

GERALD J. MONROE

Interviewed by: Raymond Ewing

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[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. Monroe.]

Q: This is an interview with Gerald J. Monroe. I am with the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program. It is the twenty second of March, 1999, and I am Raymond Ewing. This is being conducted at the Foreign Service Institute at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. Gerry, it is good to be doing this with you and catching up a little bit about your Foreign Service career. I know a little bit about bits and pieces of it but not its totality, and maybe we could start by, I think you grew up in New York State, went to City College in New York. Tell me a little bit about that and how you happened to get interested in the Foreign Service.

MONROE: Actually, I can't remember how I got interested in the Foreign Service. As far as I can remember, I have always wanted a career in international relations whether it would be journalism or as a Foreign Service officer to the extent that I was aware of what Foreign Service officers did when I was in high school, but it was something I had in the back of my mind from awhile back. I did want to travel. I did want to see the world. I did want to one way or another as a 19 year old sees it influence policy at that time.

Q: Now did that come from your school experience, teachers, or from your parents or reading the New York Times?

MONROE: Probably from reading and from one or two teachers. In college, for example, I had a government teacher who was an erstwhile minister of information in the last "Democratic" government in Czechoslovakia. His name was Lukachek. He worked part time for the Voice of America. He was very interested in getting his students to look at the Foreign Service as a prospective career. I think he more than any person I can think of influenced me, and he even helped me meet Foreign Service officers and get some sense of what the life was like, what the challenges were, and what the pleasures and rewards of a Foreign Service career might be.

Q: And that was at City College?

MONROE: That was at City College. I think before then I had, while interested, I had a very poorly formed notion of what one did in intentional affairs, be it business or government or generally.

Q: You took the Foreign Service examination while you were a graduate student or undergraduate?

MONROE: I believe I took it just before leaving for the army. I passed before the oral. I think I came home and while I was on leave and took the examination, and was not prepared very well from many points of view. I then forgot it for awhile and went to graduate school. That was after the army. I then decided to, actually a friend called me who had passed the oral examination. I had forgotten him actually, or hadn't seen him in several years. He said, "Why don't you take it again. I think it would be nice to have someone I know in the entering class." I did take it again and I did pass. Our scheduling coincided so that we were in fact in the same entering class. This fellow's name was O'herlio. He is someone I haven't now seen since Santo Domingo. We quite coincidentally ended up in Santo Domingo together however briefly.

Q: He didn't stay in the Foreign Service.

MONROE: He didn't stay in the Foreign Service too long. He went back to Columbia University to study Latin American affairs and never left academia.

Q: That is pretty unusual that two people could coordinate in that way. That's not how it usually happens.

MONROE: Particularly because it turned out we weren't really friends. We didn't know that at the time, but after sharing an apartment for about a year, twice. Part of that year in Washington and the other part in the Dominican Republic.

Q: That was enough.

MONROE: That was enough, yes.

Q: So you actually came into the Foreign Service in 1959?

MONROE: Yes, April of 1959. The only thing I have a clear recollection of is the personnel division in those days was on Pennsylvania avenue. Rain or shine, we assembled outside in a vest pocket park. I think it was about 19th Street. I remember getting together with a group of total strangers in that park after all these many years.

Q: So you did the basic officer orientation course, the A 100 course at the Foreign Service Institute, and then did you have language training or a Washington assignment?

MONROE: I had language training. I had come in with a language. I think I was on probation; I don't remember. I had passed the written examination in Spanish but I couldn't speak it at all. I could read it. I took the course, and in very short order I got up to the three level. I think I may have been on language probation. I have to look that up. But I did; I took language.

Q: And then you had an immediate overseas assignment?

MONROE: I had an immediate overseas assignment to Caracas where I was the lowest of the low. Actually I was lower than the low because, from my perspective at least, when I arrived at the airport; we weren't very well equipped in those days. Drivers didn't meet you. You were met by some vice consul who came down in a battered old station wagon and hoped he could get it up the hill. Caracas lay about 2000 feet above the airport, and one climbed [steadily] and then you went through the whole city before you got to the embassy quarter. It was a memorable arrival simply for the color and the excitement.

Q: Was this the first time you had traveled abroad?

MONROE: It was the first time I had traveled abroad by myself without some institution responsible.

Q: As opposed to when you went abroad with the army?

MONROE: Briefly, yes. This would have been November or December, the time of the month in 1959. Caracas was still a very volatile, almost ungovernable place. The excitement with the vice president, Vice President Nixon, had occurred a scant year before. As I said they were experimenting with their first popularly elected government. The government writ for some reason or another hadn't taken hold in the capital city. Things were quieter in the countryside. Later on, I understand, that shifted, but in the time that I was in Caracas, it was volatile. Not only was it crime ridden, but there was considerable political violence.

Q: Political violence directed at the United States?

MONROE: Primarily not fortunately, although the embassy was bombed, almost as an afterthought it seems. Someone threw a bomb in the fish pond. I think that the principal losers were the goldfish. There was considerable conflict among various political groups vying for power, even the more radical groups had split into a pro Cuban and anti Cuban group. So bombings were frequent, as were gunfights. As I mentioned to you before, I met a young lady at a USIA party who was a grantee at the university and an American exchange student at the University of Caracas. She had been, she lived in the neighborhood adjacent to the university. The university at one point was seized by radicals of one stripe or another, and I decided I had to rescue her. I don't think she needed rescuing, but I thought she did. I proceeded across town. Actually by the time I did get there to her apartment, she looked glad to see me. She and the woman with whom she lived. Both of them were having dinner on the floor almost prone as firing went on around them and several bullets had apparently come into the apartment. Not while I was there but earlier, so they were delighted to come be my guests, both this young lady who I subsequently married, I would say within a few months of that event, [and her friend].

Q: In Caracas?

MONROE: In Caracas, yes. I did not see the [landlady], as I guess I called her in those days, the weekend that she stayed with us.

Q: They probably both wondered, they thought you were a hero and had come to rescue them, but they probably also wondered about your sanity coming across the city with all that was going on back then.

MONROE: Well, I thought by this time, when I say I was lower than a visa officer, what happened to me when I first arrived was I was put in the code room because people had the misapprehension that all vice consuls were automatically cleared for cryptography. Not only wasn't I cleared as it turned out, I couldn't do it. In those days one had to type. One had to be a superb typist, and I was not, so the morning traffic was being distributed at about six in the afternoon. There were a number of complaints. What had happened, as I found out later in my career, smaller embassies, small posts generally when someone becomes ill or has to be evacuated for whatever reason, dire things can follow. One of them was Gerry Monroe in the code room attempting to handle a medium sized embassy's traffic. That went on for about three months during which time at least the first month I wasn't paid because they couldn't find me within the embassy. There was a lot of traffic because there was a lot of excitement going on particularly I just lucked when scattered all over the political spectrum. I felt that even though I [had no experience], I could impress everyone if I did keep my hand on the pulse of what was going on. I was quick to take every opportunity to go out and see what was going on without much regard for my own safety or the safety of my vehicle or anyone else that might possibly have been with me.

Q: Was that mostly in the capital?

MONROE: Mostly in the capital. At one point I decided I wanted to go and visit our consulate, to carry the pouch, which was an excuse for heading out across the country. In those days there were no highways between Caracas and Porta LaCruz which is where we had a little post. It was an oil port. I wondered what an oil port was. Well, the port turned out to be very interesting since you can have a lovely beach with the ships almost out of sight on the horizon as the oil was pumped out to them, eastern Venezuela being the major source of oil. It remains so actually. We did have a lot of adventures driving out. I convinced a colleague who regretted it almost immediately that we should make the trip, and we weren't at all prepared. We found some very kind people along the way who were helpful to us even to the extent of carrying our little vehicle over obstacles. It was fun, and I don't think I recognized any danger.

Q: But after your three months in the code room you did work your way up to the visa section.

MONROE: I worked my way up to the visa mill, yes, which wasn't bad.

Q: And you spent the rest of your time there...

MONROE: I spent the rest of my time there, I finally ended up I suppose doing other forms of consular work, but my memory says that most of my time there was spent issuing visas. It was interesting only to the extent that many Europeans had gone to Venezuela immediately after the war because there were only two countries in the world that welcomed refugees. They were under populated countries and European refugees helped settle the interior. As it turned out, no one wanted to go into the interior because it was frequently hot, sweaty, and dangerous. So, people stayed in the city. The city very quickly was becoming a lovely city with mountains plainly visible through a polluted valley. By the time I left, you could hardly see the hills.

Q: From a visa issuing point of view, did that mean that there were many who had passports other than Venezuelan who wanted...

MONROE: Oh, almost entirely. In those years under the 1952 act, a Venezuelan had very little trouble going to the United States, Latin Americans generally because so few were interested in migrating at that point. Only very wealthy Venezuelans traveled to the United States. On the other hand, most of our applicants were Spaniards, Italians, or other nations, all manner of refugees who had had problems in other posts getting visas anywhere, and ended up in Venezuela where the dictator at the time, Petesonovich, subsidized them. With the collapse of the dictatorship, and the move to a more representative form of government, these people felt no longer welcome, and violence and the lack of leadership discouraged them establishing roots in that society, so there were very many. And as some wise old consular officer had told me, the only ones you remember are the ones you turn down. To this day I remember the odd immigration visa that I had to turn down, and it bothers me in the end.

Q: Forty years later.

MONROE: Yes.

Q: You say that the embassy was a medium sized post. You were, did you have much to do with the ambassador?

MONROE: Now and again, mostly when disaster struck, if someone had some Venezuelan visitor arrested because his papers were not in order or something like that. We had, the first ambassador's name was Sparks. He was a fair man, and he was a hard taskmaster, very difficult in many respects for a young inexperienced, I won't say young inexperienced vice consul, just a young inexperienced person would have had difficulty. But, I think I profited from it. I learned how to hold my tongue; that was certainly something I learned very quickly in the dealing with the ambassador. He was a hands on ambassador. I admired that.

Q: He took interest in consular affairs as well.

MONROE: To the degree that they were impacting on U.S. Venezuelan relations. At various points in my short two years there, it did. As one faction or another decided they wanted to go to Miami for their health; these are things that become quite prominent for day to day diplomacy.

Q: Okay, and you said that you and Angela married.

MONROE: We were married there in Caracas.

Q: We should be sure later on to mention when she became a Foreign Service officer. It didn't happen in Caracas.

MONROE: It didn't happen in Caracas. It was an interest to her. As you recall in those years she couldn't become a Foreign Service officer. This was her intention more or less as she contemplated a career in Latin American studies which is what she had specialized in and went on to get her graduate degree in. The Foreign Service seemed like a very sensible thing. Curiously an old style consular officer, the kind that used to serve in the same country for 20 years had come from outside of Santa Fe, actually from one of the original families in the Spanish settlement of New Mexico. His name was Horizio Da Vaca. Horace was sort of the go between. He sort of acted for her father, the great courtly old world kind of courtship as it turned out.

Q: He was your supervisor?

MONROE: No. He was in another consular line of work. He was in protection and welfare... Is that what you called it then? And passports and so forth. He lived, I think he was a well to do man. He had a beautiful estate in what was the country club section of the city, the country club section being the best section of any Latin American city in those years with the servants and the like. He was married to a very wealthy Venezuelan woman. He took it upon himself to act as my wife's father surrogate. The whole thing was done with considerable grace and charm and style.

Q: Okay, anything else we have to say with regard to Caracas?

MONROE: Well, I think the only, one of the more prominent features of my stint there aside from meeting and marrying my wife and then having to leave her within three months.

Q: After the marriage.

MONROE: After the marriage, because at that point, I didn't know much about it but Trujillo was about to be assassinated. We had just about closed our embassy. We had about seven people in the Dominican Republic. It was almost like a Huxley novel. He had tried to have Ramel Avetricor, the first democratic president of Venezuela assassinated. This caused the OAS to invoke sanctions against the Dominican Republic as long as Trujillo was there. Therefore, we had a scaled down embassy and there were no dependents because of the sanctions and because as I later learned, that dictatorship was beginning to crumble. In any case, I was sent there, peremptorily without much notice.

Q: In 1961?

MONROE: In 1961. I called to say that I had acquired a wife. They said, "Well, it doesn't show on your papers." The usual bureaucratic foul up, but they didn't seem to care. Wife or no wife, I was just sent off there.

Q: On a transfer.

MONROE: Yes.

Q: What did she do?

MONROE: Well, it was a direct transfer. I hadn't quite finished my 24 months. They were being very bureaucratic about it. I wasn't eligible for home leave yet. Although the administrator and everyone else assured me that her allowances would continue, they stopped as soon as I left. It took me several days to get to the Dominican Republic. Because of the sanctions, I had to go through Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Lord knows. For a two hour flight, I was three days in the traveling. By the time I got there, there was a telegram from Evangeline saying she wasn't being supported. We had been married three months, mind you. She, being native in Spanish because of her background in Santa Fe, just got on a plane, came to the Dominican Republic and talked her way in. Went to the embassy and told her story. There was a labor attaché^{1/2} who was a Cuban American, a very nice man who said, "Well, I'll hire you as a secretary. I can argue that I need a bilingual secretary." So, Evangeline became myself and my old college friend who showed up from Mexico City became the eighth, ninth, and tenth personnel at the mission. The three of us shared a house that someone had, a large house behind a coffee [plantation] I think it was called. A coffee ranch, I guess. They grew coffee and they raised cattle. We were on the edge of the city. Now I am sure it is almost dead center, but in those days it was the country and had all of the charms thereof.

Q: What was your job in the embassy?

MONROE: Both Roger and myself, My school friend and I were issuing visas once again. Then as I mentioned earlier, Trujillo had just been murdered as we arrived, just a few days before. There was great uncertainty, a great rush and struggle for power. Indeed a little known... I am going to presume that what follows now is declassified and part of the public record. As time passed it became very apparent that the right wing was going to make another grasp at power, overthrow a centrist junta that had taken control. Actually it was the Land Rover agent with the unusual name for a Dominican of Donald Reed. Donald Reed, however, unfortunately did not last long. There was an attempt, a bloody attempt actually at a counter revolution as one would call it. There was much bloodshed, a considerable amount of bloodshed. I have a vivid recollection, probably the only thing I remember clearly that [image] of a body being strapped to a white sports car of some sort, a white European sports car, tied across it spread eagle as this car sped through the streets. This body bled all over the white, there was blood all over the white front of the car. I remember it very vividly. We were cowering in our, cowering may be the wrong word. We were seeking cover in our offices, our visa offices which were away from what had been the embassy, and were right downtown. They were often mobbed as people became more frantic to get visas to leave the country, particularly people who had been associated with the old regime. Increasingly disagreeable things were happening in the streets. One of their favorite devices, those who wanted to make trouble were to since it was a city that rose no more than two stories, would be to climb onto roofs and drop manhole covers. If they missed people as they often did, they would shatter like glass on the streets below. People would pick up these shards and throw them at cars and at passers by and whatever, people who were suspected of being revolutionaries or counter revolutionaries or whatever.

Q: On the other side.

MONROE: On the other side, that is exactly right. Well, we all had quite a collection of these things as desk weights.

Q: That had come through the window?

MONROE: That had come through the window, or picked up on the ground or in one or two cases had been thrown at us as we were driving along. We took ourselves and we took our local hires to and from work. We had a van until the van was torched one morning. So we were there without much, trying to figure out how we could close the building to some degree of dignity.

Q: Were you getting any protection.

MONROE: Very little. We had police who were doing next to nothing. Occasional firing into the crowd which we thought might not be a good idea, and we tried to dissuade them with little or no success. At one point we were literally under siege. We had an old consular officer type who had been in Latin America for years an agent who had a low whiskey voice and a pet lizard and was I suspect inebriated most of the time. He opened the door to confront this crowd. He was going to convince them that he was an American soldier. He immediately pulled by the necktie and slammed the door, and brought this American soldier in who was almost drunker than he was. This soldier had apparently been leading the mob at least as far as he was concerned. In any case, given the amount of noise, having seen this scene of this car and the body and so forth, that dramatic and frightening scene, we withdrew to the vault in the visa mill. We had a little vault to hold our seal, seal or no seal, we just got in in time when they broke the door down. They went along and they took our office away. We came out terribly indignant that at this point we no longer had partitions. We had plywood partitions between the visa officers where the three visa officers sat. We called the major building and explained that we had no way of leaving. The offices had been looted. One of the senior officers left at the embassy got into his station wagon and came down, very courageously. We were all stuffed into this station wagon. There must have been about ten of us including locals. One policeman sitting on top of us all firing through the window against everyone's wishes. Away we went. I mean there was a bit of humor to it as we rode, I suppose. Of course, I was three people down; I really didn't get much of a view. But in due course when it became clear that my wife was there, the department became indignant and evacuated both of us.

Q: Took you out.

MONROE: Took us out of the Dominican Republic.

Q: How long were you actually there?

MONROE: We were there about five months. It never showed up on my card again although...

Q: That assignment?

MONROE: That assignment, although we were told when we arrived, when I say we because there were several other people with me, in the contingent, that we could go anywhere we wanted. Just ask, and they would send us where ever we wanted. We had gotten some award or something or other. Foolishness I think.

Q: Did we have an ambassador in...

MONROE: No we did not have an ambassador again.

Q: Because of the sanctions.

MONROE: Because of the sanctions. We weren't at all sure who was the government either at that point. That playboy, Trujillo De La rosa came in. It looked for a short time like he might declare himself leader, El Caudillo. That didn't bear any fruit. Ultimately centrist forces prevailed and elections were held, but this was long after I had left.

Q: The United States did intervene.

MONROE: Dramatically a few years later, but that was after there had been an election And yet another election that turned out badly. I must say, many years later I was amazed to find that one of the parties, and I can't think of his name offhand at the moment, Baliare. He was Trujillo's last puppet president and was elected president periodically off and on for the next 35 years. I think he has just died at the age of 98.

Q: That was fairly recently, probably within the last ten years.

MONROE: Yes. He was quite blind among his many other attributes.

Q: The five months that you were there, you must have been concerned about the American citizens as a consular officer in the country with this chaos.

MONROE: We were very concerned; however, most of them were Puerto Ricans and Dominicans almost entirely. In other words the island societies are very close. Indeed they spoke the same dialect. Their Spanish had the same curiosities. You could almost always recognize them by the way they spoke. Santo Domingo had a large population of English speaking West Indians, people who had immigrated there from the smaller Caribbean islands.

Q: But not American citizens.

MONROE: No these were just curiosities in a way because they didn't speak good Spanish. You saw them all over. They were an active part of the community. Because of what had happened to Haitians there in the '30s, there were no Haitians there from the other part of the island. Indeed it seems ironic now, but we had a free ticket to Port au Prince for weekends. We could fly to Port au Prince and recreate or rest.

Q: What do you mean free ticket?

MONROE: Well by and large they were trying excuses for getting us to Port au Prince once a month, pouch or some such thing. Everyone was encouraged to go to Port au Prince to cool down and relax and so forth and so on. Just curiously at that point in history, Haiti was the quiet place, and a very interesting place. We spent a weekend there.

Q: And very different. Same island but very different.

MONROE: Same island but very different. Much poorer in some respects, and very much more tropical because of the prevailing winds. Haiti facing the Caribbean and the Dominican Republic open to the ocean wind created a totally different topography and growth of flora and fauna.

Q: You mentioned that there was an incident involving the United States when you were there.

MONROE: Yes. Again, I am assuming this is totally unclassified by this juncture. In fact our chief of mission was in touch with the president it would appear. As a matter of fact, I was present at one discussion with the White House.

Q: The President of the United States.

MONROE: The President of the United States who was Kennedy at the time. The gentleman's name was Carolton Hill if I recall correctly. Yes, Carolton Hill. He died. I think he died relatively young. But, in any case, he was very much a take charge sort of person. He decided that a show of U.S. forces was necessary to discourage the right wing from reasserting itself, or re inserting itself into Dominican politics. We were staying in a hotel at that particular juncture since our house had been looted. Fortunately we had nothing but our luggage with us. We were in the swimming pool, my wife myself and several friends when we were strafed, which was sort of interesting. In fact, I don't think we were strafed, but others felt that we were being strafed. The thing that was happening was there was a firefight out at the fortress; this plane was strafing the fortress perhaps a mile away, and the empty cartridges were falling into the pool. But they were hot if someone got hit with them. So we dove to the bottom of this pool, but soon discovered that that was not a solution, got out and since I suspected that we weren't being strafed, we were able to go back to our respective rooms. It was really a vulnerable feeling looking up at this aircraft which was almost at rooftop height.

Q: This was a Dominican...

MONROE: This was a Dominican aircraft. A little later on as we were having our Cuba libre or whatever outside, American aircraft arrived and moved across the island doing we knew not what. So we decided that if we were going to get a good look at this, we were going to have to go out to a point right outside the city where there was one of the few restaurants left open. There we were with the entire diplomatic corps, and a good part of the press corps which was growing by leaps and bounds, all with binoculars trained on the U.S. fleet which was right there with an aircraft carrier close beyond. These aircraft that were taking off were obviously running sorties from the carrier into the island. Whether there was, whether they were engaged in strafing activities, there was a lot of gunfire at this point toward the middle of the day. We don't know; I don't know. Perhaps the political officers as usual sat there very knowledgeable. I suspect they didn't know much more than we did. The whole thing reached a crescendo in the next night. The next night we had our [earthquake] whereupon our offices collapsed or at least were so badly damaged that they weren't deemed safe to enter. The Department reassessed the whole situation and decided that three consular officers should be withdrawn. The first one to go was myself. They discovered contrary to all regulations that they could find at least, I had my wife there.

Q: Even though she had gotten there at her own expense.

MONROE: Even though she had gotten there at her own expense. I'll say they were nice enough to bring her back. They did pay. The only tragic part of that whole episode, I think in the long run, was her boss was later shot in the end game of whatever political interruption was occurring, and killed. We had learned to really like this man. We were really fond of him and his family. In many respects they made the whole thing possible for us, so we were very sad about that. That happened after we left.

Q: But you were not hit other than...

MONROE: We were not hit, but we were quite poor at that time because we had lost just about everything we had which wasn't much fortunately. We had lived in French quarters in Caracas. Of course things were furnished in the Dominican Republic in the sense that we were in someone else's house. We did leave all of our shoes which was unfortunate because we had to wait for the UN to bring in shoes. My wife rather liked it because we got to Mexico City on the way home and she went to the shop to get a new wardrobe. In those days prices were not all that high.

Q: So after your five months there, they gave you home leave.

MONROE: They gave us home leave. They, no it wasn't that job then. I sort of lost track. They gave us home leave. We had a little vacation in Mexico City where my wife had run a school briefly. We looked up old friends and truly enjoyed ourselves, arrived in her home town, Santa Fe, very relaxed, and were told that I had to report to the Department immediately. I had a very important job which actually turned out to be my first exposure to computers, dealing with early computers. We were attempting to take the reporting output of one post for two years, code it, reduce it to a very short summaries, and put it into a computer. Thereupon we would be able to query this computer asking substantial questions. It was a project, and of course we were told after that was finished, we could go on to where we wanted to go because of our experiences in the Dominican Republic and the fact that we didn't go totally to pieces and continued to issue as many visas as we possibly could under the circumstances. One amusing sidelight was that a woman looked me up at my office in what was then called automated data processing and read me out. She was very indignant at the visas that I had signed. She had turned out to have been a consular officer in Montreal, and she was very indignant at the visas that had been issued at the Dominican Republic because many of these people had turned out not to be bona fide tourists but as we expected seeking asylum. I think I told her that if I had been in Montreal, I would have had the same perspective she had, but there was a different perspective from the Dominican Republic.

Q: Were some of these people, people that she had turned down?

MONROE: No these were people who ended up to change status in Montreal. I think under the old McCarran Act, they had to leave the country to change status, and a favorite spot was Montreal.

Q: She felt they shouldn't have been in the United States in the first place.

MONROE: She felt that they shouldn't have been in the United States in the first place. Well, our turn down rate could have been 110% or so. You know, we had to issue some visas we felt, and of course, to this day, I don't regret any of those. I think the people were genuinely in danger. People were being ripped apart even as usual in this kind of setting. Even if people had not been involved with the previous administration, they were still subject to persecution and even death from enemies, personal enemies that simply wanted to get even with them. It was get even time as so often happens in that kind of setting.

Q: Opportunities for retribution.

MONROE: And so forth, yes.

Q: Did you feel that things stabilized at all while you were there or the earthquake was kind of the last...

MONROE: No, I thought, I have always been amused at the earthquake, although I tell you at the time it was not amusing. It was a major earthquake and the Dominican Republic, had Santo Domingo been the city it is today, it would have done grave damage. As it turned out, there was nothing higher than the church steeple which did fall down. Our offices and newer buildings fared badly. There is an old quarter of the Dominican Republic which dates back almost to Christopher Columbus' time. People may or may not know there is a, it is the only place in the New World where Christopher Columbus left his mark. There is a capsule there that belonged to the Colombo family. The old quarter of the city fortunately survived and as far as I know, is still there as a tourist attraction. It is quite impressive, and in the days that we were there was a major part of the city. In many ways it was a very quaint place, not unattractive, and while poor, not nearly as poor as Haiti was.

Q: But it certainly was a difficult time, the period that you were there.

MONROE: Yes, it was very difficult. I think again it was something that in your 20s you could deal with; you could see the humor in it. At least you wouldn't think you were being killed. And there were many interesting and quasi amusing events, most of which occurred when my colleague and I, Roger and I were trying to get lifts to various to and from work and so forth. This was after we lost our government van.

Q: Anything else we should say about the time in the Dominican Republic?

MONROE: No, I think I said more than I intended to.

Q: Well, you wound up in automatic data processing.

MONROE: Yes.

Q: Putting recording on computer.

MONROE: Yes and we attracted the attention of Secretary Dean Rusk who came to our first display of this system.

Q: Its demo.

MONROE: Well it was a demo. I wouldn't dignify it with that term. First of all, it was God awful hour about five in the morning when we could get space, you know computer time. It was a huge mainframe.

Q: Actually at the Pentagon?

MONROE: At the Pentagon. We had to go over to do this except the Secretary was ushered over. We were getting up at five in the morning and staggering in. It soon became clear.

Q: We were talking about the department's first efforts at taking advantage of computers and your efforts at the Pentagon to demonstrate that this was possible or display what you could do.

MONROE: Well I think in retrospect it is quite clear that the promises that the designers of the system made were simply exaggerated. On the other hand as a document retrieval system it turned out to be the one we used several generations later. I am sure the technology is better. I think the basic idea of putting summaries in was the key to make this whole concept work. Now with scanners and whatnot it is a lot easier. One doesn't have to worry about so much. The problem was that everything had to be coded almost by hand. We did find, however, that attempting to deal with such concepts as propensity bill and so forth, it simply would only work if the people that coded it in queried it. A secretary couldn't get an answer to his question, for example, which I think probably set several administrators on their tails, but it didn't bother us. We were thrilled by it all.

Q: How long did this take or how long were you working?

MONROE: Well, I think we took about six months to do this. The department kept its word, quite interesting. They put me in German training to strengthen my German. I had already had some at college, but again speaking is what I needed. And off I went to Dusseldorf.

Q: Now this would have been about 196

MONROE: '63. We arrived in March of '63 at Dusseldorf. Beyond giving me a sense of what Germany was all about then, I can't say that it was terribly stimulating being there, the opportunities for travel. The work was commercial work. I worked for an older but very creative commercial officer, someone who had been appointed from the Commerce Department. He looked very much like General Eisenhower. He was Dutch and he really did look like General Eisenhower. In any case, we traveled from one trade fair to the next throughout our region of Germany which was Westphalia and the north Rhineland. We enjoyed ourselves a lot. I did have my first experience in East Germany as a result of going to the Leipzig fair which was an interesting experience. But mostly it was an opportunity to build my German which subsequently became a lifelong interest, a language I did learn exceptionally well. It prepared me for my next posting in Germany some years later. I think one interesting element was that the war was very fresh in the minds of many of the people we met. Indeed some of the damaged buildings were still there. The fairgrounds, for example, where I spent a lot of time, had been very badly damaged by shells. Much of them were still pockmarked, although these buildings were built like bunkers. I don't think there was any way that they were going to be knocked down. I think the reason why the damage hung on for so long was no one could figure out how to knock them down. I think eventually they just built around them. In any case, it did give us a chance to learn about Germany, learn about German attitudes of that immediate postwar generation who remembered the war but were not necessarily involved in it although some were. I think just about all the clichés^{1/2}s one has read about or heard about with respect to Germany in the early '60s were true. Pretty much that sort of place. We did go to Berlin shortly after the wall was built, or at least started. That was quite thrilling, quite interesting. There was a sense of beleaguering and a sense of defiance. As you entered, we took the train the duty train from Frankfurt, and as we entered the station there was a loudspeaker playing Lilli Marlene, Auf Weidersein and so forth as the next train pulled out. We were bringing in many troops at that point. Of course, our train was just filled with young GIs, none of whom could keep their window shades down or the window closed as we were all supposed to. But of course, as we passed through Potsdam, there was this view, I think train curve, unforgettable view really indelibly imprinted on my mind where these Russian soldiers lined up along the railway every few yards as far as you could see as we pulled through the outskirts of Berlin. That was the part that was East Germany in those days. So that was an interesting sort of third man kind of experience. The atmosphere could have been cut with a knife. We were told to test the Russians at the Friedrichstrasse subway station. So we did leave the subway station in East Berlin and get off, show our passports. They were armed to the teeth. We were told not to give the passport to a German official but wait for a Russian official. The problem we encountered was we couldn't tell the difference. Their uniforms, whether it was intentional or not, we tried to do it by speaking German. We tried to discern whether the person was a native speaker of German and we had someone who was good enough in German to do that. So we assured ourselves we were dealing with the Russians. To this day, I don't know. In we went. We walked along the streets. It was routinely snowing slightly and people came up and spoke to us. They knew we were Americans immediately. We asked them how they knew and they said, "Well you are wearing Russian boots." Ladies were wearing Russian style boots that year, it was the style.

Q: Russian boots, they could tell.

MONROE: They could tell we were Americans. Yes, well, the women were wearing them. It was sad and it was exciting, a little bit of everything.

Q: Let's talk about the post a little bit more in Dusseldorf. Was this headed by a consul general?

MONROE: Headed by a consul general. His name was Edmund Kellogg. Edmund Kellogg was the scion of I believe it was the Kellogg Tool Company, not the cereal company, but a rather large company that made specialized tools for the oil industry. He came from New England. He was greatly distressed to find that he could not send his children to any school he could afford. He had been appointed late in the game. He was part of what was called the Wriston program. I think he was hyperactive. I think today they might have given him that ritalin, the drug they give hyperactive children. I think he tended to feel that the we were at the navel of the universe and the department was waiting desperately for the next dispatch from Dusseldorf, which, of course, was not true at all.

Q: That rarely is the case. Dusseldorf is how far from Bonn?

MONROE: Dusseldorf is by train no more than two hours. It was kept open all those many years. It is now closed I believe. It was kept open all those many years because the consul general had an opportunity to deal with the Ruhr barons as they were called. The Krupps and the Thyssens and so forth who were held to be important. I think shortly after arrival, many of us concluded that they no longer were. Their time had passed even then. Krupp Works was closed to bankruptcy. Coal mining as an industry was in deep trouble. I think that the largest industry was the Opel automobile at this point.

Q: This was the early period of the coal and steel community.

MONROE: The early period of the coal and steel community. I think the Ruhr was rapidly becoming the German rust belt. I think it was their capacity over the decades to work that out, that led to that fabulous period of growth during the '70s. When we were there again and Germany was probably as well off as it ever had been in its history.

Q: At the time you were there Dusseldorf was a first assignment in Germany the economic revival, boom wasn't really apparent.

MONROE: No. The boom was not apparent. They were comfortable, but they were not, you know, people were not talking about a six week vacation to Spain and so forth. Although, that sort of thing was beginning. People were taking short vacations. Of course, to German middle class, a suntan is an absolute necessity, even if they were gathered on their roofs during the summer. They would have to return to their office with suntans. I also learned a lot about dealing and working in German society which stood me in good stead the next time I was there when I was dealing with important persons, at least to me.

Q: At this time you were doing commercial work, visiting trade fairs and so on. Was the commercial work that you did just within your consular area or did you have some kind of wide, countrywide perhaps possibilities as well?

MONROE: We had countrywide responsibilities oddly enough, because the Commerce Department was experimenting with the notion of the trade center which was Frankfurt. So theoretically we could be brought, well, for example, we were chosen to cover the Leipzig fair one year, which was a great thrill, but also we were doing it for the entire commercial operation in Germany. Now the reason for this rather curious divine was because Bonn was the least important commercial post in the system. I think there was one commercial officer there at that time. There was a real question whether we should have a commercial operation in Bonn at all or whether we should transfer it all to Dusseldorf. Subsequently they transferred it all to Cologne actually and they closed the post in Dusseldorf, but Dusseldorf remained open over the years primarily because of its importance as a commercial center and also as a cultural center. The USIA had a major operation there in Dusseldorf.

Q: Was there at that time a consulate also in Cologne?

MONROE: No. That had been closed and had been replaced. As post war Germany took shape, I think it was clear that Dusseldorf was going to be one of the major western cities. It was not as well placed as Frankfurt geographically, but on the other hand it being the headquarters for so many huge corporations, because Dusseldorf, it is really a lovely city. It is not rural like at all. It is right at the confluence of the Rhine and the Ruhr rivers. They were busily cleaning up the Ruhr at that time which was made possible by the demise of many heavy industries. The interesting thing was that Dusseldorf is a garden city, and so many of these corporations had their headquarters in Dusseldorf and spent weeks at a time in Dusseldorf and not in Essen and Bochrum and other less pleasant towns where there were coal mines on the main street and so forth. We might possibly join with some other place like Stuttgart and go handle a major trade fair in Berlin. Perhaps there would be officers from all over Germany at a major [fair]. I know the Hannover fair, which was a major effort in West Germany, was handled by people from all over Germany.

Q: When you say "handled," whether it was Hannover or Leipzig or one of the others, did you mean assist American exhibitors, the American pavilion, the U.S. export oriented exhibits, or was it more that you were interested in what was happening in terms of German industry and commercial sector for reporting purposes?

MONROE: All of those things. If we could, if the fair was industry or sector specific, the Commerce Department would try to interest a number of prospective American exporters in a U.S. pavilion which would be partially subsidized by the Commerce Department. We would always have a U.S. information center which would address the broader questions if we didn't have a pavilion. If we did have a pavilion, it would be part of the pavilion, but if we didn't, then we would have an information center which would address the broader scope of American activity in that particular industrial sector be it machine tools or fixers or whatever or furniture.

Q: Again with the emphasis on U.S. exports.

MONROE: Yes, we had just switched from trying to encourage Europeans to export to the United States to the reverse. I think the first sting on the balance of payments policy was being felt in Washington. I think at that point in its history the program was as innovative as I had seen it throughout my career. I think our commercial program in Germany was one of the more creative and one of the more aggressive export programs.

Q: Creative and aggressive because it was trying to involve more firms in our exporting, firms that were new to exporting?

MONROE: Well, yes. Obviously we weren't worried about General Motors or TRW or the equivalent thereof in those days. United Technologies which didn't exist then or something like it. We were interested in furniture producers, clothing producers, medium sized companies that if it could be shown that exporting was not all the horror that they had learned it had been during the war and right after the war and so forth. They would profit from a European approach, that is to say a protective setting where we would do the administrative work, taking the space, hiring the decorators and engineers to prepare the space and they would just have to come along and slip into it. They were very successful. Very few of them complained. As a matter of fact, I have no recollection of a serious complaint about the space they were given. Of course we tried to keep it as consistent as possible from sector to sector and company to company.

Q: And they felt it was worthwhile and useful.

MONROE: I think as a rule they felt it worthwhile. Another approach was mission. We tried very hard, my boss was well schooled in this sort of thing, tried very hard to make certain that there was a trade fair going on in each particular sector within Germany before we would have a trade mission come over such as a furniture trade mission so...

Q: The trade mission would be tied to...

MONROE: As I said the furniture fair at Cologne which was an important event in the worldwide furniture industry. And this notion of a trade center such as we had in Frankfurt was relatively new. It was not brand new. Frankfurt may have been one of the first if not the first.

Q: So you would go there quite often and work with them.

MONROE: We would go quite often.

Q: Encourage importers from Dusseldorf and the surrounding area to go to a trade fair show, a trade center show somewhere.

MONROE: Yes, a trade center show or somewhere else in Germany whether it was [in our] consular district or not, Stuttgart or Munich if we felt there were Americans that were exhibiting who could service north Rhine Westphalia, which was the area we were in. That happened to be the biggest consular district in the country and by far the richest.

Q: Biggest in terms of population and riches.

MONROE: Biggest in terms of population and, oh, yes, riches. This is no longer the case, but at that point it was almost three quarters of German GNP. That is how concentrated post war Germany had become as a result of, I suppose, strategic bombing, but also because of the migratory movement. So much of it went into North Rhineland zone.

Q: U.S. army, U.S. forces were not.

MONROE: Were not. We were guests of the British there. British forces were stationed in and around Dusseldorf.

Q: Now you were there from what '63 to '65?

MONROE: '65.

Q: How important at that time was the European common market as far as commercial work?

MONROE: Not terribly.

Q: Not yet.

MONROE: No not terribly. In fact, one could compete openly with the French for example. The French always had creative ideas; it was execution that seemed to be their problem. They had, for example, French restaurants that were bringing a whole new cuisine to Dusseldorf. Contrary to most of Germany, Dusseldorf did have an interesting cuisine, part Dutch and part French. As a matter of fact the city was called Eine Kleine Paris. There was a certain je ne sais quois about the city. It was a city of boulevards and parks and palaces which were in the process of being rebuilt. The old city was being rebuilt, the city along the river. Dusseldorf had been the best place to demonstrate something, I am not sure what I am demonstrating. Before the war or before the Nazi period, one of the main streets in town had been Heinestrasse. From '33 on it had been named Alleestrasse which literally means boulevard street. There was a bit of agony to change the name back. It didn't happen easily, but it happened. An old bust of Heinrich Heine was brought out.

Q: Put back out front.

MONROE: Put back up in the city hall. Yes. I am assuming that our listeners will know that Heinrich Heine was Jewish, and therefore a non person. His vast array of German literature was completely stricken from the record during that Nazi period. Of course any student of German at college in those days we read Heinrich Heine. Of course I learned to recite these poems to my German teacher Felix Dandelion. She whispered in my ear that Heinrich Heine died of syphilis. I don't think that is an historic fact. But that is what she said.

Q: How close is Dusseldorf to the border to what, Holland?

MONROE: Well, it is close to the Belgian, I would say an hour if that long. As a matter of fact, we who always thought that Henry Minuet, I think it was Heinrich Minuet, the founder of New York City, the founder of New York City, I think I have the name right, had his 400th anniversary or something. We thought, we had always been taught he was Dutch. Indeed when he was born, that town where he was born was in Holland. As it turned out, it was about 10 kilometers inside Germany when the consul general and I showed up for the ceremonies. So yes, we were quite close, perhaps an hour perhaps even less than an hour from the Dutch border and the Belgian border which came together there. France was not all that far although there was no such things as auto routes. If one wanted to drive to Paris which we did frequently, one had to go overland through the Ardennes and still see some of the tanks.

Q: Let me ask you a couple of more commercial related questions. Was there any talk in this period of facilitating, encouraging, or promoting German investment in the United States?

MONROE: Very much less. The States were beginning to take an interest in that. We were at the beginning stages of trying to figure out how to deal with that situation, because frequently we encountered competitive situations between New York State and New Jersey and what was the U.S. government, what was a federal facility to do about that? We didn't favor either state, we just favored the United States.

Q: Were some of those states already represented?

MONROE: They were already beginning to be represented. New York was among the pioneers including the New York Port Authority opened an office in, I believe, Dusseldorf, which was fascinating.

Q: Help me with my geography. Did your consular district go up to the coast?

MONROE: No, it did not go up to the coast, but it would go to the border, and it would go to Aachen. Aachen was included. One would find that you could go pretty far out into France actually in our consular district. I am a little unclear as to how far south it went. I don't know whether Trier was in our district or Frankfurt. I think it was closer to us.

Q: I guess my question had to do with the shipping and ports.

MONROE: No we didn't do shipping. The only port we had was a river port.

Q: Anything else we should say about Dusseldorf?

MONROE: No, I don't think so. I think Dusseldorf was very much a training post if one can call it that. Things were beginning to come together for me there. It was the first time I was out of a visa section and was working generally with the post. Of course, it being a small post, I think in those days perhaps six officers total.

Q: Of which two or three were doing commercial work?

MONROE: Two were doing commercial work and two were doing economic and political work. There was some political work to be done actually.

Q: And the economic reporting would be on what, the coal and steel industry?

MONROE: On the industry and in those days, we had a lot of [required] reporting concerning the company reporting program as I am sure you very well remember. So there were a lot of reports that had to be done on exports. They were split up pretty evenly among the staff whether they were commercial or not. It didn't include the two consular officers, but...

Q: So you did some of that.

MONROE: I did some of that kind of reporting, yes. Oh, and I also did economic defense which is perhaps the most interesting. It got me to several conferences. It also got me around town calling on people that I normally wouldn't have called upon. It got me into banking circles. Dusseldorf, although not one of the banking capitals per se of which there were two or three. No I want to correct that. I believe it was. What happened with Berlin out of the question then, they chose Munich, Frankfurt, and Dusseldorf to serve as banking centers for the country. Now I later learned that the United States occupation forces had had its bank in Frankfurt, and indeed it was through that bank that the gold captured by the allied forces was redistributed to the allied government. So the Frankfurt banking center probably led the Germans to choose Frankfurt as a major banking center. Dusseldorf was the commercial center and a banking center, and Munich was to the south. It was really political. CSU.

Q: Well, to share among those elements, and also to perhaps not lead to one city being...

MONROE: Becoming the headquarters of the Bundesbank.

Q: The substitute for Berlin.

MONROE: That's right. The Bundesbank had three branches. Now this doesn't seem odd to us with a Federal Reserve System, this decentralized Federal Reserve System, but it was very odd for the Germans, very confusing for the Germans.

Q: Okay, what else should we say about Dusseldorf?

MONROE: Well, I don't think much else.

Q: Did you have any children born there?

MONROE: No, we didn't.

Q: Was Evangeline working there?

MONROE: No, I don't think she was. She learned German very well. She became an excellent speaker of German. In fact, she studied German; she even went to the university to study German. She took part in many activities, and had a wide circle of women friends and learned a lot about Germany herself. Indeed, as is not uncommon, you know she was then enjoying and she enjoyed being a traditional Foreign Service wife. It was through her that I made many contacts and met many young families that I would not have normally met in the course of my business and so forth. So no, she was very much learning about Germany and learning about the culture. Of course, because of her interest in languages, she was picking up German and studying it. To this day, her German has certain idiomatic expressions that come much easier to her than they do to me. She doesn't know as much German as I do, but certainly that which she knows, she knows extremely well.

Q: Okay, where did you go after you left Dusseldorf?

MONROE: I was returned to the department, I thought to the Treasury Department, to work in their new executive secretariat. They were experimenting with something like the State Department executive secretariat. They didn't want it as it turned out. There was a change in the upper reaches. It was a delightful few months but they actually didn't want that.

Q: Did you go and work there?

MONROE: Oh, yes, I actually worked there, shared a room with someone who knew everybody. It was interesting because it was in that small part of the Treasury Building that is nice. It was agreeable, habitable. Most of it is not, but this one had a fireplace. There were three desks in this huge room.

Q: Were you closely connected with the Secretary attached to the Secretary?

MONROE: We spoke to the deputy who would then be an undersecretary. Mostly I dealt with the undersecretary for international affairs. I have forgotten his name. I do know that he came from the west.

Q: This was not John Petty, or Dillon.

MONROE: No I don't think so. Dillon had been secretary and may well have still been secretary. I think there was a sense that Dillon should be on a par with the Secretary of State. The world was changing and finance was becoming a major part of American foreign policy. The Treasury Department had not given its just position in the councils of government. One of their experiments was to come up with a kind of let's watch what is happening in the rest of the world. I think they found in very short order there was lots that was happening that didn't interest them in the least.

Q: They didn't need to pay any attention.

MONROE: They didn't need to pay any attention to it. So, the effect was that we were sent back to the secretariat. I was already identified as an economic officer. They really didn't think they wanted an economic officer in the secretariat.

Q: At the State Department?

MONROE: At the State Department. The logical place for us to have gone would have been the executive secretariat of the department. Indeed some of us did. I guess there were about four people affected by the scale back at Treasury. I instead went to trade agreements as they were called. As I recall, you replaced Peter Londay, didn't you?

Q: No, I didn't replace him. I can't even remember who I did replace. I did work with him; he was in the office. He was I think the deputy, he was assistant chief.

MONROE: Deputy chief. The chief was Robert Bruce Hill.

Q: Yes, when I came into the office.

MONROE: Chris Hill's father incidentally. If you have noticed pictures of Chris how much he looks like his father from certain angles.

Q: I came into that office after the economic course. I think you were in the office when I went to the economic course.

MONROE: That is exactly what happened.

Q: In the trade agreements division you were primarily in Latin America or a whole range of...

MONROE: No, I worked primarily on re negotiating the TSUS, the Trade Schedule of the United States. We had had a change. We had changed from the old schedule B to a new nomenclature and a new taxonomy. This had, coincidentally, and tangentially impacted on certain tariff levels.

Q: Where we had made commitments bindings on trade.

MONROE: Where we had commitments and we mechanically created, broke those agreements. Not willfully or with forethought but just as a matter of reclassifying products.

Q: And also, I remember another term we used, I think, rectification and modification.

MONROE: Something like that.

Q: W would adjust where we...

MONROE: That was the exercise I was primarily in when I first arrived. It was not where the action was. I kept pressing to do something else. Peter and I were not the best colleagues I think. We annoyed one another quite a bit.

Q: That was the period where the special trade representative...

MONROE: We constructed that.

Q: Was just getting going. Did you have a lot to do with STR?

MONROE: Yes. Primarily because STR was deeply involved in this rectification exercise. There were several people there whom I grew to like a lot and learned a lot from. There was an economist ex officio. He has since become a, well early on he went out into the private sector and opened his own business. I later bumped into him in Switzerland. He came out to make speeches and what have you. In any case I worked with him and learned a lot from him. We traveled to Geneva periodically for meetings on this rectification exercise.

Q: So you did get to go to Geneva.

MONROE: I did get to go to Geneva, but not very often.

Q: I never did get there after about two years in the office.

MONROE: The first year I was left pretty much alone so I...STR assumed that I was going to go with him. You know, there was a lot of pulling and carrying and so forth. I sometimes think I simply couldn't carry the tariff schedules of the United States by themselves. They needed more body. The second year I think I was a bit you know, I tried to find a niche in the Kennedy round as it began. It did start to build up or wear down either one. I think probably the latter. I did do some work on esoteric subjects, I can't remember, actual tariffs, the weigh in tariff levels, effective tariffs. Because a lot depended on the elasticity of the products involved. There were some products whose demand curve was such that it didn't make any difference what the tariff was. For example, very fine machine tools and that sort of thing there - die cast for example. They had to pay whatever the going rate was. I did learn a lot about trade of course. I learned that in trading with Germany, for example, you bought some of their dies and they bought some of yours. They were equally inelastic. Again, I think the way that you did it was a lot better. I think if I had come into that office with the economic background, I would have gotten a lot more out of it. I do know that upon going to Hong Kong after, today that the course was invaluable.

Q: Anything else you want to say about the period with the trade agreements division? I think you covered it pretty well.

MONROE: I think so. I believe it.

Q: You went then to the six months economic course.

MONROE: I went to the six month, it may have been a little bit longer. You must have been in the first.

Q: I was in the second.

MONROE: You were in the second, so I must have been in the third. If I wasn't in yours, I was in the third or fourth.

Q: When did you start?

MONROE: I started in the summer of '67.

Q: You probably were in the fourth group because I think there was one that started in January of '67.

MONROE: That was an extraordinarily useful and rewarding experience.

Q: It was a good course. It was new for me.

MONROE: It was new and some of the things I had studied before. Economics is a very dynamic field as everyone knows and so I was very excited to get back to the solidly academic part of it particularly the macro, or the micro, excuse me. The micro I really loved. We had a marvelous teacher; I'm sure you did too, a southern gentleman. I am trying to remember his name. He taught the history of economicIt was a marvelous course; it put it all together. He had a great motto, "Never give a promotion board an even break." He was a great teacher, a dedicated teacher. The fellow we had for public finance later joined the Foreign Service, Bruce Duncan, and I ended my career with Bruce. He may still be at the historian's office.

Q: You went from the FSI economics course tHong Kong?

MONROE: Hong Kong. I went to Hong Kong. It was a very interesting personnel exercise because I was posted to be a Treasury attaché assistant in Buenos Aires. I argued against this very vigorously. I went to my personnel counselor who in those days had power. The counselors dealt with the regions. The bureaus really had personnel power. I approve of that actually. I don't know if I should electioneer in oral history. I would like to say that that was the right way to go because the bureaus did discharge responsibilities. They didn't just take everyone they wanted and stand and fight. They knew that everyone had to be placed to get three they wanted they took four they didn't know about. Not necessarily, it was very rare in those years they would come up against someone they simply didn't want because his or her reputation was bad. In any case, this pal of mine in the course was posted to Hong Kong. He said I don't want to go to Hong Kong, I am an ARA specialist. I was saying to myself, to get back to ARA, and I happened to bump into Robert Hill. We had lunch and Robert said, "Well you have had your excursion tour. Now you are going back to your area of emphasis." I was extremely distressed at that because I wanted to get back to Germany. Not ultimately. So I went to my friend and said, "How would you like to go to Buenos Aires?" He said, "Buenos Aires, a dream." I said, "Well, I'll go to Hong Kong." We went to see our personnel counselor, Noble Mellencamp was his name. Noble said, "Why not. You are both equally qualified to go. You both took the course. Same grade. We don't see any difference. To tell you the truth neither of you are the answer to EAP's dream, but you know, why not." EAP didn't care in the least and out I went to Hong Kong. This fellow went to Buenos Aires. He fell off the face of the earth, I mean he must have gone through it. He must have gone to Patagonia or something. I never heard about him again.

Q: Was your objection to that assignment because you didn't like the idea of being under the Treasury attaché?

MONROE: Yes, that is exactly right. I had two experiences with that, one briefly at Treasury, and I was a little concerned about that because I sensed a certain guild attitude. Of course I had worked with this lovely man in Dusseldorf who I thought was very good at what he did but he couldn't write an efficiency report to save his life. He simply didn't know how to do it.

Q: So you were concerned about your situation.

MONROE: I was concerned about it yet again going to work for someone outside the mainstream. That was one issue. The other issue was as much as I had enjoyed Latin America, I didn't think that was where I wanted to make my career. To the extent I was thinking of a region it would have been central Europe. By that I mean I was really interested in going to a Slavic language country. I was taking Czech or Polish or even Russian for that matter, but more likely one of the Balkan languages, Serbo Croatian. It never happened because the jobs came and when the opportunities come, you take them while they are there.

Q: Now did you have Chinese?

MONROE: No, I didn't have Chinese.

Q: You didn't need Chinese in Hong Kong.

MONROE: You didn't need Chinese in Hong Kong. It wasn't that everyone spoke English. That would not have been true. It depended on the education level. Young people spoke English. Any child would speak English because the British had very recently opened up schools, a school position to everyone.

Q: What was your job?

MONROE: I was part of the Hong Kong, Macao section which dealt as the name implies with our very minimal relations with those two colonies.

Q: As opposed to mainland China.

MONROE: Opposed to mainland China. Hong Kong was one of the largest posts in the service, nine tenths of it being directed towards the mainland for obvious reasons. However, one major thing happened, i.e.. the cultural revolution. Hong Kong became a coven of activity, some of it rather dangerous because of a bombing campaign. Hong Kong was part of an exercise known as confrontation in which the British agreed to leave Hong Kong at any point, but if they were to stay, they would control it. The Portuguese, on the other hand just stayed, and the Chinese controlled it.

Q: The confrontation was between the British...

MONROE: ...and the Chinese. So there was a large Communist Chinese presence in Hong Kong. There were some very striking engagements clearly. None of them on the border, all of them within the city.

Q: Today is April 7, 1999. Gerry, we are talking about your assignment to Hong Kong from 1967 to 1971. When we finished the other day, you were just talking about some incidents at the border. I am not sure exactly when those were and I'm not sure exactly the extent to which you were involved as an economic officer at the consulate general.

MONROE: When I arrived which was at the high point or the low point depending on how you want to look at it, of the impact of the Chinese cultural revolution on the colony, on Hong Kong, which would have been in late '67. Therefore, what had been a geographical organization for the post had been rapidly changed. There used to be a Hong Kong/Macao section and a China section which was about eight times the size of the other, and indeed was one of the largest posts in the world at this point, because there was a lot of what normally would have been in Washington instead of Hong Kong evaluating Chinese material and so on.

Q: There was nothing in Beijing, of course.

MONROE: There was nothing in China. We had, we were far from , it appeared to us we were far from recognizing China indeed having an interest section or anything like that. Our contacts with China were discrete in the extreme, and they were based on day to day issues or day to day problems such as American pleasure craft wandering over into Chinese waters. We were in touch with the Communists indirectly in attempting to recover these people.

Q: Indirectly?

MONROE: Indirectly, because we worked through intermediaries who were acceptable to both sides. The term the Hong Kong Chinese used was red fat cat. These were people who were generally fairly successful in business, but had retained for one reason or another, contacts on the mainland. They were sort of, well probably liked by no side where they were reasonably accepted by both.

Q: So they were Chinese.

MONROE: They were Chinese.

Q: And these incidents of American citizens on boats and so on were handled locally rather than through a protecting power embassy.

MONROE: That's right. They generally and during the cultural revolution particularly resulted in local decisions. There was a very active militia on the other side of the border, Cantonese both in language and attitude and so forth. At that point in Chinese history quite independent it appeared of Beijing. Also we were, when I say we, the Colony's government, the Hong Kong government, was a tremendously competent government, and very loyal to Hong Kong's interests. Certain things had happened. The pound had devalued. I started out by being very occupied with that subject matter including some World Bank data. In this instance I found the course work at FSI extremely valuable because I was able to do some statistical stuff I never could have done without that refresher course.

Q: So you were looking primarily at the colony of Hong Kong and also Macao and you were not particularly as an economic officer interested in the economic situation on the mainland.

MONROE: That is correct.

Q: And you did not speak Chinese.

MONROE: I didn't. I was not a Chinese language person; that is correct. However, as things heated up, they decided to form a Hong Kong economic political unit which comprised three people. One was Alfred Horning who was a well known Sinologist, fluent not only in Mandarin but Cantonese which is rare. There were not many people who spoke Cantonese. And a younger officer by the name of Goldsmith who was also an accomplished flutist interestingly.

Q: Flutist?

MONROE: Flutist, yes. He would play his flute at any point. It became more and more apparent to the British particularly that there was some chance that the Chinese might absorb the colony. Because Macao, effectively the Portuguese had lost any political control over it, was at that point a Chinese run city. That said, there were Portuguese officials there; however, neither the British nor we had been there for at least a year because of the mobs and the fact that several Brits had been mistreated. So, when I first got there, Macao was off limits. Indeed a good deal of Hong Kong was off limits. The overflowing cultural revolution manifested itself in a series of events beginning with riots moving toward economic pressures such as turning off the water unexpectedly now and again.

Q: Turning off the water...

MONROE: Well, the water came, I should say that most of Hong Kong's food and all of its water at that point came from the mainland. The Hong Kong [authorities] were working as fast as they could on a new reservoir, but it was going to take a little time, so we were short of water. At one point, a group of militiamen crossed the border, actually penetrated the colony as far as the first line of defense that was manned by Ghurkas actually. There was a small firefight, and the Chinese withdrew. The Chinese government maintained that it was not their decision, and that it was done by a local militia that was out of control. This, again, was manifested through these intermediaries. The first thing I became involved in which was an obvious subject for an economic officer was trying to tally what our investments were and what would be lost if we had to withdraw quickly. They were significant, but they were nothing like today. I might add that Hong Kong was nothing like it is today. Many of those buildings, well, almost all of those buildings had not yet been built. There were probably three or four modern office buildings in town. The others had been built during the '20s or before the war. They looked as if they were ancient because of the high humidity there. In fact, they probably dated to the '20s, the oldest buildings to the turn of the century. Hong Kong itself as a city dates back to only about 1860, so it is not an ancient place except for the outskirts where there is a walled village with the original settlement.

Q: To go back to this border incident again for a minute. What supposedly precipitated that? Was it that somebody was coming across the border or was it just an incursion to stir up trouble on the Hong Kong side?

MONROE: Well, It was an incursion and there was trouble on the Hong Kong side in the sense that Hong Kong was home to many communists, certainly not the majority of the population but perhaps 20%. It would be hard to reckon, but they were capable of mounting tremendous demonstrations. Just unbelievable numbers of people out on the street. It is clear as in most cases, they were not 100% communists, they were communist supporters. It was an interesting experience because we could watch it without fear of being involved. Most of them walked past the consulate general up to the British governor general's residence. It was a rare opportunity to observe without necessarily being in too much danger.

Q: So nothing was aimed at the United States.

MONROE: Nothing was aimed at the U.S. The Chinese were very [careful] in assuring that impression was not given. The bombing campaign on the other hand, was indiscriminate and was dangerous for anyone, the communists included. We assumed that the incursion was a mistake, just a bunch of hotheads. There may have been more devious reasons. I mean there were a hundred different analyses. We reported to our government that it was a, you know after careful reading of the press. My two colleagues were extremely good at that, at the Chinese language. Their sense was that it was a mistake, the sort of thing that happens in a highly charged situation. There were among other signs of disorder across the border, the continuing washing up of bodies on the Hong Kong beaches. One didn't go swimming at that particular juncture. The Hong Kong authorities had closed off a good part of the city to western people except for police.

Q: That was primarily because of the security situation, the possibility of unrest or related to health conditions?

MONROE: Well, all three. One, there were enormous numbers of refugees who were sleeping all over the place. Beggars. Hong Kong actually slipped back a decade during this period. They had pretty much I understood, cut out begging, the more extreme begging techniques that one encounters in the far east. They had cut out street sleeping and all of these things were in full flood when we arrived. The farther east you went, the farther from the center you went in any direction, you encountered more and more of that, which was considered if not a security risk, just a risk of crime and so forth. They literally had, when they were targeting a neighborhood, what the British did as a tactic was to find out where there were concentrations of communists either labor union or a so called newspaper, and they would raid these places. The area would be cut off for days. I mean the Chinese were well warned that they were going to be raided. The British intention, of course, was to avoid conflict if they could, armed conflict. In fact, some of it got very warlike with helicopters landing on rooftops. The Ghurkas sort of cordoned off the area but mostly the Chinese police, the ethnically Chinese Hong Kong police who were more of a paramilitary force than they were policemen did the fighting with officers that were British. Some of it was pretty messy inside those dark dens, buildings without light and so forth and so on. But it was very much a, Well I had the feeling, and others shared this feeling that there were constraint that the Chinese were in fact trying to maintain some order among their own people and trying to keep to a minimum physical confrontation.

Q: In Hong Kong.

MONROE: In Hong Kong, yes.

Q: To what extent were the developments in Vietnam affecting Hong Kong in this period when you were there?

MONROE: Slight. The only thing that did occur was within our own organization. There was one group represented by some of the China watchers, not all, and myself and my colleagues in the Macao, the Hong Kong/Macao section, probably the majority of the China watchers. The argument was about whether China would intervene in Vietnam. The deputy principal officer had written his Ph.D. thesis on China interests in the Korean War, was the name of his book. He had a very strong view of the Chinese. It was inevitable that the Chinese would enter.

Q: Vietnam.

MONROE: Vietnam. Our sense, those of us who disagreed, and that included some well known people who became later well known in the Foreign Service for their Chinese expertise. My impression from just looking at the food delivery and the conditions over the border and farther south, sort of suggested to us the Chinese even if they had wanted to were incapable. We also felt that there was probably some ambiguity on the Chinese part toward Vietnam, toward the North Vietnamese. We didn't think their attitude was as benign as it had been or as neutral as it had been toward the North Koreans, whom they didn't fear and they didn't think would double back on them. It was always a sense that perhaps the Vietnamese, as later happened, could involve China in a serious war. But overwhelmingly, we were influenced by the conditions on the mainland. There was great disorder. It had gone on for almost a decade. The fact that it lasted for about three years in Hong Kong is no indication as to how stupendous an event it was on the mainland. We were of course, in constant touch with other diplomats who were in Beijing and came down to Hong Kong periodically for R&R with the pouch or whatever. The Degree of disorder, the degree of institutional collapse which was frightening actually was very apparent.

Q: Were you in contact also with foreign diplomats and consulates in Canton, Kwang sho or nobody was there much in those days?

MONROE: No, nobody was there much in those days. Our impression was that Canton province or Kwan do as it was then pronounced, was an extremely dangerous place. We had, as you might imagine, interesting experiences. I think perhaps the most amusing as well as in some respects, the most frightening was Al Harding and I went to Macao which hadn't been visited by British or American officials for about a year and a half. Some Congressmen decided it should be visited. The State Department decided it was [routine enough], I guess. It was, since we were going to visit the nominal governor of the colony, we got dressed in our suits and all, our demarche suits as we called them. Our itinerary was developed through a Chinese businessman in Macao. He had interests in Macao. His headquarters was in Hong Kong. One could argue that he was a member of the triad or closely associated with the triad. We got none of that at all, but in any case our reason for going was actually to visit two American Jesuits, one of whom had the interesting name of Father Lancelot. Between the two of them they ran the drug colony and they ran the leper colony in Macao.

Q: What was the first colony?

MONROE: The drug colony. Because opium was endemic in earlier years, the Macanese, and perhaps even the British in their time, and the British had long ceased to do this, but the Macanese, the Portuguese continued to run leper colonies and these places where drug addicts who obviously weren't going to make it could go and, one get out of circulation and two, receive a modicum of medical care. It was Catholic run, Jesuit. You know, these people were left to sort of decline in dignity. This was on an outerlying island. We arrived in Macao which was a fascinating place in those days. Nothing built there except the old Portuguese villas and old Chinese structures. Oh, incidentally, what was interesting was we had to get a license from the Treasury Department to go and eat there. We did visit the governor. He was sitting behind his desk with dark glasses and didn't really have too much to say except be careful. In Macao, you could cross into China by just crossing the street. We followed our guide implicitly. Fortunately he was a good fellow. If he had wanted to bring us into China he could have done that very easily.

Q: And you wouldn't have known probably.

MONROE: We wouldn't have known. There were guards, of course, but there was a block or two between them. In any case, he brought us to a safe distance where we could look at the guards standing there looking very hostile.

Q: Besides these two Jesuit priests of long residence in Macao, were there other U.S. citizens there or not?

MONROE: Not that we knew of. There may well have been; one can never [be sure]. Certainly no one would step forward to see us. We did see this little island off Macao. I think it is interesting to note that the waters were Chinese around Macao. The Portuguese had no claim to the water, to the bays and so forth. And in some ways even more strategically important than Hong Kong. That is a hard thing to make, but that is what some of the navy experts told. As to how they were situated on the Prou river where the Prou River met the South China Sea. In any case we did take a small motorboat to these outerlying islands to visit our Jesuits and the Portuguese district officer who turned out to come from Cape Verde was an extremely handsome and well spoken gentleman. His English was flawless. He introduced us to his water buffalo. One of whom got very excited at our presence and gave us a foomp. Our new friend drove us in an open jeep first to the leper colony and then the drug colony, so by the time we got there, we were out of grey or brown or blue suits, and it was extremely hot. For some reason it seemed to us to be hotter than Macao. The one thing we did take away from that event was, you know, first a better understanding of leprosy and such, but also we committed ourselves to getting books to be bound. One of the things these lepers could do was to bind books in leather. He asked us if we could get as many books as possible from our consulates back in Hong Kong and send them over for with a ferry boat captain, it was a hydrofoil actually in those days. He would get them bound and send them back. The question would be if you told your would be clients that this was done by lepers.

Q: Did the Florida asset control rules come into play, too?

MONROE: Well, I hate to say it but we didn't look it up. We felt it was a worthy tragedy. Well, it was a tragedy for those people in the colonies, but we thought it was a worthy cause, and certainly something that we should do whether we had a license or not.

Q: After this initial visit, after a lengthy interval, did the consulate maintain a regular schedule of visits to Macao?

MONROE: No, we went back one more time. We stayed in the city and we did visit several Chinese emporiums, places called China arts and crafts, large structures that sell almost anything mainland. Hong Kong had them, too, but these were even larger. We were importuned one might say by the staff who started singing Mao songs, you know, "The East is Red. A Revolution is not a Tea Party." Perennial favorites at that. Fortunately Al Harding interestingly had been one of these people who had parachuted into communist headquarters during the war with Ludden and so forth and others who were later purged. Al was the junior, as a matter of fact, he was a staff sergeant at that time in the army, simply army support. But he did have, he did get autograph pictures of Ju Du, the great military leader of the revolution and Mao tse Tung. So he was able to produce these; he had them in his wallet, and he was able to show this to people who were taunting us and demonstrate that he was a man of great influence. It was like the Red Sea parting and they would let us out of the store. We went about our business. It was a good thing he had those snapshots. We did not as far as I know, debunk the schedule. I am sure we didn't; it was some years ago but I am pretty certain. Incidentally, my daughter was born in the midst of all this.

Q: In Hong Kong.

MONROE: In Hong Kong at the Mother Matilda Hospital which was actually an Italian mission. It was a good thing everything went normally because there certainly was no facility there to deal with emergency. But in any case, that took a lot of our time and energy I would imagine. During the first year, one was really working all the time.

Q: Because of the cultural revolution and the impact on Hong Kong, I suppose the economic duties that you had were considerable because even though the economy of Hong Kong was far from what it is today, it was still beginning, a business community.

MONROE: Yes. There was a very small American business community. However, the first, Citibank, Citicorp, as it is now called, never left. Then there is this great American insurance combine started by Cornelius Vanderbilt the AIM, American International Assurance. It had many names. They were headquartered there. They had moved their headquarters from Shanghai. One could talk hours about that company, fascinating company. Those were the biggies. Chase Manhattan came along and opened up. That was a special story because they had closed at the beginning of the cultural revolution and came back, so they had a hard time re-establishing themselves, but they did. Other than that, American interests generally revolved around transistors. The only significant community, economic community, where people put together transistors. At that time, the clothing industry was beginning. It was a well known line of sleepwear called dynasty which later became sort of a fashion house. The gentleman who ran it was actually an American but he had been in China most of his life and had started the business in Shanghai many years before, but it hadn't taken off until Saks Fifth Avenue or somebody came out. His name was Lyndon Johnson incidentally, although he was a good friend of Richard Nixon he said.

Q: The transistor were mostly transistor radios that were exported to the United States?

MONROE: Just the pieces. They put together components. It was an interesting thing because if you get a couple of bottles of these components, these parts, and it was amazing how many transistors one could manufacture out of that. They were using, I mean there is no doubt about it, cheap Chinese labor.

Q: What about American Airlines or the shipping companies?

MONROE: Well, interesting question. There was Maxim had moved their Philippine operation to Hong Kong in earlier times. There was of course, Pan Am, who had a traditional association with the colony. That is where the old clippers used to go. The clippers were just right for Hong Kong. Kytak Airport, on the other hand, was a lollapalooza as the pilots would call it. Probably the hardest airport to land at in the world, according to many. They had to come right over the city and indeed go through two buildings to line up. Therefore it had an extremely good safety record.

Q: So they were very careful.

MONROE: They were very careful. Every pilot would land at Kytak Airport was alert. They since have built another one farther out. The Maxim lines were interesting because it was really a little bit of American colonial life, these people, many of them had been born in the Philippines. They were just an interesting bunch.

Q: What about, we have alluded I think to foreign asset controls, how about export controls, economic defense, was that important in your work, or did somebody else do that?

MONROE: Well, I was responsible for it, but I had an AID employee who had been brought up in China. As a matter of fact, his father had been a member of the old China customs, a statewide sort of Liddel Hart. So he spoke excellent Chinese. He did the leg work. He went around to these post transaction checks and so forth I think they were called. The Treasury stuff we didn't do at all. That was done by a Treasury attaché^{1/2} whose name was Morton Bach. He is still here and is in his 90s. I met him when we were at lunch the other day or the other week.

Q: Did the Treasury, you were the economic officer, the senior officer or was there someone, or was it a combined section?

MONROE: It had become a combined section.

Q: Political/economic...

MONROE: Yes, it was a political/economic section with focus on Hong Kong and the cultural revolution and Hong Kong's future as an entity.

Q: The treasury attaché^{1/2} was separate from that.

MONROE: He shouldn't have been, but he kept himself separate.

Q: Was there a commercial attaché^{1/2}, commercial officer?

MONROE: Yes, there was a commercial officer who as time went on, even got a deputy. As the cultural revolution wore down, and it was that, people gathered renewed confidence in the colony. Incidentally we were able to get an enormous apartment which we couldn't furnish because so many people had left Hong Kong. It was one of the few times in post war history when apartments were going begging. That didn't last long.

Q: The people who left were mainly expatriates or were they Hong Kong Chinese?

MONROE: Actually they were Hong Kong Chinese. I wouldn't hazard a guess as to the relationship. Most of the expatriates, of course, were British. We estimated there were 30,000 Europeans as they were called by the Chinese in the colony, 30,000 westerners and 45, 5 1/2 million Chinese. The numbers were swelling.

Q: Of the 30,000 westerners, most were British.

MONROE: Most were British. There was an American community, but it wasn't huge, not what you'd find in Frankfurt or any European country which had an extensive commercial interest.

Q: Some of the Hong Kong Chinese who had left could have gone to the United States and everywhere.

MONROE: Australia particularly. One major company in Hong Kong whose name will be forever linked with Hong Kong is Jardine Nassa. I forgot what that was called, that firm.

Q: Taipan?

MONROE: Taipan, the big chieftain was about Jardine himself. They had American interests, so in many instances you would find an American financial company that was totally staffed by British and Chinese people, but it was an American interest. We found these sort of interlocking relationships as we did our inventory of American investments in Hong Kong. I don't remember the figure; it was less than I thought it was going to be. Certainly the number of Americans was less than I thought which taught me one thing among the many things I learned in Hong Kong, which was never trust your own social circle as an indication of how many people of a particular type there might be.

Q: But you knew most of those...

MONROE: Yes, because there was something called the royal, I don't know why it was called the royal, it was the Royal Hong Kong American club. It must have derived from the skittle club or something at one point. But it had become very prosperous, and they were in one of the first new buildings. They had moved out of the old, it had been a traditional British style club with huge overstuffed chairs that would sort of waft up moths and mildew as you sat in them. Too old for a modern club facility. One thing I enjoyed enormously; I was on the library committee, so I had the great good fortune to help move and re establish the library from one building to the other. It gave me the opportunity to read an enormous number of interesting books about China and the past, about the colonial experience, the European experience in China. Shanghai had been a great English language publishing city at one point, so the books there were just fascinating as a story.

Q: Did you wish that you could have gone across to Shanghai or the mainland during the period you were there or that was just sort of totally out of the realm of possibility that you probably didn't even think about it.

MONROE: It is an excellent question. No, one had any desire to go across in the [Canton] area. One could see through the various telescopes what was going on across the border and some of it was not very pleasant. They would bring people up for punishment to the border just to intimidate I suppose. So, no, there was no interest in going to Canton. Some of us, and I was one of them, had a great regard for Chinese antiquities and would have loved to have seen Peking then, you know before the building boom and whatnot. But again, there was general recognition that it was chaos and not a safe place to be.

Q: I have just been reading Henry Kissinger's third volume of his memoirs when he talks about the United States, about his trip to China in I think it was 1971 which was about the time you left, I guess.

MONROE: It was about the time we left, but we were preparing if not consciously for that visit, although we did, we were fairly well, we generally expected something like that by the time I left. One thing I did do a study on along with other colleagues in the China watching part of the consulate was on the impact of opening trade with China. Of course my part was from the Hong Kong perspective and Hong Kong's role in this. We put it all together and we had this superb consul general. His name was Ed Martin, but it was not Edward, it was another Ed Martin, Edwin Martin who had been of missionary stock as they said there. It was the only time that I saw in the Foreign Service a long report very highly classified at that point in which he put in a dissenting opinion. I favored opening trade without restriction and letting the market do the rest. People said well, let's just let tourists buy \$200 worth whatever. I couldn't see much economic sense to that. Several of my colleagues agreed that this was not a, you know, it was going to help Hong Kong more than China. It was more of an opening to Hong Kong than to China. But it was the option the consul general chose and it is what happened.

Q: The way trade resumed, it was done without restriction.

MONROE: Without particular restriction?

Q: Yes.

MONROE: Oh, no. What I meant to say is the consul general's choice was for a staged opening of trade.

Q: But that was not what you...

MONROE: That is not what I recommended.

Q: But your views were...

MONROE: ...were expressed in the telegram as not his preference but arguably valuable and deserving of analysis and consideration of the Department. I thought that was some of the best, I don't know what to say, some of the best examples of what a diplomat should be that I have encountered in the service. He was really a fine officer in every sense of the word and a human being.

Q: He was willing to entertain other views and allow those to be conveyed and considered by others as well as by himself.

MONROE: That's right. Where his deputy wouldn't do that at all. His deputy was totally closed to other's views. His background had been academic. You know, he was very much the teacher and you very much the student as his subordinate.

Q: Okay, anything else we ought to say about your assignment to Hong Kong? It sounds like a fascinating period.

MONROE: It was a wise career move, let me put it that way. I chose, I was given that choice of Hong Kong more because I was in a class situation that we all had to get assignments, so I got Argentina first, and one fellow was desperate to go to Argentina for whatever reason. He was posted to Hong Kong. I really went to personnel and said could they switch. Of course, your careers have been identical. So, I have always been thankful for that choice.

Q: Did not having Chinese language hamper you at all, would you say, or were you able since you focused on Hong Kong to work around that predicament?

MONROE: Well, the interesting thing is that it didn't hamper me any more than anyone else, because no one else except for these two people who were working with me, no one else spoke Cantonese. It is quite a different language from Mandarin. Now, of course, they could read the papers, and that is what they did most of the time, but their focus was listening to the radio broadcasts and what have you from the mainland. Of course, interestingly, the communists always spoke Mandarin even in Hong Kong. Their material were printed while in Chinese characters with a Mandarin language. I don't profess to know anything about it. These my Chinese speaking colleagues began with the exception or two that were working with me were pretty much focused on the mainland. They couldn't order a meal unless they were extremely good at picking up a few words of Cantonese.

Q: How about your relationship with the British as it related to the colony of Hong Kong? Did you, we obviously, we the United States, obviously had a great interest in the mainland. We were interested in Hong Kong as it was impacted by what was happening in China and as a potential place for investment and to trade in the long run, but in the short run, did we ever completely defer to the British about the day to day operation of the colony. Did we give advice? Did we pay attention to the problems as they came up?

MONROE: We did because let us say we reported them to the extent that they impacted on China's communist attitudes or control or that sort of thing did in fact and water. No, we didn't advise the British except perhaps at the military level. Many of my contacts were in the British military because I guess we were doing pol mil as well as everything else where Hong Kong was maintained. We had excellent connections to the military and to the intelligence community and to other groups. I think our relationship to the whole [group] they had out there advising the government, the British had a small staff including four or five advisors, I can't say, but I have a sense that our relationship was not as close with them. Not as close with them as with the security people. Well, whenever I met them, they were not particularly outgoing or overly friendly. Let's put it that way. They may well have had their contacts at higher levels in the consulate general.

Q: I assume the United States had a defense advisor or military presence in the consulate general.

MONROE: Oh, a very large one, one because of Vietnam. There was an R&R center there that we tried to close, never succeeded during the worst of it, you know.

Q: The worst of it being...

MONROE: During the worst of the bombing campaign.

Q: And the unrest in the colony.

MONROE: ...in the colony, but the military just insisted. That gave us a lot of work on weekends, as you might imagine. We had a Coast Guard signal ship. Their chief claim to fame was they couldn't leave the harbor during a hurricane or typhoon. I mean you would see aircraft carriers leaving the outer harbor going to sea, but this little Coast Guard cutter just rode it out there a few hundred yards from shore. Fortunately, nothing ever happened to them. We did have one major scare which I would like to mention before leaving Hong Kong. It is an indication of how a relatively junior officer can suddenly find him or herself in a very critical position. I got a call early one morning from one of my British intelligence contacts. He said he had intercepted a message from a U.S. vessel which claims that it is being fired on by a Chinese shore battery. So I said, "Well is it a naval vessel or is it a freighter?" which there were many on their way to Vietnam. He said, well, he assumed it was a commercial vessel but he couldn't really tell. I got in touch with the Coast Guard ship. They said, "Well there is something out there. We are picking up something pretty much like that. We were just about to call." So I called the consul general. He said, "I'll be right there; we'll meet at the consulate." So I went down. He told people to meet. Of course the naval attaches or their equivalent at the consul general were all over the place. They had picked this up as well. They were down there. Nobody could determine just what kind of vessel this was.

Q: Or who was doing the firing.

MONROE: We knew who was doing the firing. There was no doubt the Chinese were doing the firing because there was no one else there. I got there, and the consul general called on his radio to say that there had been you know the pass he had to go through to get to work. Hong Kong has a lot of little passes you went through. That is what the British called them. There had been a terrible landslide and it went all the way around the island. He was going to be quite late so he said prepare a critic. I wrote a critic.

Q: A critic being a high priority telegram to the State Department.

MONROE: It was sort of like the Department coming over the polar ice cap. "American vessel under fire by hostile Chinese." I then got a call from my British colleague, "I'm almost sure that just by the quality of the signal. I think it is an old tramp steamer." So, I called the consul general and said, "My guess would be, I mean the prevailing British view is that this is a old tramp steamer that probably wandered out of the channel."

Q: At that point were you still confident that it was an American flag vessel.

MONROE: Yes. That everyone was sure of. I don't know if anyone was looking at it from the air. It was unclear. They certainly didn't tell us though people seemed very sure, I suspect that was happening as well. Although, it would have been dangerous I would have thought, if the air, the helicopter or whatever it might have been got off the channel. In any case, there was a submarine proving ground there which vessels, not American vessels, but others had wandered into. Well, to make a longer story short, when we finally clambered aboard the vessel, when it reached the inner harbor, the captain declared that he needed tranquilizers and disappeared. The second in command said that he didn't think there were any shells. He thought they were flares and they were meant to warn them off. He couldn't be sure, but he didn't see any shells. Other crewmen said there had been one or two shells. In any case, not close to the vessel. So, it ended up as an immediate message reporting the facts and considering in general the Chinese were probably trying to warn the vessel off rather than sink it or do any damage to it. Which is fortunate because it was full of ammunition. It was in dreadful condition. I have never seen a vessel quite as rusty as that one was, and of course, the chart was very hard to read, full of grease on the top of it.

Q: It wasn't entirely clear that it had strayed into Chinese waters. It probably had.

MONROE: It very probably had which was our view.

Q: Not only Chinese waters but in a sensitive area.

MONROE: In the submarine proving grounds which showed up on a naval chart. I don't know what it was doing there. I mean it was on the chart just to intimidate the British, but who knows. The seventh fleet went through there often with major sized vessels. One of Hong Kong's great advantages is the deepness of the surrounding waters, which, incidentally were by and large under British control except for this little neck that they were trying to get through. In any case, that was my hour of sheer panic I guess, and glory. I was running around carrying a critic message in my hand.

Q: But you didn't send it.

MONROE: I didn't send it. I was reluctant to send it. I was really quite, I was becoming more confident with each passing minute that this was one, not a U.S. naval vessel, and two, probably was where it shouldn't have been. In any case, I thought it was an interesting story.

Q: I visited Hong Kong in 1964, and I certainly heard lots of tales of countless visitors to Hong Kong, Congressmen, other who liked to visit Hong Kong for lots of reasons. Were you overwhelmed by visitors often or was it really not so bad?

MONROE: No it wasn't because of the cultural revolution. You got people who were in fact, interested in China occasionally, which was always a pleasure to listen to the consul general give them their briefing. I mean if I was the control officer. I frequently was because of what we focused on. We had quite a few visitors interested in the Maxim bank, who were selling paper at that time. That was very valuable because of the frequently visitors do give you an opportunity to meet people you wouldn't otherwise meet, such as the president, the CEO of a large Shanghai bank, that sort of thing. To the extent we got troupes of Congressmen, they were really interested in Vietnam. They were on their way to Vietnam.

Q: And stopped over on the way or on the way back in Hong Kong.

MONROE: We got some very distinguished visitors. I have forgotten his name, he was a Congressman from New Jersey. I forgot how to pronounce it, but it is an old family that he was fourth generation Congressman or something, and a perfect gentleman. What was interesting was that we had a , in spite my entreaties, he did come after midnight. The only way across the bay in those days, there was no tunnel, was in a sampan or what was called locally a walla walla. Hong Kong harbor was always choppy because it was actually part of the China Sea. It had a bore; the Proh River had a bore. Nothing like the Yangtze, but there was a tide that went up the Proh River, so this was rough. One really did walla walla in this thing.

Q: Is this after the ferries stopped running?

MONROE: The ferries stopped running at midnight. We did get them there. His wife was rather unhinged by the experience and she lost her expensive shop, because getting in and out of these things took a little experience. But he wrote a delightful letter later. He really did say he didn't know what he would have done without us. I think his wife would have just as soon have stayed at the Peninsula Hotel which unfortunately, was on that side, the Kowloon side as they said, but it was filled and there was just nothing they could do to get them over to the mainland. Anyway, the walla walla ride with these very wealthy very distinguished old family members was sort of interesting. He took it in good sorts, but his wife was definitely uncomfortable.

Q: How were the health conditions, you mentioned water shortages. Was there much typhoid or ...

MONROE: Yes, as a matter of fact, I had gotten typhoid it was assumed. One never really knows because they weren't all that great at those kinds of tests. In the last six months I was kind of ill, lost weight and that sort of thing. There was a lot of TB, endemic because of the Chinese penchant in those days at least for spitting, so that the streets just must have been hothouses of bacteria. My daughter from when she was born seemed to have strep throat. One reason we left a little early was to get her out of there.

Q: Okay, is there anything else we should say about Hong Kong? If not, where did you go from there?

MONROE: Well, just career wise it was I got two promotions there which was very good for me, and I think most unusual. So, from that point of view, it was a great post. Well, we were first assigned to Frankfurt and ended up in Bonn.

Q: Maybe just say one more thing about Hong Kong. Not only did you do well there in terms of promotions but certainly it is my sense in the sixties and in that period that some of our best officers wanted to go to Hong Kong and were assigned there partly because of people with Chinese couldn't go anywhere else almost except for Taipei, and I think throughout that decade there were really high quality officers in the consulate general in Hong Kong.

MONROE: Well, I think at least, I don't know whether I can include myself since it was in a way luck, luck of the draw. Certainly some of the men I worked with have later become very well known Chinese experts including James Lilly.

Q: Okay, so you went to Bonn. What was your job there? Was this pretty much directly after Hong Kong?

MONROE: This was after a lengthy home leave, after some treatment, diagnostic stuff. We did get there in about March of '71. Left Hong Kong in January. We immediately, I went out there as the deputy civil air attaché^{1/2} which was a job I hadn't asked for, but I thought I was going to be doing some economic work in Frankfurt, but that is not the way it turned out. I was almost immediately plunged into the four power talks. I don't know how well known those talks were, but I think they actually represented a crucial event in the cold war. Willy Brandt's opening to the east. Ambassador Rush, the ambassador at that time, was leading the U.S. delegation, flying frequently to California to consult with the President. The Germans were participating at a level that had not occurred before, primarily because Willy Brandt had made the decision that for the foreseeable future, East Germany would remain a separate state, and that the best way to assist East Germans, and as mayor of Berlin, he was well aware of their situation. He decided that it was a trade off to recognize East Germany. Let them join the [Warsaw Pact]. West Germany could join [NATO] and take the benefits that whatever the East Germans and the Soviets conceded, which were basically in the humanitarian area, the reuniting of families and so forth, opening up of more ground traffic, and any number of other areas that the West Germans or at least the SPD, the socialists thought would be, would make a valuable contribution to preparing East Germans for eventual reunification which they didn't expect in their lifetimes.

Q: They, the West Germans?

MONROE: Yes, I think Willy Brandt was a brilliant man in many respects. He had his weaknesses. He was a very interesting man, and really quite a hero of our time. He had difficulty in German which was interesting because he had spent so much of his life in Norway, his formative years in Norway as a resistance fighter. So, he spoke a sort of stilted, difficult German. Germans themselves didn't like it. I loved it because he spoke so slowly. It was easy to perfect one's German listening to Willy Brandt. But, he was a brilliant man. He really understood as did his successor Helmut Schmidt, but more on the financial side than Brandt. But, Brandt understood what problems, I think he foresaw what is happening now, I mean the problems of integrating East Germans into a capitalist democratic society. But in any case, it was extremely important to him to reach out to the East Germans at this early date.

Q: You don't think that he foresaw that unification was something that would happen within 20 years.

MONROE: No. We didn't foresee that. He foresaw reunification; he thought it was inevitable, but not in any near term. In many ways, he was correct because the weight of his argument was that whatever we do in terms of recognizing East Germany was not going to impact on ultimate reunification. And it didn't, so...

Q: When you say four power talks, this was the United States, France, Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany.

MONROE: No, and the Soviet Union. And the Soviet Union...

Q: So it doesn't include the Federal Republic, either Germany.

MONROE: No, it frequently didn't, but they were very influential. Both sides were influential. Within the aegis of this or under the aegis of this four power event, within it, the Germans were talking to one another, so there were visits to Berlin by Bonn and visits by whoever, Honneker to Bonn and so forth. I guess initially they did it at the foreign minister level.

Q: Now, to what extent, help refresh my memory, to what extent was the United States in dialogue with the German Democratic Republic or had that not yet started?

MONROE: Well, yes, because out of that, out of the four power agreement, there was recognition of both by either side. Not that the Soviets hadn't recognized West Germany; they had, but of course, neither of the allies had, not France. So we moved. Incidentally, it was a great era of cooperation between the three countries. France was a very constructive partner. These were the Pompidou days.

Q: Much of this dialogue that you were involved with took place at an embassy level in Bonn.

MONROE: Something called the Bonn group which I am sure you are familiar with. But we were a subcommittee of the Bonn Group, the civil air attaché½ group.

Q: That is what you were particularly in?

MONROE: That's right. We ran the corridors for the Germans. We ourselves, had a four power group which included the Germans, the Berlin air advisory group.

Q: The Soviets were not part of that.

MONROE: No. This was an interesting time in cold war history. Actually I visited many times, because nominally I was in command of it. I controlled the Berlin air safety center.

Q: As the civil air attaché at the Embassy in Bonn.

MONROE: Yes. Since there was a lot of technical stuff, there was an Air Force colonel who was doing the thing. But if you can envisage a huge table of mahogany in the basement of the court where the Germans held their show trials, the Prussian Law courts in Berlin where those infamous trials of the conspirators, the July '44 conspirators. The table like this with the bundling board going this way and a board coming this way. Each of the four powers had a colonel level air force officer sitting at either side. We threw IBM cards at one another which were flight plans. Occasionally the Soviet officer would stamp it in three languages, the safety of flight not guaranteed. Then I did become involved, because what did this mean? Was the safety of the flight really not guaranteed or generally. Someone before me fortunately had done a study pointing out that it only happened or 99% of the time it was a flight that was going beyond Germany.

Q: A flight that was going...

MONROE: Beyond Germany. It was going to Majorca or something like that.

Q: Whereas did the four power arrangement for the corridors flights were supposed to go from Berlin to..

MONROE: In general a German destination. Now even that was something the Soviets were unhappy about. These were really corridors designed to re supply the garrisons. But they did accept what we called the internal German service which was a scheduled service run by Pan Am, Air France, and what was then BOAC.

Q: Lufthansa wasn't yet flying.

MONROE: No. No German, no one else, just the three of us.

Q: What airport did they fly to?

MONROE: They flew to Templehoff where I had an office. In the meantime, I had become a civil air attaché^{1/2} because at one point I was taken out and made, not long after I arrived, I was made staff aide to the ambassador. The ambassador was Hillenbrand. He wanted a somewhat more senior, I am talking about by more mid career level as a staff aide, rather than the usual junior officer. So I went on for six months, seven months. I don't remember the exact time, until he found the person he wanted. He said he would keep me around if I wanted to, but he would send me back as civil air attaché^{1/2} if I wanted to because the senior had just left. The senior air attaché^{1/2} had just gone out. He didn't like any of the people who were named. So, he just went back and said don't fill it. It was a two grade stretch as they say. But I did go back into this marvelous world of residual rights and what have you requiring close reading of memoranda between Zhukov and Eisenhower and God knows what all because we also had responsibility for clearing Soviet flights flying over West Germany, Soviet military flights, which was another thing that would wake me up at odd hours.

Q: Soviet military flights coming to West Germany or beyond West Germany?

MONROE: Beyond West Germany, of which there were many.

Q: To where?

MONROE: Paris, Cuba. A lot of them stopped, you know Russian officials of all stripes traveled extensively. If they could travel; they traveled. There was a group that I later worked with who I later found out made a lot of these flights on something called export cleve. Being the Soviet Union, of course, export cleve actually went out and bought commodities. Anyway, they flew frequently on Soviet chartered aircraft. Of course, they were always cleared with the proviso that the Soviets put an English speaking navigator. Of course, they never did. If he did speak English, he wouldn't. The Germans were surprisingly tolerant of that sort of thing. I never dealt with one who complained about that. What they complained about more importantly was dollars and cents which I find kind of interesting. The obvious qualification of sovereignty implied by having a foreigner clear flights across your airspace was not seen as an issue. The fact that they were subsidized, the internal German service, was a matter of great concern to them. That was why we formed, the three of us, my French colleague, my British colleague and I, and we bonded very much, we became great friends, decided that we would write a joint message to our governments that sort of crossed them, so that the Department saw my British and French colleagues were saying, that we should have an institutionalized presence at least our economic meetings when we were discussing fare levels and so forth. While reserving the right to make the decision, nonetheless, we thought the Germans should be given the complete picture of what the economic necessity was forcing upon us and so forth. That worked extremely well.

Q: And that, too, was accepted.

MONROE: It was accepted because it was at that period of openness. And I must also add that in my judgment, Germany was at its apex, its economic apex. Its sense of well being. West Germany was riding high in the state of things. Of course the dollar was collapsing during that period. As soon as I got there, the dollar devalued. Of course everything immediately was, cost of living was always a problem.

Q: Of course it was a problem for Pan American to operate...

MONROE: A dreadful problem for Pan American because we also had the energy crisis in '73. Having the energy crisis the fuel then became a much larger component of the overall cost so that leaving an aircraft on the ground as they would, you know, became a more attractive option than flying an aircraft that was empty or half empty or what have you.

Q: Was Pan American obliged to follow a certain schedule or operate a certain frequency every day?

MONROE: Yes, they had to serve each destination every day. Some lines paid for the other lines. Frankfurt always paid for say Stuttgart.

Q: So, Frankfurt was economic.

MONROE: Frankfurt was always economic.

Q: But Stuttgart was not. How many destinations did they have about?

MONROE: Roughly five, about there. I think it increased while I was there, but they did Hamburg, Frankfurt, Cologne. Well, Cologne was done for the civil air aspect. It was the closest airport to Bonn, I think.

Q: So when you went to Berlin, that is where you would go.

MONROE: Yes. Well, there were certain oddities about the job. You could fly foreign aircraft. That is to say, you could fly to Berlin on Air France or BOAC, because the kinds of observations you were making which included whether Russian Foxbats were actually buzzing the aircraft as they periodically claimed. And of course we all had offices in Berlin and went for monthly meetings of the Berlin air safety center.

Q: That would be your two other embassy colleagues and yourself would go once a month for a meeting in Berlin relating to the air safety center for which you were responsible.

MONROE: That's right. And then there was another organization which was broader in scope, and concerned itself with politics as well as the technical aspects of the service. I have forgotten what that was called over there, the Berlin air safety advisory center or something along that line. That met twice a month when I first got there. They were concerned with such matters as can we convince the Soviets to please change frequencies before they take off from, God, I can't remember the name of the eastern airport, Schoenefeldt. There was about 20 seconds when the Berlin air safety people were not in touch with an aircraft taking off from Schoenefeldt. They would never switch their frequencies until they were airborne.

Q: The air traffic controllers in West Berlin the air safety center, whatever it was called, weren't in touch with the controllers at Schoenefeldt.

MONROE: That's right.

Q: Because that was East Germany or the GDR.

MONROE: Well, I think it is safe to say they were listening to each other. I mean I argued that you don't need this. You know and I know if you are listening to them, they are listening to you. The question of raising this and making an issue of it is probably not what we need at this particular point. We had so many balls in the air.

Q: Well you had a combination of preserving, maintaining, safeguarding rights that had gone back to the immediate post war period. The occupation powers, the four powers, the three western powers, and at the same time you have Willy Brandt's auspolitik, complete re...

MONROE: Realignment of Germany's attitude toward the east.

Q: Which we were basically respecting and supporting and not trying to fight.

MONROE: Absolutely not. I think in my judgment, that administration was, the Nixon administration was very sensible. Of course, one of the characteristics of the post at that time was that Henry Kissinger was there all the time. So, if I were inclined to tell Henry Kissinger stories which I am not, I could.

Q: Did he take an interest in something like the corridors and the air traffic?

MONROE: No. He didn't. I don't think he was aware of them. I mean, I think he was aware of the notion that the three allies were flying into Berlin and not Lufthansa and that was a sensitive area. We certainly briefed him on those issues. He was attentive. It was generally the aura around him that was so difficult to deal with, as one of many control officers. You know, who sat where and that sort of thing on the helicopter. Of course, everything was taped, so we would listen, in the long hours of the night we would listen to discussions that had gone on the day before. What we found interesting was that Kissinger could start off in totally unaccented German, just beautiful German, and then switch to English. Sonnenfelt, who didn't speak, who didn't have quite the ear, the accent, to go on in German as long as, to have a whole exchange in German. It was sort of odd. Kissinger sounded like a native German for about three minutes.

Q: But then would switch to English.

MONROE: Then would switch to English. We presumed that he spoke adolescent German and didn't want to make mistakes in front of people, Helmut Schmidt. Helmut Schmidt spoke beautiful English as Willy Brandt did. Many people argued that Willy Brandt spoke better English than German. German being the kind of language it was, you could place bets on whether he was going to get the last word in and whether it would be in the correct form, the verb would be in the correct form by the time he got to the end of those convoluted sentences of his. They weren't always.

Q: You must have had to work a lot with the Air Force. You mentioned the colonel at the control center, and also with Pan American I suppose.

MONROE: Oh, a very close working relationship with Pan American. The Frankfurt station chief, as they called him, was great. I even remember his name, Tony Balokian. He was marvelous to deal with. We had the usual assortment of legally trained types coming to Pan Am headquarters who were somewhat more difficult to deal with.

Q: Now was the civil air attaché's position pretty much entirely related to things on Berlin or were you involved also with other airlines or Pan American flying into the Federal Republic from the United States: Lufthansa wanting to go to new places, new destinations in the U.S.

MONROE: Depending on the timing, yes I was responsible for them. We didn't have as many problems then as we did later to develop [landing rights]. Actually a good part of the time, I had a very experienced local employee, a German who had to do it for me. The aviation bureau at the Department that part of the Bureau of Economic Affairs handled aviation., about three offices, the deputate, were very understanding. They recognized that Berlin was the major part of this job, and that it was compelling and that it was all hours. But whenever possible I met and went to these meetings. The Department as usual was losing purchase on the whole function. It was going to DOT more fully. CAB was being eliminated.

Q: With deregulation. But, on the Berlin side, there you pretty much had a lot of authority, responsibility, You didn't get a lot of instructions or guidance from either the State Department or the Department of Transportation or anybody else?

MONROE: Well, the Department of Transportation stayed out of it. They were scared of it. Well there was nothing they were qualified to do. The Department which was boiled down to the few officers involved was if anything quite content to take instructions from the post, because the QR's as we called them, the residual rights and the amount of materials you have to read to become familiar with the history and the background and what you could do and what you couldn't do. Very few people know there were Carders going in the other direction, but there were, and theoretically, they still could have been used. The whole question of 10,000 [foot ceiling], which was no longer, was chosen as a DC 6 altitude.

Q: That was the ceiling?

MONROE: Yes, there was a ceiling. The corridor was not only laterally defined, it was defined by altitude. They couldn't fly above 10,000 feet, which was not an economic or comfortable altitude for a jet to fly in. The ride was bumpy and expensive. Pan Am as the other airlines made the point that since you are keeping us at 10,000 feet, the government has to subsidize us for the additional fuel required.

Q: The government of...

MONROE: They meant us or anyone. They didn't care. They just had to be subsidized. In fact, it was the German government. Of course, they were a lot easier with this situation when they were more informed. I think one of the things I am proud of in that period was we did open that door, or help open it with politics to a greater German participation in and knowledge of the problems that were confronting the airlines who had to do that service.

Q: Was there a lawyer in the embassy that...

MONROE: Yes, there was a lawyer whom I dealt with occasionally. He was extraordinarily busy. I mean residual rights covered a lot of areas and so forth. Fortunately, the DOD had its own lawyer dealing with the forces, because we had liaison with the forces, and we had a series of contingency exercises which led me into all kinds of problems with the USACOM since the military suddenly decided they were working for a civilian, I mean me. At least where these exercises were concerned. They were perturbed, I mean it led to negotiations between the American commander, the American CIC and Ambassador Hillenbrand, who was greatly amused by it all and myself and other Air Force officers who fortunately never put two and two together about the Berlin air safety center. They were more concerned about certain kinds of contingency operations where we met once a year to talk about what we would do if corridors were closed or something of that nature. They were very upset that the embassy took the lead. These were treated as political matters rather than military matters.

Q: Now the, were you in the embassy in Bonn when some of this relating to East Germany came to a conclusion, and the United States got involved in discussions, negotiations with the GDR authorities on establishing an embassy.

MONROE: Yes, I was there for the whole thing.

Q: And were you involved with that or not, in the civil aviation area?

MONROE: Not really, because one of the things we had to do which was curious. We had to keep the internal German service as it was called intact and unblemished. If we were to go to Schonfeldt which we could after recognition, but it would have to be from, you know, as I recall, and this was some years ago when it wasn't an area of particular concern to me except late in my stay there, We'd stop in Brussels and then go into Schoenfeldt.

Q: No American carrier, Pan Am or no one else was interested in serving that.

MONROE: That is exactly right, so effectively there was no service by an American group. There was the odd charter and so forth all of which was permissible. The Germans didn't like that so of course we were, I mean the West Germans. We were constrained.

Q: But preserving Berlin rights was very important. In the aviation area that is what you were doing.

MONROE: That's right.

Q: Did you pretty much do that until the end of your assignment to Bonn, and when did you leave Bonn?

MONROE: Well, I was staff aide twice off and on, both while I was still deputy, shortly after I arrived.

Q: First with Ambassador Rush and then with Hillenbrand...

MONROE: Rush very briefly, but I happened to be there, and that is how I know Brandt knew me. When he brought in one person a year went by and that person went somewhere else and then he brought me back, and I lasted there for until he thought it wasn't doing me any, you know. I had gotten the most out of it that I could. It was interesting in its way, you know.

The front office Johnnys, the guys were always hanging outside the ambassador's office.

Q: You were aware of everything.

MONROE: Yes, for sure. Working for a man like Hillenbrand was a magnificent experience. I had an experience in the UB where it was not quite as thrilling intellectually or otherwise. This fellow was, Is, I think he is still alive. He must be very old. He replaced Secretary Rusk as Professor something or other at the University of Georgia. I presume he has long since retired now. He must be getting close to 90, or in his late 80s, but an extraordinarily brilliant man.

Q: It is really an exciting time to be involved in things German in the period that you were there. There was a lot of change, a lot of the economic situation was booming, but this opening to the east.

This is May 3, 1999. This is an oral history interview with Gerald Monroe being conducted at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. My name is Raymond Ewing. Gerry, I think when we finished the other day we were just coming to the end of your assignment in the Embassy in Bonn. We had been talking about the civil aviation matters, the effort to negotiate air matters relating to Berlin with not only the Federal Republic of Germany but with France and Great Britain and perhaps even the Soviet Union. Is there anything more you wanted to say about that or other aspects of your time in Bonn which ended I think in 1976.

MONROE: That is correct. I did leave in the summer of '76. Having been asked to stay on an extra year by the ambassador because there were issues remaining from the four power agreement and its effect on Berlin that he wished to have treated by an experienced Berlin cum aviation person. I think what I took away with me from the assignment particularly the last year when in fact the Soviets were testing the new arrangements, they had in return for western recognition of East Germany, the Soviets had given up their traditional that is post war control of Berlin, and undertook to avoid the number of provocations most of which were trivial but some of which were worrisome that they had enjoyed performing for almost a period of over thirty years. The one really important lesson that I left Germany with was that, one there is a fundamental basis of agreement among countries dealing with a very sticky problem, a problem that was not necessarily resolvable in its broadest context, but was at least tolerable, could be made tolerable. Since the French, British, and the United States were all interested perhaps for different reasons in making the four power agreement work, as were the Soviets. It goes without saying that both governments were themselves interested. Some of the more bizarre aspects of the Berlin air services were accepted by all parties, and we were able to work out in a rather elegant fashion these issues, both economic and technical in a way which I suspect would not have been possible had there not been this underlying objective sense of accomplishing an objective. I think that was something I hadn't focused on before, but it certainly helped me much later when I was dealing in international organization matters.

Q: You were in effect establishing some models, precedents, for the subsequent period because what you were dealing with was occurring fairly soon after the four power agreement came into effect which was what about 1971, '72?

MONROE: Exactly. '72 was the exact date. Yes, I think what we did do in a technical sense and perhaps a psychological sense as well was the groundwork for an eventual take over of the service by the Germans without. Just for example among the things we did do was close Tempelhoff Airport to civilian traffic and leave the whole operation over to Tegel which was something no one was very anxious to do initially for any number of reasons, but Tegel's location lends itself to enhancement, improvement, lengthier runways and so forth; whereas, Tempelhoff was impossible. Tempelhoff was in a residential neighborhood effectively, and there was no way one could do much with it without tearing down an important part of the city.

Q: Tegel was in the British?

MONROE: Tegel was in the French zone. I don't think there was ever any question of France's technical capacities in this area. I don't want to give that impression, but I think France had had slightly more friction with their German colleagues than we had. The Germans, for example, were quite pleased with Tempelhof as the main civil airport in Berlin, and were only persuaded to move or to acquiesce in a move when it became clear that it was no longer a safe airport. I think that was clear to anyone who sat on the flight deck and landed in an aircraft. So that was one example where teamwork paid off. I mean, people at the technical and working level such as ourselves, the civil air attaches and the civil heads of airports and so forth were able to do the job without too much interference from those who were "making policy."

Q: But yet you were involved with political issues and also with technical and economic as well.

MONROE: I think if there was a problem there, and I am not in terms of advancement and so forth, it was the fact that economic officers who came out to inspect and what have you, had a very hard time grasping what was economic about it. On the face, except for the aviation economics, which are rather esoteric and very specific, industry specific, it was overwhelmingly a political genre. Whereas most of the economic people who came out both in consultation and one inspection that we had were more interested in the section that was reporting on finance and so forth. Perhaps correctly so. They recognized it more readily. In those days we were doing macro economic reporting on a periodic basis and so forth. That said, it was as nice an assignment as I could have had. Incidentally, I was offered another aviation assignment in an attractive European capital, but I decided that I had had the best job in the field and chose not to go on in aviation.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say about your five years in Bonn?

MONROE: I don't think so. It might be putting too much weight on it. It was a period of importance to us both to my family; my daughter started her schooling there and started to grow there. It was the last post where my wife acted as a traditional Foreign Service wife which she enjoyed enormously. She didn't mind giving parties and going to teas. As a matter of fact, her social life contributed a good deal to our professional lives. She did meet some very interesting people, and in taking German lessons which I don't think she really needed, she met and became friendly with the wives of other colleagues who later proved quite helpful. She did a lot of work with the aged, visiting German old people's homes and so forth. She learned a lot about how they structure care delivery for the older population, and had a lot of human interest things with good people.

Q: I have to ask you one retrospective question. Not more than a decade, a little bit more than a decade after you left Bonn, Germany was unified. The wall came down in Berlin. Did you and your colleagues in the embassy in 1976 anticipate that that might happen ever or certainly that soon?

MONROE: Probably not. I think we did anticipate dramatic changes. I think that was, because we were watching them begin to happen in terms of East Germany as a more stable partner. I think in some respects recognizing East Germany as a separate entity and dealing with it probably hastened the ultimate unification. That said, I am quite certain that my French and British colleagues did not envisage because it wasn't what they really wanted in my judgment. I know the French didn't. I guess the answer has to be no. We knew there were going to be changes. There simply had to be, but Berlin was going to become a different place; and it did very quickly. It was quite amazing. By the time I left it had lost a lot of that siege mentality and atmosphere.

Q: I think what you are saying is the answer isn't quite so clearly no. You really did see things happening of substantial significance. It probably was lost on the part of some of the other European countries and probably the general public in the United States as well that the quadripartite agreement, the recognition of the German Democratic Republic, increased interaction between the two Germanys. All was creating some significant changes.

MONROE: As was the provisions of that [understanding] addressed family invocation. There was a lot less jamming, so that by the time I left, and I visited East Germany not infrequently, East Berlin I should say, it was possible to watch and listen to programming from either side almost the whole day by the time I left.

Q: Were you finding less testing, less raising of issues, somewhat provocative issues in the context that you were dealing with, the civil aviation area as time went by would you say?

MONROE: I think it probably was subsiding, particularly the rather nerve wracking event of getting a card thrown at you by set up which was a flight plan, by card I mean flight plan thrown at you across the table by a dour looking Soviet colonel saying safety of flight not guaranteed stamped on it. Those were always distressing incidents because you know you did have to make a decision. No, those things became fewer. I think the issue that was really perhaps the most symbolic was that the Soviets became more and more tolerant of flights going beyond Germany that initiated in Berlin and ultimately ended up in the Canary Islands. Those were flights that they had held for years were illegal under the four power arrangements, the 1946 four power arrangements. And if they start to tolerate every other one we felt that was progress. Of course, by the time I left, they seemed to have accepted as a matter of course, that Berliners wanted to go directly to their vacation areas without necessarily stopping in Frankfurt.

Q: Were in the period that you were in Bonn, did you see, could you sort of feel a ratcheting up of the tension with the Soviets and perhaps the East Germans at a time of broader international crisis which was the '73 war in the middle east or on the opposite side when there was a notable relaxation of the international climate of *di;1/2tente*. I am thinking now of the '75 Helsinki final act conference.

MONROE: I think the latter point is the one I would subscribe to. That is to say, the '73 war was viewed more as an inconvenience in terms of the shortages that it led to rather than an east west issue. Despite the concerns the Soviets had and made them very explicit. I think the German government was very well informed. I think it was one of the first times that U.S. policy makers treated the German government with regard and a sense that they deserved to be fully briefed on these issues of great global importance.

Q: At the time of...

MONROE: At the time of the '73 war, for example, Kissinger stopped by with continuous shuttle diplomacy. One aspect was it might have been the closest U.S. facility, but also because he genuinely liked Helmut Schmidt. They did have a good relationship where history has shown that was totally justified I am not sure. I wouldn't think when I was there that Schmidt was a, what is the most delicate way to put this, I don't think he was an unqualified friend of the United States. Let me put it that way. I think he was inclined to be overly critical on many issues, particularly economic issues which was his main focus of interest. He was an economist. He was very effective. I think his principal, one of the reasons he was effective was because he spoke English well and his wife spoke English very well, and because he was a man who had a certain flair for getting on with what I suppose one would call the common man. He had very little security, even after a fright in 1972 at the very beginnings of the Bader Meinhoff kind of problem. His wife had almost no security which always amazed me. Nothing ever happened, fortunately, but he was a man who liked to shake hands which surprised everyone because he was clearly more at home with his Giscard D'Estang than he was with Pompidou. In any case, I think Germany was growing up very quickly. It was certainly the very apex. I may have said this earlier. If I did, I apologize, it was this very apex of her economic ascendancy. From there it was downhill.

Q: Germany was booming.

MONROE: Germany was booming beyond belief.

Q: Do you have any reflections on Hans Deitrich Genscher or any other German personalities that you particularly had first hand experience with?

MONROE: I clearly didn't have a close relationship with Genscher. He was known as a pragmatist, and he came from a very unusual political party, the FDP, what the Germans called the liberal party. What it was, of course was comprised of a broad spectrum of beliefs which just didn't fit. They were either too left for the socialists or too right for the Christian Democrats. Both maintained influence a lot longer than either the electoral support or the consistency and coherence of their policies would have indicated. Genscher came out of that milieu, and I think his response to it was considerable pragmatism. Understand, he was a consummate negotiator. I have never experienced that, but I was told that.

Q: But he did not speak English. He understood it, but certainly could not speak it.

MONROE: I did, in fact, meet him in a coffee shop quite interestingly. That was another issue. I will say this about the foreign office. The quality was very high. Some of the people whom I dealt with who were junior officers then in an hour I can think of German foreign affairs. I was extremely impressed, much more impressed than I had been in my first tour in Germany with both the younger officers and some of the survivors of the WWII time. As in any service, there was the odd one, but they rose rather rapidly as in any [service]. That said, the German foreign office as German television was top notch at that point in post war German history.

Q: Okay, anything else about Bonn?

MONROE: No.

Q: You have added some interesting additional points. Then after Bonn, you came back to Washington. What did you do here?

MONROE: I had one of those usual personnel type experiences. I was scheduled to go to the office of central European affairs as economic advisor, but found that someone had unexpectedly prolonged his tour, someone who later entered the priesthood. In any case I went to the BEX for a year. I went to the staff board of examiners. We gave the old style examination, that is to say three on one. That was the last year it was given. In those days the BEX was rather an interesting bunch of people. They were not ending their careers. Most of them went on to other posts.

Q: And you were there for not too long.

MONROE: Well, I was there for about nine months, expecting fully to go to the economic officer in the office of central European affairs. Something else happened and I don't know what it is any longer. I ended up on the Canadian desk and did the same job as head of the economic section on the Canadian desk.

Q: I would be interested in your view, but my sense is that in some ways you doing economic work on the Canadian desk had far more interesting, difficult, and complicated issues in some ways to deal with than you would on the German desk. On the German desk, you would be more involved with multilateral agencies with political issues that you'd been dealing with on civil aviation, Berlin and so on. You really got off into a different area.

MONROE: That was right, quite correct. It was not a change I regret in the least. I think the Canadian desk experience was very rich for a number of reasons. Not the least of which is it helps you put diplomacy in its proper perspective. The relationship with Canada is so broad and of such depth that there is no way that five or six people can manage the relationship in the sense that one manages a relationship with a European or an Asian country. Canada had about 720 different agreements with the United States. Most of those were at the state level. Most of those involved trucking which was very important in its way, and timber use. We had two major issues with Canada, that is to say we had, the world had extended its coastal areas of economic exploitation just as I had joined the office. We immediately engaged in a negotiation with the Canadians a massive negotiation because we were dealing both with petroleum rights and fishing rights.

Q: Offshore.

MONROE: Off the coast. Now our coastal waters were no longer five miles or whatever the distance. The new distance I think was 200 and some odd miles which covered a lot of oil and a lot of fish for that matter. Interestingly we resolved the oil matter very quickly. Whoever exploited it would exploit what was directly off our coast which in itself was an extraordinarily difficult issue for cartographical reasons. But, that solved, then we agreed that the other, the partner country would then have first dibbs and agreed below rate market prices, so it was easily solved. What wasn't easily solved were the fishing issues particularly on the west coast, because they involved native American rights; they involved in a major way environmental issues.

Q: Particularly off Alaska, the Columbia...

MONROE: The Columbia River off Washington coast. As a matter of fact, when I first joined the office I thought shrimp salmon was a kind of sea life. We called it, it was dubbed by someone royal shrimp salmon. And of course it was American salmon versus Canadian shrimp and mutual access to. Those issues were never solved while I was in the office. Simply and I believe one senator lost a seat as a result on the East coast over the fisheries problem.

Q: What was sort of the vehicle for negotiating both the petroleum and the fisheries issues with Canada? Was there a special negotiator?

MONROE: There was a special negotiator. His name, believe it or not, was Lloyd Cutler. He led the team, and everyone on the desk when he had the time would join in the negotiations. I went to Rhode Island at one point.

Q: This was at a time partly during the Carter administration when Lloyd Cutler was also counsel at the White House.

MONROE: That's right. He was a magnificent negotiator, just an incredibly gifted advocate, as was Vance incidentally. He was very impressive at a meeting.

Q: With the Canadians.

MONROE: With the Canadians, the ones I attended.

Q: But there were periodic cabinet level meetings.

MONROE: There were periodic meetings at all levels. I mean from kindergarten teacher to the legislatures to governors.

Q: Virtually every federal agency would be involved.

MONROE: And that is a good point. I learned to have a high regard for the federal highway commission. As a matter of fact, that was a little negotiation I ran myself which was extraordinarily interesting. I will cite it as an example and I won't cite any more, the sort of complexities that were involved in U.S. Canadian relations. The Canadians had agreed to permit us to straighten a spur of the AlCan Highway which passes primarily through Canadian territory. In return for receiving that control over the engineering of the highway, we were to give them and owe them a military pipeline which they could then integrate into their pipeline grid. And, we were to hire Canadian contractors.

Q: On the highway project.

MONROE: On the highway project, a certain number. This didn't seem to be a problem until some of our students said they are not hiring native Americans. The whole clutch of Indians and perhaps even Eskimos who lived along the border of the Yukon in Alaska. They wanted to work on that highway in Canada. It was an extraordinarily complex negotiation. I don't know how many people we had on our negotiations. I led the standing group from various agencies, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, up to Yellowknife. You know, don't throw out the garbage because of the bears, that sort of place. We finally worked out a solution that was so complex that no one could understand it which was I suppose the aim in a way, at least the Canadian aim. But it did relate within a certain distance to the U.S. border. The labor force would be 25% American. This would decline as, because we had to decide how far someone could reasonably commute because the thing went on for 700 miles. Because it wound around, it was through something called the Shaklak Valley. It was not straight. In any case, it was a marvelous experience, and it taught me a lot. It taught me that the Canadians could bring to bear at any time as many as 50 or 60 people on a U.S. issue. Whereas I was always having trouble convincing my legal advisor to travel with me which was a requirement, because they always had a staff of lawyers. It took me much longer than it did the, you know, they just put much more resources, far greater resources, into their relations with the United States than the reverse, which I think says something about the relationship. By and large, they were very good, sound negotiators, and as you might imagine, they had an insight into the American political process that simply isn't to be found in anyone else. At least, I didn't during my career.

Q: It is very easy to communicate with Canadians not only technically... you could pick up the phone and call or whatever. Was that a problem sometimes for your areas of responsibility that whatever other agency could just call their counterpart in Ottawa and solve a problem or discuss it and not even tell you about it?

MONROE: Well, surprisingly not as much as one would have imagined. As I expected, certainly not among the border states. It almost seems as if they didn't want the responsibility. Secondly, the Canadians drove a hard bargain. I think many of these other agencies had learned their lesson. In most cases, they called us. Even the Federal Reserve took the initiative in informing our little group of those interested in Canadian economics and held a luncheon once a month in the Federal Reserve dining room for those of us who were interested in economic issues. Two of us would go from this department. The people would come from all over Canada including CIA, their economic research group participated. The problem was more on the other side. That was because these were the heady days of the Quebecois and Rene Levesque had just been elected governor I suppose for want of any other word of Quebec province. A very interesting and complex man. Again one of those who had the common touch, and I put that in quotation marks. He was easy to meet. Of course, the Quebecois started opening offices all over the United States. They passed the famous or infamous law, the one where everything in Quebec had to be in French which immediately cost Montreal a great deal in terms of investment, and made Toronto the city it is today. It sort of exploded as people fled Montreal. You could see Montreal becoming more Francophone. As a matter of fact, some years later I went back and gave a lecture at Quebec University in Montreal. That was the first time in dealing with Canadians which I had done extensively when I ran in to very educated people who, I spoke in English, of course, who said they would have liked a French translation, did I have one? That was the first time that had ever happened to me, even dealing with the Quebecois. The problem was the embassy didn't want us to call or even return calls from offices of the Quebecois.

Q: In the United States?

MONROE: In the United States.

Q: The embassy meaning our embassy in Ottawa.

MONROE: Well, their embassy I would have said, excuse me, the Canadian Embassy in Washington was, would become quite perturbed if they understood that we were having lunch in New York. It finally became necessary to tell them that while we understood their problem, and we would never discuss issues that were appropriately the purview of the Canadian federal government, we felt that we really did need to speak to the Quebecois on some issues. We would, you know, just as they felt free to deal with the government of Michigan. I had several issues where they were doing just that, some of their agricultural people, agricultural inspection people, which didn't bother me. We had no problem with that. Again there was no way, we were only five people, and the embassy was relatively small considering the range of issues it dealt with. There was absolutely no way the State Department could have handled the relationship without the assistance of the states and the multitude of other agencies.

Q: Did we expect the Parti Quebecois offices in the United States to register under the foreign agent registration act?

MONROE: We did indeed.

Q: So as long as they did that, they had met our requirements.

MONROE: And that included attorneys, American attorneys for the railroad, the Canadian Pacific Railroad, for example. So, as far as we were concerned, those were people on a par with the trade office in New York or the province of Quebec, and bear in mind there were trading offices in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and so forth as well, just as there are representations here of Texas, New York State and what have you, and in Ottawa. So, you know, we were sensitive to their concern and anxieties and that forbidden system, a kind of reciprocity in access.

Q: You mentioned at the beginning there were two major issues in this period of the late '70s, one petroleum, the other fisheries in the context of the law of the sea and the offshore...

MONROE: Well, we had another issue that was more pressing, and I was going to get to that, probably concluded, and that was the uranium price fixing matter. The Canadians had quite rightfully in fact associated themselves with two or three other uranium producers, and they set prices. This is anti-market behavior. It is behavior that most American courts probably would have ignored except it had a very injurious impact on Westinghouse. Because in selling its particular kind of reactor, it also promised to fuel the reactor for 10 years. That was part of the deal, and it was an important part of the deal because the reactors, there were dramatic differences in the way in which reactors operate. This meant that Westinghouse's nuclear division very quickly became non profitable because of the inflated prices of uranium, for uranium that they were paying. The wrinkle arose when the circuit court, federal court in New Mexico noticed there were a lot of Canadian companies operating in New Mexico and so forth. Ground zero if I may use the term for uranium industry in the southwest. Some judge in his wisdom started to fine people because in his judgment they were interfering with discovery. A court in New York City sought documents and information and testimony from these subsidiaries of Canadian companies. Some American companies that had major subsidiaries in Canada as well. They were forbidden to give this testimony and these materials because the Canadians had passed what they call locking legislation.

Q: Forbidden by...

MONROE: They were forbidden by Canadian law. Canada would take punitive steps within Canada. These companies were really in the middle and discovery penalties or remedies can be Draconian. It was the first time I had run into them. They later played a important part in my career too. Companies were being fined \$50,000 a day and up. This created a sense of urgency which simply had to be met, it had to be addressed very quickly, and so we'd go back and forth. For one month I think we spent two days of every week in Ottawa and vice versa. They came down. Again the matter was handled in a very civilized, very elegant way, considerable protestations of friendship and so forth. Interestingly, the justice department, they called them departments actually, not ministers, their justice department was almost totally Francophone. But, I think there was no need for interpretation. Today, there might well be, but at that point they all spoke English perfectly.

Q: And you were able to work out this problem.

MONROE: We did work it out, primarily on our own. We didn't solve much with the Canadians, although we did move it. I think they did decide they were going to have to settle with Westinghouse. They did recognize that they had done great harm to Westinghouse's interests. That said, they weren't going to settle in anything like our anti trust law would require, treble damages and that sort of thing. I think we were able to move the case from the New Mexico circuit to New York circuit where the judge was more open to arguments of comit and so forth. Of course, the State Department toward which the Canadians were very generous I might add parenthetically, they took stock in this. The State Department did enter a friend of the court brief pointing out that this was unfair because it was putting a civil question in a conflict of law situation. That, I think, was probably the stickiest issue from our perspective. I think from the Canadian's perspective it was our dealings with the Quebecois they were most concerned about during this period.

Q: Were you, this was pre NAFTA, but the Ottawa agreement...

MONROE: The auto agreement, you are quite right, I remember him. That was Steve Watkins and so forth. The auto agreement was working well. It worked so well that it was I don't know, number 18 on my [list of problems]. We had no strikes as I recall during that period, although the border had been closed by farmers, North Dakota farmers.

Q: What were they objecting to?

MONROE: They were objecting to the seasonal slaughter of Canadian cattle in the U.S. slaughterhouses, thereby dropping capacity for unexpected they had need of slaughterhouse capacity in the winter. They closed the border, quite against the law because, the only law incidentally we could find to work with was the interstate highway system discretion. They were interfering with the trade between states. Fortunately the slaughterhouses were in South Dakota. We found out they had 84 state, not state police, they called traffic patrolmen in North Dakota at that time. We are talking in the late '70s. The solution was to send them to Minnesota who was quite content, who understood. Of course, Minnesota got a lot of business. It was an interesting problem. Life was full for those on the Canada desk, our kidnaping a dolphin by mistake and claiming it landed in a storm. We had a dolphin. The customs people grabbed a dolphin and said, "This is in violation of the Marine Mammals Act just passed" and threw it into the Atlantic Ocean where it immediately died, it being not in its habitat. The U.S. government was sued by the Toronto Zoo. Those were the sorts of things we ran into on a daily basis.

Q: I sometimes summarize my experience with Canadian affairs with suggesting that they were very real, difficult, complicated issues that needed to be addressed and dealt with and solved, which had tremendous domestic political potential in both countries, which the Secretary of State, the President, really wanted to deal with and in some ways the desk officer on the Canadian desk had more responsibility to deal with them than, in fact, in any other part of the world.

MONROE: I think that is probably the case. One example would be blueprint tariffs. Basically what the Canadians were doing was putting such a high tariff on it that they were actually putting a tariff on the intellectual property.

Q: What was on the blueprint, not the blueprint itself.

MONROE: That was another issue we had to resolve. Of course, explaining that issue to a Congressman or other interested senior decision makers was in and of itself could be a farce. The number of...

Q: When because there was a cabinet level meeting or because the Canadian external affairs minister was coming to Washington or the Secretary of State was going to Ottawa, that briefing papers had to be prepared on all of these myriad of issues and that was challenging I'm sure to be able to explain complicated intricate things in a simple way.

MONROE: Well , I don't know if you were in Ottawa or on the desk.

Q: I was in the department later than this period.

MONROE: I remember you were in EUR at the time. I don't remember quite where

Q: I was in '80 and '81 a Deputy Assistant Secretary for a brief time did Canadian affairs.

MONROE: Well, this was long before that. I think you were in, well whatever, not part of this issue. I think what I left with was a deep regard if I hadn't had it before for the necessity of day in, day out diplomacy. So much of problem resolution depended on our relationship we had with your colleagues at the embassy, and in ours, so that the need to keep in touch with your friends, with your Canadian colleagues was absolutely essential, even if there was no particular problem. So often one could solve things with a phone call. I must say this is one of those rare cases where the embassy was pleased to have this call to the Canadian government directly, at least one of them during this period. Tom Enders was the ambassador; did a magnificent job, and understood how to sense what issues were the sort that would jump up, that is to say jump up and bite you in a tender spot, and those that would not. For example, he was very concerned about the native American labor issue on the AICan Highway. Because the AICan Highway was in and of itself so symbolic of the relationship, but we were able to solve problems like the purloined dolphin or the fact that someone was caught on the Great Lakes with a rifle in a fishing boat, which was a no no, were the sorts of things we could solve without creating the kind of issue that could get out of hand. Another important issue was tracing people into Canada and Detroit. As you know, it is just going under a short tunnel.

Q: Hot pursuit.

MONROE: A hot pursuit issue, yes, even though it was equitably resolved surprisingly easily. The one intractable problem was the fisheries problem. We just couldn't get a handle on it. It was so enormously political.

Q: Were you involved in environmental issues, Great Lakes water quality, acid rain, that sort of thing, or did somebody else?

MONROE: Somebody else handled that issue, that area, but it would grow occasionally. It would explode; it would become an issue of such major importance that everyone would be doing it. For example, acid rain was the very beginnings of the concept of acid rain, was something that required the entire office at one point. The remark about briefing books was very true, and we tended to have sort of institutional briefing books and would check them to see where the issues were and make the changes accordingly. The fisheries material needed to be updated.

Q: Nothing was changing.

MONROE: Nothing was changing; it was just incredible. Because we found out, the whole Pacific coast only involved a hundred families.

Q: Who were directly involved in the fishing.

MONROE: Who were directly involved in the fishing. There was this real question of who was a native American. The problem settled on that, and that was a very hard thing to resolve. Anyway it was not a two years I regretted. In fact, it was one of the jobs I have enjoyed most simply because of its [variety] of issues, and the sense that one took home every day that diplomacy was doing the job for the American people.

Q: Okay, and this was roughly in the period from summer of '77 to '79.

MONROE: To '79, that is correct.

Q: And where did you go from there?

MONROE: Well, I was slated to stay an extra year on the Canadian desk when I did get a call from Bern. My minister counselor in Bonn called me and asked if I would like to do the same sort of thing in Bern but except it would include political, one would be economic political counselor.

Q: Now who was your minister counselor in Bonn?

MONROE: Ed Crown.

Q: Who was then in Bern.

MONROE: Who was DCM in Bern. It turned out I discovered through the grapevine that Dick Vine who was then the PDAS, or the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the EUR was going to be ambassador. Since we had been working together now for, you know, we had first met many years ago in Germany, and then I was working with him on the Canadian desk. He had been in charge of Canada initially; that was his deputation. That is what it was called. So, he had a special interest in Canada, and never really let go of it. He [was succeeded by] one other DAS in the department but he did follow that very closely, and he was a stern man, a demanding man. He also had a wry sense of humor which somehow or other Canadian affairs brought out in both of us. We had some good times as well as some late nights.

Q: He had served previously in Switzerland, I think, hadn't he?

MONROE: He had. He was DCM in Switzerland, yes.

Q: So you thought you could work with him.

MONROE: Yes, and most importantly, he thought he could work with me, because it was his choice ultimately as it turned out. I don't think anyone else in Bern knew this at the time because it was very rare that career people became ambassadors to Switzerland. I think just Mac Davis was the only one I am aware of. Back in the days of legation, you know, monthly legation, we had a lot of professionals.

Q: Including a woman. One of the earliest woman career officer ambassadors, I think, was there whose name escapes me at the moment. Willis?

MONROE: Yes, Willis. I had forgotten her.

Q: So you went to Switzerland.

MONROE: We went to Switzerland. It was also Angie's first overseas post. She had become a Foreign Service officer by then.

Q: While you were in Washington.

MONROE: While we were in Washington.

Q: What was her assignment in Bern?

MONROE: She was a rotational, it was really two. Rotational officer in Bern is pretty limited. As one would imagine, it was a relatively small embassy. Hers was between administrative and consular, so she started off as the GSO.

Q: You were the counselor for economic and commercial affairs?

MONROE: And political, all three. Although I lost the commercial brief almost on arrival because there was new legislation passed and the FCS was created.

Q: Foreign Commercial Service.

MONROE: Foreign Commercial Service. The commercial attaché^{1/2} remained as the FCS person.

Q: He had been there before.

MONROE: Yes he had been there, he already had a year there. I had known him from Bonn, and so it was very agreeable working relationship.

Q: And was it also a Treasury Department financial attaché^{1/2} who came under you?

MONROE: There was indeed. Yes, very closely financial. We worked together very well indeed. There were two during my sojourn in Switzerland. I worked well with both of them; they worked well. One was actually new to treasury, so in one respect I broke him in based on many of the tricks I learned from the first one, on computing monetary aggregates and so forth.

Q: Did you have others in your section, or was that pretty much it?

MONROE: A political officer, a financial officer. I guess that was pretty much it as I recall.

Q: So you had a political officer who worked for you as well as you , yourself.

MONROE: That's right. Upon arrival Bern became an immediate action post. You might recall we were frightfully busy because of the Iranian issue and Switzerland's role as the protecting power. I think that dominated the first six months there. We had time to settle in before we were going 24 hours a day.

Q: You got there in the summer, and the hostages were taken in November, or the embassy was taken hostage.

MONROE: That's right.

Q: Was the embassy in Bern kind of a main channel conduit to the Swiss government about things related to what was happening in Iran?

MONROE: It was one of two major conduits. The other major conduit was, of course, the Swiss embassy in Washington, but of course, that was a very small embassy, even smaller than ours. For certain things the Swiss foreign office preferred to use our facilities, particularly if they were passing tangible property or things that were actually written by our people.

Q: Our people? You mean Bruce Laingen.

MONROE: Bruce Laingen who was at the foreign office and the two other political officers. No one was a political officer. I don't remember what the other was. All of them wrote on foolscap, long dispatches as we called them. Bruce was a man of the old school.

Q: They would be given to the Swiss embassy in Tehran and put in the diplomatic pouch and you would transmit them to Washington.

MONROE: Both we would transcribe them and we would send the actual copy. There were many other aspects of that whole issue.

Q: Were those other aspects primarily handled by the Ambassador and DCM or were you quite involved as well?

MONROE: I was probably more involved than the DCM, possibly because for personality reasons Dick Vine was used to working for me as a subordinate than having me do things.

Q: Dick Vine was used to you working for him as a subordinate.

MONROE: That is correct. That is what I meant. He was used to sending me places to talk to people and that sort of thing, odd people that weren't spoke to, had to speak to them in the situation. Dick Queen and those who were brought out, were brought out through Zurich.

Q: Richard Queen.

MONROE: Yes, and others came through. So all in all, one became very close emotionally and every other way. When I think of Vine's period there, it seems totally associated with that issue. Now, Switzerland became less important as it dragged on, and other mediators entered the picture and we became less engaged. Although we maintained administrative relationship.

Q: Because the Swiss continued to represent out interests in Iran.

MONROE: That's right. There were many financial issues to be resolved. As a matter of fact, the Swiss foreign interest section was bigger than the foreign office itself. I mean they had a huge building, by Swiss standards that was off in another part of town. It wasn't downtown; it was.

Q: They said they were part of the ministry, a separate entity.

MONROE: Part of the ministry but a separate entity and a separate unit. A separate ambassador heading them.

Q: Because they were representing not only the United States' interests in Iran but the United States' interests in Cuba.

MONROE: That's correct. Curiously we didn't deal with that. I don't remember dealing with that at all. I do remember dealing with administrative matters that became so complex that we finally decided to ask an administrative officer to come out on TDY, a series of administrative officers to deal with the Swiss administrative component of the interest section.

Q: Relating to Iran.

MONROE: Relating to Iran, yes. Because there were many questions, some of which we couldn't answer because they related to Iranian property in Washington. That's just what the Department did. They sent a series of very senior administrative people out.

Q: Who would specialize in handling property issues.

MONROE: Beyond that, we had a whole range of issues that involved trade. They were small issues, but they were in agriculture in a major way, because the Swiss were even more protective than the common agricultural policy was then protective of the then European community. These were problems I was used to of course, having dealt with trade agreements and that sort of thing.

Q: There was, of course, an agricultural attaché^{1/2} in the embassy.

MONROE: There was an agricultural attaché^{1/2} in the embassy who would then cast some interest. You may remember...

Q: On whether it was essentially a trade policy issue having to do with access to the Swiss market, government policy. You probably had to deal with it as much as the agricultural attaché^{1/2} did.

MONROE: Well, That's right. There were a number of... There were issues that who was to handle them was dependent on the preferences of the agency representative. I will say that this particular agricultural attaché^{1/2} didn't want to become involved in dealing with the government as much as he did want to become involved with cooperatives and the agricultural community as such.

Q: Promotion.

MONROE: That is exactly right. I found myself dealing with agriculture much more than I had ever had before which proved helpful in my later career. I did learn things that I really didn't know. And of course, we had aviation issues which I did, but again, this was relatively routine work.

Q: Why don't you talk a little bit about the economic, financial reporting. Swiss bankers have lots of information. Not necessarily willing to give it, but...

MONROE: We had two areas of concern that the treasury attaché^{1/2} and myself had to cover. One was the banking community. We met with them on a regular basis. We were honorary members of the banking association or something, whatever. It was a once a month luncheon group.

Q: Usually the two of you would go?

MONROE: The two of us would go which surprised me. He asked me to go, and I was delighted to do so. We also had the BIS.

Q: The Bank for International Settlements.

MONROE: The Bank for International Settlements in Basel. At that point, the president of the Swiss bank that is to say the national bank.

Q: The Swiss National Bank.

MONROE: The Swiss National Bank was to become director general of the BIS. It was a move of transition, so that was extremely interesting. We had the one man, because he had an intimate familiarity with the BIS, having been the Swiss representative for many years. Of course I didn't know then; I was trying to do this sort of research in the historian's office, but that is another story. The treasury was very concerned about Swiss markets which in terms of equity markets were not all that developed, as you probably know. They were surprisingly small. We began to believe that Switzerland's attraction as a banking center to the world was primarily a function of the skill of its bankers more than the secrecy. Secrecy had started to erode in terms of a treaty we had signed with Switzerland and many others involving drug money just a year or two before I arrived. I think it is important to note for future reference that that treaty was wholly dependent on the act, the presumed act committed by the depositor. It had to be a crime in both jurisdictions. It had to be a Swiss crime as well. I will put that aside for a moment. Well, before I knew it, Vine had left. The 1980 election, I got there in '79, the 1980 election.

Q: So you were with him for roughly a year and a half.

MONROE: And a good half of that was taken up with Iranian matters and trading matters that arose.

Q: And then in January, '81 Ronald Reagan came into office as President and the hostages were released and transported home to the United States.

MONROE: That's right.

Q: That changed that issue.

MONROE: That changed that issue; but then it became purely administrative. We settled on a more senior administrative officer than Bern would normally warrant attached to us to help handle that issue. So, we did away with the TDY [temporary duty] people and so forth.

Q: Ambassador Vine left pretty soon after the change in administration?

MONROE: Oh, about a month. Faith Ryan Whittlesey arrived almost the day he left. I am sure she was there very swiftly. She had been a Reagan supporter for many years. She was extremely conservative.

Q: She was from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

MONROE: Well, she was actually from Buffalo, New York. She was an American tale you might say. She was brought up, she was the daughter of a railroad man who won a scholarship to Wells College, I believe it was. A good college for the young women in New York.

Q: State.

MONROE: New York State, upstate New York.

Q: Aurora New York. I know Wells College.

MONROE: Good. I don't except I have met some Alumna now from Wells College. She then went to law school and I don't remember what law school. I think the University of Pennsylvania law school where she met her husband. She clerked for a judge, a very conservative judge. Her husband was very conservative. Her husband was very interested in conservative politics. His dream was to capture Delaware county which was a large county on the outside of Philadelphia, both the main line and many working class districts. It was a challenge. He had problems with his business and ultimately, tragically committed suicide. His wife was left with two children and a law degree. She followed his footsteps into conservative politics and became county supervisor for Delaware County where she was during the Reagan 1980 year campaign. She delivered Delaware County as she would say to the Reagan supporters, and was rewarded with this embassy. The first speech she made when she arrived was the new dimensions of the Reagan administration. I tried to write it for her, but it was so domestically oriented, and she changed a good deal of what I had written. It was kind of interesting, I had written Vine's farewell address you might say. This was a totally different thing. It had very little to do with Swiss American relations. The DCM who had changed by then was a fellow by the name of Charles Stout. I don't know if you know him. Charles was a fine fellow, I mean he was a good deal of fun to work with, a superb draftsman. So we tried out materials, briefing materials for her, Charles and I. She ignored all of it, particularly the people we asked her to call upon. In fact she never called on the head of the, the number two, essentially the operating head of the economic department, a very powerful department of government in Switzerland as we all know. Monsieur Loless, a very big man, very influential man, probably as influential as any other political figure. She never called on him which left a bad taste. She didn't call on other people who felt it strange. She was not comfortable with the career service. Nothing else one can say. She simply didn't believe that we were giving her the kinds of materials which she needed and what she said she needed was to convince the Swiss to support President Reagan. I felt that there was nothing I could say that could change that view of the world. Unfortunately, Charles Stout decided he would try and change that view. He was summarily let go from one day to the next. Curiously she let him stay in country for about two months afterwards. Because he did have no where to go. In some respects she was not an unkind person, although she had felt that he just didn't understand what had happened in the election and what was necessary. But, while she let her public affairs person go almost immediately and brought in her own USIS person. I don't know where he came from. He didn't speak to us very much actually.

Q: He was from the USIS?

MONROE: He was a USIS career person, right. He had never been to Europe before. It was someone she knew from earlier. An issue arose, and that had to do with banking secrecy, and it had to do with discovery. Somehow or other, people with insider information were making a killing on the U.S. stock exchange. The SEC discovered that the agent was a Swiss bank, as a matter of fact, several Swiss Banks were operating for these people. These people were indicted, but it was evidence from these banks that was required. The remedy again of discovery was very severe, something like the [Swiss banking consortium] was being charged \$50,000 a day in New York because all of these banks, these were major banks, they had major operations in the United States, Credit Suisse in Boston, Banque Suisse, Switz Italiana in New York actually. This led to a kind of crisis. The banks were furious. The Swiss government was beside itself, conflict of laws. The problem was that there was no crime called insider trading in Switzerland. Insider trading was a perk as far as the Swiss were concerned.

Q: Everybody did it.

MONROE: Yes, everybody did it and you tried to get into a position where they could do it.

Q: That was the name of the game.

MONROE: We pointed out that your market is small; our market is large, you make more money on our market. That is to say, you can mislead American traders in far greater numbers on our market than on yours. Since so few Swiss actually deal in Swiss securities, anti market behavior doesn't seem to you to be the crime that it does to us. We began a long drawn out negotiation which I was very shortly deeply inmeshed in dealing with people at the foreign office who I knew extremely well. For the Swiss, this was a critical issue, a basic national interest issue. For us it was a pain in the neck. Whittelsey discovered that this and selling the M 1 tank was really where it was at.

Q: The M 1 tank to the Swiss army.

MONROE: To the Swiss army, which I refused to work on in the hopes that she would relieve me, but she didn't. She said, OK, I understand. I mean the Swiss needed the M 1 like they needed a moon shot. It wasn't suited to their topography at all. That said, this other issue was fascinating, time consuming and absolutely critical to the Swiss, and I was fascinated with it. Again, the very good relations I had with a number of people at the foreign office helped go on. These were people I meet with for a late dinner after an all day session. The SEC was over almost continually. This fellow, Fedders, was the, he later became embroiled in a wife beating episode. You may remember. Something I always looked at askance. The man was 6' 10" and had been a basketball star in Texas or something. In any case, he was a good lawyer, a good negotiator, and we did work together quite a bit. Whittlesey saw it almost immediately, in that she recognized that this was a critically important issue for her. She also recognized that she couldn't do it herself. She didn't know how to do it. So, she asked me to do it for her. There was an arrangement. It was unspoken, but basically, you do this for me, and you will get a good launching on your career, and you can go when you have to etc. In the meantime, she named a fellow who was working for me as DCM, the political officer.

Q: Who was that?

MONROE: His name was Jim Shin. There are several Jim Shins in the service. This was one of them. I think she let me know as she did that, that he wouldn't bother me, that I would be on my own business on the issue. Well, she didn't know about figuring monetary aggregates every two weeks, and I report to the Treasury Department, so I doing almost totally financial reporting because the financial attaché with whom I had worked left, and a new Treasury man came along. Very well trained, academically, a lot of experience, but he was fundamentally a trade person. He had worked at STR most of his career. While he was a fast learner and a very good officer, someone you would really want to have in the Foreign Service.

Q: You needed to give him a lot of support.

MONROE: I needed to give him a lot of support at the beginning. That is exactly right. We calculated things like monetary aggregates in a very peculiar way using newspaper reports and what not. But we did it. We got a bi week out.

Q: That had a consistent data series.

MONROE: Data series, that is exactly right. I remember it because it was all seat of the pants sort of thing. Of course, the currency markets were of extreme interest, and getting some handle on what were called fiduciary accounts, I don't know if they had them in your day there, but these fiduciary accounts were exceptionally important. For obvious reasons these were moneys that the Swiss were dealing with. And during the Credit Suisse problem, shall we say, someone was found stealing money at [a certain] branch, which led them to pay back the money, so as a matter of course for the Swiss banking community, moneys that were given to them to invest became part of their deposit base in effect. They felt responsible for these moneys and would pay back for malfeasance. It was not as if there were a lawsuit, but if there were malfeasance.

Q: Let's go back to the insider trading issue. How was that resolved, or was it resolved?

MONROE: It was resolved. I got together with a fellow by the name of Sloan. I don't know if you knew him, John Sloan. Well, we must have stayed at the [hotel] until about three in the morning. They just left us alone. We came up with the notion of a private MOU which was among banks, that is the Swiss government would have nothing to do with this, the Swiss and American governments would sign another MOU taking cognizance of this, stating that we, the governments of Switzerland and the United States recognize that our banking systems have agreed on this sort of self imposed discipline. The Swiss would yield information on people trading in American markets in a matter of 90 days. During that 90 days there would be no discovery, that they had seen as an action taken against Swiss interests.

Q: But there in effect would be a waiver of bank secrecy to prevent disclosure.

MONROE: If the banks chose to do so.

Q: On a voluntary basis.

MONROE: It was on a voluntary basis. I told her this is the best you are going to do. It lasted for another month and a half. People from the SEC ran back and forth. The Swiss also promised in a side letter to study the effects of insider trading with a view to perhaps tightening Swiss law, which I thought was a significant concession. The only problem was while the Swiss banks will probably live up to it, and probably did live up to it, it was hard for us to control American courts. As soon as I left the post there was a case which tested the MOU. I think it survived, but only just, because some judge was into discovery and huge remedies and so forth. She was very grateful for this, she really was and she wrote a magnificent efficiency report. She could draft. She knew how to write these things almost instinctively. She was not a bad attorney in my judgment, and rewards and all that sort of stuff. Much to her surprise, I don't think she realized that there was any connection between promotion and the things she was writing, but I was promoted to, let's see, this was just as the wall was turning. I was promoted to OC making me two grades higher than the DCM. At this point she stopped talking to me, and I dealt solely with the DCM to the extent I had to speak to, I had to deal with him at all. I went on with my financial reporting and training this fellow. When he felt that he was comfortable doing what he did, and my wife had recovered. She had been the victim of, she went in for a minor operation and it turned very seriously because of the... Well, let me put it this way. If that happened in the United States, we'd be very rich people. She had to be evacuated on an emergency basis and we solved this up in Yale Medical Center. The issue was whether we really were ready to move, and we needed a few more months for her to recover and so forth.

Q: She came back from the States.

MONROE: She came back to Switzerland within five weeks. Then another woman from Wells, the ambassador, always kind even though we didn't talk very much, introduced me to a classmate telephonically, of hers who said, "You can have my house in Old Lyme Connecticut. I am going off to, " She called it P time, "on the cape to be with my children who are studying somewhere or the other, and you can use our house for a month." Which we did. It was a delightful month once Evangeline's problem was straightened out. I left shortly thereafter. In other words, when Evangie regained full strength and my colleague felt that he was now able to go ahead and do his own thing,, I left. By that time, Whittelsey had rotated back to the White House and John Davis Lodge came out to be Ambassador.

Q: You were there with him or no?

MONROE: Just briefly. Just a few months when he first arrived. So that was the story of my eventful period in Bern which turned out to be far more stressful, more Sturm and Drang than I ever expected in Bern.

Q: Four years you were there.

MONROE: As it turned out it was four years for the combination of reasons I was talking about.

Q: Whatever happened to the M 1 tank?

MONROE: The M 1 tank was not sold to the Swiss.

Q: And the defense attaché½ cooperated with the Ambassador?

MONROE: Others tried. With the ambassador and with the DCM. The DCM was given that mission. Of course even the defense attaché½ was very skeptical about it. I mean this was not a tank for mountain roads. This was a main battle tank across the plains or something like that. In any case, that didn't happen. They did buy a much smaller German tank that was better suited to rough terrain.

Q: You certainly had a challenge in terms of your relationship with the DCM, but I guess you coped with that on the whole.

MONROE: I coped with it but it bothered me a lot initially. Then I realized it was a reflection on no one in particular. I think it would have worked more easily had he been one of the superb officers who was getting promoted every year anyway and who could do the job. He had great difficulties in maintaining morale and keeping the place run. I helped him where I could actually. I felt that since she had given me a very key issue, an issue that I really delighted in, and an issue where I could use all that I had in terms of professional awareness and the tools I had gathered over the years. I was quite pleased with that. It is not to say I wasn't bothered sometimes early in the morning with the notion of this fellow being DCM, but we did get on. And this was noticed incidentally in the diplomatic community. She lost a lot of purchase in the diplomatic community . I suspect people with her perspective and I am not putting any value on it, but people in her perspective think that breaking up the hierarchical system that most institutions develop for themselves over the years, in our case, it would have been centuries, helps to put the bureaucracy off its guard or...

Q: Helps to establish their authority.

MONROE: It establishes, that is exactly what I was going to say, they are in command of that little piece of the bureaucracy. It didn't work to her advantage apparently because he had grave difficulty doing the job, although she was unaware of this. She had him travel with her, and she didn't realize what that did effectively was make me acting DCM the good part of the time which rather annoyed me more than pleased me. The Department was well aware of that. She had been advised not to do it, even by the deputy secretary whoever it was at the time.

Q: Even though Switzerland was a small country, and even if she stayed within the confines of its borders, that effectively took her away from the embassy a good part of the time because you have to go to Zurich and Geneva and all over.

MONROE: Well, those were places you could get to easily in one day. She liked places like Davos

Q: Where you go for several days.

MONROE: St. Moritz where you could get snowed in easily, and they frequently got snowed in. Odd that you should think of that because I had forgotten I used to think, why on earth were they going there. Well Davos was the center of a think tank, and I can see why she went there for a lot of events. St. Moritz was a little harder to pull there but that was over the hill, over the mountains as it were, and if you get stuck there, [you're isolated] but it never occurred to her that the DCM's job is to stay on post as it were and run it while she was doing her thing with the sub staff of officers that- (end of tape)

Q: Today is May 17, 1999. Gerry, we pretty much covered most of the matters you took up when you were economic counselor at the embassy in Bern. Maybe we kind of ought to finish off at least by just refreshing my memory of Ambassador Whittlesey. She was still there when you left or she left before you did?

MONROE: No, Ambassador Whittlesey left some three or four months before we did. She was offered a job at the White House as I think it was public liaison of some sort. I don't quite recall what the specific job was.

Q: This was about 1983.

MONROE: This would have been in the winter of '82 '83, probably '83, late winter or early spring of '83. She was replaced by John Davis Lodge who at that point was in his very late '70s, and to a degree was showing it. I recall his daughter traveled with him and stayed with them, Mrs. Lodge was there as well. If anything she was probably, she had been more vulnerable to the ravages of age.

Q: He had been ambassador to Spain?

MONROE: He had been ambassador to Spain and Argentina before coming to Switzerland, but I think his last mission to Argentina had been during the Eisenhower administration. It was some time ago.

Q: Was he much interested in the economic, financial, trade things that you were involved with?

MONROE: Well, he wasn't. He was very much riveted in the cold war era. He was interested in what he thought was the communist threat. Probably the only people who were more anti communist than we were the Swiss, so there was very little threat. There were a good many agents from various intelligence services around the world. Of course that sort of game playing was going on at all times, primarily financial. It was really in the financial area. He probably missed the point with respect to the Swiss U.S. relations which were very much based at that point on economics, problems of dealing with almost a global inflation. I think I described at some length, the question of insider trading which had been a major issue, and markets generally were important. We followed those on a daily basis. I'm not sure he ever read those materials as we sent them in. Some of them he didn't choose to see. I remember very vividly what he did with his walls.

Q: With his walls?

MONROE: The walls to his outer office. They were literally covered. There was no space showing, with pictures, pictures of John Davis Lodge. Interestingly, he had been a motion picture star in the days of silent films, and indeed played opposite Marlene Dietrich in Scarlet Empress. This was something he was very proud of. So he had one wall full of Hollywood pictures and one wall full of his Congressional days and one wall full of I was once governor of Connecticut, that sort of thing. It was not an "I love me" wall, just really covered. Had he could have arranged it if gravity would have cooperated, I am sure he would have hung things on the ceiling. He was a gracious man in his way, but it was clear that he was somewhat perplexed as to why there was no serious communist threat and why no one seemed eager to send a dispatch as he put it to the Secretary with respect to communist activities and so forth which were by and large a negative number at that particular point. The thing I remember most vividly was the many times I saw the Scarlet Empress which he chose to show at almost every social event he gave.

Q: This was what, from the 1930s?

MONROE: Oh, I think it was before then. It was probably late '20s. In any case, that was John Davis Lodge.

Q: How would you assess the general state of Swiss U.S. relations particularly in the financial economic area at the time that you left in 1983?

MONROE: I think by and large they were sound. I think the Swiss are very prudent bankers as we know. There had been some poor feelings particularly in regard to the insider trading issue because they felt they were being pressured. But, as I left, I had the sense in talking to contacts and whatnot that they saw, they were beginning to recognize the anti market impact of insider trading and how this discouraged investment across the board, and really might have been one of the reasons their internal market didn't grow, for all of the funds, didn't grow that rapidly as they would have expected given the amount of money in the country. I would say in general, relations were sound. The Swiss in my observation then and certainly since then in research I have done in other areas, are not a terribly self reflective people. This, of course, although there were many similarities with Germany, physical similarities, architecture and whatnot, the languages were different but they were obviously closely related and Swiss understand German, at least the German speaking area. But one of the major differences in the society, and I think this is for historic reasons is the sort of internal probing, the sort of soul searching that goes on in Germany continually because of W.W.II and the total lack of this in Switzerland until very recently.

Q: You really didn't in I guess the almost four years you were there, you really didn't sense much reverting back, looking at what had happened in the Second World War centering on the question of use that was made of Jewish assets from Germany?

MONROE: No, this was a totally ignored. They were still very wedded to their mythology of doughty little Switzerland standing up against the major war machines in the world. They were still making patriotic speeches about the farmer and whatnot, who had saved Switzerland from starvation.

Q: Weekend warrior.

MONROE: All of those things. Yes, the mythology was intact at that junction. I think the only issues, of course, were apart from the insider trading, was economic defense because the Swiss were not members of COCA mission, the coordinating committee that met in Paris and attempted to on a multi lateral basis, deny Soviet access to certain sensitive information and materials. This was for outside the system, but had given informal guarantees some of which we thought were not being met. That was a constant source of slight irritation you might say. I became very good friends with the fellow who handled the nuclear trade. We worked our way through problems as they arose. I don't think it spread to other ministries.

Q: This is Zomberch.

MONROE: Zanger, yes, Claude Zanger, who by then was an elder statesman in the nuclear fraternity. He had created a list of sensitive items. He took great pride in being Claude Zanger, the author of the Zanger list. In any case, he was a very wise man in his way, and he managed to contain whatever ill will arose periodically as a result of out asking for commitments or undertakings vis a vis trade which we felt were minimal and which he felt were intruding on Swiss sovereignty.

Q: Of course the whole idea of that list was at least in the nuclear area was to undertake on a multi lateral basis some kind of controls on trade.

MONROE: Well, that's exactly right. He understood because he was a physicist, he understood full well that there had to be an ad hoc list as well which we were keeping. Because he knew you couldn't give through you own defense list, he didn't want to give people a recipe to build a bomb at that point in history. Therefore, the fact that we would come up with a sensitive bit of machine tooling or what have you was not surprising to him intellectually. I think he found it hard to deal with at other levels.

Q: And with his colleagues in the Swiss Government.

MONROE: Oh, absolutely. He was a good contact. I did go flying with him. He was an amateur flier. Except for the odd earache, I survived most of it. He, interestingly, had been a fighter pilot during W.W.II, and scrambled to go up and look at German planes and had engaged in the odd dogfight. At least that was the story.

Q: Okay, before we leave Bern, is there anything else that you want to mention? Where did you go from Switzerland?

MONROE: I went from Switzerland to EB. There was a good deal of horse trading between INR and EB, and finally within EB as to what office I would take over. I finally took over the office of food policy which turned out to be a very wise move on everyone's part. The office handled two broad issues and was divided into two sections. The larger section concerned itself with our bilateral trade, most overwhelmingly with the European communities. The other section dealt with PL 480, or the State Department's role in the PL 480 distribution, that is to say the distribution of grant food aid. There was, to simplify probably far more than is wise, in any case, there was a small residual of both Title I and Title II which the State Department was responsible for. These were essentially political decisions.

Q: Were they to determine...

MONROE: To determine where this food would go, that is correct. Title II which is the grant food, as you know. There is no payment involved. Was frequently allocated to Non governmental institution Who were of course, the field operators. in the program such as Catholic charities and a number of others, CARE. Some food, of course, was allocated to multi lateral institutions such as the [World Food] Programme, etc. UNICEF, [UNRWA], by and large, most of our Title II or grant food aid was distributed by NGOs. Probably overwhelmingly by CARE and the Red Cross. Very little of it incidentally was program aid. Most of it turned out to be emergency aid. Of course, part of the art was dealing with the emergencies. We also dealt with Title I. There was a residual there as well which was a soft loan program. Food is given in return for promissory notes.

Q: So a lot of what you were doing, in some cases in the State Department, the office of food policy and the economic and business bureau was directly responsible for allocation decisions. In other cases you were giving advice to the Department of Agriculture.

MONROE: To the Department of Agriculture. One of my objectives across the board in both fields, bi lateral and... was to make clear to my agriculture attaches who didn't much like us when I began, that there was a political context and a broader global economic context to their programs in the State Department. On the other hand, was fully cognizant of the interests of the American farmer. Of course, PL 480 could be construed as a subsidy to the American farmer since the food aid, PL 480, as you know, was not a free good. It was purchased by the government in a very complicated, through a very complicated series of maneuvers. I actually did become the political advisor in fact, to the number three in Agriculture, the undersecretary for foreign affairs. We became in a way, close. I traveled with him extensively to the far reaches of the globe. He began to listen to us. Many of his colleagues did not, incidentally. We had quite a lot of problems dealing with people who were in the commodity division.

Q: What about AID? Was AID involved in these decisions at that time, or...

MONROE: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, the kinds of issues that were very symptomatic of the way we operated. We would get one ambassador. This one instance I am thinking of is Philippines. Do we give it food aid? This would be Title II, to a program run by a Cardinal Sin, who was in fact a democrat, a reformer, but was running a large program to feed the barrios of Manila and other large cities and towns in the Philippines. There was a real political question of whether we should continue to grant that food.

Q: To the Catholic...

MONROE: To the Catholic program, and it was an internal Catholic program. It wasn't Catholic charities, it was Cardinal Sin's own program. Incidentally, Sin, kind of interesting name for a Cardinal.

Q: Did you go ahead and support the Sin program?

MONROE: I supported the Sin program myself. The embassy did not. I think, for very well developed reasons. I am not suggesting that there really was a right or wrong answer to this. I was motivated both by the governing principles of Title II, as the only person at the State Department responsible for agricultural things, my staff and I, that it was my duty to make certain that everybody was aware of those principles at least, and also my own political instincts tended to support keeping the barrios fed. You know, we really didn't want a blood bath or famine riots, that sort of thing, to add to the turmoil. These were issues where reasonable men could differ, obviously.

Q: What about the geographic bureaus in the State Department? In this case would the East Asian Bureau take a lot of interest, weigh in, or was it pretty much up to you to handle with the embassy and with the Department of Agriculture?

MONROE: Well, it varied. Mostly they were, I undertook a program to brief the PDASS' on agricultural policy legislature which turned out to be a popular thing. I could brief the DAS' and even in one instance an assistant secretary, which made it a lot easier to deal with regional bureaus. I think one of the reasons relations improved was because I think you started to find in option memoranda and informational memoranda, references to the American farm interest. Agriculture liked this. They felt it was an improvement. Of course, I worked the hill quite a bit, dealing a lot with midwestern, mostly with the Republicans because they were a major part of the farm delegation, if you want to call it that.

Q: And of course, this was in the period of the Reagan administration.

MONROE: This was during the period of the Reagan administration. I think the Reagan administration in the area of food aid was conflicted. They were certainly clear that they didn't want to be members of any commodity organizations that had economic provisions. I worked very hard to keep us members of the Wheat Council, which at that point was a very valuable research institution into the world wheat economy. So that was one of my own objectives was to bring the director general of the institution to Washington. I used my wits to try and entertain visits to the eighth floor and so forth and so on, so he would feel like a VIP, and introduced him to the Undersecretary Wallace with whom I had a reasonably good relationship. I must say my DAS was extraordinarily cooperative in the sense that if you may recall or not that EB had done away with the DAS for commodities. There was just one for energy period, not for many of the other. That went over to the trade fellow. Well, he was very focused, Dennis Wyan incidentally, one of the really great economic officer that I met during my career. He felt strongly that agriculture is something he didn't want to become involved in, so he left it to me pretty much.

Q: He was, you said your DAS, the DAS responsible for your office was the one also responsible for trade?

MONROE: He was also responsible for trade which was 99% of what he had to do and wanted to do. In a sense I became him. We kept him briefed on PL 480, but he really played a very small role in that. He played a much larger role in our relations with EEC in agriculture, and that was an analytical part of our operation. We had a very programmatic, very operational role in the PL 480 part of our brief, and then we did a lot of papers, research papers actually, on the whole question of restitution payments and so on and so forth, and the way in which the cap operated and whether there were a practical means to start phasing down politically, whether there was a politically acceptable approach to dealing with the overhang that the EEC had developed particularly in wheat.

Q: When you talk about food policy, you were primarily involved with grain, wheat, food of that nature as opposed to such commodities as bananas fruit and vegetables?

MONROE: No, we handled what was called value added stuff as well. Value added stuff, fruits, vegetables, lightly processed, washed lettuce for example, were not programmed crops. They were not subsidized by the federal government.

Q: But to the extent that the common agricultural policy affected our market opportunity in Europe or anywhere else, you were involved with that or not?

MONROE: Yes, we would have been. We were very involved in meat, for example, meat issues. The lightly processed foodstuffs were not in trade that much at that juncture for various reasons. Primarily the domestic market was heating up. They knew they could sell a lot at home. Pricing was difficult since there was no world market for washed spinach or chopped spinach or peeled carrots, that sort of thing. There is no world market for carrots to tell you the truth. Most of our time was spent on what we would have called programmed commodities or real commodities. Their prices were determined where one unit is like another unit, and prices were determined on global markets.

Q: Besides PL 480 was your focus your interest primarily directed at the European community, or were you also concerned, involved with say Japan?

MONROE: We were concerned with a whole raft of issues particularly those where agriculture wanted to sign treaties.

Q: The Agriculture Department.

MONROE: Yes, the Agriculture Department wanted to sign treaties. The most famous of them of course was the one with the Soviet Union. I was on that delegation from the beginning. It took me to Moscow, I think, about four times. Initially we met in Vienna, and then we met in London finally. That agreement was signed two days before the Korean jet was shot down, the Korean passenger jet. Then we had almost no relations with the Soviet Union except in grain.

Q: Because they needed our grain or thought they did.

MONROE: They needed our corn. They definitely needed our corn. They didn't need our wheat because the Soviet Union produces a lot of wheat. It is not great quality wheat, but it is wheat nonetheless. They produce much more than we do. A commodity exporter is really a country that doesn't absorb its production. Its total production may be relatively small such as Argentina. That said, they consume such a small percentage that they have a lot to export, and they are important players in the market. Canada is an extremely important player.

Q: Australia?

MONROE: Surprisingly I was going to say Australia. I say surprisingly because some years they will have no wheat simply because it is a land that is frequently ravaged by drought. They have various programs which kept us continually annoying one another as we met. There were various ad hoc groups. The Wheat Council, of course, was a structured multilateral event. In one year the wheat council had as a subsidiary a sub committee known as food aid committee which I chaired one year, a considerable amount of work. It was the year the food aid convention was to be re negotiated. What this did essentially was establish a floor for global food aid. That is to say in signing this treaty the major donors agreed, even the minor donors, agreed that the global amount that global volume would not fall below a set figure.

Q: Was there any upper limit?

MONROE: No. There was no upper limit. In fact, just as we were trying to work our way through that, because it was very awkward with a growing European community which for example absorbed Portugal and Spain. Portugal had a totally different view than the European community, so there was this issue to resolve. At the same time the Ethiopian famine just exploded like that. Senator Danforth made a trip to Africa and took pictures copiously and sent them to the President. The President immediately called for a meeting. This was one of the three times that I saw the President in my job oddly enough. While the Undersecretary Wallace wanted, who had been the Secretary's economics teacher actually at Chicago I think, he decided he wanted me along with him. Schultz sent him and he wanted me with him because I knew about food commodities. So we went. Essentially what the President said is that this is a moral obligation that we must meet. So that year, we actually gave, whereas under the treaty, I have forgotten the figures, but let's assume that the American commitment would have been no more than three to four million metric tons of wheat, we actually gave twelve that year to Ethiopia. Out of that event, which was quite dreadful in every respect, one of the major contributions to the misery was the inexperience the global community had in dealing with a major famine. There hadn't been one for some time, probably the last great famine, if we exclude China, [we were] not involved in I suspect. The last great famine had been the one in Bengal during the war. This was as large as that, and it was much harder to deal with because it was widely scattered, the effects. It had become interwoven with the political struggles. Mengistu was the more or less Marxist inclined dictator of Ethiopia. One can question his fealty to Marxist principles, but the fact that he was a dictator and a harsh one was not to be questioned. So you had a civil war going on, a very complex civil war with the Eritreans seeking independence as well as famine and the results of that in terms of internal violence and so forth.

Q: Refugees crossing the border also.

MONROE: Refugees crossing the border and all their actions and Mengistu trying to get highland people down into what by Ethiopian standards were the lowlands where they were not able to farm. So, I had a very quick course in the rudiments of food aid such as the need to denature seed because if you left, it was a process which makes it inedible, because if you don't [denature] the seed, you have nothing to plant which is understandable. I mean that is just an example of the kinds of issues that you have to confront.

Q: Now what you are talking about now and in the case of Ethiopia and generally the food aid convention under the world wheat council is primarily all talking about wheat.

MONROE: No, the food aid committee curiously handled all forms of food aid including seaweed cookies, which was one of the things the Japanese kept giving us and feeding us in the course of the negotiations. Of course they were very hard. They had a lot of protein, but as a ration to pass out to starving people, they didn't strike us as being very good. Actually at one point we were dealing with fish because dried fish are the only quick fix for a disease called Pellagra or something. I may be mispronouncing it. It is a dread disease which occurs in famine situations.

Q: So you were involved with all kinds of food.

MONROE: We were involved with all kinds of food aid. This was done, wheat became the measure of value. In other words everything was expressed in bushels of wheat.

Q: Now all of this was before the World Food Programme was established, or was it already going?

MONROE: The World Food Programme had begun, but it began, of course, as a program of FAO.

Q: Were you involved with that much? Well, you were later but at this point?

MONROE: Yes, actually I was because the person whose job I eventually got that I had to do for several years was very upset with the friction that arose between the World Food Programme and the director general of the FAO. It was almost 007 stuff. People were being followed and God knows what all. The Australian head of the World Food Programme took this very seriously. He basically convinced the UN structure in New York to make the World Food Programme a more independent entity. That's what happened. Then the whole question arose, did FAO declare a famine in time in Ethiopia. That is still debated today. The head of the World Food Programme was executive secretary at that point. It was his contention that the director general of the FAO had not declared a famine in time. At that point the World Food Programme was just beginning the notion of food aid as a programmatic instrument for development which is something they probably developed along with ourselves, food for work kind of thing. That is another story. I was sent to a meeting once or twice to discuss that very issue because IO felt they could use the technical expertise, whatever that was. I knew more than they did about agriculture. As a matter of fact I knew more than anyone else at the department. No one was interested. Then, of course, what happened, the title of the undersecretary was changed.

Q: What was the new title?

MONROE: The new title was Undersecretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agriculture.

Q: That change was made while you were there?

MONROE: Yes. As a matter of fact, I wrote one of the many memos that were moving around. One thing that was also gratifying and made this job a marvelous job was the secretary actually read the material and would comment on it as if it were a school paper.

Q: This is Secretary Schultz?

MONROE: Schultz. This is good politics, good economics. Let me hear what you think about... and so forth. If one could become a made person, as they say a made man in the [world of] business, a paper I did on restitution payments fascinated him. He started me on this business you know, being called by the seventh floor to discuss these issues.

Q: Restitution payments...

MONROE: This was the European community program which coordinated payments and so forth. They had a system that probably however well it functioned, it could never be assaulted because no one could understand it internally or externally. It was incredibly complex, needlessly I might add.

Q: If you could begin to understand it, then the next challenge was to explain it to somebody else. That was probably impossible.

MONROE: That's right. Well, except for the office with which I worked very closely was the RPE, Regional Political, well it was the economic division I dealt with. Tom Niles who was the DAS in charge of that. Tom whom I had met when I was in Switzerland would call me frequently with a question about agriculture. I think one of his qualities was he really learned an issue. He certainly learned these issues. I can't speak for others, but he certainly had a lot of very penetrating questions about agriculture generally and about where institutions came from and what they were doing and why they were. There were several stories about the founding of the World Food Programme. You pick the most attractive one I guess. The one I like best is Henry Kissinger and the Shah getting together and deciding. It was created actually in the '70s. So, it had been a freight forwarding program for several years, fifteen years almost by the time I came on the scene. As I arrived it sort of broadened its web both in terms of handling emergency issues and in terms of this program, this programmatic approach to using food aid as a development instrument.

Q: To what extent were you involved with IO the International Organization bureau particularly with regard to...

MONROE: Just in this one area, the conflicts between the two, the FAO, the two main food institutions; there are others, but the two main ones, which gave me some grounding in the way the UN operated. It was really necessary because it is not hierarchical as many would think. Of course, there were just numerous programs, research institutes that reported to about six masters. It was really quite... ECOSOC was not functioning very well. Its charter granted the role to coordinate these activities, so that you would get these horrible debates among the leadership. I think I was appalled at the problem that they called everyone in to meet the principals. I did not meet the director general of the FAO at that time. I did meet him at a ceremonial service. It was the second time I saw the President in this job, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the PL 480. He may have thought I favored the other side in this debate which was not true. Actually my aim quite distinct from IO's aim as it turned out was simply to get the executive secretary of the World Food Programme's attention onto programmatic issues, operational issues, and not on his struggles, his bureaucratic struggles with the fellow who had been his boss.

Q: I guess I should ask you when was the third time you met with President Reagan in this job?

MONROE: It was a report given by I believe it was MacPherson was the AID, MacPherson and Wallace being present of course, and several others, senior Congressmen the committee heads and so forth met in the west wing I guess. This was more or less a ceremonial.

Q: The Roosevelt room?

MONROE: I don't remember. No, I guess it was the rose garden. We sat around the rose garden. It was quite nice. These fellows gave their report. Their leadership declared the famine, [and] our response to the famine.

Q: Was that the end of the period?

MONROE: It was at the end of the period more or less. I had traveled with MacPherson, who in many respects was more difficult to get to than the undersecretary of agriculture who was an extraordinarily awful man. But a very nice man in his way. He was very much a type A but knew it. One of the issues that brought us together was the fact there was nothing going on with the Soviet Union but wheat and corn. So we would go with briefing books you wouldn't believe. We basically needed a carrier to get our briefing books out there because the department and everyone else wanted us to raise a myriad of issues with the Soviet Union. Except for the last visit, we were the only game in town.

Q: In that period?

MONROE: Yes. We were the only official Americans.

Q: Did you raise some of these non food issues?

MONROE: We did, and they were, the Soviets were not most pleased.

Q: Because they probably had no confidence in that area.

MONROE: That is also true. Not only that, they were briefed as to what might arise in a meeting with the Soviets. We had on the maritime issue of port calls and what have you. Some of the Soviet ports were closed, and we had closed many of our ports. Now, unfortunately for the Soviets and for the farmer perhaps as well, the ports that we had to close were major grain ports. That was one issue in which the Soviets used grain as leverage to get some of those Gulf ports open for other reasons as well as grain. Of course we knew nothing about the background of the issue. We had to rely on our briefing books. The Soviets were very well briefed on agriculture I must say. As a matter of fact they took us to Odessa for discussions and we discussed it in the seaman's club, sort of interesting. That was a particularly interesting trip. I must say the Russians were marvelous hosts, but as soon as you got into a meeting setting, when I say Russians I mean Soviets. They weren't all Russians actually. As soon as we got into a, sat at the table, their manner changed. There was considerable animosity, pretended at least. It might have been real, a real schizophrenia there.

Q: The period from '83 to '86 was probably not an easy period in terms of U.S. Soviet relations. Our arms buildup was going on at a great pace. You mentioned the Korean Airline shootdown. Let me ask on this particular point of the maritime aspect of the Soviet grain arrangements. Was the question of use of U.S. flagged vessels, U.S. bottoms to carry the wheat the grain also an issue?

MONROE: It was not as much of an issue as one might have thought. Primarily so many ports were closed. Let me put it this way, it is an interesting question because it really did show there was a bit of a conflict. At one point the maritime interests whoever represented them, I have forgotten, an association of some sort, wanted it written in to all grain contracts, all commodity contracts that 90% of the merchandise moving, the commodity moving under that treaty would have to move on U.S. flagged vessels. This did not work with either the Soviet Union or Chinese. We pushed it for practical reasons rather than economic reasons because Soviet ship spaces were not properly sealed. Grain is a volatile commodity. It is as dangerous as petroleum. It will explode as you know. You don't light a match in a silo. Of course they were having all kinds of problems because they couldn't seal all their crew quarters off from the cargo places. One of the things that is characteristically done is a very strong anti fungicide is put on a particular wheat as it is put into, as it is loaded. That is dissipated by the time it reaches and it is gone in a week. During that week this then becomes a doubly dangerous commodity. Most ships can deal with it. The odd Soviet ship couldn't, and so you did have these incredible cases of the whole crew being asphyxiated or most of the crew. The ship going to Odessa which was the main grain port almost a ghost ship. That was an issue of great [moment]. Then the Soviets, if you didn't put the fungicide on which we stopped doing and some other treatment, of course at our latitudes would get barnyard pests as they are called. The Russians attacked the condition of the grain continually. We explained to them that it is inherent in the product. The way we take care of it is, but we can't because your spaces aren't sealed well enough. So it was that kind of problem. Of course when we toured the storage facilities in Odessa we found that they were open to the sky and so the number of pigeons or birds, whatever sort of birds they were, gulls. It was just a mass of gulls on top of there. It was quite disgusting actually. So, one wondered, that was clearly an excuse to have something to complain about. Our complaint ranged from the fact that they simply didn't buy enough wheat. In order to make the agreement fly we had to do something for our wheat farmers as well as our corn. We produce far more corn than we do wheat, feed corn that is. We also wanted to sell a little soy, which is a very critical part of the Soviet or of any food ration for livestock. The Soviets discovered, this is another insight into their system. We visited quite a few farms, collective farms, farming units. The Soviets found that they couldn't control the use of soy. The collective leader would say well we would meet our targets more fully if we could get nothing but soy. Then they don't get enough calories which is what corn had. Not only that but it was much more expensive. Soy is more expensive than either wheat or corn. Again corn is viewed in terms of wheat prices. The critical thing about wheat is that it used to be the standard for value of most other commodities.

Q: In this period from '83 to '86, what was the U.S. supply situation? Were we having bumper crops? Were we in need of export markets desperately in order to keep the prices in a reasonable range? You have mentioned the American farmers on a number of occasions as sort of a factor in the role that you were playing.

MONROE: '83 was a bad year. It was a bad crop year. That said, our stocks were so high there was no question that we could meet our commitments and still have a major surplus. Again this was a function of both the extraordinary amount of corn we produced, but also the relatively small percentage of our production we absorbed which is amazing when you think of the size of our population. But, the United States at that time was not a great bread eater; whereas, the Soviet Union was. It was their major foodstuff actually, so there was that. Primarily, the rest of the world lacked corn, and they lacked the caloric quality that corn gives livestock in their rations. They lacked to some extent protein which they can get from our soy. It used to be called the protein gap in the European community.

Q: Is there anything else in this period of '83 '86 as director of the office of food policy that particularly ought to be highlighted?

MONROE: Well, no, except it was something I grew very committed to perhaps more so than anything else I had done in my career. Not that I hadn't enjoyed everything I had done, but this became something I wanted to continue with one way or another.

Q: Was it the food aid, the meeting of you know, emergency humanitarian needs, particularly or was it more kind of the whole thing?

MONROE: Well, I think food aid was the major issue both in terms of getting it into a constructive program and not a destructive program. You know, the old argument, etc. Also, the economic reality of farming fascinated me. When you come to think of it, it is a fascinating topic because a farmer lives in a world where he has continuing expenditure as he goes to the store and buys this or that. But he only has income theoretically when he sells his crop. Well, that was the reason for future markets. The future markets are just a big crap shoot at this point. They don't help in stabilizing price levels. That in a nutshell or a wheat kernel was why we had loans, government subsidized loans and so forth and so on to give the farmer some sort of stream of income. That has to be solved. You can do away with the subsidies, but you can't do away with the stream of income issue.

Q: And the stream of income issue is relevant irregardless of the level of production. If you have a drought, you still need it. Even if you have a bumper crop, you still have to make expenditures throughout the year and not just at the time you sold your crop. You said at the outset that when you started in this job, you found it was hard to get real cooperation or a feeling that you were making a significant contribution on the part of people down the line in the Department of Agriculture and probably to some extent elsewhere in the State Department. By the end of the time, did you feel like much of that had been overcome as you gained more confidence and experience and they came to see the contribution you were making, the role that you could play?

MONROE: I think that's right. As a matter of fact, the new Secretary of Agriculture who had been the deputy secretary took me down to a conference in Williamsburg I guess or some hotel, but it was a conference of agricultural cooperatives. These are commodity associations. He asked me to be one of the speakers and I was. In introducing me, he said I was a friend to agriculture, the first he ever met at State. He gave me a very warm welcome, and it was a very good event. He called the undersecretary, the deputy secretary of State who was also very interested in these things. He was a great economist, a brilliant economist and a lawyer. I just can't remember his name. It is just a blank. I am sure you do, Schultz's deputy.

Q: Robinson?

MONROE: No.

Q: Not Whitehead.

MONROE: No, he wrote, Whitehead followed him.

Q: Rogers?

MONROE: Damm, something like Damm actually.

Q: Oh, Ken Damm.

MONROE: Ken Damm was really interested in that stuff. I had quite a few, you know, he would also seek advice on a memo, particularly on the legislative. At one point we were having, dealing with a new agriculture act which the Secretary of State recommended that the President veto. He did not of course, could not have done, and Schultz knew this. I remember discussing that with Damm at great length off and on over about a period of a month. The secretary did on principle decide to. There were certain aspects to it that were not consistent with conservative economics to put it that way including some horrible things called production loans and that sort of thing which [Agriculture] had managed to get for itself.

Q: These views that the Secretary of State wanted to put forward to express were primarily in that area or was he objecting on foreign policy or international aspects of the new legislation?

MONROE: Well, both because market loans as they were called are very destructive of free trade or any kind of trade actually because what you are doing is you are picking a price and you are paying the producer that price whether it is a real price or not. It is not nearly as involved as the, I mean it is a direct subsidy. The other farm subsidies are very complicated, not within the range of this discussion, but these are out and out subsidies. You are going to get seven dollars a bushel. If you can only sell it for one, here is six dollars. It is as simple as that. Of course that tends to increase production and increasing rice production is something we don't have to do. That was my feeling. And of course, it did lead to all kinds of problems with Thailand and other rice producers who actually were a legitimate exporter of rice in the sense that they had an advantage, an absolute advantage actually in producing rice.

Q: I have a theory that I would like to put forward that when somebody moves into a job in the State Department, particularly in a functional bureau, especially an economic bureau, but not just the Economic Bureau, it takes some time to establish credentials, to make yourself a worthy interlocutor for another government agency (the Department of Agriculture in this case). If it had a rice problem and knew it involved Thailand, the Department of Agriculture would probably go in and talk to the Thai desk or the ambassador in Bangkok. They wouldn't necessarily think of talking to somebody in the Economic Bureau until they had come to understand that that person, you, really understood the issues and could give advice on the international foreign policy, foreign relations dimension. That takes six months or a year to establish. You don't just because you have a title and a position and an office doesn't automatically get that kind of entree. Would you agree with that?

MONROE: I think that is absolutely correct. In my particular case, I was exceptionally lucky. I had had an extremely competent predecessor who had started this process I think, at least parts of it. His interests might well have been narrower, but most productively, I think, we had a greater than usual, what was the term, overlap because he was one of these people who chose not to go into the Senior Foreign Service. I mean he was a Senior Foreign Service officer, but he doesn't have to go into the Senior Foreign Service. He was retiring early. So, he had a few months more. This wouldn't have worked with just anyone, but this fellow was such a gentleman that he could sit there and be a resource person without interfering. He really had the self discipline to do that. So he was helpful. Certain people would refer to Don; other people would not. I am sure the same was true for my successor. I did get a leg up. He was gone after two months, but at least he was able to help me technically. Then it is just a lot of reading.

Q: I think the other thing that really helped you from what you have said is that on various issues, you have tremendous support, interest expressed by the undersecretary for economic affairs, the deputy secretary and even the Secretary of State. That's probably not always been the case.

MONROE: I have only experienced this with Secretary Schultz, incredible interest in economics, incredible capacity to read which amazed me. I thought no one would read this stuff. I am sure my boss didn't.

Q: Your immediate boss.

MONROE: My immediate boss. I am sure the Assistant Secretary didn't very carefully, but Schultz would annotate it. As I say I am sure he looked at it as a college paper. Wallace the same. Wallace, all three of them, Schultz, Damm, and Wallace, and as you know, I believe Schultz was Damm's teacher, and Wallace was in his 70s at that point, had been Schultz's teacher.

Q: Schultz's teacher or Reagan's teacher.

MONROE: Schultz's teacher. If I had said Reagan before, I was mistaken. Schultz's teacher. A considerable economist by anyone's measure. A little absent minded by the time I knew him. Then there was another person who was very eccentric, who had been a student with Schultz in Wallace's class. I have forgotten his name, but he was so eccentric as to be frequently an amusing and endearing obstacle.

Q: And he was somewhere else in the State Department.

MONROE: He worked for Wallace. He was one of Wallace's three or four assistants.

Q: Okay, you came to the end of your time as director of the office of food policy in 1986. Let me ask you going off on a diversion again, did you have any contact with Ambassador Whittlesey in Washington. She was over at the White House for awhile.

MONROE: Never spoke to her again.

Q: But she did eventually go back again a second time as Ambassador to Switzerland.

MONROE: As Ambassador to Switzerland. She kept the same DCM for awhile until the department literally pried him out of there. Then, of course, all of the problems arose. I can see where they would have felt that she was very close to the line while I was there. In terms of entertaining Americans to the degree that was an issue later, I could see how it arose, how it began. I thought it was getting at the time she left, I was beginning to wonder whether she wasn't beginning, you know, whether she wasn't very close to the line. Apparently it got a lot worse after her second time.

Q: Let's see, where did you go then after you left the economic bureau?

MONROE: Well, I left for a number of reasons. The DAS left, the PDAS left. That was Al Constable. My immediate supervisor was moving. Most importantly people in agriculture were shifting. I felt I had probably done the best I could. While I saw some merit in staying an extra year, I did get an offer to teach at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and I thought that was worth doing. Something we all want to know, do we want to teach. So I took it. I thought that was too good an opportunity to let pass given all these other changes and uncertainties of staying there in terms of my own production, and the fact that I was losing staff and so forth.

Q: And you had been there three years.

MONROE: I had been there three years, and I didn't see that I could do much more. The notion of establishing my expertise again this time knowing it all, as much as I was going to know, I felt it was probably time to move on. I would have tried to stay, if this other offer wasn't there.

Q: Well, I, having never worked or taught or studied at the National Defense University, I tend in these oral history interviews to move fairly quickly past that, but I'd be glad to hear anything that particularly ought to be mentioned or should we move on?

MONROE: I found it a difficult but rewarding experience. I say difficult because each class is different. The first year if I had my wits about me and if things had broken better, I should have left after the first year which was possible but not desirable from the school's point of view. I was sent over to teach economics but ended up teaching political science which became not a problem but I really had to work hard the first couple of months to get a program together. It was a required subject, but it had been taught totally, they changed the textbook; they went back to Morgantown and so forth and so on. Then, of course, I gave an elective on trade in agriculture which was attended mostly by Latin Americans from the InterAmerican Defense College and war college people. They came along to my 202 electives. I found a totally different culture. The leadership that I had at that point was very pro-State, very supportive of its senior State officials of which there were probably four. There were two teachers or lecturers, whatever one wants to call them and one advisor, so there were three of us. Then there was a vice president of the entire operation, and one or two teachers or lecturers at the war college. So I had, I got on very well with the first commandant, and indeed made some recommendations for a new course which became a required course. One of the things I found was an immense distrust among these colonels and lieutenant colonels of the Congress, of the press, and of the State Department. I thought that they probably lacked the full notion of how policy is made, how the government operates. And some of this distrust was actually almost frightening disregard. I mean there were some very strong feelings there which I was very uncomfortable about. Now, they treated me well enough, but that said, I felt we needed more than just one lecture a year on the Supreme Court. So a course was begun; General Wheeler did start. I didn't do it because I wasn't going to be there that long. They did start a course segment on American government. The other thing I thought they needed to know, and I took care of this through electives. I don't know whether people carried on the notion. That was comparative government issues particularly with regard to the Western European democracies and how they differed from the United States, and how their attitudes, political, legal attitudes were quite distinct from ours. There was in fact, I couldn't use these terms because these people would get a petition up if they felt something was overweight. Quite an extraordinary bunch. But in any case, we did talk about the Marxist influence in social democracy and what social democracy was all about and so forth. It was a very well attended course, and I think that worked. But when I did leave, I left with a very profound feeling that all of this work was necessary and that a lot more had to be done.

Q: It really did make sense for the State Department not only to send students to ICAF but to send teachers as well.

MONROE: Yes, I thought that I recommended all kinds of programs, but of course we can all think of great things to do, but the practical aspect of it. I thought it would be great to use WAEs, is that what they are called, you know, retirees, a relatively inexpensive way of getting State expertise over there. I thought using more mature people would give them an advantage. I noted almost immediately, the older you were the better off you were in just talking to them. We had several VIP lectures where the VIP didn't show up and some young person, with only one exception, and this was a woman. She could handle it. Every other one had difficulties with them.

Q: Who came as a substitute.

MONROE: Yes, who came as a substitute. They got some very hard questions that the principals would not have gotten. In any case, it was an interesting two years.

Q: You were there what, two years three years.

MONROE: Two years.

Q: And where did you go from there?

MONROE: Well, I went back to the department to be a liaison officer very briefly with the states, state liaison, intergovernmental liaison. I did that because they were bringing in a political fellow who wasn't quite there yet. Then when he got there, his feet weren't quite on the ground yet. Then I was discovered in the fifth, as I put it, like being discovered at the drug store, I was at the fifth floor coffee bar whatever it was, a little cafeteria there. An old pal actually from college days walked in and said, "Say, you are a food manager aren't you." I said, "Yes." He said, "How would you like to be our firm rep in FAO?" I said, "Well, I don't now, what is it all about?" I don't want to go out there to talk to any of those people because the people that I know who have done that, one had a heart attack, Touissand, a very nice fellow. He did have a heart attack. The other one came back, and the third one, Jack Direkey was sent off to Uruguay and was there three months. "No," he said. "I would take over. The ambassador was going to be recalled, and you'd be assigned as his DCM and when he left, you would take over." A long period ensued, several months when I was angling not to go out as this fellow's deputy, wait until he leaves, and then I will go out. Then you know, what was the White House going to do about this? Administrations were changing. Were they going to send someone else out, a political appointee. Of course, it did require six months family separation. Evangie, was at that point State Vice President of AFSA. She had to finish that up, and there was a question whether she could get a job there. She eventually did because of her credentials in handling central American communist issues.

Q: In political sections.

MONROE: In political sections of the embassy, but that happened later. Finally I was told go in January. I think people sympathized with my not wanting to work for that ex Congressman given the track record. But come the end of January 1989, I was told, you go now. I was called on vacation in Vermont, and told, go.

Q: And you went. Were you deputy or were you in charge?

MONROE: I was in charge, but I wasn't, I didn't have ambassadorial title because they had withdrawn it with Ecker. Now, that was both good and bad. I mean, the good part of it was, for decades the thing had been an embassy.

Q: A mission. A separate mission from the embassy.

MONROE: Yes, that's right, with an ambassador as the principal. So, nothing changed. The embassy didn't get it back. We were on the top floor of this magnificent villa, that Ambassador Robson, Reagan's ambassador to the Vatican had acquired at great expense. The difference was our part wasn't decorated very well, theirs was.

Q: The Vatican mission was in the same building?

MONROE: It was their building.

Q: It was their building, but you were using part of it.

MONROE: We were using part of it and paying our share which I had to re negotiate. We had more Americans than they did. They had 13 locals. We had two locals. One was my driver, bodyguard, Chiaso, you know, because he could deal with Italians, and could speak Italian. Well, he was Italian. The only problem was he couldn't speak much English. Then there was someone, a woman in her 70s who had been working for AID since the war or something, and was in Rome, and was still working for AI D. AID had two positions there.

Q: In your office?

MONROE: In my office.

Q: You say you had more Americans than the Vatican Embassy. How many did you have?

MONROE: I had myself and another State department officer, a deputy, who was a mid career officer, agriculture was too when they arrived because the principal was relatively low ranking for agriculture. Generally agriculture sends very senior people to those highly visible kinds of positions. The AID people both of them had separate budgets. One was to IFAD or the International Fund for Agricultural Development which is essentially an agricultural bank. That is the best way to describe it. And the World Food Programme. The agricultural fund, I said was under the aegis of policy planning at AID. The World Food Programme, of course was its own division, a food aid division which had an assistant secretary equivalent. So it was three agencies and four budgets. The administrative overhang was rather daunting actually that was the one that was in negatives.

Q: The administrative...

MONROE: Well, the requirement to administer the place proved to be far more difficult than I envisaged.

Q: You didn't have an administrative officer.

MONROE: No. We had first depended on the, you know, EUR was attempting to be very cooperative but both embassies were not. They were remarkably uncooperative. Some of our contracts for cleaning and what have you were still held by the embassy. Looking back to a time when we were around the corner from the embassy on the villa St. Daniel or whatever it was. Some were handled by the Vatican. Of course, I kept arguing that the Vatican should take over all of these contracts if they choose or will take them over, but give us a contract option. Well, what they eventually did was give us a, they did give us an accountant who worked at the embassy but was less committed to us. He was a dedicated...

Q: This was the Rome embassy as opposed to the Vatican embassy.

MONROE: Right. I argued strenuously that the mission should be integrated administratively. Actually I thought that all three should be I mean as they do in Brussels, because the Vatican had an administrative officer.

Q: The Vatican was completely separate from the embassy in Rome administratively and every other way.

MONROE: Well, all of us were dependent on Rome's communications. Technology was such at that time that they didn't have the small post kits available for the kind of setting we were in, which was a complex communications setting in a modern country more or less.

Q: When your office would send a telegram to Washington, it would be signed by Monroe?

MONROE: Yes. I mean I moved in there operating just the way Eckert did. That is the way I operated until the day I left.

Q: Nobody else ever came so you

MONROE: Well, I was never given the title of Ambassador because every time I was offered it from someone on the hill, they later found that person wanted the job, Phil Christianson for example, from Helm's office wanted to turn it into an embassy. Then another Congressman, influential Congressman, he didn't want the job, but there was somebody he wanted to give it to. A member of the black caucus, Donnely, I think. Something like that. Then Hecht, Senator Hecht from Nevada, remember him? He wanted it very badly. He called me and said, "Where is the nearest golf course?" I said, "All the golf courses are far out," and they were. I wasn't lying. I said, "I have never heard of one, but there must be one. I'll ask. I am sure Italians play golf." Well, he became very distressed at the visibly, I mean audibly distressed at that over the phone. I could hear as I sort of thought out loud. Well I think I know some one who must belong to a club. Well, I will ask at the FAO. Maybe he will know. But, in any case, yes, that went on. Every time I asked something for our administrative types back in IO, his response would be well I just got a call from the hill. They are interested in sending out so and so. He had a perfect ploy, but I am fighting for you. I don't know how many were interested except the ones that called me.

Q: As far as the State Department and maybe the White House was concerned, you were the acting permanent representative.

MONROE: NO, I was the permanent chief of mission. That was the title they finally got around to giving me sometime in April.

Q: And you were there about what, two and a half years or longer?

MONROE: Three years. My wife was there two and a half.

Q: And besides dealing with the two embassies, your main purpose was to deal with the food and agricultural organization of the UN and the World Food Programme and IFAD.

MONROE: IFAD and numerous legal entities I didn't know about but which I had to sit on the finance committees of, if you don't mind my ending with a preposition.

Q: What was your sort of main area that you worked on and what were the main problems you were dealing with?

MONROE: Well, initially, we had horrible, when I arrived, the day I arrived, I actually called on this, the director general of the FAO the day I arrived. The relations between the United States and him personally were just in the gutter. I mean just...

Q: What was the name of the director general?

MONROE: His name was Soloma, Edward Soloma. He was of Lebanese origin. He had come up the usual way in the FAO which is firm rep job at the FAO, division chief or something and then runs for director general and wins. We had not supported him for his third term. He had already served two terms. We supported him for his first term as a technocrat. We supported him for his second term because everyone serves two terms, but not his third term. We supported someone from Benin whose coming didn't make much of a showing.

Q: By the time you were there, this was his third term.

MONROE: This was his third term, so he was angry at us because we hadn't been supportive. He was angry at us because we were already falling into arrears, nothing like we ultimately fell into, and had only paid part of our dues our obligations. I was a member of the finance committee, ex officio, as well as the program committee and a number of other committees, OECD. Multi lateral life is one meeting after another because there are all of these little groupings. The place was a mini UN, I mean a mini New York in that sense. They all operate pretty much the same. You have the Geneva group which is a formal group of interested major donors. We had a lot of informal groups. We were unique because we weren't divided between Western Europe and others in the G 77. We were divided between OECD and non OECD which made for a rather slight variation. There were satellites who were members. Of course this in the descending days of the Soviet Union, but they were still there more or less. The Soviet Union had never taken up its seat, so that set of issues didn't arise. We didn't have east west, but north south was, you know, north south conflict was the way in which someone kept power.

Q: In support of the south.

MONROE: He had the support of the south. So I began to call on everyone I possibly could. I had seen mistakes made. Dare I say Ambassador Whittlesey was not very diligent in making calls, so many people refused to talk to her, she found.

Q: Because she had not called on them.

MONROE: That's right.

Q: To introduce herself.

MONROE: That's right, so I decided that I was going to call on every African, every Latin American and Middle Easterner. All these were geographic groupings within.

Q: And all of these were representatives of their country at FAO.

MONROE: Well, I called on everyone. I called on ambassadors which many times they preferred. Most of my colleagues in the western group I met the ambassadors of. They invited me to a luncheon or something of that sort. That was easily done. I didn't really have to call on them, but I did have to call on African- (end of tape)

Q: This is June 9, 1999. Gerry, we have been talking about your assignment from 1989 to 1992, which was U.S. permanent representative to the UN food agencies in Rome, head of that mission. I think the other day we were talking about some of the things you tried to do on an ongoing basis to keep in touch with the variety of other delegations from Africa and all parts of the world. What were some of the main issues you had to deal with in that period? Were we fully paid up, or was this kind of the beginning of the difficulties we had paying our full share of the expenses to the UN agencies that subsequently come to affect all of the United Nations contributions?

MONROE: I think several things coalesced very severe relations, and probably our relations with the UN system was no where as bad as it was with the FAO. The reasons were several. There was an underlying problem with the UN system generally where the administration was concerned. I arrived just at the change of the Reagan Bush administrations. We had been falling into arrears during the previous two years. We had had several ambassadors. These people were political appointees. One was a prominent Congresswoman by the name of Millicent Fenwick who in general was very positive toward the FAO, toward development, and she for whatever reason was able to get along with Salma in a very positive way. Indeed she was frequently instructed not to take positive action but did that Salma considered helpful. As a matter of fact, someone called me just yesterday and asked to talk about. Excuse me, someone who is working on a biography of Millicent Fenwick, and they wanted to talk about the Rome years. She was fluent in Italian; she was fluent in French which was Salma's first language if not Arabic. I never knew which. French seemed to be the language he preferred to use. Then, when she left, she was replaced by an extremely conservative ex congressman from upstate New York. His views more or less conformed to the views of many conservatives both on the hill and in the administration. Therefore, relations just fell into the cellar. Salma and Ambassador Eckert finally made their peace just before Eckert left, but much harm had been done. A considerable amount of negative reporting on Salma was done, negative impressions were drawn during the conferences and council meetings and assembly meetings and so on. So that in many instances, I would say that that part of IO that handled the FAO, we were involved in a cold war you might say. It was one of those cases where the desk officer loved to hate his client. And of course the feeling was reciprocated. I think Salma felt for several reasons, one is that this was his third term, and we had not supported him for a third term while we had for the first two elections. Incidentally it runs about six to seven years. It is a lengthy hold on the office. Salma had first been elected in '76, so this man had been running the FAO for a number of years. During that time there was a considerable controversy attached to his name particularly where the first African famine of the '80s occurred or during this Ethiopian civil war and the tyrannical regime of Mengistu, and the FAO's actions during that time, the FAO's efforts to whatever their efforts were did not meet the standard the U.S. government expected to be met, nor did they meet the standards of the World Food Programme. That began, I think, the animosity between Salma and the Australian director general of the World Food Programme. I think I described that last time. There were already two strikes against anyone who went, three strikes if you count Eckert who was not Salma's favorite person. What one found when one made the opening call on Salma was a lot of hostility. Now this was before we managed to stay in by just giving him enough money to retain our vote. Several other things that happened during that first year. The council president was a prominent agriculturist from a member country. The term was three years. These people were elected. It was held to be the U.S. turn which is frequently the way things operate in the United Nations system, regions and to the degree countries within those regions have turned. As a major donor country it was pretty much felt it was time for the U.S. to head the council. We hadn't actually had that position for many years, several decades I think. A Belgian ran against, the Belgian current representative ran against the very prominent person that we found, the number three at Agriculture, and actually had been in the industry very well known grain broker working with Cargill, so this was a prominent man in American agriculture. He lost because many felt some had brought pressure to bear on the governing council membership particularly the G 77 or the developing countries.

Q: Who were sitting on the council at that time.

MONROE: That's right. I think the answer is he did. I think he clearly didn't want an American to win. He argued that it was inappropriate given the level of our arrears. In any case with this in hand, with that loss in hand and several other political things we had for the first time, a Palestinian resolution was introduced by the Egyptians of all people. We didn't really expect that. Well, the usual team flew out both from Israel and the United States to deal with this. As it turned out, I dealt with it mostly and a DAS from IO. We met constantly for the better part of a week with various middle eastern caucuses, and seemed to be making headway. We also had a very long afternoon with the Egyptian ambassador. We thought that perhaps we were watering this down to where it would be acceptable to the Israelis and to ourselves for that matter. One of the pluses of the FAO was that it had been remarkably unpolitical over the years. I think that was one of its strengths, probably one of the few left by this time. Certainly in terms of the way Washington viewed the agency. Well, the possibility of the usual kind of Palestinian resolution which was political without question. Palestine was already or the territories that the Israelis called it were already benefits of a fairly significant FAO program, so we could see no particular gain to be made except in the political arena. In any case, I think inexorably we were going to lose that one as we do in all agencies. We got a little more support there because even the Australians abstained. We got more extensions than we expected. Normally the Australians follow the EC's road on this sort of thing. They essentially support Palestinians resolutions. Notwithstanding their surprising level of support, we still lost the vote by a fairly significant number. It wasn't two votes to a hundred and sixty eight as it usually was the case in that sort of thing. In any case, Washington was very upset with that. I think that tilted the boat in favor of just getting off it and letting the FAO go slowly out to sea. There was no question that the organization, had we left, I knew the Canadians would leave, the British would have given very strong consideration to leaving because by this time no one in the donor community if you want to call it that because that is the way the real division is. It wasn't so much contribution levels as it was donor and beneficiary or G 77 versus members of the OECD, however one wants to call it. I think at the UN it was Europe and others. At the FAO for whatever historic reason it was the OECD group. Therefore Washington decided we were going to get out of this thing. Now, there was not total unanimity even among the conservatives. The farm belt congressmen wanted to stay in.

Q: The Department of Agriculture?

MONROE: The Department of Agriculture definitely wanted to stay in simply because they found it a convenient venue for technical exchanges and because the FAO ran a structure of independent research organizations who were regionally organized. The Agriculture Department felt that this was of value relationship, not critically important to the agricultural welfare of the United States. In fact the United States technology was by and large the driving force of the agency. That said, much was learned from others obviously. Some of the G 77 had the largest seed banks in the world and so forth which was worth having access to through the FAO. But that did not mean to say that the Secretary of Agriculture would not have been influenced by the political world of the White House obviously. I think this whole Palestinian issue which was very barely caught. Of course, what happened was, as frequently happens with this sort of thing is the EEC persuaded the middle east that they were going, the middle eastern caucus that they would support them, or I should say the French, that they would support this resolution, so the ground was cut out from under us. Try as we might, we had much more negotiating success with Syria than we did with France as it turned out. Not unusual I suspect. With that behind us, I got to go over with my Agricultural attaché^{1/2} and hand this \$15 million check to the director general. It was one of the most unpleasant interludes in my entire career. I never quite dealt, even Soviets, I never quite dealt with a foreign interlocutor who was literally in a rage, I mean stomping about the office. It was almost carpet chewing.

Q: Why was he so enraged? You were giving him \$18 million for his organization.

MONROE: Well, he needed 56 from us. That's what he felt, plus we owed another \$70 or \$80 million at that time, I don't recall. The total indebtedness was far beyond \$18 million.

Q: Was he objecting also to whatever instructions you had to tell him?

MONROE: Oh, absolutely. I mean, he was convinced there was some sort of conspiracy. Indeed he never got above the personal in the entire three years that we worked together most of the time. It was just in his background. As he put it, he had been there whatever 15 years and he still had all his teeth. Probably an old Lebanese saying, an old Arabic saying, but whatever, I think it pretty much personified the man, his personality. Many people, man Americans and indeed many other Europeans considered Salama personally corrupt. I think that was not the case. He lived modestly. I was unaware of anything irregular in his dealings with the system, the UN system except the way in which his pension was calculated. The UN has several figures for income levels. One is used for pension purposes. The gap between that and what he actually made was the widest probably in their system. Other than that, I could find nothing that could indicate crooks, you know skimming money from projects or anything of that nature. What was terribly corrupt was his use of permanent representatives from the third world. Many of these people don't receive or regularly receive instructions. Indeed they may not receive instructions in most matters of importance to other members. So they will vote in expectation of a permanent job at the FAO when their permanent representative status was concluded. This had happened enough to suggest that perhaps there was more than merit involved. Indeed Salama himself had been Lebanese special representative before he got a job with the FAO. I will say he seldom delivered. I mean it was probably, there probably were other aspects leading to his decision. None of them were based on merit. I know he did choose the Saudi for head of the newly arranged state of the middle eastern office which had been closed for years. It was quite clear that man was not up to the job, but there was a close relationship between Salama and that particular person. This, of course was not unknown to the department, and they had a view that this sort of maneuvering lended to the Palestinian resolution - i.e. that essentially what Salama had told us was that if we were to vote for the, rather if we were to support the budget and pay or make a good faith effort to pay, this Palestinian resolution might go away. That was certainly a very plausible interpretation of what Salama had said both to me and the assistant secretary. It was after the assembly conference. The Assistant secretary had no doubt and what's more whether he had doubt or not, and I had little doubt as well, he just didn't... I wasn't surprised, let's put it that way. I didn't see it as the worst thing that ever happened. It made sense to me, and I think the thing to have done was just what we did do, stay in but make clear that we were most displeased.

Q: How close in sequence were these steps? This all happened in 1989, the Palestinian resolution was passed, and soon after you delivered the \$18 million.

MONROE: It was a matter of weeks. The conference ended the second week in December and I had to have the check in his hand by January 2, which is when I delivered it. I have forgotten what the [connection was], so when the relationship between these events and the payment of that \$18 million was really, they were intimately associated.

Q: Was there also a debate though as to whether maybe to pull out entirely and not pay the \$18 million?

MONROE: Oh, yes. I'm sure that was the assistant secretary, the Secretary of Agriculture's view and some Congress people, but I know there was very strong opposition even among some Republicans from the farm states. On the other hand, the foreign affairs committee, some powerful people on the Foreign Affairs Committee were very strongly disposed toward our leaving the organization. Had we done so as I mentioned before, then the organization itself would have unraveled. The Canadians would definitely have left. The British were giving it serious consideration.

Q: Did you make a recommendation?

MONROE: Well, yes. From the very beginning I said we just have to see it through. Salama wasn't forever. He wasn't the FAO. He was a very shady character who had become director general of the FAO. He was about as bad as the system then had, but there had been worse. There were worse than actually from one point of view. Salama was competent. One could never claim that he didn't know the business, and he didn't know the organization. He certainly didn't know how to handle Americans for sure.

Q: Who was the Secretary of Agriculture in this period?

MONROE: Yider.

Q: He had quite a bit of international experience himself.

MONROE: Quite a bit, and he had come to the conference. You know, he was there for as per usual, three or four days. Of course, everything went wrong that could from Salama's point of view. When I gave Yider the traditional conference party at my residence, Salama first accepted and then didn't show.

Q: Was this meant as a sign of displeasure with the United States?

MONROE: Obviously, and the Secretary noticed it. It might have been pointed out to him by somebody which I suspect. But he said, "Well as a major donor, he should have appeared." He certainly should have appeared after saying he was coming.

Q: Did he have an explanation?

MONROE: No, he really didn't. He apologized to me later personally, you know on a personal basis, which was his way, but he didn't, and he muttered some excuse in French which I didn't catch. I think it was meant to be an affront. Because, he went for example, somebody saw him in the Secretary of Agriculture's entourage of the Algerians. It turned out that the Algerians and Egyptians had been the people who had tabled the Palestinian resolution. So, there was a good deal of animosity or a good deal of negative energy from the Secretary of Agriculture as he left Rome. He really felt that he had not been treated very well by Salama. Salama believed that he had been similarly mistreated and not given appropriate regard given his status.

Q: All of this I think happened in the first year you were in Rome.

MONROE: It happened during the first year. I then decided that we needed to go to the United States, my mission needed to go to the membership and convince them that we were serious about the affair. That our concerns were well grounded. There was a problem, a serious problem with the FAO, which others were aware of. I renewed my efforts to deal with Africans particularly. We were most successful, my staff and I were most successful with such countries as Cameroon. Ethiopia was going pretty well, but then the fellow defected which created another drama of its own.

Q: In the sense that he defected to you?

MONROE: Yes, at a cocktail party. So he stayed for dinner unexpectedly. I then turned him over to the embassy, but it made it difficult to renew relations with the Ethiopians. I believe Mengistu was still there, or if not, someone like him. I don't recall the exact position this fellow was in, but it was obviously very serious. I also developed very close relationship with the Bangladeshi perm rep who had worked at the UN both as a permanent representative for his country but also doing special missions for the Secretary General. The same could be said of the Brazilian ambassador who was a superb diplomat. I saw him for awhile. We had about four or five lunches when I probably said that I think what we need to do is to get a country with a skilled diplomat such as yourself to figure some way to stay in this organization. He agreed to look into that. He did. He got the Argentine on board. I think there had been a change in the Argentine point of view as far as the United States was concerned. At least I was told that with a new president who is still in office. The view was that we would look at, we Argentina, would look out for our interests but we would not take on the United States. There was no real reason to, and we would try to be helpful to the United States where it was consistent with our own interests. They saw our staying in the United Nations system as in their interest. So, they helped in dealing with the Latin American group. This led to a little group of Latin Americans that I met with periodically which helped get Puerto Rico into the FAO, an interesting side bar.

Q: Puerto Rico was a member of the FAO?

MONROE: Was. They decided not to remain a member when there was a change of government, a change in the governorship. In any case, that was very difficult for the Latin Americans to swallow. They didn't like that.

Q: They probably felt that Puerto Rico was not an independent nation.

MONROE: Well, they wanted it to join as an independent nation. There is a special status at the FAO which had been developed for European, for British colonies. Puerto Rico joined under those special arrangements. Also, Puerto Rico didn't pay, so that added to our arrears. It wasn't much. It wasn't a serious matter.

Q: How were the relations with the western Europeans in this period? Coming back to the election to the chair of the council, I could understand why a number of countries would not be very happy about voting for the United States given this acrimony and problems that had occurred, but one of the problems was that we were competing with a close ally, friend, Belgium. You know, if there were going to be two candidates for essentially the same family, then others had to pick one or the other.

MONROE: Well, that was right. In fact it was the OECD who said it was our turn. It was that group.

Q: Our turn meaning...

MONROE: ...that we should run someone.

Q: We, the United States?

MONROE: The United States. It was only Belgium in that...

Q: Belgium is an OECD country.

MONROE: They are, and we understand the Belgian government had first instructed him not to run. He had been a very important colonial governor in the Congo. This was his principal contribution. He purported to be absolutely, totally, fully devoted to the aims of the G 77 because of this terrible experience with his as he would have put it. The whole title was independent chairman, and so he said that our person could not be independent because he had worked with Cargill. His position was that he would be under the instructions of Cargill, which was nonsense of course.

Q: But did things begin to improve with the western Europeans in this latter part of your time?

MONROE: Yes, we had, well, the French could not be reached. They were a solid supporter of Salama because he was Francophone. Everyone else as I said, as a matter of fact, this reform minded group that so called group that existed while I was there, when I first arrived, and really had nothing to do with these issues that I was discussing earlier, that is to say the bi lateral issues. They were the result of Scandinavian skepticism about the honesty and the effectiveness of the programs that Salama was running in various underdeveloped countries. This was a result of something called multi bi which means that effectively countries like Denmark and Finland will not have a very developed technical assistance agency of their own. It would be just a few people in the foreign office. They will use the UN system to deliver their aid through trust fund contributions. It is a complicated system, but the short title is multi bi, multilateral/bilateral. The only problem with it is you have to trust your multilateral organization and you have to be certain that you can account for the monies you put in trust for multilateral organizations to use. As this became a problem, the Camberly group was formed. The whole problem with the Camberly group was at first it was designed to find systems and approaches for accountability rather than looking at the whole policy construct. Furthermore, we thought the Scandinavians would never do anything particularly serious to bring the FAO up short and get it cooperating. One of its major weaknesses was its total unwillingness to cooperate with other members of the UN system such as the World Health Organization which there was a real link there. I already mentioned the World Food Programme and several links, also other agencies, for example, UNDP, the United Nations Development Program which was a trust fund of the Secretary General. That organization had traditionally been run by an American. Parenthetically it no longer is. It is run by a British citizen, so I suspect that reflects the reduction in our contributions. Of course, UNDP was held to be under the control of the donors. It almost had a form of weighted building. I might mention it later because my next assignment really dealt with UNDP. In any case, our technical judgment was UNDP should be closely associated with FAO and other specialized agencies in order to have a resident representative there who was responsible for the entire country program where ever they might be, be it Ghana or Cambodia. Salama didn't see the world that way, so we had a technical problem with him. You know, his view was that he was very turf conscious to put it bluntly. His view was only FAO knew how to do scientific agriculture, and they were the only ones who knew how to apply these tools to the development populace. The Europeans were worried about that. We were not the only ones to conclude that. I don't think they were interested in the United Nations Development Program as we were, but I do think they felt that greater coordination and cooperation was absolutely essential if they were going to get their money's worth. I formed a group myself to replace the Camberly group. I think it became known as the Monroe group actually. It was about eight or nine, or ten European perm reps including Australia. Again it was more structured, more obvious than the little group with Latin America that I also had. Their job, their aim, our aim was to bring FAO at least to a point where we could argue to our governments that it was beginning to turn around as Salama's last term came to a halt, came to an end, excuse me. The organization itself was going to change from within. We were attempting to influence individuals within the organization, the assistant secretary or the assistant director general level, not in any political way, not against Salama, but toward greater coordination, for example, forestry and so forth.

Q: Now were you there when his term did come to an end and the question of an election to a successor came up?

MONROE: I left the year before.

Q: But you were involved with the election of an American to the World Food Programme?

MONROE: Yes, I was. That was a very curious agency. It was begun in the '70s. The story I like best, there are lots of stories about how it was born, but the one that I thought was the nicest was that Henry Kissinger and the Shah of Iran got together and Henry Kissinger said we are going to need something besides oil to make this food conference of 1974 and the oil conferences and so forth during the same period, make sense to the world at large. So the World Food Programme was created, largely with American and Iranian money, oil money and American commodities. That's as good a story as any. I think the possibility of a multilateral food agency struck everyone as constructive for a number of reasons. It did allow us, for example, to deal more effectively with the first Ethiopian crisis, the first Ethiopian famine created by this dictator, Mengistu, in a way that no individual European country could have worked it. I said it was extremely difficult even for the World Food Programme because there were no NGOs in Ethiopia at that point. Normally the World Food Programme tends to broker food to NGOs and to other agencies such as the United Nations Children's agency. I'll call it that because the intercession no longer need be an emergency. It was designed initially for European children after the war. But that is an example of an agency that does a lot of feeding, that deals with refugee situations focusing on women and children obviously. But in Ethiopia, I believe World Food Programme had to develop a distribution system of its own which was not really what it was cut out to do, but it did this and it did it effectively all things considered. I think that may have been one of the reasons why Salama and Ingram became estranged. There was considerable disagreement as to when to declare an emergency, a food emergency.

Q: Was the World Food Programme under the FAO or was it separate?

MONROE: No, it was separate, but it was part of the FAO to the degree that the secretary general and the director general of the FAO chose the secretary general of the World Food Programme. "Executive director of the World Food Programme" was his title.

Q: So the Secretary General of the United Nations and the head of FAO jointly select the executive director of WFP.

MONROE: Exactly. And WFP used FAO administrative support.

Q: It was located in Rome.

MONROE: At least then, yes. It was located in Rome but it had a totally separate organization, had a separate headquarters.

Q: And you were the U.S. representative.

MONROE: I was the U.S. representative to that. I had a very senior AID official who dealt with the day to day stuff. But I dealt probably more with them with their executive secretary than any preceding permanent representative. One, I had known him from an earlier job when I was in EB and working on food aid conference which was another, I think I described that in an earlier time. But Jim Ingram was having a lot of problems at that point administratively and every other way with the FAO, so I was in constant communication with him.

Q: Did he then decide at some point not to seek another term.

MONROE: He had had his two terms and that was traditional. And he was of a panache. I think he was looking forward to, he had a years teaching stint at Oxford and then going back to the outback in Australia where he came from.

Q: And then we decided that we would like to see an American replace him.

MONROE: Well, again, in discussing this with the OECD, they agreed it was now, it was still the donor period, and incidentally the distinction between donors and beneficiary was very sharp in the World Food Programme. For obvious reasons it was delineated institutionally. The donor group, which was more or less like the OECD group except it included Argentina.

Q: A major wheat producer.

MONROE: Major wheat producer and a member of the World Food Aid Committee in London. We were not in the best position to convince Salama that this was a good thing to do. First we had to arrange for an amicable divorce between the World Food Programme and the FAO where administrative matters were concerned. The department had decided and I had endorsed the notion that it wasn't working.

Q: So that there should be a complete separation.

MONROE: A complete separation of administrative, not to change the way the executive secretary was appointed, but rather to let them administer themselves because they had a considerable amount of expertise in brokering ships and freight forwarding and so forth, marine insurance. So they had different needs basically. Their people did different things, and it was very hard to get expense accounts reconciled and so forth and so on. Of course the will wasn't there either on the part of the FAO in everyone's judgment. We needed to call the Secretary General into the picture of the United Nations which the department did very effectively. They started sending to various meetings, they started sending a representative from the UN in New York, from the UN secretariat to attend these meetings. Happily it was an ex-Foreign Service officer with whom I had quite a long friendship, or had had. I mean we hadn't seen one another for approximately 15 years, but we had been friends for awhile, went through FSI or something like that. His name was Jim Baker, but not Jim Baker the Secretary of State. It just happened to be Jim Baker. He came frequently, and he told me that the secretary general was very reluctant to take a position because traditionally he had just let the FAO make the choice and preceding secretary generals had as well. He said however, he sensed what the problems were, so if we could come up with what I call an amicable divorce, if this thing could be made to work, then he would appoint an American of our choice. The Europeans had already picked the American unfortunately. He was the head of operations at the World Food Programme.

Q: And they wanted to see him promoted.

MONROE: They wanted to see him promoted because they knew his capabilities and they knew he was largely responsible for the good that the World Food Programme had done during the African crisis in the mid-'80s. That was not the person we chose. As a matter of fact it was Secretary of Agriculture took me aside and said the choice was a woman by the name of Catherine Britini who at that point was head of several of the feeding programs in the United States, the WIC program- (end of tape)

Q: Had run for Congress; had been defeated, a conservative from up New York State. She had been in the Department of Agriculture for some time, so she had some experience, not with the World Food Programme though I suppose.

MONROE: No, she hadn't. Very little international experience. The problem that she confronted at least with the Europeans was that she had had insufficient experience. Everyone holds the job to be one of the more difficult in the system because of the kinds of decisions. To give an idea of the kinds of decisions, I used to sit up with Ingram late in the evening while he struggled with whether to send a boat into Asmara. The last one had been fired upon, but people were in desperate straits outside of Asmara, and the trucks were lined up on the dock. He ultimately sent the boat in. I can recall his agonizing over that decision. I got that into a letter that the Secretary of State wrote him as he left office and everyone was aware of these kinds of decisions, two a day, that this man was making. It was one of the reasons he wanted to leave quite apart from his relations with Salama. The Europeans had difficulty envisaging someone like Britini taking some of those.

Q: Well, I know that today in 1999, she is still the head of the World Food Programme so tell us how you arranged for her election or selection.

MONROE: Well, the maneuver the department began with I think was a good maneuver. They sent cables to all of Africa. As a matter of fact, my successor was running that part of the program.

Q: From Washington.

MONROE: From Washington. Asking our people to go in there and make a demarche for Catherine Britini's selection. Salama called me in to say even before the first cable left the department I suspect, to say that this was nonsense. It wasn't an election. There is no way a permanent rep, at last he admitted it, the permanent rep population from that part of the world was going to tell him something he didn't want to hear.

Q: So how did you respond to that?

MONROE: Well, I said we just feel that we want you to feel comfortable with your decision. So then if these countries after meeting her and evaluating her background feel that she is the one they would like to represent their interests at the World Food Programme as the beneficiary community, I think then you would feel more comfortable.

Q: Was it his inclination did we think at the time that he was going to select the American who was the operations chief at the World Food Programme instead of backing a candidate that we endorsed?

MONROE: No there was no feeling of that. As a matter of fact, Chase let it be known that he was going to leave.

Q: He was the...

MONROE: He was the person, yes. This person decided the best thing he could do was get out of town as soon as a new executive secretary was chosen. The Danes then quite by surprise, put up a senior diplomat, which is essentially what Ingram was for us, had been for Australia, to run. Run, by that I mean to attract Salama's attention and give him an alternative to selecting Britini. This was not a good thing actually. He was very smooth obviously. He had a lot of international experience. He was very much your typical UN executive, diplomatic background, very smooth, lots of contacts around the world and so forth and so on. NO agricultural experience that we could determine. Then there was talk of running a minister of something or other from Sweden. This was a woman who had had at least experience with UNICEF, with the dealing with children. It began to look as if the OECD group was not going to support our person, not because they didn't think it was time for the United States, they just weren't convinced that our choice was a good choice. Since major donors are major donors, and they want to be certain that their money and their commodities are being appropriately handled. So I set out to convince them that Ms. Britini had the requisite background in the sense that she was well aware of the problems that arose in trying to feed large groups of people and so forth. She came out on several occasions, on every possible occasion actually to Rome. She toured Africa. She took my AID attaché^{1/2} with her to do this which was a good idea actually. I think it worked very well for both of them. To make a long story short, I had advised Washington from the very beginning that none of this, you know, we can work on countries, but Salama was going to choose to do this only if he thinks its.. So what is really going to count is the budget debate and the budget negotiations at that conference that was coming up. The conference where Ingram's successor had to be appointed. That would happen at a major assembly conference.

Q: We could be current or at least eliminate our arrears, that would make a big difference.

MONROE: That's right. So, I asked that the financial person from IO come out, and she did, a very capable person. I went in to see Salama's financial, technical people, and we said what we would be willing to do. Primarily we based our position on as full payment as possible. We were now in the Bush administration, and Bush was pro UN because of his previous experience. By that I don't think he was going to do anything radical about supporting the UN, but I think he felt we should pay our current dues. The question of arrears was extraordinarily complex and remains so at the UN. Very difficult to get the Congress to agree to arrears payments. We felt that we could get a little arrears out of them if the FAO agreed to use these arrears for a predetermined projects if we could agree on one. Because these are windfalls for the agency effectively and actually no longer had any need for the money in the truest sense. We were paying almost up to the penny on our current, and I knew we were going to so, I mean I got a call from someone I knew on one of the key committees in this thing. It looked as if we were going down the right track. What then became the issue was the zero based budget. We had always insisted on the no growth budget.

Q: In the FAO.

MONROE: In the FAO. Zero budget growth. Salama said that was our ideology; that was our religion, and it was wholly unrealistic given the arrears situation and so forth. Of course there were many members who never paid, mostly G 77. Of course, every time someone paid from the G 77, they would get up and say we are going to pay our \$23,000 which was the minimum you could pay. The minimum you had to pay as a member. Then they would say no matter how much we are suffering and how many people are starving, we are still going to make this payment because we think it is our duty. That was another one of Salama's maneuvers, which he never tired of. I mostly didn't arise to his baiting except at one point when he accused us of stealing from other members because we weren't paying. I then made a statement about how the American system operated and whatever else we were doing, we weren't stealing. Of course, given the amount of money we had spent on the agency at its beginning and over all the years, this was nonsensical. In any case, I believe that whatever happened in the autumn of 1991 it was really going to be based on zero based budgeting. Some sort of an agreement would be worked out finally.

Q: When was the agreement reached?

MONROE: Finally the agreement had to be made with the director general. We did; we had lunch in his office. It was the first time in our entire stay that the agency ever permitted that to happen. We actually had lunch catered in his office, and had the agricultural attaché^{1/2} there, had this financial advisor who was superb. He had his financial advisor, his administrative people. We worked on as usual it became a very complex arrangement which no one could understand, which was part of the most people who were privy to the background would not understand, which is not unusual at all. It is actually two budgets is what it mounted to. It was like UN payday. I was very reluctant to do this incidentally because I knew the higher of the two, the virtual budget as opposed to the real budget, would be the one that he would want to work on for the next round. But in consultation with the department, we decided to take the arrangement with its faults because this was the only way we could be assured of one, a zero based budget outcome. It would maximize Catherine Britini's chances, and I think he made that clear. It would begin, it was one way of getting a little bit of arrears out of the Congress because they were interested in Catherine Britini by this point, at least some of them were. So, all in all, that is what happened. Everyone was happy. He appointed Britini, signed off and left.

Q: He was involved in her selection as well.

MONROE: Yes, he had to be.

Q: Were the African countries that had been lobbied, did it really make any difference what they thought?

MONROE: I don't know whether it made any difference where Salama was concerned. I mean it was something he could point to if he were criticized for her in his own little group whatever that was. You know, his group of perm rep supporters and what have you who had the base of his power. Without question, however, that group remained loyal to Catherine Britini throughout her tenure and remains loyal to her. Once she took office, and we overlapped for... I made the welcoming speech for her at one of the program committee meetings, so I was there then. I guess we went to a few African dinners together where some of the African group had gotten together and threw her a party. So I could see he had very good relations with this part of the beneficiary community, and things have gone on apace. She made some enemies in her own office.

Q: Her own office meaning the World Food Programme staff.

MONROE: Well, in the executive suite as it were because she really tried to fire all of Ingram's people, and that didn't quite work because many of them were UN civil servants, and they just couldn't be fired from one day to the next. But in general she did well. People supported her. She appointed an African as director of operations. He came from the Cameroon. My sense was that he was effective. It is always hard to measure how effective, but certainly he didn't fall on his face as some people thought he might.

Q: Certainly the food needs of the world had advanced in the period we are talking about.

MONROE: They have. She had Bosnia in that part of the world where there was considerable...

Q: Lots of things in Africa, Afghanistan.

MONROE: Lots of things in Africa, Afghanistan. North Korea has been one of her major efforts. I still see the fellow, my AID attaché who left government service. Worked in Latin America for a time, for the Latin American agent of the FAO. Then he became a consultant, and he has consulted for the World Food Programme in terms of organizational change. They are trying to be more decentralized. Well, they started out as a very decentralized agency. They had to be brought to Rome because of this need for administrative affairs. So, I would say, she has done the job.

Q: Okay, is there anything else we should talk about your time in Rome? I am sure there are lots of other things.

MONROE: There are that we could talk about, but I think that that's, I think I learned a lot about bilateral diplomacy in the very real sense and the techniques of dealing with perm reps who can't leave the room without cabling their government and perm reps who hardly ever hear from their government, the free standers as we call them. Also the fact there is a power structure in all of these organizations. There are cliques that cut across regional lines. There is the G 77, an extremely strong organization caucus you might say. It is a caucus in some agencies, not all, but in some agencies it can deliver a lot of votes when it has to.

Q: Would you say that you, as the United States representative, had very little leeway without instructions, without checking with Washington, or did you have a fair amount of autonomy and independence, chance to take initiatives?

MONROE: Well, as much autonomy as you could possibly want. Sometimes even more than one might have wanted. I think for several reasons. It was a specialized agency. It wasn't, you know, the security council after all. Secondly, for a long time, the desk officer left and wasn't replaced. Nobody thought of replacing him since we got along well. I had, I was in total agreement with my DAS if not always the assistant secretary, probably hardly ever with the assistant secretary if he deigned to look at, I mean he had a lot of other things on his plate fortunately. I think once he had decided to stay, he didn't care any more. He thought I was doing it as well as anyone could. The people who were somewhat more troublesome who were the other agencies. We also did fisheries which was not a problem except on one occasion, which would make a good problem in a school if there was a school that taught diplomacy, a good case study. I think I should mention one thing before departing. I did have other agencies to which I was accredited including several legal agencies which just happened to be there, something called UNIDOIT. It was a magnificent organization. It met, these were learned attorneys from all over the world and they were attempting to codify a global civil code, and had been since 1930. This old League of Nations organization that met in a beautiful villa. I only handled their finance, I was only involved in their financial matters, but it was a good deal of fun. We were also involved in finding who did [what in] this organization that was involved in art restoration. It was a UN agency. It was involved in trying to catalogue stolen art. It was a very interesting organization. They had me over to lunch once to show me the organization; I never had anything else to do with them. And then an agency that had sprung from AID but had become an international agency that gave advice on legal systems for third world countries. In other words, they would send specialists out to do a commercial code, legal code.

Q: And all of these agencies were based in Rome.

MONROE: They were all based in Rome.

Q: Which is why you as the multilateral U.S. representative got involved with them even though they had nothing to do with food or agriculture.

MONROE: That's exactly right although the brass plaque said special representative or permanent representative to the UN food agency resident in Rome. It was a long time, so we didn't think we needed anything more on the plaque and couldn't think of anything else to say. I very seldom, I only went to those institutions when there were problems with finances, and there were from time to time because they were denominated in Swiss Francs, so the Lira Franc arrangement was troubled. That was their problem. The others, I think the people providing legal support to third world countries had had some problems with the Italian government in a status problem. Someone argued that was because the FAO had a related but not similar I should say program where they went out to talk about agricultural law and sent experts out. Anyway, we finally solved that with the Italian government and took care of that.

Q: Okay, in 1992 summer you continued your multilateral expertise, field and came back to Washington. I believe your title was director of office of multilateral development and food aid in the bureau of international organizations affairs, IO.

MONROE: Yes, what happened there was that office had traditionally been funded and staffed by AID officers. I think there was one or two others, perhaps two FSO's in the whole office. The office was divided into those who handle the UN and those who handled the food agencies, so there were two sections.

Q: You say handle the UN, you mean UNDP.

MONROE: UNDP, UNICEF, the development or emergency assistance agencies. From one day to the next, AID said it wasn't going to fund any more and what's more, it wasn't going to staff it anymore.

Q: It comes after you had arrived?

MONROE: No, this had happened once before I had arrived, and the DAS at the time asked me if I would come back on a reasonably short term basis and sort of prepare that office to be a State office, because the State Department had after some hesitation decided to staff the office and support it. So, I came back, for reasons, and they were all the technical administrative reasons I didn't like but one has to handle in this sort of situation. I, for reasons I think of propriety, I didn't want to become too involved with the FAO matters if I could help it. I mean I went out to various meetings but...

Q: Had the desk officer reported to you?

MONROE: Yes, kept me informed. The real problems were with UNDP, the successor for the director of UNDP.

Q: The question of who should be...

MONROE: Who should be the successor; whether it should be an American. Listeners may want to know that part of the UN has obligatory budgets that the membership undertakes to pay an assessment every year. That includes the UN itself, which is the security council and the general assembly, and a number of other institutions that are associated with the UN in New York. They're really trust funds of the secretary general. They are trust funds because these are all supported voluntarily such as UNICEF. UNICEF is not a specialized agency. Specialized agencies are known as such because they have their own budget. They can assets.

Q: Although some of them have a voluntary component for certain programs.

MONROE: Well, all of them have voluntary components as this multi bi. Anyone can give them a trust fund. We, for example, in the past have given the FAO trust funds or contributed to trust funds on locust control, but something like the United Nations Development Program was wholly voluntary. It's entire budget was.

Q: It had been headed by an American for a long time.

MONROE: It had always been headed by an American from the time it became UNDP. It had been something else. It had gone through about three different titles and structures. It was designed to be a coordinator of all aid activities and the resident representative representing effectively the Secretary general would open an office and would ask that all UN agencies in the country share that office, share the communications. We saw it as a , we saw the resident rep more affectionately called the resrep as the answer to a lot of our problems in dealing with, one the confusion that ensues when you have 20 different agencies in a country and something happens, a civil war, a famine, what have you. And you are running around trying to rescue workers from various parts of the UN system. Two, in terms of delivering appropriate services as efficiently as possible, as cost effectively as possible, the resrep system appeared to us to be the best approach. The Europeans understood the efficiency. They weren't always happy with having an agency run by an American. There were American resreps, but there weren't numerous incidentally. The resident representatives were very powerful. Now an agency like UNICEF and FAO would not, would be very hesitant to cooperate with the resident representative. UNICEF's view was that they were essentially not in the capital. If they were in the capital, they weren't doing their job. They were organized to be around the countryside in various department governments or state governments, call it that if you will, local governments. Whereas, WHO would very definitely be in the capital because they would have physician instructors at local hospitals and whatnot training and so forth. Those people, in our judgment should have reported to the resident representative in country and had their offices and their communications facilities operating out of the resident representative's office. For policy guidance, theoretically, all the agencies reported to ECOSOC. ECOSOC was not a very effective agency. It still may not be, and so that had sort of fallen into disuse I think, before it ever got started really. Those agencies such as UNIFEM, the United Nations program for women reported to the director of UNDP, who incidentally is number three in the UN system.

Q: Number three after the secretary general and who else?

MONROE: The secretary general and, well there is now a deputy secretary general, before there was it was a deputy secretary general for political affairs. It was rather like the State Department thing. But in any case, it was considered a very powerful position. The Scandinavian reform movement which someone said the Scandinavians were the mother in laws of the system, because they had reform plan for everything. They said it was because of their deeply religious backgrounds. They wanted to revitalize ECOSOC, and they wanted all the voluntary agencies to report to ECOSOC. That, we weren't too concerned about UNDP at that point, but we were really concerned about the World Food Programme which is a voluntary agency in this but mostly food. After giving it its own administration and giving the necessarily rapid response time that one needs from an organization like the World Food Programme, putting them into an ECOSOC straitjacket was really not what we thought appropriate. Some agreed with us; some didn't agree with us. But, I think everyone agreed with us, it was simply that the Scandinavians felt it more appropriate. We could sacrifice that rapid response time for the great benefits to be had by UN reform. I don't believe we ever saw it that way. Neither did the Australians or the Canadians. Because we recognized the rapidity with which food emergencies arise, and prepositioning food is always difficult. It is expensive and it is difficult.

Q: Storage.

MONROE: But the real problem with UNDP was to deal with during the '80s what had arisen in the minds of many people not only the United States but even the British public, show us a country that is developed that UNDP has been working with. That was difficult. Actually there are some, Portugal for one. Portugal became a donor country while I was there in this job. But in truth the major beneficiaries had not developed as had been anticipated, frequently for reasons which were quite exogenous to the UN. First of all, the UN can't develop a country. They can create an environment; they can give some money so there will be seed money. They can improve the investment environment, but not by much, just enough. I mean that is the theory. Of course one of their weaknesses was they had new theories every five years. Every time they came up with a five year plan which was an unfortunate terminology, and I changed that. For a long time it was technical assistance to governments. They are the only ones that count. Then it was community empowerment. I think we are moving back to, some consultants who still work with them tell me that we are now moving back to civil service reform and that sort of thing. Not quite to dealing with only the head of state but the community empowerment seemed not to be the way to go.

Q: Well, let's maybe against this background, was there a question an issue when you were in this office, when you were director of the office from '92 to '94 about who should be the new director of the UNDP?

MONROE: Absolutely.

Q: And there already was an American. Was this a question of a new term or a new American?

MONROE: A new American. This fellow, I wish I could remember his name. I have a blank about his name.

Q: Spafe?

MONROE: Spafe was the one who worked with me who was appointed during my, he was the new one.

Q: To replace the one you have trouble remembering.

MONROE: That's right. It is an easy name. He was a very highly successful venture capitalist and came from an extraordinarily wealthy family and was, it was amazing that he chose to do this because it is extremely hard work and the travel was ceaseless.

Q: And he had been doing it for five years or so?

MONROE: He had done it for almost... He was extremely charming as you might imagine. He looked more like a diplomat than a diplomat. I mean this man was everything you would want in the head of an agency to be, but he was willful, obviously. He was impatient with the complexities of that development professionals frequently bring to any problem. The academic part of his work just simply didn't interest him, and aid and technical assistance, development assistance, there is a very significant academic overhang if you will. I mean theory is important. Theory is how you tap into the not for profit private sector and there is some of that, you know, trust funds and foundations and whatnot. He was less able to deal with that effectively than many thought he should have been. I thought he made up for it in other ways. That said, from my perspective, the important thing was he wasn't universally admired.

Q: Now did this mean that because of that other countries thought it was no longer the United States' right to have this position? We also had not been paying all our bills to the rest of the United Nations. We had other senior American positions including director of the World Food Programme by then, so I guess there were really two issues.

MONROE: Yes, that was my major problem as Catherine Britini's recent appointment. She made one extra. Now, I argued that this was bound to happen, that at some point we needed to be, we would be executive secretary of the World Food Programme.

Q: Because we were a major donor.

MONROE: Because we were a major donor and like everything else it was revolving, sort of like the Swiss Presidency, well it took a lot longer. Therefore, this was a temporary anomaly if you will, that we had one more American in a top position than we had had traditionally. The other argument was that while we still were a major donor, the major donor, our donations were not worth were diminishing as well to the UNDP. And in fact the Europeans decided, as they frequently do, that if you put it all together, we are the major donor. That didn't last long because the British donations started to decline very rapidly. At one point, maybe to day it is the case, Japan is the major donor. Although Japan as a matter of policy would try and get below ours if they could. They did not want to be a major donor to anything.

Q: So who was the American candidate?

MONROE: The American candidate, and this is part of the again academically speaking what you deal with when you are at the department, was that kind of situation where a new American has to be appointed is what is the White House going to do and how is the Congress going to influence that and are we going to have someone who is superbly qualified with whom we can march forward with full confidence, or are we going to have someone we don't know about such as Catherine Britini. None of us had ever heard of her before. It turned out she was qualified. Well, we weren't going to get a total loss you know, someone with a history of not being qualified. Fortunately we got Gus Spiff who was about as fine a candidate as one would want for that job. He was one of the founders of the natural resources defense council. He had had a long career in environmentally impacted development science and so forth. This is something he could talk about very eloquently. He was a good candidate. Now, he was a lot stiffer than his predecessor who could sort of light up a room if he was really in form. You know we had to draw him out a little. He was not a personality plus sort of person.

Q: But he was the candidate of the Clinton administration.

MONROE: He was the candidate the Clinton administration chose and very wisely so. I mean he was an excellent candidate. And when he was engaged, he was extraordinarily eloquent, and since he knew what he was talking about, and since he cared about these issues in a way that someone who had not spent his whole adult life dealing with them could never be, we were quite happy with that. I think he was an easy sell. I mean it took a lot of time. The Europeans, of course had candidates and so forth.

Q: Was the UNDP director elected or appointed?

MONROE: The UNDP was appointed by the secretary general, but essentially the secretary general had to be assured that this person had the complete support of both the donor and the beneficiary communities. The membership had much more to say about that than they did about the World Food Programme. One, because the character of the secretary general's office and secondly because just the nature of the institution of the United Nations Development Program required that the leadership had the complete confidence of at least the donor community.

Q: I believe there is an American who is head of administration for the United Nations.

MONROE: That was traditional.

Q: So we really have two very senior positions in New York.

MONROE: That's right. I was told that on many occasions. That was part of the problem. Three if you count the head of UNICEF. Now UNICEF was a very, which was also part of my watch, was an intriguing and fascinating story. I am sure someone should, Jim Grant was the American head. Jim Grant was one of the great men of our time.

Q: Who had been head of UNICEF for many years.

MONROE: For many years. He was a handsome older man. He was courageous to the extreme. I mean this man would go in under fire into Bosnia or whatever to see what was going on. He had started his career during the Bengali famine in 1944, and he could make a speech about how that had been accepted as an act of nature and how today, we don't accept famines, rail against them and fight against them. He said that was the progress that had been made in his lifetime. He was the one who got the idea to have people like Katherine, whatever her name was.

Q: Katherine Hepburn.

MONROE: It wasn't Katherine Hepburn. Katherine Hepburn actually did do some politicking, some public relations for UNICEF, but Audrey Hepburn was the big operator as Danny Kaye had been in an earlier generation. I think that was Danny Kaye's initiative.

Q: Danny Kaye's or Jim Grant's?

MONROE: No, Jim Grant was after. I think it was Danny Kaye who wanted to do something for the organization. In the case of Audrey Hepburn, Jim Grant buttonholed her in the lobby of the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong and sort of wouldn't let go of her until she said she would do something. Jim was a magnificent fellow. He devoted his life to the agency. He died, left work on Friday and died on Sunday, tragic in a way. But Jim Grant being there and being as visible as you could possibly be, I mean you could forget the administrator occasionally who is pretty generally a Senior Foreign Service officer, the most senior Foreign Service officer. You would never know who they were, but Jim Grant was up there every, you know, if he couldn't get his picture taken, the day was a loss as people frequently said.

Q: Okay, we are continuing with Gerry Monroe on the ninth of June, and we are talking about UNICEF and its funding sources and the role that you played in terms of U.S. policy toward UNICEF.

MONROE: UNICEF to me was an example of an agency that worked perfectly. The only issue that I saw was either their incapacity or their unwillingness to coordinate fully with UNDP. I suspect that has improved. I think Jim Grant for all his virtues, I think his forceful personality was just not the sort of individual with whom it was easy to coordinate. Jim was passionate; Jim was committed. He didn't necessarily care whether he was cost effective. So, that was not an argument you could make with Jim.

Q: Was he still there when you were in this job?

MONROE: Oh, yes, most of the time I was there. As a matter of fact, I might have left by the time he had actually died.

Q: And you were not involved in the question of who his successor should be.

MONROE: No. Although we were talking about it because Jim had decided, you know, he was well into his 70s, and was ill. No question he was not going to take another stint. I think it is quite clear that Grant could have stayed as long as he wanted to. That said, it was an organization that down to very relatively low levels in it, people were personally very devoted to Jim Grant or the notion of Jim Grant or the figure of Jim Grant. He was truly charismatic in the most positive sense.

Q: And of course, the idea of helping children, their mothers, was sort of a...

MONROE: Well, that's why the State Department never bothered with the donation, just penciled in last years and sent it off. Congress doubled it and that was that. That had been going on for years. Of course, it was the only institution that had quasi civilian institutions in each country. In other words there was always a UNICEF national committee. Ours is very significant, very large. Britain has one; France has one; most of western Europe has one.

Q: That's the source of funds from Christmas cards and Halloween and all sorts of things.

MONROE: Well they oversee that part of the commercial enterprise. Actually UNICEF has a major store where people go and buy UNICEF related things, dolls and what have you. We had problems of technical disagreement or locational or situational disagreement without doubt. Policy questions arose as to whether UNICEF should take care of training of children, of putting children into a school setting in these refugee camps. There was also the relationship of UNIFEM and the population councils relationship to UNICEF and how they should work together. They finally, UNICEF or Jim Grant I should say accepted and became rather enthusiastic about their role in protecting reproductive health for women and allowed them in their programs. So they set up clinics and as James said toward the end of our association any time he meets a head of state, he slips him a condom. So these were all interesting and somewhat technical associations and relationships with which I became involved, but probably not of lasting interest. I think what was my biggest project was to put UNDP back on track both in terms of how we viewed it and how others viewed it. Jim Speth at my request and the request of other people, the AID director, appointed an AID, a senior retired AID officer as a consultant to come up with a strategy, not a five year plan, but a strategy for the institution. The early stages of his presentation of this report were very positive we received. I think almost anything would have been better than the way they were. That is to say working on their last five year plan well beyond the margins of what the academicians and researchers thought was sensible in terms of, I mean things had just changed in terms of the way NGOs were strategizing and so forth. At the same time, UNDP seemed not to be in control of the specialized agencies as it should have been or as in control of the administrative aspects of field headquarters and so forth. There were incredibly complex financial problems between them which had to be dealt with sooner rather than later because too much of the money that should have passed between the two was being tied up with one agency or another or wasted, certainly not used for program purposes. That had the Europeans very upset with the preceding director, and so I pointed out to Speth that your job is for the moment one part theory and five parts administration. You have simply got to get this place in order. The support cost problem alone is costing you money.

Q: Was that kind of a problem particularly at the headquarters level or in the field or both?

MONROE: Both. I said you should begin immediately, the advice was not quite as direct at that. Some of the substance of what we worked out is we were preparing to put him before the secretary general. It always helps to go in to see the secretary general with a plan. That he would immediately undertake to visit all the directors general, all the directors of the specialized agencies and the other agencies on a tour and he would find out what their needs were and would report back to the UN, and he would create a committee to take the interests of other agencies into account as they developed a new strategy for dealing with the next millennium. I think Speth became an extremely popular appointee. I think people were impressed with his commitment. He was certainly not a Jim Grant. Fortunately he was not anything like his predecessor who many people thought was a mile wide and an inch thick which may or may not have been unfair, but the man certainly hadn't grappled with the theory underlying what he was doing; that is for sure. Speth was doing well. He was doing well because he was someone who really knew the field. He had alternatives to choose from intellectually which I think set him apart from almost all others. Whereas Jim Grant was reactive. The World Food Programme, Catherine Bitini and Ingram before her were reactive to crises, to emergency situations. Although the World Food Programme had tried to deal with the universal criticism of food aid that is to say it detracts from local capacities and local motivations to grow the crops they need by developing food for work programs. I suggested that UNDP become deeply involved in those and assist the World Food Programme because quite clearly we could see with Somalia that the emergencies weren't going to stop; they were getting worse. More and more you know the World Food Programme used to try and keep 50 50 development versus emergency. They were now 80% emergency, so I said UNDP has to step in and use food as a development tool based on your experiences, your much greater experiences in development science. All of these things started to get done. Without question Speth was doing a good job, and I felt that it was probably time for me to leave. We had a State Department staff; we had a new director of the World Food Programme. UNICEF was in great shape. The worst aspects of both Butros Butros Ghali's reform which were sweeping. At one point he had one division that was a thousand people. Those things had been brought into some sort of reasonable perspective in the development area at least which was the area I was. We had, I had a serious problem with the Chinese actually. They wanted to get some sort of development czar in place and then put a Chinese. The real problem was what do we do with this very senior Chinese who doesn't know anything about the UN system who has been there for 20 years. All of those things seemed to be in place; problems were solved, and I thought well, two years was about enough because new problems would arise obviously. And an opportunity that kind of interested me came along. I knew I was getting towards retirement, and with Speth completely in hand and so forth, I decided to leave IO after two years which gave me effectively five and if you count the part of my EB experience that was involved with the World Food Programme, another three, eight years dealing with multi lateral development issues was probably enough.

Q: Yes, I guess I have to ask in light of exactly what you just said, were you tempted, did you consider yourself moving into the UN system?

MONROE: Well, I was offered, but unfortunately because of an action taken by a predecessor of mine in Rome, a career decision he made to go with a UN agency, there was a law that said I couldn't do it for three years. So, I had to turn that very agreeable offer down. It would have been a dream position. It was dealing with the UNDP strategy with some people I knew very well from UNIFEM and the World Population Council. We were all going to get together and put all things together and come out with a long term look at these things and how they impact development decisions. That was not to be for political reasons, and of course two years later Speth was already talking about leaving. He was no longer in this let's get cracking mode.

Q: Okay, do you want to stop now?

MONROE: Yes.

Q: Today is September 21, 1999. Gerry, I think last time we were talking about your assignment to the development office of the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs as director I guess was your official title, office of multilateral development and food aid. That was from August of '92 to August of '94. We covered a good part of the work of that office but you might say how that assignment came to an end and then what you did next.

: I am not sure whether I had mentioned this before or not. One of the challenges of that office was the change in its character from a group of detailees from AID who practiced what they would have done had they been back in their own agency, that is to say there was more of a development focus than a worldwide technical focus and a diplomatic focus on the work of the office. That involved many of the staff in relationships with their overseas colleagues which were not always appropriate to the problems we encountered while at international meetings and so forth while they were close and productive perhaps in one or another technical area, they did not in my judgment and the judgment of the bureau advance U.S. interests at the UN. That meant in addition to finding, creating a budget for the office, deciding what resources it could and should call upon. It also meant replacing all of the personnel. It happened overnight; that was one of the difficulties, that is to say the money stopped from AID so these people were just withdrawn willy nilly. One or two were in the retirement mode so they were able to stay on fortunately for a few months in order to help in the transition. I think basically because of the need to hire people with experiences or job experiences that could be applied to both multilateral work and development issues within that context, it was extremely difficult to find good fits for each and every position. We didn't in the initial stages succeed in every case. I think by the time I departed we had a staff that was well qualified for the transactional aspect of what we were to do which was primarily attending these meetings and advancing U.S. interests both in terms of our financial contributions to the organization which was voluntary, different from the specialized agencies in that this money had to be earned in a sense. There was no treaty obligation. The U.S. had traditionally been the principal donor. In fact the agency had a very strong U.S. coloration to it. The director who incidentally was number three at the UN.

Q: This is the UN Development Program.

MONROE: Yes, the director general of the UN Development Program. He was known as the administrator was in protocol terms number three in the entire UN system which made it a pretty crucial job. I must admit that very rarely in the history of the institution did the individual holding that job discharge or exploit his position within the institution for a number of reasons, simply the way they were recruited in many instances. It was one of the three or four "American institutions" UNICEF being another one, and to a certain degree the World Food Programme, although Americans were not always at the head of the World Food Programme. Certainly U.S. food aid philosophy predominated. Certainly U.S. development philosophy whatever it was at the time dominated the United Nations Development Program. I talked about this at length because I think it was one of the major jobs of IOD to maintain a balanced relationship with the institution. We did in fact succeed in getting an American appointed for one last time. I say for one last time because I believe it is now an Englishman or a British citizen. Interestingly if you took the Nordics as a group, they became the major donors at some point in my tenure at the office. And the Nordics have very specific ideas about what we should be doing. They didn't always, well how can I put this? They didn't always agree with us. There was a friendly debate within the institution, and I think primarily because the Nordic use of the organization was something known in the trade as Multi bi, meaning Multilateral organization were used for bilateral aid deliveries. Understandably the Nordics per capita are very major donors in the development world, but they have very little delivery capacity of their own. They don't have large technical assistance bureaucracies. They have theorists. They have small groups of heavy thinkers you might say in their capitals. Their zeal for reform I think was in one instance on one level sincere. They like us, believed the institution, the way in which the UN delivered development services however one defined them as well as emergency services, crisis services, could be better organized. We differed in methodologies as to how to approach that, and we certainly differed in the degree to which the UNDP would be a delivery agency. Without going into much technical detail, it was an agreement, it is always harder to negotiate with friends really, to debate friends than with people who you really don't see or have nothing in common with. That said, with the appointment of Gustav Speth, a well known environmentalist in the United States, as well as someone who had had experience in melding the two fields although he defines sustainable development as one that was ecologically consistent and compatible.

Q: "Speth?"

MONROE: "Speth," otherwise known as Gus. He was one of the founding members of the council of natural resources. I think that's what it is called. As an institution it is quite well known and operated quite well in those days. Additionally the office had a full compliment. It was clear to many people concerned with the UN and particularly the development side of the UN that we weren't going to have enough resources to retain our position in the institution, retain our influence. I felt that I had probably done as much as I could both in terms of the staff development, in terms of sizing the office appropriately, and defining travel budgets and whatnot.

Q: On that score, I assume as AID pulled back from supporting the office financially and also with personnel that State Foreign Service officers were assigned to the office. Did that happen?

MONROE: Foreign service officers were assigned to the office in several cases willy nilly. They weren't good fits.

Q: They didn't have the background or interest.

MONROE: They didn't have the background. Some may have had the interest, but it was not as sharply directed as it might have been. Some had trouble defining what it was we were about and what the institutions we were dealing with were about. I think and this is putting in a pitch for more training, I think the three day multilateral diplomacy course is simply not enough. It is a complex matter. It does differ dramatically from bilateral diplomatic issues. I think a much, either professional exposure as happened in my case and which occurred rather slowly, I mean I started in EB. Over a period of 10 years one does develop a certain insight. I think definitionally many people who came were not prepared to deal with multilateral diplomacy. They simply didn't understand it. They simply didn't know what the underlying dynamics were. That said, those who came who were ready to be trained and who were willing to be trained were a lot easier, you know, did a lot better, performed better and actually had done better in their careers since. So that by the time I left, we had a staff that was either prepared or were willing to learn the business.

Q: The office was primarily concerned with the United Nations Development Program. Did you also get involved with other specialized agencies?

MONROE: Yes, the office actually, if I hadn't explained this earlier, the office actually had two if not three sections, clearly three. One handled food programs, so we dealt with the FAO from the department standpoint, the World Food Programme and all the subsidiary agencies that dealt with food. We dealt in a major way with UNDP, the only people who did, well the only people in the State Department who did, as well as a number of subsidiary funds. They included UNIFEM, the institution that worked with women, the population council. No, that's the private institution. The population fund of the United Nations and several others. One was a technical institution that delivered services, very interesting and actually very successful group of people. Actually I hesitate to call it an agency but effectively it was. As a matter of fact, I became involved with the overarching question of UN reform when Butros Butros Ghali as part of his it was claimed, as part of his reform program, he wished to take that very effective development assistance delivery institution and put it in with the UN secretariat. It later developed that many people felt the secretary general was doing this in order to placate the most senior Chinese official in the system, to give him a fuller mission. This was resisted strenuously, intellectually by all donors, but only the United States was willing to resist.

Q: Where was this delivery mechanism located if it were not in the secretariat?

MONROE: It was located as one of the subsidiary funds of the UNDP as was UNIFEM and several other specialized, I don't want to confuse them with specialized agencies but sharply focused institutions.

Q: The UN Development Program at this time aside from having an American administrator, was there a governing institution on which the United States was represented or how was sort of policy...

MONROE: Well, tradition had been guided by something called an executive council. That executive council was large, and probably if everyone were to show up, it would not have worked. But the G 77 had worked out some sort of better arrangement. The executive council worked very well actually, but it did not concern itself with the day to day operations of the institution. I say that because what the essence of the Nordic program, the proposed Nordic reform program was to turn the executive council into a small group, perhaps 10 or 12, which would meet frequently to direct the administrator.

Q: A steering committee.

MONROE: Sort of a board of directors almost. Certainly a steering committee is another way of putting it.

Q: And we resisted that.

MONROE: Well policy would then be made by ECOSOC. Well in our judgment, not in our judgment in our money, ECOSOC was not a leading institution for any number of reasons. It was far too politicized. Whereas in general the executive council had worked well, the executive council of the UNDP. From our point of view primarily because it was dominated by the donors.

Q: How was the United States represented on the executive council? Did we have someone in New York who did that?

MONROE: We had someone in New York who was the ECOSOC ambassador who also did this but not very frequently. Basically I was the deputy chief of delegation and I did nine tenths of the work.

Q: So you would go up to New York for the meetings of the council.

MONROE: Frequently. The council met in Geneva once a year, and various caucuses met in Sicily, all over the place so one was on the road almost constantly, which created a management problem in a way because the issues were complex. They needed an experienced negotiator and someone who was familiar with the system and the way in which the system operated. The sixth floor if you will, the DAS's felt that I should attend these meetings. I think I agreed in part but was working desperately to train up some people who could, and I think there was then the issue of whether you could appropriately train people, manage people. Until I got a deputy who was talented and actually had been an economic officer, it wasn't that my first deputy was incompetent, it was that he had no particular experience in. He had been the only FSO in the office for several years before I arrived. He was not accustomed to stepping out because he was forever put in his place by the AID people who were far more expert in what they took to be the work of the office. Things improved the last year when I was able to get a deputy who could manage while I was on the road, and increasingly go on the road himself. I always took the senior officer in charge of the little unit that was in charge of UNDP with me as often as I could. She was a very talented person. She knew nothing about this work before she started. but turned out to be a real star.

Q: Let me just ask you before we kind of go into your next transition, the period that you were in this office was kind of at the beginning of the Clinton administration, first term. Is it fair to characterize our overall approach as essentially trying to hold the line, resist the Nordic efforts to kind of reform the role of the UNDP, resist certainly the secretary General's effort to bring it closer under the UN secretariat? Were there other areas where we were trying very hard to get new changes, or was it more sort of hold the line and keep things going the way they had been going before with a strong American domination if you will?

MONROE: Well substantively, I and mostly myself, I must say I did not get as much direction or reinforcement as what I needed. Is this a good idea or isn't it from your perspective. I mean is there something else that is going to interfere with this that I don't know about? One of the problems of IO work is that everyone is always on the road. You know it is hard to get with your colleagues in other offices, but I believed very strongly that operating within five year cycles and establishing programmatic moneys by country and there is a technical term for that which I won't use, had in fact created a sense of entitlement on the part of the recipient countries, so that if you had allocated \$50 million for a certain country, that country felt it could sit back and wait for its \$50 million, however well devised its projects were and so on. I was interested in opening this up somewhat, creating multi cycle moneys so that moneys would not be lost or given to other countries unless it was absolutely necessary. There were some cases where that sort of thing couldn't be avoided. Now this was a very difficult notion to sell because obviously the G 77 component of the institution were wedded to the notion of these standard contributions or standard target figures. It also meant taking your projected budget which may or may not over a five year period which didn't conform to anyone else's to the donors budget cycles. It created some very awkward situations. The UNDP was no longer meeting its targets, not only because of the United States but because of other major donors participation, the Canadians. Even some of the Nordics were beginning to develop more capacity of their own. The problem with dealing with the Nordics is they operate as a group and it is always the least common denominator is not unusual phenomenon. So we did have a policy prescription which was to open it up a little more, be a lot more flexible with allocations of money to various individual countries, make clear that some record of success would be looked at. You know, the record should and would be looked at to determine. Some countries might in fact be more comfortable dealing with a two year commitment than a five year commitment and so forth and so on without going into too much detail. That was the policy prescription which I certainly was able to sell to my immediate DAS. Whether I ever sold it to the assistant secretary is another story. To be quite frank, I felt the assistant secretary was very unrealistic in the notion that he really felt that we would profit from the so called cold war dividend. Well, that created a situation where we were giving far more money to the, suddenly to the population agency than it could absorb realistically. It also took money from UNDP which was probably not a wise idea because it really was a chicken and egg kind of thing whether UNDP was the appropriate agency which it felt it was to devise population programs then have the population group of experts sort of put them into play in the field. So that was the substantive issue.

Q: There is another aspect of the early post cold war period that happened, and I know some African countries felt it was to their disadvantage that the new countries of the former Soviet Union immediately started getting resources, certainly from the United States bilaterally. Was that also happening in this area that UNDP was starting programs in Kazakhstan and so on? Perhaps funds were drawn away from the traditional developing countries in Africa and elsewhere.

MONROE: Probably less so than one would imagine. I think the major and I won't say drain, but the major reallocation was the Palestine problem, the Palestinian problem. It just started. There had been one that was a traditional one that we all agreed upon years and years ago.

Q: Refugees

MONROE: Refugees. Well, UNRWA and its programs, but a small program which was really a consortium which frequently happens between the World Bank and the UNDP of perhaps \$10 million, something like that, suddenly exploded. As you recall, we held a donors conference in Washington, and they were held in various other capitals. If anything, the third world, the other G 77 members were concerned about that. Much of the money came from special action programs of the UNDP which involved donors giving some money, earmarked moneys for a specific target. The UNDP and the UN generally was deeply committed to for a number of reasons to the Palestinian issues. So that did take straight program money, reallocated or allocated because one of the weaknesses in the structure of this five year planning cycle was that the working level at the UNDP could be a little irresponsible and take money they didn't yet have. Or if they did have it, they would give it to Palestine, you know, the program du jour and hope for the best for next years donation levels and that sort of thing.

Q: You mentioned the assistant secretary early in the Clinton administration favored moving funds into the population area perhaps beyond what could be used effectively. Who was the assistant secretary and why was that done?

MONROE: Well, Douglas Bennet was his name, and he had had his experience, well he had been an AID director briefly in the Carter administration. He was a Connecticut Democrat, probably from a very influential family in Connecticut in Democratic politics. He was in my judgment, I am trying to put this as well as I can or as accurately as I can. He was driven more by sentiment and by depth of belief than he was by shall I say, a careful assessment of the objective. Circumstances, I argued strenuously that the peace dividend was not going to be anything like you think it is going to be because in many ways the cold war was a distributive mechanism as well as other things. It is just not going to be there. Secondly, money helping to empower which is what we are talking about then, local communities is one thing. Money for associated with population issues is just going to attract the wrong kind of attention. To go from nothing to \$90 million was not a good idea. To go from nothing to \$20 million which is what they were expecting would have been fine. I am picking figures out of the air, but you know, that was the issue. And of course, the council had learned to get on without us. I shouldn't call it the council, a mistake. This group, this agency had learned to deal with their problems without U.S. contributions.

Q: Because during the Reagan and Bush period they were essentially zero funded by the United States because of some foreign issues.

MONROE: That's right. [Especially] in Mexico, that's right. It really focused itself on this whole complex of issues became focused on alleged or perhaps one doesn't know what the truth of the matter was because China is such a vast country, forced abortions in China. Probably no one could say for sure whether or not it happened. Our point was that it didn't make any difference whether it happened or not because no one could control it. Neither the Chinese government nor the population agency nor anyone else could stop what happens in a vast country of that nature even if they know what is happening. So while there was ample evidence that certainly the agency didn't favor it, and certainly the Chinese government didn't favor it, they said, "Oh, the real issue is not enough to stop the program." It was very functional. It was one of the UN's more effective programs, cost effective programs.

Q: Well, let's come to the summer of 1994 when you did move out of this office. Was there a particular reason why you wanted to bring the assignment to an end after two years or...

MONROE: Well there was the issue of travel which was getting to be on the one hand. On the other hand, we had finally put together a staff that I thought could do the job. On the other hand I did, and old German saying "am der zeitz," "on the other hand." I just simply felt that I would like more time to reflect. A different kind, a non operational job because not only was there the overseas travel which got to be constant in my last year, there were the weeks in New York and various and sundry other meetings, or the days in New York. I also felt a little frustrated that it was very difficult to manage the office as I would like it managed. There was that frustration as long as I was the office's principal substantive officer which wasn't good management but a question of who spoke the language, who had the experience in negotiating in that setting which again is dramatically different from any other setting that you might run into in my judgment. In any case, one of my colleagues in another office was married to the department's historian. I was talking to her and she said this is something you might want to do. We were discussing things of that nature. And I had these differences of opinion with the assistant secretary, and the assistant secretary certainly against my heartfelt advice, also the advice of my boss, my DAS, pulled my successor out of Rome for reasons which were clearly not the right ones.

Q: Was that to open the position up for a political appointment?

MONROE: No, it wasn't actually. At least that would have made some sense. No, it was because the director general of the FAO who was a sworn enemy of the United States for years didn't like him, and because the assistant secretary because Mr. Bennet had a strong sense of what was wrong with the UN because the perm rep was the permanent representative committee felt it was their job to needle the agencies and report negatively on. Why he felt this problem would be solved simply by pulling someone out.

Q: Was that sort of the last straw for you?

MONROE: Well my sense was that I simply wasn't going to communicate with this fellow much. Again not that he wasn't pleasant enough. That really struck me as not the thing that should have been done, and it turned out to have been really disastrous in many ways. In any case, he left soon after I left.

Q: He, Bennet.

MONROE: Bennet. I shouldn't say that. He left after the '96 election which would have been another two years. I would have faced another you know. The most I could have stayed presumably would have been another year, and I would have been dealing with him continually in a number of areas where I felt we are really going to have to make up our minds. For example, one issue, UNICEF, did we really need an American at the head of UNICEF. Well, I could see the political reason. That said, it was one of the UN system's most if not the most effective institutions. It did its job better than any. It didn't need an American.

Q: It was popular not just because it had an American head.

MONROE: It was popular because it dealt with children and it dealt with mothers and the problem with it was that it was very hard to integrate it into the activities of the other agencies. That, incidentally is interesting because their argument was they are not, they are never in the capitals of recipient countries. They're in the field. They deal with the NGOs.

Q: Where the children are.

MONROE: Where the children are. Indeed in the great Ethiopian famine of 1984, it was UNICEF who was the major deliverer because they were there. They were the only institution in the field for any number of reasons. Anyway, this was another disagreement. We had a, we were pushing an epidemiologist which was kind of interesting. I mean there was an argument for it, an intellectual argument. He was an excellent choice for something. I wasn't sure it was UNICEF. He was terribly qualified, had been head of the center for disease control and so forth. Of course it was Jimmy Carter who was pushing him down in Atlanta because he had joined the Emory College foundation that Carter [supported]. In any case the atmosphere was extremely political from my perspective. The UN was going through some very hard very difficult period at the end of Butros Butros Ghali's term and so forth. I felt when this other opportunity arose was that it was probably the thing to do.

Q: Did you go to the historian's office with the idea of a particular project or role, or was it that they were looking for a Foreign Service officer who could perhaps give a different context than some of the...

MONROE: Well this is another indictment of the department's personnel system. It required that they write a position description which in no way suited or fit what the historian actually wanted. What he wanted was something more like your second statement, that is to say he wanted FSO's to read the manuscripts to deal with the civil service historians who were very much the typical version of people who had been at the same job far too long and who had put that job in life context as it were so that they could do other things. The job was in many instances not their primary interest. He felt that since the office's primary function was the preparation of the foreign relations of the United States series which is an ancient honorable program. Actually the first one was published in 1964 so this is not something, you know it has been around long enough to have grown its own mythology and so forth. The first thing he wanted me to do is read a manuscript, any manuscript. It turned out to be a compilation of documents on DeGaulle and France's departure from NATO. It was part of the Lyndon Johnson series. I found it almost revelatory. It was a fantastic experience reading that. Reading that manuscript, remembering those things, learning what actually lay behind them because I was a very junior officer at the time those things actually happened, learning how actively the President participated in foreign affairs, was quite extraordinary, in detail. The same, incidentally, was true of Eisenhower, perhaps not the same degree, but to a surprising degree. I reviewed already published materials from the Eisenhower years.

Q: Why did you do that?

MONROE: Well, because I was supposed to write a report on how a new practitioner viewed these things, these efforts, and I did it. I wrote a short, but I thought focused, short but focused report on, and emphasizing several points. One of them and perhaps the most important one was that all of the opening materials, the prefaces and what have you were technical in character, that is to say they were descriptive. They described what had been done to write the volume, to prepare the volume they had done this and what.

Q: What files they looked at and..

MONROE: What files they looked at and so forth. This is fine; this is required. It had a list of persons that he mentioned that was wholly inadequate in my judgment, so looking at the book itself, I felt that just to say George Kennan was Ambassador to the Soviet Union at the time was not describing what a report from George Kennan meant when they... One given the numbers of influential and important Foreign Service officers and political appointees, long standing political appointees such as Bruce and what have you who were still active at that period, it was important to identify them in every volume because in many, one had to remember that not everybody or few people were going to read or even delve into the entire 12 or 14 volumes of the Lyndon Johnson administration. Someone doing work either academically or as an author as a scholar, working on his or her own, may just look at this one volume. So, I felt one, you had to be more discursive, more descriptive in terms of who the people were that were playing the game that is described by the documents they generated. Secondly it needed an introduction a short introduction which addressed the substantive issues.

Q: What happened to these two recommendations.

MONROE: These were two, I had many others, but these were the two key ones. Well, that volume got an intro. I wrote an introduction then to demonstrate what I had in mind, you know that this was the first, this was months, this volume opens two or three months into the Johnson administration after the death of Kennedy. The fact that JFK's foreign affairs team was still very much in office, and addressed the whole question of whether, underlying whatever was occurring as reflected in those documents, the role of Germany in collective security for Europe, the growing economic well being of the area, the strongly left wing attitudes of many of the political figures with whom we had to deal, and a gathering sense perhaps articulated best by or most vividly by DeGaulle, perhaps there was a third way, perhaps there was a possibility of some sort of rapprochement between the Soviets and Western Europe. All of these were issues, I think, that needed. Anyway, I wrote such an example. I gave it to the editor, not the editor in chief, but the editor.

Q: Of that volume.

MONROE: Of that volume. She said, "I like this. I'm going to put it in." Well it got put in and published. It is in the volume. The interesting thing is, of course, it is probably in no other volume. I have never seen it again. The ideas were rejected out of hand, of course, by the deeply entrenched compilers if you will. They would call themselves historians, and I guess they were.

Q: It is interesting that this particular volume, the editor was receptive and presumably whoever else.

MONROE: Well, the chief historian was. He could have chopped it. It may be the only volume in the entire series, certainly this century, that has that.

Q: Has that been noticed by outside readers or users?

MONROE: Not that I am aware of. It may well have been, but it may well have been discussed. There was an academic advisory group. From there, that took awhile that whole exercise. These are huge manuscripts. I mean they run page after page. And of course, they are cold. I suppose one way of describing them is mediated primary sources because they are the actual documents generated. Incidentally, one recommendation or one observation they made is there was far too much dependence of the presidential libraries because it was easy. So that is was questionable to me whether every MemCon or visiting statesman needed to be included with the president, whereas perhaps a well thought out report from, first person report from the ambassador in Paris might have been of interest.

Q: Or perhaps a memorandum done at the State Department that never would have got into the presidential library.

MONROE: That is exactly right.

Q: Those documents are not included in these volumes.

MONROE: Well they are, but not as much. You know, one could sense a growing since the Eisenhower administration or Truman administration use of documents from the center from the White House. Now that might reflect, it clearly reflects a trend in the way that our foreign affairs were managed. I don't deny that. That said, if one reads if one picks a random volume from 1938, it is almost entirely reports from abroad.

Q: And that has changed over the last...

MONROE: That has changed. And one would expect it to change, but not to the degree that it has. Later on I found out how easy it was to deal with presidential libraries, so I could understand why this happened. And I think there was a strong substantial argument for it as well. You know it is wholly a matter of degree.

Q: Were you the only Foreign Service officer in the historian's office at that time?

MONROE: Well for a bit. I was joined by my successor in Rome who came back early.

Q: We needed it.

MONROE: His place by a very talented ex ambassador by the name of Ed Horowitz who had been ambassador most recently to Kyrgyzstan, but was an incredible linguist speaking Russian, Korean, Urdu, Lord knows what all. He became profoundly involved in the Soviet set of materials. My pal from Rome and I were then given a very interesting project, and that was to do a manuscript on Guatemala. Now Guatemala had been done and had been an historic disaster if I may say so because the Congress picked up the fact that we never did it when we published that part of the Eisenhower administration, Central America, all of the materials relating to the Arbenz government, the overthrow of the Arbenz government in 1954 were excised by the intelligence agencies. That led the Congress to take a very dim view of the product we were developing. They blamed the wrong people, but understanding that, the Congress then enacted laws that prescribed as academic advisory and so forth and so on. Well, nothing was ever done to resolve the underlying , the proximate cause of the excitement i.e. the reflection of the Arbenz period. We had fascinating jobs for eight months, you know, going to the CIA. They had an office, a side office where their historical materials were made available on a very limited basis. We culled that. We made a manuscript, listed them maintained then on a spread sheet describing them and so forth. Now there was a major difference in operating in this environment and operating in the State Department archives or the National Archives, and that is we had no references. We had no underlying documentation. We couldn't say this is in response to a memorandum. It was obviously in response to something but what we didn't know. It was that kind of limited. So, I again argued that this project would have to have a major introduction, and I wrote it and left it with the manuscript. Now the manuscript I understand happened to bump into the... Of course it was never published during the time we were there, and indeed I had not quite finished the introduction because other work would intervene. I was also the person answering call in questions.

Q: Call in questions?

MONROE: Yes.

Q: What do you mean call in questions?

MONROE: Well, when was the Foreign Service founded? It is a hard question to answer in a way because you start with the Rogers Act, but that is a cop out.

Q: Questions called in from anywhere, not say to a talk show.

MONROE: Oh, no. Questions called in by scholars. We only seriously addressed those called in by people. And then of course, the secretary's office had a question a day, or the White House frequently had questions. When did the Austro, was there ever a battle during WWI where the Australians and the Americans fought together? The answer is yes. That was one I researched. It was great luck. I just opened Martin Gilman's WWI and there it was. But it was that sort of thing that would interfere with the other except we did have this eight month period where we could go every day to the CIA.

Q: Were you looking just at that Arbenz government and the overthrow in 1954 or was it Guatemala over a longer period of time?

MONROE: Well, I brought, in my introduction I tried to bring into the picture the fact that Arbenz as an individual and as a politician was very much motivated by the revolution of 1944, and the almost Byzantine set of political relationships that emerged from that. For what it's worth, it is my judgment upon reading closely the material that Arbenz would have fallen.

Q: Without being pushed.

MONROE: Without being pushed if one had waited long enough. Primarily because he appeared to have broken faith with his colleagues in the '44 revolution, and one of them had died under mysterious circumstances and others were seeking their turn as it were.

Q: You said you ran into recently somebody connected with this project.

MONROE: The historian himself at a restaurant. He said it was apace. It was moving apace. Actually he didn't know about the materials I had written and so I told him where they were or where I had last seen them. He said the manuscript is on his desk.

Q: Without your introduction.

MONROE: Without my introduction, but these are documents that Bill Marsh and I chose, so hopefully they will have been culled over again. We used personal interviews in this particular exercise. We interviewed Foreign Service officers who had been, were around at the time.

Q: Did you actually use their interviews in the text, in the introduction?

MONROE: No. It was simply to give us a sense of what we were looking at. And of course, most of the material was administrative in nature. They became very concerned about travel vouchers and the kind of trips, moneys that were spent, so forth and so on. So it was a strange and sort of a strange research job, but in any case before the final touches are just about done with when by this time my colleague had retired. I was the last of the early bunch. My time was running down. I was due to retire in January, '97. When September of '96 this whole Swiss Nazi gold issue arose and came essentially something that the historian and I did together, overwhelmingly because no other historian was willing to touch it. To my amazement, they got away with it. They didn't... I initially worked with somebody from INR who was becoming a permanent historian in the office. He was an accredited historian. As soon as he got his position, he backed down of the project.

Q: When he moved to the historian's office.

MONROE: Oh, he was already sitting in the historian's office, but as soon as he got a permanent slot which amazed me. I mean I don't think I quite understand how they operate.

Q: But their reluctance to get involved was because it was sensitive in the sense of Jewish...

MONROE: I have no idea. I think their reluctance was just plain laziness. It was something they didn't have to or something they were doing their volumes and their volumes were important, and that was all they did, besides they couldn't give their other lectures and work on their book on medieval French cuisine if they had to do something as consuming as this.

Q: Did the historian involve you also because of your four years experience in Switzerland or...

MONROE: No, he involved me because he desperately needed someone to do it, and I would do anything he asked, of course, which amazed him. As long as it was reasonable. Most of the time it was. But I also very quickly became aware that I was in familiar territory and could deal with the multitude of Swiss newsmen, embassy people, and people from Bern who ultimately started visiting us and so forth. It became a major task, and a major issue. We were inundated. Press from all countries, it was quite amazing all European countries. It got me into the inner sanctum of the archival of the National Archives crowd which was interesting. I still retain those connections, those ties.

Q: Now the subject was of great political interest as well as public interest. As I recall in the early days Stu Eisenstadt was undersecretary in the Commerce Department. He was given the responsibility I think, for kind of pulling together U.S. experience, knowledge, documents.

MONROE: Well, yes. It arose very interestingly. His connection to the whole set of issues that subsumed under the shorthand Nazi gold arose when his ambassador to the European communities was asked by the President apparently to take a trip to Poland to see if he could negotiate an agreement for the return of communal Jewish property. He did this, and in so doing he learned about the plight of many Polish Jews in other particularly, I guess he stopped in Prague on the way back, the Moravian, Sudeten Jews and so forth who were never paid. So he learned of a generation or a group of Jewish survivors who were very impoverished because they were behind the curtain, they were two time losers as he put it. But he found that many claimed they had accounts or claims on accounts in Switzerland. So, on the same trip he went to Switzerland where he was stonewalled

Q: He also of course, had a background either before joining the Clinton administration with one of the major Jewish organizations. Did he go back to that period or maybe that was partly why he was asked to get involved.

MONROE: Yes, I think it goes to the Congress for that. Now the World Jewish Congress had never given up trying to get to lay claim to Jewish assets around Europe. How, you know, except for the obvious constituents, Al Damato got involved and started to hold hearings, I am not quite certain, Probably in dealing with the World Jewish Congress.

Q: But that pushed the administration even further.

MONROE: Even further, and a lot of stories about how Hillary Clinton took a personal interest. I think one story which I like, is she read Paul Erdman's Swiss account in which a Justice's matter and decided that these were issues that needed settling. The Swiss had behaved very cruelly in terms of their treatment. People, you know, demanding death certificates. It was reported, relatives reported the bones are back at Auschwitz. These were all things not calculated to endear the Swiss banking community to the [Jewish community].

Q: I think I may have asked this earlier, but in the period you were economic counselor in Bern, did issues like this occupy any of your time?

MONROE: No. Well, banking secrecy did of course, insofar as it affected insider trading. That was the major issue of my tour in Switzerland. I think I talked about it. And of course, it was made clear ironically in retrospect that the Swiss established banking secrecy to protect Jewish interests, which is something they claimed as a defense for this approach, this lack of cooperation. The problem very rapidly became getting all of the groups and agencies involved, 11 agencies involved, writing the first report. We wrote it, but literally, incidentally I introduced to the historian two people who I thought would do a good job of work since we couldn't get any historian to work on it. I got a small contract for Frank Canelli, a retired economic officer, and another fellow presented himself who I thought was okay, a fellow by the name of Basil Scarlis who had served in Switzerland actually, probably at the time you were there. Perhaps afterward.

Q: A little bit after.

MONROE: So, he understood, spoke German, could read German. So could this other fellow who served in Bonn. Reading in German was absolutely essential which may have been one reason why some of the historians didn't want to become too involved, because a lot of the earlier material right after the war were in German, the interrogations.

Q: They were in the archives/

MONROE: They were in the National Archives.

Q: The U.S. National Archives?

MONROE: That's right.

Q: Now to what extent did the European bureau, the office of Swiss, Austria, German affairs, the Swiss desk, were they involved?

MONROE: Well, they couldn't help but get involved because it became a major bilateral issue. They tried to keep the thing under control. They tried to hold meetings.

Q: With these 11 agencies.

MONROE: Yes, or at least with us in the department.

Q: The historian's office.

MONROE: Yes, to find out what was going on. Of course the whole issue of roll out of the report and so forth coordinated with John Kornblum, who was then assistant secretary. John wanted to stay out of the issue, quite frankly, and the bureau was not as active a participant as I thought they might have been.

Q: Ruth van Husen who was then office director was pretty involved, wasn't she?

MONROE: She was involved; she actually hired someone to do the job as well.

Q: But the actual historical report...

MONROE: They wrote nothing.

Q: It was pretty much done by you and these others in the historian's office, or was it done after you had left?

MONROE: No, I wrote the lion's share of the report, because I had to pick up everything that this one historian who dropped out suddenly. So, the work was divided. Frank Canelli did part of the '30s and the war period. I picked up from 1944 through the negotiations with the Swiss.

Q: Which took place...

MONROE: In 1946, spring of 1946,

Q: The so called tripartite gold?

MONROE: The creation of the tripartite gold commission which flowed from the reparations conference, the major Paris conference on reparations in late '45. As I say, I covered that conference to the extent it addressed the issue of restitution versus reparation etc. One of the interesting sidelights. The conference actually probably for the first time in history, although one can't be sure, certainly a very rare, came up with a rare provision in the history of the United States that stateless, though they weren't called stateless then, they were called nonrepatriables, and if you look at your dictionary, you won't find it. It was a term of ours, nonrepatriables. We had identified people who had been deprived of their citizenship or were so brutalized by their experiences in the camps for example, who simply could not return to their country of origin. They no longer had a home.

Q: They were from, their country of origin was Poland for example?

MONROE: Well, most of the country of origin was Poland but it was all over the world, it was all over Europe. It was Romania.

Q: Germany?

MONROE: Many Germans, yes to the extent Germans survived who were there.

Q: Were these essentially survivors or were they also family members of...

MONROE: They were overwhelmingly survivors. For the first time, the international community agreed to provide them with reparations, a group of people, not a country.

Q: And that was done?

MONROE: Yes, in a curious kind of way.

Q: In the '40s still?

MONROE: The '40s and '50s, early '50s. It was complex in the extreme, and the provision was complex to the extreme, and this was created of course, because of British resistance. Of course they didn't want to sustain these people so that they could go as a group to Israel or Palestine. They did not. Now from this reparations agreement, a five power meeting which included among the powers Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia interestingly who had an interest, so they wanted to participate in this reparations exercise. A meeting was held in Paris somewhat later, led by an American lawyer who led this negotiation, wrote a report appended vast numbers of documents to this report and disappeared. I mean from the record, the recorded record. Presumably back to practice law in New York.

Q: That document was then not published, but it was made available.

MONROE: It was available as a resource. It was not a briefing book. People kept calling it a briefing book; it was not a briefing book. It was after the fact. It was essentially a report of a meeting.

Q: A record.

MONROE: A record of a meeting. A similar thing arose with respect to the Swiss negotiations. Another interesting characteristic of the reparations conference was that it implied a level of guilt, a punitive level of guilt to the neutrals, all of them essentially. Those of them that assisted the Nazi war effort which essentially was all the European, the Swiss in a major way, the Swedes in a major way, Spain and Portugal. It implied this because some of the moneys to be given, for example, to the survivors was to come from neutral powers who were to return Nazi holdings. Now, the neutrals differed dramatically in the way they handled this. Probably the ideal was Sweden. Sweden said they didn't want any Nazi gold and they returned it. The problem was, I mean from the point of view of sovereignty, the cover was they were making a contribution to the restitution of Germany, and providing assistance, food assistance and whatnot to the German people. Effectively they paid up, paid whatever it was we thought they should give more or less. There were always differences as to where our intelligence people felt this could go on this way. The earlier negotiation with Switzerland was long, contentious. The Swiss submitted nothing. They were in the moral, perfectly correct in everything they did and so forth and so on. The more the documentary record which became available to us as we perused victims dug into it, and also secondary sources, books that were primarily written in German by Swiss and German about the period, there was every reason to expect the Swiss to do something. The Swiss did the minimum, without going into any detail about the negotiations. That, of course, set the stage for 50 years later for what the Swiss found themselves in.

Q: In the period from September, '96 when this first came up until the study which you largely did was published in May of '97, you were primarily involved in researching and writing the study; you were not so much involved in Eisenstadt's ongoing negotiations with the Swiss?

MONROE: No. I was overwhelmingly doing the historical work, writing the report.

Q: Did that involve travel on your part?

MONROE: Just to the Archives, just to Archives II which was [in College Park, Maryland]. We did a vast amount of our work in there.

Q: When you finally got the study together, was it difficult, complicated to get it cleared, the decision to publish it, or was it Eisenstadt and others were anxious to get it out as quickly as possible, and therefore there was pressure on you to finish it?

MONROE: Well, there was both. There was pressure to finish it. I must say on behalf of the EUR despite their wanting, they were content to separate themselves from it more than, they never tried to influence it. They never tried to influence the Justice Department. The office concerned with war criminals, on the other hand, did want to change it.

Q: What was their reasoning? That they wanted to convict and prosecute additional war criminals, and use this as evidence?

MONROE: No, they had a strong predisposition to believe that the Truman administration had misled to Congress with respect to these negotiations.

Q: The Truman administration?

MONROE: Yes. They based this on two bits of evidence. One was nonsensical i.e. a Congressional signed by Acheson when he was assistant secretary for Congressional affairs which was slightly misleading. Admittedly it was not a good job, but had probably been drafted by somebody with no knowledge of the negotiations and was just working on a file.

Q: Was that a letter?

MONROE: It was a letter to a Congressman, but if one had read a lot of Congressionals, one would see that this is probably within the general range, probably more toward the misleading than not, but not willfully so. The fact that Acheson signed it meant nothing. I mean, he signed all of them. We never were able to make that point because their notion of somehow or other the Truman administration, American negotiators had one way or another sold out the interests of the people they were trying to protect. The reasons why this might have happened politically, I put in the report. The Data on cold war ETC. The fact that we had no support from the Brits or the French in taking any action against Switzerland anyway, we were toothless as it were in terms of anything we might have done if the Swiss didn't cooperate etc. There were many reasons why we weren't, why we accepted what we accepted. Some of them very logical reasons, i.e.. we needed money badly for the tripartite commission, and without it, we would never get money in the system. Europe badly needed an infusion of assets.

Q: Without it being...

MONROE: Well, without concluding with the Swiss some kind of agreement. The Swiss, after all, did give \$60 million in gold which you could immediately put into the tripartite gold commission coffers. Bear in mind that we had shall we say liberated enormous quantities of gold which were on deposit at something called the Frankfurt monetary depository, which is the military run attempt to save whatever it was that U.S. troops found. Amazingly while unquestionably there was theft, it was not all that great. I did deal extensively with the New York Federal reserve, and the Federal Reserve Board, both to get a notion of how well the Swiss were aware of German gold holdings at the end of the war and whether there was any way they could be aware the confrontation of gold was moving into the system of gold transfers that occurred between Germany and the rest of Europe, neutral Europe. I think it is worth pointing out that we didn't, had not addressed the banking issue. What we addressed was the return of gold held by Switzerland and found by U.S. forces, allied forces in Germany, properly occupied territories to central banks who were owing reparations or restitution.

Q: Now, you did not deal with the banking issue because you had enough on your plate/

MONROE: Well, because it was being dealt with by innumerable other institutions including two Swiss ones. The Swiss had pretty much agreed they were going to make the records available, and they later, as the president Minor Gutram, you might have known, I knew as the one who came up with the notion of a settlement, a cash payment. So the Swiss addressed the problem in two ways. One was this Volker committee which was a group headed by Paul Volker, the Federal Reserve Chairman, who had essentially hired auditors to look at the accounts of these banks which was a very complex issue because like anything else, the Swiss banking history since the war has been a history of consolidating institutions. Then they were making a major historical effort, the Bregere committee which was a group of historians who hired an American historian to help them research Swiss actions during the war. So, we plus the fact that we didn't have data. Data wasn't available to us. We couldn't go to banks and say show us your books.

Q: Was another consideration if you had gotten into some of these banking areas, it really would have delayed the interagency study and there was pressure presumably to get it published, to get it out as quickly as possible?

MONROE: Well it was that. I mean I don't remember thinking that particularly. I guess to the degree that we knew we couldn't do it in three months and didn't know if it could be done, whereas we could certainly do what we had set out to do and that was you know, very briefly we set out to find out what U.S. officials and negotiators knew at the time and what they did with the information they had. So there was also another issue that was difficult to explain or convince, explain convincingly to the Justice Department that because the situation exists doesn't necessarily mean that Randolph Poll who was the Chef De Berigation were aware of it at the time.

Q: The Chef De Berigation,

MONROE: Of the American delegation dealing with the Swiss.

Q: Because we had a legation at that time or was there...

MONROE: Oh, we had a legation. I should have said the whole circumstance was designed to get the Swiss banks. I mean you know, they were called to Washington where they were to meet with the allies, i.e.. the U.S., French, and British.

Q: In 1946?

MONROE: '46. March of 1946. This proved to be a very protracted negotiation. It wasn't over until June. It was broken off on several occasions. It was a great example, probably one of the first examples of great power probably when one considers the United States could destroy the world at that point.

Q: Was the Treasury Department quite involved in that negotiation?

MONROE: Totally.

Q: And then when you came to do your report 50 years later, was the Treasury Department interested and involved?

MONROE: Oh, very much so, except they didn't have the materials available. They had to pay an inordinate amount of money to hire something called history associates, a company which went through the raw materials that they were willing to give up to the archives. First they were accessioned as the term goes to the archives. The dispute by about 20 historians or pseudo historians consultants went through this like a railroad train culling. All of this was designed in my judgment that if anything went wrong, it was the State Department. They were too trusting of the Swiss.

Q: In 1946 or also in 1996.

MONROE: No, during the war. Well, there was, of course, the whole issue of Morgenthau and his notion of a hard peace and those people who were involved in his [peace plan]. And of course a lot of the people who were involved in this issue in '46 were later identified as spies for the Soviet Union, Harry Dexter White, a fellow by the name of Curry. You would know his first name; I can't remember it.

Q: Those people were at the Treasury or the State Department..

MONROE: Both. Very strange. Material that proved to be the most interesting was what I got from the Federal Reserve Board which they had gotten from the banks.

Q: U.S. banks.

MONROE: Yes.

Q: When did they get that material?

MONROE: Oh, you know, during the war and immediately succeeding the war. A lot of reports about what had happened during the war. Of course you could go to the Treasury Department which has a whole library which I talked myself into. They had all the reports from the Bank of International Settlements. Now the Bank of International Settlements was nothing but a Nazi front even up to Bretton Woods where there was a provision of Bretton Woods that provided for the elimination of the Bank for International Settlement. Well, this Brilliant American shadowy figure, McKittrick, managed to save the Bank for International Settlement. We don't know how. I mean, you have to do more research to find out how by 1950 it was...

End of interview