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

ANDREW F. ANTIPPAS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Today is July 19, 1994. This is an interview with Andrew F. Antippas, being conducted for the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Andy and I are old consular colleagues and old friends, going way back. Andy, to start this off, could you give me some of your background? You were born in 1931 in Massachusetts?

ANTIPPAS: Yes, Winchester, Massachusetts.

Q: Could you give me something very briefly about your background-your family and your early years?

ANTIPPAS: My father was an immigrant. He came to the United States in 1922.

Q: I assume, from Greece?

ANTIPPAS: From Greece. He went to sea in 1904 when he was nine years old and was a sailed, mostly in the Greek Navy from then until 1922. In fact, he was present at the evacuation of the Greek population in Anatolia from Smyrna [now Izmir, in Turkey]. He participated in many of these events, including the Allied landing at Sebastopol in the Crimea in 1917. He was an eyewitness to a lot of history. He got fed up and jumped ship in Baltimore in 1922, as a lot of Greeks did. He made his way to Boston, which he knew from ship visits and eventually set up shop there. What do Greeks do? He opened a restaurant, married and became an American citizen in 1936. He had two children, my brother and I. My brother is two years older than I. My parents divorced very early on. I don't know why. My brother and I lived with her for a while, but, basically, my father brought us up. For most of our boyhood our father was very much our "guiding light."

Q: Did you work in the restaurant?

ANTIPPAS: Oh, yes. We had to, of course. Winchester, MA, is a very nice upper middle class, Yankee community outside of Boston. It had a good school system. Probably, the best thing that our father ever did for us was to bring us up in a place like Winchester. We did all right in sports and so-so in school. Of course, I grew up during World War II and was very much influenced by what had happened during the war. I pretty much planned on a military career, very much influenced by the war.

Before graduating from high school I was accepted at VMI [Virginia Military Institute] and Norwich University both well known military schools. However, two weeks after I graduated from high school in June of 1950, the Korean War broke out. My father said, "Look, your brother's going to get drafted, so you can't go anywhere. You've got to stay here and help me." He was right. Within six months my brother was drafted, and I had to stay on and help in the family business. So that put college off. It made me all the more determined to join the Army, which I eventually did. Interestingly enough, I received my draft notice about a year later, in 1951. I took my physical exam but was classified "4-F" [medically ineligible to serve] because of a heart murmur. This surprised me, because I was a championship quarter-miler in high school.

Anyway, I managed to talk my way into the Army. I persuaded the medics to review the situation and to send me to a specialist. I entered the Army in June, 1952. I had been scheduled to attend OCS [Officer Candidate School], but the Army reduced OCS requirements that year due to reduced combat casualties and a large ROTC class.. I eventually got to OCS, as they used to say, "over choppy seas." I ended up as a rifleman replacement in an infantry platoon in Korea, carrying my 4-F card in my pocket. I never told anybody about that because I would have been ridiculed. But fortunately, I arrived at my unit on the Eastern flank of Heartbreak Ridge during the last four months of the war. I served there and ended up by...

Q: Where were you serving?

ANTIPPAS: I was in the 45th Infantry Division on "Heartbreak Ridge." The division had been an Oklahoma National Guard unit. In point of fact, I was successful in the Army. I was not wounded or hurt in any way and I ended up by commanding the platoon in which I had served as a rifleman replacement-not as a result of combat casualties but just because of turnover or rotation of personnel.

That experience-wonderful as it was, and I enjoyed it-led me to decide that the military really wasn't my "bag." This was not because of the war, particularly, but because I felt that it was clear that in peacetime there would be a draw down of the Army and there really wasn't much future in a military career. Since I only had a high school diploma, I was encouraged by one of my company officers to go to a university. He suggested that I attend ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] and then decide about a career after graduation.

Q: You had the GI Bill, too?

ANTIPPAS: I had the GI Bill. I felt not a little trepidation about going on to school. I didn't have that much confidence in my scholastic abilities. It's one thing to leave high school and get kind of caught up in college. But at that point there had been a four year hiatus, and I wasn't really sure that I had the ability to go through college. Anyway, a kindly Veterans Administration representative in Boston talked me into entering BU.

Q: BU is Boston University? When I got out of the Army after the Korean War in 1954, I went there and got my master's degree.

ANTIPPAS: Then we were there at the same time. I started into Boston University in January, 1955, in the College of General Education, in a two-year "immersion course." I got an A. A. degree [Associate in Arts] from that. It just "clicked" for me-the intellectual stimulus was such. One of my professors was a young, Harvard graduate, a history professor named David Trask, who encouraged me a great deal. Later on, he was the Historian of the Department of State.

Q: He's now Historian of the Department of the Army.

ANTIPPAS: Is he? I had lost track of him.

Q: He's written some books and is here in Washington.

ANTIPPAS: Is he? I really should get in touch with him because he had a very big impact on me.

I decided that BU was too large, the commute from Winchester, MA, was a "killer," since I lived outside Boston. David Trask encouraged me to try to transfer to Harvard University as a junior. However, Harvard only took eight "transferees" in the arts course that year. Later on, David Trask told me that I had been rejected by Harvard, principally because my high school grades were not so stellar. I applied to and was accepted at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts as well as Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. I decided to go to Tufts, which was much closer to home. It was a nice, little school-just three miles from home. I majored in European history at Tufts and, of course, started taking the Foreign Service exam.

Q: How did you hear about the Foreign Service exam?

ANTIPPAS: Well, it was advertised, of course. It was the practice at that time in college-as you might recall-to take every exam that came along-civil service, Foreign Service, and so forth, because working for the government was considered "honorable" in those days.

Q: There was also the "intern" program.

ANTIPPAS: Yes. Things like that. So I just took these exams regularly-every year. Like most people, I had had very little exposure to the diplomatic service. I had stayed in the Army Reserve, as sort of a recreational outlet. It provided a little money and a vacation every summer, since I regularly attended summer school and worked after hours at my father's restaurant. My Army Reserve unit, the 301st Infantry of the 94th Infantry Division used to go to Pine Camp [now Fort Drum], NY, for summer training. Over the weekend in the middle of the training course most people went to Montreal or some place like that for the usual diversion, whatever GI's do.

I went to Montreal a couple of times over the next five years. As I think back on it, I saw the Consulate General there and thought, "That's kind of interesting." I'd never really seen a consulate anywhere else. I told this story many times in Montreal, which was my last post in the Foreign Service. I used to say that I walked around, in 1954 and 1955 in my uniform, with my boots "bloused" [pants tucked into the boots] and got very hard looks from the local citizenry. Apparently, in 1951 an American airborne division had made practice parachute drops on Pine Camp or Camp Drum. They had been given leave, went to Montreal, and "tore the place apart." Montreal was a "wide open" town, a great party town in those days.

I began to think over time that a "diplomatic career sounds kind of good to me." I was taking diplomatic and European history as a major. The diplomatic service sounded as if you wouldn't have to work too hard-no heavy lifting in the hot sun so to speak.

I took the Foreign Service exam beginning in late 1956 following the Suez and Hungarian crises but failed it a couple of times. Finally, I passed the written exam and took the oral exam in the summer of 1958-the year I received my BA from Tufts. I was not accepted-whether from my own, obvious failings, or because it was a recession year, and the State Department was not taking in a lot of candidates that particular year. The chairman of the Government Department at Tufts at the time was Robert R. Robbins. Robbins had served in the Department for 15 years in IO [Bureau of International Organization Affairs] in the Office of Dependent Areas Affairs. He was a trust territory expert-a very nice guy from Ohio. Very soft spoken, contemplative and "laid back." He sympathized with me that year. He said, "You know, I think that you really got 'shafted.' He said they give the Foreign Service exam but really don't have any slots to put people into. They will take very few people." The one individual from Tufts who was accepted into the Department was such a "jerk" in my opinion, that I couldn't imagine what on earth the Department could see in him.

Robbins told me, "Listen, I'm initiating a graduate program in public administration, leading to a master's degree. Would you like to be the first candidate?" This took me aback because my grades at Tufts hadn't been all of that great, either. But he showed such great faith in me that I decided to accept it. At about that same time I had received a direct commission as an officer in the Army Reserve. Under a special program if you had combat experience and were a non-commissioned officer in the reserves, you could apply for a commission. I applied and received my commission belatedly six years after joining the army during the Korean War. I was toying with the idea of going back into the Army. 1958 was a hard year-a time of recession. Remember the slogan that the Federal Government put out-"You 'auto' buy an auto"? This was an attempt to pump prime the economy. Anyway, I got my commission but decided that the graduate degree program looked like a good idea.

I worked under Professor Morris Lambie, who had been at the Littauer Center for Public Administration at Harvard. Lambie had retired from there but wanted to continue teaching. He was hired by Tufts to start the graduate program. I studied state and local government under him as his teaching assistant. I thought then that what I would like to be was a city manager. I worked in this program through 1959 until January, 1960.

Then I passed the Foreign Service exam-having taken it more or less out of habit, of course. I guess I was more relaxed on this occasion because I passed it. The Department of State accepted me in the summer of 1960 and offered me an appointment. By then I had begun a job as Executive Director of the Cambridge Civic Association [CCA], a municipal reform group in Cambridge, Massachusetts dedicated to the support of the city manager form of government. It had 3,000 members, including luminaries from Harvard, MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], and the business community-people like John Kenneth Galbraith.I had started out in the CCA job but then decided that I could always be a city manager or local government activist, but couldn't always be a Foreign Service Officer. At that time the age limit was 31 for people entering the Foreign Service. I decided, "Why not? I don't know much about the Foreign Service but I can give it a whirl."

In my entering class at the Foreign Service Institute [in 1960] there were three who were my age of 29 in my class of seventeen. The others, fifteen men and two women, at least half were pretty much fresh out of college-22, 23 years old. They were bright and eager. I think that we had two men who were Russian specialists already-who were interested in the Russian language. One member of the class was a nephew of then Congressman Boggs-future Speaker of the House of Representatives. I think that over half a dozen of the class including one of the women, had served in the military. I think that the class was imbued with the feelings that existed then-reflected by the Kennedy era and the line from Kennedy's inaugural speech, "...Ask not what your country..." etc.

Q: This came somewhat later.

ANTIPPAS: Not the Peace Corps humanist view but in any event similar to my feelings then, that is: interested in foreign affairs and the future of our country, the Cold War, and so forth.

Q: I don't want to put words in your mouth but I think that there was a feeling that we had something to offer.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. We felt that it was a great honor to be in the Foreign Service. I think that we all felt that. It wasn't just a job. To be selected for the Foreign Service was a great privilege. I don't think that anybody in the class expected to be an Ambassador right away. It was made very clear to us that it was going to take a while to work our way up the ladder, and that was OK with me. We really didn't know that much about what this business was all about. I certainly didn't and was marching along very carefully. I don't know whether I did all of that well in the A-100 course [at the Foreign Service Institute] in things like role playing. I think that I was more relaxed and jocular than most people in the class. But we were very enthusiastic, as I recall.

Q: What did you do after finishing the A-100 course?

ANTIPPAS: We were all given our initial assignments, of course. This shows you how much the Department and our society has changed. The woman in Personnel who was assigning the new officers looked at my file and said, "Gee, you're 29 years old and not married. I think that we'd better leave you in Washington for your first tour and get you married off before you go overseas." She actually said that. She'd probably be sued today if she said something like that! I thought, "Yeah, I guess that makes sense." I was having a ball in Washington as a single, unmarried male. I thought that it was a terrific town to be in.

I was assigned to IO [Bureau of International Organization Affairs] in the Office of International Conferences. I became a Conference Officer, which was kind of interesting. It gave me a sort of "Cook's Tour" of the Federal Government.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

ANTIPPAS: Arranging the program for U. S. delegations to conferences. I would be given a stable of international organizations to follow which had conferences every year. I remember that IMCO [International Maritime Organization] was one of "my" conferences. Now it's called IMO. I also worked on the International Civil Aviation Organization, which is headquartered in Montreal. There were also ad hoc conferences. One of them was called PIANC. I can't remember what that meant, but it had to do with American ports. I had to arrange the Secretary of State's participation in that conference in Baltimore. It was no big deal. However, it got me up to the seventh floor of the Department [where the Secretary's office suite is located]. Coby Swank [Emory Coblentz Swank] was then the Secretary's Senior Special Assistant. I later served under him when he was Ambassador to Cambodia-an awfully nice man.

For a junior officer to go up to the Secretary's office and not be "devoured" by somebody was quite a nice experience. Coby was very helpful, easy-going, and "laid back." I never forgot that. That was a very pleasant interlude.

In any case, we dealt with the delegations and made sure that the position papers and other documents were all put together and that the delegation left Washington on time.

I managed to go to two major conferences in the first year. In September 1961, I went to Vienna as secretary of the delegation to two, back to back conferences. One was the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] General conference, an annual event. The IAEA is headquartered in Vienna. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund were having their meetings there as well just following that. So I spent a month in Vienna in September 1961.

This was a fascinating time to be there. President Kennedy had met Khrushchev in Vienna in June 1961, and been humiliated. Everyone was still talking about it three months later. Here is a little bit of history. There was a reception at the IAEA conference on the first day at the Hofburg Palace, where they had all of their big diplomatic social events. There was a big, mob scene, with everybody standing around, holding a drink. I was standing there, not knowing a soul, and with nobody to talk to, perhaps the most junior guy there. The man who was standing behind me came up and grunted, "My name is Molotov." And it was Vyacheslav Molotov [long-time Soviet Foreign Minister and senior Soviet leader]. Molotov was the Soviet representative to the IAEA. He was on his way down. He wound up running an electric power project in Siberia. I looked at him and thought, "It is, indeed, Molotov." I didn't know what to do. Should I ignore him, pour my drink on him, or what? So I just kind of ignored him. I turned my back on him and snubbed him. I don't think that he even knew the difference, but I can tell my grandchildren that I snubbed the man who started World War II [the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement leading to the war was signed in August, 1939].

That was an interesting conference because all of the "key" figures on the American delegation were from the Atomic Energy Commission and had been involved with the Manhattan Project [the project to develop the atomic bomb in the United States during World War II]. They were the sum and substance of the American nuclear program. I sort of observed all of this and could say that I saw all of these people.

I spent 2 ï¿½ years in IO.

Q: You were there from 1960 to 1963.

ANTIPPAS: In the Department from 1961 to 1963.

Q: During the Kennedy administration.

ANTIPPAS: Yes.

Q: Could you talk about this? I think that for all of us the coming of the Kennedy administration was not an absolute delight for the Department of State. There were a lot of very young, eager people running around. Could you give us your impressions of the Kennedy administration?

ANTIPPAS: I came with a bias. First, I was from Massachusetts, and I am, or was, a Republican. Not everybody from Massachusetts at that time thought that the Kennedy's walked on water. I didn't think that any of them walked on water. There were a lot of prejudices against the Kennedy's, starting with the old man, Joseph Kennedy. As I had worked in Cambridge and was somewhat politically immersed in this whole crowd, I just...I think that Jack Kennedy did some interesting things. He did, in fact, make some contributions. He made an impact on Indochina, for example, in 1952, when he first became a Senator. However, I viewed him in the late 1950's as basically an "absentee" Senator, a playboy who was going to run for President. I really couldn't stand "Teddy" Kennedy [Senator Edward Kennedy]. I found Teddy as downright obnoxious on television. I'm talking about the way he came across. I really had no particular knowledge of "Bobby" Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy, later Attorney General and also a Senator from New York], because he didn't really grow up in Massachusetts. I subsequently ran into Bobby Kennedy in Washington.

I was very unhappy that the Republicans had lost [the 1960 presidential elections]. At the time of Kennedy's inauguration in January, 1961, I was living in the Capitol Hill area, on East Capitol St., seven blocks from the Capitol. The night before the inauguration there was a major snowstorm. It took four hours to go from Arlington Towers [where the Foreign Service Institute was then located] to Capitol Hill. About one inch of snow had fallen, but the Washington area with all of the stranded vehicles, looked like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. They got the 3rd Infantry Regiment out [the ceremonial detachment at Ft. McNair] with shovels to clean off Pennsylvania Avenue for the inaugural parade [on January 20, 1961] because Washington had no snowplows.

Everybody was running around. We went out that night, "bar hopping," and so forth. The Democrats were in town, looking for jobs. PT-109 must have been as big as the cruiser USS BOSTON...

Q: PT-109 was the Patrol Torpedo Boat which John Kennedy had commanded during World War II and which was sunk.

ANTIPPAS: PT-109 must have had a crew as large as a cruiser because there were so many people going around, saying that they had served with Kennedy. It was kind of a fun evening when this major catastrophe, the snowstorm, hit Washington. But on January 20, I was so unhappy that I got into my car and drove to Boston. I wasn't going to be present when "that man" was sworn in as President. This was kind of stupid, because the snow was worse up in Boston.

At that time-I guess it still exists-there was a junior diplomats organization in Washington, organized by young people in the Department of State and including younger officers in the Washington Diplomatic Corps. There were social events, such as a reception on July 4. I was sharing a row house in the Capitol Hill area with a group of other Foreign Service Officers, including Bob Blackburn. I don't know if you know him. When you were in Naples, I think that he was the Administrative Counselor in Rome.

I've known him for a long time. He literally recruited me out of the A-100 course [at the Foreign Service Institute] as a tenant in his row house. I lived there for my 33 months in Washington. Blackburn and I subsequently served in Cambodia together. In fact, I stayed with him in Rome when I met you with the War College group, which visited Italy. Anyhow, he was the guiding light of this row house group. He had had a tour overseas and was back, studying Indonesian. He was one of the movers and shakers in this young diplomats' organization.

We had a reception at the house for the young diplomats. We invited Bobby and Ethel Kennedy to come. He had just returned from his mission to Indonesia where he had helped to "ease" the Dutch out of West Irian. He showed up. I may have been "half in the bag" by the time he arrived. I greeted him at the door. I said, "It's nice to meet another man from Massachusetts who has done well." It was a dumb comment. He gave me the coldest look. He had icy blue eyes. He was evidently not amused by my greeting.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Kennedy administration within the Department of State in the first few months?

ANTIPPAS: I think that John Kennedy once asked "Chip" [Charles E. Bohlen, a long time Ambassador and Russian specialist in the Department] Bohlen, "What's wrong with your Department of State?" Bohlen replied, "You are." The junior officers in the Department, of course, thought that President Kennedy was great. There was this reputation that he had of great interest in all issues and of calling up desk officers and asking them what was happening. I rather suspect that the senior levels of the Department were being driven "nuts"-something like what we see happening today [with President Clinton].

At the same time, thinking back on that time period, I have the impression that many people thought that President Kennedy was sort of the "choice" of the Foreign Service. He was regarded as being better inclined toward the Foreign Service, the Department, and foreign policy in general than Vice President Nixon had been.

Q: Seen in retrospect, Nixon was much more qualified than Kennedy in the foreign affairs field.

ANTIPPAS: I suspect that both of them "hated" the bureaucracy and ended up by "hating" the Foreign Service. I think that Nixon worked in the field of foreign affairs for a longer time. Of course, he lived a whole lot longer than Kennedy did. Maybe we can talk about that when we cover my Cambodian experience, because of what President Nixon tried to do to the 50 or so Foreign Service Officers who signed the petition against our Cambodian policy in 1970.

From the point of view of junior officers, it was thought that Kennedy was kind of "special," despite the failure of the "Bay of Pigs" expedition and the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. At the time of the Cuban missile crisis, I was in Washington at "ground zero" thinking that World War III was about to start.

I was almost recalled to active duty as an Army Reservist at the time of the Berlin Crisis in 1961. I said to myself, "I can't believe that this is happening to me, after all of these years of trying to decide about my career, and then have my career derailed by the Berlin crisis." I didn't have much of a "feel" for what the senior officers in the Department felt about Kennedy. Of course, the press was totally in Kennedy's pocket. They really were. They thought that he could walk on water.

If you were observing anything, you certainly got the feeling that the Kennedy administration was really "screwing up." He wanted to get involved in Laos, but somebody talked him out of sending troops there. Obviously, there had been a "screw up" on the Bay of Pigs. He had been roundly "chewed out" by Khrushchev in the face to face meeting in Vienna. We discovered that there really hadn't been a "missile gap" which Kennedy had talked about during the 1960 presidential elections campaign. In fact, we were in pretty good shape from the defense point of view. However, given our relative lack of sophistication, younger officers believed that the Kennedy years were "Camelot," with all of these bright, young people in the White House. I think that the senior levels of the Foreign Service were probably pretty frustrated.

Q: You were in IO during the whole time in Washington.

ANTIPPAS: Yes.

Q: When did you leave Washington?

ANTIPPAS: I left in late August, 1963, and arrived at my first post in Cameroon in October, 1963.

Q: The capital of Cameroon was Douala, wasn't it?

ANTIPPAS: Yaounde was the capital. We had opened a Consulate in Douala in 1962. I was the third officer to be assigned there. There wasn't even a Post Report. I had to go to the library and find something in the "National Geographic" to find out what Cameroon was all about.

Q: I have to ask. Did the three years in Washington get you a wife or not?

ANTIPPAS: No. I came close. I had relationships with a couple of young women, one of them a CIA analyst who had graduated from Fletcher [Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University]. But she was from Kentucky and was certainly not interested in going to go to Africa. No, I think that she felt that she had her own career and was not really interested in doing the Foreign Service spouse thing.

So I went to deepest, darkest Africa, without a wife.

Q: You went out to Douala in 1963. This was the height of the "romance" with Africa [in the Department of State]. It was thought that the corps of specialists on Africa was going to be the leading edge of the Department and that Africa was going to be the bright light of the world. It was just a feeling. I am not denigrating anyone.

ANTIPPAS: You're right. That feeling was very much there.

Q: Did you think this way?

ANTIPPAS: Well, I didn't particularly want to go to "Black Africa" [Africa South of the Sahara]. In fact, I had asked to be a "Mediterranean Basin Specialist." This field of specialization didn't exist, of course, but it sounded all right to me. Algeria was one of the most interesting places in the world at that time. It was really the "hot issue." France and the French language were also my interest. I figured that there were lots of places where the French language was used. It would be interesting to serve in some of those places. I said that I really would like to serve in Algiers, if I could, for my first posting abroad. I was taking an early morning French class with the Personnel Officer in the Department for Africa. I kept telling him, "Don't forget, when my name comes up, that I want to go to Tunis or Algiers or some place like that."

Anyway, he called me up in IO one day with laughter in his voice and said, "Guess where you're going?" He said, "You're going to Douala." I said, "What? What is Douala?" I remember reaching for the Department phone book on my desk, because there used to be a map in the back with all of the Foreign Service posts on it. I wondered, "Where in the hell is Douala?" Douala wasn't even on the map. I said, "You can't do this to me." He really got a great laugh out of that. I thought that my career had ended, before it started. I was somewhat depressed by the prospect.

I went to Cameroon by ship, via Europe, where I bought a Volkswagen "beetle". I drove it to Marseille, loaded it on the SS "General Mangin", and took a 17-day trip down the West coast of Africa.

Q: Before you went, did you get any briefing from the African Bureau? Did it stick in your mind at all?

ANTIPPAS: Yes, I did. But it didn't stick with me very much. Cameroon is an interesting place, though, because an insurgency was going on at that time, sponsored by the Chinese Communists, the Guineans, and Ghana. The insurgency was led by what was called the UPC [Cameroonian People's Union]. This insurrection had been going on since 1955. Cameroon (ex German Imperial colony of "Kamerun") had been a League of Nations then a UN Trust territory, with the French and British as the administering powers. The reason that we had opened a Consulate in Douala was that Cameroon was supposed to be an independent country. It really wasn't independent. We thought that there might be commercial opportunities there. The Consulate was supposed to handle consular affairs as well, but the French had the country "sewed up" economically as tight as a drum. They weren't about to let the Americans get in.

The insurgency in Cameroon had been violent. It was kind of like what had gone on in East Africa, with the "Mau Mau" movement. There were 17,000 casualties over seven years. But the interesting thing was that few ever knew anything about it, because the French kept the press out of there. They knew how to keep a "lock" on things. And, of course, most of the attention at the time was in Algeria. The guerrillas attacked the international airport at Douala and hacked a bunch of French to death with machetes. This doesn't shock anybody nowadays, but in 1963 it caught your attention.

Q: What were they after?

ANTIPPAS: It was a communist-Marxist led movement. Everything was in a state of flux. West Cameroon, which had been under British control, had split in 1960 with half of the territory deciding, along tribal lines, to go with French Cameroon, and the other half-the northern part of Cameroon-went with Nigeria. Many of the tribes that were involved in this rebellion were along the West Cameroon border. Great Britain assigned a regular army infantry battalion to keep an eye on things. We had about a hundred Peace Corps volunteers in West Cameroon in 1963 and a much smaller number in French Cameroon.

So it was an interesting place. Ahmadou Adhijo, who was the President of Cameroon, was a fairly stable individual. He was smart and competent. He ruled for over 20 years-and quite sagely. It kind of went to pieces after he died. He had not been as dictatorial or as nutty as Kwame Nkrumah or some of the other African rulers of the period.

Q: What were you doing there in Douala?

ANTIPPAS: I was a vice-consul, the number two man at the Consulate. There were four Americans at the post. There was a secretary and an administrative assistant-both female. The Principal Officer was the Consul, and I was the vice-consul. I replaced the man who actually opened the post.

I didn't hit it off with the Principal Officer. The first year that I was there was not a very rewarding experience. He was the kind of person who kept all of the interesting work for himself. If a Peace Corps volunteer turned a jeep over out in the bush, or had some other kind of accident, the Consul would hop in his vehicle and go out to rescue him. I couldn't even write a letter to a missionary, saying, "Your passport is about to expire," without the Consul's correcting it. So I ended up by counting the paper clips in the warehouse and meeting the couriers, that sort of thing. I think that the Consul didn't have a high opinion of my French language capability. He was himself married to a French woman. I had come out of French language class and still felt a little uncertain about using it. Although I thought that he had given me a fairly decent efficiency report, my first abroad, it was only after I returned to the Department and read the CONFIDENTIAL part of it, as they used to do, that I realized that he had literally "cut my throat." The DCM, who wrote the Reviewing statement tried to soften it because he liked me. However, the Consul came down with hepatitis, four months before he was due to be transferred and had to be medically evacuated.

Cameroon was being inspected at that time [by Foreign Service Inspectors]. The chief inspector was a very highly regarded, senior Foreign Service Officer named Randolph Kidder. His previous position had been that of Political Counselor in the Embassy in Paris. He took a liking to me. and with the Department and the Embassy wondering who was going to replace the Principal Officer in Douala until the Consul's replacement arrived from Genoa. Inspector Kidder said, "Let Antippas do the job. He's going to sink or swim. He'll either do it or not."

So the Embassy and the Department agreed to leave me in charge of the post and I served as acting Principal Officer for four months. I think that I did well. As I was on my own, I kind of "took off." Of course, I worked very hard. I wrote an analysis of the political parties of the West Cameroon, the first ever. But because there was no secretary I had a Peace Corps girl I was dating type the airgram for me. I also spent a hectic month helping search for an aircraft that disappeared near Mount Cameroon in the process of being ferried to the former Belgian Congo by the brother of the then Duke of Hamilton. The Duke was related to the then British Prime Minister Douglas Home.

Not the least of the Consulate's chores related to the fact that Douala was a transit point for the U.S. diplomatic courier system in West Africa. The post with the departure of the Consul was reduced to two American, Principal Officer and Administrative Assistant. We had 13 couriers a week come to Douala-only one during normal duty hours. So every other day I had to go to the airport in the middle of the night, pick up the courier, and take him down, with all of his "X-2" [large size diplomatic pouch] bags.

The Congo was the hot area at the time-this was now 1964. I swear that Washington must have been shipping ammunition to the Congo because those X-2 bags were very heavy. It also went very hard for you if you missed a courier run. One day G. Mennen Williams, or "Soapy" Williams [then Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs], came to Douala, flying out of the Congo. He was just transiting Cameroon. A French friend who was UTA [Air Transport Union, a French airline] manager...

Q: By UTA, you mean the other...

ANTIPPAS: The other French airline beside Air France. He called me up and said, "There's a guy sitting out here, sleeping on a bench in the waiting room at the airport. The manifest says that he's an Assistant Secretary of State named Williams." So I quickly called the Embassy, got the Ambassador on the phone, and told him that Assistant Secretary Williams was in the waiting room at the airport. The Ambassador said, "Go out there and tell him to hold on. I'm coming down to see him." I rushed out the door of the Consulate. When I got to the airport, I saw Assistant Secretary Williams walking out to his plane, which had just been called for departure. I introduced myself, said I was the Vice-Consul, and said that the Ambassador would really like to talk to him. He smiled, was very nice, but waved me away. That was 1964. Four years later, in 1968, when I was in Saigon, "Soapy" was the Ambassador to the Philippines. He came to Vietnam for a visit. This was three days before the bombing halt of early November, 1968, by which President Lyndon Johnson was trying to ensure that Hubert Humphrey [the Democratic presidential candidate] would be elected.

As the Saigon Embassy escort officer I took "Soapy" Williams all over Vietnam, including a visit to "Yankee Station" [an area off the coast of South Vietnam where U. S. Navy carriers conducting the air war against North Vietnam were normally located]. He wanted to talk to the people who were bombing North Vietnam. I reminded him of his visit to Douala and what a day he made for me when I found out that he was sleeping on a bench and how the Ambassador was unhappy that I hadn't been able to persuade him stay. "Soapy" was amused by the story.

In any event it was really delightful to be a Principal Officer and I thought the best job in the Foreign Service.

Q: Was there a Cameroonian Government, a French Government, or what?

ANTIPPAS: There was a Cameroonian Government. The French were still dominant, for the most part. There were only three career Consulates in Douala: the French, who, under the Cameroonian constitution, were automatically deans of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, no matter how long the incumbent French diplomats had been there; the Swiss; and ourselves. There was a gaggle of honorary consulates. The French were influential because they were paying a good part of the international aid bill. They had a lot of technical people there. They also had a lot of "Peace Corps type" volunteers, who were doing their military service as teachers. The French exercised an omnipresent influence with their aid and technical advisors. The French Consul in Douala had been a local "Prefect" before independence. But there was a Cameroonian Government.

Q: Did you have much to do with the Cameroonians?

ANTIPPAS: Not all of that much. Mostly with the Provincial Governor in the French Cameroons side. I spent more time over in West Cameroon than anything else because there were more Americans over there. There were missionaries and...

Q: West Cameroon was part of Cameroon-is that right?

ANTIPPAS: Yes. West Cameroon was a long strip of British administered territory that stretched from the Bight of Biafra to Lake Chad in the North. In 1960 it was split into northern and southern parts. The northern part went to Nigeria. The southern part elected to be federated with French Cameroon. The split went along tribal lines. The Vice President of Cameroon at the time was a West Cameroonian named John Ngu Foncha. He spoke no French but was the Vice President of the Federated Republic of Cameroon. Given the fact that the insurrection was taking place in that part of the country and that we had all of these Peace Corps volunteers and a little bit of commercial activity, I spent a fair amount of time in West Cameroon.

Q: How did you find the Cameroonian Government officials that you dealt with at the provincial level?

ANTIPPAS: There were no particular problems. They were quite accommodating. There was no particular difficulty. The one contact that comes to mind is when the AID mission in Yaounde asked me to represent them in the presentation of some chemicals to fight cocoa plant blight.It became quite clear that, first, there were very few commercial Americans in the area. Oil exploration was just beginning at that time offshore in the Bight of Biafra, where major strikes were made afterwards. I can remember that, apart from the Peace Corps volunteers and a couple of guys from Texas or Louisiana who were doing seismic soundings in preparation for oil prospecting, there was very little American commercial activity. I left the post when the new Principal Officer came, because the Department decided to reduce the size of the post to two Americans, rather than four Americans, as had been the case previously. I was transferred to the Embassy in Bangui [Central African Republic].

Q: What about the Peace Corps volunteers? What were they doing?

ANTIPPAS: They were mostly teaching English.

Q: How did this go? Here was a...

ANTIPPAS: It was really the first generation of Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: Here were Peace Corps volunteers teaching English in what had been virtually a private hunting ground of the French. I'm surprised that there was any call for English.

ANTIPPAS: There was interest in English. There was a much smaller number of Peace Corps volunteers, as I recall it, in the former French Cameroon than there was in what had been British controlled West Cameroon. West Cameroon was somewhat backward in comparison to the French Cameroons. The British hadn't done much for it, and the French didn't do anything for it, either. I remember that when the West Cameroons affiliated itself with the French side they lost Commonwealth preferences for banana exports which really hurt. In any event, I think that the Peace Corps volunteers were accepted all right. They didn't do too badly. In the West Cameroons they were mostly involved in village development projects; digging wells and the like.

My basic impression of the Peace Corps volunteers was that a lot of them "went native" very quickly. This was kind of the beginning of the "flower children" generation anyway. This was the early generation of the 1960's. My eyes went very wide at some of the things these people did. The Peace Corps had its own administration. They had an in-country Director with whom we worked very closely and had very cordial relations. They had to watch out for the volunteers. But nevertheless, if something happened, the consular officers had a certain responsibility toward them.

Q: When you say, "going native," I think it's interesting...

ANTIPPAS: I meant that some were living with native women. Some volunteers, I recall, lived in local huts-not, exactly, Peace Corps issue housing. They really got into the culture, if you could call it that. These were fairly primitive living quarters. Some of the locations were pretty limited. I dated a Peace Corps volunteer, who lived 80 miles away in what was a French aluminum foundry town at Edea. There were several rubber plantations in the area as well some that belonged to the Terres Rouges Company. There was a waterfall there at Edea, so the French had built a power plant and a smelter. They brought bauxite from Guinea to Cameroon. They trucked the bauxite 80 miles into the interior, smelted it, and sent the ingots to Louisiana in the United States. It's interesting in terms of mercantilist theory.

I used to have to drive through this rain forest, 80 miles one way, for a date in Edea. It made it very interesting. What you do when you're young and single!

Q: Then you went to the Central African Republic [CAR], where you served from 1964 to...

ANTIPPAS: 1965. I spent a year at each post [Douala and Bangui]. The CAR was much smaller in scope than the Cameroons even though it had a land area the size of Europe. The city of Bangui had a population of only 45,000 people at that time, out of a total population in the whole country of about one million.

Q: Before we get to that, what was the political situation there?

ANTIPPAS: The President of the country was a civilian named David Dacko. He was later thrown out by the Army chief, Colonel Bokassa, who proclaimed himself Emperor and spent the country's entire GNP for a year on his "coronation". The Central African Republic is situated just North of the then Republic of the Congo [now Zaire], which, at that time, dominated everything that was going on in the region. French power was very much "present." The French had a military force stationed on the tri-border area of Chad, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic. They had a military post there at which what was called an "intervention force" was stationed. It was smaller than a division-probably a regiment or brigade of paratroopers. I think that they actually intervened in Gabon, when a coup d'etat was attempted there. They were very evidently going to intervene wherever French interests dictated and to secure those countries whose administrations were basically friendly to France.

There were several insurrections going on. The Katanga area [Eastern Congo, now Eastern Zaire] was of the greatest interest.

Q: This was the southern Congo province of Katanga, which split away from the central Congolese Government. There were a lot of mercenaries there.

ANTIPPAS: There were considerable mineral resources there.

Q: The major company was the Union Miniere du Haut Katanga [Mining Union of Upper Katanga].

ANTIPPAS: The union leader there, I think, subsequently became the president of the Congo. What was his name? I can picture him but I can't remember his name. [Moise Tshombe]

Anyhow, there were some other, "half-baked" insurrections going on. One of them was called the "Simba Rebellion." They were a real bunch of "crazies" up in the northern part of the Congo. They captured Stanleyville and held our Consul.

Q: Michael Hoyt.

ANTIPPAS: At least one American missionary was killed during the Belgian-American rescue operation [of Stanleyville].

Q: The operation was called "Dragon Rouge" [Red Dragon].

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. There was a little chore I had to do from time to time in this connection. Our PAO [Public Affairs Officer] had his own airplane in Bangui. So we used to fly around the country. We went up to a crossing point 300-400 miles into the interior on the river that forms the border between the CAR and the Congo. This was apparently a traditional crossing point of the main North-South road from the Sudan. All of the canoes had been brought over to the CAR side and chained up there to keep the "Simbas" from crossing over and doing any more marauding. I went up there to try to pick up intelligence-to see if any "line crossers" could tell us anything about what the Simbas were doing to our people, who were still under house arrest.

One of the other chores I had in Bangui was to go down to the river [Ubangi River] every day and look for American bodies in the river. Bodies were floating down the river. Some of them would wash up in the shallows in downtown Bangui. The situation was kind of like Rwanda today, though not as bad. I have pictures at home of bodies floating in the river. One of the things which one learns is that the skin pigmentation of black people, after being immersed in water for a time, turns white. So the bodies all looked like Caucasians, floating in the river, until you realized that, in fact, they weren't. Anyway, this was a pretty grisly job.

I had originally been assigned to shift to Embassy Nouakchott, Niger from Douala. But this was changed to Bangui as Third Secretary and Vice-Consul, because the incumbent Administrative Officer had to have a hernia operation. He went up to Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya, where there was an Air Force hospital. So I was assigned to Bangui as Administrative Officer, Consul and Economic/Commercial Officer. I had at least three "hats" to wear. Claude "Tony" Ross was Ambassador. He was at age 43, the youngest career Foreign Service Officer to become Ambassador. Ed Brennan was DCM. Charlie Bray, who was then Political Officer, subsequently became spokesman for the Department and Ambassador to Senegal. In addition to a Public Affairs Officer (PAO) who was a USIS officer, The Military Attachï¿½, as I recall, was also actually resident in Chad, at Fort Lamy [now called N'Djamena]. There was no Peace Corps contingent but we did have a couple of "SeaBees" doing some kind of construction work in the Western part of the country. We would stop with them if we drove the 800 miles to Cameroon. It was a very small, fairly close knit Embassy and diplomatic community. I was in Bangui when De Gaulle recognized Red China. The CAR was very close to De Gaulle. The Ubangi Shari, as the territory was called before independence, had been one of the first French African territories to declare for the Free French in 1940. So it had a place very close to De Gaulle's heart. He never forgot those African countries that had supported him at that time-particularly the CAR and Cameroon.

Consequently, De Gaulle gave them an extra dollop of aid every year. When France [under De Gaulle] recognized Red China in 1964, the CAR, and all of the other former French territories also recognized the PRC. The CAR kicked out the Ambassador of the Republic of China, who, of course, was fairly close to us. Then the Red Chinese and the Russians came in, which sort of changed the local atmosphere.

Q: We'll stop this at this point and will pick up with more details about what our interests in the CAR were, more about the "Simba" business and how that worked out, and how the Embassy in Bangui was run and how it dealt with the CAR.

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Q: Today is August 5, 1994. Andy, while you were there in the CAR, how did the "Simba" business finally wind down? Or did it wind down while you were there?

ANTIPPAS: It did. My memory is not all of that exact on this. Of course, the CAR is on the northern border of the then Congo-Kinshasa [now Zaire]. The capital, Kinshasa, was called Leopoldville in those days.

As I recall, the "Simbas" were really a fragmented kind of opposition group, led by witch doctors, in effect. They were probably high on drugs, for all I know. In any event, they managed to take over a certain amount of territory in the northern part of the Congo, including the major town of Stanleyville, capturing our Consulate and Consulate staff. They were held as hostages in the town, along with a number of other American missionaries and other Europeans. It was quite a tense time, because we didn't know whether they would be killed if we tried to go in and liberate them. Eventually the U.S. Force ferried in Belgian paratroopers who cleared the area. I recall the one American casualty, a missionary who was machine gunned trying to scale a fence.

I had several jobs in the Embassy in Bangui. These were not particularly onerous in a small country like the CAR, which only had a population of about one million. At one point I had to be Administrative Officer, GSO, Consul, and Economic Officer. As one of my jobs was the protection of American citizens. We had a lot of missionaries in the CAR. There were also Americans prospecting for diamonds out in the western part of the CAR, toward the border with the Congo-Brazzaville, as it was called [to distinguish it from the Congo-Leopoldville]. During the "Simba" affair I had made a number of contacts. There was a large number of Greeks in the former French Equatorial Africa in those days. One of them that I met was a coffee planter, who admitted that he had run away from conscription during World War II. He had good contacts over in Congo-Leopoldville. I used to go up to the crossing point, which I mentioned before, 300-400 miles up the river from Bangui. I would fly up there on the PAO's plane from time to time and we would look around and try to pick up tidbits of information. We didn't have a CIA "Station" in the CAR at that time-didn't get one until the Chinese Communists and the Russians arrived in 1964. I would go up there and try to find out what was going on. The CAR authorities were obviously scared to death that the "Simbas" might try to cross the river there, which was very broad. This Greek coffee planter had contacts with native "line crossers"-people who would go across the river and pick up information. I would talk with him and get some idea of what the situation was.

Q: How did you find dealing with the government there?

ANTIPPAS: It was relatively easy. The dress was informal.

The Israelis had a fairly active Embassy in the CAR in those days. Their Ambassador had been an Army general. Their aid mission was quite active. The Israeli Ambassador had persuaded the President of the CAR to go into the "summer uniform" of a short sleeve shirt and no tie and stop "doing the French thing" of wearing a dark suit and a tie. This made an awful lot of sense. This was the first time I ever experienced that.

Relations with the CAR Government were not much of a problem. We didn't have that many issues to deal with. The biggest economic interest we had involved diamond mining and some timber exploitation. The CAR didn't export very much else at that time except hardwood timber. The French were the paramount economic power, as they had been in Cameroon. They were very anxious to keep the Americans out.

Q: Tony Ross. How did you find him as an Ambassador?

ANTIPPAS: A great guy. A very nice guy. He had been a Middle Eastern specialist, you know. As a young officer, he had served in Egypt, where he did well during the 1956 Arab-Israeli War, I think. He had a Greek-American wife, so we got along very nicely. He was very sharp, very professional. He went on to be Ambassador to Haiti, and he was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the African Bureau. I think that he finally retired when Secretary of State Kissinger appointed someone else to be Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

Ed Brennan [DCM in Bangui] was my immediate superior. I remember that I lived with him and his family in his house, until I got my own place in Bangui.

You might be interested in hearing how the "Agency" [CIA] came to town and how such things worked at that time.

Q: Oh, yes.

ANTIPPAS: As I said, the Agency had no particular interest in the CAR. I think that they had a lot of interest in the Congo-Leopoldville [now Zaire] and what was going on there. They were supporting Mobutu even at that time.

When De Gaulle recognized Red China in 1964, all of the former French colonies in Africa followed suit. They "threw out" the representative of the Republic of China [ROC] on Taiwan. I remember that when the ROC Ambassador had to leave the CAR suddenly-almost overnight-we tried to "secure" his property. In fact, I was given the task of taking his sedan and driving it to Cameroon to keep it from being turned over to the Red Chinese. I remember that Ed Brennan told me to "hot foot" it out of town and get it to Cameroon. That was 800 miles away over basically savanna or desert kind of country. I did it. I beat it almost out of the CAR. But before I could get out of the country, I stopped off at the location where we had the "SeaBees" [U. S. Navy Construction Battalion]. I stopped overnight with them. Charley Bray [Political Officer] chased after me in another Embassy vehicle, caught up with me, and said, "You've got to turn around. We've changed our minds." It apparently not in accordance with protocol to take ROC Embassy property and try to keep it from the incoming, PRC [People's Republic of China] Embassy. It would embarrass the CAR Government. So I drove back.

When the Red Chinese came in, we were very "uptight." Relations with them were not good. The Vietnam War was beginning to heat up at that time. We studiously ignored each other at social functions. The Red Chinese came in, and the Russians weren't far behind. They had earlier recognized all of these countries. They just didn't have resident ambassadors in them. Later, they set up resident embassies there.

When the Russians showed up, the Agency showed up, in the form of a "representative from the Department of Commerce in Washington." He came in with a lot of luggage. The Russians had decided to take a house, a former American missionary house which was two houses over from my house, in a very nice part of town. The "Commerce Department representative" came to live in my house. Of course, I was a bachelor, and this was no problem. However, they had managed to put some "bugs" in the walls of the house that was being refurbished for the Russians. The Russians were not the only ones planting "bugs" in those days.

Using the technology of the times- the Agency guy had two large, Samsonite suitcases-he would sit in one of my bedrooms. At night he would fire a "thunderbolt" and turn on the "bugs." He would leave them on for a while, trying to listen while taping the conversations. He had to listen to all of this in real time. Then he would take all of the equipment away when my house boy was around. So he spent day and night in my house, listening to tapes. I remember one time that we had a fierce rain storm, with bolts of lightning hitting around the neighborhood. One lightning bolt turned on the "bugs" inside the house. I remember how nervous he was. If the Russians "swept" their house electronically, from time to time, as we would do, they might find the "bugs." He was firing "thunderbolts" from his equipment, trying to turn the "bugs" off. He told me that most of the time the Russians had radios playing, which was the technique that you use to try to foil listening devices. So we apparently couldn't pick up much. The first resident agent spoke Russian as well as French. We subsequently served in Vietnam at the same time. Anyway, the Russians, the Chinese, and the Americans kind of "peered" at each other, out there in the middle of nowhere in Central Africa. I only stayed in Bangui for a year. Charley Whitehouse [later Ambassador to Laos and Thailand] was the Personnel Officer for Africa. He wrote me a letter and asked me if I would be willing to go to work for the AID program in Vietnam, which was just then building up [1965]. The Department was assigning Foreign Service Officers to the "Office of Civil Operations" (OCO). I remember writing back and saying: "Hell, no." I'd been shot at in Korea and had just spent two years in the jungles of Central Africa. I didn't want to go to some place where I'd be shot at and also be in a jungle. He wrote back and said that the Department wanted to do right by those of us who had served in the hardship posts, so it was decided to send me to Japan. That was how I got my assignment to the Consulate General in Kobe.

Q: You were there from 1965 to 1967. What were you doing in Japan?

ANTIPPAS: I was actually sent to be the Administrative Officer. However, the Consul General was John Stegmaier, a senior Foreign Service Officer, who had been in Japan forever. I sometimes thought that he had forgotten whom he represented, the U. S. or the Japanese. Mrs. Stegmaier was even worse. Her family had been missionaries in Japan for generations. She spoke better Japanese than the Japanese. Anyway, it was decided that I would be a Visa Officer and Vice Consul. John Coffey, who had been in charge of the Consular Section, would also be the Administrative Officer. So I basically did consular work for two years. Eventually, when John Stegmaier left, I was made chief of the Consular Section. Kobe was good to me. I received two, back to back promotions in Kobe and found a wife.

The Consulate in Kobe was basically a "visa mill," but those were the days when vice consuls signed every visa, before we had plates with signatures on them. I remember that in one year I signed 13,000 visas by hand. That was a big workload in those days. I don't know what it would be now-maybe half a million. We have a visa waiver with Japan now. During my time the Consulate was "split." The Consular Section was in the Consulate building in the compound that we had in Kobe. The CG and the Commercial section were in Osaka.

This shows you how the old Foreign Service worked. We had had a Consulate in Kobe since the "opening" of Japan [in 1854]. It's a wonderful town-the most Westernized town in Japan, up until the 1960's, I think. We had a Consul General in 1958 who decided that the Consulate would be in Kobe, because he thought that Kobe was a much more pleasant town. In point of fact, most of the work in the office was in Osaka, which is where the commercial center of gravity was. The Department built this compound-the office was an architectural award winning structure-in Kobe, along with an apartment building providing housing for most of the American staff. But, as I say, most of the work was over in Osaka, so another building was provided in Osaka.

Q: How far away was it?

ANTIPPAS: 25 miles away to the North East. Osaka then had a population of four million people. Kobe had one million. Commuting was really something. Talk about "mob scenes" at the trains. Try riding the subway in Osaka in August-or in winter, for that matter. So I spent one year in Osaka and one year in Kobe.

Eventually, another Consul General decided that everyone should move over to Osaka. Now, I think, they've decided to compromise, since the Consul General's residence was in Nishinomiya, which is halfway between the two. We've now built an office building in Nishinomiya. If you have work to do down at the port, you go in one direction. If you have work to do in Osaka, you go the other way. The train service is excellent.

Q: Did you get any feel for how the Japanese felt about us at that time?

ANTIPPAS: Yes. It's interesting that you say that, because it depended on the turn of the generations. I remember that the American impact, the American occupation of Japan, was very strong after World War II. Remember that, first of all, I was a consular officer. I was involved in protecting American citizens. I remember a senior police officer calling me up at 4:00 AM one day to say that they had some guy in jail for some reason or other. I said, "Fine, I'll be down there first thing in the morning." He replied, "Oh, you must come now, because under SCAP [Supreme Command, Allied Powers-the command headed by General MacArthur] rules we must inform you immediately upon the arrest of your citizens. You must come immediately." In the 1940's and 1950's, SCAP meant MacArthur. I remember getting up and going down to the jail, because they took it so seriously. There are countries, including the United States, which would let weeks go by before the police informed a foreign Embassy or Consulate that they were detaining one of their nationals. Who was I to refuse the police officer's request? But at that time the people in authority still remembered the American occupation, which had been over for about 13 years, at that point. The occupation ended in 1952.

Q: I remember. I was there. I stopped occupying Japan and started protecting it.

ANTIPPAS: That's right. But there were relationships established, and we were still very much a powerful influence in that country, although there were lots of pro-Communist, anti-war demonstrations. If you haven't been in a Japanese demonstration, you really haven't seen anything. Until you see 100,000 people show up for a demonstration, snake dancing down the street, linking arms and chanting, with police five ranks deep in front of your office building, with water cannon and teargas to turn people back, you really haven't lived. And you know that they're looking for you.

I remember one time in Kobe. I was in the office at lunchtime. pro-Communist demonstrators showed up, walked into the office, and started reading a communist manifesto-in Japanese, of course-at the top of their lungs. I remember how absolutely infuriated and humiliated I felt at these guys. I just went into my office and closed the door. What else could you do? When they tried that the second time, we locked the door on them and wouldn't let them in the building. They would always come at lunchtime. They complained bitterly to our local employees that they worked at the post office. They said, "We do this on our lunch hour." I felt, "Well, screw you. I don't want you in my office." I've got slides of these demonstrations, taken from inside the building. It was really something to see.

Q: Why was it that in the course of these demonstrations-and I did not serve there at that time-no buildings were burned down, and so forth?

ANTIPPAS: No. They were very careful about property damage. I recall that they painted graffiti on the office wall of this prize-winning building, which is very much in the Japanese style. The wall was made of cinder block-lava type rock. It was very porous, and we had a hell of a time getting those red-painted slogans off the wall. But there was no real property damage. They didn't burn vehicles or hurt anybody. Still, 100,000 people! After you get past 10,000, chanting anti-American slogans, what difference does it make? One of the things that we had in that area, just North of Kobe, was a large, aircraft repair plant. The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps used to bring their aircraft there from Vietnam for refurbishing. It was an aircraft "rebuild" facility. I can't remember the name of the place. We had a constant stream of Marine Corps and Navy pilots coming through. This was in 1965-66 at the height of the Vietnam War. The pilots would come up to collect the airplanes.

I heard a lot about the Vietnam War from these pilots who were flying on missions against the communists and telling us what it was like to be on the receiving end of a SAM missile [Surface to Air Missile], which they called "flying telephone poles." They said that you could actually see these things coming up at you. Several of my friends who were serving in the Army in Vietnam had come up to Kobe for R&R [Rest and Recreation] also described what was going on. That's one of the reasons why I volunteered to go to Vietnam, I got so interested in these stories that they were telling me.

Q: You mentioned that your Consul General was an old Japanese hand. Did you get any feel about Japanese hands?

ANTIPPAS: Yes. I really felt that those people were afflicted by a serious case of "clientitis." They had great empathy with the Japanese. Now, I'm a great admirer of the Japanese. If you've lived there, you can't fail to admire the country. It's a society that functions. It works, in every sense of that word. They are very special people. When you're a language officer and really become enamored of the country, you tend to see things from the Japanese perspective. I was not a language officer, although I was offered language training in a two-year program in Yokohama. As much as I liked Japan, I didn't particularly want to spend a third of my career in one place.

I remember thinking, "Whom do these language officers represent? Do they represent the United States or Japan?" Because everything that I was hearing was pro-Japanese. Obviously, the problem was not very severe at that time. Japan was really beginning to "take off" at that time in the mid-1960's.

Q: You're talking about economic affairs.

ANTIPPAS: Yes. I'm talking in economic terms. That was the beginning of the electronic revolution. Transistors, for example, were just then becoming "the" thing. I remember buying stock in Texas Instruments in those days. But not everybody was so affected. I remember a Commercial Officer, named Charles Duffy, who was married to a Japanese. He could be very critical of the Japanese-but that's because he was married to a Japanese and really had a special point of view. Her grandfather was Shigeru Yoshida, I think, who was Prime Minister during the 1950's. Duffy had a very good perspective on the Japanese. In fact, he quit the Foreign Service and went to work for a merchant bank in Japan.

Q: In a way I'm surprised that you volunteered for Vietnam.

ANTIPPAS: You know, I really had "had it" with jungles and things like that in Africa. I had felt that Africa was not going to be very important in the great scheme of things. As Vietnam began to heat up and it was beginning so in 1961, I also thought in my mind that it was a mistake to be there. I vividly recalled the French experience in Indochina. I had watched the French battalion leave Korea for Vietnam where it was slaughtered in the Central Highlands in 1954. I recalled the views of General Ridgway at the time who said we should avoid getting into a war on mainland Asia. But, after two years in Japan I really was kind of resting on my laurels. I had been promoted and was catching up with colleagues of my age group. I felt that, because of the way the Foreign Service was organized in those days, unless I obtained a political reporting job, my career would be stymied in some fashion. I could go so far on the administrative or consular side, but if I didn't get some political experience, I would not really stand a chance of getting to a very senior position. I felt that one easy way to get a political reporting job would be to go to Vietnam. Also, I was becoming very interested in the problem-hearing these stories from these people who were there. We were obviously on the "losing side" at that time. We had been taking our "lumps" in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966. It wasn't until 1967 that we began to think that maybe we might win this struggle.

I think that the other motivation was, quite bluntly, promotion. I thought that everybody who went there was being promoted. I was very eager for promotion because, as I told you in our first session, I was five years older than my peers, because of my Army service and having gone to college after Army service. It was stupid of me. I really shouldn't have worried about how fast I was promoted. This is the guidance I later used to give my own junior officers. I would say, "Don't worry about it. Take each job as it comes along and do the very best you can, because the Foreign Service is always looking for good people. If you're good, you'll get promoted." In fact, I worried about it, despite my own advice. I worried that I was 29 or 30 and was still an FSO-7 [under the old personnel system]. That was kind of dumb, but it motivated me very much. I'd gotten these two, back to back promotions, so that by the time I was through in Kobe, I was an FSO-5. I really wanted to make FSO-4 and thought that if I did, I'd really be in a "launch" position for the rest of my career. So, for a lot of reasons, I decided to volunteer for Vietnam. A number of cables had come out from the Department, asking for volunteers for Vietnam. Furthermore, John Coffey, who was very much an old Foreign Service hand, told me in Kobe, "You really ought to volunteer and go to Vietnam because it will help your career." So, almost on a whim, I did.Then I went and told my wife. I had just been married to Judith Blewett, a Canadian girl who was teaching in Kobe at the International School. We married in early 1967 and returned to Kobe to finish the tour-and I volunteered to go to Vietnam in the Spring. Well, I'll tell you, she's never forgiven me for this-and this is 28 years later. She still hasn't forgiven me, not because of Vietnam as such, but because she couldn't go. At that time we weren't allowing dependents to be in Vietnam. She is a rather gutsy and courageous woman. She would have done very well in Vietnam but she was very angry that I did this without consulting her-and I was wrong. One of the key mistakes of my life. The hassle I've had since then-aside from the fact that we lost the war! I'll talk about that, down the road, because it was interesting how things worked out for me in Indochina.

Q: So what did you do?

ANTIPPAS: I think that I volunteered in March, 1967. My tour in Kobe wasn't up until October, 1967. I kind of hoped that I would go right away. The way it would work, if my wife stayed in the United States, the tour was 18 months. If she was "safe-havened" in a post near Vietnam, the tour was two years. My idea was that she would stay in the U. S. for 18 months, I would be promoted, and we would go on to greater glory. She didn't see it that way. She said, "I'm not about to stay home." So she decided to go to Bangkok for safe haven. Of course, by that time she was also pregnant.

I didn't get to go to Vietnam right away. In fact, I didn't get there for something like eleven months, which was a very difficult time. I got to Saigon just after the Tet offensive [of late January, 1968]. The whole scheme of things had changed by February, 1968. In fact, my arrival was held up by the Tet offensive. When did you go to Vietnam?

Q: I went there just a year later, in February, 1969.

ANTIPPAS: We were in Saigon together, in the Embassy. Of course, by the time I had volunteered to go to Vietnam, I couldn't take it back. It would really have hurt you, professionally, to have declined to go. At that time the Department was ordering people to go. Whole junior officer classes were being ordered to go, over their objections.

I was assigned to the Political Section. I was supposed to replace an officer in the Internal Unit of the Political Section. Then, when I got there, it was decided that I would work in the External Unit. We had a 25-man Political Section. These were Foreign Service Officers, not including any "spooks." They were all "straight leg" Foreign Service Officers. We had four or five guys that covered the provinces, three guys in Political-Military Affairs, three in External Affairs, five in Internal Affairs. We had one guy to cover the Upper House of the National Assembly, another guy to cover the Lower House, we had two guys covering the labor situation. One guy would cover the Buddhists. We were very specialized.

When I got there, I went to the External Unit. It was decided that I would cover Cambodia.

Q: OK, this is Tape 2, Side A. This is an interview with Andy Antippas.

ANTIPPAS: It was decided that my area of concern in the political section in Saigon would be Cambodia, the French Community, and what we called the "More Flags" project. The latter was President Lyndon Johnson's effort to get more foreign countries to support the South Vietnamese Government. A lot of work already had been done on this. I was a sort of "guardian" of the files but periodically I would have to go out and visit the Philippine contingent [PHILCAG], the Thai division, the Iranian hospital down in the [Mekong] Delta-and things like that.

In fact, I spent most of my time working on Cambodia. The "French Community" really meant the rubber plantations. Many of the French left in Vietnam worked for the rubber plantations. The rubber plantations were mostly located in Zones "C" and "D" [areas North of Saigon where communist armed activity was very active], as well as near the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, where they were being used as sanctuaries by the Viet Cong. There was a sort of synergy between the functions.

My job required me to be chairman of the Mission Cambodia Committee. We were not represented in Cambodia at that time. Prince Sihanouk broke diplomatic relations with us, I guess, in about 1965, over border incidents with South Vietnam. We didn't reestablish relations until 1969. Between 1965 and 1969 the Australians were our "protecting power" in Phnom Penh [capital of Cambodia]. It's interesting to recall that W. Randolph Kidder who was nominated to be Ambassador to Cambodia in 1965, had been the Senior Inspector who inspected Douala in 1964. He was the man who suggested that I be left in charge of the Consulate in Douala for several months and be given a chance to "show my stuff." After his assignment as an inspector and his nomination as Ambassador to Cambodia, he went to Cambodia, but Sihanouk never accepted his credentials. We closed the Embassy down after that.

During the time I served in Saigon the Johnson administration was trying very hard to convince Sihanouk to do something about the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong use of his territory. In 1968 we recorded over 200 border "incidents," involving firing from Cambodia into Vietnam or attacks by the North Vietnamese which resulted in the loss of American lives on the border.

Then there was the famous "understanding" of some of the missions sent by the administration to Cambodia to try to talk Sihanouk into being more cooperative. One of these missions was led by Eugene Black, who was then President of the World Bank. He was accompanied by Philip Habib. During your time and mine in Vietnam Phil Habib had been Political Counselor in Saigon. He was one of the "legends" of the Foreign Service. Wasn't he your Ambassador in Seoul?

Q: No. My Ambassador was Dick Sneider.

ANTIPPAS: Anyway, Phil Habib was the Foreign Service Officer who accompanied Eugene Black to try to talk Sihanouk into being more cooperative. We wanted to "beef up" the International Control Commission in Cambodia so that it could be more effective, by offering them better communications equipment and maybe even helicopters. For the benefit of people who don't know about the International Control Commission [ICC], it was created as a result of the Geneva Accords of 1954. The Commission had four branch offices: one in North Vietnam, one in South Vietnam, one in Laos, and one in Cambodia. They were each basically independent of each other. The function of the Commissions was to make sure that the provisions of the 1954 [Geneva] Accords were met. Most of the Commissions became virtually moribund very quickly. The only one that seemed to function at all was the one in Cambodia, because it suited Sihanouk's purpose to have an international presence to try to protect Cambodia's territory.

The members of the Commission were the Poles, the Canadians, and the Indians. India provided the Chairmen of the International Control Commissions. The Indian who was Chairman in Cambodia at that time was V. V. Paranjpe, whom we all thought was pro-communist. He actually went on to be Indian Ambassador to China. He was a China "expert."

There was a constant battle. Sihanouk would take members of the ICC up to these border sites and make a big "PR" thing, alleging that this was where the Americans bombed Cambodia. Dead bodies would have lain out there for three or four days until he could get the ICC to go up there. You want to talk about a sight! The poor ICC representatives-they were all diplomats-were just trying to do their jobs. They would look at these fly-ridden bodies. We had, of course, good relations with the Canadians. The Canadians never really acted as our "agents," per se, because they were much more independent than that. But they were basically our friends.

One of my jobs was, from time to time, to brief the Canadian ICC representative, At that time, a Canadian diplomat named Dick Gorham, who would come over from Phnom Penh. I would take him to J-2 of MACV [the Intelligence Branch of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam] to get briefings about where the North Vietnamese were in the border areas. If he could get down there, he might find them. I remember telling him one time that in the "Parrot's Beak" [West-Northwest of Saigon, where a salient of Cambodian territory jutted into South Vietnam], "If you guys would go down here and go one kilometer further, you'll find the Command Post of the First North Vietnamese Army Division."

I remember arranging for a firepower demonstration to be put on at a range in Long Binh Province. We actually had the military fire various kinds of weapons and then we took Dick Gorham out and showed him what the hole looked like [at the impact points]. What the Cambodians would do was to go out, dig holes, put pieces of rusty shrapnel in it, and say, "The Americans did that." We wanted to show the Canadians that, "If we shoot something, this is what it's going to look like." So the Canadian ICC representative became much more active.

The other representatives on the ICC, the Poles and Indians, knew about this. They assumed that the Canadian ICC representative was feeding us a great deal of information. Dick Gorham went on to be an Under Secretary of External Affairs in the Canadian Government in Ottawa. He hated the Indians. He'd been assigned to India at one time and disliked the Indians. He couldn't stand Paranjpe, the Indian ICC representative.

I remember that when we reopened our Embassy in Phnom Penh in 1969, my wife Judy and I went over to visit Phnom Penh and Angkor Wat [Buddhist temple complex Northwest of Phnom Penh]. We went to a party at the apartment of the Canadian Military Attachï¿½ . Dick Gorham was there-the whole, small Western community was there. Dick introduced me to Paranjpe while we were standing on the balcony of this apartment block overlooking the Mekong River. My wife was there. Dick said, "I want you to meet Mr. Andrew Antippas. He's an American Embassy Political Officer in Saigon. He follows Cambodia, and this is his Canadian wife." I saw Paranjpe's eyes widen, and suddenly, everything fell into place for him. I thought that he was going to do a "back flip" off the balcony when Dick said that. Paranjpe was probably thinking, "The son of a bitch. He's been doing that all of this time. He's been feeding intelligence [to the Americans]." Because the Indians saw their job as covering up what the Viet Cong were doing in Cambodia. Gorham's job was to try and get this information out, try to "expose" it, try to do his job.

Anyway, Cambodia was an interesting subject to follow. I wasn't, as I have mentioned, particularly a believer in why we were in Vietnam, since my original feeling about Vietnam had been the one I gave to Charley Whitehouse in 1965. Since I had been in Korea and knew very well what the French had experienced in Indochina-I had grown up during the Indochina War, after all-I doubted the wisdom of what we were doing in Vietnam. But the fact of the matter was that we were engaged, our armed forces were engaged, and we were taking a beating through the communist use of neutral territory-in Laos and Cambodia.

I really became kind of a believer in doing what we could, not so much to get Cambodia into the war. Nobody believed that the Cambodians could do anything to influence the war. One of the things that I knew was the condition of the Cambodian Army. It was pathetic. It was a 30,000 man force, organized into 50 battalions scattered all over the country, mostly in "Beau Geste" type mud forts [from the novel by the British author, P. C. Wren]. Those forts were simply there to demonstrate Cambodian sovereignty, not to be able to defend anything. They couldn't have. The North Vietnamese would pull up artillery units, next to the Cambodian forts, and fire into Vietnam at our Special Forces camps. The U. S. Air Force would come over and attempt to plaster the North Vietnamese, but they would frequently hit and kill Cambodians.

One of the things that Eugene Black and Phil Habib had gotten out of Sihanouk was a commitment to receive intelligence information on the presence of Vietnamese Communists on his territory. He indicated that he would accept such information. One of the jobs I had, working with American Intelligence, was to prepare what we called "packages" of information about the location of these base camps. There were about half a dozen or a dozen, major communist base camps just inside the Cambodian border, which we knew about, mostly through signal intercepts and POW interrogations. We knew which units were in there and what they were doing. Now and again we would have an American prisoner who would escape and tell us what was in there.

There's an interesting aside that I must tell you about, just to show what the atmospherics were in Vietnam during that period. I would prepare these "dossiers" and give them to the Australian Embassy in Saigon, which would send them over to the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh, which, in turn, would give them to the Cambodian military. Sihanouk never acknowledged the receipt of any of these "packages" of intelligence. We would know, again from signal intercepts, that the Cambodians would send out a unit looking for these Vietnamese Communist units. One time one of these Cambodian units got lost, up in the Northeast "Tri-Border" [Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos] area, trying to find one of these locations. It was really pathetic. But we knew that the Cambodians were beginning to realize how much of their territory was being taken over by the Vietnamese Communists. I think that what really "blew" their fuse on this matter was that the Viet Cong started moving their families into these base areas and farming the land. Then they started issuing tax receipts to the Viet Cong families for the rice fields that they were farming and preventing Cambodian District Officers from going into those areas. They would literally seal off whole zones of these base areas.

Well, anybody who knows the Cambodians will tell you that they really get upset about Vietnamese encroachments on their land. All of the Mekong Delta, all of the territory South of Saigon had been part of Cambodia, up until the 19th century. It was only at the beginning of the 19th century that the Vietnamese, moving slowly southward, as they have done over the past five centuries or so, took over. The Cambodians called this area "Kampuchea Krom," which means "Southern Cambodia." The ethnic Cambodians living in the Mekong Delta, many of whom we recruited for our Special Forces, were called, "Khmer Krom," which meant "Southern Cambodians." When they worked for the U. S. Special Forces, they were called "KK," or "Khmer Krom."

You can be sure that when the Cambodians finally realized that the Viet Cong were, in fact, taking over their territory, they started getting upset. That's what happened in 1970, when there was a...

Q: General Lon Nol took over.

ANTIPPAS: Well, the overthrow of Sihanouk took place because there was a demonstration in the provincial capital of Svay Rieng, which is the "Parrot's Beak" area I mentioned before. It took place in late February or early March of 1970. I was not in Saigon. I was back here in Washington. There was a demonstration in front of the provincial governor's house [in Svay Rieng], protesting the Viet Cong takeover of their land. The "Tet" offensive [of 1968] in Saigon had been launched from the "Parrot's Beak." The southeastern tip of the "Parrot's Beak" is only about 35 miles from Saigon.

Then there was a sympathy demonstration in Phnom Penh. That is where what happened becomes questionable, because that was set up, we think, by Lon Nol's younger brother, Lon Non, who was then a police official. Sihanouk was in France on one of his periodic "rest or health cures" [in Mougins, near Nice]. There was a sympathy demonstration which was followed by another sympathy demonstration near the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Embassies. The Vietnamese communists had two Embassies in Phnom Penh: the Viet Cong Embassy of the so-called "Provisional Revolutionary Government" and the North Vietnamese Embassy. A mob sacked both embassies. They literally threw everything in them outside, including over $100,000 in U. S. currency, which they burned. We later found half burned greenbacks. The Vietnamese were using this money to buy rice in Cambodia for Vietnamese communist troops in the border areas. We used to have people take pictures of bicycles carrying sacks of rice down to the Vietnamese-Cambodian border area. There was a very sizeable cross-border trade going on, particularly in the so-called "Parrot's Beak."

Following the riots in Phnom Penh, all hell broke loose. Sihanouk was very angry. He made very threatening noises from France that he would "fix" those responsible when he returned to Cambodia. Gen Lon Nol started negotiating with the Vietnamese and said that he would reestablish the "status quo ante," but the Viet Cong troops in the border area had to leave Cambodian territory. In other words, he would continue the arms and the rice trade, because the communists were also shipping arms through Cambodia, along the "Ho Chi Minh Trail."

This was one of the great intelligence debates of the Vietnam War. Which was the route the weapons and ammunition that the Vietnamese communists were using. The trail or by sea on 100 ton trawlers? We knew the stuff was coming from China. There was a way of calculating the expenditure of communist [artillery] ammunition, just by the number of "booms" that went off. Every U. S. unit would report how many [Vietnamese communist] shells were heard exploding on a given day. Over time you could figure out how much ammunition they had on hand. This would tell us what the resupply operation would have to be. The experts could figure out how much was "in the pipeline." The debate was whether the Viet Cong were bringing the ammunition down by trucks along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, or on these 100 ton steel hulled trawlers which go down the Vietnamese coast and then up to Sihanoukville in Cambodia. The weapons and ammunition would be offloaded and the supplies were then trucked up to the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, where the communist units were stationed. A great internal debate went on in the intelligence community in 1968 as the Johnson Administration was winding down. The U.S. Navy under Admiral Elmo Zumwalt was convinced the stuff was coming down by ship. It was very hard to prove since we had few agents inside Cambodia and the top Cambodians were profiting from the arms and rice trade.

Near the end of the Johnson administration [October, 1968] William H. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, the younger brother of McGeorge Bundy who had been President Kennedy's National Security Adviser, came to Saigon with a group of high-powered people from CIA. They conducted a debate with MACV as to whether the Viet Cong ammunition was coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail or through Sihanoukville. The obvious, political implication for the administration was that if the predominant amount of ammunition for III and IV Corps in South Vietnam, more or less the southern half of South Vietnam, was coming through Sihanoukville, that was something that we could do something about. We could blockade Sihanoukville, overthrow Sihanouk, or do something else. But if it was coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, nobody could stop that. We had been trying to stop that for three or four years, without success. You can see the political implications.

This was at the end of the Johnson administration. We were going into the elections of November, 1968. The last thing in the world that the Johnson administration-or the Democratic Party-wanted to do was to expand the war into Cambodia. Given my position in the Political Section in the Embassy in Saigon, I sat in on the briefings for the Bundy party. I worked very closely with the intelligence community representatives in following all of this. In fact, I received an award from the U. S. Navy for the work I did in this effort to try to identify where this Viet Cong ammunition was coming from.

The Bundy group came to Saigon and asked to see all of the reports that we had which asserted that the ammunition was being delivered in Sihanoukville, trucked inland by General Lon Nol's people to the arms caches, and then distributed to the Viet Cong military authorities. They went through this debate. I remember that the decision was that there was no real "smoking gun" and, therefore, the Johnson administration wasn't going to do anything about Cambodia.

However, the following, Nixon administration was very much of the view that this was happening.

Q: How did you feel about it? What did the people who were dealing with the problem in Saigon feel about it? Obviously, this had political repercussions.

ANTIPPAS: I believed that Cambodian territory was being used to resupply the Vietnamese communists. I can still remember the name of the [Cambodian] trucking company used to bring the ammunition up [from Sihanoukville]. It was the Hak Lee Trucking Company. We would find out that there was a Chinese [Communist] ship off the Cambodian coast, going into Sihanoukville (now Kampong Som). So my job was to rush over and ask the Australian Embassy in Saigon to send a message to their Military Attachï¿½ in the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh, stating that there was a [Chinese] ship arriving in port and requesting him to "hot foot" it down there to see what he could find out.

He [the Australian Military Attachï¿½] would do that. He would jump in his car and drive down Route 4 to Kampong Som, a four-hour drive from Phnom Penh. More often than not, he would get there and meet the [Hak Lee] trucks coming back. I don't know whether this incident was simply "alleged" or "apocryphal" or what, but there was an assertion made that one case of guns had fallen off a truck, had been found by people friendly to our side, and had been reported back. By virtue of the serial number on an AK-47 [Chinese-made automatic rifle], they could tell when that gun was manufactured in China and when it was delivered. Therefore, it had to come by ship through Kampong Som.

We had intelligence reports that said that the Hak Lee Trucking Company was delivering these weapons to certain locations where the Viet Cong would take them and distribute them. I think that the Australians believed this. Well, nobody actually saw them do this. It was worth your life to watch them deliver the weapons to the communists.

We also had U-2 [very high-altitude, reconnaissance aircraft] flights over Kampong Som. The port at Kampong Som had been built by the Russians. We built Route 4 under our aid program in the 1950's [the so-called "Khmer-American Friendship Highway"]. In fact, the project to build Route 4 was the source of the story on the "Ugly American," [from the book of the same name].

The port at Kampong Som had no onshore loading and unloading cranes. There was no equipment to offload ships at the docks. Ships had to offload cargo, using their own, shipboard cargo booms. I remember that we would have these great debates. The U-2 photos that we were taking could tell us how big the cargo hatches were. Looking at the booms, you could tell how long it would take to unload that size ship. You could then analyze this information. The experts would say that it would take two days to unload whatever it was-10,000 tons of ammunition or whatever it was that they were unloading. The communists always managed to do it faster than that, because I think that they worked day and night. They'd get this stuff on the trucks and get the trucks up Route 4 or Route 5 up into the Vietnamese-Cambodian border area and deliver it.

Anyway, there was a great debate about how this was done. I believed that this was how it was happening, based on the expenditure of ammunition. Afterwards, Gen Lon Nol's supporters kicked Sihanouk out and he became our "buddy." I was at the Embassy in Phnom Penh in 1970 as a Political Officer. We actually began to confirm these earlier ammunition reports. We visited some of the arms caches where these items had been kept.

It's kind of funny because the arms caches we found in Grenada, when I participated in the Grenada operation in 1983, looked just like the arms caches I saw in Cambodia. This was because they were built by Russians-designed and constructed by Russians or Russian trained people. The piles of weapons all looked just like the ones in Cambodia. Talk about "deja vu all over again!"

So the Johnson administration was unable to "pass the ball" to [former Vice President] Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic candidate for President, and the Nixon administration came into office. During the Eugene Black and Phil Habib visit to Cambodia in 1968 Sihanouk reportedly either said or indicated, using our favorite Foreign Service term, "indicated," that it was all right to bomb communist base areas. However, Sihanouk was reported to have said, "But if you kill Cambodians, I will scream like a stuck pig." He reportedly said, "If you kill Vietnamese, that's all right with us." Since most of these base areas were basically uninhabited, that's what was said. So, based on that, the Nixon administration began the "secret bombing" of Cambodia in 1969. This campaign was first "discovered" by William Beecher and surfaced in articles in the "Boston Globe" in March, 1969.

I believe that I was the first individual in the Embassy [in Saigon] to find out about the "secret bombing" of Cambodia, because I had special access to MACV J-2 [intelligence] information. I used to wander into the office of the J-2 all the time-particularly the photo interpretation side. You know, they were keeping track of what the Vietnamese communists were doing, because you could tell a great by photo interpretation.

I remember an Airman Second Class acquaintance of mine who was a photo interpretation specialist, in J-2. I wandered into his office, in a very secure area, probably the most secure area in the whole building. People used to call MACV headquarters, "Pentagon East." This specialist said to me, "Do you want to see something interesting? We tried to hit the CP [Command Post] of the First North Vietnamese Army Division last night with B-52 strikes, and they were one kilometer off the target." He showed me the track, on a 1:50,000 scale map. It was about five kilometers inside Cambodia. I said, "What? We just did what? We bombed Cambodia?"

I jumped in my car and sped back to the Embassy. I told the Deputy Ambassador-Sam Berger, at that time-and I don't know who else I told. I don't know whether Martin Herz was the Political Counselor at that time or not. Anyway, I was telling Sam Berger. I could tell from the expression on his face that he didn't know that this was authorized. So I was dismissed from his office.

Then all hell broke loose. General Westmoreland was furious. I was never allowed back in the photo interpretation lab after that. I wonder what happened to the photo specialist? The affair caused an enormous "stink" in the U.S. when it was discovered that we were bombing Cambodia. Of course, the explanation was that, "Sihanouk said that it was OK to bomb Cambodian territory as long as we just kill Vietnamese. If we kill Cambodians, "you'll hear about it."

Of course, the border incidents continued, and we continued to kill Cambodians. It would happen, time and time again, that our forces would return fire into Cambodia and would kill Cambodians. So I spent my time dealing with incidents like this.

Q: Did you get any feel for what the CIA was doing? They had a huge operation in Vietnam, and you were in the Political Section. How did they "interface" with you?

ANTIPPAS: We had, of course, signal intercepts, which were a big part of their function at that time. I had the impression that they didn't have much in the way of "resident assets" in Cambodia. They had become notorious in Cambodia. The CIA was alleged by the Cambodians to be implicated in an effort to overthrow Sihanouk in 1959. This caused such a stir that the CIA subsequently kept a very low posture. In fact, when Mansfield visited...

Q: This would be Senator Mansfield.

ANTIPPAS: Yes, Senator Mike Mansfield. He was quite an Asian expert, in his own right, and was very friendly with Sihanouk. We reopened the Embassy [in Phnom Penh] with Mike Reeves as chargï¿½ d'affaires in the summer of 1969. I remember that I helped them a good deal in reestablishing the Embassy, with resources from the Saigon side. Senator Mansfield arrived in Phnom Penh the week after Mike Rives set up shop in the Royal Hotel. Mansfield spent a week in Phnom Penh. He made a commitment to Sihanouk that there would be no CIA presence in Cambodia. He said that there was none then and there would be none later. And there wasn't-at least initially, when Sihanouk was still in power.

So I think that the CIA really had very little in the way of assets in Cambodia. Of course, the conventional wisdom in some quarters in Washington and elsewhere was that the CIA overthrew Sihanouk, that it was at our behest that Gen Lon Nol' supporters kicked Sihanouk out. I don't believe that this is true, based on my own knowledge of what was going on in Cambodia. Obviously, there's a lot that I didn't and wouldn't know. However, over time you learn the signs. I believe we had decided that we were getting out of Vietnam, as a policy. The great debate was simply over the rate of our withdrawal-how quickly we would get out. One of the great criticisms of President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger was that it took them four years to get us out of Vietnam.

I think that no one who had any knowledge of the capacity of the Cambodians to fight had any illusions about their ability to defend themselves. They certainly were in no position to take on any kind of Vietnamese at all. Overthrowing Sihanouk would have set off a dynamic that no one could predict or control. More than that, it's one thing politically to shoot into a so-called "neutral" country, with the screams of outrage and diplomatic repercussions that would follow. It's another thing to shoot into a communist country. If Cambodia went communist, we would really have ended up with "egg on our faces" and would have a situation like the one we had with North Vietnam and Communist China.

It seemed to me that nobody would want to do this [i. e., overthrow Sihanouk] because we were drawing down and getting out of Vietnam. Bombing Cambodia would start off something that we couldn't predict. Secondly, if Cambodia did go communist, that would be an even bigger problem. So it was better simply to keep the status quo, until we could get out of Vietnam. I think that the argument that we overthrew Sihanouk to widen the war and bring Cambodia in on our side of the struggle might have been plausible in 1966 or even 1967. By 1968, it was too late. We were on our way out. The American people had indicated very clearly that they wanted to "get out" of Vietnam. So I have always taken the view that Sihanouk was overthrown by Cambodians.

[After we reopened our Embassy in Phnom Penh], I was one of the first Americans to attend sessions of the Cambodian National Assembly. We had a very tiny Embassy in Phnom Penh-only eight people-when all of this took place. I arrived in Phnom Penh as a Political Officer in April [1970]. Three weeks after Sihanouk's overthrow on March 9, 1979, the Vietnamese started attacking the Cambodians. I didn't finish that story, which I began earlier.

Lon Nol had started negotiating with the Vietnamese, saying that he would reestablish the "status quo ante," but Vietnamese [communist] troops had to get out of Cambodian territory. They talked for a week or two, in March, 1970. Then the Vietnamese evacuated all of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong Embassy staff. The Chinese communists also evacuated their Embassy staff.

Vietnamese troops in the "sanctuaries," particularly up by the rubber plantation country [where the "Terre Rouge" plantations were located], started attacking Cambodian Police and Army posts in Kampong Cham province. A full three weeks before we intervened, the Cambodians were being attacked and pushed back. By the time the American "incursion" into Cambodia began on May 1, 1970, the Vietnamese communists were 25 miles outside of Phnom Penh. When I got to Phnom Penh, on April 27, 1970, the Vietnamese were literally outside of Phnom Penh. The first CIA officer, John Stein, arrived in Phnom Penh two days before I did, on a Special Mission aircraft. He was basically an Africa hand. He had no Indochina background whatsoever. That was sort of a tip of the hat to Sihanouk's fear of the return of CIA people with Indochina experience.

At the time I was sent to Phnom Penh, Tom Corcoran was Country Director for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. He said, when he sent me to Phnom Penh, "You should know that Mike Rives doesn't want you. Nothing personal, he doesn't want a bigger staff. But when U. Alexis Johnson, [Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs], signs this telegram, you're going out there." He said, "I want you to report more than what's in the newspapers. Find out what the hell's going on there." I did that.

The Cambodian National Assembly overthrew Sihanouk in 1970. It approved a resolution that said that Sihanouk, in fact, had endangered the well being of the state by collaboration with the communists. It was the National Assembly which had approved the constitution which made Sihanouk "head of state for life." So since they made the constitution, they could unmake it, and they threw him out.

I went to the National Assembly and started talking (in French) to the members. During the two years that I was a Political Officer in Phnom Penh the National Assembly was my "beat."

Q: Let's talk a little more about Saigon before you do that. You mentioned something about a story concerning a prisoner escaping.

ANTIPPAS: Right. We had very little information about the communist "base areas" in Cambodia. We had the case of an American soldier who had been captured up in the Central Highlands of Vietnam [Ban Me Thuot-Kontum area]. He had been taken into one of the communist "base areas" in Cambodia, number 704 if memory serves, as a prisoner. One of the things that they did was to take his boots away, which makes it a lot harder to run away. Nevertheless, he managed to escape and walked out of the communist "base area" and back into South Vietnam, where he managed to be picked up by American forces.

I went out to the medical clearing station near the Saigon airport and MACV headquarters, where he was being treated, to interview him. He'd been brought in for medical treatment, as his feet were all torn up. He had walked out of the "base area" barefoot, through the jungle. I wanted to talk to him about what he saw, what was there, and what the "base area" looked like.

Of course, he couldn't tell me very much. But it was interesting to see all of these wounded American soldiers at this medical clearing station near the airport. The severely wounded were being evacuated to Japan for further hospital treatment. I saw a lot of these beat up Americans-just kids. You know what movie they were watching on AFVN Television [American Forces in Vietnam]? They were watching "Combat," a TV serial on the American Army in combat in Europe during World War II. Every week you had a new episode of this war. Here were all of these kids-literally kids, who had legs and arms blown off and terribly beaten up. People talk about being "anti-war." If you haven't been in a ward full of wounded soldiers, you really don't appreciate what war is all about. That struck me-the irony of soldiers wounded in Vietnam watching a TV series on World War II.

Q: What was the atmosphere in our Embassy? At this time you were in this huge Political Section [in Saigon]. What was the atmosphere about what was happening? Was everybody so busy that you weren't focusing on...

ANTIPPAS: There was a lot of concern, about corruption, which was considered a major issue. We were very concerned about the corruption of our allies-the wholesale theft of PX items for example by the Thai and the Filipinos in particular. Our Political-Military unit worked very hard to stop the use of "Agent Orange" for defoliation-to stop defoliation completely. You remember that the defoliation effort was called "Operation Ranch Hand." They were quite prescient to realize what that meant.

I remember the son of my first boss in the Foreign Service, a guy I had worked for in the State Department in 1961. His youngest son received an ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] commission and was sent to Vietnam as an infantry officer. He looked me up in the Embassy. He used to come down to Saigon for weekends, when he could get time off from his base camp up near the Cambodian border. He would come down, and we would talk. I would show him a little bit of the night life of Saigon.

He told me what it was like to lead an infantry platoon through these defoliated forests. We allegedly defoliated them so that we could see the enemy. Nobody was thinking about the chemical impact on the immune system of our soldiers, or anything like that. He said, "These are triple canopy forests. You defoliate the first canopy, you might even get the second canopy." Literally, these planes would fly over the forest and turn everything gray. They would kill all of the leaves. But he said, "You still had to walk down there, through all of the third canopy, which is all of the lower brush. But with the sun beating down on you, it would be like a Turkish bath." He said that it was "murder" to move through these areas, because the defoliation really didn't help all of that much. So he felt that it didn't make any sense to do this. He wondered why we were spraying this stuff all over the place. Our Political-Military unit, was trying to stop defoliation, and eventually we did stop it.

It was interesting that one of the people that I had a lot to deal with in connection with the Cambodian arms traffic was the Commander of the U. S. Navy Forces in Vietnam, Admiral Elmo "Bud" Zumwalt. He went on to become Chief of Naval Operations. I worked with him directly. He had been Naval Attachï¿½ in Denmark at one point in his career, so he had a very good appreciation of how Embassies work, unlike most of the military guys, who had no understanding of diplomatic niceties or our requirements and needs, and the context within which an Embassy had to work.

It was ironic that one of Zumwalt's sons was running a patrol boat [in the Riverine Forces, the so-called "Brown Water Navy"], down in the Mekong Delta, along the Cambodian border. The son had been sprayed by these defoliants several times and eventually came down with cancer and died. Of course, Zumwalt had ordered the defoliation of these waterways as part of his function as Commander of Naval Forces in Vietnam to cut down areas for ambush. Our boats used to be ambushed down there. It was a terrible, moral burden for "Bud" Zumwalt that, in fact, he had believed that he was responsible for killing his own son in the process.

Q: How did you feel about the reporting as far as what was "getting through?" Was there a kind of ferment, say, among the Political Officers?

ANTIPPAS: Let me give you a personal observation on that. I'm glad that you mentioned it. I was the Embassy Duty Officer the week of the May offensive of 1968. The "Tet" offensive took place in February 1968. The next "high point" was expected to be in May. I forget why that was. There was a holiday in May. We expected a repeat of the "Tet" offensive, when they [the communists] almost got into the Embassy. I remember the first night that I was on duty [during this period]. The Embassy Duty Officer spent the night at the Embassy, sleeping in a small room next to the Code Room on the top floor of the Embassy. He had a flak vest and a pistol. This was early May 1968. We didn't run the air conditioning in the building at night, because paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division guarding the building were stationed on the catwalks between the sunscreen and the building. We had the paratroopers there and turned the air conditioning off, so that they could hear if people were skulking in the bushes surrounding the Embassy.

The building was kind of silent when I went to bed that particular night. I heard a couple of mortar explosions go off up the street. So I jumped into my pants, pulled on my flak vest, buckled the pistol belt, pushed the elevator button, and went down to the Embassy lobby. The Marine Guards were running around in circles. One of them looked out the back door and said, "Son of a bitch! The back gate's open." I thought that this was no place for me. I punched the button and went back upstairs, went into the Code Room, and locked the door.

That was the opening salvo of the May offensive. It was not as severe as the Tet offensive. There was a lot of fighting...

Q: Particularly in Cholon.

ANTIPPAS: In Cholon. There was a battle around the "Y" bridge [on the south side of Cholon]. The 47th Infantry Regiment, in which I took my infantry basic training in 1952 at Ft. Dix, NJ, was involved in it. My job was to stay in contact with everybody. I called the MACV Situation Room every morning to find out what was going on. I also called Washington and talked to John Burke, Director of the Vietnam Desk. I was in a kind of loop at night. I called each of the Corps areas and learned what was going on. I was preparing my own intelligence summaries, right from individual sources, before anyone had a chance to "massage" this information. The information which I assembled was put in a cable, which we would send out to the Department, reporting what was going on.

The commander of U. S. Forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, was very irritated at these cables that were going out and which his people hadn't seen-reporting what was going on in the country, before his staff had a chance to look at the information. Deputy Ambassador Sam Berger said that MACV was complaining bitterly about these cables. However John Burke, said, "Keep up the good work. The only way that we know what's going on there is what you're sending us."

Q: Was there a feeling that...

ANTIPPAS: There was the whole "body count" issue and the whole matter of "massaging" impressions of what was going on. This was another reason why we had this Provincial Reporting Unit-so that our guys, who reported through the Embassy, but not to AID or to the military, would go around and try to find out what was actually going on.

Q: What would happen? Let's say that they would go out, and we would get information from the Provincial Reporters which indicated that MACV was putting its own "twist" on a given situation. Would the Embassy report something different from MACV or would it end up going through a process of "synthesis" so that everybody reported the same thing?

ANTIPPAS: I can't answer that directly. All I know is that the Provincial Reporting Officers would come into Saigon from time to time. There were five of them [Actually, the Unit reached a high point of eight officers, including the chief of the Unit.]. They had a boss whose name escapes me [Tom Conlon]. He was Political Counselor when I was in Bangkok, and John Burke was DCM. There were four guys that I remember: Jim Mack and two David Brown's: David E. Brown and David G. Brown, both of whom are now Office Directors in East Asia, one for Korea and one for Regional Affairs. These were bright, young guys several who spoke Vietnamese. Some of them had just come into the service or out of language school at the FSI and were still "feeling their way". They were assigned to different areas of South Vietnam and traveled as they thought suitable [sometimes by plane, sometimes by automobile or truck, usually alone and frequently at substantial risk to their lives], picking up information. They would come in and "dump" their material on someone [Tom Conlon, as chief of the Provincial Reporting Unit]. I think that their message was getting through but I think that their reporting, given the interagency politics that had to go on, may well have "pulled its punches." There are many ways to do that. I saw the same kind of thing more directly in Cambodia, more so than in Vietnam.

Q: We'll come to that later on.

ANTIPPAS: We'll come to that, because I was Desk Officer for Cambodia. I knew the guys in Cambodia and I knew what was coming out. I believed that I understood what was happening in Cambodia. I had to assume-from my own experience of what was going on in Vietnam-that the same kind of thing took place there. Of course, it [the U. S. presence in Vietnam] was much bigger. It was enormous. The CIA alone had an enormous computer capability by that time [in Saigon]. They were feeding in all kinds of material. They were getting all of the answers that they needed. They could produce any answer you wanted, based on the data that was being fed into it. There was an enormous "scam."

Q: Andy, within the Political Section, was there a chasm between, may I say, Martin Herz, Sam Berger, and Ellsworth Bunker-that level-and the officers who were going out in the field?

ANTIPPAS: I don't think so. The one thing I clearly recollect is that I did not serve under Phil Habib [during this time Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with particular responsibility for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia]. I came in after Phil Habib had been Political Counselor in Saigon. I'll tell you, anybody who had to fill Phil Habib's shoes had a big job. He had such a manner and such ability to relate to his officers. He was such an iconoclast himself that he was just wonderful to work for. He motivated everybody. He was tremendously loyal but at the same time he was a hard taskmaster.

He was replaced by Arch Calhoun. Arch hated to be reminded of the fact that he had been Ambassador to Chad, because he hated that place. He said that he didn't want to be reminded that he had been Ambassador in Chad, "that awful place." He was a German specialist. He had been U. S. Minister in Berlin. His reward was to be assigned to Saigon as Political Counselor.

This is a kind of reminder of the jobs we had in Saigon. We had former Ambassadors as Section Chiefs, which we never do in the American system. Other foreign services do this all the time. It's nothing for a foreign ambassador to serve subsequently as consul general in New York.

Q: They don't carry the title with them. We do. It's about the one title we have that we carry around.

ANTIPPAS: If you've been an Ambassador, you have to be at an ambassadorial level in subsequent assignments or you are forcibly retired. But Vietnam was special. We had such large numbers of assets. I mean, 25 Foreign Service Officers in the Political Section! The Political Section was bigger than most of our Embassies throughout the world.

Arch Calhoun was a different breed of cat. He was a more soft-spoken kind of guy. Habib was a real "blue collar" type guy, and everyone loved him for it. He encouraged people to speak out. He encouraged people to be iconoclastic. You could tell that. People would say things in staff meetings that I could hardly believe. I felt that they were really telling people off or speaking their mind. This had quite an impact, I thought, for several years after Habib left Saigon and the East Asian Bureau. Of course, I worked for Phil Habib in the East Asian Bureau, toward the end of the Indochina experience. I had a real sense of how he operated. It was wonderful to work for a guy like Phil Habib. He looked to you to say what you really think. He would ask questions like, "Do you think? What do you think?" He made clear that he wanted to know what we really felt.

In the Bureau of East Asian Affairs he would have meetings with the lower-ranking Desk Officers from time to time, without the Country Directors [their supervisors] present. He wanted to hear the unvarnished attitudes and opinions of his officers. I think that this is the best way to operate. This is a system which I used when I became a supervisor. In my later career as a supervisor I tried to encourage people to say what they really thought. Are we doing something right or not? People can't argue that I didn't give them a chance to say what they thought. Of course I found out that a lot of people don't think at all.

I think that from Ambassador Bunker on down people were encouraged to say what they felt and how they saw things. But once you've done that, you've done your job. It was up to the senior officers in their relationships with the military, the CIA, or the host government to carry out the policy. If you couldn't live with that, then you had better get the hell out of the Foreign Service. You should quit. And a number of people did that.

Dick Holbrooke is one of those who quit. He went on, after his Vietnam experience, to go into politics, in effect. He's done very well for himself. That's your choice. There is a discipline within the Foreign Service. If you can't tolerate the policy, and you might well not tolerate the policy, the only honorable thing to do is to get out, once you have had your say, once you feel that you've really aired your feelings.

Now, one of the things that I did get involved in was dealing with the French, which in this context meant dealing with the rubber plantations [in South Vietnam]. I was the point of contact when our military would do something involving the rubber plantations. They would do two things. One, they would defoliate or, more importantly, use bulldozers with the "Rome Plow" attachments. They would cut down hundreds of thousands of trees on their main supply routes which ran through the plantations, on the ground that the communists were ambushing their convoys going through the plantations.

Well, without telling anybody, the U. S. Army would go in on a weekend and cut down 100,000 trees. The Army started with a 50 meter margin on each side of a main supply route, cutting down these rubber trees. Then they would widen these margins to 100 meters on each side. Finally, in 1969, I think, they widened them further to 200 meters on each side. So that's a quarter of a mile. Of course, the Viet Cong would sit behind that patch of plantation and lob shells onto the roads, because they had them zeroed in. When the U. S. Army cut down these trees, they left windrows-piles of brush, which made excellent ambush sites. The Viet Cong would burrow into these trees and shoot at armored vehicles or trucks or whatever was coming through. So we had big arguments with the military.

I remember trying to make a case that the rubber plantations were an economic asset that should be preserved for peacetime use, and we should not be destroying them. It really did not make much all that much sense from a military point of view. So we would have these big fights with the U.S. military. I found that the Embassy supported me. My "clients" were the French, who would come to us. Basically, they cooperated with us. The French were very helpful. They knew what the Viet Cong were doing in their plantations. They would pass the information to me. On more than one weekend I would go up to the plantations and spend the weekend-fly up in the rubber plantation airplane. Do you remember a guy who ran the American Chamber of Commerce when you were Consul General in Seoul? He's a retired brigadier general, a heavy set guy. His name was Frederick "Brick" Krause.

Anyway, I first met Krause when he was a full Colonel and brigade commander in the 1st Division at the Quan Loi rubber plantation [Binh Long province], up near the Cambodian border. I had gone up to investigate a defoliation complaint by the plantation. The U. S. Army had defoliated a bunch of young [recently planted] rubber trees-not the old trees. I went there and was standing by this Colonel's CP [Command Post]. We'd just gotten off the plane. The French rubber plantation manager was there. The Viet Cong had apparently seen our plane come in and decided to lob some shells into the CP area. You should have seen five guys try to get into a one-man hole! I remember the Frenchman standing there, looking scathingly at these Americans, scurrying for cover.

Krause retired from the Army as a brigadier general in Korea. I ran into him at the residence of Ambassador Dick Sneider, when we had the East Asia Consular Conference in 1977. You were there, weren't you?

Q: Yes.

ANTIPPAS: Well, this brigadier general was at the reception that Dick Sneider had for the conference. I said, "God, you look familiar." And then I found out that this guy had been a brigade commander whom I had visited in Vietnam at that time. We have remained very good friends since that time.

I think that the Embassy was supportive of trying to "rein in" the American military, because the military became a virtual law unto themselves. It was a lot harder to deal with them on PX corruption.

Q: I was a member of something called "The Irregular Practices Committee." I was the chairman of it, which was a kind of civilian court martial. Did you get at all involved with the "More Flags" business and the corruption of the Thai, in particular and the Filipinos? The Koreans had this so well organized that it wasn't even corruption. They just...

ANTIPPAS: Well, what happened for example, was that the manager of the Commissary or the PX in Cholon was a Filipino employee. He was one of those "TCN's," or Third Country Nationals. The PX would get in a supply of TV sets, stereos, or whatever. He would call PHILCAG, Philippine Civic Action Group, which was out in Tay Ninh province. He would call them, and they would scarf up everything that had come in. I was in Saigon for months before I could buy a TV set. The old saw about the Thai was that, "If we could only maneuver the Viet Cong between the Thai and the PX, we'd have a military victory on our hands."

Q: I can remember watching Thai soldiers being marched into the PX. They would each buy the limit of whatever they could. This was a whole unit. Then they would turn it over to their officer.

ANTIPPAS: They would buy refrigerators and sell them off the back of their trucks. It was on such a wholesale basis. Our military took the view that this was simply the cost of doing business, and who cares? "We'll bring in more and sell whatever we can." Our allies were so corrupt. It used to anger everybody in the Embassy.

Q: And a lot of our military, too. Do you remember seeing the Provost Marshal of Saigon, standing outside of the PX, watching these Thai go in there and just...He was red faced, his jaw muscles quivering.

ANTIPPAS: We had the same thing in Korea.

Q: What was the feeling in the Political Section about the Vietnamese Government?

ANTIPPAS: They felt that it was pretty weak. There was always a question in everybody's mind whether or not these people were going to be able to "hack it." Thinking back on that time, I'd really have to give the matter some thought. I think the situation was pretty hopeless,' from our point of view. The problem was so insuperable, given our inability to stop the North Vietnamese from reinforcing their troops in the South. How can you possibly protect hamlets? We had this hamlet protection program and all the other "gimmicks" that we tried. For example, the Vietnamese Government, with U. S. support, took people and resettled them in villages that they tried to protect. How could you do that, when you couldn't stop the infiltration of the military forces, the ammunition, and all the supplies that the communists needed?

It was all part of the same situation, you know. You couldn't solve the problem in Cambodia and Laos or stop the communists at the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone, roughly the 17th Parallel of North Latitude]. How could you possibly bring any kind of security to the countryside?

I'm convinced that if we could have handled the military problem successfully, the political problem could have been solved. There really was no political problem. The South Vietnamese didn't want to be communists. It was also very evident that nobody wanted to be a communist in Cambodia. Nobody believed any of that "liberation" blarney. It was just that we couldn't solve the military problem with our own self-imposed limitations, which involved how to stop the communists from coming down from the North.

Q: You left Saigon in...

ANTIPPAS: February 1970. Somewhat in disgrace.

Q: What happened?

ANTIPPAS: It was very interesting. I really thought that I would be promoted to FSO-4 for the good work which I had done in Saigon-and I really had done good work. I got pretty good ratings on my efficiency reports from my several bosses in the External Unit of the Political Section. I worked hard. I think that I once went three months without getting out to Bangkok to see my wife. My son was born there in Bangkok. In Vietnam I was shot at. I was running around in the woods with the U. S. military.

But I had a personality problem with the chief of the Political Section under Martin Herz, the Political Counselor [who replaced Arch Calhoun]. Martin Herz liked me personally. He was the resident Cambodia expert in the Foreign Service. He had served in Cambodia in the mid 1950's and had written a little book, "A Short History of Cambodia." You might remember it. Since I was the Cambodia expert in the Political Section, he liked me. I had known him from my first job in the Foreign Service. He was in the Africa Bureau when I was setting up conferences. So I had a pretty good relationship with him. Martin Herz was a very tough taskmaster. I've seen him make grown men cry. He was tough. He could take faster dictation than most secretaries.

Q: He did his own shorthand and his own typing.

ANTIPPAS: Anyhow, I got along with him and thought I got along with the section chief as well, because he and I were both from Massachusetts. He was a Massachusetts "blue blood." His wife was "safe havened" in India. He went from Saigon to be DCM in New Delhi under the former U.S. Senator from New York. Was his name Keating? It turned out that this officer would pass through Bangkok on his way to New Delhi and have dinner with my wife at our house, while waiting for his flight. She'd pick him up at the airport in Bangkok. So I thought that we had a good relationship.

Anyway, without a long "to do" about it, there was a "glitch" in our relationship. He got angry with me and wrote in my efficiency report for 1969 that he questioned my judgment about something that I had done. That's all that's needed in the Foreign Service. An efficiency report was then as now, so important. My file was put down at the bottom of the pile. I was ranked in the lowest 5% of my class. You hope to be in the top 5% of your class to be promoted. When you're in the lowest 5% of your class, you are what they call "low ranked" for that year. If you were "low ranked" a second year in those days, you were selected out of the Foreign Service.

I wasn't promoted that year [1969]. What had happened was that all onward assignments were canceled. I had just then wangled an onward assignment to the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, followed by assignment to Greek language training. I had asked for Romanian or Greek. So I had been given what I wanted. Roger Kirk, who was my boss in Saigon, wangled this Greek language training, followed by an onward assignment to Athens. Because of my "low ranking," the training assignments were canceled.

I remember that Martin Herz called me up to his office, on December 22, 1969. He said, "I just got this 'back channel' message from Personnel in Washington that says that you've been 'low ranked.'" I was due to go home in January or February. Herz said, "They want to know when you're going home. They want to talk to you."

I was devastated by that. I said, "Look, I've got to go to Bangkok and tell my wife. No way I can tell her over the telephone." I had really screwed up this great adventure of the Foreign Service in a major fashion. There was a question as to whether I had a career. You remember the telephone system available at overseas Embassies at the time. This is before we had communications satellites. In the war zone we had military switches. The switchboard in Saigon would go to a switchboard someplace else, say, in Thailand. You had to go through about four different switchboards to make a civilian telephone call, including the Thai civilian telephone system. So, more often than not, you'd start a telephone conversation with your wife and family, and you'd be cut off. You'd be pre-empted by a higher priority telephone call. I told Herz that I had to tell my wife about this disaster, face to face. So Herz authorized me to catch a military flight and go over and tell her. Bless her soul, she took it very well. I was really down about it.

Q: Had you known, or was this...

ANTIPPAS: It came out of the blue. I had not expected that at all.

Q: Did Herz understand what the situation was?

ANTIPPAS: Well, I think that he understood. But, you know, the section chief did this to a number of people in the Political Section, particularly unit chiefs. He did this to Bob Shackleton, who was the Political-Military guy, and three or four other guys. He "clobbered" a number of other people. So I left Saigon very depressed. I thought, "Well, where do we go from here?"

What happened after that was interesting. We decided to take a slow boat home. I didn't have an assignment to go back to in the Department, until I talked to Personnel. So we thought that we might as well take a ship home. Judy and the baby came over from Bangkok and joined me in Manila, where we caught the American President Lines ship, the "SS Cleveland," which was one of the last of the passenger "liners." We took two weeks on the ship from Manila to Yokohama and Honolulu. We flew home from Honolulu, went to Canada to be with Judy's family, and then went down to Washington and took our house back in Bethesda.

Finally, I sauntered in to see Personnel. They couldn't really explain what happened. They said, "Well, cool it and see what happens. Meanwhile, we're going to put you to work on this Task Force that we've just set up that's going to computerize the State Department's files. They put me in with this great gaggle of people and sent me to Anacostia, where the Navy had a computer school. It was really fascinating that a guy who can barely balance his checkbook was sent to computer training! It was hilarious. Meanwhile, we set up housekeeping in Bethesda. I also decided to opt for the "Consular Cone". You will recall this was about the time that the Service required you to pick an occupational specialty: political, economic, administrative or consular. I didn't particularly want to but I decided I might as well pick a specialty where I can go back overseas again right away as well as stand a chance of promotion. I had obviously not done the political specialty very well.

We were now getting into March 1970. Sihanouk was overthrown on March 9th. In fact, we were with Roger Kirk, my former, immediate supervisor in Saigon, not far from here, having dinner with Roger and his wife. He was EA duty officer that night. He was a special assistant to Bill Sullivan, who was then the Deputy Assistant Secretary of East Asian Affairs, dealing with Indochina. Roger got a telephone call from the Operations Center at the Department, while we were eating, telling him that Sihanouk had just been overthrown. So we talked about it. The great question was, "What does this mean? Is this real, or is this some gambit of Sihanouk's?" Sihanouk loved these ploys to get sympathy.

I went off to the Navy computer school at Anacostia for two weeks. I had earlier gone by the State Department and was debriefed by Tom Corcoran, who was the Laos, Cambodia Country Director, and others from INR [Intelligence and Research], when I came home. The Laos, Cambodia office of course was very busy in March, because the Cambodians were under attack by the Vietnamese communists. The question was, "How long are the Cambodians going to last?" There was the murder of a large number of Vietnamese civilians. You might remember this when it took place. Western news media found over 200 Vietnamese bodies floating in the Mekong River, all with their hands tied behind their back. The Cambodians explained this by saying that a ferry crossing the river had capsized. Oh yeah? The Cambodians got a very big, public relations black eye for that. The Cambodians were taking it out on the Vietnamese civilian population inside Cambodia which was very large. Anyhow, I told Tom Corcoran, "Look, I don't have much of a job." I didn't explain what my problem was, or anything like that. I said, "You must need somebody to go out and get the coffee or help out. I'm available." So I went off to this computer course.

The day the course finished was a Friday. We got out around noon. I was going to go down to Springfield, Virginia, where Hecht's or Woodward & Lothrop had one of those clearance warehouses. We were looking for furniture. On the way I stopped by the State Department to see if anybody on the desk wanted to have lunch. I walked in around noontime. Tom Corcoran's secretary, Dallas MacGlynn said, "Where have you been? Mr. Corcoran's been looking all over for you. Go right on in. He wants to see you." Tom was a very laid-back, soft spoken individual. He said, "You were imprudent enough to throw your hat in the ring." This was when he told me, as I mentioned previously, that I was being assigned to the Embassy in Phnom Penh over Mike Rives' objections.

I didn't have to have a brick wall fall on me to figure out what was going on. I still had my diplomatic passport and had not yet turned it in. So I went down and got my ticket. I went home, cut the grass, and told my wife that I'd be back in a couple of weeks. In fact, I didn't know when in hell I would be back-or if I'd ever come back. I left Washington on the following Monday morning, on my way to Phnom Penh, before anybody could change his mind!

On the way to Phnom Penh, I stopped off in Saigon to check in, to "stage in" to Phnom Penh and find out what was going on. I stayed with Walt Cutler, who had been my boss in Saigon. He went on to be Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. He also replaced Roger Kirk as Bill Sullivan's special assistant for Vietnam. Walt had served in the Cameroons in the late 1950s and was the Junior Staff Assistant to Secretary Rusk when Coby Swank was the Senior aide. Walt was a good guy. I also went to see Admiral Zumwalt, who had just been designated to become Chief of Naval Operations. I went over to congratulate him. I said to him, "Look, I don't know how long this Cambodian situation is going to last." We talked about it. This was now April 26, 1970. I said, "We may get shot out of Phnom Penh." We speculated about what Sihanouk was up to. I said, "You're going on to be Chief of Naval Operations. Would you have a slot for a Foreign Service Officer on your staff?" I was thinking that I had to find a job. Zumwalt said, "That's an interesting idea. Let's think about that."

So I went to Phnom Penh and did my job there.

Q: Let's stop at this point.

ANTIPPAS: Let me just finish this story, because it ties up my Vietnam experience in an interesting fashion. What had happened was that when I left Saigon in late January, 1970, I had been to a farewell party that Walt Cutler had for me. Some of the Navy and Marine officers from Zumwalt's staff were at the party. They heard that I'd been "shafted" by the State Department and that I was going home in a kind of disgrace. They reported this to Zumwalt. Unbeknownst to me, Zumwalt at that time wrote a letter to Secretary of State William Rogers, describing my contributions to the Navy's effort to determine where the guns and ammunition were coming from for the Vietnamese communists and who was doing what to whom in Cambodia. He said that I'd collaborated with the Navy in exemplary fashion on border incidents, because his boats [of the Riverine Force] became involved in firing at Cambodia too. He said that, because Mr. Antippas is a civilian, the Navy couldn't give him an award, but he suggested that perhaps the State Department could do so. A year later, in 1971, I was given a Superior Honor Award for the work that I had done on Cambodia. For the same period that I was "low-ranked" I was given a Superior Honor Award two years later! The medal and certificate finally caught up with me, through Saigon. Ambassador Coby Swank presented me the medal in Phnom Penh at a small party in the Residence and the photo appeared in the State Department Bulletin.

To this day I have never found out what specifically made me "low-ranked in 1969." Of course, it scared the hell out of me, because I thought it meant the end of my career. It just shows that you never know how things might work out. You just have to keep trying. I was flabbergasted and terribly pleased, because it got me promoted, too in the 1972 list. So I made FSO-4 two years later than I thought I would.

Q: Let's pick this up the next time, Andy, and cover what happened in Cambodia.

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Q: Today is August 19, 1994. Andy, you came back to the Department, feeling that the end of the world had come. Although this was a matter of great concern to you, things worked out fairly well for you. As you have already said, you were assigned to the Embassy in Phnom Penh in the spring of 1970.

ANTIPPAS: We had already reopened our Embassy in Phnom Penh in the summer of 1969, with Mike Rives as chargï¿½ d'affaires, as I said. Mike had served in the Consulate in Hanoi, along with Tom Corcoran, before 1954. He had gone on to serve in Africa at a number of posts. He had been chargï¿½ at least three times. He was selected to be chargï¿½ d'affaires in Phnom Penh because he had no recent Indochina experience. Initially, the Embassy remained small, headed by the chargï¿½ and with a small staff, including a military Attachï¿½ , an Administrative Officer and one political/economic officer, two secretaries and a communicator. There were only eight Americans in the Embassy in Phnom Penh in March, 1970, when Sihanouk was overthrown, things began to happen, and world attention began to focus on Cambodia.

I knew that everything was short in Phnom Penh, so when I stopped off in Saigon, I stocked up with a couple of suitcases full of whisky and other "goodies." As I mentioned before, I saw Admiral Zumwalt, who had been nominated to be the new Chief of Naval Operations. I met with Zumwalt on the morning of April 27, 1970, just a few days before we began the Cambodian "incursion" on May 1, 1970. I wondered later on if Zumwalt knew that this incursion was about to begin. Very few people in MACV knew about it in advance. The operation was only set up in the last three or four days of April, 1970. Even Secretary of State Rogers didn't know that we were planning this because on April 25, 1970, about the time I left Washington, he was testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Senator William Fulbright, that the United States had no intention of intervening in Cambodia. It made him look kind of silly after we marched in a five days later.

I arrived in Phnom Penh on the afternoon of April 27, 1970. Mike Rives, the chargï¿½ d'affaires, set me up in a little flea bag of a hotel in downtown Phnom Penh. We began work to find out what was happening, both politically and in terms of the war.

Q: OK, this is Tape 3, Side A, of the interview with Andy Antippas.

ANTIPPAS: I mentioned previously that John Stein, a CIA officer who had previously served in Africa, arrived in Phnom Penh shortly before I did. The White House had insisted on a CIA presence because of the need to know what was going on, despite the opposition of Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield to such an assignment.

It was interesting that Stein's "cover" in the Embassy was to be the Consul. He had never done consular work. Over the months that followed, whenever a visitor's visa or an immigrant visa had to be issued, one of us would have to go down to the consular section to handle it for him. Then he would sign it. Over the months, because I was an "activist" type and was out running around, looking at the war, riding in helicopters, and flying in the Air Attachï¿½ 's airplane-he had a C-47-most of the journalists covering Cambodia at that time figured that I was the CIA guy, and Stein was the consul. It was sort of fun, and I always told Stein that I should have been put on the payroll, since I was the "target."

Of course, we spent a very hectic summer in 1970. When the U. S. "incursion" of Cambodia took place, we didn't know about it. The "New York Times" correspondent almost "beat" Mike Rives to Lon Nol's residence to inform him that we had just marched into Cambodia. Henry Kamm, the "Times" correspondent had the news almost before Mike Rives did. The incursion created quite a clamor, of course. However, those of us who were there or had any experience with the Cambodian relationship to the war wondered what the big "to do" was all about.

Q: We'd been bombing, we'd been shooting across the border...

ANTIPPAS: As one U. S. 1st Division officer told me in Vietnam in 1968, when talking about the area called the "Fishhook," one of the places where our troops marched in, he called it, "Wall to wall North Vietnamese." There was nothing out there but North Vietnamese. So we wondered what everybody was getting so excited about.

I was surprised at the incursion and, then again, not surprised. If you thought about it-and this was the theory on which I based a paper at the National War College-first, I didn't believe that the White House participated in the overthrow of Sihanouk. I think that it took place in spite of anything that the White House wanted to do. It had always been our perception and policy that we really couldn't influence events like that. To suggest that we were seeking to turn the Cambodian Armed Forces against the Vietnamese communists was ludicrous. It was like throwing the baby out with the bath water. I think that the White House, and particularly the State Department, was as surprised as anyone at the overthrow of Sihanouk. What happened was that things just got out of hand. This is not to say that there were no individuals in Phnom Penh who felt that Sihanouk should go and that if they, in fact, threw him out, the United States would have to go along with it. We would have no choice but to support those who opposed Sihanouk.

One of the things that motivated an awful lot of these same Cambodians was that there would be a return of the American aid program, which many Cambodians remembered from the 1950's. They wanted that aid program to come back because of the corruption and opportunities for making money.

That consideration came into play, and we became captives of that particular scenario, because I think that, if you put yourself in the place of the White House, here we were drawing down our troops in Vietnam at this very time. We could see this. We could observe this phenomenon from Cambodia: the fact that American troops were no longer able to do the kinds of things that they had done the year before. We could see it in the maintenance of the aircraft that came to Phnom Penh-the helicopters, for example. We flew around Cambodia in MACV helicopters.

I think that the view was-and the reason why they decided to go along with an incursion into Cambodia-that they might be able to disrupt North Vietnamese supply lines. I don't think that anybody thought that there was a prayer of really "nailing" North Vietnamese "main force" units, which would have a very positive tactical implication. But if they could upset the North Vietnamese supply system, this would buy some time. Any time that we could buy was to the advantage of the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. Don't forget. A big concern was to avoid a kind of "Dunkirk". We didn't know what would happen in Indochina, but we didn't want a Dunkirk. We didn't want to have to shoot our way off the beaches, which would really be a terrible situation for any administration.

I think that was the main motivation for the incursion into Cambodia-and it worked. I think that everybody was surprised. I think that the incursion was a much tougher campaign than people recall. Some people think that it was just a "walk through." In point of fact the North Vietnamese fought very hard, and we took very heavy casualties in Cambodia. Of course, the North Vietnamese took the view, as did the Chinese communists, that we had precipitated the overthrow of Sihanouk, in order to turn the Cambodians against them. They did what they had to do. They turned 180 degrees around in their sanctuaries and started to attack the Cambodian forces.

I think that the only thing left in dispute is how, in the full light of the presence of international journalists, the North Vietnamese could explain the overthrow of Sihanouk by Cambodians, and the subsequent occupation of Phnom Penh by Vietnamese troops. The communists had always denied having sanctuaries in Cambodia. That was a big question in our mind. Of course, what we did not know and did not learn for almost another year was that there was an "outside" as well as a "home grown" Khmer Rouge movement. There had long been a Khmer communist party. It was really as pitiful in terms of its military capability as the Cambodian Army. Even the Cambodian Army could keep the local Khmer Rouges on the run. But what no one knew was that in 1954 the Viet Minh, when they withdrew from South Vietnam and Cambodia, where there had been some small unit actions before the battle of Dien Bien Phu, took some 5,000 young Cambodians to North Vietnam. They took young Lao with them as well, for training and indoctrination, with a view to sending them back to their home countries to start a revolution at such time as the party decided that was the thing to do.

Over the intervening period, which was something like 16 years [1954-1970], the "home grown" Khmer Rouges had often pleaded with Hanoi to send back these cadres to help reduce the pressure that the Cambodian Army was putting on them. The North Vietnamese had always refused to do that. They had always refused to play that card because Sihanouk was cooperating with them. He was giving them pretty much everything that they needed and wanted. They had border base areas and were able to buy rice and medical supplies. They were getting weapons through Cambodian sources, and, of course, the Cambodians were making an awful lot of money from this trade, as we all knew, including Lon Nol.

We did not know, in fact, that there was a very large number of Cambodian cadres available to start a Cambodian civil war. It was just a question of how the North Vietnamese would explain this.

One of the other things that we did not understand was that by June, 1970, the North Vietnamese had fought their way almost all the way to the Cambodian-Thai border. They occupied the Angkor Wat complex. By June 1970 they besieged Siem Reap, which is two-thirds of the way, across Cambodia, to Thailand. Very quickly, it became impossible to drive across Cambodia, which we used to be able to do. We used to be able to drive from Saigon to the Thai border in about 24 hours, if you caught all the ferries right across the various rivers. Nobody seemed able to explain what the North Vietnamese were doing, going all of that distance, because by that time the Nixon administration had already announced that the incursion was going to be very limited in duration-two months-and that American forces wouldn't go any deeper than 25 kilometers inside Cambodia.

In fact, it became a great game for the journalists to drive, say, 26 kilometers into Cambodia "looking for the Americans" so that they could make a scandal out of their report. There was an interesting kind of by-play once in June, with a number of international journalists, including some Americans, who were cut off by North Vietnamese North of Phnom Penh. They had gone out to watch some operation. You were never safe, even with a Cambodian battalion around you. One of the American journalists came rushing into the Embassy when I happened to be duty officer one afternoon. He said that they needed American helicopter support to bail the journalists out. They were up on Route 6 some place. I carefully explained to him that U. S. forces were precluded from going into Cambodia any deeper than 25 kilometers. However, I said that I would note the interest of the journalists and report this to the Cambodian Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Defense had the responsibility of protecting these guys.

I reported all of this to Mike Rives and to the Military Attachï¿½, who, of course, referred to all of these guys in very scatological terms, more or less in the sense that "They can go screw themselves." I managed to convince the Colonel that he had better report it to the Defense Ministry in case the journalists were caught and murdered as seemed to happen quite regularly.

It became very evident a year later when we became aware of the existence of all of these North Vietnamese-trained Cambodian cadres that what the North Vietnamese had been doing in going so deep into Cambodia was the classic communist ploy: getting as much of the population as possible with a view to dragooning them into the Khmer Rouge army. That's what they did, in fact. These 5,000 Cambodian cadres came back to Cambodia, created units, and set up training programs. Two years later, by the time of the Easter offensive in South Vietnam in April, 1972, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong main force units which had been fighting the Cambodian Army up to that point withdrew from Cambodia and went to South Vietnam to participate in that offensive. The bodies of Cambodian communist soldiers began to be found on the battlefield instead of Vietnamese. It was very clear that we had been fighting Vietnamese [communists] up to that point. After that, it was Cambodian [communists].

One of the things I did was to debrief two "ralliers," two Khmer Rouge cadres who had come back from North Vietnam, had survived, and had surrendered to the Cambodian authorities. Most of those who did surrender were killed by the Cambodian Army. But these two guys managed to survive. Apparently, they had been picked up by American intelligence, taken to South Vietnam, debriefed, and then sent back and turned over to the Cambodian authorities. The Cambodian authorities decided that they would "exploit" these men and introduce them to the press, as a demonstration of the "perfidy" of the North Vietnamese, that the North had been planning this for many, many years and that it was all part of the "international communist plot."

I persuaded the [Cambodian] military spokesman, who, interestingly enough, was named Lt. Col. Am Rong. This was always greeted with great hilarity by the press. He was actually a very nice fellow but dumb as a post. He was a decent individual and tried very hard to do his job. We became very friendly.

I asked him if he would let me debrief these ralliers before he released them to the press, because I wanted to get a little "scoop" myself. I was irritated to discover that, in fact, they had been debriefed. These two guys told me that they had been taken to South Vietnam and debriefed by some [American] intelligence agency, given a briefcase, a pair of combat boots, and a little money, and sent back to Cambodia. We in the Embassy in Phnom Penh never saw the report of their debriefing. We were never told what they had found out. So, I thought, "Well, screw these bastards [who had debriefed the two Cambodian Khmer Rouges]. I'm going to talk to them and then report by an LOU (Limited Official Use-a low level security level for a document) or an unclassified dispatch for widest possible distribution.

I took the interpreter from the Political Section of the Embassy in Phnom Penh and told him, "We're going to talk to these guys." That had been my practice. I found a number of old characters who had been involved in the "Khmer Issarak" [Free Khmer] movement, all of the anti-French types, and anybody we could talk to, and just vacuumed up as much information as I could, still heeding Tom Corcoran's dictum, "Don't send us what's in the newspapers. Tell us what the hell is happening."

So I debriefed these guys extensively. They were very impressive individuals. I viewed all of this with a great deal of personal alarm. I said to myself, "If they [the Khmer Rouges] have 5,000 guys like this, we are really in trouble. We don't have anybody like these people and we never will. The political process [in the United States] had dictated that there would be no "Secret War" in Cambodia, as there had been in Laos. I think that it had been the intention of the White House [to do the same thing in Cambodia as in Laos]. There would be no opportunity to train a Cambodian military establishment, even in the "half baked" fashion that we had been able to do in South Vietnam over the years. The Cambodian Government would never have any kind of "level playing field" in terms of trying to fight [the Khmer Rouges] themselves. The only kind of people that we were able "to toss into the pot" to even the state of play were the Khmer Krom, the ethnic Cambodians who had worked for the American Special Forces-the "Mike Force," or "mobile forces," as they were called. The Khmer Krom were very good troops. They were all given the opportunity to be discharged from the Special Forces under Vietnamese [government] control and be transferred directly into the Cambodian Army. Several battalions of them were transferred to the Cambodian Army.

Of course, I knew nothing of this, as I was in Cambodia. We in the Embassy really weren't "in the loop," as it were, because we didn't have the secure ability to talk to the Embassy in Saigon. In fact, Mike Rives was not even able to get time off to go to Saigon for consultations. The amazing part of this whole thing was that here was the American chargï¿½ d'affaires in this tiny, beleaguered Embassy [in Phnom Penh], with no real opportunity for consultations with Saigon to find out what the "big game plan" was. All I remember was that one day I came out of my "flea bag" hotel and was standing on the main street in Phnom Penh. I saw a couple of Cambodian soldiers standing there that didn't look anything like any Cambodian soldiers I'd seen before. Their uniforms fit, they didn't have any weapons, they had real combat boots-not just some kind of sneakers or loafers or something like what Cambodian soldiers usually wore. They looked like soldiers. You could tell just by their bearing.

Then we discovered that, in fact, there were hundreds of these guys encamped in the Olympic Stadium. They'd been brought in from South Vietnam, set up in the Olympic Stadium, and then parceled out to various Cambodian Army units as cadre. So that was our contribution.I found out about this because Lon Nol's younger brother, [Lon Non] had asked to meet with us in the Embassy. So Mike Rives sent Bob Blackburn and me to meet with him. Lon Non came to Blackburn's house and brought two of these Khmer Krom officers with him. The Khmer Krom officers, wearing US Army fatigues without insignias, started telling us what their requirements were. He said that they needed 81 mm [mortar] ammunition, medical supplies, call signs for the Forward Air Controllers, and all that. We had to explain to them, "Fellows, you now belong to the Cambodian Army, and we aren't going to give you anything. You are not going to get any direct support from the United States." Their disappointment was really quite palpable. I think that it came as quite a shock to them that there was not going to be a "Secret War" [in Cambodia] which would be stage-managed by the United States from Saigon.

Two other things happened during the first couple of months that I was in the Embassy in Phnom Penh. On May 4 or 5, 1970, we were informed that another Special Mission aircraft was coming into Phnom Penh with a brigadier general on board. We were instructed to receive him and take him to visit Lon Nol. We were all wondering who this brigadier general was. Brigadier generals in the Vietnam War were as common as doughnuts. In fact, they went out to get the coffee.

We went out to the airport and met the aircraft. The brigadier general who arrived-very recently promoted to brigadier general-was named Alexander Haig. He was accompanied by a young NSC [National Security Council] officer named Winston Lord. I had known Winston Lord from my very early days in the Foreign Service, from which he later resigned. Win Lord, of course, was very well connected with the Republican Party. His mother was Mary Lord, of Lord & Taylor [department store] and a very big, moneyed figure in the Republican Party in the Washington, D. C., area. Win Lord was the "note taker" for Brigadier General Haig. Al Haig was, in fact, the office manager of the NSC staff. This was his first big assignment under Henry Kissinger [then Special Assistant to President Nixon for National Security Affairs]. He was told to "go out and find out what the hell's going on in Cambodia" and give Kissinger an assessment.

This was four days after the Cambodian "incursion" began on May 1, 1970. I don't know what happened. Blackburn and I really weren't privy to what went on. We didn't participate in most of the meetings with Al Haig.

However, my general appreciation of the situation was that Haig did not like Mike Rives. I think the chemistry was bad. Rives has a an effeminate manner, sort of high class English manner. Haig thought he was gay. Mike was all man though. He had fought as a Marine private under Chesty Puller on Guadalcanal in the Second World War. Rives came from money in Newport, Rhode Island where he counted Claiborne Pell as a neighbor. Rives was also a descendent of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. But he wasn't everyone's cup of tea so speak. We became good friends and I worked for him for over four years in Cambodia and the Department.Rives had not been particularly cooperative with MACV in Saigon. During the first year after the Embassy in Phnom Penh was reopened Rives had complained bitterly, almost constantly, about border incidents. He had said that if MACV wasn't able to control events more effectively, the result would be that the Embassy in Phnom Penh would be kicked out of Cambodia again. This, of course, was viewed with a great deal of anger by the MACV establishment, from Gen. Abrams on down. I had this directly from Admiral Zumwalt. They were wondering whose side this guy [Mike Rives] was on. This is the kind of thing that I tried to communicate to Rives. I told him that he really should be careful, because he was angering the "establishment" in MACV.

Q: By this time you were an old hand in Vietnam and in the area. Can you talk a bit about Rives? Where was he coming from and how did he operate? Was he trying to play the classical diplomat's role, keeping a low profile, and avoiding upsetting anything? Was he saying that diplomatic relations with Cambodia were far more important than any other considerations?

ANTIPPAS: Yes, that was it. His instructions from Marshall Green [then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs] were that it was important to establish relations and get a dialogue going with the Cambodians. You should understand that Mike Rives did not talk to Sihanouk. He never saw Sihanouk or the Prime Minister of Cambodia. The highest level Cambodian he talked to, during that whole period before the overthrow of Sihanouk, was the Foreign Minister. Those were his instructions: keep things "low key." There was no Embassy building. He reopened the office in August, 1969, in one of the rooms of the Royal Hotel [in Phnom Penh]. He sort of hung the flag out the window. One week after he arrived and established his presence, Senator Mike Mansfield came and had a meeting with Sihanouk. The State Department was operating from that point of view: we mustn't anger Senator Mansfield and we mustn't anger Senator Fulbright, who was angry enough because he felt that he had been led down the garden path by the State Department in the past. I think that Mike Rives was just doing his job.

Admiral Zumwalt told me that one of the other things that angered the Saigon "establishment" was that, during the coordinating conferences which were held from time to time, when our Ambassadors from Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam would get together to discuss what was going on at the theater level, they were angered by Rives' absence from those meetings. However, as Rives explained it to me, when I discussed it with him, he said, "Hey, I didn't have an airplane. How was I supposed to go? Furthermore," Mike said, "Marshall Green told me to 'stay put' [in Phnom Penh]." Marshall reportedly said, "I don't want any other junior officers to be chargï¿½ d'affaires in your absence." Mike continued, "How was I supposed to get down there? It was only an hour's flight to Saigon, but I didn't have an airplane. To get to Saigon, I would have to go to Bangkok and then from Bangkok, fly commercially to Saigon, which would take a whole day. I'd be absent from the office for, maybe, three days, and that was unacceptable to the EA [Bureau of East Asian Affairs] front office. Nobody ever sent a plane for me. Nobody ever thought about sending a plane to pick me up."

Mike Rives was very conscious of [the importance of] not appearing to be manipulated from Saigon. He said that it was very important that it not appear that he was getting his marching orders from Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker or General Abrams [in Saigon]. But this got him into trouble, because he was perceived [as having no interest in the area discussions], plus the "nattering" that he periodically did about incidents along the Vietnam-Cambodia border. This made it appear that he was not a "team player."

However, I think that Mike Rives was very much a "team player." He was trying to pick up as much intelligence as he could, given the fact that he didn't have any CIA presence [in the Embassy in Phnom Penh] to help him, he had one Political Officer, and he had a Military Attachï¿½ who was a drunk and apparently wasn't there half of the time. The Embassy in Phnom Penh was really not very well set up. [If he had gone to Saigon for these meetings], he would have gone from this eight-man Embassy which was operating out of the servants' quarters of what was to be the Ambassador's residence in Phnom Penh to this enormous Embassy in Saigon.

Don't forget that after the overthrow of Sihanouk and the U. S. "incursion" into Cambodia took place, the Cooper-Church amendment was passed. This amendment limited the official American presence in Cambodia to 200 people at any given hour of the day. This made it almost impossible to set up a logistics operation whereby you could supply the Cambodians, once we decided that the non-communist Cambodians were going to survive and that we weren't going to be shot out of Cambodia. Suddenly, Cambodia became sort of the living example of the "Nixon Doctrine," which stated that we would help anybody who would help themselves. The Americans weren't going to do the fighting, but we would help others.

The "Nixon Doctrine" was mocked by the liberal press and by those who felt that we were doing the wrong thing in Cambodia. However, the fact of the matter is that the Cambodians did fight. They didn't do it very well, but they did fight. They lasted for a long time, and they distracted the attention of something like four "main force" North Vietnamese/Viet Cong divisions. I used to know the numbers of these divisions: the First and the Seventh North Vietnamese Divisions, the Ninth Viet Cong Division, and something called the "C-2" Division, which was made up of Vietnamese fishermen recruited from around the "great lake" [Tonle Sap in Cambodia]. The Cambodian Army kept these Vietnamese units busy, while, of course, they were being battered the whole time. The Cambodian Army was something of a joke, in terms of being able to fight. I used to say, "I wouldn't go out to look at the war with anything less than a brigade because, given all of the corruption which took place, including the fact that you had all of these 'phantom troops' to pad the payroll, when a brigade went into action, you didn't know if there was a brigade or a battalion. The chances were that you probably didn't have much more than a battalion out there."

To answer your question, I think that Mike Rives did what he was told to do. I believe this was his natural inclination. He never talked much about the propriety of our involvement in the Vietnam War. he was probably against it but he was a good soldier. he did what he was told. After he got into trouble for this, because of what happened, he then got into deeper trouble. This is all very much an object lesson to a younger, observing officer such as myself about how to avoid getting into trouble and how Washington works.

In early August, 1970, Spiro Agnew, the Vice President of the United States, was to make a short visit to Phnom Penh to encourage the Cambodians. It was to be a four-hour visit. He was to fly into the airport. He wasn't even going to drive into town from the airport. They were going to helicopter him in. He was going to have lunch with the acting Chief of State, Mr. Cheng Heng, former President of the National Assembly, and fly out. In fact, I never even saw the Vice President of the United States. I stayed in the Embassy during the visit. The Secret Service was there. There was a lot of concern about his security, because there was fighting right outside of Phnom Penh. I guess that, in the "great scheme of things," it was fairly heroic on the part of Spiro Agnew to fly into a besieged capital like this.

I remember-you couldn't miss it, as we all occupied the same office space-that when the chargï¿½ d'affaires had an important visitor, Blackburn and I would pick up our files and leave the room and sit outside with the secretaries. Depending on who the visitor was, Mike Rives might, in fact, move out of his chair and sit on an orange crate. He made a big deal out of the fact that he was getting so little support out of the State Department from Bangkok. Mike Rives was a bit of a theatrical character. He was an old Africa hand, used to operating on very slim rations.

I will recount two incidents which kind of give you the atmosphere of what we were up against in dealing with Washington. Vice President Agnew came to town and, of course, the Secret Service did their usual "thing." In the exit interview, after the Secret Service left-and remember that they'd been in Phnom Penh for two weeks, programming this visit out and working out exactly what was going to happen during this four-hour visit-we had gotten to know these guys fairly well. I had had some experience with the Secret Service during the 1966 visit by President Johnson to Manila for the seven-nation conference on Vietnam of the troop contributing countries. I wasn't particularly daunted by these Secret Service guys.

Mike Rives sort of bawled out the Secret Service guys for the "heavy-handed way" in which they had handled the [Agnew] visit. For example, when Agnew "trooped the [Cambodian] honor guard line," off camera the Secret Service was "covering" the honor guard with submachine guns. Another Secret Service guy, with a drawn Uzi submachine gun, sat behind the acting [Cambodian] Chief of State at lunch! When they took Vice President Agnew on a tour of the Royal Palace, Sihanouk's palace, and led him into a room that hadn't been scheduled for a visit, the Secret Service got all excited. They unceremoniously pushed Mike Rives out of the way because he was in the line of fire. They literally shoved him out of the way and charged around with drawn submachine guns.

Mike Rives was very upset about this. He said, "You [Secret Service] guys come to town and leave me with the pieces to pick up. You know, I've got to work with these people." This was the Cambodian honor guard which had received [international] luminaries such as Zhou En-lai, Tito, Castro, and people like that. They weren't exactly "slouches" in terms of protecting people. Mike said, "Don't you think that I'm interested in the security of the Vice President of the United States?" I'll never forget what the Secret Service guy said. He said, "I don't give a damn. All these guys have got their hands out, anyhow." In effect, he was saying, "Screw you, Mr. chargï¿½ d'affaires."

We learned subsequently that the Secret Service went back to Washington and told Vice President Agnew, "You know what that guy in Phnom Penh said about your visit? He said, 'Agnew comes to town and leaves me with the pieces to pick up.'" Well, that remark really tore it, as far as Mike Rives was concerned. The State Department was told [by the White House, "Get rid of this guy [Mike Rives]."

So he had all of these strikes against him, despite doing his job. Anyway, it was an object lesson. I learned, "Boy, it doesn't take much to screw up." If you get crossways with these guys, they can cut your throat, and you don't even know it happened. So Mike Rives was given the Distinguished Honor Award of the State Department and was transferred to INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research] to cover African affairs. Marshall Green [Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs] told me, when I went back in June, 1970, to pick up my family that Rives was in trouble and that he [Marshall] had been ordered to "fire him." However, Marshall was trying to avoid doing this.

When Coby Swank was appointed Ambassador to Cambodia, Bill Sullivan [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs] told me that Coby, who had been Bill Sullivan's DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Laos at the time of the beginning of the "Secret War" in Cambodia in 1964, was his choice to be Ambassador to Cambodia. Despite Coby Swank's being a Soviet specialist and although he had served in China in 1946 as a soldier and later on in Laos with Bill Sullivan, he really had had little Foreign Service Asian experience. However, Coby offered Mike Rives the job of DCM in Phnom Penh, to serve under him. Mike accepted the offer. Mike had had hopes that he would be appointed Ambassador to Cambodia, but at that time that sort of thing almost never happened. Chargï¿½s d'Affaires were not usually upgraded and appointed Ambassadors. We're doing that more frequently now. It makes a certain amount of sense, actually, for an officer who is knowledgeable about the country to be appointed Ambassador.

However, Mike's days in Phnom Penh were numbered, because very shortly thereafter Tom Enders was appointed to be the DCM in Phnom Penh. Tom had his own "friends in high places," but Tom was in trouble on his own. He was about to be kicked out of Yugoslavia, because he had had his difficulties with the Ambassador there. Anyway, Tom was "larger than life" when he came out to be DCM. Mike was relieved from duty and moved sideways to INR, to a "nothing" job, because the position was later abolished.

Mike ultimately replaced Tom Corcoran as Laos-Cambodia Country Director, sort of over the objections of the White House. People in the NSC [National Security Council] staff, had also developed a bias against Mike Rives. One such FSO, now a senior ambassador, complained to me at the time of my own assignment as desk officer for Cambodia that the NSC staff really didn't like having Mike Rives appointed as Country Director for Laos-Cambodia. However, the Personnel people concluded, "Well, the hell with you guys. We're going to take care of 'our' guys."

So I think that there was a perception that Mike Rives had been "shafted." You can probably say that Mike hadn't been very "clever" about the way he handled himself. I'll make a kind of philosophic observation. Here we Foreign Service Officers train ourselves on how to observe and analyze what's going on in foreign countries, but we don't do a very good job of analyzing how our own government operates and what it takes to "operate" within our own government. You really have to be smart and clever about this kind of thing.

Taking the kind of "absolute" positions which Mike Rives did was not helpful. Here is another example of what he did to "anger" the "establishment" in Vietnam. Before we had satellite communications between the United States and Vietnam, they had a "tropospheric scatterer" system. What happens is that you "bounce" the sound or radio wave off the tropospheric layer of space downwards. In effect, it's a kind of satellite communications. That's what we were using at that time, in 1970. The Embassy in Saigon very much wanted to establish a "tropospheric scatterer" unit [in Cambodia] for its own communications. Mike Rives was against it. He said, "We should communicate by telegram so that we'll have a paper record of what's going on." He continued, "Too many things get decided over the telephone, and there's no record of the decision." That's a very interesting principle to fight for, but not to fight and die for. This issue was one of those "white birch stakes" which was sharpened and driven into his heart.

Mike Rives was really fighting the system. I think that he also fought the idea of rearming the Cambodians with anything more than AK-47's which we could buy from the Indonesians or whatever we collected on the battlefield in Vietnam.

Q: I remember that the Department really made an effort at the time of the Cambodian "incursion." I was in Saigon. They went around and collected all of the AK-47's they could find.

ANTIPPAS: Hanging up on the wall?

Q: As souvenirs. Actually, I wanted one. It happened that just at that time I was told, "We're sorry but we're collecting all of them to send up to Cambodia."

ANTIPPAS: That's right. In fact, I think that we bought about 40,000 AK-47's from Indonesia. But that wasn't enough. The big problem in supplying the Cambodians with these weapons was the ammunition supply. We would have had to set up an ammunition factory. It really became simpler to re-equip the Cambodians with M-16's, M-1's, and other American equipment, for which we had an ammunition supply. I remember all of that.

In fact, the guy who was selected to run the "Secret War" in Cambodia, which never really got off the ground because of the Cooper-Church amendment, was a guy named Jonathan ("Fred") Ladd. Fred Ladd was a retired U. S. Army colonel. We became very good friends. I met him in the State Department in Washington in June, 1970, when I went back to collect my family.

When it became clear that we weren't going to be "shot out" of Phnom Penh and that there was a job in the Embassy there for me, Mike Rives said that he wanted me to be assigned to the Embassy as a Political Officer. He said, "Look, you've got two weeks to go back home and bring your family back." I tried to do it and almost succeeded in doing it. I flew home and collected my wife and infant son. She was pleased enough. She didn't want to stay in Washington by herself. Fortunately, we hadn't unpacked most of our effects, so we threw it all back in the lift van and left town.

Q: Did you go through Saigon when you moved to Phnom Penh?

ANTIPPAS: I don't think so. We flew directly to Phnom Penh from Hong Kong if memory serves. We were permitted to have our families in Phnom Penh. [In Washington] Tom Corcoran had introduced me to Fred Ladd. Ladd had commanded the Fifth Special Forces Group in Vietnam, until the time of the "Tet" offensive of 1968. He went back to Washington and retired from the Army after that, in 1969. He went down to Florida to open up a charter fishing business. Fred was very well known in the Army "establishment." His Father had been a regular army Major General and he had attended but was washed out of West Point. He attended OCS in the Second World War. He was very close to senior General officers like Fred Weyand and Creighton Abrams. He was mentioned in David Halberstam's book, "The Best and the Brightest" as one of those people who had spoken up early in our Mission in Saigon, saying that the corruption of the Vietnamese was going to do us in, if we didn't handle things right. Ladd had had a lot of career experience in special operations, running around with the Kurds in Iraq, riding camels, and that sort of stuff. He had also served as military assistant to Secretary of the Army Wilbur Brucker back in the late 1950's.

Interestingly enough, Fred Ladd and Al Haig had been aides de camp to Gen. MacArthur at the time of the Inchon invasion during the Korean War [1950]. Fred was a captain and was senior aide. Al Haig was a first lieutenant and was the junior aide. So Ladd's relationship with Al Haig went way back over twenty years. It was Al Haig who decided that we needed somebody to run a "Secret War" in Cambodia. He felt that Mike Rives, was not the man to do it. Haig persuaded Ladd to come back into the government, in the State Department, as a Foreign Service Reserve [FSR] officer Class Two and to be the Political-Military Counselor in the Embassy in Phnom Penh.

I remember Tom Corcoran's specifying to Mike Rives at that point that Ladd, as an FSR-2, would be the next most senior officer after Rives. However, Ladd was never to be left as Chargï¿½ d'Affaires of the Embassy. The State Department was going to remain in control of the Embassy. Well, Fred Ladd really didn't know an awful lot about the Foreign Service. He really wasn't an "empire builder" at all but he was a "results-oriented" kind of guy. He firmly believed that the only way to succeed in a situation like the one we had on our hands in Cambodia was not to repeat what we had done in Vietnam but, in fact, to set up a kind of Special Forces operation to harass the communists on their own turf. He felt that building a large, "main force" operation as we had done in Vietnam, would create enormous problems for ourselves, including corruption, which would be our undoing and which we were very familiar with, based on what had happened in Korea, China, and Greece.

Fred Ladd was a "can-do" kind of man. He knew everyone in authority in Saigon and could "interface" with the Saigon brass very well. He had access to Gen Weyand, who was then Deputy Commander of MACV and became Commander of MACV after Gen Abrams left Saigon to become Chief of Staff of the Army after Westmoreland.

Q: Gen. Weyand was later the Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army.

ANTIPPAS: Yes. Ladd was "well wired" into the system. We in the Embassy in Phnom Penh got as much out of MACV in terms of materiel as anybody could reasonably get. This was at the same time that Admiral John McCain, who was CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific], decided, "By God, Cambodia is going to be under ME." He said, "I am going to run things in Cambodia, not MACV."

So the line of authority went directly to Ladd from CINCPAC. In fact, Admiral McCain came to Cambodia a couple of times while I was there. It was probably a mistake to have CINCPAC running the Cambodian war. The military support aspect, if not the strategic aspect of our whole effort in Cambodia should have been run out of Vietnam. But we had this other layer of CINCPAC running things.

That's where we were in the fall of 1970, when it was decided that Cambodia was going to survive. The Nixon administration was going to draw on all of the military assistance programs, worldwide, to find money to support Cambodia. Over the shrill screams of everybody in the world, like Israel, Greece, and God knows where else we were giving money to. We had to support Cambodia.

In fact, the Deputy Director of P/M [Office of Political- Military Affairs in the State Department] at that time, was Tom Pickering [later Director General of the Foreign Service and Ambassador to the UN and to the Soviet Union]. He was another very bright and upcoming officer who was a classmate of Tom Enders. They had competed ferociously throughout their careers. These two people were just larger than life. They were so smart that they made your teeth hurt! Pickering found the money in the worldwide military assistant program (MAP) to give to Cambodia.

By the fall of 1970 we had a limited operation going on in Cambodia. There was no "Secret War." We were limited to 200 Americans in country at any given time. We were getting military assistance for the Cambodians, who were getting out and conducting some operations, but they turned out, for the most part, disastrously. In October 1970, they had the "Chenla" operation, a multi-battalion effort directed up Route 6 to try to open up the road to Kampong Thom and Siem Reap. Of course, the Cambodian Army walked right into a divisional sized North Vietnamese ambush. It reminded me of General Braddock and the French and Indian War [1755]. The Cambodians were really clobbered. They lost 13,000 men. It set the Cambodians back very seriously. They lost a lot of the hard-won ammunition and equipment that we had given them.

The another blow fell in December, 1970, when Viet Cong "sappers" attacked Pochentong Airport in Phnom Penh and blew up every airplane there. They also blew up the ammunition that was being delivered at the airport. The whole thing was such a fiasco that Gen Lon Nol had a stroke because of the stress of that moment.

The Viet Cong probably did us a favor by blowing up all of these old airplanes because Lon Nol had the damndest collection of aircraft that you ever saw. He had MiG-17's, French Fouga-Mystere jets, and a whole collection of "junk," none of which was much good for close air support of the Cambodian Army. Because of the loss of all of this equipment and supplies we started delivering some helicopters, with the cooperation of the Vietnamese. Also, we started giving them some T-28 trainers, which had been turned into excellent close support aircraft. They were very good.

Q: You're saying that Lon Nol got rid of all of these old aircraft.

ANTIPPAS: All of the aircraft that they had been given by the French, Russians and Chinese over the years. In effect, it was a blessing.

Q: Andy, I'd like to go back to an earlier period. You were sent to Phnom Penh on April 27, 1970. You were told to "find out what's really happening." We're talking about a situation where you had to "hit the ground running." You knew about Cambodia, but this was not your "beat." One of the things that I'm trying to do with these oral histories is to pass on information on how to do things like this.

ANTIPPAS: Tradecraft. I think I can tell you. Here's an interesting little anecdote about that. I told you that I had volunteered to go to Vietnam in the first place. I figured that was the only way that I was going to get a political reporting assignment. I was one of those who felt that I had to try this. I didn't really know what the Foreign Service was all about. I'd joined the service before we had the "cone" system. I didn't particularly like the "cone" system. In fact, I was dead set against it.

Q: The "cone" system involved your area of specialization in the service. The "cones" included administrative, political, economic, and consular.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. I remember that when I was in Kobe, U. Alexis Johnson became Ambassador to Japan. He had been Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and President of AFSA [American Foreign Service Association] at that time. We're talking of 1966. Ambassador Johnson came down to Kobe for a visit to the Consulate. Another officer named Charley Duffy, an economic officer who later resigned from the Foreign Service, and I spoke to Ambassador Johnson at a reception held for him and Mrs. Johnson. I had known U. Alexis a little, because Steve Johnson, their son, was a class behind me in the Foreign Service. We'd been part of the Washington junior officer crowd. Afterwards, we were in Saigon together. I had known Ambassador Johnson on a personal level. I said to U. Alexis, with Charley Duffy, that we didn't think that it made a lot of sense to have this "cone" system. I hadn't joined the Foreign Service to do just one thing the rest of my career. One of the reasons that I had joined the Foreign Service was to avoid doing just one thing throughout my career.

It was clear to me that I was doing very well as a consular officer. I'd gotten two promotions in succeeding years and I really did like consular work but I wanted to try something else. I felt that if I were put "on a peg," so to speak, I would never get to do anything else. I didn't feel that I would advance to my greatest capacity.

Anyway, I volunteered to go to Vietnam to do political reporting. I had learned a little political reporting in Douala [Cameroon], when I served as acting Principal Officer for four months. I spent a lot of time doing political analysis on the ruling political party in West Cameroon. In my graduate studies, political analysis was my "bag." So I wasn't exactly a neophyte. My biggest problem in political reporting was learning how to do it and learning how to write. Writing was the biggest problem that I had. That's something that you only learn after you get into this business. Being a journalist doesn't exactly prepare you to be a good Political Officer.

I did "hit the ground running" [in Phnom Penh]. One of the things that I was asked to do was to go to the military press briefing every morning and find out what was going on. Of course, all of the journalists were there. Some of them would go out in cars and look at the war, which could be very dangerous and very injurious to your health. In fact, during the first year of the Cambodian War, 17 journalists were killed. They went out to look at the war and never came back-ambushed by the Viet Cong.

Q: You mean the Khmer Rouges.

ANTIPPAS: No, they were Viet Cong [operating in Cambodia]. There were very few Khmer Rouges at that time. They were really not militarily active. I am persuaded that the people that they ran into were Viet Cong, who weren't about to let Western journalists tell the world that they were captured by Vietnamese on Cambodian soil. The journalists may have been handed over to the Khmer Rouges for captivity or other disposition, but I think that they were captured by the Viet Cong.

I would go down to the briefings and find out what was going on. We would get bits and pieces of reports from all and sundry and would go back and write this up in a daily "sitrep" [situation report]. I started to expand my horizons a little bit. As I said previously, I was the first American diplomat to go to the Cambodian National Assembly since the overthrow of Sihanouk. I introduced myself and met the people there. You may recall that it was the National Assembly which actually overthrew Sihanouk. They're the people who changed the constitution and said, "He's out." They created the Cambodian Republic. The acting President of the National Assembly was In Tam. He was also Governor of the province of Kampong Cham, Northeast of Phnom Penh, in the rubber plantation country. The province itself is bisected by the Mekong River. East of the Mekong River was very much "Apache country" [communist controlled]. Kampong Cham town, the province town, which is on the West bank of the Mekong River, was the scene of several very heavy battles. This governor, who was a career Ministry of the Interior type, had police experience and training. I came to the conclusion that he was probably the best trained military guy that they had, since he was about the only one putting up an effective fight against the communists. He was actually holding his own.

He would drive down from Kampong Cham to Phnom Penh, down Route 6, every couple of days, to attend to the business of the National Assembly. We became very good friends, dating from those very first days in May 1970. Of course, I also got to know a lot of other people in the National Assembly. I started to pick up bits and pieces concerning what made Cambodia "tick."

Q: French was the language you used?

ANTIPPAS: French was the language. You didn't need to speak Cambodian [at the time]. That came later. Just like in Saigon. You didn't need to speak Vietnamese for dealing with the Foreign Ministry. So the [Cambodian] National Assembly became my "beat." In that way I got a lot of inside "dope" on what was going on.

In Tam, the President of the National Assembly, became quite a political power. In fact, he ran for the presidency in 1972. It was stolen from him by Lon Nol, and we let Lon Nol get away with it. In Tam really had been "my" candidate to be president. Had he become president, I think that the Cambodians would have put up a much better fight. But it was problematic, and the White House-and particularly Al Haig-were very concerned that if we "lost" Lon Nol, the military who were beholden to him might disintegrate. Given what had happened to [President Ngo dinh] Diem and the dynamic of what had happened [in 1963 and subsequently in South Vietnam], nobody wanted to fool around with the situation in Cambodia. So we let Lon Nol get away with stealing the 1972 election.

At any rate, there were lots of to-ing and fro-ing politically, and In Tam became "my" source. In fact, I even had a big "to do" with the Agency [the CIA] when they tried to recruit In Tam and put him on their payroll. I found out about it when In Tam told me that he'd been visited by an Embassy officer who had offered him medical treatment in Laos and all of that sort of thing. I went storming back to the Embassy to see John Stein, [the CIA Chief of Station and] my colleague at the "flea bag hotel" in April, 1970. I told him, "Look, we don't have to pay a nickel for this guy. He tells me everything we want to know. In fact, if he's put on your payroll, he'll be discredited, in my view. I'm mad as hell that you're trying to take over 'my' contact." John Stein backed off. The guy who had been assigned to recruit In Tam, Tom Ahern, was one of the guys later captured in Iran [when the Embassy in Tehran was taken over in 1979]. He was an Agency guy who spent 444 days as a "guest" of the Ayatollah Khomeini. He had a German wife named Gisella. Our families were great friends. We had been in Saigon at the same time. Our wives were friends in Bangkok, where they were "safe havened."

Tom was just doing his job. I said, "Look, this is 'my' contact. I developed him, and he's going to be 'mine' as long as I'm around [Phnom Penh]."

[During my time in Phnom Penh] a daughter of Sihanouk was still there-I think her name was Bopha Devi. She was a classical Khmer Ballet dancer. She was arrested by the new Cambodian Government and put on trial. We in the Embassy decided that convicting her would not be useful. It would make Sihanouk look like a hero in various quarters if his daughter was "railroaded" into jail. I used to attend her trial, just to demonstrate that the American Embassy was very interested in this matter.

Q: This is how one influences a situation, in a way...

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. I didn't say, "Look, damn it, let her go," but I made it very clear that we were concerned about what was going on. The Cambodian authorities got the message very clearly.

You may remember that in 1969 an American merchant ship, the "Columbia Eagle," which was carrying munitions...

Q: Yes, Heavens, I remember that.

ANTIPPAS: The "Columbia Eagle." We had a program in Phnom Penh in 1970 called, "Take a mutineer to lunch." Two mutineers had taken over the ship and were imprudent enough to do this about the time when Sihanouk was overthrown. They took the ship into Sihanoukville and found that they had taken it into the wrong country. [The Cambodian authorities] put these guys into a Navy jail on the Mekong River. The Cambodian authorities were really kind of fed up with these guys by May, 1970. They didn't want them. They used to take them out to lunch from time to time and during one outing one of them escaped. They never saw him again. We figured that the Khmer Rouges caught him and killed him. The other guy was mentally unbalanced. I can't remember his name exactly. Perhaps it was Glatkowski. I've got it in my files somewhere. He may still be in custody. A U. S. court had asked for his arrest. U. S. Marshals were flown into Phnom Penh to pick him up.

During the time this was being set up, Blackburn and I "entertained" this guy to make sure that he didn't get lost. We had this program, "Take a mutineer to lunch." We used to feed him. We took him out to the airport to deliver him to the Marshals. They never got off the airplane. I suppose that there was some legal consideration in that, that they were still on American territory, in a sense. We bundled this clown on the aircraft, and he was taken back to the U.S. You were probably involved in that.

Q: When the ship was hijacked, I think that it was carrying napalm...

ANTIPPAS: And "iron" bombs.

Q: It was on its way to Thailand. I remember that everybody was chasing around. I think that was the only time I ever met Admiral Zumwalt in Cambodia. He was working up a scheme to get this ship. Then, when the ship was picked up, just after the Cambodian "incursion" in May, 1970, one of my U. S. Coast Guard officers-because I had a Coast Guard detachment attached to the Consulate-came in and said, "The South Vietnamese Navy people say that they know where these guys are. Do you want them 'taken care of'?" I said, "Good God, no." That's what they were talking about-killing them. I guess that he felt that I could just wave my hand and say, "Do what's necessary..."

ANTIPPAS: And have them "terminated with extreme prejudice."

Q: Yeah, I was mad as hell about it. I said, "Tell the South Vietnamese Navy, 'No, no, no.' Stay out of this affair." Just to finish this story off and to satisfy my own curiosity, what were they trying to do?

ANTIPPAS: I think that it was basically an "anti-war statement." They were just a couple of kooks. One of them, I swear, was mentally unbalanced. They were a couple of disreputable characters. They weren't old guys and really weren't very smart. How they got away with it-I don't remember the details.

Q: What happened to the ship?

ANTIPPAS: The ship was released very quickly. The Cambodian authorities just took these two guys into custody. The ship and the rest of the crew were released. I never met them. Of course, I didn't get down to Sihanoukville to see the ship when it was there. It was gone by the time I got to Cambodia at the end of April, 1970. These two guys were still in jail. I had had some experience with people captured in Cambodia when I was in Vietnam. We had two instances that I dealt with, when I was the "border incident" guy.

One case involved a U. S. Army LCI [Landing Craft, Infantry] which went up the Bassac River en route to Can Tho [South Vietnam] or some place like that. It was traveling inside the IV Corps area with a crew of 21 on board. They had a few cases of beer. I guess they all got "bombed out of their minds" somewhat and sailed right up the Bassac River and into Cambodia. They were seized by a Cambodian gunboat. I remember that General Abrams [then commander of MACV] was mad as hell that this had happened. I used to get this information from Army lieutenants who handled Cambodian affairs. They used to sit "behind the screen" [against which slides were projected] at MACV briefings. So they heard everything and they would pass it on to me. It was just as if I had attended the MACV staff meeting.

They told me that the Rear Admiral who was Commander of Naval Forces Vietnam-probably Zumwalt's predecessor, because this was about 1968-said, "Well, it wasn't one of my ships. This was an Army LCI." General Abrams erupted and said, "No, God damn it, it was one of mine. How the hell did this happen?" It had a forklift on it to handle crates, POL [Petroleum and Other Lubricants], and stuff like that.

Sihanouk kept the crew of the LCI for a fairly long time before he finally released them. He arranged to have them treated them quite well. Now and then they would be taken to "floating brothels" for feminine companionship and they would be taken to lunch. Sihanouk arranged to have a white, tropical suit made for each one of them. When they were repatriated, they came off the plane wearing these white suits! The U. S. military [in Saigon] didn't know what to make of this.

The other case was a little more serious. We had these reconnaissance aircraft-[De Haviland] Beaver's [Canadian made]. You remember them-high wing monoplanes. They were loaded with SIGINT [Signals Intercept] equipment. They used to fly up and down the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, listening to enemy tactical communications. On this occasion a Beaver, flying along the Western border of Tay Ninh Province, adjoining Cambodia, was shot down and crashed about one kilometer inside Cambodia. I remember how excited everybody got because it was loaded with all of this equipment. [MACV] called in an air strike on it and blew the plane up. The pilot and crew were captured by the Cambodians. Fortunately for the aircrew, the Cambodians beat the Viet Cong to the scene. They took them to Phnom Penh. I don't think that anybody really realized what these guys were or that they were quite important from the technical point of view. They could have ended up in the Soviet Union, for all of that. We finally managed to get them back.

That was part of my job [in Saigon], keeping in contact with the Australian Embassy [during the time when the U. S. Embassy in Phnom Penh was closed, and Australia was the "protecting power."], the Canadian Delegation to the ICC [International Control Commission] and all of that.

Q: Getting back to your service as a Political Officer at the Embassy in Phnom Penh, could you talk a little more about the international press there, which was all over the place.

ANTIPPAS: Of course, Cambodia was "the" story at the time. During the fall of 1970 the reporters were distracted by the civil war in Pakistan, which led to the establishment of Bangladesh. But for three or four months Cambodia was "the" story. Everybody was waiting to see the Vietnamese communists march into Phnom Penh. It all quieted down after we ended the Cambodian "incursion" and President Nixon was seen to have kept his word that this was an "incursion" and not an "invasion."

The international press were a mixed bag of people. I had a pretty good relationship with a number of them whom I had known in Saigon where I had occasion to brief them. One such was Francois Sully who wrote for UPI and was killed in a helicopter crash in 1971 with Vietnamese General Do Cao Tri, the III Corps commander. He was a pretty good journalist and had been a very good contact of mine in Saigon. He understood the war and what it was all about, so we had a good relationship. There were others. The New York Times reporter, Henry Kamm had a political ax to grind, as did the AP [Associated Press] representative. A lot of the contact between the Embassy and the international press was "confrontational" in tone. It was our side versus their side. These guys were out to embarrass the Nixon administration, and they certainly embarrassed the Cambodians, who weren't doing all of that well in the field.For example, there were the atrocities that took place-on "our" side. One of the habits that the Cambodian Government people had, when they killed a Vietnamese, was to cut out his liver and eat it-raw-to ensure that the dead man never went to Vietnamese heaven, or whatever. [They believed that] his soul would wander eternally. Or they would decapitate bodies of prisoners, and people would walk around with these heads. That became a big controversy. Of course, it is embarrassing when your "clients" act like headhunters. Then there was the "child soldier" issue. The press would become aware of the fact that there were 13-year-old Cambodian Government soldiers, carrying AK-47 rifles. This was a big thing.

Q: I remember seeing pictures of that.

ANTIPPAS: Anything that was embarrassing to the Cambodians, of course, was an embarrassment to us. It's funny how "what goes around, comes around." You remember Moose and Lowenstein?

Q: Yes.

ANTIPPAS: Jim Lowenstein and Dick Moose, both former Foreign Service Officers who resigned from the Foreign Service and went to work for Senator Fulbright as investigators. This was when the staffs of Congressional Committees began to be expanded. Moose, of course, was from Arkansas. Lowenstein was probably from New York. Moose and I had never served together, but we had both been in Cameroon [at one time or another]. I think he served with Walt Cutler, when they were very young officers and we had just opened up the Embassy in Cameroon.

When Moose and Lowenstein came to Phnom Penh, they were out looking for all of the "dirt"-whatever they could find to feed to Senator Fulbright to "flay" the Nixon administration with, such as the treatment of refugees or the failure to take care of refugees. The fact that we were doing very little for the Cambodian refugees was an embarrassment. In 1972 I had to testify before Senator Edward Kennedy's Refugee Subcommittee on our treatment of refugees in Cambodia.

Of course, Moose and Lowenstein weren't particularly welcome in the Embassy at any time. They knew it and figured that they were "going to get the ball in play anyway," so they spent most of their time in Phnom Penh talking to the press. They'd get all of the "dirt" from the press and then would go back to Washington and feed this into the system. Then Senator Fulbright could take the administration to task.

It was ironic that one thing that some of the journalists would do on Saturday evenings was to have "couscous" [North African barbecue] parties. The trouble was that the "couscous" was laced with "hemp" [marijuana], and they'd all get a "buzz" on-they'd all go ga-ga. Moose and Lowenstein didn't know this the first time they were invited. The press had a great time feeding them with this marijuana "couscous" and got them "bombed out of their minds." This was reported. I remember how frantic both of them were to send a cable to the staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to explain what had happened. [Laughter] We all got a big laugh out of that.

In fact, a free-lance AP photographer and the AP reporter pulled the same thing on my wife Judy and me. We were invited to the AP guy's house. Judy was pregnant with our second child at that point. There was a young woman from the Singapore Embassy and the two journalists, who were feeling no pain. They were drinking, and I think that they were smoking something. We just said, "Look, we don't do that. Don't feed us anything." We thought that we knew our hosts well enough so that they would respect our concerns. By the time dinner was served, we were very hungry. We had something like minestrone soup, and I ate everything. But the "spinach" turned out to be marijuana. I got "bombed out of my mind." The young woman from the Singapore Embassy was much worse affected. She became hysterical and very frightened. The two journalists who gave the party were having a hell of a time. They were laughing their heads off. Judy and I drove the Singapore woman home. Then we decided to go back to the party. The effects hadn't hit us yet, for some reason or other, the way they had hit the young woman from the Singapore Embassy. We thought that she was nuts, or something. It seemed like a nice party, and we liked these two guys. It was a mistake to go back to the house, because it didn't take very long before the effects of the marijuana hit us. It's a wonder that we got home in one piece. I was mad as hell that they would do this to us.

Q: Of course.

ANTIPPAS: It was very common. The Cambodians used marijuana on a recreational basis. They would collapse in the afternoon in their hammocks and smoke a "joint." They felt that this was no problem.

Q: What was your impression-or the Embassy's impression-of Lon Nol and his coterie?

ANTIPPAS: I think that those of us who had to deal with the problem of Vietnam had contempt for him. Maybe "contempt" is too harsh a word. I think that we really understood his limitations. He really was a limited individual. He wasn't all of that smart. He was clever, to a certain extent. He was experienced. He had basically been a policeman during most of his career. He had worked for the French and had been "around the track" a number of times-Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and all of that. And now he had himself proclaimed "President of the Republic of Cambodia."

However, his heart attack in late 1970 really limited him. We flew him to Hawaii for treatment. We thought that this would allow us to arrange for a real change of government and get a stronger hand to run the Cambodian military. It was quite clear that it was all going to be "downhill" if we didn't get the Cambodian military under control. However, in April, 1971, he came back to Cambodia. The heart attack had crippled him, but he was still functioning, to some extent. Of course, the Cambodian military wanted him back, because they had their "feeding frenzy" in the U. S. aid program.

His younger brother, Lon Non, became a real "shit disturber." That's the only term I can think of to describe this guy. I am convinced that he was the guy who started the trouble in March, 1970 in Phnom Penh-the anti-Vietnamese demonstrations which got out of hand. They resulted in the sacking of the PRG [Provisional Revolutionary Government-the Viet Cong] and the North Vietnamese Embassies. This created the situation in which the communists withdrew diplomatically and set off the attack on the Cambodians. In other words, he altered the status quo in Cambodia to bring the Americans in. He and his little coterie succeeded in doing that.

The group around him included some Cham's. These were Muslims from northeastern Cambodia. He controlled the 15th Infantry Brigade, the largest unit in the Cambodian Army. It was not supported under MAP [U. S. Military Assistance Program]. We would not support it militarily because he would not observe the requirements that we levied on him, in terms of operations, strength, unit size, accountability, and all of that. Since he was "the first one at the trough," he had this enormous brigade which did very little fighting and which was very obviously created to be the Palace Guard. We felt that this guy was a real problem. He had been the "point man" in spoiling In Tam's run for the presidency in 1972.

This was very clear. I used to make a point of going to In Tam's house very openly to see him, because I knew that Lon Non's guys were watching. I wanted them to understand that the U. S. Embassy was very much interested in In Tam. He was, in effect, under the Embassy's protection. I even brought my son with me on these visits. In Tam kept a monkey up a tree. My son liked to go and play with the monkey.

In late 1972 or early 1973, after I had become Cambodia desk officer in Washington, we started getting CIA reports that Lon Non was talking about staging a coup d'etat against his brother and taking control of the Cambodian Government. I remember writing a memorandum to Bill Sullivan [then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs], through Mike Rives, who was the Country Director for Laos and Cambodia. I analyzed the situation and concluded that Lon Non was fully capable of making a coup attempt. From what I knew about him, he was going to present us with a "fait accompli," as he did in 1970, and we would be "stuck" with him. He would become "our bastard." I didn't think that he was smart enough to be "our bastard." It was bad enough to have the onus for starting something like that, but he really wasn't smart enough to pull it off. I recommended that we "get rid of him." I recommended that we tell Marshal Lon Nol-he had not only made himself President but also Marshal of the Cambodian Army-that his brother had "to go." Obviously, we were not in the business of assassinating people any more, but somebody had to find a way to get rid of certain difficult people, somehow.

Interestingly enough, Marshall Green [Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs] approved the memorandum I wrote on the status of Lon Non. I saw the copy he had signed. It was decided that someone would go to Phnom Penh to tell Lon Nol this. Bill Sullivan decided that Al Haig was to be the messenger. Al Haig had just left the White House and the NSC. He had just received his fourth star [had become a four-star general] and was then Vice Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army. Haig didn't particularly want to go, but he was Lon Nol's "buddy," so Bill Sullivan said, "You've got to go and do this, because you have enough prestige so that Marshal Lon Nol will accept this." Haig was President Nixon's friend, and all of that.

There was then the question of who from the State Department was to go to Cambodia with Al Haig on this mission. The first choice was Walt Cutler, who was then Bill Sullivan's Special Assistant. I think that Roger Kirk had gone on to be Ambassador to Somalia or some such place. However, Walt was getting a divorce from his wife. He felt that he had traveled enough with Bill Sullivan-to Paris and so forth. He said, "No, I don't think that I want to go. Antippas wrote the damned memorandum. Let him go." I was not Al Haig's first choice. He didn't remember me from meeting him in Phnom Penh in early May, 1970 or subsequently in Phnom Penh again in 1972. When we took Haig out to the airport at the end of this May, 1970 visit. I told Him as I had Admiral Zumwalt, "I don't know whether we're going to be shot out of Phnom Penh, but do you have any jobs on the NSC staff?" He said, "Well, we have a really small staff. but if you don't have anything in hand when you come home, come and see me." The point of this was that at this stage of my life I was keeping my options open.

By this time it was late March or early April, 1973. Fred Ladd had left Phnom Penh and was working in P/M [Political-Military Affairs], but with a special responsibility to keep the Secretary of State informed about what was going on in Cambodia. This was before Henry Kissinger "pushed" William Rogers out of the position of Secretary of State and assumed that position himself. This was at the height of the "secret bombing" of Cambodia-or "not so secret bombing" of Cambodia. The debate in Congress on the War Powers Act was just building up. Fred Ladd's job was to go over to the Pentagon and find out "who was bombing who" and come back and report to Secretary of State Rogers.

At that point we were being cut off from circulation of what they used to call, "The Yellow Peril." This was a book with yellow covers published daily which reported all of the bombing strikes which took place in Vietnam and elsewhere. Because the White House was so paranoid about "leaks". The State Department was cut off from distribution of "The Yellow Peril." Even the Secretary of State didn't know whom we were bombing at this point. Ladd used to go over to the Pentagon and find out what was going on. He and I had retained a friendly relationship.

At the same time I had thrown this other issue into the pot, that we had to get rid of Lon Nol's little brother. Ladd persuaded General Haig to take me along on this trip to Phnom Penh. However, Haig did not accept me because I was the most knowledgeable on Cambodia, because I wrote the memorandum, or anything like that. The way that Ladd persuaded him was to say, "You know, Antippas fought in the Korean War" and that I had received a direct commission. It was on those grounds that Haig accepted me.

I spoke to Haig a little bit during that trip because we went to Bangkok, Nakhon Phenom, Vientiane, Laos, Phnom Penh, and Saigon. There was an effort to camouflage the real purpose of the trip, which was to get rid of Lon Non. During the trip I told Haig, "We desperately need a competent Cambodian Ambassador to the United States to help us talk to Congress. The guy that's there now is an old, French-trained diplomat, whose basic function is to sit there and look ambassadorial. Meanwhile, we're getting our brains beaten in. I've got just the candidate to be Cambodian Ambassador. His name is Um Sim". Um Sim had been Director, then Minister of Posts and Telegraph. He was a Fulbright Scholar. He went to the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale, IL. in the 50's. He was one of the people I met in Phnom Penh early on and was a good friend of mine. I told Haig, "He's articulate, he understands what the problem is, and he could help us make our case in Washington, which is something that we desperately need."

While in Phnom Penh, Haig persuaded Lon Nol not only to get rid of Lon Non but also to appoint Um Sim Cambodian Ambassador to the United States. When we were on the way back to Washington on the Special Mission aircraft, Haig came back to where I was sitting and said, "Well, I got your guy for you." This was great. I spent the next two years collaborating directly with Um Sim in working the Hill on the AID program and fighting the battle of who was to represent Cambodia in the UN-the Phnom Penh government, Sihanouk, or someone else.

Q: I'd like to go back to the time you were in Cambodia from 1970 to 1972.

ANTIPPAS: May, 1970, to February, 1972.

Q: Was Mike Rives the Chargï¿½ d'Affaires during the whole time you were there?

ANTIPPAS: No. Mike Rives was Chargï¿½ from August, 1969, until Coby Swank arrived in August, 1970. He served as DCM until November, 1970. Tom Enders came in to replace him, and Rives went back to the Department.

Q: How did Coby Swank deal with matters in Cambodia?

ANTIPPAS: Swank, of course, is an enormously decent guy. He is a very nice guy-a man whom I have liked and admired from the time of my first assignment in the State Department in 1961, when he was Secretary of State Dean Rusk's senior staff assistant. Here was a guy at the apex of power in the State Department who took time to be very decent. Of course, I'd watched his career since then. He'd been DCM in Laos and later in the Soviet Union.

He was obviously in line to go on to very great things, as he was a Russian specialist. However, I think that he was not the guy for Cambodia, particularly to try to control the U.S. and Cambodian military apparatus. He took great pride in the fact that he didn't have much military background, apart from having been a private first class in the Quartermaster Corps, in Special Services in China, or something like that. He had never fired a shot in anger. He took great pride in that.

Well, we were dealing with an unusual military apparatus in Cambodia. In such circumstances we needed a guy like Fred Ladd to deal with the Cambodian military, and we certainly needed someone who had the confidence of a guy like Fred Ladd. Tom Enders also had no military background, but he has a very strong personality. He had his marching orders from somebody, presumably Henry Kissinger who had been his professor at Harvard. Tom knew what he was about and was very clear in his own mind. There was no question of who was in charge when Tom Enders was around.

This is not to say that Coby Swank wasn't in charge, but I think that he really didn't quite understand the "game," as it was played in Cambodia. Of course, he had had no direct experience in Vietnam, so he didn't understand how that whole mechanism worked. Only those of us who had dealt with it understood the "mind set" of the people we were in contact with.

I think that the biggest mistake we made [in Vietnam and Cambodia] is that we tolerated the corruption and let the people we supported get away with it. This lost us a lot of support from Congress and from the public more generally. Secondly, there was the unlimited bombing of Cambodia. Of course, the Embassy was found out to be heavily involved in the targeting. In fact, Moose and Lowenstein found out that Tom Enders was heavily involved in the whole system. These two guys found out from journalists with little FM radios bought in Hong Kong which could pick up the communications with the FACs [Forward Air Controllers] from the airport control towers. It was an "open secret" that the U. S. Embassy was running the bombing campaign. That really didn't "play" very well in Congress or elsewhere.

Now, I would say-and this is what I said in my paper at the National War College-that we, the Cambodian Army, obviously needed bombing support. Since the Cambodian Army didn't have much artillery, they needed the Air Force equivalent of flying artillery. But what the U. S. Air Force was doing in Cambodia was just horrendous. It was engaging in "carpet bombing." I remember that when I accompanied Al Haig to Southeast Asia in the first week of April, 1973, we visited Seventh Air Force headquarters in Thailand. We were standing in the Officers' Club having a drink. By this time I was physically exhausted. Lt. Gen John Vogt, commanding the Seventh Air Force told Haig, as we stood there, "We have reconfigured the B-52-D's. We can carry more 'iron bombs.'

At that time CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] Admiral Noel had come out against the "carpet bombing" of Cambodia. I remember General Vogt telling Haig, "Don't let them turn us off. We have to continue to hit them [the communists] hard." I have to imagine that Haig, being basically a "political" general, went back and told the White House that we should not fail to continue the bombing. I think that the political overhead in any White House has to be careful not to appear to refuse the military their requests, especially if the venture might end disastrously.

I was in Phnom Penh during that trip and spent three days talking to people in the Embassy, including the Air Attachï¿½ , who said, "These guys [the air crews] drop sensors. If anything moves out there at night, they put in an "Arc Light" [carpet bombing] strike. So the Cambodian Army is afraid to move at night. If a herd of cattle moves out there, first thing you know, they're obliterated."

Q: "Arc Light" was the code name for B-52 "carpet bombing" strikes.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. This campaign became terribly counterproductive, and now and then we made serious "mistakes". The B-52's at various times blew up an airfield, a hospital, and the ferry crossing [of the Mekong River] at Nhiek Luong.

Q: This is Tape 4, Side A, of an interview with Andrew F. Antippas.

ANTIPPAS: Anyway, I imagine that Al Haig went back and told the White House and pretty well told the Washington "establishment" that we cannot stop the bombing of Cambodia. If we lost the war, the same military guys calling for these extreme measures were going to say, "The President of the United States did not do everything at his disposal to win the war."

I think that the "carpet bombing" was a terrible mistake. I watched us lose our Congressional support for this enormous amount of bombing that was going on and the killing that was taking place. Sydney Schanberg won a Pulitzer prize for his reporting on the bombing of Cambodia. He was one of those who delighted in reporting on all of the missteps that we were making. Yet we had plenty of tactical aircraft, like the F-111's, that could have been used as flying artillery and air support.

Q: There is a problem that goes on [when you use air power]. All you have to do is to think back to Wurzburg and Dresden and World War II. When the generals have these weapons-particularly the Air Force-they don't see what happens. They get too concerned about the tonnage of bombs they can drop. They don't really think about what is happening on the ground.

ANTIPPAS: It's a very mechanical thing.

Q: There is a view that "more is better," and all of that. It often doesn't work that way and can be counterproductive. There are two more things that I would like to talk about during the time that you were in Cambodia. First, you mentioned something about a Foreign Service inspection while you were there.

ANTIPPAS: We had an abbreviated Foreign Service inspection in late 1970. It really wasn't one of the usual inspections. The inspectors happened to be in the area and were asked to visit Phnom Penh, more generally to help to "sort out" the Embassy. Obviously, we desperately needed help, because we had such a limited staff. Suddenly, the Embassy was expanded from eight to 200 Americans, organized very much "on the hoof" [in an unplanned way]. So the inspectors came in to see what they could do to provide us with some guidance on how to put everything together.

I remember that one Inspector was Allen Morland, who, you will recall, was head of the Visa Office. I think that he finished up his career as Consul General in Toronto. He was a senior inspector on this team. I took him aside and talked to him about my concern about my own future. I said, "Look, this is what happened to me in Vietnam, where I was 'low-ranked.' I wasn't sure whether I was going to be "shot out of the saddle" [selected out]. I said that I didn't know why this had happened, but I was really concerned about my future. I said that here I was in Phnom Penh, helping to fight the good fight in Cambodia. Anyway, he took note of some of this, went back to Washington, and reported it. He was very positive. I think he helped. This is one of the things that really struck me about those inspectors, as had struck me when Randolph Kidder came with the inspectors to Cameroon in 1964. Their attitude was to help people to fix things, instead of functioning as they do now. I found their attitude an ideal use of the inspection function.

Q: The other point concerned your time in Cambodia. You have been talking about how inept the Cambodian Army was. Here you had a very proficient and very professional North Vietnamese Army. Why didn't they just take over the country? When you left Cambodia, what did you think about the future prospects at that time? Could you address both of these points?

ANTIPPAS: I think that we all wondered about that. When you think about it, the Cambodian Army only controlled most of the population centers, most of the provincial capitals. They controlled very little of the countryside. The North Vietnamese pretty much had the run of things. In retrospect, I think that the North Vietnamese could have "cleaned their clock" [i. e., wiped out the Cambodian Army] at any time. I think that they could have taken over the country as early as May, 1970, had it not been for the U. S. "incursion" into Cambodia. I think that they saw their basic role as keeping the Cambodians tied up in knots while they trained the Khmer Rouges to take over. They basically sought to keep the Americans and South Vietnamese occupied and spread out. They knew that the Americans were withdrawing. If they didn't know that from battlefield activity, they certainly knew what was going on at the Paris peace talks. So I think that the Vietnamese didn't overthrow the Cambodian Government, not because they couldn't, but because they decided not to do that. It's as simple as that. There's no other explanation why this rag-tag outfit that the Cambodian Government had become was not wiped out very quickly.I certainly expected that to happen during the first month I was there [April-May, 1970].

What did I think was going to eventually happen in Cambodia? I was very pessimistic about what was going to happen when I left Cambodia [in 1972]. I was terribly impressed by these two Khmer Rouges cadres whom I debriefed in detail. Even allowing for exaggeration, the fact that the communists had large numbers of these people available to them to set up whatever they were going to set up, while they watched our own presence diminish day by day in Vietnam made it very evident to me that the Vietnam War was not going to be decided in Cambodia. Obviously, Cambodia was part of the problem, but we weren't going to be able to solve the problem in Cambodia. I felt that we really weren't helping ourselves on the political level by letting Lon Nol do everything that he wanted to do-by allowing the corruption to take place, which simply was sapping the will of the Cambodian people. Obviously, the Cambodian people wanted to fight. No Cambodian that I knew wanted to be communized.

Q: No Cambodian or Vietnamese.

ANTIPPAS: Or the Vietnamese. For their part, the Cambodians despised the Vietnamese of whatever political persuasion. They just wanted to be left alone. Cambodia was a very viable little country which could function very well on its own. There was no population pressure and no starvation. It was very attractive in its own sense. I really had a tremendous sense of foreboding and of doom.

I might note some of my interests in Cambodia. Early during my tour in Cambodia I traveled up in the northern part of the country, around Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, and Kampong Cham, which are North, Northeast, and Northwest [of Phnom Penh]. This area became my "beat." I used to go up there by helicopter and talk with provincial governors and take a look around and see what was going on. I did this regularly enough that I did some reporting on these trips.

I could appreciate what was happening. I became very familiar with the region. We noted that after the Khmer Rouge took over, after I left Phnom Penh but while I was on the Cambodian desk in the Department, the people in the Political Section in Phnom Penh were my friends. One guy, David Carpenter, had been in the Political-Military Section in Vietnam and then Cambodia when we were there. Bill Harben was the Political Section chief and was a "great old pro" in the Foreign Service. We were all on the same wave length. We were privately corresponding with each other all the time. I knew a lot that was going on which wasn't coming in through the official cables. They were simply writing me letters, telling me what was going on and sending me lots of information.

Early in 1973 Khmer Rouge "main force" units started to concentrate around Phnom Penh, encircling the capital. A lot of heavy fighting was going on outside of Phnom Penh. Many of the provincial capitals were left unguarded by the Khmer Rouge "main force" units. In Kampong Thom, which is half way from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, the town was surrounded. You could shoot across the perimeter-that's how small it was.

Then, when he discovered that there were no Khmer Rouge "main force" units around some of the provincial capitals, the Governor of Kampong Thom went out and contacted a lot of the villages in the area. When the people realized that there were no Khmer Rouges to inhibit them, they all headed into Kampong Thom itself. David Carpenter sent photographs taken from helicopters of masses of people streaming into the government controlled towns. The Cambodians knew that there was nobody to protect them. Not only were Cambodian Army forces unable to feed them but they were unable to protect them. But, when they could get away form their villages, the people did so. That was a major indication to us that the Cambodian people didn't like what was happening to them.

The second thing was that I got to know the senior monk of the major Buddhist order in Cambodia, the "Mohanikay" order. The senior monk became one of my contacts, and I used to visit him just to talk to him, just to be able to report on what he was thinking. He came from the town of Oudong, which is 35 miles Northwest of Phnom Penh. It had been the capital of Cambodia between the time of Angkor Wat and the advent of the French protectorate in 1850 in Phnom Penh. It was just a little town of a few thousand people, but it was basically known for several special pagodas there. It had a giant Buddha-the only Buddha that faces North, instead of East. It faced North more as a gesture to China than anything else.

Anyway, the senior monk came from that town and therefore was interesting. Well, the Khmer Rouges took that town in the spring of 1974. I still have a picture taken from an SR-71, a very high altitude reconnaissance aircraft that overflew Cambodia. Every household in the town was burning. I guess that it was taken on infrared film. Of course, the people of the town had run into the forest. It's one of the few towns that the Cambodian Army took back. Basically, they took it back because it was so important from a religious point of view. They found a thousand skeletons in the wreckage of the town, which was a very clear indication to us that it was Khmer Rouges that took the town-not Vietnamese communists. The Vietnamese didn't do that. They didn't kill lots of people. There were other instances, but those are two that I recall vividly about what was going to happen to Cambodia if the Khmer Rouges won.

So when I left Cambodia, I was very depressed. We didn't have the same kind of people fighting for us that the other side had fighting for them. I knew in 1973 that the bombing would have to stop, and we were going to lose what little support we could give them. And that was our own fault. I never felt that we were going to win the war in Cambodia. If we were going to win it at all, it would have to be that we settled something in Vietnam, and part of the payoff would be that we would do something for Cambodia-set up some kind of coalition government there. But in that way we might avoid the bloodbath which we all thought was going to take place.

Q: So we'll pick up the next time you're available when you went back to the Cambodian desk. We've already talked about your trip with Alexander Haig to get rid of Lon Non. We'll talk about the desk and how it operated.

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Q: OK, today is September 1, 1994. Andy, we left things when you were returning to the Cambodian desk in the State Department. When did you serve there?

ANTIPPAS: From July, 1972 to April, 1975-almost three years.

Q: So you had the full experience, then.

ANTIPPAS: The whole nine yards, as they say. I was able to be the person who was "in on the takeoff and in on the crash"-for the whole Cambodian adventure. It didn't begin in 1968 but in 1970.

Q: When you say the "Cambodian desk," what was it?

ANTIPPAS: The whole Indochina apparatus in the State Department has gone through a variety of permutations over the years. During the buildup for the war years in Vietnam, there was a separate "desk" for Vietnam, called "The Vietnam Working Group," as you might recall. Laos and Cambodia were shunted off to a separate office, run by a Country Director, with desk officers under him. In the case of Laos there was only one desk officer during the almost three years I was there. For Cambodia there were two desk officers: one who followed political affairs, myself, and one who followed economic affairs, including the aid program and all of that. There was plenty of work to do in both areas. Mike Rives was appointed Country Director, replacing Tom Corcoran.

Of course, as I described previously, I had worked with Mike, starting in 1969 when he reopened the Embassy in Phnom Penh. In 1970 I went to Phnom Penh on a TDY [temporary duty] basis to help him when he was Chargï¿½ d'Affaires there. The other officer in Phnom Penh with me was Bob Blackburn. He had had no political experience but was a very competent officer. He was a quick study and understood how things worked. The "chemistry" in the relationship between Mike Rives and Al Haig didn't work. I've already mentioned Mike's problems with the Secret Service during Vice President Spiro Agnew's visit to Phnom Penh. Not many people can survive the kind of "slicing job" to which Rives was subjected.

Rives was ultimately appointed Country Director for Laos and Cambodia. I believe that the Personnel guy who arranged this assignment for Mike Rives was Tom Recknagel. Tom is an old friend of mine from way back, from the earliest days of my career. We had studied French in an early morning class at the FSI. Then he was my boss in the Embassy in Saigon, where he was chief of the Political Section, 1967-68]. I was told that, in spite of the objections that the NSC [National Security Council] staff raised against Mike's being assigned as Country Director for Laos and Cambodia, the Department's Personnel section decided that it wasn't going to be dictated to by people outside the building. By that time Mike had also been promoted to FSO-1. 1972 was a critical year on the Cambodian desk in Washington. My work on the desk was largely staying informed, writing memos and staying in touch with the Embassy in Phnom Penh. The two major events in 1972, were the "Watergate Affair" which occurred during the election campaign, though its ramifications dominated events in Washington in 1973 and 1974. The other major event in Cambodia was the impact of the Easter offensive in Vietnam. At this time the Vietnamese communist troops were pulled out of Cambodia and sent into combat in Vietnam. The Khmer Rouges took over the conduct of the war in Cambodia.

Q: The Easter offensive of 1972. For the record, who was conducting the offensive?

ANTIPPAS: This was the Vietnamese communist "main force" attack on South Vietnam. Eventually, it was turned back mainly through the use of American air power and Saigon Government troops. Many of the U. S. forces had already left South Vietnam by this time. It was the major push by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in 1972. The main effect on the Cambodians is that they really got a bloody nose. As the Vietnamese communists pulled out of Cambodia, they just walloped the Cambodian Army. After that we began to find Cambodian communist bodies on the battlefield, instead of Vietnamese communists. It became apparent by that time, even to the most casual observer, that the Khmer Rouges had been committed to combat in Cambodia. There was a "brand new war," in effect, in Cambodia.

Those people who say that the "secret bombing" of 1969-1970 precipitated the Khmer Rouge struggle against the Cambodian government are simply mistaken. We were fighting Vietnamese communist forces until 1972.

The second thing that took place on the political level in Cambodia, which I, of course, monitored very closely, was the Cambodian Presidential Elections. The Cambodian government had declared the establishment of a Republic in October, 1970. Sihanouk, of course, had been effectively removed from power. There was an acting Chief of State. The government drafted a new constitution, and Lon Nol decided to run for the presidency, even though he was, in effect, crippled by the stroke that he had suffered in December, 1970.

We had hoped against hope that Lon Nol would drop out of the government and would be replaced by a more reform minded group in the spring of 1971. That didn't happen, basically because of the "machinations" of Lon Non [Lon Nol's younger brother]. Lon Nol ran for president in the spring or summer of 1972-I don't remember exactly when it was. The main candidate against Lon Nol was my old friend, In Tam, who had been Vice President of the National Assembly and Governor of Kampong Cham Province. In my view he was probably the most competent guy in the country. However, the Nixon administration wasn't about to do anything to interfere in what they saw as the "people's choice." This was a big mistake, in that it meant that we would never really get a handle on military corruption. As a consequence, as we saw over the next several years, Cambodian corruption was enough to "turn off" any support for Cambodia that we had in the U. S., even though the Cambodians were doing the fighting. They had mixed results, obviously, as they weren't doing all of that well. But they were fighting. I don't think that anybody could disagree with that. There is no question about the fact that, when Cambodian refugees would come out of these areas [of combat] when they could, the people were "voting with their feet." There was absolutely no question of this. Nobody wanted to live under communist control. The Cambodians were fighting, and all they wanted from us was our material support.

I think we were unable to continue that material support because of the scandals that went on. If you change the place names and the names of the people, it could have been the situation in nationalist China before the communist takeover. It was the same kind of thing. There were military units with "phantom" payrolls. They'd send a brigade out on an operation, but, in fact, it was only a battalion. If you were sensible, you never went out with the Cambodian Army on anything much less than a multi-brigade operation, to make sure that there were enough people to protect you. The Cambodian Army would sell POL [petroleum and other lubricants] and ammunition to the communists-anything was fair game to them.

Q: How did it look when you were on the Cambodian desk in Washington? Were you getting reports that business was pretty much as usual in Cambodia?

ANTIPPAS: Yes. By that time the Nixon administration and the American Embassy were becoming increasingly unwilling to communicate any "bad news." They were really afflicted with "clientitis." I was getting letters from my friends in the Political Section in Phnom Penh which contrasted with the official cables being sent to the Department, as I mentioned before.

Q: What kind of letters were these?

ANTIPPAS: My friends in the Embassy would write letters to me and tell me their views on what was happening. When people would come back to Washington on leave, they would come in and visit and tell me. So I think that I had a pretty good insight into what was happening, over and above the official telegrams from the Embassy.

Q: For the historian, what happens to those "private" letters?

ANTIPPAS: They were written to me, personally, so they are probably squirreled away in my own files.

Q: The normal source of information for historians is the flow of telegrams.

ANTIPPAS: And the telegrams go all over the government.

Q: And then you have, particularly in controversial places, a certain number of letters from officers who want to keep the desk informed. So there's a different type of reporting which will...

ANTIPPAS: Will never show up...

Q: On the historical radar.

ANTIPPAS: One of my responsibilities was to make sure that I didn't expose these guys who wrote to me. They were getting into enough trouble as it was, "bucking the system" inside the Embassy. The "system" involved Ambassador Coby Swank being told what to do by the [U. S.] military. I think I've mentioned this before. Coby probably wasn't the right choice to be the Ambassador there. He was a decent individual and as competent an officer as there is. We really needed a person as strong minded as Tom Enders, except that Tom Enders was going to do what Henry Kissinger wanted, because he had been one of Kissinger's students [at Harvard] and had his own agenda as well. It was very clear that the Nixon administration really didn't want to "rock the boat."

Q: Well, you'd be sitting in meetings in the Department and people would be talking about where Cambodia was going. By that time a significant number of people in the Foreign Service-certainly in the Department of State-had served at one time or another in one of the three Indochina countries. You weren't talking to a bunch of "starry-eyed" people.

ANTIPPAS: No, no.

Q: Well, what was their attitude?

ANTIPPAS: Actually, it was very negative. I worked under several Assistant Secretaries of State. Marshall Green went off to be Ambassador to Australia after that. He was replaced by G. McMurtrie Godley, who had been in the Congo and then in Laos during the "secret war." He was a wonderful guy. I had known him slightly in Africa. I was in the Central African Republic when he was in the [former Belgian] Congo, during the crisis over the seizure of some of our people in Stanleyville. I had visited him in Vientiane in 1969, when we were in Saigon. He became Assistant Secretary.

Then he was replaced by Phil Habib in 1974. Phil, of course, as I think I mentioned before when I described how the Political Section in Saigon operated, was one of those people who liked controversy and liked to be challenged. He liked to challenge his officers and was really quite a breath of fresh air in the system. As I look back on it now, I really felt quite intimidated by the negativism of almost all of the country desk officers in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. At our staff meetings we would have a roomful of country desk officers...

Q: When you say "negative," what do you mean?

ANTIPPAS: Well, they were almost all against our policy in Indochina. They wanted to "cut our losses" and get the hell out of Indochina. That was basically it. They were dealing with their "clients" [in East Asia] and they could see the impact that our Indochina policy was having on our policies toward those [other] countries, everywhere from Australia to Japan. This really came across very clearly. Should I then get up and make a speech to my colleagues about how we should help "our little brown brothers" in Cambodia? I would be laughed out of the room. Everyone knew where I stood, anyhow.

The biggest chore that I had in 1973-1975 was the credentials fight for Lon Nol's government at the UN. This involved our effort to save the seat of the Khmer Republic from the challenge of Sihanouk and his communist associates in the so-called "GRUNK" [Gouvernement Royal Unifie Khmer], the Royal Unified Khmer Government. The political arm of this government was called the "FUNK" [Front Unifie Khmer], the Khmer United Front. So it [Sihanouk's faction] was sometimes referred to as the "GRUNK/FUNK." They were our opponents. My job for several years was to beat the drum and make sure that every one of our Embassies abroad went to their host government foreign ministries and urged them to vote for "our side." This didn't make me very popular in the Department of State at all. Not only was I not popular in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs but in the whole building. I would go around and beat the drum all over the building-"roller skating" up and down the corridors and visiting every desk. I was "thrown out" of the best desks in the Department.

Q: Let's go back to these meetings with Habib and the desk officers. The other people were "negative" as all get out. How did you feel about it? You had a "client." This was your job.

ANTIPPAS: I had a very personal feeling about it. I knew these Cambodians.

Q: What was your personal feeling?

ANTIPPAS: My personal feeling was a certain loyalty to the Cambodians. I knew them, "warts and all," because I had followed this problem from the vantage point of Vietnam in the late 1960's. A number of our so-called "allies" in Cambodia had been, in effect, on the communist payroll before the Cambodian Army overthrew Sihanouk. However, as I saw it, the point was that the Cambodian people didn't want to be communists. They were fighting. They didn't ask for direct American combat assistance. You could argue that the very fact that we had a policy which got us involved in Vietnam dragged the Cambodians into the struggle as well. So I felt that we had a certain responsibility for what was going on there. Obviously, you couldn't carry that too far. In the first instance it was very much in our interest to keep them fighting as long as possible, because that helped us in the negotiating stance [on Vietnam in Paris]. Secondly, it helped us to get our troops out of Vietnam.

To me that was the critical consideration. I'll never forget the fact that the last American killed in Vietnam, an American Army colonel, was hit by a rocket fired from Cambodia by the Vietnamese, during the Easter offensive of 1972. He was the last actual combat casualty.

I knew some of these Cambodians and I played a certain role in getting some of them to work for us. In 1974, I think, I played a key role in convincing the then [Cambodian] Foreign Minister to take the job of Prime Minister. I wrote the paper that was used by Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush in his meeting with this individual, asking him to take on the job. He was a good man, very active, very intelligent. In fact, he was killed by the Khmer Rouges at the very end because he did not manage to escape from Phnom Penh.

I remember meeting him at the Diplomatic entrance of the Department in Washington. He had been in New York and came down from the UN. It may have been March, 1974, or about that time-I would have to look up my notes to see. He came down to Washington for a meeting with Deputy Secretary Rush. I had written the briefing memorandum for the Deputy Secretary, giving him the arguments why this guy should take the position of Prime Minister. The Minister was well regarded by the Embassy in Phnom Penh. He had served as Minister of Information as well as Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank in Manila. He knew I had supported his appointment as Prime Minister. He said, "I'll take the job of Prime Minister if you will stay on the desk and protect our interests." He knew very well how Um Sim and I had operated and the role I had played in getting Um Sim appointed. I told him that I would stay the extra year. My initial assignment on the desk had been for two years. In point of fact, in personal terms, I probably should have moved on at that time, instead of being there for the "crash" [of our Cambodian policy].

I knew these people personally and felt a certain responsibility toward them and knew-better than most people-the actual conditions on the ground.

Q: What was the general feeling, say, within the "Indochina complex" in Washington about Cambodia?

ANTIPPAS: For many in the liberal camp "Cambodia was a dirty word. It was felt in many quarters that it was, to use William Shawcross's terms, "a sideshow". That was a very apt name for it. Nobody really knew that much about it. I think that most people saw Cambodia as one of those things to be used. It was the sort of thing that you had to do to try to protect our flanks in Vietnam. If we could get a decent, negotiated settlement in Vietnam, maybe that would be all right for the Cambodians as well. I don't think that anybody really lost much sleep about Cambodia in the Washington community, quite frankly. Generally, they didn't think that the Cambodians were very great fighters and that we were using up a lot of our credibility by supporting them. Cambodia was a pretty poor "client" to be representing.

I may have told you that when Secretary of State Rogers left the Department in 1973, to be replaced by Henry Kissinger, the custom was to allocate a time when anyone who wanted to see him could do so, shake his hand, and say goodbye. Practically the whole building walked up and shook his hand. As I passed through, since I had briefed him a couple of times, he did sort of recognized my face. I introduced myself and said, "Sir, I'm the first mate on the 'Titanic.'" He laughed at that. He knew exactly what I was talking about. That's kind of the way I felt. We were really on a collision course, and our policy probably wasn't going to be successful.

But I felt so proud of the Cambodians. They were so central to our policy. The whole debate over the War Powers Act turned on the unauthorized bombing of Cambodia in 1972-1973. This debate was going on about the time I made that trip with Al Haig. I'll never forget the feeling that we all had in the Summer of 1973 when U. S. Air Force participation in Cambodia was "turned off." They made the last strafing runs across the skies of Cambodia. We all held our breath and felt that our "clients" were going to go down the drain, because now they had no protection. A major offensive took place in the provincial capital of Kampong Cham, on the Mekong River. There was one hell of a fight up there. Amazingly enough, the Cambodians stood their ground and beat off the Vietnamese offensive. The Khmer Rouges were in contact with the Cambodian Army, but Kampong Cham was so close to the Vietnamese controlled, rubber plantation "sanctuaries" that the Vietnamese communists were very much involved in that fight. But the Cambodians survived. I was surprised but so proud of them. I used to say to people, "How can we abandon these people when they're fighting like hell?"

I became too emotionally involved. I still am, to this day. I still feel very "uptight" about it, when I think about it.

Q: How did we view Sihanouk? At the time you were on the Cambodian desk, Sihanouk was out of power. He was wandering around the world and was in Beijing quite a bit.

ANTIPPAS: And in Pyongyang.

Q: Were you following what he did?

ANTIPPAS: Yes. Of course, he became the "hand maiden" of the Khmer Rouges.

Q: At that time?

ANTIPPAS: Oh, yes, very much so. He made a very well publicized trip to the "liberated zone" [i. e., Khmer Rouge controlled zone] of Cambodia.

Q: Wearing one of those little scarves [which the Khmer Rouges wear]?

ANTIPPAS: Exactly, and with several of the former "three ghosts." There was a great debate about three of the former Khmer Rouge leaders during the 1960's. These were not the people who had gone to North Vietnam in 1954, but local Khmer Rouge leaders: Khieu Samphan, Hu Yun, Hu Nim The only survivor was Khieu Samphan who is the putative head of the Khmer Rouges, who is still alive. I obtained a copy of Doctoral thesis from the University of Paris which was critical of French colonial policy and became the theoretical basis of the Khmer Rouges policy of returning Cambodian society to the earth or the "year zero".Anyway, there was a great debate about whether the three ghosts had been eliminated by Sihanouk in the mid 1960's. What happened was that they simply went into the bush and disappeared. They resurfaced after 1970. But there were many of us who didn't believe that they were alive and that these were impostors who were created simply to develop popular support. They had been popular in the National Assembly. They were National Assembly members-communist and Marxist members of the National Assembly who had really been pains in the neck to Sihanouk and Lon Nol in that time period.

It turned out that they, in fact, were alive. I spent a lot of time in Cambodia going around and asking people, "Do you recognize this picture?" We would get these pictures from communist sources. We would also tape their radio broadcasts that the FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service] would pick up. I would go around asking people who had known them and ask them, "Are these the voices of these same people?" I even remember asking, "Do you recognize the shape of this guy's ears?" It was kind of detective work. Anyway, it turned out that they were real.

As I said before, Sihanouk made a very well publicized trip with them in the 1973-1974 time frame. It was clear that he was so angry at those people such as Lon Nol who had betrayed him and thrown him out of office that he was determined to bring them down, whatever the cost. He no doubt felt that he would be able to control events after that. I am not sure if that, in fact, is accurate. I think that he was as much a prisoner of the communists as anybody was. In fact, the communists killed off a number of members of his family when they took power. We know that now. Sihanouk was basically held under what amounted to "house arrest" for several years by the Khmer Rouges after they took power. But there's no question that Sihanouk was very valuable to FUNK and GRUNK and to the communist cause generally. I used to say that he was worth four communist divisions to them because he played their game. People in the Non-Aligned Movement thought that he was a great hero and couldn't be wrong.

But your question was, "What did we think?" I know what I thought and I know what many people in the State Department thought. I'm not sure what the Nixon administration thought-how the NSC viewed him...

Q: Were any efforts made to contact him?

ANTIPPAS: I suspect that there were, but I don't think that he was his own master. Any efforts that we made to talk to the Khmer Rouges were just ignored. They just "would not play ball."

Q: Let's talk about the Khmer Rouges during the time that you were on the Cambodian desk. You were on the desk when the Vietnamese pulled out of Cambodia to "do their own thing" in Vietnam.

ANTIPPAS: Right.

Q: What was the feeling at that time about the Khmer Rouges?

ANTIPPAS: Well, I think there was surprise in the intelligence community at the fact that they were able to field a major force. I don't think that anybody had really appreciated the fact that the Vietnamese had these Cambodian cadres in North Vietnam during all of those years-15 years or whatever it was. Then the Vietnamese sent them back to Cambodia and corralled themselves a peasant army. Obviously, these troops were "dragooned" or conscripted into the Khmer Rouge army. They gave a fairly good account of themselves, from the very beginning, except in the face of our air power.

I told you of the sinking feeling that I had after I interviewed several of those Khmer Rouge "returnees." They were middle level cadres. I was shocked to find out the quality of the training which they had received. I said to myself, "We're really in trouble, because we don't have anything like that and we won't get them under the combat situation we were in."

The only thing that we had anywhere near that was the "Mike Force" people, the Khmer Krom from South Vietnam. They were basically Cambodians, but they were from South Vietnam, so their attitude was slightly different. Of course, the casualties which they incurred were very heavy during the first couple of years. Khmer Rouge casualties were also very heavy. I am sure that the great majority of the 5,000 cadres who returned to Cambodia from North Vietnam were killed off.

Q: When the Khmer Rouges did march into Phnom Penh, I heard stories about how young they were.

ANTIPPAS: Oh, yes. We saw many pictures of those troops. They were young people. Their commanders were well trained and were definitely in charge. There is no question about it. They very definitely had their agenda.

Q: Were you picking up stories or reports about how the Khmer Rouges were acting?

ANTIPPAS: Oh, yes.

Q: In the villages...

ANTIPPAS: And in the "liberated zones."

Q: We're talking about the time up to the fall of Phnom Penh.

ANTIPPAS: Yes, we're talking about 1973-1974. On a number of occasions the Khmer Rouges would take forces away from areas that they had captured. They massed their forces for an offensive against Phnom Penh, for example. There were several offensives against Phnom Penh which were beaten back. To do that, they would take troops away from certain areas. When these troops would get down below a certain level, the local people would "take off" and would go to a provincial capital still held by the "friendlies," even though the "friendlies" couldn't protect them. It was very clear how those people felt, in the stories they were telling about what was happening out there.

I think that we had a very clear view, long before the fall of Cambodia, of what was going to happen, in general. However, I don't think that anybody predicted the ferocity [which they displayed]. You knew that Cambodian Army officers would suffer, maybe the bureaucrats, and maybe the teachers. Perhaps they would all get "zinged," because that's what the communists do. However, the Khmer Rouges took it out on anybody who could read. They killed anybody that wore eyeglasses. People like these were taken out and killed, because anybody that could read was obviously a "threat" to them.

Q: Were you getting this from the Khmer Rouge propaganda? When you look at this situation, the Khmer Rouges were the most vicious and, you might say, ideologically as far to the "Left" as you would want. None of the other communist troops did this-the Vietnamese...

ANTIPPAS: I think that the North Koreans did a little of this.

Q: A little of this, but not really to this extent. Yet you think of the Cambodians as being a relatively relaxed people.

ANTIPPAS: Absolutely. We were shocked.

Q: Looking at this, at the time or afterwards, did you have any feeling about why?

ANTIPPAS: I think that we kind of "kidded" ourselves into thinking that these were very nice little brown people who were very "laid back," as you pointed out. In fact, the Cambodians had a reputation of being very tough people. They were used by the French as police in Indochina. The French Empire, the French colonial administration, used Vietnamese as bureaucrats in all three states of Indochina [Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia]. They used Cambodians as the police, because the Cambodians did what they were told and they were "tough."

I had this theory that I used to put forward of the three "races"-the Lao, the Vietnamese, and the Cambodians. The Cambodians were the best fed of the three. Their diet was the best. They ate more meat than any of the others, since they belonged to a cattle-owning society. They had a lot of cattle. Not that this made them necessarily bloodthirsty, but I think that there is some relationship between people who slaughter cattle and who can be "tough." In fact, the means of execution used by the Khmer Rouges resembled how you slaughter cattle-"pole-axing," cutting throats, and things like that. So I had this theory that the Cambodians weren't as "blasï¿½" as we used to think and their pre war tourist based propaganda had us believe. In fact, they had a very "tough" background. Cambodian troops had fought in World War I in the French Army and gave a fairly good accounting of themselves. This is not well known, but they did. They did what they were told, they were well disciplined when they were trained, and they had this dietary preference.

One of the things that really upset me in 1979, when I was put on a task force for famine relief in Cambodia, was to think that there could be any famine in a place like Cambodia, given its well known attributes in terms of fish, rice, and cattle. You really have to work hard to starve a country like Cambodia-the size of Indiana or Missouri. It's not that big a country. The fact that people were starving to death meant that, obviously, somebody was working hard to achieve that.

Q: How about Pol Pot? Did we have any feel about him? Was he just a name?

ANTIPPAS: I forget what his real name is. He was a student in Paris. One of my jobs was to try and keep track of all of these people and learn about them. One of the things I accomplished was that I was one of the first people to get a copy of the doctoral thesis of one of these three "ghosts," the man who is now the key Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan.He was one of a number of Cambodians who went to Paris in the 1940's and 1950's and became communists. The fact is that the French Left probably created more home grown communists in their former colonial areas than any place else. We have a lot of data on the names of Cambodian students in France who became communists or were co-opted by the French Left. Pol Pot was one of these students. I'm told that he was an electronics student, who failed his technical studies. He returned to Cambodia an embittered man. Having been co-opted by the communists, he went to work for the local resistance to the French colonial system.

Not everyone admired Sihanouk as an administrator. Sihanouk really acted like royalty. People tell stories about Sihanouk the first time he came to the United States, which I think was in 1959, under the Eisenhower administration. He landed on the West Coast. He was received there by the Under Secretary of State. Christian Herter was the Secretary of State at the time. I forgot who the Under Secretary was it may have been Douglas Dillon. I remember reading a report of this first meeting with Sihanouk and how absolutely amazed this Under Secretary was at the way Sihanouk's entourage treated him. No one in his entourage would walk up to him. They would literally "crawl" up to him, on all fours, not daring even to look at him. It was kind of the way Japanese Emperor Hirohito was treated before World War II. People were not even allowed to look at him. Sihanouk had been king for 30 years when he was thrown out. He'd been around a long time. You kind of get used to it. When you become king at the age of 17, you learn a certain way of behaving. So I think that the Cambodian communists really didn't like him because he treated them as royalty did in the middle ages. They had their axes to grind, too. They viewed him as a hand maiden of the French and the colonial powers. Of course, the communists wanted to change all that.

Q: How did the whole thing "play out?" Can you talk about the "end game," from your perspective?

ANTIPPAS: Well, the major problem was continuing the supply of rice and ammunition to the Cambodians. We had "saved" the seat of the Cambodian Government at the UN, so they still had some political power. Our aid program had been cut back dramatically. Those people in Congress who were against the whole effort in Vietnam and Cambodia took steps to cut off even the small amount of military assistance that we were giving them. Toward the end [in 1975] supplies had to be flown in, because the Mekong River was no longer safe for navigation. Most of the heavy stuff had been brought up the Mekong River from Vietnam, but the supply line was interdicted in a number of places.

I think that in the late winter of 1974 or early spring of 1975, the Vietnamese or the Cambodians figured that aid was going to be cut off. I recall that Ambassador John Gunther Dean testified before Congress after the end in Cambodia-and I accompanied him up to the Hill to talk to the East Asian subcommittee chaired then by Congressman Lee Hamilton. Hamilton asked Dean if he thought Congress was at fault for the loss of Cambodia. Dean was very cagey and dodged that bullet but answered by saying that, "Nobody fights to the last cartridge."

I think that the Cambodians just gave up hope.

I can't speak directly to Vietnam, since I wasn't really dealing with the issue. In Cambodia the "siege areas" tightened. The Khmer Rouges were closing in on several provincial capitals, which the "friendlies" still held. I think that when they got the message that there would be no more assistance and we started pulling our advisers and observers out of local areas, the Cambodians understood that they were being left on their own.

During the third week of April when the Embassy in Phnom Penh was actually evacuated, we thought that we might have to shoot our way out. I say, "We." Actually, I was observing all of this from the vantage point of Washington. The feeling was that the Cambodian Government forces might, in fact, impede the evacuation of the Embassy. There was some apprehension about what would happen. However, the Cambodians were almost lackadaisical about it. Our people just left. In fact, the Cambodian military guarded the Embassy building until the very end-not allowing anybody in. The interesting phenomenon was in the days between our pullout and the Khmer Rouge takeover, almost the whole cabinet had refused evacuation, I was told there was a euphoria among cabinet members in that they felt that finally they were their own masters. All those leaders who remained behind were executed immediately. Sisowath Sirik Matak, the former Deputy Prime Minister, who refused evacuation and expressed his contempt for America's abandonment in a letter to John Gunther Dean, was hauled out of his refuge at the French Embassy in a garbage truck and killed. Lon Non, who had returned to Cambodia in spite of my efforts to keep him here went out to meet and negotiate with the incoming Khmer Rouges and he was immediately shot by firing squad on the banks of the Mekong River. My friend In Tam was in the Western Provinces and he made it to the Thai border with his whole family in a hail of gunfire. The Thai put him under house arrest and I was unable to see him when I visited Thailand as part of the Refugee Task Force in the Summer of 1975.

Q: Before we get to that point, when did John Gunther Dean go out to Cambodia as Ambassador?

ANTIPPAS: He went out in 1974.

Q: How was he viewed?

ANTIPPAS: He was tough. He was viewed as a very hard liner. He made very strong pitches for assistance and continued support for Cambodia. He was very angry, for example, when I "let" Lon Non leave the U. S. to go back to Cambodia. John was a very strong figure in Phnom Penh. But the Ford Administration literally had no cards to play with. Congress had turned off the water. There was a lot of bitterness about that.

Q: Were you dealing with Congress at all at this time?

ANTIPPAS: Oh, yes. Not directly, of course, since we weren't supposed to be "lobbying." However, we obviously had contact with a variety of people in various Congressional committees. I had a lot of direct contact with Dick Moose and Jim Lowenstein and later Chuck Meissner, who were "investigators" [for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee]. So there was a dialogue of sorts. However, it was very clear that there were elements in Congress that wanted to stop the war, pure and simple. They were tired of having people "kill each other with American weapons." This was kind of a favorite quote at the time. They worked continuously to stop the assistance [to Cambodia and Vietnam]. This was what happened. It happened for Vietnam and it happened for Cambodia. Nothing that anybody could say about the explicit and implicit commitments of the United States for the previous 20 years, would change their view.

Q: What about your colleagues within the Department. What was their reaction toward the end in Indochina? Did they pretty well see the end in sight?

ANTIPPAS: Everybody pretty well saw the handwriting on the wall. The attitude of most of my colleagues-the desk officers for the various countries in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, including even those who had served in Vietnam-was "a pox on all of their houses. Let's just get out of there and end it." The raiding of what little money was available for military assistance to Indochina, where it was obviously going to waste, didn't make any friends for us on other desks in the Department. So there was a lot of bitterness about that. I can sympathize with how those people felt at the time. It was very much of a "down" feeling for anyone working on Indochina at that time. Everyone was pretty depressed.

Q: Were you involved in the decision to pull the Embassy out [of Phnom Penh]?

ANTIPPAS: I observed it. I actually had left the Cambodian desk by the time all of that was playing out. I think that I left the desk around April 1, 1975, and went over to the Bureau of Consular Affairs to be the Administrator's special assistant.

I was only in Consular Affairs for a couple of weeks when the Bureau of East Asian Affairs created the Refugee Task Force. I was actually working on this task force at night when the evacuation of the Embassy took place. After the evacuation took place, the inter-departmental task force was established. It was obviously more than the Bureau of East Asian Affairs could handle. When the evacuation of the Embassy was going on, I was monitoring events up in the Operations Center in the Department. They were telling people that they had to limit the baggage they could take out of Saigon. I remember the Executive Director of the Bureau saying, "Don't let anybody take out any of those bloody ceramic elephants." Most people left everything behind and just took out a suitcase. Not even pets were allowed to be taken out.

During the day I'd be working in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. I remember that Admiral Zumwalt called me one day. I don't know if he was still Chief of Naval Operations or had just retired. He called me to say-this was before we actually closed down the Embassy in Saigon-that he very much wanted to bring the former Vietnamese Chief of Naval Operations, with whom he had worked, out of Vietnam. We were still issuing visas to Vietnamese at the time. So on Zumwalt's behalf I called the guy who had your job as Consul General in Saigon-I can't remember his name.

Q: I forget, too. The Consul General in Saigon.

ANTIPPAS: He subsequently served in Haiti. He had a heart attack, I think, as a consequence. I remember calling this poor guy in the middle of the night, getting him out of bed, and asking him to take care of Zumwalt's "buddy." I guess we did take care of him in terms of issuing him a visa but I think he too decided to remain behind to care for his Father.

It all went down the drain very quickly, I thought. The Consular Section in Saigon stopped issuing visas-stopped letting people into the compound. The end came fast in Vietnam.

Q: Would you care to talk about the refugee situation?

ANTIPPAS: Sure. I was one of the original recruits [on the task force].

Q: You left the Cambodian Desk in April [1975] and went to Consular Affairs.

ANTIPPAS: Tom Recknagel [former chief of the Political Section in Saigon and then in Personnel in the Department] recruited me for the job as Special Assistant to the Administrator of Security and Consular Affairs. He was the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator and about to retire himself. No sooner did I start this job when I was immediately drafted into the East Asia Bureau task force which was set up. I was allowed to work at night so that I could continue to work during the day [in Consular Affairs]. Basically, that task force dealt with the evacuation of both Phnom Penh, Saigon, and other places in Vietnam. After April 25, [1975], when Saigon was evacuated, it was decided that we needed to broaden the scope of our efforts because we would have to deal with all of these refugees who were coming out of Indochina. Ambassador Dean Brown, former Under Secretary of State for Management, who was then the Director of the Middle East Institute, was selected to be in charge of the task force. He pulled together a bunch of people-most of the old Indochina hands, including a number of the people who came out of the Consulates and the Embassy in Saigon. I don't think that anybody from the Embassy in Phnom Penh went to work on the task force. A number of these guys who were evacuated were brought back and were either working in the task force in Washington or were sent out to field operations, where we set up reception centers for the refugees, like Guam, Camp Pendleton, Fort Chaffee, Indiantown Gap and places like that. It was a big operation to try to pull this together and decide what the policy would be.

We had representation from the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service]. The Deputy Commissioner of INS was a member of the task force. The Commissioner of INS was a member but, for operational work, we had his deputy and an assistant commissioner.

After some time the task force was reorganized, and I was put in charge of a unit which dealt with the Vietnamese that didn't make it to U. S. territory or to U. S. bases, such as the Philippines or American ships or Guam. They escaped to Malaysia, Thailand, and other locations. So I headed up a unit of several officers and a secretary that worked with INS in particular to figure out how we were going to get these people into the U. S. and what criteria we would use to select them. Everybody that made it to U.S. territory, in fact, we took, including a number of "Third Country Nationals" who decided that they weren't going back to the Philippines or Korea. They decided that they were refugees, too, and were going to the United States. They refused to be repatriated to their home countries. I think that we actually took some of these guys, because we couldn't forcibly repatriate them. I never understood that. I really never understood how a Korean "Third Country National," who had been working in Vietnam, made it to Guam and was permitted to go to the United States as a refugee.

Q: I guess it was just too complicated [to send him back to his own country].

ANTIPPAS: It was kind of interesting. I made a trip out to Southeast Asia to see some of these locations with an Assistant Commissioner of the INS and one of the senior deputies in the task force. His name escapes me now. He finished up his career as an Ambassador to Haiti, as a matter of fact. He was an old Indochina hand. He had run the computer program for...

Q: Was this McManaway [spelling?]?

ANTIPPAS: Yes. Clay McManaway, this Assistant Commissioner of the INS, and I. We went to Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to talk to the local governments, our Embassies and to get a handle on how many people had made it their shores. That is, the original "wave" of boat people not the subsequent ones after 1977. We got to Kuala Lumpur just after the Japanese "Red Army " terror squad captured one of our consular officers in the Embassy. The consular officer, Bob Stebbins, later became my deputy in Seoul, in fact-an old friend of mine. He had been a courier when I was in Africa. He had the dubious distinction of having the "Red Army Faction" take him as a hostage.

We didn't go to Indonesia. We were trying to find out how big the problem was and what would be the criteria that we would use to decide which of these people we were going to take.

I worked on this task force for about six months. The Administrator of Consular Affairs in the Department began to squawk about where his special assistant was. So I managed to get away from the task force.

Q: Just a question or so on the criteria you used on the task force. Was the idea to pare the numbers down-to get as many of these people into the U. S. as you possibly could?

ANTIPPAS: The fundamental criterion was that if they could make any linkage at all with the United States, we would take them. If they had relatives in the U. S. or had worked for the Americans in some fashion, we would take them. Of course, the numbers of refugees were not that large at that time. I think that in the first few months after the evacuation [of the Embassy in Saigon] total Vietnamese refugees in particular-Cambodians didn't take to boats in any numbers-were only about 12,000 to 13,000. The numbers were really fairly small.

Q: The big problem came later.

ANTIPPAS: Subsequently. After I got to Thailand, the "boat people" started coming out in numbers reminiscent of what's happening in Cuba today. We were trying to handle the refugees in a workmanlike fashion.

Let me say a couple of things about working fairly closely with the Commissioner of the INS. At that time the Commissioner was General Leonard Cushman, the former Commandant of the Marine Corps. He turned out to be a very charming individual and all that. I would go over to his office from time to time to negotiate the acceptance of certain individuals that we wanted to take from these offshore camps [in Southeast Asia]. I would go over to his office and would put these names up to him. He would veto them or accept them, as the case happened to be. He used to say that he was the guy who "taught Antippas how to say No." We had an interesting time. During the first days after the evacuation of our people from Saigon, I accompanied General Chapman to a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee chaired by Senator McClellan of Arkansas. I remember McClellan telling us to order all American ships in the Philippines Straits to clear out because they were like a "neon sign saying welcome". McClellan said he feared a flood of refugees. He was right. The Senator subsequently was further annoyed when we opened one of the reception centers for the refugees at Fort Chaffee. Anyhow, it was quite an interesting learning experience, working directly with General Cushman and his Deputy Commissioner.

At the time my personal feeling was that we "owed" something to an awful lot of people [in the Indochina countries], but I really couldn't agree that we should take everybody. I continued to feel that way all during the entire exercise. Simply deciding to take everybody that wanted to come out [of the Indochina countries] just didn't make sense from the American interest point of view. It certainly did not pay off any debts we owed people because of the fact that we'd been there.

I think that mine was a minority view at the time, because I was one of the few consular officers actually involved in the task force most of the time. To most of the old Indochina hands who were running the task force, the idea was, "Let them all in." They had a kind of personal commitment about that. We'll talk more about that when we discuss my time in Thailand.

Q: You came back to work for the Director of Consular Affairs in the Department. Who was that?

ANTIPPAS: That was Len Walentynowicz, a lawyer from Buffalo, NY, a very decent and intelligent guy. However, he really became sort of a Polish joke in the State Department, both in terms of his sartorial splendor and his use of the English language. I think that he thought he was going to be sitting at the right hand of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. He was rather surprised to find that he only attended the staff meetings of Larry Eagleburger [then Under Secretary of State for Management]. He was liked well enough but was viewed as quite a "tyro" in foreign affairs. He definitely wanted to "do right" by the consular business, in terms of obtaining manpower and "doing the job." I grew to like "Wally" a great deal as an individual. Obviously, he had a lot to learn. Lorry Lawrence was the senior deputy in Consular Affairs by that time. He was Wally's "mentor." Lorry and I used to "car pool" in to the Department from the Bethesda area. We saw a lot of each other and became very good friends during that time.

One of the biggest problems that the Administrator of Consular Affairs had at that time was Frances Knight, who was head of the Passport Office. She was an institution all by herself. No administrator of Consular Affairs ever really solved that problem-until Frances retired. She wouldn't even come to the SCA/CON [Security and Consular Affairs/Consular] staff meetings. She would always send one of her deputies to the staff meetings. I think that this was really a little "much" to say that you could run a bureau like that and not really be in charge of it.

Anyhow, I spent about six months there [as special assistant to the director of Consular Affairs].

Q: And then...

ANTIPPAS: I went from SCA to be chief of the Consular Section in the Embassy in Bangkok, on the recommendation of Lorry Lawrence, who said that I probably ought to "bail out." This was before the 1976 elections. Lorry anticipated that the Republicans were going to lose the elections, and he and I would probably be out "on our ears." Given a Republican administrator in Consular Affairs, it was probably time to move. Lorry Lawrence took the job of Consul General in the Embassy in London. He told me, "The Ambassador has told us that he desperately needs somebody in Bangkok 'to clean up that mess out there.' Why don't you go out and do that?"

Q: You were in Bangkok from when to when?

ANTIPPAS: From the fall of 1976 to 1979. An interesting time to be there.

Q: When you got there, what was the situation that you found?

ANTIPPAS: It was a very grim situation. A Thai civilian government had finally taken over power from the Thai military in 1973. The Prime Minister was Khukrit Pramoj, who was sort of a socialist. Anyway, the Thai government decided that with the end of the Vietnam War there should no longer be an American military presence in Thailand.

So the thousands of military personnel that we had at these air bases in Thailand were told to get out within a very short period of time.

It became a major consular task to document the dependents of U. S. military personnel. Between that job and the problems posed by the refugees, this created some difficulty. The refugee problem was not as serious as it later became. In fact, the Consular Section was really short-staffed, given the work that they had. The Consular Section was a "zoo." It was really in bad shape. The chief of the Consular Section at the time was someone you know.

Q: Who was it?

ANTIPPAS: Margaret Barnhart, an old colleague. We had worked together in Japan. She was in the Embassy in Tokyo when I was in the Consulate in Kobe. She was in over her head. She was so busy that she literally closed her door.

She would go into her office, close the door, and sit at her desk. She didn't know what the hell was going on. She told the senior local just to keep his eye on the Americans working in the Consular Section. It later turned out that the senior local was one of the most corrupt people in the Consular Section. Talk about "putting a fox in the hen coop." The junior officers threatened to initiate a grievance case if Barnhart wasn't pulled out. So I was given the job to replace her and try to shape the place up. I have to say that I think that I did a good job in a rather short time.

Charley Whitehouse was the Ambassador at that time. The DCM [in the fall of 1976] was John R. Burke. He had been Country Director for the Vietnam Working Group when we were in Saigon. He was later Ambassador to Guyana. We were old friends. There were a lot of old buddies there. I don't think that they ever thought of me as a consular officer. They had always known me as a political officer.

Anyway, I developed a plan to reorganize the Consular Section and what I needed in terms of equipment to shape up the section, including some additional people. But one of the problems that the Consular Section had was that the previous Ambassador, William Kintner, was so annoyed at seeing long lines of visa applicants around the Embassy that he ordered the Administrative Counselor to "get rid" of the Consular Section. So they moved the Consular Section down to the old Embassy compound, a mile away on Sathorn Road. The old Embassy compound had been taken over by USIS [United States Information Service]. There was an old, wooden building-almost 100 years old-that had been the Embassy Medical Unit. It was so termite-ridden that if you walked up to the second floor to look at the boxes of documents we had up there, the whole building would shake. The GSO [General Services Officer] wouldn't let us put any safes up there because they would come crashing through the ceiling.

Anyway, the GSO had done a "paint up, fix up" job on this old building, had put carpeting down, and all of that. The Section didn't look all of that bad, but the fact is that we were a mile away from the main Embassy building down a one-way street. Anyway, it was a busy place.

I made a number of recommendations on how we could turn the situation around and what I needed to do this. Ambassador Whitehouse gave me pretty much a free hand and said to go ahead and do it. I think that I turned the situation around. The Consular Section shaped up, and we performed fairly well after that. Of course, in addition to the refugee problem, we had a constant battle with narcotics and visa fraud. There was a major problem with the security of the Thai passports. The Thai passport was so easily "photo substituted" that it was laughable.

Q: You could remove the photo and substitute another for it.

ANTIPPAS: You issue a visa to a legitimate person, the passport is taken, and you put somebody else's photograph in it. The American immigration officers had no idea what a Thai name means anyway-whether male or female. It was a major problem. We got to the point where we didn't know who the hell we were issuing a visa to. It got so bad that I actually restricted the number of visa applicants to 50 a day, which created a real problem. People were lining up at 4:00 AM to get into the Visa Unit. But I said, "We have to check everybody to whom we're going to issue a visa."

I worked very closely with DEA on this problem to try to get a line on the travel agents who were obviously facilitating this [the problem of passport substitution].

Q: DEA is...

ANTIPPAS: The [U. S.] Drug Enforcement Administration. They had a regional office in Bangkok. I worked very closely with DEA in trying to solve the problem, since many of these fraudulent visas were being used by drug couriers to get into the United States.

I managed to accomplish two things in that area. It was 1977 before I really began to zero in on the problem. Lorry Lawrence had left London and gone back to the Department to become the Director of the Passport Office, just after Francis Knight retired. He very much wanted the job of Administrator of Consular Affairs. That was his great aim in life. He told me, "If I get to be Administrator, I'll make you my Deputy." He became Director of the Passport Office.

I came back for a conference in Washington on prisoner problems overseas. By that time we had about 25 Americans in jail in Thailand for drug smuggling. I told Lorry, "I could use some help in convincing the Thai Passport Office to make a better product, to create a more secure passport." We had found out that the "crooks" were actually going into the passport office at night to do the photo substitution. The Thai Passport Office put a sheet of plastic laminate over the photo, but that was almost useless as a process, because you could peel the plastic off and paste on the photo you wanted to substitute. Remember, they used to put a grommet through the photo. That provided absolutely no security at all.

Lorry Lawrence was very good. He sent one of his office directors-one of his unit chiefs-for TDY [Temporary Duty] at no cost to the Embassy to do a study of the Thai Passport Office and make recommendations on how they could reorganize their procedures. We had this recommendation translated into Thai, and the Ambassador gave it to the Thai Foreign Minister with suggestions on how he could improve the quality of the Thai passports. Of course, I had few expectations that the Thai were ever going to do anything to "shape up."

Actually, I came up with another scheme, which really solved the problem of "photo substitution." Do you have time to talk about that?

Q: Yes.

ANTIPPAS: I became almost desperate about this problem of "photo substitution" and concern about whom we were giving these visas to. The problem was underscored, at this time when I was sent back to Los Angeles to testify in Federal Court on the conviction of a Thai drug courier who had been arrested, carrying one of these passports with a visa which had been issued to somebody else.

One of the few strong points we had to work with in Thailand at that time was the fact that the Thai Government, because of their concern about communists, had created an ID [Identity Card] program in Thailand-much as we had done in Vietnam. Every Thai citizen was issued a laminated Identity Card which was secure. Because it was an anti-communist tool, nobody dared to fool with it. If you fooled with a Thai ID card, they really "lowered the boom" on you. They would let you do anything you wanted to get an American visa. However, if you started fooling around with Thai internal security, they were ruthless about it. So I used to tell my staff in the Consular Section that when they gave a passport back to an applicant with an American visa in it, make the person show you his Thai ID card. We would at least know that we had given the right passport back to the right person.

After we'd done that for a bit, I had a brain wave and said, "Listen, why don't we do this? Xerox the Thai ID card." The ID card was written in Thai which looks to most Americans like squiggles. But the photo was there, so you knew who it was. Even if you couldn't read it, you could tell who was the bearer of the ID card. I said, "Xerox the Thai ID card, paste it on the back of our visa form, and attach it, using the U. S. passport 'legend' machine. If they try to remove it, it will destroy the page." American immigration officials wouldn't even have to look at the Thai passport identity pages. U.S. Immigration needed only to look at the U. S. visa stamp and the xerox of the Thai ID attached to it. This cut the "bad guys" out of the business altogether within a week.

Q: OK, this is Tape 5, Side A, of the interview with Andy Antippas. How about the "boat people" [from Indochina]?

ANTIPPAS: They started coming out, if I recall correctly, early in 1977. I remember when the first boats started showing up on the coast of Thailand. They started building up in camps established under Thai Government authority along the shore of the Kra Isthmus facing the Gulf of Siam. The first reaction of the Ambassador was to put me in charge of the refugee program. In fact, we were creating a refugee program.

Of course, I was a good soldier and was going to do what I was told. However, I said that I really didn't think that I could do both jobs. I couldn't run a very busy, fraud-ridden Consular Section, with all of the problems we had on that, and try to run a refugee section, unless he gave me a helicopter to ride around in. Just getting around Bangkok was a major task with the constant traffic jams. Traffic was just awful. Since a lot of the refugee work meant direct contact with the Thai in the Ministry of the Interior, you almost had to camp out at the Ministry to deal with this. I told the Ambassador that I really didn't think that I could do it. We needed more people. This was a constant cry of mine in those days: "We need more help if we are going to do the job."

Over time the Embassy built up a refugee staff. Lionel Rosenblatt came in to run that effort. I was kind of concerned about that. Not everyone was convinced that Lionel could handle the job, though he ultimately did very well.

Meanwhile, I had decided that I would become my own "prisoner" man. I convinced the chief of the Thai prison system to consolidate all of the American prisoners into the penitentiary in Bangkok, which made it easier for me to visit them. You may recall that, at that time, there was a lot of pressure in Congress to do more for American prisoners held in foreign jails, because of the scandals in Latin America.

Q: Particularly in Mexico.

ANTIPPAS: So this was "take care of a prisoner week." We really didn't have enough people to make weekly visits to the prisoners, so I decided that I would handle this activity myself. I felt that I could get more done, being more senior. I really didn't have time to fool around with the refugee program on top of that.

As it turned out, even though I didn't deal with the refugee program, I ended up creating the "orderly departure" program for Vietnam. After 1976 we in the Consular Section of the Embassy in Bangkok became the recipients of the immigration petitions being filed by Vietnamese in the United States who were obtaining resident or citizenship status and were then able to petition for the admission into the United States of relatives left behind in Vietnam. Since these petitions had to be sent somewhere, the INS started sending them to the Embassy in Bangkok. I set up files on these Vietnamese. In fact, I became the Consular Section for Saigon in Bangkok. It wasn't really a burden for the first couple of years, because there simply wasn't much more to be done than setting up folders and filing them. There was no real action to be taken, since we couldn't see or communicate with the persons concerned.

Then the communist authorities in Vietnam, for their own reasons, started letting people out legitimately, on Air France aircraft. To deal with this development, we started up the "orderly departure" program, with the approval of the Department, which was hoped would be an alternative to people coming out of Vietnam on boats. The argument was that if you could get out of Vietnam as an immigrant to the U. S., you wouldn't need to take the dangerous trip to Thailand by water, with the perils of the sea, Thai pirates, and all the rest of it.

By the time I left Thailand in 1979, there were 5,000 cases on file under the "orderly departure" program-all being managed by my immigrant visa officer. I only had one officer to deal with this whole problem. This was before we were permitted to have people in Saigon to process these applicants. The way it worked was that petitions were approved, and the Vietnamese were allowing them to leave. The Office of the UNHCR, the UN High Commission for Refugees, in Vietnam would take our list of names of people with approved petitions and contact the Vietnamese communist authorities. These people would be allowed to get on aircraft and come to Bangkok, where we would then issue them immigrant visas.

The arrangement I had was that I would go to the Thai Immigration Office. I would tell the chief of that office that, for example, "The 40 people on this list are coming out of Vietnam next week. We need your permission for them to stay in Bangkok for two weeks, in a hotel near the American Embassy. We'll process them, and I guarantee you that they will all leave Thailand." So it was on my signature that these people were allowed to come to Thailand to get out of Vietnam and be processed. Of course, I had no control over the U. S. visa process itself. If it turned out that there were medical or other reasons to refuse to issue U. S. visas to these people, there was nothing we could do about it. But that's how the Department wanted it, and that's how it was done. It became such a burden after a while that it was putting a tremendous strain on our ability to handle the visa caseload in Thailand for Thai applicants.

I started complaining to the Consular Affairs Bureau, saying, "Hey, my officers are here to work on Thailand, not Vietnam. I need help." As I was a graduate of the system, I knew all of the buttons to push and the telephone calls to make. It was to no avail. I squawked mightily to the Executive Director of the Consular Affairs Bureau.

Finally, as I came toward the end of my tour of duty in Bangkok, I was increasingly "fed up" with the fact that I was being ignored. The system in the Department of State was placing this terrible burden on us, this non-immigrant visa workload, plus about 2,000 immigrant visas a year. This was not a lot, but it kept one officer pretty busy. But we were getting 20-50 Vietnamese every two weeks. This became a full time job. We had to process them and get them out. I was committed to the Thai Immigration Office to get these people out of Thailand.

Finally, I told the UNHCR representatives that I wouldn't sign any more letters. I said that I would not give them any more letters to give to the Thai Immigration Office that say that I "guarantee" these people. In effect, I stopped the UNHCR effort to bring out Vietnamese. That really raised a stink. That happened in the summer of 1979, about the time that I was leaving. I didn't plan it that way. It's just the way it worked out.

There were two issues. One was the scandal that broke out. The Ambassador, Mort Abramowitz, called me up to his office about two weeks before I was due to leave Bangkok. The Regional Director of the DEA was sitting in his office. Mort said, "So and So has told me that So and So, the former chief of your Visa Unit in Bangkok (This individual had left the post in 1978.) made a million dollars selling student visas and was 'planking' the male students."

Q: "Planking" the male students?

ANTIPPAS: He was allegedly a homosexual and was sodomizing the male students. I said, "What!!!" I was so shocked that it stunned me to hear that accusation. Mort said that this was from a DEA informant. I said, "Well, the guy left a year ago, and it's a little late for me to do anything about it. We can't set him up and find out if this is really true."

I'd gone into this job in Bangkok, aware that the problem of fraud was endemic there. One of the problems which had faced Peg Barnhart [my predecessor] and which had overwhelmed her was that she believed anything that anybody said to her. I had decided that this is how you can really screw yourself up in this kind of a job, if you do that. I felt that I had to defend the Americans in the Consular Section in particular. Maybe not so much as far as the local employees were concerned. As far as the Americans were concerned, unless somebody could show me some proof, I was going to ignore allegations of American corruption.

Q: Well, it's endemic in this situation. I was Consul General in Seoul, and the same allegations were made. You're very aware of fraud. However, at the same time, this was a problem in this kind of society. You took what steps you could.

ANTIPPAS: The oldest story in the book is the visa broker who says, "I need an extra thousand dollars for the Consul General."

Q: Absolutely. What else? The oldest story in the book.

ANTIPPAS: Anybody who's been in this business for any length of time knew that. So I said that, as far as my personal philosophy was concerned, I keep my ears and my door open. I wasn't going to do what Peg Barnhart did, which was close the door. Until somebody can demonstrate to me that he has some actual evidence or a sworn statement, I'm going to ignore all that and let people do their job. I'll do things on a very professional basis.

The individual officer charged was, in fact, a very tough consular and visa officer. He had a "bad" reputation for being tough, even mean. In fact, the head of USIS [United States Information Service] in Bangkok at the time [Jim McGinley], a very senior USIS officer [He had been the equivalent of an Assistant Secretary of State in USIA in Washington.], said to me, "I've had one public relations problem in this country, and that's your deputy." So I thought, "He must be doing his job." He had done one hell of a job, given the situation that I've just described to you.

It was in that kind of context that I said, "What???" Anyway, I took it as a kind of personal vote of confidence that Ambassador Abramowitz had told me all this. That was in 1979. In 1989 I would have been strung up by the thumbs by the Inspector General as probably being part and parcel of any "scam" that was going on! At the same time I was outraged that this allegation might have been true, because a lot of things and recollections then started falling into place.

I knew that this individual, for example, didn't particularly like women. Bangkok is a bachelor's heaven. You might want to die and go to Bangkok.

Q: I came to Bangkok for a consular conference. I saw things that I had never imagined.

ANTIPPAS: This was what the Vietnam War was all about, in case you were wondering. It was to save Bangkok. [Laughter]

I had a good time there. I know that this guy didn't have any girlfriends. So little things like that sort of fell into place. We all know about the guy who can be very tough as a visa officer and, at the same time, is doing all kinds of things out the back door. Anything is possible, given human nature.

So I delayed my departure from Bangkok for two weeks to initiate the investigation, working closely with the Embassy Security Officer. In those days we really worked together. We weren't viewed as "enemies," which is the system now, where everybody is suspect.

I started by interrogating my Thai staff. I'll never forget the reaction I got from my Thai secretary. I had an American and a Thai secretary. I said to my Thai secretary, "Vorapon, you knew this guy very well." I was very blunt about what I was looking for. I said, "You knew this guy very well, and I know that you people didn't like him. I know that very few people liked him. Why didn't you come to me? You know that I tried to do a lot to improve the conditions at work [in the Consular Section]." I had arranged to have an air conditioned bus assigned to the Consulate to take people to the Embassy for lunch. I had a shelter built outside so that people wouldn't have to stand in the rain waiting for the American staff to come and open up the office. I did lots of little things like that to try to improve working conditions. I worked hard to get people promotions, money, and all the rest. I said, "How come you didn't come to me and tell me what you suspected?" She said, "Oh, Mr. Antippas, he was always so close to you." Sure. He'd come into my office, and we'd talk about specific cases, tell "war stories," or whatever. He was my deputy. Obviously, I'd spend a lot of time talking to him. The implication of that statement was that maybe I was "bent" as well.

I must say that was a shock. It was really a shock. I never went back to Bangkok until last spring when I had occasion to go to Vietnam and went through Bangkok. What turned me off was just that reaction. I was so personally angered.

Q: Was the case proven against this man?

ANTIPPAS: No. The Department never made a case. t. We dealt basically with the Embassy Security Officer [SY]. I went to the SY guy who was handling this case in Washington. I said, "Look, I'll do anything I can to help you. If you want me to go back [to the Thailand] to help in the investigation, I'll go back, since I know people there." He said, "Look, basically, we don't have a case against this guy. This is a year after he left the post." This officer heard that he was under investigation and the first thing that he did was to get himself a lawyer. Then the Department backed off, because it had no evidence. In fact, that officer was subsequently promoted. So as far as I know, he's still in the Foreign Service. So I don't know. I may be abusing him as well.

Q: One never knows in these matters, because allegations of this kind are endemic to the situation.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. You're taking the word of an unidentified "informant." I thought about my Bangkok experience when I left Seoul, for example. I thought that, even though you try to do a straightforward job and try to be a "tough" American Consul General who protects American interests or what you think are American interests, people out there may hate you and try to ruin your reputation. I'm talking about the local "crooks" whose income you are hurting, but basically that's your job.

I remember leaving Seoul saying to myself, "You know, I think that I'm going to leave here with my reputation intact." I had been tough. I ran a really "tight" ship in Seoul, given the problems that you know very well. In fact, I left Seoul with my reputation intact, with an excellent reputation, and with lots of recognition for what I had done there.

I felt very personally hurt by this whole thing in Bangkok. However, the point of this is that the system at that time was that if you didn't have a case to make against an officer, you close the file, you go onto other things, and you don't ruin the guy's reputation. Now maybe there's another book that the Department keeps somewhere with a "black mark" on it somewhere. As we've noted, this is endemic in the system and you just can't get do anything else.

Q: You left the Embassy in Bangkok in...

ANTIPPAS: The summer of 1979.

Q: Where did you go?

ANTIPPAS: I had applied for the job of Consul General in Seoul, which you had held. You may remember that my son has a learning disability.

Q: Yes. We talked about it. The Eighth Army had a school or facility that might have been helpful for him.

ANTIPPAS: That's right. My problem was trying to arrange telephonic communication between the Embassy in Bangkok and Seoul. The problem was more a matter of getting through to Yongsan. I could get in touch with Seoul, but as far as getting in touch with Yongsan was concerned, I think that the problem was that the telephone system was run on batteries. We could never have a conversation. I waited so long to accept your job that the Department gave it to Lou Goelz, who came out of the Embassy in Tehran. So they offered me Lou's job in Tehran. I thought, "Hell, no, I don't want to go to Iran".

Q: This was just before the events [of December, 1979] when the Embassy in Tehran was taken over. You would have been one of the hostages held there for 444 days.

ANTIPPAS: That's right. Dick Morefield took the job and got to stay in Tehran for all of that time. Anyway, I tried to get the Consul General job in Montreal because Tom Enders was Ambassador to Canada at that time. I told him that I'd really like to go there. He said, "You don't have enough rank. You can't get that job." I think I was also dickering for the job of Consul General in Guayaquil, [Ecuador]. Your predecessor in Saigon was Consul General in Guayaquil. I thought that I'd study Spanish and go to Guayaquil.

One other thing that I was considering. Through all of that refugee work, I had gotten to know the staff at Senator Teddy Kennedy's subcommittee, and particularly Jerry Tinker, who recently died. You may have seen the notice in the press. Jerry was the staff director for Kennedy. Through working on refugees since Cambodia, we got to know each other quite well. I said to Tinker, "How about a Pearson assignment to the refugee subcommittee?

Q: A Pearson assignment was a personnel detail to familiarize Foreign Service Officers with jobs in other parts of the government.

ANTIPPAS: Particularly in Congress. I was "dickering" for a job like this with both Harry Barnes, then Director General of the Foreign Service, and with Senator Kennedy's office. It didn't work out. I don't remember why it didn't work out because, in fact, the suggestion was warmly received. It was probably a question of slots. Anyhow, I ended up with no job when I came back to Washington. My wife was absolutely furious.

I was assigned to the newly created Refugee Bureau, a job which I really didn't want to do. I really had "had" it with refugee work at that point. Part and parcel of that job was that the Department discovered the existence of a famine in Cambodia, so it created another office called the "Kampuchea Working Group." So I was assigned to that. Cambodia was a labor of love, and I got very involved with it.

Before finishing up on my assignment to Bangkok, let me tell you about the case of Bobby Garwood. For many years, beginning with the Johnson administration and right through the Nixon and Carter administrations, Frank Sieverts was the POW/MIA [Prisoners of War/Missing in Action] guy in the State Department. He is now press spokesman for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He had done the POW/MIA job for many years. I knew him from my Indochina days.

Frank Sieverts got in touch with us in the Embassy in Bangkok and told us that Garwood, a Marine Corps private who had been taken prisoner in 1965, relatively early in the war, had stayed behind in Vietnam. He had never been returned with the other POW's in 1973. He was viewed by some people as a "turncoat" and a collaborator with the communists. He had gotten a message out that he wanted to return to the United States. It turned out that the Vietnamese communists were going to permit him to return to the U. S. Working through the UN Office in Saigon, we learned that he would come out through Bangkok. I was scheduled to receive him, as the Consul General, protecting an American citizen.

Frank Sieverts' view was that I should accompany Garwood to Okinawa on a commercial flight. During the flight, I would try to debrief him. He would obviously be in a certain amount of shock-culture shock, if nothing else. It was thought that a low key approach, talking to him about other, missing Americans or people he had known about or had knowledge of might easily be done that way without making it too "structured."

I agreed to that approach. However, by the time that Garwood left Vietnam for Bangkok, some lawyer in Garwood's hometown took it upon himself to tell Garwood's family that he [the lawyer] would represent him on a contingency basis and that Garwood should have legal representation. This lawyer, in fact, enlisted himself as Garwood's attorney. He told the Pentagon, in effect, "You can't talk to my client without me being present."

So the whole "game plan" was thrown out the window. The Marine Corps sent down a C-130 transport aircraft from Okinawa with a legal officer to receive Garwood. My basic job was to take Garwood from the civilian side of Don Muang Airport in Bangkok to the other, military side of the airport and turn him over to the Marines, which I did. I stood there while he was being "read his rights." I signed a receipt for him. I have a picture of myself, standing in the C-130, turning Garwood over to the Marines.

Garwood really was in a state of shock when he got off the Air France plane from Saigon. The Air France stewardesses had taken pity on him, given him a lot of champagne and all the rest, and he was somewhat "ga-ga" by the time he got off the plane. My plan had been to take him out through a side entrance [at Don Muang airport terminal in Bangkok], put him in an Embassy car, drive around the airfield to the military side, where the C-130 was waiting, and turn him over to the Marines. I would suggest to him that he say no more than, "I'm pleased to be going home. I'll make a statement later."

We were greeted by such a phalanx of journalists and TV cameramen, who almost overran us, that I grabbed Garwood by the elbow, propelled him right through the crowd, in the process trampling several of these journalists, got him into the Embassy car, and got the hell out of there. My picture appeared in the papers all over the world, propelling Garwood through the crowd. I got a lot of letters from friends, saying, "Now we know where you are."

There was a great debate about whether or not he had "collaborated" with the Vietnamese communists. Garwood's story now is that he was, in fact, kept a prisoner and was not allowed to leave. He said that he had really "conned" his way out of Vietnam. His book on his experiences was "ghost written" by somebody else. It didn't seem terribly accurate, in my view. It's an interesting story but leaves a lot to be desired. I still think that we would have learned a lot about missing Americans, had I been allowed to debrief him. In fact, everything was put "on ice" for a long time afterwards, and all of his defenses went up.

Q: What about the American prisoners held in jail in Bangkok? What was their condition?

ANTIPPAS: It was a tough scene. When I left Bangkok, there were 25 Americans held in prison there. Besides being a prisoner, being a Thai prisoner in particular is something I wouldn't want. Part of the problem was that they could still get drugs very easily in prison through corrupt guards. Many of them were drug addicts. I had recommended strongly to the Department that we be permitted to set up a program in the Thai jail to get them off hard drugs, using "Methadone." I tried to work things out so that we would manage funds that would be sent by their families. The Thai would only permit them to have a certain amount of money-to buy necessary items from the prison store.

One of my jobs was to make sure that they behaved themselves and treated the Thai with the deference that was expected of prisoners. Many of the Americans were really obstreperous and created additional problems for themselves because of their behavior in jail. Sometimes, when they would talk back to me, I would "bawl them out." This would be in the presence of the Thai guards, which the Thai appreciated. The American prisoners were pretty much a bunch of rapscallions.

I went to the American community in Bangkok, through the American Chamber of Commerce, and asked for some funds to support a "slush fund" to make it possible to buy necessities for them. Some of the prisoners had no money at all. I wanted to have a little money so that we could buy them at least a few things to make life easier for them, to the extent that it was permitted. I remember getting a very negative reaction from the American business community. They said, more or less, "Screw those bastards, those dope peddlers." I would say, "Now, wait a minute. I'm as strong a believer as anybody is in being 'tough' on narcotics. However, I want to tell you. If I didn't exist, the American Consul who goes out there to defend these guys, you'd have to invent me. There has to be at least one guy in this Embassy who will protect people. What happens to the person who is unjustly accused? The Thai simply lock him up and throw the key away? What would happen if your son were in that situation? You'd come crying to me and say, 'This kid isn't a dope addict. You've got to protect him.'" If I simply said, "Well, screw you, he's an accused dope peddler or whatever. The Thai can throw the key away." I said that somebody has to be here who doesn't have that attitude.

I had a couple of cases of people who were "set up" by taxi drivers and all of that. They were thrown into jail. Because of my efforts, I got them off. Those cases are in my official files. There were letters written to the Secretary of State regarding people who were unjustly jailed, and I got them out of prison. They were legitimate citizens. I made that argument to people [in the American community in Bangkok], but not terribly successfully. The prisoners really were an unsavory bunch.

Q: Bangkok had a reputation of being a "hot bed" of drugs and sex for high school kids. We had a lot of American dependents there. Did you get involved in that, or was that somebody else's responsibility?

ANTIPPAS: It was really not directly my job. We did have a problem with some of the American dependents-children getting involved with drugs. We had a couple of kids take LSD and walk off the roof of the International School of Bangkok [ISB]. In fact, the Department began a program for treatment of such people because of the problems in Bangkok, which, as you say, was a "hot bed."

Q: But that didn't fall under your responsibilities.

ANTIPPAS: It didn't fall directly under my job. I just felt that I ought to do something. It would have been a major problem to visit all of the jails in the provinces. There was no way that I could have afforded the manpower to do that. I don't know whether it was the best idea to corral all of these guys together or not. I suspect that they "fed" on each other.

Q: I think that this is always a problem. If they are off somewhere by themselves, they tend to calm down and blend into the local scene.

ANTIPPAS: But after I left Bangkok, the regional DEA office did some soul searching. Through their efforts they doubled the prison population, principally with people accused of drug offenses, the year after I left. I took a strong position about not "setting people up" and trying to protect Americans in that regard. I had enough credibility with DEA because I worked very closely with them. In fact, I got an award from DEA for the work I did with them in Bangkok. I think that they were very careful about not "setting up" Americans. I told DEA, "Look, don't put these guys away here because you can't put them away in the United States." I was very much in favor of having a prisoner exchange agreement between Thailand and the United States. I wanted to send these people home. I didn't want them in Bangkok. They were not a consular problem. They were an American social problem.

Q: Andy, let's stop at this point. We'll pick up next time in 1979 when you came back to work with [Indochinese] refugees.

ANTIPPAS: And famine relief.

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Q: Today is October 5, 1994. Andy, as we mentioned last time, you came back to the Department in 1979. How long were you with refugee affairs?

ANTIPPAS: I spent a year there. Actually, I was in Washington from 1979 to 1981, because I was assigned to the National War College in that last year.

Q: What were you up to?

ANTIPPAS: I had been trying to consider too many possibilities in 1979 in terms of getting an overseas assignment. We wanted to remain overseas. My wife preferred to stay overseas, and that was my preference, too. I was also under consideration for assignment to the Bipartisan Immigration Commission, under Father Hesburgh, the President of Notre Dame University at that time. The commission had been set up here in Washington to study immigration problems. I don't remember why that didn't work out, either. The end of the story is that I ended up in the brand-new Refugee Bureau, which had a title but not much of anything else. It hardly had space in the building. As I said before, I was not much interested in working on refugee matters. I really felt kind of "burned out" in this respect, however, as I also mentioned, the world was discovering that Cambodia was starving to death. The Vietnamese communists, who had invaded the country in 1978 and chased out Pol Pot, the Cambodian communist leader, became involved in a very small but "hot" war with the Khmer Rouges. The situation was so confused that people were actually starving to death in Cambodia. There was a lot of pressure on for the world community to "do something." The Carter administration decided that we should help out.

The unit designated to do this was called the Kampuchea Working Group, a kind of task force. The Director was Tom Barnes, an experienced and senior political officer who had served in Vietnam. They made him the Director of this working group, and I was assigned as Deputy Director, since I was one of the few people around Washington who could find Cambodia on the map and knew what had happened in that sad place.

We began to work very hard and put in long hours in the summer and fall of 1979. The horror of what was going on in Cambodia came to light. It was an interesting experience. In fact, I spent most of my time proselytizing and going out and talking to people. Somehow, very little was really known about the situation inside Cambodia. I appeared on the "Good Morning, America" TV show twice to talk about Cambodia. I made trips outside of Washington such as Albuquerque, New Mexico, where former Secretary of State Dean Rusk's son was mayor. I spoke to a group about Cambodia. I also went to Santa Barbara, California and Chicago. Anyway, I traveled around, spreading the good word about why people should help Cambodia.

I won't dwell on this effort to any great extent, but the major problem was that the administration had to find money for food relief in Cambodia. There was no money in the budget for this purpose. There was the usual shuffle of budget funds. Now, Cambodia is not a very big place-more or less the size of Missouri. It's not hard to get around. It's not particularly mountainous, and the roads are not that bad. There are a lot of natural reasons why nobody should be starving to death in that country.

The Vietnamese communists made it very difficult for the aid program to get food into Cambodia. We were working on plans, for example, to fly C-5 planes [very large, four-engine U. S. Air Force transport aircraft] into Cambodia.

Q: Those are our largest transport aircraft.

ANTIPPAS: Our biggest job was to find rice which we could obtain immediately for delivery to Cambodia. We went to the Japanese Government, which had enormous stocks of rice-government sponsored and purchased rice which was very expensive. About the most expensive rice in the world is in Japan. They had mountains of it. There was the inexplicable fact that they said that they couldn't afford to give the rice away, because it cost so much to buy it from the Japanese farmers. The hardest problem was getting permission from the Vietnamese to deliver rice to Cambodia.

We had the prospect of Russian-donated "red corn" from Argentina, which was impregnated with DDT [insecticide]. It was fit only for cattle but it was being delivered for human consumption in Cambodia.

Finally, in desperation the UN and the voluntary agencies set up feeding stations on the Thai-Cambodian border, where a lot of Cambodian refugees were heading, anyway. This created even larger magnets attracting Cambodians to come to Thailand. The poor Thai ended up with over 100,000 refugees in their laps.

I spent a year working on Cambodian famine relief under the Carter administration. That was the year, you might recall, when the Department in an excess of conservation zeal, turned down the heat in the building and half the lights. Everybody was going around, wearing sweaters. The Under Secretary for Management, Dick Moose, was wearing a sweater. There wasn't a drop of hot water in the bathrooms. It was all a little unseemly.

Anyway, I was rewarded for all of my efforts by being assigned to the National War College, which had been a long-held aspiration for me.

Q: Andy, just one thing. When you were working on Cambodian relief, how did you find the support from, say, other elements in the State Department?

ANTIPPAS: Actually, this wasn't a particular problem. I can't recall any particular difficulty in that connection. We had the manpower assigned to us-a "pick up" team of the kind you usually get for a task force. The biggest problem we had was that the Department kept moving us around. We were set up in offices on the sixth floor, where the Bureau of East Asian Affairs was. Then they moved us to the international conference suite [on the ground floor of the Department]. From time to time they would need that space, and we would have to move elsewhere. It was really a kind of bureaucratic "shuffle." I think that everybody was kind of understanding and helpful. I don't have any particular recollection of the State Department giving us a hard time on this. Everybody was sympathetic about the problem.

Q: Which war college did you attend?

ANTIPPAS: The National War College at Ft. McNair, in Washington. I was initially assigned to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces [ICAF]. A friend of mine in Personnel handled the assignment. I asked if I could be switched over to the National War College, and he arranged it. My understanding of the Industrial College is that they work awfully hard. [Laughter] At the Industrial College you really had to have your head on your shoulders as far as logistics and mathematics were concerned. I wasn't sure that was what I really wanted.

The National War College was a very satisfying experience. It came during my 19th or 20th year in the Foreign Service. At that point I was 48 or 49 years old-a bit older than my classmates from the military and peers in the Foreign Service, as well. Still, it came at about the right time for me in terms of giving me a "respite" from the work that I had been doing in the Foreign Service. It coincided with the 1980 presidential elections campaign, which is a marvelous time to be at the War College. We heard well-qualified people come and discuss world issues with us.

That was the year when the authorities decided that our class would have to write a "paper." This business of doing a "paper" at the War College is an on again, off again kind of thing. It was my luck that year we had to do a paper. No one in the class really wanted to work that hard. I remember that the State Department adviser at the National War College told us that, since the War College came under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if we would do a paper which the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] would like to have done, there might be a little stipend involved for research and travel. Therefore, we were all requested to prepare an outline of a "paper." Obviously, it was a very thinly disguised excuse for getting us to prepare for a "paper" which otherwise we wouldn't have done.

Anyway, I thought about what I would like to write. I decided that, having had all of this experience with Cambodia during the previous 10 years, I would do a kind of "cathartic" paper on Cambodia and get this "devil" out of my system. Since we were in a military atmosphere, I decided to do a paper on the Nixon administration's decision to "rearm" Lon Nol. This involved reviewing the "Nixon Doctrine" of 1969-1970. It would be a "friendly" paper, since I had pretty much agreed with the policy while I was in Cambodia. I decided that I would try to talk to all of the "key" players-everyone that I could reach-and ask them, 10 years after the fact, what they had thought and why they did what they did. Basically, I was not out to "sandbag" anybody.My advisor told me that the JCS staff were not interested in my topic and therefore I would not qualify for a stipend because it was "too historical". That really amused me. It didn't really bother me because I wasn't intending to work that hard. I did say "you mean we as a nation will never get involved in some dusty little country where we will use others as surrogates to fight for our interests?" I was of course referring to the hot issue of the time-El Salvador. This whole episode was very instructive and insightful about how our government operates. We spend fortunes in collecting, filing and retrieving information but basically we don't really want to know how or why we did a particular thing in the past. The political overhead doesn't want to be told why they should not do a particular policy because of why something like it had been attempted in the past.

I wrote letters to various people. Those in the State Department were very easy to get to: Marshall Green, U. Alexis Johnson, Tom Pickering (who had been in PM at the time) Mike Rives, Fred Ladd, General Ted Metaxis(the first MEDTC Chief)-all of them were available and quite willing to talk about the decision to rearm Lon Nol. The key CIA people such as John Stein and Ted Shackley were also available. The political people were more of a problem. I wrote to Melvin Laird [former Secretary of Defense]. He begged off and said that he was not involved in Cambodia at the time and that I should talk to Larry Eagleburger, who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. I wrote to Henry Kissinger and to Alexander Haig. Kissinger agreed to receive me and be interviewed about our Cambodian policy but never did because as I later learned he was writing his own book. Haig begged off because, by that time, Ronald Reagan had won the election, and Haig had been nominated to be Secretary of State. He said that he was too busy preparing for his confirmation hearings. I still have Haig's letter, which was written in what came to be known as "Haigspeak."

Q: Haig was renowned for his confusing syntax.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. I had gotten to know him slightly during my Cambodian experience. The one person I didn't try to reach-and I regretted this later-was former President Nixon. For one thing, I thought that he probably wouldn't receive me. What would he say that wouldn't be a defense of what he did? But not attempting to contact Nixon was a mistake on my part. I should have followed my instincts, which were to try to see him.

Some years later-I think that it was in 1985 or 1986-when I was Consul General in Seoul, Nixon came to Korea on a visit. There was a reception at the Ambassador's residence where Nixon gave a short talk. This was really the first time that I had a chance to listen personally to Nixon other than briefly in Thailand in December 1969. It was very interesting to hear him talk. He spoke about the first time he had come to Korea in 1953 during his first tour of Asia as Eisenhower's Vice President. I went up to him after the reception and introduced myself. I said, "You know, you probably don't hear this very much, but you were right about Cambodia." He did a double take and looked at me. I explained who I was and what I had done, serving in Cambodia. I said, "I was a Political Officer in our tiny Embassy in Phnom Penh. We would go out in the morning and try to find out what was happening during the first month or two of the war. Then we would go back to the Embassy and dictate telegraphic reports on what we had learned. We discovered that you were reading these reports. So we had to 'clean up' the grammar." He got a big laugh out of that. He slapped me on the back and said, "Give me your card. I'm going to send you a copy of my latest book, 'No More Vietnams." He did. He sent me an autographed copy of the book, plus a couple of other books as well.

I said to him, "I really regret that I did not come to talk to you during my stay at the War College about the decisions made in 1970 about going into Cambodia." He indicated that he would have received me and would have liked to talk about it. He said that I was right. Not very many people understood that the objective was not to overthrow Sihanouk. Under the circumstances and to save American lives, we had to do what we did. I am persuaded that he was right about this. That's not a popular view.

Q: I happen to subscribe to that view. I don't see what else we could have done.

ANTIPPAS: We just couldn't have walked out of Cambodia. Anyway, I spent the first six months of my National War College assignment observing the national elections campaign in 1980. It was fascinating. Then I spent a lot of time doing the research and talking to people for my paper. I managed to finish it, and it wasn't half bad. I'm fairly proud of it. It allowed me to review my own thinking about what our government could have done in terms of supporting Lon Nol at a very difficult time.

Then we had our overseas trip. You'll recall that I came to visit you in Naples as part of my "boondoggle." I decided to pick Italy and Greece because I knew that I'd never be assigned to either place in my Foreign Service career, so I might as well go there. You were kind enough to receive me in Naples.

I think that finishing up the National War College assignment was an interesting commentary in itself on how the Foreign Service works. Starting in April 1981, I was busily looking for an ongoing assignment. This is always difficult to do and was especially so at that time.

Q: Yes. They always promise you the moon when you enter a war college. You're a "picked person," they say.

ANTIPPAS: You're in the elite of the elite.

Q: Then you come out, and they say, "Who are you?"

ANTIPPAS: I was walking the halls of the State Department, like everybody else. Tom Enders, who had been my boss in Phnom Penh and who, obviously, was very much on the "fast track," from the promotional point of view, had been nominated to be Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs. I asked him if he would support me for the job of Principal Officer in Guadalajara, Mexico. I said that I didn't speak Spanish. However, the Guadalajara position was due to open up in the fall of 1981. If I could get this job, I would have time to take a course in Spanish. We have this "chicken and egg" situation in the Foreign Service. You can't compete for a job unless you speak the language, and you can't take a course in the language unless you have the job.

I was keen to go overseas, and so was my wife. She hadn't been very happy about coming back to the U. S. in the first place. The Consular Affairs Bureau wanted Director of the Visa Office, Julio Arias, to go to Guadalajara. This was kind of his "swan song" as well. I remember thinking to myself, "Well, I'm not about to 'sandbag' Julio Arias. When I'm in his situation, I hope that somebody is thoughtful enough to take care of me when I'm near the end of my career."

So I accepted the job of Consul General in Seoul, which was opening up. Lou Goelz really hadn't liked Seoul very much, had stayed only for about a year, and was going on to do something else. Vern McAninch replaced Lou Goelz but Vern didn't like Seoul, either. He was a Latin American hand and a real gay blade. I guess that he didn't like the weather, though I don't know. There are a lot of problems in Seoul, of course. So I decided to take Seoul and accepted the job of Consul General. Vern and I, in fact, talked back and forth by phone about the "overlap." He was going to have a reception for me and introduce me to everybody.

On the morning that I was to graduate from the National War College I was trying to get my family out the door to get down to the graduation ceremony. We all had to be in our seats at 7:45 AM. Right at this time I got a call from Personnel in the Department, asking me if I would like to be chargï¿½ d'affaires in the Bahamas. I had forgotten that the previous year, on my list of preferences, I had put down the position of DCM in the Bahamas. This position was opening up, but I thought that I didn't have a prayer of getting the job. It turned out that Tom Enders had seen my name on the list of people who had applied for the job. He offered the position to me. Judy and I had to think about it a little bit because of the schooling question. But the Department allowed me to "break" the assignment to Seoul, which I did.

Anyway, I got down to the National War College late, missed the graduation, but went to the reception afterwards. The Commandant was pleased to hear that I had gotten a very nice assignment. We had a special little ceremony under the dome of the college, where he gave me my diploma. So I left with very nice thoughts about the experience at the National War College.

Q: You went to the Bahamas. That's Nassau, isn't it?

ANTIPPAS: Nassau. There was no Ambassador at the post when I arrived there in July 1981.

Q: How long were you there?

ANTIPPAS: It was to be a four-year assignment as DCM: two years, followed by home leave, and then return for another two years. In fact, it turned out that I was chargï¿½ d'affaires there for the best part of two years. A political appointee was assigned as Ambassador. There's a lot to say about the Bahamas, which says a lot about how the State Department, the Foreign Service, and the White House work. I would say that the Bahamas was my most interesting assignment by far.

Q: Let's talk about that. What was the situation in the Bahamas when you went out? Was there any particular thing that you were supposed to concentrate on?

ANTIPPAS: I originally figured-my God! The Bahamas! People tend to confuse Bermuda and the Bahamas as being the same sort of place with people running around in "Bermuda shorts" and swinging golf clubs. I figured that the biggest problem I would have as chargï¿½ d'affaires or even as DCM in the Bahamas would be practicing my tennis backhand. I figured that it was really going to be a two-year or four-year vacation. I had known some people who had served in the Bahamas and so knew a little bit about the place, particularly when I was in the Consular Affairs Bureau as special assistant to the director.

We had had an American who had been sentenced to death for murdering an American tourist in Nassau. The murderer was apparently insane. I remember the great effort that was made by the Department to save this clown's life. The Bahamian Attorney General said, "Hell, no." And they hanged him. I also knew that we had tried to get Robert Vesco out of the Bahamas.

Q: Vesco was an international financier cum crook.

ANTIPPAS: He had ripped off $220 million from the IOS [a U. S. private investment service] and an investment fund. So it was more of a law enforcement kind of place, but very much consular oriented. In fact, in Bangkok one of the visa scandals which I had helped to uncover was a fraudulent immigration visa racket worked out of New York by a Chinese-American lawyer and the American Consul in the Bahamas. The Consul was going into his office early in the morning and writing up phony immigration visas. He was subsequently tried and convicted of fraud, due in part to the evidence which I helped to uncover in Bangkok. So I had a little knowledge of the Bahamas and I thought that it would be an interesting place to serve.

The biggest bilateral problem that we had when I arrived in the Bahamas was the completion of the negotiations on the military base agreement. In the 1940 50-destroyer deal...

Q: This was an agreement reached with Great Britain.

ANTIPPAS: 50 [World War I] destroyers were exchanged for 99 year leases on bases in the West Indies, including the Bahamas. Britain gave us 99 year leases on a variety of locations in the Caribbean which we could use for military bases. Most of those bases were not particularly useful after World War II. The facilities in the Bahamas were, particularly for the space program, because we set up tracking stations for Cape Canaveral (Cape Kennedy) in several downrange locations through the Bahamian archipelago. In fact, all of the way down through the Turks and Caicos Islands, which are part of the same archipelago. As important as the tracking stations, was a naval test facility in the body of water between Andros and New Providence Islands.

When the Bahamas became independent in 1973, we were to start paying for the use of the facilities. The tracking stations were of declining interest because, as technology changed in the space program, particularly the use of satellites, we didn't really need these stations as land-based facilities down-range from Cape Kennedy. What was of particular importance though was what they called the "AUTEC" facility, which is an acronym for the "Atlantic Underseas Test and Evaluation Center."

In fact, the body of water between New Providence Island, which is where Nassau is located, and Andros Island, the largest island in the Bahamas, is almost a land-locked lake. It is up to 6000 feet deep. Because it is mostly surrounded by land masses, reefs, and sand bars, it is like a giant test pool. It was ideal-in fact, unique in the world-for its clarity, depth, and size to allow the sound-testing of submarines. The most important thing about using submarines is that they need to be silent. Even nuclear vessels make noises with equipment and propellers. You could run a whole naval battle group in that area. They did a lot of "war gaming" there. It was only two days' steam from Norfolk, VA. So it was a very important facility. The U. S. Navy very much wanted to improve the infrastructure there but couldn't do so because we hadn't completed the bases agreement. The Carter administration had been involved in negotiations with the newly independent, Bahamian Government over the terms. It was thought that we had finally worked out the rental agreement.

So when I went to the Bahamas, my instructions were to find out where and when they wanted to sign this agreement. The Reagan administration was now in office. One of the first things that I did, when I assumed charge of the Embassy, was to send a diplomatic note to the Bahamian Government saying, "I've been instructed to ask, etc, etc." I received no response, which I found very curious. Obviously, this was a fairly big deal, in that we were going to be paying the Bahamian Government something like ten million dollars annually for the use of these bases. The payments were not to be retroactive either. Moreover, we couldn't improve the bases until we had a signed agreement, because Congress wouldn't allow us to do so. That is one part of the larger story of the difficulty I encountered over the next several months.

I arrived in Nassau in mid July 1981. I discovered that all was not sweetness and light between the United States and the Bahamas. It turned out that the Foreign Minister felt that he had been "hornswoggled" in some fashion, as far as the agreement on the payment schedule was concerned. In a word, what he wanted was a guarantee that over the 10-year life of the agreement, the Bahamas was going to get their $100 million under the payment schedule. On our side we said that we could not "guarantee" $100 million because of our legislative budget arrangements and budget cycle. There's no way to "guarantee" that the payments will be made during the life of the agreement. In other words, we could not legally "guarantee" payments of $10 million per year for 10 years. He was "sore" about that. He felt that the Bahamas might be cheated.

Anyway, it was really kind of an academic point. However, to show you how these guys operated, the Attorney General of the Bahamas was concurrently Foreign Minister. This made it kind of complicated, because he was the guy we most frequently dealt with in the Bahamas.

Q: What was his name?

ANTIPPAS: Paul Adderly. I crossed swords with this individual on numerous occasions. He was a little bit "nuts," actually, but an absolutely brilliant and knowledgeable individual. He understood how the U. S. Government worked. He was a pretty good politician for the Bahamas but he really was a case. Some of the American VIP's who visited the Bahamas and whom I escorted to call on him were just "flabbergasted" by his attitude.

Anyway, on the base agreement issue I was absolutely stunned to find that the man would not answer a direct question about what his problem was. Here I was, the new American Chargï¿½ d'Affaires. What I didn't know about the Bahamas would fill a book. There was a new American administration in office in Washington [the Reagan administration]. All of the arrangements had been made under the previous administration [President Carter]. He knew that. I would come and ask him a simple, direct, bilateral question. He would not even answer the question, even when I asked him directly, to his face. I would ask, "Can you tell me what your problem is?" He wouldn't answer. It became very, very frustrating, to say the least. However, I didn't consider it a personal failing on my part.Over time I began to discover that there were other problems for the United States in the Bahamas.

After my first 90 days at post I sat down and wrote a 10-page telegram, describing my impressions of what our relations were with this country. I have a copy of this report. I managed to get it out of the files before I retired. I thought that it was a rather good report. I described all of the problems and the attitudes which I had encountered. My conclusion in this cable was, "The Bahamas is no friend of the United States."

This was before we had even begun to realize the enormity of the narcotics trafficking which was taking place in the Bahamas. We already had some idea of the "money laundering" that was going on, since the Bahamas was an offshore banking center. I was also beginning to discover, to my horror, how big a transit area it was for illegal immigration into the United States. Even then, the Haitian problem was becoming a major difficulty, with boats pitching up on the beaches of Florida, hundreds of people drowning, and all of that.

I discovered that the Bahamian Government really wasn't being terribly helpful in these areas. And because of the "narcotics traffickers," American citizens were running into trouble. We had the case of a legislator from the State of Michigan who mysteriously disappeared from his sailboat. Everybody on board was apparently murdered. The boat was found, floating empty. The belief was that they'd run into some drug traffickers who killed them. It was becoming very troubling.

Q: Was there an inherent kind of anti-Americanism or was it because of these other interests?

ANTIPPAS: There were two parts to the problem. First, I arrived in Nassau in July, 1981. The Ambassador appointed under the Carter administration had left on January 20, 1981, and he hadn't been replaced. The Pindling government was getting the distinct feeling that the new, Republican administration was "less friendly." It was very much a "black-white" thing. You have to understand that there is a very definite relationship between the American civil rights movement, particularly as Black Americans see it, and the efforts of the Bahamians to obtain independence. Pindling, in fact, had defeated a white minority government.

Q: Pindling is...

ANTIPPAS: Lyndon Oscar Pindling, known among his supporters as "LOP," or "Ping", was the Prime Minister of the Bahamas. He had taken power, initially, under the self-government program in 1966. The British couldn't wait to give the Bahamas its independence. The country became independent in 1973, and he became Prime Minister, since his party, the PLP [Progressive Liberal Party], was pushing a black agenda or black accusations against a white, minority government. There was a close connection with the American civil rights movement. Many leaders of the American civil rights movement used to come to the Bahamas. It wasn't by chance that the Congressman from Harlem, Adam Clayton Powell, used to "hang out" on Bimini Island, the westernmost island in the Bahamas Archipelago-50 miles due East of Miami.

There was a distinct feeling that the Republicans were "anti-black," and certainly anti-Pindling. After all, it was during the Nixon administration that Pindling had refused to surrender Robert Vesco, when we had asked for Vesco's extradition because of the stock fraud in which he was involved. It was very clear to all observers that the Pindling administration had taken a political decision not to let Vesco go. The Pindling administration was probably not far off the mark in thinking that the Republicans didn't admire them. The fact that there was no American Ambassador at post for six months was viewed with a certain concern on the part of Pindling.

I remember my first call on Pindling. It took place around the first week in July, 1981, when I went to see him with my predecessor. I had gone down a little early, just after I completed my year at the National War College, to take a look at the post. My predecessor and I had an "overlap" of several weeks.

This call on Pindling coincided with the decision to hold a seven-nation meeting in Nassau of Foreign Ministers of the countries covered by the "Caribbean Basin Initiative" proposed by President Reagan. Alexander Haig, the new Secretary of State, was going to attend the meeting, at which he was going to present the "Caribbean Basin Initiative" or "CBI". Since the Secretary of State was going to visit the Bahamas, prudence dictated that I should be on hand, no matter how many eggs were broken in the process.

As it turned out, the Reagan administration couldn't have cared less about the Bahamas. They just happened to use Nassau as a location for launching the "Initiative." There wasn't even going to be provision for the Secretary of State to meet Pindling. We proposed to use their conference hall for three days, as it were, and didn't even plan for the Secretary of State to call on the Prime Minister. I made a distinct effort, using some of my contacts in the Executive Secretariat at the State Department, to make sure that time was found in the Secretary's schedule to meet Pindling. I figured that Pindling would feel a bit sore at us, and slighted, if Haig didn't call on him. I know that I would have felt slighted if I had been in Pindling's shoes. So they managed to cut 30 minutes off Al Haig's tennis game to give him some time to see the Prime Minister of the Bahamas. I thought how clever I had been to manage to handle this little problem!

When I went to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Pindling with my predecessor, I was absolutely stunned when Pindling wore an Hawaiian-flowered shirt (People were very relaxed in the Bahamas.). I showed up in my dark suit! After the niceties had been completed, he leaned back and said, "I wonder what kind of trouble I can cause you-to get your government's attention." I gulped. I wondered what this man was talking about. Then he launched into a litany of complaints of how the United States had "slighted" the Bahamas and hadn't been very friendly. (He particularly mentioned that the United States hadn't appointed an Ambassador.) One of the things that the Bahamian Government was really sore about was that the Internal Revenue Service had decided in 1980 to refuse to allow deductions for American organizations and groups holding conventions outside the United States. In other words, if you were a professional person and went to a convention overseas, you used to be able to "write off" the costs...

Q: I remember the Northern Virginia Lawyers Association meeting in Athens, when I served there. I wondered what this was all about.

ANTIPPAS: That's right. Of course, that really stopped the conventions and hurt tourism in the Bahamas. They were sore as all get out about that. At this initial meeting, Pindling mentioned all sorts of other, real and imagined slights. I remember saying to him (I was sort of "leaning forward in the foxhole."), "Prime Minister, tell me what's bothering you, and maybe we can put the systems together, because I may know how to push the buttons." I didn't mention that I'd gotten him an appointment with Al Haig or anything like that. I was trying to give him a message, "Look, I don't have anything against anybody. It's important to me that I do well in this job." I guess I was setting myself up for a good case of "clientitis," but that's the kind of thing I had to do. If you're going to be in charge of a Foreign Service post, you need to work with the local government.

Q: The whole idea is to take care of some of the problems.

ANTIPPAS: Anticipate the problems and take care of them, because that's what you're there for. The folks back home really don't understand what the situation is. Your position is like the flea in the elephant corral. Pindling huffed and puffed at that point, but his remark was kind of a "shot across my bow." I began to appreciate that we had some problems in the Bahamas that I didn't know about.

After the first few months in Nassau, it became apparent to me, based on the intelligence that I was receiving from the desk and my friends in the Bureau of American Republic Affairs, that there was not going to be an Ambassador appointed for a long time, given the way the matter had been handled. Several candidates had been put up. One of the initial problems with the Reagan administration was that a number of appointees couldn't get clearance from the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission]. This candidate for the position of Ambassador to the Bahamas had problems with his financial background. So I realized that I was probably going to be on my own for quite a long time.

Now, I should mention at this point that I didn't have all that many friends in the ARA Bureau. I had never served in ARA before and was not a Spanish speaker. I really didn't belong to that particular group in the Department. However, the Executive Director of the Bureau at that point was a friend, and Assistant Secretary Tom Enders had been my boss in Phnom Penh. I had a couple of other "friends at court." The desk officer was a bright young man, a Naval Academy graduate, intelligent and energetic.

Under the circumstances, I had a personal decision to make about how I was going to proceed, as a Foreign Service Officer. I had two choices. First, I could "sit on my hands," keep the lid on in the Embassy, manage the office, but avoid doing anything liable to get me into trouble. On the other hand, I thought that I might never again be given a chance to manage anything, because that's the nature of the Foreign Service. I might as well try to do something in the Bahamas. I'm the guy in charge. I'm "Mr. United States" in Nassau. It's quite evident that we've got some problems here. There are American interests at stake, so why not? What can happen except that I can fall on my face? So I decided that I was going to be an "activist" chargï¿½ d'affaires.

The only instruction I had been given by Tom Enders, the Assistant Secretary for American Republic Affairs, was, "Look, you're going to get a 'political' Ambassador. I want you to be a 'strong' DCM. Go down there and lead that place." That is the only instruction that I had. It was kind of a revelation to discover, when you're a professional Foreign Service Officer, how it is when you're sent out and put in charge of an Embassy. Being in charge of a constituent post is entirely different. In the case of managing an Embassy, you're the man. It doesn't matter what the size of the Embassy is. The paper work is the same. The basic issue is how much attention the "front office" [the Bureau] is going to pay to you. Are you in a place that's going to get people's attention, or what?

While I wasn't exactly going to go out and look for trouble, I soon discovered that in the Foreign Service you don't have to do anything to get into trouble. Just the fact that you're there means that lightning may strike, because you've become the lightning rod.

That was very instructive. I found that during the first six months at post some of the issues which came up were very intense. I developed a lot of mental and physical stress, given the problem that I had with the Foreign Minister-the Prime Minister, less so. The stress was so great that my back "went out." I developed a back problem. It reminded me so much of the problem that Mike Rives had 10 years before in Phnom Penh. He had the same problem with his back. He was under so much stress, being "under the gun," regarding this policy in Cambodia, that his back "went out." The Assistant Secretary told Mike Rives not to leave the post for treatment, because there was no one suitable to be put in charge.

I faced the same kind of problem. Fortunately, my next door neighbor at the East End of the island, where I lived, was a British doctor. He gave me some muscle relaxants. I became so relaxed that my eyeballs almost fell out! I felt that I could only work standing up. I couldn't sit down. I read my telegrams standing up. I arranged a desk where I could work standing up. The stress was enormous. That was a very intense experience for me, from that point of view.

By the time I wrote this 90 day review of the situation to the Department, I had an American citizen come to me, at the Embassy. He owned property on an island about 35 miles West of New Providence Island, where Nassau is located. The name of this island is Norman's Cay (Key). It was a privately owned island with a marina and an airstrip on it. It had been developed over the years. A number of the properties on it were owned by American and Canadian people who came down there for the winter. It had a very nice [scuba] "dive" location, fishing was good, and it was relatively close to Nassau. This fellow owned three or four bungalows on the island. He had developed it so that they were right off the runway of the airstrip. People could rent the bungalows and fly in. They could actually park their airplanes right next to the bungalows. He came in to complain to me that Colombian drug traffickers had moved in and, in effect, taken over the island. They were intimidating the owners of property down there, so much so that he really didn't have access to his property. His complaints to the Bahamian government hadn't resulted in any action.

It turned out that a year or two before that [1979 or 1980] the Bahamian police had raided the island but had been unsuccessful in arresting the Colombians, who had managed to escape or "paid people off." No large amounts of drugs were found. I took this complaint under advisement.

Then I made my initial trip to the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Turks and Caicos Islands are still a British colony. Under the arrangement we had with the Department the DCM in Nassau is accredited to the Governor and Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands, because we have an Ambassador in London. So the Ambassador in Nassau is not accredited to the Turks and Caicos Islands-the DCM is. So, since it was part of my "turf," I decided to go down there and take a look at this place. It was a three-day jaunt to get there-there was no direct way. I went over to Grand Bahama Island and took the U. S. Air Force courier aircraft, which used to make the run down to the various tracking stations. They took me down to the Turks and Caicos Islands. However, to get back, I had to take an Air Florida flight back to Miami and then from Miami back to Nassau. I made that trip and met the Governor, the people in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and looked around the place.

I flew back to Miami and was met at Miami International airport at planeside by a Drug Enforcement Administration agent, who took me into Miami to a hotel. He sat me down and talked to me all night about the problems they had on Norman's Cay with the Colombian cartel, which had taken over the island. What, in fact, the DEA wanted to do in the Bahamas, was to raid the island to apprehend the Colombians "in the act," as it were, because large quantities of cocaine were being transshipped there. This was the beginning of the major transshipment of cocaine into Florida. This was in 1980-1981.

I was a bit taken aback by what he was proposing because this would have involved taking American helicopters and DEA agents, with Bahamian police, and landing in what would be a "hot LZ" [coming down in a landing zone defended by hostile elements], and possibly "shooting it out" with the Colombians. I said, "I think this is not allowed under the Mansfield Amendment." The Mansfield Amendment doesn't permit American law enforcement agencies to do this kind of thing. However, I said that I was very sympathetic with what he was telling me, given what I was beginning to learn about the nature of the problem on Norman's Cay. I said that I wasn't sure that the Bahamian government would "buy" this, given their attitudes about law enforcement cooperation with the United States. On the other hand, I wasn't sure that the United States government would want to do this.

However, I said that I would "check it out." I said that this wasn't something that I would really want to write up in a cable and send up to the State Department, because I thought that it would be immediately shot full of holes if I did that. I said that what I would like to do is to take the first opportunity to talk to Assistant Secretary of State Tom Enders, face to face, and see if I could get his verbal approval.

I knew that Enders would be coming down to Miami in early December, 1981. At the time the Rockefeller Foundation had what they called the Caribbean-Central American Committee. The committee met annually in Miami, and chiefs of state from Central American and Caribbean countries attended to talk about issues of mutual interest. Since this was the first year of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, I felt sure that the Assistant Secretary would be there, and I would get a chance to talk to him. The DEA agent agreed with that and left it to me to proceed. I did meet Enders very briefly when he came to Miami for this meeting. I didn't really have time to discuss the matter. That's another thing that you discover when you're trying to get the attention of your boss, when you're chargï¿½ d'affaires. Sometimes it's a major problem to have the chance to talk to your man in the front office of the bureau, unless he happens to come through your area on a visit. This reminded me of my experience years before in Douala, Cameroon, which I mentioned previously, when Assistant Secretary of State G. Mennen ("Soapy") Williams came through Douala one morning, en route home from the Congo. I only learned about it when the UTA (French Airlines) representative called me.

Tom Enders asked me, when I met him at a cocktail party, "Are you having fun?" I said, "Yes, it's great. Can I talk to you?" He was distracted by someone, and I never did get a chance to talk to him.

However, I did meet another person, John Upston, a political appointee in ARA [the Bureau of American Republic Affairs] who had the title of "Caribbean Coordinator", a Deputy Assistant Secretary level position. He apparently had a lot of experience in the Caribbean area and had worked in the State Department, off and on, over the years. We struck up a friendship. The chemistry between us was good. He was very interested in what I had to say about what I was seeing in the Bahamas. We were able to set up a dialogue, both by phone and when he came down and visited us on several occasions. He was very sympathetic about what I was trying to do. It turned out that he and I-and I'll get into this later in the story-managed to get past the bureaucracy in getting permission to do something effective in the drug war in the Bahamas.

I had discovered by that point that we had an American Embassy but had no resources with which to fight crime or even to get an appreciation of how big a problem it was. I would get, for example, a message from the U. S. Coast Guard, saying, "We understand that Robert Vesco's yacht is in the marina at Nassau. Can you check it out and see if he's there? You can very easily tell which boat is his because there will be a grand piano on the fantail." Well, how in hell am I supposed to do that from an Embassy automobile? This was the only vehicle I had to get around in. Here I was, the chargï¿½ d'affaires in an archipelago. If I needed a boat, I had to go out and rent one. It was a little hard to find yachts of escaped financiers if all you had was a car.

Then we began to appreciate the fact that, when you have problems like the one at Norman's Cay, how do you go down and find out what the situation is there? How do you fly in? I didn't have any travel money for this. I didn't have an airplane.

I finally managed to get down to Norman's Cay because the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] would fly in from Florida from time to time to do what they called "ramp checks." The FAA would fly into an airport and just check the registration numbers on the aircraft there. They checked on U. S. registered aircraft parked at airports in the Bahamas. You could tell very easily which ones were being used for "drug hauls"-they didn't have seats in them or might have rubber fuel bladders in the back instead of seats. What the drug traffickers would do was use all manner of aircraft, initially flying in marijuana and then, of course, transporting large amounts of cocaine.

Yachts were coming through all the time. The Bahamas is a major tourist cruising area. From time to time people would tell me stories about drug trafficking. A cabin cruiser or something like that might observe a DC-3 transport aircraft dump out hundreds of bales of marijuana. The traffickers used to wrap the marijuana in garbage bags in 40 and 80 pound quantities. The bags would be water tight and would float only about an inch or so above the surface of the ocean. The bags were green and hard to see. One person told me that he was on his boat, sailing toward Nassau. He saw a DC-3 circling a nearby area and pushing out bales of marijuana. The crew then "pancaked" the aircraft in the water, stepped out on the wing, were picked up by motorboats, which then picked up the marijuana and let the plane sink. He said, if that happened, you really didn't want to be there. Three things might happen, if you came across this stuff floating in the ocean. First, the "dopers" [marijuana smugglers] could catch you, and you'd be in trouble. Secondly, the American Coast Guard could catch you. Thirdly, the Bahamian Coast Guard could catch you. Any way, you'd be in trouble. So this could become a very serious citizen protection problem. I recall that in 1982 we had one major case like that.

We were beginning to discover that large amounts of narcotics were flowing through the Bahamas, and the Bahamian Government wasn't very helpful in solving the problem. When you would confront them with this, their basic reaction was, "Look, you can't stop this traffic with all your armed forces and law enforcement resources. How do you expect us, with our tiny little Coast Guard, and only one air traffic control tower in the whole archipelago, to control this sort of thing?" They were right of course. The problem was that they were not going to allow us to come in and do it for them.

So, I found that I had a problem getting around the country. How could I get an appreciation of this problem if I couldn't even get to the places where this sort of thing was happening?

To go back to the Norman's Cay story, I hitched a ride with the FAA guy on one occasion. I asked him if he would fly me down to Norman's Cay, because I wanted to see what was going on there. In the late fall of 1981 two things had happened. First, I had received the formal complaint from the man who owned bungalows down there. In effect, he had been "run off" his property by the Colombians. Secondly, I was informed by the Bahamas desk in the Office of Caribbean Affairs in the State Department that a number of American citizen property owners on Norman's Cay were going to take out a full-page ad in 10 international newspapers, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, and the Times of London, complaining about the government of the Bahamas doing nothing about this problem at Norman's Cay. They had been forced off their property.

I told the desk, "Look, please contact these people, whoever they are-I don't know who they are-and ask them to hold off and at least give me a chance to raise the matter with the government of the Bahamas." My instinct was that if the ads were published, there was going to be "egg on my face," because I was the local "whipping boy." I wanted to say to the government of the Bahamas, "This is the problem. What are you doing about it?"

I wasn't having much luck with the Foreign Minister/Attorney General in talking about the base agreements. The retiring Commandant of the Coast Guard came through the Bahamas on a trip to various locations to bid farewell to the local authorities. I took him on an official call on the Foreign Minister. The Foreign Minister really gave us a hard time. He really lectured this four-star, U. S. Coast Guard admiral about what he called the "fecklessness" of American law enforcement efforts. He even made some adverse comments about the quality of American youth joining the armed services. I could see that the admiral was really doing a "slow burn." We were both pretty angry by the time we left that interview, with the gratuitous insults of the United States made by the Bahamian Foreign Minister.

Then we were driven to call on the Governor General, whose name was Sir Gerald Cash, or "Gerry Cash" to his friends. He was a wonderful man-the epitome of the friendly Bahamanian that most Americans associate with the islands in the old days. A call on him was always the last call we made with a visitor. He was sort of an antidote to all of the bashing we had had. He would bring our blood pressure down about ten degrees because he was so decent. I remember that in the car for the short drive over to Government House, I said, "Admiral, you look pretty 'ticked off' over what the Foreign Minister was saying." He said, "Yeah, you kind of looked as if you were ready to go over the table with this guy, too." I said, "That was a pretty incredible display of arrogance," which, of course, I dutifully reported to the Department. I would bring in high-level visitors when I called on senior Bahamian officials. They would always agree with my request that they make such calls. I was becoming more and more conscious of the fact that these Bahamian officials were sore that there was no resident American Ambassador and that they were being slighted. At least, if I brought in "heavy hitters" [senior officials] from Washington...

Q: The problem about assignment of an Ambassador was that the White House...

ANTIPPAS: Just couldn't get its act together.

Q: Rather than that we were trying to...

ANTIPPAS: Send a message to the Bahamas. I'm convinced that this was not the case. The White House just couldn't decide on someone. You'd think that people would be lined up to go to a "soft touch" place like Nassau. But, generally speaking, it was true that people interested in serving as Ambassador to the Bahamas had problems getting clearances from the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission].

Q: If you've got sleaze, where do you put them?

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. And where can you put these guys where they won't do any harm? Again, this was a misapprehension because there were definite American interests in the Bahamas that would have been helped enormously by some competence.

Anyhow, in the midst of the problems I was having with the Foreign Ministry, my wife and I were invited to dinner by the Board of Directors of the Morton Salt Company of Chicago. Morton Salt had a major salt operation down on Great Inagua Island in the Bahamas. This is the place-as you may have seen in the press-where the Marines were practicing their landings for the operation in Haiti. Great Inagua Island is very close to Haiti. Its only redeeming feature is that it has nothing on it except salt. There are enormous salt pans [where seawater is evaporated by the sun, leaving the salt]. Morton Salt has an industrial salt operation there. The Board of Morton Salt would come to the Bahamas every year for their annual meeting at a club on the Western end of New Providence Island.

Anyway we were invited. The Bahamian Prime Minister was there. Everybody who was anybody was there. Again, that was a revelation to me because as I sat there, the chairman of the Board of Morton Salt stood up and proposed a toast to the Queen, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and the Prime Minister of the Bahamas. We sat down and waited for the Prime Minister to reciprocate and offer a toast to the United States. The Prime Minister sat still. He didn't get up or toast the President of the United States. I really almost "lost it" at that point. I almost took my wife by the arm and said, "We're getting out of here."

I wondered to myself, "What should I do? This guy has just insulted the United States." It was very clear what protocol required at this point. Anyway, I decided not to make a fuss. I decided to corner the little bastard and I would "put it to him." His game was that his flunkies would surround him at the end of the evening. He would rush out of the room, and nobody would get a chance to talk to him. But I cornered Prime Minister Pindling before he could get out of the room and I said, "I need to talk to you." He said, "OK, give me a call and come over and see me." I must say that Pindling was very good about that. He would always take my telephone calls, and I could see him when I asked, unlike the Foreign Minister. If I needed to see the Foreign Minister about anything, it would take as long as two weeks to set it up. There were only three career diplomatic chiefs of mission in Nassau: the American, the British, and the Haitian. You could have a meeting of the Diplomatic Corps in a telephone booth, yet it would take two weeks to arrange to see the Foreign Minister. It was rather frustrating, to say the least.

Anyway, I went over and called on Prime Minister Pindling. I said, "Look, I have a couple of things to raise with you. First, I'm getting complaints from American citizens who own property down in Norman's Cay that they're being 'pushed around' by Colombian drug smugglers. They want to put a full-page ad in the international press. I've asked them not to do this until I could make representations to the government." At this point he said, "Who are these people who are going to put a full-page ad in the papers and what are their names?" I said, "I don't really know who they are. I got this information from the State Department." He said, "That's all right. I'll find out who they are from the Land Register."

I thought, "Boy, I'm not about to say who these folks are." I knew a couple of them. One of them was a Vice President of Salomon Brothers Corporation who happened to be a close friend of Assistant Secretary of State Tom Enders. Another one was the fellow who had come into my office to complain to me. He was from Florida.

So I said, "Shall we talk about Norman's Cay?" He said, "I don't know anything about Norman's Cay. As far as I know, the police are doing their normal duty." I said, "Well, there is a problem down there."

Then I said, "Look, the other issue is the base agreements. We need to sign the base agreements so that you can start getting the rent checks." I said, "I can't get any answer out of your Foreign Minister." He said, "What? My understanding is that you [the United States] are the problem." I said, "No, we're not the problem. We're ready to sign. You just tell us where and when you want to sign, and you'll start getting your money." It was clear from the expression on his face that this was news to him. He said, "Well, I'll check into that." I went home, feeling rather self satisfied. I had done an "end run" around the Foreign Minister.

Q: Did you mention the lack of a toast?

ANTIPPAS: No. I decided that, since I didn't walk out on him, I wouldn't do that. I'll mention another story that happened a year later.

This is a lesson to future diplomats on how you handle situations like this: should you take umbrage and what should you do-particularly if you are not the Ambassador? There is a difference between being a chargï¿½ d'affaires and being the Ambassador. Your "clout" is entirely different. You have to be careful not to "shoot yourself in the foot."

I was angry. I felt slighted on behalf of the United States. I felt that we, as a people, were being slighted. I felt satisfied at having raised these matters with the Prime Minister. Within a matter of days I received a diplomatic note from the Foreign Ministry, saying that, in fact, they were ready to sign the base agreement. So I dutifully sent the text of the diplomatic note to the Department. I really didn't understand it-a lot of it was legalese gobbledygook. I hadn't steeped myself in the text of this agreement because I'd been assured by the people in Legal Affairs in the State Department and the desk that we had an agreement.

Patting myself on the back, I dutifully sent over the text of this agreement and informed the State Department that we were close to signature. I felt, "What's so hard about this diplomacy stuff?" I was solving problems left, right, and center. Well, "boom !!!". I got a message back from the Department which said, in effect, "The Bahamian Government is 'sand bagging' us. They want to change the text of the agreement. They want guarantees about their $100 million that, over a period of 10 years, or whatever the time period was, they are going to be guaranteed $10 million a year. We can't do that for American domestic legal reasons." So we found ourselves back at square one. But at least I had an official piece of paper out of the Bahamian government, which I put in front of our Bahamas desk.

Another interesting thing happened at this time. It shows the trials and tribulations of trying to run a Foreign Service post. As I mentioned, the Bahamian desk officer, whose name escapes me at the moment, was really an excellent young man. Suddenly, he disappeared from sight. He was no longer in the State Department. For a couple of days I couldn't find out where he had gone. I had really depended on this man for intelligence, getting things done, and all of that. To their great embarrassment, the Department admitted to the fact that my desk officer had just been arrested by the Arlington County, Virginia Police for "pimping" for his wife! His wife was an Uruguayan national and apparently was prostituting herself. And they arrested him for pimping for her. I thought, "Oh, God, I can't believe that this is happening to me! It's just incredible!" My best friend at court at the State Department had just been arrested and bounced out of the Foreign Service.

Q: This shows that you really have to pay Foreign Service Officers a higher salary, I guess.

ANTIPPAS: I just couldn't believe it. This bright, young guy. It was incredible. So there was no desk officer. In fact, the Department assigned a young woman who was a consular officer as Bahamas desk officer. She happened to be the wife of a man in AID with whom I had worked in Cambodia. So I more or less knew them. But she really wasn't terribly competent at that point. She didn't know how to be a desk officer. A desk officer has to know how to "push buttons" and get things done, aside from knowing the substance of the issues. Obviously, she wasn't just dealing with one country. She had a whole sheaf of Caribbean countries to deal with. I needed someone who knew what he was doing up there-for my own self protection. And I'll describe what that meant.

We're now getting toward the end of December, [1981]. I'd already had my little experience with the conference in Miami. I didn't get much help from Tom Enders, the Assistant Secretary, in terms of mounting a formal presentation to the Government of the Bahamas to do something on the law enforcement side.

Q: Particularly on Norman's Cay.

ANTIPPAS: Norman's Cay was a particular problem. It was quite evident that we needed to do something. We had problems in the Bahamas, and the United States Government really didn't know anything about them. Law enforcement was becoming a major difficulty in our relations with the Bahamas. We in the U. S. Embassy were not equipped to do much of anything about it. We didn't have the manpower and we didn't have the access to the means, except from time to time when a U. S. Coast Guard cutter would come into port. For example, I had learned that the Haitians were using the Bahamas as a kind of "moving walkway" through to Miami.

Among other visitors we had in Nassau was the Deputy Commissioner of the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Al Nelson, a political appointee. He later became Commissioner of the INS. I was informed in advance that he was coming down for a short vacation.

As was my practice, when a VIP [Very Important Person] came to town, I'd go out to the airport, meet him, and escort him to his hotel. I figured that they didn't particularly want to be met. However, we had one Senator and member of the Foreign Relations Committee who came to town. He was a Democratic Senator from Nebraska and had been Mayor of Omaha. He has since died of a heart attack. He came down for a tennis weekend or something like that. I met him at the airport. He said, "You didn't have to come out and meet me. I didn't particularly want to be met." I said, "Sir, when a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee comes to Nassau, you're going to be met." I drove by the Embassy and the Residence and that sort of thing. I said, "This is just for your general education. By the way, why don't you people do your job as far as appointing decent Ambassadors is concerned? Why do you let the administration get away with appointing 'losers' to a place like this?" His answer was that it was not worth it to most Senators to fight a President on those kind of appointments unless the nominee was really a world class loser. Anyhow, we had a nice chat and became very friendly. He'd invite me to lunch when I'd come to Washington. It was my practice to meet people like that, because it's one of the little things that you can do when you're the boss.

The previous Carter Administration Ambassador to the Bahamas came to town from time. This guy had not been particularly active. Ambassador Charley Whitehouse once said about the Foreign Minister or the Finance Minister of Thailand, "I had to hold a mirror to his mouth to make sure that he was still breathing." The previous ambassador was something like that. When the previous Ambassador would come to Nassau, I would send the car out for him, as a courtesy. I figured that it didn't take much of an effort to show a little bit of consideration. I'd never forgotten the lesson I'd been told about Richard Nixon after he had been Vice President. He was traveling around the world on behalf of Pepsi-Cola.

Q: He'd been defeated in the election for Governor of California [1962]. He was considered a "loser."

ANTIPPAS: Absolutely a "loser." He was working for Pepsi-Cola and was traveling constantly. The story I've been told is that he was not particularly well-treated by the Foreign Service. He'd come to a given capital, and the Ambassador and everybody else would "cut him dead." Except Marshall Green, when he was Ambassador to Indonesia.

Q: And Henry Tasca.

ANTIPPAS: Right. They took care of former Vice President Nixon. As a consequence, when he was elected President in [1968], these guys were taken care of. That lesson was not wasted on me. As a matter of courtesy, it doesn't take much effort. I wasn't all that busy, so why not go out and meet these people?

Q: Let's return to finish the Norman Cay matter.

ANTIPPAS: All of these things are kind of intertwined. It's very hard to separate them from each other, because, as they developed, my experience in the job also came into play. You kind of have to "rock back and forth," from issue to issue. I'm covering these matters chronologically, because that's how I can best remember them.

In January, 1982, there was still no Ambassador in sight. No Ambassador was going to be around for a long time. We had a problem with the base agreements, which were "hanging fire." There was a growing appreciation that there was a crime problem in the Bahamas, which largely came down to a law enforcement issue. However, the Embassy was really not equipped to do anything about it. American interests and American citizens were being hurt by this attitude [on the part of the Bahamian authorities]. The Bahamas were not really a safe place to visit, yet we had something like two million Americans visiting this place every year. However, even if I had wanted to, I could not ignore the problem of law enforcement in the Bahamas, if I were going to do my job. I decided that, by guess or by God, I was going to try to do something.

As I understood the problem and given the experience I had had to date, you have to convince the "front office" of the Bureau of American Republic Affairs to help you. How could I do that? One, by trying to get more people assigned to the Embassy. Give the "front office" an appreciation of the problem and then see what could happen.

In early February, 1982, I received a phone call from someone who said that Prime Minister Pindling was going to Washington to attend the Congressional Prayer Breakfast. He said, "I just wanted to let you know that."

I had already had the experience in October, 1981 of the Foreign Minister going to New York for the opening of the General Assembly of the United Nations and not telling the Embassy that he was going. It had been my experience that whenever a Foreign Minister would go to New York for the UNGA, the American Embassy would be told. I was a little put out about that. Not only did he fail to tell me that he was going to New York, but I read about his speech at the United Nations in the newspapers. I wasn't even "clued in," so I was a little bit annoyed about this. I found it rather strange that the Bahamian Government took this view that cabinet ministers could "swan off" officially and unofficially to the United States and not tell anybody [in the Embassy in Nassau].

So I called Prime Minister Pindling on the phone. I had learned that he would take telephone calls without too much difficulty. He wasn't all that much concerned about protocol. I said that I had heard that he was going to Washington for a visit. I said, "Anything I can do to help you?" He replied, "Well, I have some "buddies" who got me invited to the Congressional Prayer Breakfast. Why do you people treat the Bahamas this way," alluding to the fact that we had no resident Ambassador and why we treated them in a slighting manner. I said, "Listen, while you're up there, if you agree, I'd like to try to make some appointments for you to see some people and get to know the new team [i. e., in the Reagan administration]." The Reagan administration had been in power for a year at that point. Aside from meeting Secretary of State Haig, he really hadn't met anybody else in the U. S. Government, to my knowledge.

Pindling said, "No, I don't think so." I said, "I don't know where Secretary of State Haig is." I think that at that time he was probably "shuttling" somewhere, perhaps in the Middle East. I don't think that the Falklands Islands crisis had yet started. I said that I didn't know where the Secretary of State was. However, I said, "The Deputy Secretary is in Washington, and he would be delighted to meet you if he knew that you were in town." Pindling said, "No, no," sort of dismissing this idea out of hand. However, I went ahead and, using my contacts in ARA, managed to get an appointment for Pindling with Secretary of State Haig, who, it turned out, was to be in Washington during the period when Prime Minister Pindling was going to be there. It was harder to get the $200 in travel funds for me to go to Washington to be there for the appointment. My instinct told me that I had better be there.

Normally, when a chief of state or chief of government goes to Washington, the American Ambassador or Chief of Mission is also there as a courtesy. There would be no problem arranging that. However, a chargï¿½ d'affaires is in a different position. I told the Department, "Look, I think that I ought to be there."

Q: Particularly with a "prickly" guy like that.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. Anyway, I managed to convince ARA to come up with the $200 for a round trip ticket, Nassau-Washington. I went up to Washington in the same plane with Prime Minister Pindling. It was the coldest month in 100 years. It was the week that the Air Florida plane crashed in the Potomac River.

Q: It hit the 14th St. Bridge or almost did.

ANTIPPAS: That was when we were in these meetings. I arrived Sunday night in Washington and stayed with my friend Upston, who was the Caribbean Coordinator-not that I couldn't afford a hotel, but he invited me to stay with him in Bethesda. I drove into Washington with him and went to the State Department on Monday morning. The appointment was scheduled for Tuesday. I went to the Office of Caribbean Affairs to make sure that the talking points were prepared for the Secretary. I dressed rather casually. I had on a tweed jacket and slacks. I figured to wear my more formal suit for the meeting the next day. The new Bahamas desk officer didn't know anything and hadn't prepared anything. So I had to sit down and prepare talking points for the Secretary.

We got a call from the Secretary's office. His assistant said, "The Secretary has a conflict in his schedule. He has to go to the White House on Tuesday. Bring your man in around today at 5:00 PM." I said, "What!!" Then, I thought, first, I have to find Prime Minister Pindling and make sure that he will come. I called the Bahamian Embassy, and they agreed to bring him to the State Department at 5:00 PM. Of course, I wasn't wearing my regular "burying and marrying" suit. I was going to be meeting with the Secretary of State in a tweed jacket!

I have never forgotten my first boss in the Foreign Service, in the Office of International Conferences, who was an old-line Foreign Service Political Officer. He was a great guy-an FSO-2 at that point, a very senior officer who had just come out of the Congo. I remember that in my first efficiency report he wrote, "Mr. Antippas sometimes comes to the office dressed in a sport coat." [Laughter] That was the Foreign Service as it used to be-not exactly "stiff upper lip," but there was a dress code. I thought, "There's no way I can get home to Upston's house to change my clothes. I'm going to be involved flat out to the last minute, getting these talking points processed through the system."

Anyway, we went up to meet with Secretary Haig at 5:00 PM. Haig was very affable. I don't know whether he remembered me or not, but I think that he recognized me from my Cambodian days. So Pindling, Tom Enders, this guy Upston, and I were there for the meeting with Secretary Haig. Pindling started "taking off" after the United States, with his litany of complaints about this, that, and the other thing. He was particularly angry with the Embassy.

The political season in the Bahamas was already starting. Parliamentary Elections were coming up in June, 1982. My Political Officer, who acted as my deputy, and I had agreed that I would go to the governing party political convention. He would cover the opposition political party convention. We knew them all, but I said, "We'll be even handed."

I was watching the opposition political party convention on TV, at home, with a friend of mine visiting from Washington, who was a staffer on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U. S. House of Representatives. I had invited him to stay with us. The opposition political party convention was being held in an older, smaller hotel, but it was great for television.

As I watched, whom do I see sitting at the head table but my Political Officer. I almost fainted. I almost died. I said, "What in the hell is he doing there, sitting at that table?" If I could have called the hotel to get a message to him to get the hell out of there, I would have done so. I died a thousand deaths that night. And, obviously, the government party was watching that TV program, too. I said that I knew that they were going to be sore, wondering what an American Embassy officer was doing, appearing in at the head table at the opposition party convention.

The next morning I tore a strip off this Political Officer. I said, "Why were you sitting there in such a prominent position? You should have been behind a drape." He said, "What could I do? They marched me in and sat me down there." They said, "We've got a chair for Andy, too-over here." I said, "What are you trying to do, kill me?" I said, "You should have gotten up and walked out. I would rather that those people were 'ticked off' at you. You have driven a nail in my coffin."

Well, at his meeting with Secretary Haig, Prime Minister Pindling complained about the activities of the American Embassy, which was supporting the opposition party. What he said amounted to, "It ain't right."

Pindling didn't mention the base agreements. I had written in the guidance I had given the Secretary, "Don't get drawn into a conversation about the base agreements. Ask Pindling to go to a meeting tomorrow with Assistant Secretary Enders to discuss the base agreements." It would have been too hard to get the Secretary of State up to speed on this issue. I could get Assistant Secretary Enders ready for such a discussion. I suggested that the Secretary simply say, "I'd like you to talk to Assistant Secretary Enders about other issues." Haig followed my suggestions very well.

One of the other problems we had had a few days before this trip to Washington was that a U. S. Coast Guard cutter had spotted a motor vessel in international waters near the Bahamas. The vessel had no flag, no markings, and apparently no radio equipment on board to respond to the attempts of the Coast Guard to contact it. It looked to be about the size of a typical drug boat. In international waters the Coast Guard challenged vessels of this kind. The cutter chased this boat for a couple of hours, trying to get it to stop so that they could board it, check it out, and find out whether it was carrying contraband. By the time they stopped it and put a boarding party on it, they discovered that it was a Bahamian mail boat traveling between the islands in the Bahamian archipelago. When the Coast Guard boarding party left the boat, both vessels had drifted into Bahamian territorial waters.

The Coast Guard cutter had not followed the established SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) and signaled Washington-Coast Guard Headquarters and the State Department-and the Embassy that it had had this encounter. I can still remember the name of the Bahamian vessel, the "MV (Motor Vessel) Geleta". During the chase the crew of the "Geleta" threw a garbage bag overboard. The Coast Guard Cutter retrieved it, and there was a small amount of marijuana in it. The captain of the cutter thought that they were on to something, and they kept chasing the "Geleta." It turned out that the crew of the "Geleta" was a feckless bunch of Bahamians. They had no radio, didn't fly a flag, and had no markings of any kind. It looked like a drug boat, but it wasn't. But. the captain of the "Geleta" returned to Nassau and screamed bloody murder to the Bahamian Government about "high handed" U. S. Coast Guard activities. So they were all worked up. I had egg on my face. There was egg on the Foreign Minister's face, because he didn't know about it.

The protocol procedure on this was that Washington would inform me, I would call the Foreign Minister day or night and either tell him that a "drug bust" was going on, that we were about to board a Bahamian vessel, or something like that. He would then give his "OK." I must say this about the Foreign Minister/Attorney General. On such occasions he was good about that. In fact, I had to call him at 4:00 AM a couple of times to tell him that DEA was about to jump on somebody on Bahamian territory and was it all right with him? There were issues of "hot pursuit" and so forth. He was agreeable to things like that. It was only on the more formal things that he was giving me-or giving the U. S.-a hard time.

Anyway, I could appreciate the fact that the Bahamian Government had "egg on its face" because of the action of the Coast Guard cutter. The Foreign Minister was sore. I had not taken any steps to apologize for this because the Bahamian Government hadn't complained to me. Maybe I should have apologized. We were still trying to figure out what had happened when this trip to Washington came up.

During Prime Minister Pindling's call on the American Secretary of State he complained about what the Coast Guard had done. He went on and on. Anyhow, bless Haig's heart! He kind of smiled and said, "Well, you know, sometimes there's an excess of zeal, but I'm glad to see that the Coast Guard's on the job." He cut the ground right out from under what Pindling was complaining about. Pindling was obviously not getting any joy out of Haig on this matter. When we were leaving, after this one hour meeting, Haig "winked" at me. I kind of rolled my eyes in response. As I walked back to Ender's office with Pindling, Tom said, "Well, your guy really sandbagged us."

On the next day Pindling met with Enders at 9:00 AM. Enders was late for the appointment because Mike Wallace [TV personality] was harassing Enders about U. S. activities in El Salvador, which was the ultimate undoing of Enders. He was "fired," when Judge Clark took over as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs over the issue of policy toward El Salvador.

Enders came to the meeting late. We were engaged in small talk while we waited for him. It was very cold on that particular day. Enders said to Prime Minister Pindling, "Well, Prime Minister, what's the situation?" I had called the Embassy in Nassau that morning and talked with the Political Officer to see how everything was going and to make sure that there had been no "blow up's." There was no news of great relevance from the Embassy in Nassau. So in response to Enders' question, Pindling leaned back and said, "Is it customary for the United States Government, in discussions with a foreign government leader, to make public announcements about the agenda for meetings he's supposed to have and comment on the substance of the meetings that he's undertaking?" There was a great silence. Enders looked at me, and I looked at him. We wondered what he was talking about. Pindling went on in that vein for a while. I slipped out of the meeting room and called the Embassy in Nassau to talk to the Political Officer. I said, "What is Pindling talking about? What's going on?" The Political Officer said, "Oh, in the 'Nassau Guardian' this morning there was an article to which apparently our Public Affairs Officer had contributed. It said that Pindling was meeting with the Secretary of State and would be discussing various pending issues."

Evidently, Pindling had decided to get up on his high horse and ride this issue for all it was worth. He was angry, he was ticked off, he felt he had been insulted, pushed around, or whatever. Nothing was mentioned in the press article about the substance of the issues. I figured out eventually that this was all a "setup" by Pindling. The only thing that had gone right was that, because of a conflict of scheduling, he was going to "dump" all this on Secretary Haig. As it turned out, he only dumped it on Enders. I figured that, if Pindling had dumped this on Haig, I would still be explaining what the hell had happened 10 years later. Thank God we didn't let him see the President! I'd be folding blankets some place.

Pindling was very clever. He understood very well how the United States Government worked. When I got back to Nassau, I tore strips off both the Public Affairs Officer and the Political Officer. I said, "What the hell were your guys doing? Why were you so inept? I was up there in Washington, holding the fort, and you guys let these people walk all over us. You should have said, 'No comment'-on anything."

The Political Officer decided to request a transfer after that. It was fairly early in his tour. He was a nice guy and very bright, and we had had a good relationship. He really screwed up twice and drove at least two nails into my personal coffin.

The Public Affairs Officer was the first USIA [United States Information Agency] officer assigned to Nassau. Until that time USIS [United States Information Service, the overseas service of USIA] just had a local, contract employee to handle USIS activity. The Public Affairs Officer was "certifiable"-he was mentally unbalanced, very unhappy to be there, and his family wasn't with him. He became a major management problem for me. I had a good excuse to "fire" him and get rid of him, because he had really screwed up in this instance, and nobody would have faulted me for it. However, I decided that I would not do this. I would look better if I "rehabilitated" this character, rather than use my obvious authority and "fire" him. And as he was the first USIS officer assigned to the Embassy, "firing" him would not look good. In retrospect, I should have "fired" him, because he did me "dirt" subsequently, when the Foreign Service Inspectors came. He "bad mouthed" me to the inspectors, unjustifiably so.

When you are placed in this position and are faced with decisions, you have to choose what to do. Should you be a "good" guy or a "tough" guy. To this day I'm not quite sure whether I made the right decision-whether I should have "fired" these two guys, "fired" them out of a cannon, or what. But that's what you're faced with.

Let me just finish this story. In early February, 1982, while I was up here in Washington, D. C. with Pindling. I went over to the National War College. They had an afternoon seminar, and I had some free time. I went over there to cadge a free drink at a reception later in the afternoon. Somehow, I ran into a guy who was the Assistant Inspector General of The Department at that time. He had been one of the senior officers who had inspected the Embassy in Nassau in 1980.

One of the management problems I had in the Embassy in Nassau was that it still had essentially the same Foreign Service Local and American complement as it had when it was a Consulate General, prior to independence. While that wasn't too bad on the substantive side, on the administrative side it was "murder." We were not a Consulate General. We were an Embassy. I was very concerned about the fact that I didn't have an American citizen Budget and Fiscal Officer. I had an American Administrative Officer, but he did everything. He wasn't a Budget and Fiscal Officer. One of the things that I had been pushing was how to get another position out of the Department and have a Budget and Fiscal Officer assigned. I was concerned about my own personal, financial responsibility for fiscal matters. For example, we had a local employee assigned to the Consular Section who worked on the preparation of passports for issuance. She had "ripped off" [stolen] the receipts for passports to the extent of about 800 Bahamian dollars, because the Consular Officers were not observing the proper receipt procedures. A Budget and Fiscal Officer would have caught that. As it turned out, there was no loss of money because we managed to hold back this employee's pay and then we fired her. That was simply proof to me that we had a Bahamanian local employee who was doing the Budget and Fiscal work, while we, the American employees, really didn't know what was going on. I thought that I was the guy who was going to go to prison at Ft. Leavenworth, given the experience I had in connection with the visa "scam" in the Embassy in Bangkok. I was nervous about this.

So I asked the Assistant Inspector General, "How do I handle this? You noted this problem in your 1980 inspection report. You said that the administrative side of the Embassy in Nassau needs more support. Can you tell me how to go about getting another position." Now, the Executive Director of ARA was a friend of mine. I could call him up and talk to him any time. I also spoke to Ambassador Robert Miller who had been in charge of Indochina matters during one period when I was in EA who was in charge of "M/MO" at the time...

Q: "Management Operations."

ANTIPPAS: Management Operations.

Q: Let me stop here to turn the tape over.

ANTIPPAS: He finished his career as Ambassador to one of the African countries but was in charge of Management Operations at this time. I could call him up, talk to him, and ask how we could get an additional position. I said that I needed help down in the Embassy in Nassau. So having pushed even personal connections and all the "buttons" that I could push, I still was getting no action in terms of an additional position. There was supposed to be a "floating" Budget and Fiscal Officer who was nominally based in the Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, who was supposed to come around and check the books. However, the guy had never shown up in Nassau in living memory. The Assistant Inspector General said to me, "Look, you can request a "special inspection" at any time, just on administrative affairs, to reinforce the need for this position. I recommend that you do that." So that was one thing that I did.During this same time my friend Upston, the "Caribbean Coordinator" in ARA, told me that the South Florida business community was so concerned about how crime had taken over in South Florida, particularly following the "Mariel" boat lift [the flow of Cuban refugees to the United States in small boats in 1980], the influx of Haitians, and the "narcodollars" that were flowing into South Florida, that, in their view, it was becoming like the "Wild West." They felt that local authorities were losing control of the situation in South Florida.

The business community, led by the President of Eastern Airlines and former astronaut, Frank Borman, had asked President Reagan to "send the troops in," that is, to send Federal troops in to help to restore order. President Reagan agreed to help in the establishment of a South Florida Task Force on Crime and he put Vice President George Bush in charge.

So Upston, the "Caribbean Coordinator," and I went over to call on Bush's chief of staff, Admiral Dan Murphy, just to introduce ourselves and talk about the "crime problem" in the Caribbean. I tried to explain to Admiral Murphy that he couldn't really understand what was happening in South Florida if he didn't know something about what was happening in the Bahamas, which was sort of the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" of narcotics, illegal aliens, and other skullduggery which had a definite impact on what was going on in South Florida.

The South Florida Task Force on Crime was established. I unilaterally enlisted my Embassy in Nassau in the task force. I wasn't invited. I just said, "I'm joining up." I used my own travel allocation to go to Miami periodically to sit in on Task Force meetings and report on what was going on in the Bahamas. With that we managed to follow through on the DEA proposal for the operation against Norman's Cay, although by that time DEA had withdrawn its request to make a "hostile takeover" of Norman's Key to arrest the Colombians.

There was still a proposal on the table about using American helicopters and aircraft to carry Bahamian Police on drug raids-in other words, to facilitate the delivery of Bahamian law enforcement personnel. During the Carter administration Prime Minister Pindling had made a request to the American Government for $25 million in assistance, including communications equipment, boats, and helicopters. Of course, people in Washington just laughed themselves sick when they saw this request. Two years later we finally delivered two "Boston Whaler" boats with spare engines to the Bahamian Government.

Q: These are small...

ANTIPPAS: Small, outboard motor powered boats. They're good for use on the open seas, but they didn't amount to $25 million in "goodies"-and this was another issue that Prime Minister Pindling was angry about. He felt that we kept hammering the Bahamas for assistance with our problems with drugs, but we wouldn't give the Bahamas any help. I'll tell you, I was one embarrassed character when I went down to hand over these boats to the Bahamian Police.

We finally obtained agreement that we would present a proposal to use American transportation assets to carry Bahamian law enforcement people. I thought that it was rather problematical that the Bahamian Foreign Minister/Attorney General would accept this proposal, particularly since he was no friend of mine at this point. However, we put the proposal together. I drafted it on behalf of DEA and sent it on to the State Department. Upston, who happened to be the only guy in ARA at that particular time, dealt with it. He talked it over with Assistant Secretary Enders. However, Enders by that time wouldn't sign his name to anything. He indicated to Upston to "deal with it as you see fit." This proposal had not been vetted with anyone else in the State Department or with the law enforcement community more generally in Washington. Upston simply sent me back a one-line cable, signed "Haig" and saying, "Proceed as you see fit."

So the ball had been lateraled back to me. I felt, "Well, let's go for it." I put the proposal up to the Foreign Ministry, fully expecting that the Foreign Minister was going to reject it out of hand. I thought that he would not agree to let the Americans come tramping through the Bahamas. Much to my surprise, the Foreign Minister agreed that we could do this.

Q: Why not stop at this point? Would you explain what we're talking about, so we'll know when we resume?

ANTIPPAS: OK, we're talking about the establishment of what we called, "Operation BAT." This doesn't stand for the mammal. It stands for "Bahamas, America, Turks and Caicos." This was the first time in American history that American transportation and other equipment assets were used to take foreign law enforcement people to fight crime.

Q: We'll pick it up from there.

ANTIPPAS: OK.

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Q: Today is October 18, 1994, Andy. You were talking about Operation BAT. Please continue.

ANTIPPAS: OK. As I said, I was really surprised that the Bahamian Government agreed to use American transportation assets to take Bahamian police on operations against the narcotics traffickers.

We're talking now about 1982. It was very clear to me that the Bahamian Government was very much involved in drug trafficking. The Foreign Minister/Attorney General was not. I don't think that he was corrupt. I think that he was "certifiable"-he just had a loose screw. He was brilliant, an intellectual, loquacious, honest as the day is long, but not intellectually honest.

Q: So the Bahamian Government agreed to this proposal. Can you figure out why they accepted it?

ANTIPPAS: I think that it was like the appointment of the Ambassador. I think that they "blinked." They lost their nerve in terms of not permitting the Americans to do what we wanted to do. I think that they could not openly refuse the United States to exercise the right of "hot pursuit" and chase the "bad guys." The situation was getting very grim in the United States. The amount of narcotics coming into the United States was enormous. The money laundering operation was on a very large scale in the southeastern part of the United States.

I remember a statistic that I heard. At the time of the economic recession of 1980-82 the only Federal Reserve District in the United States that had a positive cash flow was South Florida. Buildings were going up, and money was changing hands in a big way. The "bad guys" [the drug traffickers] were "buying" entire local governments. Of course, I'm not talking about the Haitian situation, which was also complicating things. It really was a very fragile period of time.

Don't forget. Nothing starts at "ground zero." A lot of people, particularly in Florida-I'm thinking now of Broward County-had very "hard feelings" toward the Bahamas, particularly toward Pindling and company. They could clearly see, from across the Straits of Florida, the nature of the problem. Of course, the Federal authorities just weren't dealing with it. I think that the Bahamians came to understand that they had better watch their step.

The Reagan administration was doing some very unconventional things in terms of indicting people. For example, they started the practice of telling international banks that if they wanted to do business in the United States, they would have to open up their secret files to United States prosecutors. That really "blew" some minds at that time. A lot of countries were very uncomfortable with that. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher [of Great Britain] as well as the government of Canada were very unhappy and uncomfortable with this action by the Reagan administration.

I remember that the Bank of Nova Scotia was told in no uncertain terms, "We want to know what you've got on your books in the Bahamas. If you want to do business in the United States, this is what you're going to have to do." Well, this was quite a departure in terms of respect for sovereign immunity. I think that was one of the reasons why the Bahamian Government accepted our proposal. Before I get into a discussion of Operation BAT, I'd like to talk about the appointment of the Ambassador.

I mentioned that when I was assigned to the Bahamas, I was told by Assistant Secretary Tom Enders to expect a political appointee as the Ambassador. He wanted me to be a "strong" DCM and run the Embassy. He couldn't tell me when we'd get an Ambassador. It might be a matter of weeks, it could be longer.So I went down to Nassau simply with the expectation of "doing my job." However, it became very apparent, after several months, that a number of people had been selected for appointment as Ambassador but were not being "cleared" for one reason or another. Given the way things were developing, we weren't going to have an Ambassador for a long time.

The Bahamian Government deeply resented the fact that no Ambassador had been appointed. They looked on this as a deliberate slight on the part of the Reagan administration, intended to send a very clear, political message to the voters of the Bahamas. There was an election coming up in June, 1982, and the United States Government was apparently displeased with the Pindling administration. In the view of the Bahamian Government that was the reason why there was no American Ambassador assigned to Nassau. Of course, the Bahamian opposition really beat the drum on this. I was sitting in the "hot seat." I was having people and politicians come up to me and say, "Why isn't there an American Ambassador here? Why are you guys doing this to us?" This makes it hard to explain this failure to appoint an Ambassador by saying, "Well, that's the way it is," and that it is not anyone's fault.

Finally, we got the word that Professor Lev Dobriansky who, I believe, had taught at Georgetown University, had been nominated to be the Ambassador to the Bahamas in the late Summer of 1982. That is, the request for agrï¿½ment was put to the Bahamas' government. Dobriansky had a very long record as a conservative Republican. He was of Ukrainian background, had something of a reputation as a Ukrainian "freedom fighter," and was very anti-communist in his views. In fact, when he finally arrived in Nassau, set up shop, and hung up his pictures on the wall of his office, it really looked like the political spectrum to the right of Genghis Khan. There were pictures of Park Chung Hee [of South Korea], Chiang Kai-shek [of Nationalist China]-you name it. All of these anti-communists going way back. His daughter, Paula, became a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department and was an NSC [National Security Council] staffer at one time. She's very bright.

When Dobriansky's nomination as Ambassador was surfaced, it was about at the same time that we were cranking up Operation BAT-the spring and summer of 1982. I received instructions to request agrï¿½ment and passed it on to the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Minister was aghast. He didn't like it. He didn't like Dobriansky. He said that he wanted to get a collection of his writings. He looked at Ambassador Dobriansky's record and said to me, what am I going to talk to this man about? What does he know about the Caribbean or the Bahamas?"

More than that, I think that the Bahamians were a little apprehensive about how the Cubans might take this appointment. It might look to the Cubans that we were kind of surrounding Cuba. The Bahamas had had its own problems with Cuba. They had a patrol boat strafed and sunk by a Cuban MiG fighter [Soviet made aircraft] in 1980. The Bahamians were very nervous about Cuban activism. There were some people within the Pindling government who were trying to come to an accommodation with Cuba. We're talking now about a period of increased tension in the Caribbean. Grenada was seen as a place where the Cubans and Russians were "up to no good." There were even reports that missiles were being emplaced in Grenada.

After I requested agrï¿½ment by diplomatic note, I waited and waited and waited. I thought, "If this nomination is going to go the way of the base agreements, we're going to have a problem." The Department was starting to "prod" me about obtaining agrï¿½ment for Ambassador Dobriansky. I was receiving cables, asking "What was the status of agrï¿½ment?" Assistant Secretary Tom Enders called me up one time and said, "What's the problem down there and what are your recommendations for action?" I replied, "Tom, they really don't want this guy. I recommend that we do nothing. I'll go in and push if you want. However, if I go in and push, they're liable to say 'No.'" Adderly had done this once before with a nomination from the Ford Administration. I said that they really object to him, more on ideological grounds than anything else. Enders, in turn, was being "pushed" by the White House. Like every good Foreign Service Officer who wanted appointment to another Embassy, he didn't want to irritate the Director of Personnel in the White House. So the pressure came on down to me.

I remember attending a party on Paradise Island at the house of Kevin McClory, the producer of the last James Bond film in which Sean Connery acted. Connery was also a resident of the Bahamas. I was at a party at McClory's house one night. Two of Pindling's cabinet ministers were there. I was on speaking terms with them, and they were friendly enough. However, both of them were as corrupt as the day is long. They actually were sort of charming "rogues." They were very much "in their cups" that night. They came up to me and said, "Why are you sending this guy Dobriansky to us? We don't want him." Obviously, they had listened to the Foreign Minister at a cabinet meeting. No one, not even the Prime Minister contradicted the Foreign Minister. I said, "Listen. I'm only the messenger. If you don't want this guy, you just tell me, and I'll pass the word back. It's not up to me to decide things like this."

Subsequently, in a matter of weeks, the Bahamian Government "blinked" and gave their agrï¿½ment to the appointment of Ambassador Dobriansky. Evidently, there was some concern in the Bahamas about the U. S. as "big brother" and how "big brother" could really hurt the Bahamas if it chose to. I think that that's what happened on "Operation BAT". I suspect that they probably thought, "Well, let them do what they want. They're not going to have a hell of a lot of impact," based on what we were proposing, which was to assign a helicopter or two to the Bahamas to carry out the mission. In fact, if you look at what we started out with, it was not very prepossessing.

The DEA managed to rent or acquire in some fashion a very much used Army HU-1 "Huey" helicopter from some depot in Texas. It was painted black, but you could still see through the paint a 1st Cavalry Division patch and a Red Cross. It had probably been used as a medical evacuation helicopter in Vietnam. DEA had provided only one pilot and no crew. Every "Huey" helicopter I flew in Vietnam and elsewhere had a crew of four people to run it. I discovered that DEA had only one guy to run this whole machine, moreover, a single engine aircraft. It was a UH-1G model, I think. The UH-1H, I think, was a two engine helicopter. This meant that if the DEA helicopter "crapped out" in flight, you had a problem. Initially and for the first several months I went on several of the flights, just to see how things were done in taking the Bahamian police on some of these missions. I must say that I was very nervous about the fact that the helicopter could not land on the water. There's a lot of water in the Bahamas, and some of it is very deep.

Q: Well, the first six feet are the most critical. After that, you don't have to worry about it.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. Eventually, they managed to put "floats" on the helicopter. But the helicopter could only operate for 100 hours before it had to be "rotated back" to the U.S. for a major overhaul in Florida. There were no facilities for major maintenance in the Bahamas. Florida is more than 200 miles away. So the number of missions you could actually fly with a "one lunger" Huey helicopter was very limited. On top of that, there was the questionable ability of the Bahamians to go out and arrest anybody. We had already had some experience with this and knew that some of the senior police officers were corrupt and would signal the "bad guys" [the drug traffickers] that they were coming to make a raid.

So we began the operation, running it out of the DEA office in the Embassy in Nassau. We brought in some communications equipment to talk to the helicopter. We would set up missions but wouldn't tell the Bahamian Police where we were going until we got the cops on the plane and were airborne. It was that kind of situation.

As I mentioned before, on Andros Island, the largest island in the Bahamian archipelago, due West of Nassau, we had "AUTEC," the Atlantic Underwater Test and Evaluation Center. Collocated at AUTEC was a [U. S.] Customs Department radar, aimed to the Southeast, in other words, aimed down the "Slot" or the chain of the Bahamas toward Cuba, so that it could detect aircraft that would come up the "Slot," around Guantanamo and between Hispaniola and the North coast of Cuba, heading for Florida. Unfortunately, this was a military radar, operated by the Customs Department It was not continuously on the air. It wasn't manned 24 hours a day. Frequently, we would find that an aircraft was coming up from Colombia, making the run up the "Slot." We would call over to AUTEC to see if the radar was on. Sometimes, the operator wouldn't be around. We would have a real problem because we very much needed a vector [a heading]. By the time the "bad guy" was flying along the North coast of Cuba, we had to guess what the direction was. Was he heading for the State of Georgia, for the Florida Keys, or where? We needed to know. If we were going to send a helicopter out to intercept this aircraft, we had to know where he was headed.

After Admiral Murphy set up the Federal Task Force in Florida, I used to go over to its meetings. I handled all of my own contacts with the Coast Guard, the DEA, the FBI, and, most importantly, with Admiral Murphy's office. When I would have problems with U. S. Customs, such as not having the radar "operating" on Andros Island, I would call Admiral Murphy and say, "Damn it. We have a [suspected drug smuggling] plane in the air now. We don't know where he's going because the U. S. Customs can't seem to get their act together." And so on. Anyhow, that's how we handled this matter.

Once we got a DEA flight "team" on the ground, I decided we would position the helicopter at the Police Training College in Nassau, located on what used to be called Oakes Field, which was once the airport in the Bahamas. We had built that airport during World War II as a landing point for the aircraft which we were ferrying through the Bahamas to Europe or Africa. Until the 1960's it was the commercial airport in Nassau, until they built the international airport farther out on [New Providence] island. The Bahamian Police had set up a police training college at Oakes Field. It had a secure area. I decided that we would put the DEA helicopter at the Police College, because I was afraid to leave it out at the international airport, for fear that the Colombian drug traffickers would sabotage it. The Colombians would be out at the international airport servicing their own aircraft. If the DEA helicopter were there, without much of a team to protect it, it would be easy to sabotage it. If the DEA helicopter were at the Police College, it was more unlikely that a Colombian would come by and pour sugar in the fuel tank, or something like that.

The next requirement was the need for communications. It was very evident that we didn't have the means of talking to the helicopter very well while it was in the air or talk to the U. S. Navy Base in Guantanamo, which also had a radar. It was also difficult to talk to AUTEC, which is where the U. S. Customs radar was located. More importantly, once the DEA and the Bahamian Police were out on a mission, we couldn't talk to them and had no way of knowing what they were up to. If the helicopter went "down," we wouldn't know that it was "down" or where. One of my biggest chores became the effort to try to get some communications equipment.

It turned out that one of my instructors at the National War College was an Army Lieutenant Colonel with whom I had become very friendly. He was originally from New Hampshire and taught "American political history" at the National War College. Anyway, he was very helpful. His assignment after the National War College tour as an instructor was in the office of the Secretary of the Army. He was put to work on problems like the one I had encountered-assistance to civilian law enforcement. I got in touch with him. He became my "prime mover" in trying to get some surplus military communications equipment in place at the Embassy so that we could communicate with the law enforcement world. We were then just going through the hassle over the "posse comitatus law" between the U. S. law enforcement community and the Department of Defense over assistance to law enforcement organizations.

For example, U. S. Navy vessels would come into Nassau twice a month, on the average. Nassau was a major port of call for ships coming out of Norfolk, VA. It seemed that if we didn't have a Navy ship in port, we'd have a Coast Guard vessel. I went aboard an awful lot of ships, doing my "thing" as chargï¿½ d'affaires. I entertained some of the ships' officers and got to know them. For example, we once had a visit from the USS INGERSOLL, a Navy destroyer which carried both guns and missiles. It was one of the newer types, built since World War II. The skipper of the INGERSOLL was a very friendly Navy Captain. When I went aboard, they gave me a tour of the ship, including the Combat Command Center. They told me how, using radar, they could vector weapons systems and could "play war games" to keep up the skills of the crew. I asked them, "Do you guys ever do anything when you see a drug airplane fly overhead? It must happen all the time. Do you do anything about that? Do you tell anybody?" The Captain said, "No, we have no requirement to report on this kind of activity. Even if we should see, for example, an aircraft making a drop [of some kind of packages], we wouldn't tell anybody. There's no requirement for us to do anything about it."

It "blew my mind" that we had all of these assets floating around there playing "war games"-kind of like computer games-to keep up the training of their crews. One of these aircraft could be offloading a month's supply of cocaine, and the Navy ship wouldn't tell anybody, much less chase them or anything like that. Some of the skippers on these Navy ships were very sympathetic to the view that they should be doing more about that.

I remember that the INGERSOLL had to "clear port" one day because of a conflict in the cruise ship schedule. They had to make room at the pier. They had to get permission from Norfolk. Normally, a Navy ship doesn't leave port once it comes in. It stays for a couple of days and then leaves. "Clearing port" early is an added expense and some trouble, but on this particular occasion they had to "clear port."

The skipper said, "Would you like to bring some of your people from the Embassy on board? We'll just take a little ride outside the island." I said, "Sure, why not?" The skipper said, "Well, where should we go?" I said, "There are a couple of islands about 30 miles North of here which, I know, are major dropping points for drugs. Planes come in and drop the packages. Why don't we go over there and take a look?" We did. I got a whole bunch of people from the Embassy who wanted to go out and take a ride one morning. So the INGERSOLL showed up off this island. They put a long boat over the side, and we went out to take a look. I think that we scared the hell out of somebody.

Anyway, it was clear to me that the Defense Department wasn't really "on board" on this drug enforcement effort. Of course, the argument on the military side was that this kind of activity detracts from their primary mission, which is training for war. It's kind of like the debate which we're having today about whether or not the military should be carrying out "peace-keeping" missions which detract from their fundamental commitments. These "peace-keeping" missions also cost a lot of money for fuel and so forth. At that time the argument was that the military were prevented from law enforcement activities under the post Civil War "Posse Comitatus" Act. This act was passed as a result of the occupation of the South by the Union Army. It provided that the military would not carry on law enforcement functions. So the Defense Department used to take cover behind that law. Eventually, the "Posse Comitatus" Act was modified to allow the military to take on law enforcement missions. In fact, after the Cold War was over, as you may recall, the military went around "looking for a mission." They needed to justify their existence and their assets. But at the time, in 1982, we had this frustration of really needing to have our armed forces to go out and chase the drug traffickers.

All things come to those who wait and try. Eventually, the military decided that we needed more than this "one lung" helicopter with one pilot with very limited "loiter" time. It was becoming very clear to the law enforcement community that there was a lot happening in the Bahamas, and we weren't dealing with it.

For example, at one time the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] reported that they were doing a "surveillance" flight over Bimini Island. Flying at about 10,000 feet, at night, using night vision equipment, they watched a drug aircraft being unloaded by the Bahamian Police. It was quite clear to everyone that we had to do something about tightening the screws in the Bahamas.

A plan was devised to deal with this situation. One of its major components was to station several radar "blimps" in the Bahamas. One of them had already been emplaced in Key West, 80 miles Southwest of Miami, which kept an eye on military aircraft activity, particularly in Mariel [Pinar del Rio province in Cuba]. The "blimp" or "balloon" in Key West was called "Fat Albert." The Reagan administration proposed to put additional blimps in strategic locations in the Bahamas where they could monitor drug aircraft coming through the Bahamas. The Bahamian Foreign Minister/Attorney General was less eager to do that. He gave us a hard time. However, Congress was very much in favor of it. There were several Congressional Committees which were eager to have these blimps emplaced. Hearings were held on this and other proposals in 1983. In fact, a Congressional Committee of 21 Congressmen came down to the Bahamas to look the situation over, meet with Prime Minister Pindling and company, and come to some conclusions.

Q: I would like to stop and ask a question here. 21 Members of Congress come down for a visit. Obviously, there is a chargï¿½ d'affaires in charge of the Embassy. You brief them...

ANTIPPAS: I briefed them. I took them around. In fact, I went over to Key West with them to look at "Fat Albert."

Q: But a Congressman is going to say, "OK, Mr. Antippas. Are these guys in the Bahamian Government 'on the take?'" How did you respond?

ANTIPPAS: I said, "They are." I said, "Basically, these people aren't friends of ours. They're helping us [to some extent] because they have to help us, but, basically, we're having a very hard time here. Our efforts haven't been that successful." A lot of the Congressmen knew this. Don't forget, we had people in the Congressional group like Rep. Mike Barnes, who used to be the Congressman for Montgomery County [in Maryland]. He headed up a subcommittee on Latin American Affairs. We had Rep. Dan Mica, a Republican Congressman from Ft. Lauderdale or somewhere on the Atlantic coast of Florida. He knew very well what was going on. The Congressional delegation from Florida was very well informed. The Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Dante Fascell, who has since retired, talked to me about Prime Minister Pindling in scatological terms.

Q: So you weren't telling them anything "out of school" on this.

ANTIPPAS: You would have to be really disingenuous to wring your hands and say, "These are great fellows." Nonsense. Actually, the Bahamian government had a number of objectionable people who were not friends of the United States. They hurt us in many ways. A lot of things were hanging fire because of their obduracy, going way back to the effort to arrest Robert Vesco.

I have to tell you about my effort to get an aircraft for the Bahamians. As I said before, the Bahamians complained bitterly that we were putting all this pressure on them to do something. As Prime Minister Pindling told Vice President Bush in Miami in December, 1982, in my presence, "You have all of this ability in the United States, and you can't stop the drug aircraft or drug boats from coming in. We have one control tower in all of the Bahamas, no Air Force, and not much of a Navy. How do you expect us to stop the drug traffic?" Vice President Bush got very angry about that barbed comment.

As I mentioned before, the Bahamian Government had given the Carter administration a shopping list of $25 million for equipment which they wanted to support the anti-drug effort, including helicopters, boats, weapons, communications gear, and other things. The Carter administration replied, "No way we're going to give these guys this equipment because it's very clear to us that the Bahamians aren't going to do anything with it." There was also the view that helicopters were a very expensive proposition to run. Unlike fixed wing aircraft, they are really expensive in terms of maintenance, apart from the training of air crew. They're certainly very useful, but their cost effectiveness is really questionable under the circumstances.

A friend of mine in the Department who was very interested in aviation contacted me and told me that in the aircraft "bone yard" in Florida there was a Grumman "Widgeon" seaplane which had just been retired by the Department of the Interior. Interior had used this plane to make resupply flights from Miami down to Ft. Washington...

Q: In the Dry Tortugas, where Dr. Samuel Mudd...

ANTIPPAS: The Dry Tortugas. Samuel Mudd was the best-known prisoner. It was really "back of beyond" and a long way from anywhere. I guess that the Interior Department decided that it couldn't afford to keep this plane going any more, so they retired it. This fellow told me about it. So one day I took a trip over there to take a look at this thing. The aircraft "bone yard" was located South of Homestead Air Force Base. I thought, "This would be perfect for the Bahamas. That's exactly what they need-a seaplane which could be refurbished." It would allow them to carry Bahamian Police as fast as a helicopter, although they were not quite as effective. More importantly, it could land on water and could deliver the police where they were needed. It would do the job and was a lot cheaper than a helicopter.

I "sold" the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Affairs. At that time the Assistant Secretary was a Republican political appointee from New York state who later went on to become a federal judge. He was quite helpful. It turned out that the desk officer in INM [Bureau of International Narcotics Affairs], who was handling the Bahamas, was a consular officer whom I knew. He was also very friendly and helpful. I said, "Look, you've got to get this plane for me. The Department of the Interior will give us the airplane. If you can scratch up $40-50,000, we can refurbish the engines and plane. We would need some money for pilot training-and we'll get the Bahamians to fly it."

The military advisers to the Bahamas at that time were still the British. The Commodore of the Bahamian Defense Forces was a serving Royal Navy officer who was very friendly to us. He had always been very accommodating. His second in command, who actually ran the logistics base on New providence Island, was a retired Royal Navy officer. He was also very friendly to the United States. He had an American wife.

They had an Royal Navy flying officer assigned to the Bahamas, who flew a "leased plane" for the Bahamian Defense Forces. I worked out a deal. I said, "Look, if I can acquire this plane, would you agree to use it? I'll look stupid if we go to the expense of acquiring this airplane and then you guys won't use it." I said, "We will arrange to provide flight training on seaplanes for a Bahamian pilot." Obviously, the British weren't going to be there forever. They agreed that they would do this. The wheels were set in motion, I got the money, we got the plane signed over to the State Department, and we actually had this plan moving toward fruition. We actually were going to get this aircraft.

Before that happened, we had this Congressional "flying circus" come to Nassau-21 Congressmen who decided that they were going to "put the screws" to the Reagan administration's efforts on drug enforcement. I think that it was Congressman Glen English of Ohio who was the head of this special Congressional committee, who came to Nassau with his 20 colleagues. We had meetings. We went around and looked at this, that, and the other thing. As I said, we went over to Key West and looked at "Fat Albert," the blimp. Then he decided to have hearings in Miami, to which I was subpoenaed to appear, as the chargï¿½ d'affaires in the Bahamas. The Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics Affairs was also subpoenaed to testify before this committee. Congressman English took the Assistant Secretary "over the hurdles" for the fact that IN/M had done so little for the Bahamas, in terms of providing them with resources. The Assistant Secretary just "took his lumps." Congressman English even took me "over the hurdles" and said, "Is this the best that the United States Government can do for the Bahamas-to give them a 40-year-old airplane to chase down the 'bad guys?'" Of course, I tried to explain what the situation was.

The hearing was over, and we were walking out of the building. Congressman English came up to me and apologized. He said, "We have to do that. It's politics." Actually, it had been a very useful session.

As I'll tell you subsequently about my adventure in getting "kicked out" of the Bahamas, I actually came out of these hearings, "smelling like a rose." I had tried to do something of utility. I looked good and the Department looked good.

Anyway, Operation BAT finally didn't get the seaplane because the British "double crossed" us. They said that they didn't want the airplane because they were under pressure to get the Bahamians to buy a British aircraft for their use-but land based. It had no ability to land anywhere except a runway. There were very few runways available. This was totally counter to what I was trying to "sell" them. To get to most of the places where the "bad guys" congregated, you either needed a helicopter or a seaplane. The drug traffickers were using air drops and "cigarette type" speedboats, which can go 60 miles an hour. We needed an aircraft to catch them. There are no ships which can chase these boats, even though the U. S. Navy put into service in the Caribbean area several hydrofoils. One of them, the USS TAURUS, once visited Nassau. I looked a little bit stupid because we had an airplane which we couldn't use. I don't know what happened to the old Grumman "Widgeon." I don't know whether the Department used it elsewhere or everybody kind of "fell on their swords." I never forgave the British for that. I did have one other idea that I was working on. There was an island South of Bimini Island. Bimini is the closest Bahamian island to Florida and a very natural, staging point for all kinds of "shenanigans" going on, aimed at the United States-illegal aliens, narcotics, money laundering, you name it. They even had banks on Bimini Island for money laundering.

South of Bimini there is an island, basically composed of sand. I think its called "Ocean Island". It was mostly man-made and had digging and earth-moving gear on it to mine the sand of which it is composed. This sand is called, "Aragonite." [According to the dictionary, aragonite is calcium carbonate in orthorhombic crystals with less distinctive cleavage and greater density than calcite]. This is industrial sand which is mined for making glass for automobile windshields. The island was owned by an American company which mined the sand and shipped it to industrial locations.

You didn't have to be a tactical genius to figure out that we had to do something to stop these speedboats, which were the primary means of moving high value narcotics into Florida from the Bahamas. What would happen was that there would be air drops of narcotics on various islands in the Bahamas, anywhere from Bimini to the East. "Cigarette" speedboats would just run into Florida at night, with a load of cocaine. Aircraft were also used, of course, to smuggle drugs, but speedboats were being used, more and more. We had to do something to stop these boats, as they were crossing the Straits of Florida.

By that point, in the spring of 1983, Ambassador Dobriansky had been appointed and was about to arrive in Nassau. I had this 21-member Congressional delegation visit us and give us the benefit of their wisdom, as well as "dump all over us." The U. S. military had acceded to the Reagan administration's desire to give us more assets for our efforts. So a Special Mission Air Force unit with helicopters, from Hurlburt Air Force Base in Florida, was designated to send some aircraft to the Bahamas and to "set up shop." The unit was under the command of an Air Force lieutenant colonel. These aircraft were equipped for night time operations. They had night vision equipment, and the personnel knew how to use it. They had the latest model helicopters to do this.

We moved them into the Police Academy at Oakes Field and began to run some more effective operations, because we had a greater capability. I pretty much directed this whole effort. I had a good relationship with two DEA agents who were assigned to the Embassy. They were very accommodating and understanding. However, they were essentially intelligence operatives. They really would not have known how to manage this kind of operation. For example, I was the one who said that we had to have rubber "fuel bladders" brought in and set up because we couldn't take the chance that the "bad guys" would adulterate the fuel. We'd have to have our own fuel supply, which we could test and could guard. We wouldn't depend on commercial fuel. These DEA guys would not have thought of that.

It was my idea to move this whole operation closer in to the Embassy. Oakes Field was not far from the Embassy. Think of it. If you had to run an operation, if you suddenly got word that there was a "bad guy" flying up the "Slot" and you had to drive all the way out to the international airport to mount up your helicopters, since we didn't man these planes unless we had a target, it made a lot more sense to operate from closer to the Embassy. I was able to arrange that.

The U. S. Air Force was very accommodating and very helpful. We found housing for them. They were on "per diem" and were doing very well. I didn't get the impression that the Drug Enforcement guys were resentful that I, in fact, was running the "drug war" in the Bahamas because, by that point, I had been chargï¿½ d'affaires for almost two years. There was no question of who was running the Embassy, even though the Ambassador was just about to arrive.

It was my thought that we needed to station one of these helicopters closer to the Straits of Florida, so that we could actually "run down" these speedboats as they came across. I had in mind setting up a base on Bimini Island, as well as a base on this sand island, of which I spoke just now. I flew over and "made a deal" with the management of the sand island that we could station some fuel there so that the helicopters could refuel, if necessary. The management of the sand island would arrange to guard the fuel. We didn't think that we would station helicopters on the sand island, because conditions there were not very good. There was a lot of blowing sand. It would really be like desert operations. It was not a particularly hospitable situation. But we really didn't need to station helicopters on the sand island. But we could set up on Bimini. The deal that I worked out with the Royal Navy officer, who was the Commodore of the Bahamian Defense Force at that time, was that we would construct a helicopter pad in Bimini. He would assign a patrol boat and armed guards to protect the helicopter pad, so that we could base our helicopters there. This was really "Apache" [hostile] country. There were enough of the "bad guys," so that if you're going to set up a military base, you'd better be prepared to guard it.

Payment for fuel was a manageable problem. The Commodore had to operate his forces anyway, but he didn't have money for fuel for his boats to go back and forth to Nassau. So I worked out a "deal" with IN/M [in the State Department], which was very helpful to me, that they would pick up the "tab" for the fuel for the Commodore's Bahamian Defense Force. He would station troops there to guard the helicopters. So we were all set to start operations, flying out of Bimini Island and this sand island to chase down the "bad guys."

The Commander of the U. S. Coast Guard District [Seventh Coast Guard District] was Rear Admiral "Deese" Thompson, who was very helpful. He had begun his career, flying seaplanes like the Grumman Widgeon in the Bahamas, back in the 1950's. I had complained about not having the means to check out the waterways in the Bahamas. He arranged to have shipped over to me in 1982, a 17-foot, aluminum hulled, "buoy tender," with a 125 HP Johnson outboard motor. It would really move. So one day they towed this boat over, behind a Coast Guard cutter, and said, "Here's your boat."

You could fill a volume with what I didn't know about boats. I learned "OJT" (On The Job). Of course, there was no operating money whatsoever in the Embassy for this boat. Some delicate inquiries were made to the ARA Executive Office, but I was told that there wouldn't be any money for this purpose. So I would somehow have to run this thing out of the Embassy budget. There was no money to keep this boat in a marina. Since the DCM's house in Nassau was on the waterfront, and I had a beach in front of the house, I just anchored the boat right there. For fuel I used the budget for the automobile assigned to me. We used this boat to cruise around and check on the Haitian boats which were cruising through there and to keep an eye out on the "bad guys." Now and again the marina owners were very understanding and would let me keep the boat in one of their slips for a couple of days.

One evening my son and I went down to a marina to check on the boat. I was walking back toward the marina office, and this Latino-looking individual, carrying two large bags of groceries, was walking down to where a very large "cigarette" boat was docked. The "cigarette" boats were really fast. This is the kind of boat that President George Bush has.

I had a Coast Guard baseball type cap on my head, which said, "U. S. Coast Guard Cutter ACUSHNET" on it. I had a lot of baseball caps. It happens that the ACUSHNET is a "light ship." [It carries a light which can be seen for miles; it is anchored in a relatively fixed position off the coast.] I can still remember the expression on this Latino's face when he looked at me and then looked at my hat with the name of the ACUSHNET on it. I smiled at him and said, "See you later." Hopefully, I ruined his evening for him.A helicopter could chase a "cigarette" boat and keep an eye on it. A Coast Guard cutter could come out to meet it from Florida. The cutter could stop it, but you needed a helicopter or a seaplane to follow it. There was no Coast Guard ship fast enough to catch one. Even a fixed wing aircraft might have a problem staying with on of these boats, because they are so fast. However, a helicopter probably could follow it.

There was a policy decision that we would not go out armed. We weren't going to shoot at anybody, either in boats or in planes, because of considerations of boating and aircraft safety and all of that. Still, the Coast Guard would be prepared to shoot back at the "bad guys" if they did something stupid.

Anyway, we were all set up to launch the new phase of Operation BAT, which was to extend operations when I was "fired." Ambassador Dobriansky arrived in March, 1983. He "fired" me in June. I really thought that he was going to be a "law and order" type of Republican-a conservative Republican. Our understanding had been, when we had met in December, 1982, that he would let me "run" the Embassy, and he was going to do whatever he wanted to do-write his memoirs or whatever...

Q: Or push for Ukrainian independence.

ANTIPPAS: Or whatever. Actually, I liked him. He was a nice, old guy. Mrs. Dobriansky was something else, but he wasn't a "bad sort," actually. I thought that we had a pretty good relationship. Of course, I was keeping in mind what I had been told early in the game that if you're going to be chargï¿½ d'affaires for a long time, don't get your hopes up about staying on. It doesn't really work.

Q: The rule of thumb is that you almost have to get rid of the old DCM, because it doesn't work.

ANTIPPAS: You get big ego's involved, and I knew that. But operations against the drug traffic seemed to be going so well. We were really beginning to build up a head of steam. I had a great relationship with Vice President George Bush's office and the law enforcement community. In December, 1982, after the meeting in Miami, I went up to Washington to meet Ambassador Dobriansky and Assistant Secretary Tom Enders and find out what the Department had in mind for me to do next. Tom said, "You know, the Bahamians want you out of Nassau. Prime Minister Pindling wants you out." He said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "Well, there isn't much available in the way of assignments. The only assignment available would be Principal Officer in Martinique. Frankly, from what I've seen happen to guys who go to Martinique, that's got to be the end of the line." You know, nobody ever goes on to anything after [serving in the Consulate in] Martinique.

Q: That's the Siberia of the State Department.

ANTIPPAS: It's sort of a "golden handshake." I had known a couple of guys who had gone to Martinique. In this business and for the benefit of this exercise if you don't watch what your peers and your seniors do with their careers...

Q: You have to keep an eye on their number and your number.

ANTIPPAS: So I have done that over the years and I thought that there was no future in the Foreign Service after serving in Martinique. I wasn't planning to retire at that point. I was having a great time, running this anti-drug program. I thought, "I'd just as soon stay here and give Pindling heartburn." Enders' view was, "OK, you can stay as far as I'm concerned. Pindling is not going to dictate our personnel management."

So I went back to Nassau having made a commitment to the new Ambassador that my basic function would be to make his mission a success. If he looked good, I would look good. That's what I would work towards. I made it very clear to him that he was going to be the boss. However, I had been running the Embassy and knew how things worked. We had had a lot of problems. The Bahamas were attracting additional attention in certain areas. I thought that the Ambassador and I had an understanding. He had agreed that I would stay on as DCM for two more years. But I had also seen that happen to Mike Rives in Cambodia some years before. Nothing in this world is ever certain. So I returned to the Bahamas in early 1983 and did my job, which seemed to be beginning to work out quite successfully.

Ambassador Dobriansky finally arrived in Nassau in early March, 1983, after many "false starts." In fact, he took over three months to arrive in Nassau. The delay was becoming a very definite embarrassment. When the Governor General of the Bahamas, Sir Gerald Cash, a very good friend of ours and of the United States and probably the most decent person in the Bahamian Government, began to complain that the new Ambassador had not yet arrived, I thought that we were in trouble. I felt that I could expect Prime Minister Pindling and company to be angry.

By the way, Pindling had won the elections of 1982-he really "stole" them. So he was all set for the next five years. I told the Ambassador that he really should come down to Nassau as soon as possible, as his continued absence was becoming a major political problem for the Embassy.

For one reason or another Ambassador Dobriansky made one excuse after another about not coming down to Nassau. Whether it was renting his house in Washington, or his wife didn't want to come-whatever the problem was-he didn't arrive until March, 1983.

One of the great annual events in the Bahamas is what is called the Out-Island Regatta, which takes place in Georgetown, in the Abaco Islands. Many of the sailboats in the Bahamas get together there and have races. It happens just about Easter time and is a great time for parties. Prime Minister Pindling invited the Ambassador to attend the Regatta. It turns out that is when Pindling "did me in." He was able to have some "quiet" time with the Ambassador. In effect, Pindling told Ambassador Dobriansky, "Look, I can work with you, but Antippas has to go." That message came across pretty clearly to me.

The Ambassador did not take any action immediately. It was not until the Foreign Service Inspectors came in May, 1983. We were inspected and, as I predicted earlier, the "gigs" [criticisms] showed up on the administrative side. I had said earlier that if I didn't have another American employee here to help out [on the administrative side], how on earth could we keep our accounts clear? The Inspectors came up with 48 specific criticisms of the administration of the Embassy. The Ambassador used those criticisms as evidence that my management techniques were a failure and, therefore, I had to go.

The senior Inspector, Nancy Ostrander, who had previously served as Ambassador to Suriname, spoke to me. She said, "Look, I don't know what the new Ambassador is thinking about, but you've got a problem with him." I replied, "Well, I guess I'm really not surprised, under the circumstances."

After the Inspectors left, the Ambassador called me into his office in early June, 1983, and said, "Look, you'd better find yourself another job. I think that we need to make some changes here and I need a new man. We have systemic problems in the Embassy." He loved to use words like that. He would talk in large terms, like cartoon balloons. He would just "bury" you in words. You would have to listen to him very carefully to understand what he was saying.

I was so shocked that I didn't even clean out my personal files, as I should have done, including all of the memoranda that I had written, cables, and so forth. I just kind of left all of this stuff there in the Embassy in Nassau. I just walked out. I was dismayed by this kind of treatment.

Q: He was a professor?

ANTIPPAS: As I mentioned previously, he was a Political Science professor here at Georgetown University.

I was quite shocked when he "fired" me. I shouldn't have been. As it turned out, Vice President Bush's former Press Secretary, Peter Teeley, happened to be in my officthat day. He had just left Bush's office and was writing a book on narcotics trafficking in the Caribbean. He had put in six months of research at Harvard University. He had come down to Nassau to collect material for his book. He happened to be sitting in my office on this particular day. My wife was also there at the same time, when I walked in from my morning meeting with the Ambassador. I was in a daze. I said, "You know what this guy just did? He just 'fired' me." I had asked him at least to let me stay on until December, 1983, so that I could get back into the assignments cycle and also because my children were in school. But the Ambassador was adamant. I had to leave as soon as possible. June was the worst possible time to look for an assignment.

Q: All assignments were in place for that year.

ANTIPPAS: Except when somebody "drops dead," which is always a possibility. That was my hope, so I said, "Obviously, I'd better get the hell out of Nassau." I also had in mind that the Ambassador hadn't been at post long enough to do an efficiency report on me, so maybe it would be best for me to leave before the Ambassador had time to do a negative efficiency report on me.

A U. S. Navy sponsored meeting had been scheduled at Key West to review Emergency and Evacuation [E&E] procedures. I was scheduled to go, as was the Administrative Officer, to prepare a plan on how we would evacuate the post, should the occasion arise. This was several months before the situation in Grenada became a problem.

I told the Ambassador that, under the circumstances, I didn't think that I ought to go to the Key West meeting. I said that I should arrange to leave the post as soon as possible. If I couldn't stay in Nassau, I had to find another assignment in the Foreign Service. I was due for home leave at the time and actually had the tickets for my family and myself.

However, the Ambassador said, "No, I would really prefer that you would go to this conference. You could leave in July," or something like that. I was really upset at this point, when I started thinking about it. I figured that Prime Minister Pindling had "done me in," and the Ambassador had let him get away with it. As far as I could see, the Ambassador hadn't even gotten anything in exchange for getting rid of me! If you're going to throw somebody to the wolves, at least get something for it, like the base agreement. I had already worked out a deal on the base agreement. I think I should talk about that before I discuss how I was "run out of the Bahamas."

I have already said that, early in my tenure as DCM in Nassau, I had discovered that we had a major problem with the Bahamian Government-particularly the Foreign Minister over the base agreement because he wasn't guaranteed 10 years' income for the bases. We couldn't guarantee that because of our budget process.

Anyhow, in 1982 I took the occasion to invite Ambassador William Middendorf, the American representative to the OAS [Organization of American States], to visit Nassau. He had been Ambassador to the Netherlands in the Ford Administration and had been Secretary of the Navy.

Q: Yes , I've interviewed him.

ANTIPPAS: Bill Middendorf was a banker. I had met him when I was leaving for the Bahamas. He had just been appointed American representative to the OAS. He said, "Listen, find an excuse to invite me down to the Bahamas." Well, I remembered that. So I invited him down to the Bahamas, because it was part of my personal program to invite prominent personalities down there to show that we really didn't hate the Bahamas. I invited Bill down, and we talked about the base agreements, because he was quite familiar with the issue from his experience in the Navy. I said, "What can we do to 'sweeten the pot' a little bit or to 'sweet talk' the Bahamians into accepting the base agreements?"

Anyway, to make a long story short, Bill Middendorf had helped enormously to get the U. S. Navy to make some accommodations to the working group which allowed us to get approval to sign the base agreements. That was all "in train," as it were, at the time I was "fired" as DCM in Nassau. It was one of the things that kind of "blew up" in our faces, along with all of the arrangements we were making on Operation BAT.

After I was "fired" and left Nassau, the Ambassador decided to have a "chat" with NBC [National Broadcasting Company] television. NBC was in the process of doing an expose on the "cocaine connection" in the Bahamas. The Ambassador made these arrangements on his own hook, without telling Washington and without having the Public Affairs Officer or anybody else in the Embassy help him or protect him. He talked for three hours on videotape with Bryan Ross of NBC. He said some outlandish things, which NBC, of course, showed on television on the day after Labor Day, 1983. The Ambassador told Ross, "Law enforcement isn't the only issue that we have in the Bahamas. We have this base agreement which is still pending." That was absolutely the wrong thing to say. It blew everything out of the water. It was almost hilarious if it had not been so stupid. It was a prime demonstration of how political appointees can be their own worst enemies. The Ambassador almost got himself "fired" because of this thing. I think that he was very close to being forced to resign by the White House, except that Presidents don't like to do that sort of thing.The NBC expose, which was called, "The Vesco Connection in the Bahamas," alleged that the Bahamian Government was being "paid off" by Robert Vesco on behalf of the Colombian drug cartel to let them use Norman's Cay, which I mentioned earlier. The television program stated that there were drug airplanes flying out of Norman's Cay into Florida and that the original "connection" had been Robert Vesco, who had allegedly funded the initial Colombian operation in the late 1970's. The program was apparently based on "leaks," probably out of the State of Florida law enforcement community. I don't think that the "leaks" came from the federal law enforcement community. I think that it sounded like what the Sheriff of Broward County had said to me. The Sheriff had told me that Robert Vesco had been "paying off" Prime Minister Pindling and company. Vesco was allegedly also in "cahoots" with the Colombian drug cartel.

On the day before the NBC television program on the Bahamas was aired, my friend Kenny Cartwright, from the Bahamas, called me in Boston where I was visiting my brother. Kenny was still in Nassau. He said, "Watch NBC tomorrow morning. On the NBC 'Today' show there's going to be an expose on the Bahamas. I've got a problem because they're going to mention my name as being involved in narcotics trafficking." He asked, "What can I do to protect myself?" He said that Glenn Campbell, who was the DEA agent in Nassau, "knows very well that I am not involved. I knew that myself. It's going to be very bad if my name is mentioned. It can ruin me." I advised him to send a telegram to the chief of the DEA office in Miami, whose name escapes me now, indicating that this NBC show was about to be televised. I advised him to tell the DEA chief that he absolutely denies any involvement in drug trafficking and that he is willing to take a polygraph ["lie detector"] test to prove his point. I said, "I suggest that you send a copy of that telegram to NBC immediately, showing that you have done this. That may dissuade them from mentioning your name." However, in any event, Kenny Cartwright's name was mentioned prominently.

On the next morning, at 7:00 or 8:00 AM, this segment showed up on television with Bryan Ross questioning Prime Minister Pindling of the Bahamas. It was sort of "in your face" journalism. He had walked up to Pindling in the street in Nassau, pushed his microphone on his face, and said, "Are you being 'paid off' by the Colombians?" I thought, "Boy, am I glad that I'm not in Nassau."

This telecast caused a political "firestorm" in the Bahamas. In statements to the press and in speeches at political rallies, Prime Minister Pindling started to blame me for the allegations made in the telecast. He said, "This is all because of "Antippas". "Antippas leaked this material to NBC because he was angry that he was not made Ambassador to the Bahamas". When Ambassador Dobriansky came to Nassau, he 'fired' Antippas." In fact, Dobriansky "fired" me because Pindling had told him to "fire" me. So on and on it went. It became more and more a matter of allegations like that. Pindling appeared on the NBC "Today" show with Jane Pauley and Bryan Ross. It was a very acerbic, frigid kind of session. I have video tapes of these interviews some place in my files.

U. S. Government policy was that we didn't want to create any problems with the Bahamas. This had been my own instinct. I felt that it doesn't serve any purpose to pick a fight with the Bahamian Government. It would just give them an excuse not to cooperate with us. In fact, that is what I told Bryan Ross, when ran me to ground later on in Grenada. At first I refused to talk to him. Then I agreed to. I told him, "Look, I may be very sympathetic with what you're trying to do-your motives and all that. I certainly agree that a number of figures in the Bahamian Government are as corrupt as the day is long. I also think that some of the things you reported in that story were not right-the references to 'air conditioned hangars full of cocaine,' and all of that stuff. If I had been in charge of the Embassy when you came to Nassau, in July, 1983, you would not have gotten in the door. Not only would I not have talked to you, I wouldn't even have let you in the Embassy, because it was not my job, as a representative of the United States, to cause an uproar in our relationships with the Bahamas and give some of the leaders of the Bahamian Government an excuse not to cooperate with us," which is what happened. They stopped cooperating on the drug side and they also stalled the signature of the base agreement for another year before they finally sat down and signed it.

I had gotten to know Kenny Cartwright earlier during my stay in Nassau. He was a white businessman who was doing very well. He owned car dealerships and property. Later on I rented a house from him which my family lived in. Initially, I looked at Kenny Cartwright with something of a jaundiced eye. I had gotten to know him because our wives were in the same bridge group. Kenny's wife was of Colombian background and had been married to Kenny for some years. We met these people socially. My wife was telling me about his wife. I thought that I should stay away from these people because he had the absolutely classic profile of somebody involved in drugs.

But I was wrong, actually. He was simply very much a hard charging, Bahamian businessman who knew how to make a buck. As Nassau was a very small community, he had gotten to know a lot of people. One of the things that he had done was that he had either sold or rented property to Robert Vesco in the Abaco Islands. I think that he either sold Vesco a house or a half interest in an island there, which, of course, was suspect in some people's minds. I asked DEA to run a "whole name check" on him before I started seeing this guy socially. We got to know each other. He had a couple of yachts.

On Easter weekend, 1983, we took our families and went down to inspect Norman's Cay, which, by that time, had been abandoned by the Colombian cartel, as a result of the pressure that we had put on them the previous year through Vice President George Bush. I had been able to arrange for a surveillance of the island by an AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System] aircraft. The Vice President was able to hand Prime Minister Pindling the substance of this surveillance at their meeting in Miami in December, 1982. He insisted that Pindling had to cooperate with the United States. I think that Pindling got the word to the Colombians that they had to leave Norman's Cay, and they left. They just walked out, leaving groceries sitting right on the table. I found open bottles of Ketchup sitting on tables there in the houses which I inspected.

Anyway, I didn't advertise my presence there. We went down to Norman's Cay with an American doctor who lived on the island part of the time. We inspected every house-some 20 of them-on the island. I found evidence-drug paraphernalia-including boxes with the leaflets which the Colombians had dropped on the 1982 Bahamian independence day parade in Nassau. These leaflets said, "Nixon, Reagan, DEA-Go Home! The Bahamas for the Bahamians!" They had stapled money to some of these leaflets, which they also dropped on Bimini and on Grand Bahama Islands. They had Bahamian $100, $50, $20, and $10 bills-which are equal to U. S. dollars-stapled to these leaflets. I learned from a grocer in Bimini Island later on that people came in to buy groceries with the money still stapled to the leaflets. The drug traffickers apparently just tossed these boxes of leaflets out of the plane door. One of the boxes apparently hit the [horizontal] stabilizer, damaging the aircraft so that they had to land. The Bahamian police knew who carried out this operation, and they arrested the Bahamian pilot. I also found plastic envelopes in which the Colombians packed cocaine. I found a duffle bag-not a military regulation size bag but a smaller size used in packing cocaine. I found a number of pistol holsters and a set of Sears Roebuck golf clubs which were cut off so that the heads of the clubs were sticking out of the bag. The bottom part of the bag was empty so that you could load things into it-drugs or money or whatever.

I took all of this stuff with me, along with bags full of telephone receipts from the office of the yacht marina, which had been "trashed." The receipts recorded phone calls from Norman's Cay to Florida, Georgia, and other places. The whole island was "trashed." There was nobody there. Boaters would come and look around, but there was nobody living on the island at that time.

We took this stuff onto the boat and hid it in the bilges so that the police wouldn't see it immediately if they stopped us. I laid out this material in my office on the following Monday and asked the Ambassador to come and see what I had brought back from Norman's Cay. I must say that I was somewhat surprised at his "low key" response. He was not impressed with any of this stuff, which showed the massive use of Norman's Cay by the Colombians.

I called DEA Intelligence in Miami and told them that I had all of this evidence and asked them to send someone to come over and look at it. They could look at it, but they would have to leave it here, because I was afraid that it might "disappear" if they took it over to Miami. I kept this material in the Embassy vault. This subject came up later, in 1988, when I had to testify in Jacksonville, FL, against Medellin Cartel founder Carlos Enrique Rivas "Joe" Lehder, for the U. S. Prosecutor, when I described what I had done with all of this evidence.

My family had returned to the Bahamas in August before the NBC expose. I had arranged this with my wife, since the kids were already in school. We didn't want to go back to Washington, just having come from there. We agreed that I would try to find another appropriate overseas assignment and would "camp out" in Washington with friends. She would stay in Nassau. If I didn't land another overseas assignment by Christmas, we would "bite the bullet," kick the tenant out of our home in Washington, and settle down there. That probably would have been the smartest thing for me to have done, from a professional point of view. I probably should have stayed in Washington at that time.

Anyway, I made this arrangement with my wife. She went back to Nassau. We rented a small house from our friend, Kenny Cartwright. I moved out of the DCM's residence and moved the family into this small house. I went back to Washington and took a trip, visiting friends in New England. I was "working the telephones" a lot, trying to find an assignment. The DCM job in Athens was opening up. I tried to get the Principal Officer's job in Bermuda. The Ambassador in Barbados asked me if I'd like to be DCM down there, because I had gotten to know him. I agreed. Unfortunately, the Ambassador had turned in his own resignation, so the personnel system decided not to go through with this assignment, as ARA had its own candidate for the DCM slot in Barbados. Nothing was really working out. The Executive Director of ARA said, "Well, you can't hang around Washington doing nothing. I'm going to make you Deputy Director of Mexican Affairs." I said, "Well, that will be interesting, because I've never been in Mexico and I don't speak Spanish. I should bring a whole, new perspective to our relationship."

This was at the time when John Gavin, the actor, was the Ambassador to Mexico, and, I think, George High was the Country Director for Mexico-a very decent guy and a very competent officer. But the one thing I remember from the two months or so that I spent in Mexican Affairs was that, basically, the "desk" wasn't running anything. Ambassador John Gavin was running our policy toward Mexico, given his close connections with President Reagan. Gavin was running things "his way" and was breaking all sorts of crockery in the process. He put a relatively junior officer in as Mission Coordinator, more or less bypassing the DCM. It was a little tough for a career guy to swallow to see how the "pecking order" in the Embassy in Mexico was being disjointed. The one time that I met Ambassador Gavin, I found him to be very personable, charming, and all that. I immediately thought of the movie, "Psycho," which he had starred in back in the 1960's. However, I didn't find working on Mexican affairs very satisfactory under all of these circumstances.

Around Labor Day in 1983, before I went to work on the Mexican Desk, I went back to Boston to visit family members and went up to Vermont to visit Jim Engel, a former Ambassador and friend of mine, who had served in Cambodia with me and then went off to be Ambassador to Benin, in West Africa.

Q: He lived in Peacham, Vermont. I interviewed him up there.

ANTIPPAS: I went up to spend that weekend with him and then went over to York Beach, in Maine, to see another friend. Jim and I had been good friends. I had known him in Vietnam. He had asked me to be his DCM [in Benin] at that time, when I was on the Cambodian desk. It didn't happen because Jim White, who had come out of Benin and was later Ambassador to Morocco, I think, had appointed a new DCM in Benin. Again, this is the kind of thing that you're not supposed to do, in the great scheme of things. You normally let the new Ambassador appoint his own DCM. I remember that Ambassador Jim Engle was a little irritated by that. I've often thought of how different my career would have been had I taken that job in Benin, because, as it turned out, the guy who went out as DCM for Jim Engle remained as chargï¿½ d'affaires for a good part of his tour there, because Jim pulled himself out.

Maybe I should back up a bit and tell another story, because it is indicative of the trouble you can get into as a chargï¿½ d'affaires, if you're not careful. On July 4, 1982, as was the custom in the Bahamas, none of the members of the Bahamian cabinet came to our reception. The Governor General came, representing the Bahamas, but not one cabinet member-not even the Foreign Minister. Can you believe that? With only three resident diplomatic missions in the Bahamas the Foreign Minister couldn't find time to attend. Obviously, it was a deliberate snub of the United States. I was furious, fit to be tied, and very angry at this kind of treatment.

The Bahamian Independence Day celebration is on July 10. We had a staff meeting at the Embassy, and I decided that, under the circumstances, we couldn't fail to show up at the Bahamian reception. However, they had sent us 10 tickets to the grandstand, where all of the VIP's [Very Important Persons] and the Diplomatic Corps were seated. The way the system worked was that you drove up in your car in front of the grandstand, got out of your car, walked up to the grandstand, and sat down. This was all done in front of everybody. So I thought, "Screw these bastards! I'm going to send the most junior guy in the Embassy in our smallest car. He will sit alone in the middle of this 10-seat section."

My friend, John Upston, the Caribbean Coordinator in ARA, happened to be visited the Bahamas at that particular time. He sat in on this staff meeting. Remember, this guy is a political appointee but had been around Washington for a long time. He said, "Don't do that. It'll never be understood. These guys will complain to Washington, and you'll look bad. You've got to go." As I thought about it, I thought, "Whom am I going to be hurting? I'll be hurting the Governor General," who, in fact, is the man who presides over the independence day celebration as the representative of the Queen of England. I would be insulting him. So I swallowed my pride, and the whole Embassy staff attended this celebration.

The festivities were held in a park near Ft. Montague, which the American Marines took in 1777, during the Revolutionary War seizing all of the gun powder there. The USS NASSAU, a Marine Landing Ship, is named after this event. When we were getting ready to leave the grandstand at the end of the celebration, out of the corner of my eye I saw some papers fluttering over in a corner of the field. At first I thought it was garbage blowing in the wind.I was about to get in my car when a journalist came up to me and showed me this leaflet. He said, "What do you think of this?" This was the leaflet I mentioned before. I did a double take when I looked at this thing which said "Nixon-Reagans DEA leave the Bahamas for the Bahamians". A plane had just dropped these over the city, aiming for the independence day celebration. You often reflect on what you should have said in such a circumstance. Anyhow, I said, "Well, I don't think that the Bahamian Government shares that feeling," or something like that. After I had given the matter some thought, what I should have said to this journalist was, "We must be doing something right if they would do something so stupid as to drop leaflets on the Bahamas independence celebration!!" It didn't take a genius to figure out who had done this. It was the Colombian drug cartel.

In fact, as I was talking to this journalist, I saw that somebody was showing another leaflet to the Foreign Minister, who was down in front of us, several rows away. He was laughing uproariously. Later on, those leaflets became a prize possession in the DEA office in Miami-they even made Xerox copies of them. It was almost like a badge of honor.

In July, 1983, my family and I were in the U. S. on home leave, before Judy and the kids went back to Nassau. I was trying to sell a house, having a medical exam, and so forth. As I mentioned before, July 10 is the date of the independence day celebration of the Bahamas. I had a good relationship with the Bahamian Ambassador to the United States here in Washington, Reginald Wood. He had been permanent Secretary in the Bahamian Finance Ministry before being appointed Ambassador. Kenny Cartwright and his family came up to the U. S. for a vacation and to look at schools. They were putting their daughters into school in Baltimore. We got together, as friends do. I said, "Look, I'm invited to the Bahamian independence day celebration at the Embassy." I told Cartwright, "Why don't you come along? It's your Embassy, your celebration. Let's go and have a drink on the Bahamas." So we did, and everything was friendly.

Well, it turned out that the Bahamian Ambassador reported back to Nassau that Antippas had turned up at the Embassy reception on Bahamian independence day with Kenny Cartwright. Unbeknownst to me, Kenny was probably already in "bad odor" with Prime Minister Pindling. It was apparently known that Kenny had taken me down to Norman's Cay to investigate the island. I wasn't sure whether this was known to Pindling or not. If so, Kenny would be in "hot water" with Pindling. Of course, Pindling could be vindictive. He knew how to hurt people.

When Kenny Cartwright's name was mentioned on the NBC "Today" show, Pindling said, "Well, you know Kenny Cartwright," implying that Kenny was part of the problem. The fuss that took place because of the "Today" show caused a real problem in Washington. Admiral Murphy, Vice President Bush's chief of staff, later appeared on the "Today" show to talk to the NBC people about the implications of this. Of course, he tried to smooth it over.

When I met Bryan Ross of NBC later on in Grenada, I told him that I had been subpoenaed before the Congressional Task Force on Narcotics of which Representative Glen English, of Ohio, was chairman. English had summoned me to testify about what I had done in the Bahamas and what was going on there. I said that I would testify but I stipulated that it would have to be in Executive Session. I explained to the Committee staff that my family was still in Nassau and that it might endanger them if my testimony were reported. They agreed to that, and I did testify in Executive Session.

Q: May I ask you a question. Here you were, a serving Foreign Service Officer and you're asked to testify before a Congressional Committee. How does this work? Does the Department of State give you any instructions or anything like that? What did the Department do?

ANTIPPAS: The Department of State did nothing.I wrote out my statement, describing what I had tried to do in the Bahamas and the efforts I made to bring resources to play and get the Bahamian Government to cooperate, to shut down the Colombian cartel activities on Norman's Cay, and so forth. I didn't show this statement to anybody in the Department. Nobody asked to see it.

Q: But they knew that you were going to testify before this Committee?

ANTIPPAS: The Department knew that I was going to testify. I think that everybody was thinking, "Let Antippas go out and hang himself." I think that they expected me to go up there and fall flat on my face. One of the reasons that I was so shocked for being "fired" by Ambassador Dobriansky in the Bahamas was that I had done, I think, quite a good job, and I had a pretty good reputation with people in Congress. In my statement, I made it clear that I had left Nassau unwillingly, but I had left. Statements made on NBC certainly didn't reflect my feelings. I felt that we should be doing as much as we can to interdict the flow of narcotics into the United States from the Bahamas. I've looked at my statement several times since then, as I still have copies of it. I could have done it better, but this was prepared in a hurry. I made it CONFIDENTIAL because my family was still down in Nassau. I think that I came out of those hearings, "smelling like a rose." I was complimented and was certainly not hurt by that.

It turned out that video coverage of me coming out of the Committee hearings was shown on TV in Nassau. This drove Prime Minister Pindling and the Foreign Minister "up the wall." They probably knew exactly what I was saying, even though none of my testimony was published. It was not "leaked," and its confidentiality was kept.

I had left Nassau in fairly good odor. I wasn't in trouble when I left. I just left-no press conference, no reporters, no nothing. I only told the Police Chief and the Governor General why I was leaving. I said, "I'm going to leave my family here. I'd like you to keep an eye on them. I'm just leaving. I'm not saying anything. It isn't in my place to say anything. The Ambassador has the right to choose whomever he wants as his deputy. That's it." And I was gone in a week. Of course, I came back to Nassau in August, 1983, to settle up my house and move out of the DCM residence, but I left quietly.

After it became known that I had testified before the Congressional Task Force on Narcotics, Prime Minister Pindling realized that my family was still in the Bahamas. At first I did not know how he found out. However, Ambassador Dobriansky was sending telegrams to the Department, not only to ARA but to "M" [Management], claiming that I was the "leak," that I was the "problem," and that I was causing political problems for the Embassy in Nassau because of my activities. I am not sure of exactly what he alleged, because I only saw some of his statements. The Ambassador was in trouble with the White House because he had compromised the narcotics campaign. The Bahamians were making it very clear that the NBC television program angered them and were beginning to drag their feet on law enforcement cooperation with us. In fact, the Ambassador was the source of the public affairs problem for the Embassy by his talking to NBC. He had really done the dumbest thing of all, which was to open up this "Pandora's Box." I wasn't in the Bahamas. I could truthfully say that I didn't know a thing about the NBC program on the Bahamas until I saw it myself on the day after Labor Day, 1983.

To show you what a fool Ambassador Dobriansky was-and I mean a fool-I have a copy of a SECRET EXDIS [Exclusive Distribution in the Department of State] cable in which he discussed this whole issue with the Under Secretary for Management. I was still in ARA and was able to go down to the Caribbean desk and see the cable traffic. In one of these telegrams the Ambassador took various "potshots" at me. But one of the things that he admitted in the cable was that he told Prime Minister Pindling that my family was still in the Bahamas. And he told him where my family was in the Bahamas-of course, breaching my family's and my rights of privacy. This was one of the decisions which one has to consider about what to do about something like that. My first inclination was to raise "holy hell" and bring a lawsuit against Ambassador Dobriansky for doing this. But obviously this would not please the White House and would compromise my family's privacy. They were in Nassau as private citizens, and not as the dependents of a U. S. Government employee. They had moved out of the DCM residence and were in private quarters.

When Prime Minister Pindling discovered where my family was, the next thing I knew was that my wife was being summoned to the Bahamian Immigration Department to justify her presence in the Bahamas. They started harassing her. I wasn't worried about their physical security, although the house was robbed once. We think that it was the Haitian gardener who did that. The Pindling government forced my wife to leave the Bahamas on two occasions to reapply for visas. My children were half scared to death with agents coming to the house. It was about the time that our pet dog was run over in front of the house. The kids were really concerned. My wife was verbally "abused" by the Bahamian Director of Immigration, who was the sister of the Deputy Prime Minister. In 1982 I had helped this woman's son get a scholarship to The Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma. They are all interrelated there. It's amazing how quickly things turn around.

My wife called the Embassy for assistance, but Ambassador Dobriansky refused to provide any consular assistance to help her in her problems with Bahamian Immigration. It ended up that it cost me $1,000 for my wife and $50 for each child to let them stay in Nassau until Christmas.

Ambassador Dobriansky continued to send "zingers" to the Department against me. It shows you how "dumb" the Ambassador is. I held off doing anything about all of this, because taking on an Ambassador at his post abroad doesn't do anybody's career any good. Fortunately, a very good friend of mine in the Office of the Legal Adviser who handled Latin American affairs sent an instruction to the Embassy in Nassau, telling the Ambassador to stop criticizing me, since I was no longer in the Bahamas, and instructing the Embassy to assist my wife in her dealings with the Bahamian Immigration Department. The Department saw that the Embassy was getting out on a limb by not providing my wife with appropriate assistance. That took a little of the "heat" off my wife. Of course, our mutual friend Richard Morefield, who had accepted the post of Consul General in Tehran after I had turned it down and who became a hostage when the Embassy was taken over in 1979, was in charge of the Office of Caribbean Affairs at the time. He kept telling me, "Get your family out of the Bahamas. You can't tell what might happen. This is too dangerous." I discounted the danger. I didn't really think that they were in any danger. Harassed, yes. I didn't feel that the Bahamian authorities would be "dumb enough" to harm my family.

The Ambassador was going after me in a pretty hot and heavy way when the Department told the Ambassador to "lay off." He was in enough trouble as it was without trying to blame someone else for his obviously patent stupidity. One of the things that he had not known-and he had not given me a chance to discuss this point before I left Nassau-was that I had asked the Director of the Federal Task Force on Narcotics in Miami for a letter to the Department describing my assistance to the Task Force. I said to the Director, "I'm the chargï¿½ d'affaires in the Bahamas. One of the problems of a guy in my position is that nobody knows what I do here. I don't have very many supervisors. I've got a boss in Washington, but he's there. It's always helpful for people who deal with and work with me to send some kind of memo into the "system" to indicate what I have done. So if you think that I have been of any use to you guys here in Florida, I wish that you'd tell somebody about it." I left it at that.

It turned out that he had a letter drafted, praising me "to the skies" for the collaboration which I had provided to the Task Force when I was chargï¿½ d'affaires in Nassau. He sent it up to Admiral Murphy, the chief of staff of the Office of the Vice President, to sign. Murphy decided to give it to Vice President Bush to sign. Bush sent the letter to Secretary of State George Shultz. In May, 1983, when I was having some problems with the Foreign Service Inspectors, I received a "back channel" copy of Bush's letter to Shultz. Before I had a chance to show it to Ambassador Dobriansky, he "fired" me. So the Ambassador never saw this letter. Of course, I was naive enough at that time to think that this might make a difference. I thought that the Vice President might call the Ambassador and ask him, "What do you think you're doing, 'firing' Antippas?" But the system doesn't work that way. The Vice President isn't about to get involved in anything dealing with the White House. This is something that any Foreign Service Officer who aspires to do anything must understand. The Vice President's staff and the White House staff are really very much in a confrontational situation. Very seldom do those two staffs cooperate.

In fact, Admiral Murphy, who is now my "boss" in the consulting firm I work for, has talked about this issue with me on a number of occasions. He was talking about former Secretary of State James Baker, when Baker was President Reagan's chief of staff during the first Reagan term of office. However, Baker had been suggested to President Reagan by Vice President Bush. Baker was a Bush supporter when he became chief of staff of the White House. Admiral Murphy was saying to me the other day, "You know, Baker never did a thing for us [in the Office of the Vice President]. He never gave us any extra office space or 'goodies.' The confrontation was always there." This tendency had probably been underlined when Lyndon Johnson was Vice President and was "dumped on" by the Kennedy White House staff. Or when Vice President Ford became President. The White House can be a real "shark tank." So don't be naive and think that, because you have some relationship with the Office of the Vice President, this is necessarily going to do anything for you in the White House.

Obviously, this unsolicited letter from Vice President George Bush was useful to me. By the way, I had to "find" the letter. It had gone astray. I was prudent enough, when I returned to the Department from Nassau, to ask Personnel where this letter was. It wasn't in my file. They found the letter somewhere and put it in my file. In mid-October, 1983, I was promoted to be a member of the Senior Foreign Service, which was very satisfying. I thought that this was the result of the letter which Vice President Bush had written to Secretary of State Shultz regarding the assistance I had given to the South Florida Task Force on Narcotics. If I hadn't found this letter and had it put in my file, I probably wouldn't have been promoted.

Q: This is probably a good point to stop. We'll pick up at the point where you're back in Washington, looking for a new job, in the summer of 1983.

ANTIPPAS: On the beach.

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Q: Today is December 12, 1994. Andy, we're back in the summer of 1983, and you're "on the beach," as it were. What happened?

ANTIPPAS: I can't remember how we left it, but I had been suddenly "unhorsed" in the Bahamas-very unexpectedly and shockingly. I was out of "synch" with the Foreign Service assignments cycle. I left the Bahamas in June, 1983, to come back to Washington and look for a job in the Foreign Service. I knew that I couldn't afford to waste any time in doing that, especially at that level. After my two years as chargï¿½ d'affaires and chief of mission, I was really in a special category. I knew that openings would come up. People drop dead, break legs, and do all sorts of things like that. You never know when a job might be opening up. I came back to Washington to "politic" for a job that might get us back overseas again. As I said before, pending some other assignment, my wife and kids went back to the Bahamas, because the kids were already in school, rather than returning to Washington and throwing the tenants out of our house.

My best friend in ARA was the Executive Director of the Bureau. He had been a very staunch supporter of mine. For a guy like myself, who had no background in ARA, to have one of the key officials in the Bureau on my side was really worthwhile. You really needed friends in high places. You can't understand the Foreign Service if you don't understand this matter of "belonging" to a given Bureau. I understood this very well and had been surprised when I got the job as DCM in the Bahamas in the first place.

I think that one of the things that led to my "downfall" was the fact that Tom Enders, the Assistant Secretary for ARA, was relieved from his assignment as a result of his fight with the White House over policy toward El Salvador. He had crossed swords with Judge Clark, the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and who knows who else? Tom Enders wasn't "liked" by people like Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina] and others because he had been regarded as too close to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Tom was replaced in ARA. I couldn't get back in time. The timing was just a little bit "off" for me to get to know the new Assistant Secretary for ARA Tony Motley, who replaced Tom Enders.

Although Tom tried to help me do that, I found that, by the time I got back into the Bureau of American Republic Affairs, I was being "stiffed" [kept at arm's length] by the people around the new Assistant Secretary. Some of these people were my colleagues and people that I knew. They were keeping me from getting in to see the new Assistant Secretary to plead for another assignment. This was a message to me that I had become "notorious." I probably had "frosted" or "ticked off" someone. Maybe it was just the ARA "crowd" making sure that a non-ARA guy would not walk off with a "plum." But I kept working at getting another assignment overseas.

Then the Grenada affair happened. I decided that, as I knew how these things worked and as I had been deeply involved in similar circumstances in Cambodia, I would volunteer to go. I thought that I would do anything to get out of Washington and get out of the job on the Mexican desk for which I was really not suited. Who knows? Maybe there would be an overseas assignment as a result of this job. All kinds of dynamics are set in motion when events like this take place. I had experienced this kind of thing before and I had some knowledge of what was happening in Grenada because I had watched this situation develop while I was in the Bahamas, particularly as concern developed about the ultra-Left wing takeover in 1979 in Grenada. The fact that the Cubans were doing things in Grenada raised the question of whether missiles were being emplaced there. Then there was the whole business about an airfield being built in Grenada. As nearly anybody could tell you, this airfield was probably intended to provide a landing place for flights going to Angola in support of the Cuban expeditionary force in Africa.

So I volunteered to go. I went up to the Grenada task force and said, "Look, you're going to need help down there. I know something about running embassies. I'll be happy to go." My offer was accepted, and I went to the house owned by the people I was staying with, packed, said goodbye, and left the next day. In Barbados, just before I reached Grenada, other troops were coming in. The American forces had already landed in Grenada and had cleared the airfield [which had not yet been completed]. I actually arrived in Grenada with the various prime ministers of the Eastern Caribbean area, including Prime Minister Edward Seaga of Jamaica, when they made their first visit. That started that part of my career.

Q: Could you tell me what the situation was and what you were doing?

ANTIPPAS: The whole intervention was very unstructured. The 82nd Airborne Division from Ft. Bragg was already in place by the time I arrived. The initial combat was handled by U.S. Army Rangers and by Special Forces field teams which had gone into Grenada to rescue American medical students who were there and also to rescue the Governor General. After the murder of Prime Minister Bishop and his associates by the Ultra-Leftists it was felt that we had to rescue the Governor General because he was the "link with legitimacy," as the representative of the British Crown and as the link with the constitution. Navy "Seal" teams went into Grenada to protect the Governor General. Though he was not evacuated, some of the heaviest fighting took place, protecting him at his residence.

I got to know him a little bit because we worked quite closely with the Governor General during the period when I was acting DCM and chargï¿½ d'affaires in Grenada. The U. S. representative on the ground was Charles "Tony" Gillespie, a classmate of mine at the National War College and an old ARA hand in the State Department.

It is interesting to recall that Gillespie had accepted the job that Tom Enders had originally offered me in 1981 to be his assistant in the Bureau of American Republic Affairs. Gillespie was a much more skilled bureaucratic "in-fighter" than I would ever be. He did very well by himself in Grenada. I think that he was the one who made sure that I didn't get to meet the new Assistant Secretary of ARA who replaced Tom Enders. Gillespie came out of the reshuffle of the Enders "front office" as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean. While Enders had tried to limit the number of Deputy Assistant Secretaries in the Bureau by not creating a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Caribbean Affairs, Gillespie came out of this whole affair in that position. Gillespie was traveling in the area at the time the events in Grenada took place, so he was "on the ground," as it were.

Q: This is Tape 8, Side A, of the interview with Andy Antippas.

ANTIPPAS: Since Charles Gillespie was "on the ground," he was put in charge of U. S. efforts on the civilian side in Grenada.

When I arrived in Bridgetown, Barbados, I went directly to Gillespie and told him that I was there to help. Anything that he needed to do, I would do it. We weren't particularly friends. We were just acquaintances from the National War College and from the two years I spent in the Bureau of ARA and in Nassau. You may recall that when I first went to the Bahamas, the seven-nation conference on the Caribbean Basin Initiative had taken place. I had "put the arm on the Bureau" to make sure that Secretary of State Haig found some time to meet with Prime Minister Pindling of the Bahamas. In arranging this I had talked to Charles Gillespie and told him that he simply had to "make this happen." We could not let the American Secretary of State come to Nassau and use the Bahamian conference hall and not talk to the leader of the government which owned the hall. However, I had really not had an awful lot to do with Gillespie after that. He was an old ARA hand, of course. He spoke Spanish and was an officer from the administrative "cone." I think that he was a competent enough guy and was clearly the senior man on the ground on the civilian side in Grenada. I had no problem with that.

We flew over to Grenada in a C-130 transport aircraft. When we arrived in Grenada, we tried to "set up shop." We were basically operating with satellite radios-I forget what the designation was. You have a satellite "dish" and can talk to anybody you want to talk with. Your hand got a little tired, holding down the "butterfly" [transmit] switch, if you were talking to the Operations Center in the Department.

We moved from the airport to the outskirts of Georgetown, Grenada, while the area was being cleared, on the very first day that we were there. Two things happened that I got involved with during that first day.

We had learned, through "SIGINT" that the Libyans had received instructions to kidnap an American and hold him as hostage.

Q: "SIGINT" is "Signals Intelligence."

ANTIPPAS: So it was decided that we had better "lock up" the Libyans in their compound. There was a junior Foreign Service Officer, whose name escapes me now...

Q: Was it Larry Rosen?

ANTIPPAS: No. I can picture him now, but he was one of the few people in the world who had ever been on Grenada. I think that this was because he was a vice-consul somewhere else and had to go to Grenada to do consular work. So he more or less knew where some of these places were. He knew where the Libyan Embassy was. I was told to take a vehicle and go back down to the airport and secure the cooperation of the U. S. military in lending us two or three squads of infantry to supply the firepower needed to secure the Libyan Embassy. Others would go off and try to locate the Libyan Embassy and see what the situation was.

I went back down to Salinas Airport, which is where the 82nd Airborne Division had set up its Command Post. The Commanding General was not there, but I talked to his chief of staff and some of the staff officers. I told them what the situation was and said that we very much needed to "quarantine" the Libyan Embassy. We weren't going to "lay hands on them." We just wanted to make sure that they didn't leave the Embassy and go off and do the "nefarious deeds" they had been instructed to do. You should remember that all of the communist bloc countries had representatives there: the North Koreans; the Soviets, of course; and I forget who else was there. It was the strangest crowd you ever saw were in Grenada at that time. It included the Libyans.

I obtained the agreement of the 82nd Airborne Division staff to supply three squads of infantry, or something like that. I think it was three squads to serve for three, 8-hour shifts. I was to find out exactly where they were to go. Of course, we had very limited communications. A lot of the communications were accomplished by simply running back and forth, over terrible roads. I'd never seen roads in the condition of the roads in Grenada. Even in Africa I'd never seen anything like that, with all of those potholes. We were told that there were some Cubans "running loose" in the countryside who might be sniping at traffic. We had to be careful. When darkness fell, you didn't wander around outside of Georgetown, the capital of Grenada.

As I was leaving the 82nd Airborne Division Command Post, I ran into the Commanding General, whom I had not previously met. I recall that Tom Enders had told me that the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne had been the Defense Attachï¿½ in Spain when Tom was Assistant Secretary of State.

When I had been shopping around for a job, before the Grenada exercise began, I had tried to get a job in the ARA Bureau. When Enders was "kicked upstairs," he was offered the position of Ambassador to Spain, which he accepted. He told me that he was considering offering me the position of DCM in Madrid, but I hadn't been promoted to senior rank at that point. He felt that I really didn't have enough rank to be DCM in Madrid. You had to have the rank, as DCM, because of characters like this general, who didn't like the Foreign Service and particularly didn't like USIA [United States Information Agency]. He felt that they were all a bunch of "comsymps" [communist sympathizers], fellow travelers, or who knows what.

It turned out that this general went from Madrid to be commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division. We met as I was walking out of the division command post. He said, "Who are you?" I was dressed in a sport shirt and khaki pants. The only badge of authority that I had was a Navy hat, which, I think, had on it the name of the USS COMTE DE GRASSE, one of the frigates which had visited the Bahamas. I identified myself and told him what the situation was and what we needed. His reaction was very quickly negative. He said, "I don't take orders from the State Department." He said, you can't come down here and demand the use of our troops outside of channels. Well, I decided that this was probably not the place to tell this "jerk" off. I was thinking, "Man, your name is mud if somebody is grabbed by the Libyans tonight" if we hadn't secured the Libyan Embassy. Anyway, I thought that I shouldn't pick a fight with this general at this point.

So I drove back to the hotel which we were using as a sort of Embassy. I don't think that we ever did "nail down" the Libyans. I think that they took cover in the Soviet Embassy, as did all of the communist bloc representatives. They were subsequently evacuated from there to Cuba. As it turned out, as things went on, after the initial operations were completed, this was sort of a high-powered position for a major general. When he left Grenada, the Army left a brigadier general in command of the balance of the 82nd Airborne units on the island. But for the several weeks I assisted in running things in the Embassy in Georgetown, the General and I developed a pretty good relationship. There were no hard feelings. But I never really forgot his reaction. In all of the years that I've been associating with the military, during all of those years in Indochina, Japan and Korea, for example, I'd never had that kind of negative reaction from a U. S. flag officer. I think that it was too bad that I'd gotten in touch with a guy like that.

Regarding the other job that I'd tried to get, the position of Principal Officer in Bermuda was opening up. I tried very hard to get that job, because it was still a Foreign Service assignment. I pushed very hard for it. That job came under EUR [the Bureau of European Affairs], because Bermuda is a British Colony. Enders had arranged for me to go and see Richard Burt, then Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. I made my "pitch" to him and said that I would very much like that assignment, if I could get it. I didn't get the job because, as it turned out, somebody in the White House wanted it. The former Director of Legislative Affairs in the White House decided that he wanted to get out of heat of the kitchen for a while. He could have had any Embassy that he wanted. He didn't want an Embassy. He wanted a very soft touch, Foreign Service post, which turned out to be Bermuda. The Department cut short the tour of the Foreign Service Officer who was there, to accommodate this White House guy. It really left a bad taste in my mouth.

In a sense, I was probably well off that I didn't get the assignment to Bermuda because it would probably have been like taking the job as Principal Officer in Martinique. In terms of a Foreign Service career...

Q: It's a dead end.

ANTIPPAS: But I was desperate. I wanted to stay in the area and didn't want to go back to Washington.

Another post that I had a "crack" at was the position of DCM in Bridgetown, Barbados. The Ambassador to Barbados was a political appointee from Indiana. We had become acquainted when I was chargï¿½ d'affaires in Nassau. We met at Chiefs of Mission conferences and that sort of thing. He asked me if I'd like to be DCM in Bridgetown. The tour of the DCM assigned there was coming to an end. I said, "Sure, that would be a great job." However, the Ambassador made the mistake of submitting his own resignation before he offered me the job. So I wasn't about to get that "plum." This discussion with the Ambassador to Barbados took place before the Grenada intervention occurred. Anyway, I ended up in Grenada and spent almost two months there.

Q: What was Charles Gillespie's role?

ANTIPPAS: In effect, he was acting chief of mission. The Assistant Secretary of State for ARA, Tony Motley, visited us on several occasions to see what was going on. I think that Charley was given the personal rank of Ambassador to do the job. His basic function was to set up some sort of Embassy in transition, because the U. S. military would not be able to stay there forever. It was not desirable to have them stay there for any extended period of time. The task was to try to pull things together and put Grenada back on the road to political health. There were big problems there. Grenada is just a tiny, little island-the top of a volcano, really, with a population of 100,000.

Aside from the economic assistance that they required, there was high unemployment. Over the years the Marxists had really done the place in to a terrible extent. The late Prime Minister Bishop was genuinely admired as a leader, but he was a Marxist. Of course, the great subject for discussion at the time was that he was on the way to making a deal with the U. S. when he was "killed." The big problem was to establish a police force that could control the place. The police had been disarmed by the Ultra-Leftists.

The other problem was to punish the remaining Ultra-Leftists who had murdered Bishop. We never found his body, though we spent a lot of time looking for it. The conventional wisdom was that after he and his cohorts had been executed in one of the forts-Ft. Rupert, I think it was-their bodies were taken out to sea and fed to the sharks.

I spent most of my time in Grenada helping to organize the Embassy. After Gillespie, I was the next senior officer at the post. After a month there, I decided that I would not try to get the job of chargï¿½ d'affaires. We obviously would have a chargï¿½, with the Ambassador in Bridgetown, Barbados, also accredited there. That was how the Department arranged it. There were no schools, and Grenada was no place where I could take my children. Conditions were really primitive. It would have been a tough situation. We were about 100 miles from Barbados. It was pleasant enough, but pretty primitive. You might as well be somewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa.I stayed on in Grenada until early December, 1983.

I think that one of the puzzling things about the Grenada experience was that almost everybody that had been involved, on the State Department side, received an award of some kind-Superior Honor Award or Meritorious Honor Award. I was the only person who was not even mentioned as having been involved, yet I was "running" the Embassy and was one of the first to volunteer to go there. As I had just been promoted and had come out of a chargï¿½ d'affaires position in Nassau, I wasn't too worried about this. Nothing particularly good was going to happen to me, anyway, but I considered that this was clear evidence that somebody was "out to get me." Even the janitor got an award for the Grenada operation, presented by the Secretary of State. I found this curious, to say the least.

As it turned out, it took Tony Gillespie two years to do an efficiency report. I didn't get this report-really a memorandum report-until I was in Korea two years later. It was a fair enough and accurate report on my activities but I had to "bug" him to do that, just so that the record would be clear that I had done this venture. I found this a commentary on how things were handled between colleagues. That sort of thing has probably existed forever, but it was my first real experience with a colleague "doing me in" or shunting me aside-making sure that I wasn't going to share in the experience or the rewards. All of the other experiences that I had had in Africa, Indochina, and Japan had been "positive." I had done a good piece of work, been loyal, and had virtually "jumped in by parachute." I was recognized for doing this sort of thing before. I have also been able to recover from career "mishaps." This was the first experience that I had of this kind of thing, and it saddened me. I'm saying this because it's all part and parcel of the Foreign Service.

Q: I understand. This happens. Well, to move on...

ANTIPPAS: The fact is...

Q: That it gets personal.

ANTIPPAS: It gets personal. And I get the message that the higher up you go, the faster it gets personal.

Well, I came back to Washington [in December, 1983]. There were no jobs available as a Chief of Mission or Principal Officer. There was some talk about the ambassadorship in Equatorial Guinea but that was snapped up by the General Counsel of USAID. Your old job as Consul General in Seoul had opened up again. I decided that what had happened during the previous six months was a clear message to me that I was "notorious" and probably wasn't going to get much of anything if I hung around the Department. Since my wife was still pressing me to stay out of Washington, I decided to take the job in Seoul and get as "far away from headquarters" as possible. The assignment became official in December, 1983, and I went to Seoul in January, 1984.

Ken Keller was still there as Consul General. He was retiring from the Foreign Service. He had replaced me three years before when my assignment to Seoul had been "canceled," as I indicated previously. He wasn't due to leave Seoul until February, 1984, but, rather than hang around Washington, I decided that I would go out to Seoul a little early.

I stopped off in Honolulu to talk to the District Director of the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service], Sam Feldman, who had been in Hong Kong when I was in the Embassy in Bangkok. We had done the Indochina refugee "thing" together. He was still in Hong Kong at the time of the fall of Indochina to the communists. Sam was one of these hard-charging INS guys who apparently took on the Asian organized crime syndicates, or at least Pacific Island organized crime-especially the Samoans, apparently a very tough crowd in Hawaii. A few months later, after our meeting in Hong Kong and resuming contact there, he committed suicide. He shot himself, so there was no question that one of the criminal "tongs" had done him in. I was really shocked when that happened. Sam was a gruff kind of guy but once he accepted you as a colleague, that was it. We had that kind of relationship-we in the old line consular service. I've talked to people in INS since then, and they felt that this was strictly due to "stress." They hadn't recognized until that time that stress could play such a role in INS.

I took over the Consular Section in Seoul in February, 1984, after Ken Keller left. I found the Section somewhat in disarray. Ken and the fraud unit had uncovered a major fraud ring in the Section, centered in the fraud unit itself. I should say that the Fraud Officer led the investigation to find these people. We fired 12 local employees in the Consular Section, including the senior security local employee, who apparently was involved in the fraud. I found that relations between the American and Korean staff in the Section were very poor, very tense, very fragile. There was a lot of resentment on both sides. The Americans were distrustful and resentful toward the Koreans, and the Koreans, of course, felt great resentment toward the Americans because the Americans felt that way.

Ken was a very competent and professional officer and had run a "very tight ship." The place was working, we were issuing 30,000 immigrant visas a year and almost 100,000 non-immigrant visas.

I thought that the first thing that I would try to do was to try and establish better relations between the Korean and American staff. My experience in Bangkok, under similar circumstances, although on a smaller scale, had been that if you could not make friends with the local employees, if the local employees weren't going to help you, you're never going to be able to fight this battle against fraud. You're never going to win this battle in any case. You can't even fight this battle against fraud if at least some of the local employees aren't going to be supportive. I decided that it behooved me to try to improve relations between members of this large staff-47 Korean employees and something like 20 Americans.

There was a very competent cadre of Americans there. They knew their job and were doing it very well. Bruce Beardsley was my deputy in the Consular Section. He's gone on to do very well in the Foreign Service. Of course, I knew the DCM but didn't know the Ambassador before I arrived there. The DCM at the time was Paul Cleveland, an old friend from Indochina days, when he was a staff aide to Marshall Green. I felt that I would have the support of the front office of the Embassy in anything that I would need to do.

I decided that as a first step I would try to get to know the local employees of the Consular Section a bit better-at least have some direct contact with them. I started a program of meeting privately, in my office, for about 10-15 minutes with every local employee, "pressing the flesh" and showing the human face of bureaucracy. I think that worked, to a certain extent. At that time the Korean staff was overwhelmingly female. A lot of them had come out of the Peace Corps and the aid program. When those programs were phased out in South Korea in the 1970's, a lot of these people had gone to work in the Consular Section. The situation was very well summed up by one of the younger women employees who was willing to talk to me. In the case of most of the employees, I'd call them into my office, ask them to sit down, and try to talk to them. They would say very little but would be quite circumspect. I knew that this was because not too many people did this, particularly in Korea, a male-dominated society. As we know, the turnover in American staff like that is tremendous, particularly in vice consuls. Everybody does things differently, from the Consul General on down. Every supervisor is different. I could see where the local employees would say, "Don't bet your life on any one of these people because, after a few months, there'll be a change of boss." I understood that.

Anyhow, one of the younger and friendlier members of the staff said that she had been told by the older women, "When we need to talk to the Americans, we [the older women] will talk to the Americans." In other words, "shut up." That was a clear message to me that it was going to be a hard row to hoe. We would really have to "divide and conquer" here and do the best we could in terms of improving working conditions, which are always a problem for our staffs, and trying to be friendly and outgoing.I would regularly go around the Section, see what was going on, and just try and stay on top of things. This is very much what the boss has to do. You know this from your own experience, as you're a friendly, outgoing type of guy, anyway. My experience had been that you really can't tell what your staff is up to by simply going up to the "visa line" and standing behind them and listening to conversations. Even if you're an ultra democrat and sit down and issue visas with your officers, as some consular section chiefs do, you're not really going to find out what's going on. I thought that I had other things to do beside going up there and issuing visas. "Showing the flag" helps out. I've done all of that. I've issued all of the visas that I want to do.

I've found that one of the great demands put upon the section chief by Korean society is that you get to be the ultimate "court of appeals" for visa refusals. I got involved in visa issuance because the Ambassador, the DCM, "Minister So and So," or someone else would call me up and "put the arm on me."

Q: I recall that the only time I've ever been in an actual "shouting match" with anybody was in Korea. That was with the Political Counselor at the time, Paul Cleveland. We made it up afterwards, but...

ANTIPPAS: He was calmer when he was DCM. We had more "shouting matches" with the commercial section chief because Korean businessmen were really "putting the arm on him." At times the situation was very tense. I consider myself very much a "team player." I had been a chargï¿½ d'affaires and run my own Embassy. So I was not parochial. I had done other things. I had been a political officer and a desk officer in the Department. I understand where all of these guys are coming from, and you've got to help them out.

So I decided that, normally, my deputy would be the ultimate "appeals court." We were already doing this, to some extent. I decided that I would get involved in the process as well, because I think that this is the only way that you can "tap into" the system and find out what your officers are telling the applicants. You recognize that, initially at least, you're only hearing the appeals of those who are well placed. They are the only people who are able to appeal, through somebody. What I wanted to find out was what's happening to the ordinary visa applicant? Aside from any democratic feelings that I might have, I really needed to know how I could find out what was happening. Once you can find that out and they know that you're finding it out, the whole system works better. Once the vice consul or the unit chiefs feel that they're not answerable to anybody, then everything deteriorates after that.

I found that what angered me a great deal, that vice consuls, for whatever reason, sometimes feel so full of themselves that nobody can "talk back" to them.

Q: This disease is called "vice consulitis."

ANTIPPAS: I found it very reprehensible. I have experienced it since I retired, as I've gone back to places that I knew. I noted that these vice consuls are junior officers. One of your biggest jobs as a section chief is to bring those junior officers along and teach them the "trade," not the "trade" of being a vice consul but of being a Foreign Service Officer-the value system of the Foreign Service. I thought that was very important.

I decided that we had to start out with a "level playing field." The vice consuls had to know that I knew what they were doing, and not because I was standing behind them or listening to them. I was going to review the record of their cases on a very representative, ad hoc, basis. The biggest problem I had was to get people to keep decent notes on the application forms. I said, "Look, a visa application is practically a court document. These things have ended up in court and become subjects of litigation. I want you to keep decent notes on them. I can assure you that when I review or handle a case, I keep very detailed notes as to what was said and the reasons for my decision. That's what I want you guys to do. I realize that I have more time to do this. I've got leisure to do this. I've got a nice office to sit in, and you're sitting out there on the visa line. But you've got to do better. You never know whether we'll have to go to court on some case. I may have to justify overturning your decision."

Anyway, keeping visa records became a "growth" industry. It soon became known that Antippas would listen to anybody. I let it be known that anybody could talk to me. You didn't have to go through somebody who knew somebody. I had an "open door" policy. I tried to be careful about that.

Appearances are so important, as you well know, particularly in Korea. I guess that I personally handled 10 or 12 visa cases a day. People would make appointments to appeal decisions that had been made on cases. I would have the cases brought to me and would review them. Of course, frequently they would be brought to me by somebody who was somebody. Most frequently, I would overturn the decision made. I would find that the 30 seconds which the vice consul had to listen to this person, who may have been standing out in the snow for eight hours, before making his decision, had not been enough to bring out all aspects of the case. Generally, I would let the intermediary sit with me. I would tell them, "Don't say anything. The conversation is between me, the applicant, and my Korean secretary." I would ask all of the questions that I needed to ask before coming to my conclusion.

Generally speaking, my perception would be a little different from that of the vice consul, probably because of my own long experience and my understanding of the ethos of Korean society. Finally, I would say to the intermediary, if there was one, "All right. I will grant the visitor's visa. When is this individual coming back to Korea? Tell me the date when he or she is coming back." I would say, "I don't care when it is-three months or six months from now. You tell me. I will mark it in my book that I want you to come to the Consular Section and see me. Don't send the person's passport over. You come and see me. If the person doesn't come and see me, don't call me again on a visa application."

By doing that I found that very few people double-crossed me. Some people would. They were in the business of influence peddling. There was no greater currency in Seoul than to say that you knew the American Consul General. That is still the case today. I hear that the situation today is as bad as when I got there.

Q: As bad as that? You're always shoveling against the sea but you can't give up.

ANTIPPAS: I hear complaints about the attitude of American consular officers.

Q: And I'm sure that the American officers are talking about the illegals, the people who are slipping through. Anyway...

ANTIPPAS: I was doing that on that level. However, as Counselor of Embassy for Consular Affairs my job was to take a "strategic" view of the problem. I took off on that area on two fronts.

One of the things that really angered me was to discover, given my extended knowledge of Korea and my understanding of what had happened, having been there from the beginning, so to speak-as you had-was "GI brides" and the possibilities for fraud which this involved.

Just before I went to Grenada, the "20-20" TV program had done a lengthy program on Korean prostitute rings working on the U. S. military in Korea. This wasn't anything that I had invented. When I got to Korea, I walked the "trench line" in the Consular Section and tried to figure out what I could do on the margins to change and improve things. One of the things that ticked me off was to see the "obvious" fraud that took place in GI marriages, when a young GI would come in with a woman 20 years older than he was who looked well traveled and well worn. You knew perfectly well what had happened. Old soldiers knew very well what had happened. This annoyed me. It was one of my hobby horses. I thought that I would like to do something to change this situation.

The Immigration Attachï¿½ in Seoul during my stay there was sympathetic to my view, because he, of course, had to approve the petitions which the GI's were executing on behalf of their Korean "brides." We would make inquiries at the U.S.- Korean Command. There were certain areas and certain centers of interest where the Korean Command would have liked to see us improve that situation.

First of all, you had to recognize that nobody can tell American citizens whom they can marry. Changing the circumstances under which GI's met these women is really beyond the Theater Commander. This is a Washington level problem. However, as I looked at the problem, what I discovered was that, given the way that the American military were operating in Korea, we had the phenomenon of "homesteaders." That is, there were officers and enlisted personnel who spent a large part of their careers in South Korea. In many cases they were married to Koreans and really had a vested interest in that country. They kind of specialized in Korea.

Among the offshoots we had of this problem at this time was black marketing and currency speculation. We're talking now about 1984, before the economic "takeoff" happened in South Korea. There still was a thriving black market for commissary and PX merchandise. On the black market a banana would cost you a dollar. You would have fights between the Korean and the American wives in the commissary over bunches of bananas. I know that my wife once threatened to "belt" somebody over an issue like this. The Provost Marshal when I told him said, "No, don't let her do that!" There were scandals of this kind. I felt that the American Army wasn't looking very good. There were prostitution rings.

I did a long-term research study of the problem, pulling in all of the information I could obtain from INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] and other sources about what was happening to a lot of these wives when they went to the United States, particularly if they remained in the U. S. military, and the kind of Korean communities that were springing up outside of military cantonment areas.

I also checked law enforcement reports. These wives weren't really involved in drug trafficking, but they were involved in large-scale trafficking in commissary goods-fur coats, jewelry, and electronic equipment. This was a time when a Foreign Service employee could sell his property in Korea, because local Korean industry wasn't producing merchandise of this kind. They started doing that a couple of years later, and after that, there was no way you could get rid of your old stereo set. Remember, before the Korean economy "took off," you could still sell your old stereo, buy new equipment at the PX, and refurbish everything. This was in 1984. Things changed a great deal in a couple of years.

There was a lot of trade going on in these Korean communities around the military cantonment areas in the U.S. It was very clear that there were major prostitution rings as well-not necessarily because the Korean women went there as prostitutes. They were more or less "forced" into prostitution. They borrowed money so that the U. S. immigration visa "fixer" could "hire" the GI to marry them. They went to the United States with him but they owed money to the "ring." Very frequently, the GI would "drop" them. Even the GIs who married these women for love had second thoughts, once they were married. A lot of these Korean women were just "dumped."

Q: Koreans are very tough on their women. They have no compunction about sending in some "bully boys" to beat them up.

ANTIPPAS: There were gangs called the "Korean Killers" and others. As I say, they stayed away from narcotics, as far as I could tell-unlike the Chinese, Thai, and maybe the Vietnamese gangs. The Koreans were a little more circumspect, but it was very clear that they had very sophisticated prostitution rings operating. A great source of supply was these Korean women who were marrying GIs and who were subsequently jettisoned.

I felt that I was on firm ground to be pushing this as an issue, from a strategic point of view. I worked very hard on this matter. I managed to get the chief of staff of the Eighth Army on my side-a major general. The first chief of staff was not interested. His replacement was different. I think that he and his wife were "born again" Christians, or something like that. They had very high moral standards. He was much more cooperative. Once I got him on my side, I found that the rest of his staff was cooperative.

I found, for example, that senior military chaplains were very cooperative. The junior chaplains-the majors and the captains- didn't seem to care very much. The older, "bull" colonels among the chaplains understand what we were trying to do.

Dealing with this problem was an interesting exercise. It involved my going on AFK [Armed Forces in Korea] TV and giving talks with the Immigration Attachï¿½ , saying what was involved and trying to get the Korean Command to change the regulations under which people were "counseled" about the implications of getting married. I think that the culmination of this whole effort took place when the Chief of Staff of the Army came to Korea. I think that he was the commanding general of the Eighth Army when you were in Korea.

Q: When I was there, the commanding general of the Eighth Army was General Stilwell.

ANTIPPAS: It was the man who replaced Stilwell. I can't remember his name. He was not a guy that I particularly liked. I don't think that anybody else liked him, either. Stilwell was a very good guy. I got to know him quite well after he retired.

Anyway, an FSO on his staff whom you knew, I think, was George Barbis. George is an old friend of mine, of course-part of the Greek "Mafia" in the Foreign Service. George was working as a kind of special assistant to the Chief of Staff. He came to Korea on several occasions with the Chief of Staff. I went to George and said, "Look, I'm working on this problem." Of course, George himself had served in Korea in the 50's. He had a lot of Korean friends and was sympathetic.

"Dixie" Walker, who was the Ambassador to Korea at the time, was sympathetic to my efforts as well. Ambassador Walker arranged for me to "brief" the Chief of Staff of the Army during one of his visits. The briefing was held in the Conference Room at the Embassy. I gave him a kind of "read out" of what I just told you here. I gave him a copy of a long dispatch that I had written to the Department on the nature of the problem, mentioning all of the INS reports of what was going on outside the American Army cantonments in the States and all of that. I tried to make the point to the Chief of Staff that I was a very good friend of the American Army. I said that I had had a "love affair" with the Army since I was a kid. I said that I thought that this situation was giving the Army a bad name. I tried to tell the Chief of Staff that I was not trying to "attack" the Army.

Of course, as you could predict, the reaction of the Chief of Staff was defensive. He said, in effect, "Well, I guess we have to do something to make our soldiers less 'masculine,'" or a wiseacre comment about " too much testosterone," or something like that. Anyway, the briefing didn't go off too well. There was obviously very little that the Chief of Staff could do. Washington was not prepared to say...

Q: I was in Korea from 1976 to 1979. I looked at this issue and said, "There's nothing that we can do about it." But it still was an issue of importance. You picked an issue where you thought that you could do something. We were "clamping down" on American civilians in those days. We told them that they couldn't get married.

ANTIPPAS: They were told not to get married. However, one of the interesting aspects of this matter was that my thinking continued to evolve in this connection. As I looked at the records available in the Consular Section, one of the things that concerned me was where in hell all of these Koreans were coming from in the United States. Based on the records available in the Consular Section, there were some hundreds of thousands of Koreans who had gotten to the U. S. illegally. Even if you factored in the number of those who had "overstayed" on visitors' visas, it still didn't add up. These Koreans were in Los Angeles, New York, and every place else. They were springing up all over the place.

Then from the CIA reporting from the "Blue House" [Presidential Mansion], it was clear that the Chun Doo Hwan administration was encouraging the movement of Koreans to the U. S. The view of the Korean Government was to encourage emigration, because this was how to get rid of protestors. But there also was a reverse benefit. There would be large communities of Koreans in the U. S. who were amenable to the Korean administration's way of thinking. They thought that this was a good development.

I had decided that the prostitution issue was worth fighting for because it was clear to me that if we didn't "tighten up," in some fashion, we'd have a continuous "leak" of Koreans into the U. S..

I continued to look for ways to slow down the visa trafficking. I was trying to do something because it was clear that there was an absolute "flood" of Koreans heading for the countries South of the U. S. - Mexican border. They were making it into the United States in that way, particularly from Mexico. In fact, there was a Korean movie issued in 1987, called, "Deep Blue Night." It was about a Korean illegal immigrant who goes to Los Angeles through Mexico and recounts his shenanigans with some women there. This was quite scandalous at the time it came out in Seoul in 1985, I think, because there was a lot of nudity. I said, "This thing is a training film on how to get people into the United States." I put in a lot of effort, trying to persuade my consular colleagues to tighten up their visa requirements.

Q: When the U. S. Army Chief of Staff turned down your efforts to do something about GI "marriages," did that pretty well end what you were doing?

ANTIPPAS: Well, yes. Obviously, it was a very limited effort. We could only try to do something on the margins. I subsequently received a note from George Barbis on the stationery of the Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army. I still have that note somewhere. He referred to some kind of scandal regarding Korean prostitutes and said, "You tried to tell us about this some time ago, and here it is in the news." It was sort of a moral victory, I thought.

Q:When did you leave Korea?

ANTIPPAS: I left Korea in August, 1988.

Q: Then where did you go?

ANTIPPAS: I went to Montreal as Principal Officer. I'm telling you a lot of this to lay the groundwork for what I'm going to tell you about Montreal, in terms of where I thought I stood in the "pecking order" of things in Korea-in terms of my personal status. It was more than being just chief of the Consular Section, the guy who issued the visas.

Q: All right. So we'll pick it up when you left Korea. We'll talk about your going to Canada.

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Q: Today is December 21, 1994. You left Korea. Where did you go? Could you give the dates?

ANTIPPAS: I left Korea in the first week of August, 1988. I was assigned as Principal Officer in Montreal, a position which I had sought over a number of years. I thought that would be a very nice assignment. I was not unfamiliar with Montreal. It seemed like a "classy" town. I had the choice between being DCM in Haiti or Principal Officer in Montreal. My wife wanted Haiti because the weather was nicer, obviously.

Q: But she is Canadian, isn't she?

ANTIPPAS: My wife is Canadian-from Ontario. And there's a difference. She's always tried to learn a language wherever we've been assigned-at least pick up some of the language. When someone suggested that she should pick up French, she just dug her heels in. This is the Ontarian coming out, loud and clear. I had to "shut her up" a few times over French-English issuers in the Province. It was interesting to see how the nationalist fur rises, you know.

Anyway, I decided that I'd rather be "Number One" in Montreal, rather than "Number Two" in Haiti, plus the fact that I just felt that I had watched what had happened in Haiti from the vantage point of the Bahamas. As I knew a number of people who served in Haiti, I thought that there wasn't a future in Haiti for anyone. However, as it turned out, there wasn't a future in Montreal, either. That's the unique feature about Montreal, as pleasant an assignment as it was.

I finally arrived in Montreal in October, 1988, because my predecessor had delayed his departure because of some medical problems. Instead of going to Montreal in mid-September, which would be the normal transfer time, I had to delay my arrival for three weeks.

We decided that, after spending the requisite period of time here in the United States, doing my French test, taking home leave, and arranging for consultations and all of that, we wondered what we would do. We thought that we couldn't sit around in a motel some place. So we decided to go back to Korea for the opening of the Olympic Games. With all of the travel we had done, we had enough pieces of tickets left over from the four years we had been in Korea, plus the fact that my daughter was studying in France and in Quebec during that whole period. I was bringing her home every two months, so we had lots of tickets lying around. We decided to go back to Korea and be with our friends.

The Koreans were so enthusiastic about the Olympic Games. We had watched them put this altogether over a four-year period. We thought that it would be nice to be there. It was a fun time. I mention this because it has relevance for what happened later.

I arrived in Montreal in the first week of October, 1988. The snow was just about ready to fly. I thought that it was a nice post, heavily oriented toward the consular and commercial functions. At that time the Consulate General had been in a high-rise building in downtown Montreal. The Consular Section was on the ground floor. Twelve floors up was the rest of the Consulate General. We had a problem of a bifurcated office, which caused a bit of difficulty in terms of organization and the flow of information. The problem was not insuperable, but it was still difficult.

Montreal is a post where you probably get a hundred different nationalities coming in, asking for visas. This was a different experience from anything I ever had before. Montreal really is a "gateway" to North America. In terms of the consular function it was an interesting and busy post.

The first decision that I had to deal with, which, I think, eventually became a problem for me, was who was I going to designate as my deputy. There was no "deputy" slot at the post. Obviously, I had to have a senior officer, whom I would leave in charge when I was not present. It was a "toss up" between the Economic Officer and the chief of the Consular Section. Both of them were FSO-4's-and experienced officers. They were at the same grade, but the chief of the Consular Section had a bit longer in grade than the Economic Officer. The chief of the Consular Section was not at post when I arrived. He was on home leave. My predecessor left me a note, saying, "This is a decision which you're going to have to make on this issue." He gave me some hints and his thoughts.

I decided to designate the Economic Officer as my deputy, first, because his office was close to my own office. He worked very closely with the Principal Officer. We also had a Commercial Officer. The chief of the Consular Section, of course, was located down on the ground floor. I decided that it probably made more sense to designate the Economic Officer as my deputy, because the chief of the Consular Section really had a "full plate." He had a busy office, a large staff, and lots of things to do. I was sympathetic to his position, as I had just left a Consular Section. The Economic Officer spoke French very well. The chief of the Consular Section did not speak French very well. That is really critical for a post in Quebec Province. You have to speak French. You just get laughed off the street if you're not able to handle office business in French. I mention this because this ended up by becoming a problem, due to the resentment generated by this selection.

I had a pretty good Administrative Office and a first class Secretary. One of the problems that the Consulate General in Montreal had faced previously was that, at one time, there were two American secretaries assigned. This was subsequently reduced to one American secretary. The post also had a communicator. One of the things that the American secretary had to do was to be able to handle communications and stand communications watch every other weekend. In the past this situation had posed a problem. In fact, the previous Secretary had made a real "fuss" about doing communications work, aside from the fact that the communications watch required a commitment to be present every other weekend. It's also a difficult job. The equipment now has become so sophisticated. It's not just the old "punch a tape" business. You really have to be able to work with this equipment. It's all computerized and takes a lot of savvy. I can understand that. However, I remember that in the inspection report for 1987, the year before I was assigned there, this was mentioned as a problem.

The question of the communications watch every other weekend for the American secretary eventually became a personnel problem for me because the new Ambassador, a political appointee, arrived in Ottawa.

Q: Who was that?

ANTIPPAS: This was Edward Ney, a New York advertising mogul and a personal friend of President George Bush. They had gone to the same prep school. He was a nice enough guy-not a bad sort. He listened to what I had to say. Anyhow, he "hijacked" my secretary to be his secretary in Ottawa. What could I say about that? It was a promotion for her, a step up, and all that. I put the best face on it and said, "Well, at least I've got one friend at court. Not only that, I've got an ear at court."

However, I think that the loss of my secretary was a disaster for me during my tenure in Montreal. I'll tell you why in the course of this description of the post. I found that the biggest problem that I faced in Montreal was something that I didn't realize until I actually got there. I discussed this problem with Tom Enders, the previous Ambassador to Canada and an old colleague of mine.

Montreal and Quebec City are unique in the Foreign Service in that they are the only two constituent posts in a single province that we have in the Foreign Service. Normally, the arrangement is that you have a constituent post to cover several provinces in a country. Of course, the other aspect of this is that Montreal, historically, has been perceived as being "the English" town in the Province. That is, it is "the enemy." In point of fact, that was not true. Almost half of the population of Montreal are now French speakers. Most of the officials of the provincial government are French Quï¿½bï¿½cois. Ironically many are from Montreal and live in Montreal.

Q: Also, by the time you were there, the English-speaking "establishment" had moved over to Toronto.

ANTIPPAS: Exactly. They had all moved out. They were scared to death when the PQ [Parti Quï¿½bï¿½cois-the Quebec Party] came into power in 1976. However, the fact is that the perception was that Montreal is the "enemy" [of the French speakers]. Most countries represented in Canada have their consulates in Montreal because it is still a commercial and banking center. In fact, when I was in Montreal, there were only two Principal Officers in Quebec City.

Q: Well, Quebec City is relatively small.

ANTIPPAS: It's a provincial capital. Only the U. S. and the French have Consulates in Quebec City. In fact, the French had a Consulate whose Principal Officer had the rank of Ambassador.

Anyway, this posed a real problem for the Principal Officer of the American Consulate General in Montreal because he really doesn't have a job. The basic function of the Principal Officer of a Consulate General, of course, is to manage the post. His other main function is political reporting. That's your reason for being, really. That's why one is expected to speak French, when you go to a post like that. However, the Provincial Government of Quebec didn't want to talk to Principal Officers of the Consulates in Montreal if the discussions were to be in Montreal. If you wanted to talk officially to the Province you were to go to Quebec City.

Now, one of my predecessors, B. J. Harper, had a good experience in Montreal in the mid 1970's because the then Premier of Quebec, Rene Levesque, had an office in Montreal and most importantly wanted to talk to the Americans. He spent a lot of time in Montreal, and B. J. Harper had access to him. That's what it takes-some kind of access to the political leader. It doesn't matter whether this access is formal or not. The fact is that this is the basis on which you can write reports. Who cares what the Mayor of Montreal says? So, in fact, I was accredited to the Mayor of Montreal but no first person discussions to report.

Of course we had a lot of fun. It was a nice post. I'm not taking away from the fact that Montreal is a lovely city. We had a nice house, a car, and a couple of servants. We were living better than I did when I was chargï¿½ d'affaires in the Bahamas. But from the point of view of the job, Montreal was a cipher and a great disappointment to me.

Q: This is Tape 9, Side A of the interview with Andy Antippas. You were saying that the post was a disappointment in that respect?

ANTIPPAS: As you well know, if you want to cover yourself with glory for onward promotions and assignments, a Principal Officer at least needs to "set the agenda" in terms of what the post is going to do and the kind of work you are going to do. So when you have the basic function of political reporting taken away from you, or denied you, because of the structure of things, it is really rather disappointing. I tried very hard to make myself "relevant". I was never, never formally presented to the Premier of the Province of Quebec, in spite of the fact that I asked for appointments on several occasions. I met all of the other cabinet members in Quebec and was treated very nicely. They have the tradition that, when a new Principal Officer comes to the province, the office of protocol takes you up to visit Parliament. You sit in the gallery at the Parliament, you're acknowledged by the Speaker of the Parliament, and they even give you a little video tape of that event. They were charming and very considerate. Obviously, Quï¿½bï¿½cois understand the United States and Americans very, very well. We're practically one country. We don't know them, but they know us very well. So it's not exactly like dealing with a Third World country.

I understood this situation very quickly, after a couple of months, when I discovered that I was never going to be able to formally meet the Premier of Quebec, even though most of the time the Premier lived in Montreal. His home was actually in Montreal. Many of the political figures had to commute between Quebec City and Montreal, a three hour drive each way.

I took on other projects. Aside from the management of the post, I tried to become involved and, as I said, to be relevant, politically. Montreal is a very ethnically diverse city. As I am a Greek-American, I was, of course, readily and happily accepted by the very large Greek community in Montreal. There are over 80,000 Greek Canadians there. The Lebanese community was also very sympathetic and understanding. There is even a Kurdish community which would invite me to their national day of commemoration of what the Turks had done to them in 1915. Anybody who had ever, or whose family had ever been colonized by the Turks was very welcome.

I also became very involved in the functions of the Consular Corps, because that appeared to be something that was useful to do, since the Consular Corps basically was run, master-minded, and dictated to by the Honorary Austrian Consul, who happened to drop dead the month after I got to Montreal. As the Consular Corps struggled to reconstitute itself, I became very involved with trying to refashion it to something which would be more useful to the professional diplomats and also to give us a way to talk to the Provincial Government.

Every government treats honorary consuls differently. In the case of the Province of Quebec, because the "separatist," Parti Quï¿½bï¿½cois government was looking for more international acceptance, it had tended to give much more authority and privileges to the honorary consuls than I had experienced at other posts. They were even accorded "duty free" importation privileges and Consular Corps license plates for their cars. The career consuls objected to this sort of treatment because the non-career consuls don't have the same responsibilities as the career consuls. Anyway, that was a "hobby horse" that I was able to ride and be involved with. At least, it allowed me to "mix" with my colleagues in a constructive fashion.

I became very friendly with the Russians. The only other post that the Russians had outside of Ottawa was in Montreal, which also maintained representation at ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization. This was just before the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Q: Basically, you were talking about the Soviets, rather than the Russians.

ANTIPPAS: Initially, it was the Soviets, and then it became the Russians. But before the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Consul General made it very clear to me that he would like to be able to get together periodically and discuss issues. Of course, this was very interesting to me, given my own 30 years of Cold War experience. Suddenly to be in charge of a post and to have the Russians say, "Let's talk," would be very useful, in my view, from an intelligence-gathering point of view.

So I asked the Embassy what they wanted me to do and how they wanted me to handle this. We have had these long-standing requirements to report conversations with Soviet Bloc representatives. Of course, there were other Bloc representatives in Montreal: the Poles and the Czechs had consulates. The North Koreans did not. The South Koreans did. The Chinese Communists eventually opened a consulate in Montreal. The Cubans had a consulate there. However, I was struck by the indifference of our Embassy to the whole thing. It was made rather clear to me that I could do almost anything that I wanted to do. I thought that this was one of the "straws in the wind" which raised the question in my mind, "What am I doing here?" It was completely different from anything else that I have ever experienced.

Q: I found the same thing when I was Consul General in Naples. The Embassy didn't really care. It just didn't want me to cause any problems and wanted me to keep out of the headlines.

ANTIPPAS: This really gave me pause for thought. I realized that the Embassy really didn't care what the Russians were saying in Montreal. Anyway, I developed a good relationship with the Russian Consul General. We discussed matters of general interest. It was interesting to watch that transition as the Soviet Union broke up and how they coped with that. The Russians were really not 10 feet tall, after all.

When one of the major GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] conferences was held in Montreal at the end of 1988, it was hard for me and my team at the Consulate General to play any role in that relationship, because people came from Washington to deal with the various issues. We provided the delegation with some transportation and escort service, but there was no real way to get involved in this kind of thing.

I wondered how I was going to "cover myself with glory" and, in fact, "make a difference." I was still in the FEOC. I needed a promotion to MC [Minister Counselor]. Obviously, I would have to "shine" as Principal Officer. The question was, how do you do that?

I thought that one way I could do this was in the management of the post. One of the requirements that developed was that we had to move out of the existing office facilities and move into new, specifically-designed and constructed facilities, as a result of what had happened at other posts in terms of protecting them against terrorist attacks. The Department decided that, although we would have liked to remain where we were, there was a problem with the security of our office building. The building we were in was basically part of a shopping center-a large, high-rise office building and shopping center. The owners of the building objected to our "bricking up" the windows, for example. They allowed us to put vehicle barriers out in front so that a "suicide bomber" couldn't crash a car into the Consular Section on the ground floor. However, the Consular Section was vulnerable if someone decided to blow up a car in front of the building.

The Department eventually was able to negotiate a lease on space in another high-rise building, two blocks away and closer to the center of Montreal. We were allowed to redesign two of the top two floors of that high-rise building for new Consulate General offices. I had a lot of input into designing that facility, given the structure that we had. We had two floors, plus the basement, to work with. What we clearly had to consider was how to handle the flow of visa applicants. We had several hundred visa applicants per day. It was nothing like the Embassies in Seoul or Manila, but still a busy place in a very tough climate. So that was an interesting challenge for my first year in Montreal. I helped to design the facilities and to negotiate the lease, plus working with the contractor to set up a "hard line" and figure out what space we should have.

The chief of the Consular Section, who, I guess, still resented the fact that I hadn't selected him to be my deputy, tried to pull a "fast one," communicating directly with the Department about his desire to have his own conference room in his section. He did not even tell me about it. The Department actually put that idea into the plan, based on his conversations with people in Washington. I came down on him like a ton of bricks. We were going to have a nicely-appointed conference room which everybody would be able to use.

I had other designs for space that would be available. For example, VIP [Very Important Person] quarters for the Ambassador, who would come down to Montreal from time to time. We had had U. S. cabinet and sub-cabinet officers come to the post, but there had been no appropriate space to put these people. We had a visit from the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Energy. I had no suitable place to put him and his staff, outside of giving him my own office. So I created a VIP office suite. It worked out fairly well.

Eventually, we managed to move into the new offices in the spring of 1990. During the move we were only closed to the public for two or three days. We were able to move everything and still get into action quickly. There was money to build the place but no money for curtains or signs. We didn't even have money to make signs as to where the visa lines were supposed to be. We had paper signs all over the place. It looked a little "tacky," initially. Nevertheless, the move was relatively painless because we planned and worked it out in advance. Everybody cooperated in the move.

Two weeks after we moved the Foreign Service Inspectors showed up. I had planned for the arrival of the inspectors, although this was my first experience with the "new" Inspection Corps-that is, the post-1987, Jesse Helms inspired, Inspection Corps. Inspections were no longer under the control of the State Department.

Q: One felt that it was an adverbial process.

ANTIPPAS: I discovered this painfully afterwards. Up until that experience, I'd been inspected probably at seven different posts during my career. I'd worked as a TDY [Temporary Duty] consular inspector in China. I thought I understood how the inspection system works. I had learned about the system from contact with inspectors on a number of occasions who were thoughtful and helpful to me. I had no real fear of the inspectors. You try to do the best job you know how to do, under the circumstances. If you make mistakes, OK, you make mistakes.

Q: And also they can put in a word for you, saying, "He really needs this or that." They can suggest ways of straightening things out if there are problems.

ANTIPPAS: I've described to you my experience in the Bahamas. It was the same kind of thing. The inspectors said that I needed more administrative people and all of that.

The inspectors were going all over Canada, because there are four or five posts involved. I talked on the telephone to the senior officer leading the team which was going to inspect the Consulate General in Montreal and worked out the schedule. One of the things you need to work out are the ground rules, what kind of representational functions I would plan to demonstrate the depth of our contacts, the kind of people we knew, and what was going on in the post. I had known this senior inspector because I had replaced him at a previous post. We weren't friends, but we were acquainted with each other and, I thought, had a fairly amicable relationship. He was a very competent officer, who since has died, but I won't mention his name.

I guess I should have gotten a clue when he told me that basically all of the plans were fine but he didn't want a lot of representational functions. He suggested an initial dinner reception for the section chiefs at the residence the first night that they were in Montreal. He said that they didn't want any other representational functions, although they would like to go to a couple of baseball games. It was spring, and the Montreal Expos were playing major league baseball. The inspectors were going to be in Montreal for two weeks, but they really didn't want any representational functions put on for them. That should have tipped me off that there was something very different going on. Why would inspectors come to a constituent post for two weeks? All of my experience had been that the inspection of Embassies took two weeks, but not a constituent post. They were going to inspect the Consulate in Halifax before coming to Montreal, so maybe they were going to write their report on Halifax while they were in Montreal. So perhaps that was why they needed the extra time.

No, that wasn't it. They sent us a flock of questionnaires that everyone was supposed to fill out, which we dutifully did. I gave the requisite lecture to the staff, Americans and locals, instructing everyone to tell the inspectors whatever was on their minds and answer candidly whatever questions they might have.

It had been my practice in Montreal, building on the experience of my predecessor, to hold two staff meetings a week for the American staff. There had long been a weekly staff meeting for the American staff-early in the morning on Fridays, as I recall. I found that this was really a problem for the Consular Section because their public was waiting for them in line...

Q: It's not the same thing as with a Political Section.

ANTIPPAS: I was very conscious of the fact that I would be talking, other people would be "gassing," the public was waiting, and these guys in the Consular Section were going to have to work through lunch to get through their workload. You always have to be aware of the pressures that they are under. At the same time, you don't want to leave them out. We had two junior officers in the Consular Section. Inevitably, they were torn between priorities. How do you deal with this problem? I also had to hold my staff meeting at a time when the morning telegrams hadn't been processed yet. I hadn't even read them. I couldn't even tell people what was in the morning cables.

I decided to have a second staff meeting on another day of the week for all of the section chiefs, including USIA [United States Information Agency representative], the commercial officer, and a DEA, Drug Enforcement Administration, representative. We also had a representative of the Department of Agriculture, from the Grain Testing Service, because of the grain storage facilities in use in connection with the St. Lawrence Seaway. I also invited the U. S. representative to ICAO to come over-either he himself or his State Department political officer-to sit in on those sessions, just to "plug in" to what was going on. This was unique, because it had not been done before. The ICAO staff had always been separate. They were basically friendly, but apparently we had always stayed at a distance from each other. I was interested in what ICAO was doing and was looking for something to be involved in. So I would have what I called my "Country Team Meeting" and then would have a staff meeting for all members of the American staff.

So there were two American staff meetings per week. One of the problems I faced when I first came to Montreal was with the local employees. The Foreign Service local employees in Canada are very vocal. They're probably the most vocal, local employees in the world, because Canadians don't view themselves as anybody's employee. They are your equal.

Anyway, just after I arrived in Montreal the local employees had been very disappointed over the decision by the Embassy not to accord them a cost of living increase which they regarded as due them. This had transpired because in several previous cycles an Administrative Officer in the Embassy had unilaterally granted them increases in salary over and above what they should have received under the schedule approved by Washington. He did this because he wanted to be a "good fellow." Well, to pay Peter, you have to take it away from Paul, so to speak. It had come out that this Administrative Officer had done this on his own responsibility, so the Department, in effect, was "docking" the wages of the local employees.

This angered the local employees, and they asked to talk to me about that. So, just after I arrived in Montreal I had a meeting with them along with my Administrative Officer. There was just one Administrative Officer at post, as was the case in the Bahamas. I met with the local employees and heard them out. I told them, "Look, I can't do very much to solve this problem, and neither can the Embassy. This was dictated by events which took place previously and was a Washington level decision. I understand that and I want you to know that I sympathize with you." I took the occasion to tell all of the Consulate General's local employees that I was going to follow an "open door" policy. I understood the difficulties resulting from the fact that initially there were 12 floors between most of the local employees and my office. Furthermore, there were several locked doors to go through. I said that I realized that it was not easy for a local employee to go and see the "boss" to talk about problems. However, I wanted to let them know that I understood the "peer pressures" that go on. I was going to encourage them to try to talk to management.

The way I would do that is that I would have a meeting periodically-say, once every two or three weeks-with the local employees. Myself alone-no other American from the Consulate General. Obviously, we couldn't take everybody away from work to do that, but I wanted each unit from the whole office to send a representative to these meetings. Actually, the local staff was largely made up of USIS and State Department local employees. I said, "I want you to select a representative from each unit who will come in and talk to me. You can empower that person to tell me what your problems are. I will tell you what I think about this and I will tell you about other issues. We can try to create a 'flow of information back and forth.'"

I found this practice useful. It lowered the temperature, to some extent. It reduced the level of rancor that was felt. But it wasn't until the inspection that I appreciated how many problems there were at this post. The point of all this is that I made it my business to create a lot of "flows of information." Of course, there were other, more informal things that I did, like "trooping the line"-walking the "trench line," a policy which I had followed at other posts where I had served and had a supervisory responsibility. I also invited some of our local employees to the residence.

Various Principal Officers have used their residences in different ways. My predecessor had worked very hard to get money out of the Department to refurbish the residence, because it had "run down" over the years. I knew several of my predecessors as Principal Officer in Montreal. In fact, I think that I knew all of them, with one exception, dating back 30 years. You know some of them, as well. Many of them didn't want to entertain.

Q: Montreal is a "retirement post."

ANTIPPAS: It's a "retirement post," a "golden hand shake post." Many of them thought that they weren't going to break their backs bringing people in to entertain them. Many of my predecessors did their official entertaining at restaurants or at a club. There was a club in Montreal that the Consular Corps used a great deal for entertaining. There was no lack of places where you could entertain. However, I felt that the U. S. Government had spent all of this money, refurbishing the house and so forth, so why not use it for entertainment purposes? It was a nice house, and we had household staff to serve. My wife and I happen to like to entertain people. It's part of the pleasure that we got out of the Foreign Service.

So I tried to include not only the junior officers but also local staff members. I had Christmas parties, for example, at the residence. I had known of Principal Officers at that post who had never even invited local staff members into the house.

I used all of these various ways of getting people to talk, to open up, and to be accessible, which I figured was the name of the game. The other aspect is that I don't think that you should look at a place like Montreal and say, "This is a problem post." This was not a "problem" part of the world. Montreal is a very nice town. The functions at the post are primarily routine, and it's a routine kind of Foreign Service post. We did our work, and the biggest problem was the climate for a few months of the year. The people who live in the Province of Quebec solve that too, by going "underground"-staying out of the weather. Nobody really suffers terribly in a place like Montreal and nobody really has any basis for complaint. I've been to some of the really "crappy" places in the Foreign Service. While I was not particularly "relaxed," or "blasï¿½", I took my responsibilities seriously. I did not feel that anybody had any particular reason for complaint.

I was concerned, for example, about what we could do for the junior officers. In Seoul I had had eight junior officers to deal with. How do you supervise these guys so that they are not "burned out"? I mean, "burned out" and disgusted with the consular function, if they are treated like galley slaves. How do you do that, particularly when the work has to be done? There is a given amount of work to be done and statutory responsibilities which we have to perform. Still, I thought, with a little "give and take" and a little imagination, maybe we can do something to broaden their horizons.

For example, I pushed to arrange for one of the junior officers to spend some time working with the Economic Officer-a few hours a day, just so that he'd have something else to think about. He was an economic cone officer and wanted to be able to do something else beside consular work in the Foreign Service. It was like pulling teeth to get the Consul to agree with this, but that's the sort of thing that I did.

If Quebec City, for example, which is just a two-man post, had a problem because they ran out of people-one man was on leave or the other guy was sick or had a family emergency of some kind-I would send somebody up there to help to hold the fort. I didn't send a supervisor. I would send a junior officer up there. I would say, "This is what I did 25 years before. The way to learn how things are done is to jump into the deep end of the pool. So go up to Quebec City and help to manage the place." I felt that I was doing my duty by doing this. I'm telling you all this because of what happened as a result of the inspection.

The inspectors came in, and I found that out of the five inspectors, only one or two had previously been in the Foreign Service. Most of the inspectors had primarily auditor type experience. They had worked in other agencies of the government, such as the Defense Department, for example. As I said, this was my first experience with the new type of inspection, which the new Inspector General set up in the Department. Previously, the Inspector General had always been a very senior Foreign Service Officer-an Ambassador, for example. The new Inspector General of the Department came from outside the Department.

So we went through this drill. The inspectors handed out their questionnaires and went around and talked to everybody on the staff. Of course, I tried to be as helpful as I could with them.

The team leader came into my office one morning the day I was having a reception for the Consular Corps, city leaders, and other notables to cut the ribbon for opening our new offices. I had invited the Ambassador down from Ottawa to preside with me and I got the Mayor of Montreal to come over. Nobody from the Provincial Government showed up, which didn't surprise me. I had my household staff prepare the food. We didn't have to cater it. It was a very nice reception.

The wine industry in the United States was pressing very hard to persuade the Quï¿½bï¿½cois to open up the wine market. The French had had this market pretty well "sewed up." The American wine industry had a hard time selling wine in Canada. What the American vintners would do would be to sponsor a wine exhibition. Over the years we had accumulated a fairly large "wine cellar" of excess wine, under the care and keeping of the Consulate General. We would use some of this wine for representational functions. I tried to keep very careful control over it, because I was afraid of a scandal developing over what had happened to all of that "free" wine from the American wine industry. Anyway, there was plenty of wine available for a function like this one, for the July 4 celebration, and other things that we would do.

As I said, the senior inspector came in to see me on the morning of that reception. I will never forget that date or the experience of it until the day I die. He looked at me with a very sad face and said, "I'm sorry to report to you, but you've got a very unhappy post, a post that's in trouble." I tell you, I was so shocked that I was speechless. Then he went on to describe all of the statistics which the inspectors had collected from the questionnaires and from the confidential interviews with the employees at the post. I was absolutely dumbfounded. Of course, I realized immediately that my career had ended that day and that I was "finished" in the Foreign Service. I remember sitting in my chair as if somebody had hit me with a two-by-four. I just couldn't believe what the man said. Groggily I thought that, if I could have gotten away with it, I would have canceled that stupid reception.

The date was early June. We had the reception. I made a speech in French. The Mayor of Montreal, the Ambassador, and everybody else had a great time. They all thought that it was a wonderful office "layout." They thought that we had done a marvelous job of outfitting the Consulate General. We took our guests on tours of the facilities. I know that the inspectors were dumbfounded by what they saw. I recovered my public persona pretty well. I decided that I would not go out "feet first" but would go out as a professional. I thought that I had obviously failed and that it was the end of my career. I thought that I would not be promoted again. I needed to be promoted or I would be retired for having exceeded the allowed "time in grade." I thought that I would go out with the knowledge that I was probably the only FEOC who served his whole time in class doing jobs rated at the highest level and didn't get promoted, which takes a lot of doing. But there it was. I was angry about this whole thing.

I remember that, as we went through the process of "negotiating" what the inspectors' report would say, we had a lot of angry meetings with them. I felt "betrayed" by something, that I'd been "sandbagged," but I couldn't figure out what had happened. I didn't understand what had happened to me. Of course, the Ambassador felt humiliated by this. He had given me a good Efficiency Report, which the DCM had drafted. I felt that my management skills had been quite "up to the task" and that I had done very well. But here I came out of the inspection with the reputation that we had a "shoddy" shop. This was absolutely not the case.

During the summer of 1990 I obviously thought about this a great deal. I "stewed" in this. That was the summer when we had the great "Indian uprising" in the Montreal area. You may remember it.

Q: Oh, yes. They were blocking roads and bridges...

ANTIPPAS: The key bridge across the St. Lawrence River was blocked by the Mohawk Indians of the area, which almost caused bloodshed. The commuters were pretty sore about it. It was like having the Indians take over the 14th St. Bridge in Washington. Imagine what would happen in Washington, D. C., if somebody did that. It was kind of interesting to report on that because I happened to know the Mayor of the little town on the other side of that bridge. He was one of the people I had gotten to know. I went around and met the mayors in the various towns in my consular district. I talked to him on the phone. They had the Canadian Army out there, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and the provincial police. It was kind of like reporting on a war zone. I enjoyed writing little telegrams about this.

We also had the only military ship visit during my tour of duty in Montreal. I think that the name of the ship was the USS AUBREY FITCH, one of the frigates which had supported our efforts in Grenada, when I was chargï¿½ d'affaires there. I had gone on board this ship as chargï¿½. [The AUBREY FITCH is a Guided Missile Frigate of the OLIVER HAZARD PERRY class.] They had given me a hat to commemorate the occasion. When the ship came through Montreal, it was going down to the Great Lakes and then coming back. We were discussing by phone a joint reception which we would have on board the ship. The ship made its way through the St. Lawrence Seaway, right at the time of this Indian uprising. The captain was concerned. So when they were going through the Seaway, they "buttoned the ship up" [went to General Quarters].

The Executive Officer of the ship, with whom I was in telephone contact, said that he flew the biggest American flag that he could find. There was nobody on deck when they went through the locks. There was a Mohawk Indian out there in camouflage uniform. I don't remember whether he was carrying an AK-47 automatic rifle. He might have been carrying a U. S. Marine flag. It was obviously somebody who had served in the U. S. Marines. The Mohawk Indians are allowed to cross the U. S.-Canadian border without any immigration formalities. Many of them served in the U. S. military. I think that he gestured to the ship and said, "Shell Montreal, shell Montreal!" I put that in a reporting cable to the Embassy to "lighten up" the situation.

We had a lot of fun at the reception on board the ship. I was treated very nicely by the ship's officers. I have an plaque which they gave me, saying that I am an "Honorary Fitchman," because I had been on board the ship in Grenada and now in Montreal.

But over the summer of 1990 I "stewed" in this humiliating experience of the inspection. The Ambassador was required to come down and "read us the riot act." I had to sit there and listen to him go on with all of this jazz.

I decided to engage a lawyer and said to him, "I'd like you to find out what happened to me in this inspection." He came to Montreal and, in fact, inspected the inspection. By that time I had figured out who was on my side and who had probably participated in "hanging" me in this "lynching." Based on my recommended list of local and American employees of the Consulate General in Montreal, the lawyer interviewed a lot of people. He came up with enough written, sworn statements which indicated that there had been a conspiracy to "sandbag" me in the inspection.

This conspiracy had been orchestrated by several people in the Consulate General. These people apparently had reason to dislike me. They persuaded two of the junior officers and several others to say things to the inspectors about my management of the post and to make comments on the questionnaires. Of course, the questionnaires were shredded as soon as they were reviewed, so there was no way to find out who said what.

For example, the minute that the inspectors learned that the DEA representative had nothing but good things to say about me, they never went back and talked to him. I learned this from the Drug Enforcement officer who spoke to my lawyer. Based on these sworn statements, it was clear that the inspectors would bring a person in for an interview and say, "Now, tell me what the Consul General is doing now, or did, or whatever. None of this is going out of this room, and your name is never going to be mentioned. Just tell me what he is up to.

I had thought initially that the local employees of the Consulate General were at the bottom of this. I never suspected that the Americans were involved. In point of fact the local employees, if not neutral about me, were complimentary. There were between 18 and 20 Americans assigned to Montreal. 18 questionnaires were collected and analyzed. If you have six or eight people who put you at the bottom of the list, it's going to bring the entire score down. It's going to "skew" the results. I don't know whether or not the inspectors were instructed to "get" me because I had allegedly done something "wrong" in Seoul but couldn't prove it. But they may have wanted to make sure that I was never promoted. Again, I don't know if that happened or not. People could go to their graves and never admit it. You could hypothesize, but basically, if you can "skew" that score, why didn't the inspectors say, "Hey, wait a minute. There's a real range of opinion here about what happened in the Consulate General in Montreal. This post has just moved into new quarters. It is in a bit of an uproar, and there are these other problems with Canadian posts, because of local dissatisfaction." And so on. None of that was ever mentioned as mitigating factors. Basically, the inspectors came in with an agenda, and then they decided that somebody was going to get it "in the neck."

The other issue that had a lot of bearing on what happened to me, is that the courts found against the Department in terms of the women's class action suit. This was the suit brought by several hundred women who said that they had been systematically deprived of assignments and awards and had been discriminated against by male Foreign Service Officers. As you know, that had been fought by the Department for a long time-10 years. Finally a woman judge in the Appeals Court told the Department that she had found against it and told the Department to promote 300 women into the Senior Foreign Service.

You don't have to be a personnel genius to figure out what has to happen in that sort of situation. In fact, if you had the problem, and were told that there are 600 or 700 people in the Senior Foreign Service, and then were told to promote 300 other people, how do you do that, without creating circumstances leading to another class action suit? You could have people saying, "Hey, I've just been forced to 'walk the plank' here."

I think that, basically, the Department decided that it had to "get rid of" a certain type of officer. Men coming near retirement who had done all right and were senior officers. However, it is necessary to make room, somehow. You can't "buy" people out and you can't say this openly. If you say it openly, you'll have a class action suit that will rock the whole of foggy bottom. I believe that the system decided that it was going to be necessary to get rid of a number of people. It's clear that anybody who was a supervisor was fair game, because you can go into any operation, anywhere in the federal government-and particularly in the State Department or Foreign Service-and find something "wrong." If you are out to "get" somebody, you can "get" somebody. That's a cliche, but I think that it's absolutely true. I think that that's what happened.

I don't even take all of this personally. I think that they said, "Antippas fits the profile-59 years old, white, male, he's out." This came to me in a blinding "flash" in 1990. I couldn't figure out what had happened. I guess that I'd been out of the Department so long that I hadn't realized what had happened. I knew about the female-male conflict. In fact, I even knew the woman who precipitated all of this.

Q: Alison Palmer?

ANTIPPAS: Alison Palmer. We were all in Vietnam together, right? I was in Seoul on vacation in 1990. After this Mohawk Indian incident in Montreal I decided to take some time off. I went to Seoul for a vacation.

While I was in Seoul, I did two things. First, I called on the president of Korean Airlines [KAL], an old friend of the Embassy. He had worked as a contractor for the U. S. forces in Vietnam and is a person I had a lot of contact with at the time because, obviously, KAL needed a lot of help from the Consular Section. We had a good relationship. I went to see him to say hello. He said to me, "What is this about the State Department Inspector General's Corps? When I was in New York last spring [1989], I was interviewed by two investigators who came to my daughter's apartment in New York. They asked questions about you. They wanted to know if I'd given you free airline tickets at any time." He continued, "I told them that we had dealings with each other because that was our respective jobs. However, I'd never given you free tickets. If you want to look at my records, I'd be happy to let you do that." He said, "What the hell is going on with these people?"

I was really shocked when I heard that. Here they were approaching a private Korean citizen in the United States. I also read the "Asian Wall Street Journal" or, rather, the Asian edition of the "Herald Tribune", during the time I was there in Seoul. There was a column in it written by William Safire, in which Safire described what the FBI was doing to people in their investigations. Do you remember our colleague who was the Assistant Secretary of State for Security at the time the story broke about the DCM in Vienna [Felix Bloch], who allegedly passed secrets to the Soviets?

Q: I remember.

ANTIPPAS: You remember the Assistant Secretary, because he was head of the Passport Office at one time. He was apparently under consideration to be appointed Ambassador to Cyprus. His appointment was held up. Apparently, he had taken a polygraph at the time of this investigation of this situation with the DCM in Vienna. There had been a "blip" on his polygraph. Because of that the FBI wouldn't give him a clearance. They left the file "open". Because the file was open, he couldn't be appointed. However, Senator Sarbanes [Democrat, Maryland] very much wanted him to go to Cyprus and pushed the FBI into "putting up or shutting up."

That was what Safire's column was about. How the FBI "punishes" people by keeping the file of their background investigation open. This hit me like a blinding flash of light. This was something that I hadn't "understood" previously. I said to myself, "This is what happened. This is where the system has changed." In the old days it was more of a gentlemen's organization. There could be accusations and suspicions, yes. That's the name of the game. We've had that since the beginning of the Republic. People have been accused of malfeasance or whatever. However, as I understood the system from my own, personal experience, if they didn't have a case to make, they closed the file on an investigation. They may have made a mark somewhere else that never saw the light of day until later on. However, the fact was that if they didn't have a case, they closed the file after a decent interval, and people got on with their lives. What has changed is the nature of this "beast." The other development which led me to this conclusion is what happened within the Inspector General's organization itself. It grew. They...

Q: They acquired a lot of auditors. They had to have "raw meat."

ANTIPPAS: They brought in investigators, auditors, they quadrupled the staff. I don't know. I have these figures somewhere. Somebody said at one point that the Inspector General's Office spent $60 million to collect $30 million.

Q: They needed "raw meat" for this.

ANTIPPAS: You justify your existence by the number of cases you can make out. How do we do our "consular packages?" We do it by workload, right? And the number of cases that you have open, which may never be resolved...

Q: Andy, I'd like to come to some sort of conclusion to this.

ANTIPPAS: The reason why I'm going through all of this in excruciating detail-I'm not trying to make a legal brief out of it-is that it shows you what happened to the Foreign Service because of that. What are the implications of this, once it gets to be known that the Inspector General's basic function is to "terrorize"? What does this mean for people who are expected to be senior officers, to show initiative, to make decisions-especially if you're the boss? It means that anybody who has his own agenda can "take you out," and you don't have any legal recourse. When did I surrender my civil rights when I became a federal employee?

Q: When did you retire?

ANTIPPAS: I retired in 1992.

End of interview