

ELIZABETH ANN BROWN

Interviewed by: Thomas J. Dunnigan

Initial interview date: May 30, 1995

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This is Thomas J. Dunnigan. Today I will be doing an interview on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training in the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program. The person I will be interviewing is Elizabeth Ann Brown, who had a long career in the field of foreign affairs, divided between the Department of State and the Foreign Service. Elizabeth is one of the real experts on the United Nations, having given many years of her service to that organization.

Q: Elizabeth, will you tell me how you became interested in a career in foreign affairs and how you got into the State Department?

BROWN: I studied international relations and political science as an undergraduate and graduate student. Eventually, during World War II, I worked briefly for the War Labor Board. However, I continued to work at Reed College for my major professor, who had been associated with the State Department in a post-war planning group. At the time he was aware that I was interested in returning to the field of international affairs.

As the work of the War Labor Board wound down, I was able to transfer to the State Department in the summer of 1945, working initially in the Office of International Organization Affairs, as it was then called, which was beginning to organize United States participation in what was to become the United Nations. Shortly after entering the State Department in the summer of 1945 I attended the second part of the first session of the UN General Assembly in New York as a junior adviser. Most of the people who were working on UN affairs in Washington simply moved back and forth between Washington and New York.

Q: When you first came into the Department, for whom did you work?

BROWN: I worked for Durward Sandifer, who was the Director of the Office of International Organization Affairs. In that office I also worked directly with David Popper and Paul Taylor.

Q: Did you find the Department supportive of the new UN system, or was the Department cynical or...

BROWN: I think that there was a problem initially. The Foreign Service was a bit cool about international organizations which were not traditional diplomatic mechanisms. It was somewhat difficult at first to encourage Foreign Service Officers to participate in international organizations. Many of the staff were civil servants. I was, for example.

Q: How were women officers accepted in the service at that time?

BROWN: Well, I think that there were problems at the time I worked in international organization affairs. There were only three of us women on the political side at the time: Dorothy Fosdick, Betty Goff, and myself, although on the economic and social side there were a lot of women who remained active over the years.

Q: What specific functions were you first given to work on?

BROWN: I think that one of the first projects I had was related to the procedures of the General Assembly. I participated in a special committee headed by a Canadian diplomat, Erskine Reed, to set up procedures that still are applicable in the UN.

Q: In those early years there was a bit of a struggle, was there not, between the General Assembly and the Security Council over jurisdictional matters-who was going to handle what?

BROWN: Well, in the early years the Security Council was recognized as the primary, political organ of the UN. The General Assembly-really until late in the mid 1950's-presumed to take over major political issues, although it debated some of them, even in the early years.

Q: What was the problem about the permanent site for the United Nations?

BROWN: It was argued initially that we could use the League of Nations facilities in Geneva, [Switzerland], and that this would be more economical [since the building was already constructed]. There was a strong sense that, to keep the United States directly involved, the organization's headquarters should be here in the United States. Really, as I recall the debate at the time, there never was a serious move to take the UN out of New York.

Q: In those early years-1947, of course-the issue of Palestine arose. How did that affect your work-or did it affect it?

BROWN: Only marginally, because when I was in New York, I worked to a great degree on international legal affairs, although I was not a lawyer. I participated as a reporting officer during the Palestine debate. I was not involved in the substance of it.

Q: In 1948 the General Assembly held a meeting in Paris. Did you attend that?

BROWN: Yes, I did attend it. I had a double role. I was the reporter for the [U. S.] delegation meetings and also organized the annual report on the work of the UN. It was a very interesting time because everyone expected that there would be a change in the [U. S.] administration.

The General Assembly went to Paris to get away from the hurly-burly of the American electoral process. Secretary of State Marshall headed the [U. S.] delegation, and John Foster Dulles, who fully expected to be Secretary of State, also was present. I can recall going to those meetings. Secretary Marshall and I would be the first ones to turn up at the meetings. He usually wore his overcoat because Paris was very chilly in those days.

John Foster Dulles was given free rein to interview and meet with all of the Foreign Ministers who were present at that meeting of the General Assembly. He assumed, of course, that he was going to be Secretary of State. It came as a terrible blow when the returns came in from the election [of 1948].

Q: You say that you were the rapporteur of the [U. S.] delegation. Did you have to draft the daily telegrams back to the Department, or did you have help on that?

BROWN: No, I drafted the daily telegrams to the Department and I drafted or dictated into a Dictaphone very detailed minutes [of the meetings]. I discovered that some of these minutes got into the legal digest.

Q: Obviously, you didn't get much opportunity to enjoy the delights of Paris, working that schedule.

BROWN: Well, I didn't see a great deal of Paris. However, it was my first visit to Europe, and I saw a good bit of it.

Q: During those early years I understand that you came across an amazing assortment of Soviet representatives: Molotov, Brzezinski, Gromyko, Zorin, and Malik. How did you rate them-all the same, or were some worse than others?

BROWN: I think that Molotov, perhaps, had a bit more finesse. He came, of course, to the early sessions of the General Assembly. Brzezinski was an out-and-out Soviet apparatchik. The others didn't leave me with a strong impression-no one more than the others. From 1946 to 1960 we had a relatively "easy" time in the General Assembly, organizing the votes to pass resolutions that we wanted, against the votes of a solid Soviet bloc. The work was not as difficult as it has become today.

Q: I referred earlier to the Palestine inquiry. Did the killing of Count Bernadotte [in Jerusalem in 1948] have any great effect on our policy or on what eventually happened there?

BROWN: I don't really know. I recall the great shock it was at the time, but, beyond that, I think that our policy slowly evolved in a very difficult set of circumstances.

Q: To pursue that point a little further, Israel became independent in 1948, and war broke out with several Arab countries. The United Nations became involved with truce commissions and so forth.

1949 was a year when the Chinese representation issue arose, with "Red China" taking over Beijing and the government, presenting us with an issue which continued to be active at the UN for many years.

BROWN: It's true that the Chinese Communists came to the General Assembly and the Security Council in 1950, at the outset of the Korean War. An unsuccessful effort was made at that time to engage them in fruitful negotiations. They came to New York and then left rather quickly.

Q: You say that there was an attempt to engage them in negotiations. Was that by the U. S.? Did we do it, or...

BROWN: We were certainly part of it. However, you are quite right. The Chinese representation question went on for years, and it really took the full time of one individual [in the State Department] to make sure that Communist China was not admitted to the U. N.

Q: Despite all the attempts by India and other countries to have Communist China admitted.

BROWN: That's true.

Q: Of course, 1950 brought a major event in our history, the Korean War, with its tremendous implications for the United Nations. Were you deeply involved in that?

BROWN: Well, relatively so, of course, because we sought initially to get United Nations "cover" [for our efforts] and a United Nations Command, for which one might read the United States. During the period of the Korean War we had what was called the "Korean briefing meetings," which the State Department held with the countries that contributed troops.

When the war was at its height, the briefing meetings were held weekly. I also participated in them in terms of preparing briefing papers for the U. S. representative, U. Alexis Johnson [then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs]. I prepared reports on the meetings and did the reporting cable, as well.

Q: Was there any friction in those days between the Bureaus of Far Eastern Affairs and International Organization Affairs with regard to Korea?

BROWN: Not really. Certainly, the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs handled the substance of the matter almost exclusively, but with some input from the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. As I said, the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs [U. Alexis Johnson] headed the Korean briefing meetings.

Q: Then, of course, in 1950 or 1951 the Chinese Communists entered the Korean War in great strength, and that changed the nature of the war to some extent. I recall that General MacArthur was dismissed from his command [by President Truman in April, 1951]. Did that have a great effect on what we were doing?

BROWN: I don't think it did. I don't think that it really changed matters.

Q: Were there many defenders of MacArthur in IO [Bureau of International Organization Affairs] and in other parts of the Department?

BROWN: I don't think so. Everybody felt that if you were going to run an international organization, you had to have a more compromising and cooperative leader [than MacArthur was].

Q: So as a result, in the following year [1951] Taiwan gained a seat in the General Assembly, much to the annoyance of the Chinese Communists.

BROWN: Well, Taiwan had had that seat all along.

Q: As China, yes. It had China's seat. But in 1952 I understand that there was some difficulty when the General Assembly building was taken over, by dissidents who were opposed to our policy.

BROWN: You have lost me completely. I can't recall anything like that.

Q: It's not particularly important, but I thought that it might be of interest. There were continuing wrangles over admissions to the UN throughout the 1950's-not only China but other countries as well.

BROWN: We had a longstanding stalemate on the admission of new members to the UN. We initially favored staying with the original 51 members. Then there were applicants whom we regarded as completely qualified but who were repeatedly vetoed by the Soviet representative.

I happened to be directly involved in Washington and I would have to review my own notes and the annual reports of the UN to recapture now all the ins and outs of getting these states into the UN. Suffice it to say that, in the end, we reached a compromise and got them in over a few recalcitrant people in the State Department who were keen to have countries like the Republic of Korea [South Korea] admitted at the same time. The divided countries were in a different category-South Korea, East Germany, and so forth. But it was a long drawn-out process.

Q: In 1952, apparently, during the American presidential election campaign, there were signs of antagonism to having the UN in the U. S., presumably mixed up with the election campaign. Did any of that affect the Department at all?

BROWN: I don't think that it did, to any great extent. After all, John Foster Dulles, who became Secretary of State [in the Eisenhower administration], had been a member of the U. S. delegation at the San Francisco Conference in 1945. I think that he was generally very positively disposed [to the UN]. I suspect that that made a great difference, but certainly the "extreme right" had a certain, ingrown antipathy toward international organizations.

Q: I was thinking of Senator Joseph McCarthy and some of those who followed him and the fact that people were being dismissed from the State Department for security reasons and so forth.

In 1953 the Korean armistice agreement was reached, which has continued in effect until this day.

BROWN: That is correct, and I remember it well. I think that it was concluded in July, 1953. We had an agreement with our Allies that, because the armistice itself was an imperfect document in terms of ensuring the peace, we would have a separate declaration, known as the "Joint Policy Declaration," which all of us would sign at the time the armistice agreement went into effect. The "Joint Policy Declaration" stated that in the event of a renewal of hostilities we would all react promptly. Along with someone from the Treaty Affairs Section of the Office of the Legal Adviser of the Department of State, I spent one Saturday escorting people back and forth from the various embassies of the 16 countries which had participated in the Korean War who signed this "Joint Policy Declaration."

I must say that I think that it is lost to posterity at this point. I'm sure that no one would accept it as a binding obligation today.

Q: You shouldn't be too sure about our Legal Adviser's Office!

BROWN: That's true.

Q: Also in 1953 Dag Hammarskjold became Secretary General, replacing Trygve Lie. Did that have any repercussions on our policy? Were we pleased with this change?

BROWN: I think that we were very pleased with Hammarskjold, who was a much more "on the job" type of Secretary General. He himself was a rather quiet person but a very forceful one. He was a man who thoroughly understood the issues to a much greater degree than Trygve Lie had done.

Q: In those years and subsequently we were being pressured by our "right wing" to keep the Chinese Communists out of the UN. I'm thinking of Senator Knowland [Republican, California] and some of the people who followed him. However, I gather that we were not under any great pressure to withdraw from the UN.

BROWN: I don't think so-not at any time.

Q: Our efforts were concentrated on keeping the Chinese Communists out. In 1955 the commemorative session of the UN General Assembly was held in San Francisco. Did you attend that?

BROWN: No, I did not. We sent people who had attended the 1945 meeting. I was not one of them.

Q: 1955 also brought the "spirit of Geneva." Did you notice any change in the attitude of your Soviet colleagues because of the "summit meeting" in Geneva?

BROWN: I think that our Soviet colleagues were always willing to meet and talk. However, from the point of view of getting anything done, they didn't seem to feel that there was any great hurry about it.

Q: There was talk but no agreements.

BROWN: That's right.

Q: In 1955 also the French were very upset because the UN General Assembly debated the situation in Algeria. They thought that that would be most unfortunate.

BROWN: Yes. There was a long, drawn-out argument about domestic affairs being beyond the purview of the UN. However, as the years wore on...

Q: Algeria seemed less and less a "domestic" affair of France.

BROWN: Algeria was even less "domestic" than could be said for South Africa.

Q: I was going to ask you about South Africa because they didn't consider that their racial policies [specifically, apartheid] were subject to discussion [in the UN].

BROWN: At the very first session of the UN General Assembly in New York General Jan Christian Smuts appeared and defended his country's policies and was to reappear later at the UN. But, over the years, the South Africans became more and more the "black sheep" of the organization.

Q: In 1955 there was also a compromise which allowed 16 new members to join the UN. Although that was also sullied by the fight between the Yugoslavs and the Philippines over a vacant [non-permanent member] Security Council seat.

BROWN: Almost all of those early elections were much more a matter of contention than they are today, when things are pretty cut and dried. The regional blocs have their candidates.

Q: In 1956 there was the special Security Council session regarding the actions in the Middle East where the British, the French, and the Israelis went after the Egyptians.

BROWN: That's right. The United States parted company with our French and British allies. This certainly made for a rather icy series of discussions, both in New York and in Washington.

Q: It was apparently strongly felt on both sides.

BROWN: Very strongly felt.

Q: There was also a Security Council special session on Hungary.

BROWN: Yes, in 1956. Of course, that was an extremely sad situation because, on the one hand, we were involved in the Middle East and terribly concerned that a major war did not break out over that. However, the Soviet Bloc states, including Hungary, had really been encouraged to "break out" of the traces of Soviet domination. Speeches had been made [by John Foster Dulles during the 1952 elections campaign] about "liberating" Eastern Europe. The Hungarians were pleading for and believing that they would get assistance. It was a case of their having been "led up the garden path," and then let down.

Q: This must have been an exceedingly busy time for you, with two Special Sessions of the UN General Assembly going on.

BROWN: Well, I dealt mostly with Hungary. I can put it down as one of the most really frustrating experiences I had.

Q: As I recall, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was in the hospital at that time.

BROWN: He was in the hospital. I guess that he died at about that time.

Q: No, he didn't die until 1959. However, I believe that he had an attack of appendicitis at that time, right in the middle of...

BROWN: Earlier. I should have done more research before you came here.

Q: At that time you were in what was called at the time UNP-the Office of United Nations Political Affairs.

BROWN: By that time the State Department had reorganized itself. There was a Bureau of International Organization Affairs, under which was an Office of UN Political Affairs. An Office of UN Economic and Social Affairs was later broken off from that. Our involvement in the General Assembly and the Security Council came under UNP.

Q: Who headed UNP at that time?

BROWN: David Waynehouse, I believe.

Q: 1957 was the year of the "walkouts" at the United Nations. The French walked out over Algeria; the Hungarians, over the debate on their country; and the South Africans, over their racial policies. Did that cause any particular concern to us here?

BROWN: Oh, I think that we were concerned but a bit more relaxed than we might be today because there were no practical results for those countries. The debates continued just the same. I don't recall that it was a terribly upsetting experience.

Q: Although we were, of course, on the "wrong" side of those debates, if you looked at them from the French, Hungarian, and South African points of view.

BROWN: That's true.

Q: 1957 was also the year of Sputnik [the first satellite in history, launched by the Soviet Union in October, 1957].

BROWN: It was a very exciting time because the satellite went up during the UN General Assembly session. I was in New York when the news came. Everybody was congratulating the Russians. There was a rush to organize UN activity in the whole field of outer space. Eventually, an Outer Space committee was established, whose meetings I attended for some period of time. Not that I think that it achieved a great deal, except to focus on the need to ensure the peaceful uses of outer space.

Q: In 1958 there was a Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the Middle East. This apparently led to a push for a permanent UN force to keep the peace around the world. However, that was put aside at the request of the Secretary General. Did we favor that? Would we have earmarked troops for such a UN force?

BROWN: I doubt it. Of course, the UN charter provided for a Military Staff Committee to be set up. National forces were to be provided [to the UN]. In those early years of the UN the Military Staff Committee met regularly [in New York] and got absolutely nowhere. I think that we tended to agree that making ad hoc arrangements at the time of international outbreaks of fighting worked better. Of course, this was Hammarskjold's view.

Q: We also were about to send UN troops to Lebanon, but that was vetoed by the Soviets, I gather, so we had to take that on unilaterally.

BROWN: Well, the whole problem of peacekeeping became a major issue at about that time because the Soviets declined to pay their share [of the costs]. There was a considerable effort made to deal with this problem in terms of finding ways to induce them to pay their share. Unhappily, this never happened.

Q: We were still paying, what-over 30 percent [of the UN budget]?

BROWN: Yes, almost one-third.

Q: In 1959 Secretary Dulles died and was succeeded as Secretary of State by Christian Herter. Did that have any effect on what we did? Was Herter as interested in the UN as Dulles had been?

BROWN: I don't think so. Dulles had been involved with the UN since the very beginning and was far more interested in it [than Herter was]. I was beginning slowly to phase myself out of UN affairs as 1959 wore on into 1960. By then I had shifted over from the civil service to the Foreign Service. In fact, I think that I had done that in about 1956.

Q: You moved from the civil service to the Foreign Service and were allowed to continue in the same position?

BROWN: Correct.

Q: But then in 1960, I believe, you received orders to go to [the American Embassy in] Bonn?

BROWN: That's correct. I went to Bonn. I had worked with William Tyler at the UN in 1959. He was later Political Counselor in Bonn. At any rate, he knew me and was willing to accept me as a member of the Political Section.

Q: I think that we should put it that he was lucky enough to get you. Ambassador Dowling was in Bonn at the time. What were your responsibilities when you arrived in the Embassy [in Bonn]?

BROWN: I was supposed to deal with the UN, to a degree with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], with Franco-German relations, and arms control issues. I worked initially with Frances Williamson. I never really was as busy in the Embassy in Bonn as I might have been. Toward the latter part of my tour there I started writing speeches for Ambassador Dowling because Senator Henry Cabot Lodge had visited the Ambassador and told him that I was "great" at speech writing, since I had written speeches for him in New York. [Laughter] That was sort of an interesting sidelight but not really fascinating.

Q: I can understand that. You had come out of a very hectic and exciting position here [in the Department] where you had been immersed for years in "pressure cooker" type situations.

BROWN: The difference, of course, was that the association in the UN field had been at fairly senior levels, where you're likely to have more responsibility than an officer gets at a post abroad.

Q: You were in Bonn in 1960. We had our presidential election here in 1960. Did Chancellor Konrad Adenauer give any indication whether he favored Nixon or Kennedy in that election?

BROWN: Not to my recollection. You should know, although you came to Bonn a bit later.

Q: Yes, I didn't get to Bonn until 1962. In 1961 there were indications, of course, of the growing Franco-German rapprochement, between President De Gaulle [of France] and Adenauer. You were following that closely.

BROWN: I was following that closely and I was prepared to make my own prediction that this rapprochement might be more detrimental to U. S. interests than it actually turned out to be, in the event.

Q: 1961 was also the year when the Wall went up in Berlin, which had repercussions everywhere, and particularly in Bonn.

BROWN: I'm sure that you know the famous story of the Embassy officer...

Q: No, I don't think that I do. Please tell it.

BROWN: Well, the Wall went up on a Sunday morning. On Sunday afternoon in Bad Godesberg there was a tournament of Little League baseball teams in Europe, which "everyone" was watching. In the course of the games word came to the [Code Room for the ] Ambassador about the Berlin Wall, which at that point had been under construction for some hours. The CBS correspondent in Bonn came up and told the Ambassador [about the Wall]. It turned out that an officer from the Legal Office of the Embassy had been duty officer. He had gone into the Embassy and looked at the telegram from the U. S. Mission in Berlin, reporting that the Wall was going up. He wrote, "Noted" on the telegram and never said a word to anyone about it. So he was rather promptly transferred out of Bonn.

Q: I can imagine Ambassador Dowling was livid.

BROWN: Absolutely.

Q: I had never heard that story.

BROWN: Seriously?

Q: I never did. Well, in 1962 De Gaulle's visit to Bonn received considerable attention. Something that I remember very well was that Adenauer, under great pressure, dismissed Franz-Joseph Strauss as Minister of Defense. Adenauer then promised to retire as Chancellor in 1963. People found this hard to believe.

BROWN: There was also the visit, early on, from Secretary of State Dean Rusk. I think that he was making the rounds of European capitals. I had known Rusk from the very early days [of the UN] when he had initially been involved in UN affairs.

Q: That was before my time in Bonn. As I said, I arrived in Bonn in the summer of 1962, just in time for some of those critical events, such as the Strauss dismissal. That caused a lot of fluttering in the "hen house" there [in Bonn].

Then, in January, 1963, came the Franco-German treaty which was later denounced by Ludwig Erhard, who was regarded as Adenauer's "Crown Prince." There was even concern, I believe-and I'd like your views on this-in the U. S. as to the significance of the Franco-German treaty. Would you talk a little bit about how the U. S. saw it?

BROWN: As I said earlier, while this treaty was being worked on, I think that we were genuinely concerned that it was going to break up the dominant position that the United States had in post-war [Western] Germany. At the same time there were mixed feelings on this. I think that my own view at the time, although I was not the best observer, was that [the Franco-German treaty] raised more problems for us. As it turned out, I think that, although enmity between France and Germany had modified, the severe reactions that we had expected [did not materialize].

Q: Now, President Kennedy visited Germany in 1963. Were you still in Bonn at that time?

BROWN: I had left. I don't recall exactly when Kennedy came.

Q: He came in June, 1963.

BROWN: I left Bonn at the end of May, 1963, largely because my old office in Washington, [UNP], wanted me back.

Q: You were then transferred back to UNP [as Deputy Director of the office]. It must have seemed something like "deja vu" to you.

BROWN: Well, it was "deja vu," except that things were more difficult for me than they had been in the 1950's, when we had a more or less automatic majority in the General Assembly.

Q: Then came the assassination of President Kennedy. I am told that President Johnson addressed the UN General Assembly and did fairly well.

It isn't often that one gets to come back to an office where one had previously served. How did you find your work different from the early 1950's?

BROWN: First of all, the work was organized quite differently. UNP was an office with several parts. There was a section which dealt with arms control, disarmament, and outer space issues, in which, basically, IO [Bureau of International Organization Affairs] was peripheral. There was another section which dealt with dependent areas. Another section of UNP dealt with organizational issues-slates, procedures, and the Chinese representation issue, which was still with us at that time. Then there was a section dealing with political issues in the Middle East, Cyprus, and the political issues in Africa. I can tell you that it was an office where, every morning, you looked at the cable traffic and discovered how many new subjects we had to follow. For its part New York [USUN, the U. S. Mission to the UN] was also feeding in the problems it had encountered on the UN circuit.

Q: Did you notice a great deal of difference between the operation of USUN in New York when different people took it over? You were there under various U. S. Permanent Representatives.

BROWN: Exactly. I went from Herschel Johnson during the very early days, who was a Career Ambassador; to Warren Austin, who had been a Senator from Vermont; to Henry Cabot Lodge, also a Senator, from Massachusetts; and then to Adlai Stevenson, a former Governor of Illinois. Then, for a good part of the time I was in UNP in the 1960's, Arthur Goldberg, a former Justice of the Supreme Court, was our Permanent Representative in New York.

Some of these Permanent Representatives were "activists" and really wanted to run the whole show. The U. S. Permanent Representatives had cabinet status. I won't say that it went to their heads, but it at least gave them an independent voice in Washington.

Q: Which of them was the most "activist"? Could you say or were there several of them?

BROWN: I suppose that our Permanent Representatives in the 1960's were the most activist. I would have to go back and check this point. I suspect that, perhaps, Goldberg was the most "activist."

Q: Ambassador Goldberg had a close relationship with President Lyndon Johnson anyhow and had a pipeline to the White House.

BROWN: Ambassador Adlai Stevenson also played a fairly active role. In the late 1950's I wouldn't discount Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, because he was a leading Republican and had considerable influence both with his former Senate colleagues and with the White House.

Q: You mentioned Adlai Stevenson. In 1963 he was physically attacked and denounced as our UN representative. Was that symptomatic of sentiment arising against the UN or not?

BROWN: I don't think so. I think that places like Texas have always had these groups. There's always been a group in the United States which has been against the UN because they attributed to it power and authority which it simply does not have. Today the so-called "militias" [in various states] think that the UN rules and that it has troops at its disposal.

Q: In 1964 there was the issue of UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim who was reported to have had some role in the Nazi SS organization during World War II.

BROWN: I don't think that he really did. I had known of this for a long time because I had worked on arms control and disarmament issues with Waldheim and the Swedish representative. I would have to go back and look [at the record on this issue]. At any rate they were part of a group that was trying to find a way to mediate between the U. S. and the Soviets on arms control questions. I had met Waldheim and worked with him in that connection in New York. However, I must say that my judgment of Waldheim related to how well he performed at that time. He was not particularly outstanding. We certainly had no idea in the State Department of his previous Nazi associations. I think that no one who had known him as the Austrian Permanent Representative to the UN thought that he had the strength to be a particularly good Secretary General. However, he was a compromise candidate.

Q: 1964 was also the year of the Goldwater campaign [for president of the U. S.]. Much was said about the UN at that time-most of it not very favorable. However, the organization survived. Then there was the major confrontation, particularly with the Soviets, over their delay in meeting their financial obligations in the UN.

BROWN: The peacekeeping arrears. Now, in retrospect, with the U. S. so far in arrears itself, it seems rather unique because we had one officer who spent practically all of his time, with the help of a lawyer, figuring out why the assessments were a treaty obligation and what could be done if a country didn't pay its dues. Now the U. S. is in much the same situation.

Q: The Security Council expanded to 15 members in 1964. Can you tell me how that came about?

BROWN: Well, there had been considerable pressure for expansion to take into account the new states that had come into existence since the end of World War II, as well as the regions which had been basically unrepresented. There had been a general understanding on how the seats should be divided up. However, that meant that various regions had to rotate seats at a time when each region felt that they were entitled to a representative of their own. The expansion agreed to was, I would say, the minimum that met the demands of the time and still did not expand the Security Council beyond a number which was workable. For the Security Council to operate effectively, considerable consultations "in the corridors" are needed. As the number of members rose, these contacts proportionately become much more difficult to handle. We basically held the line to keep the number of members at 15.

Q: In 1965 there was another commemorative ceremony in San Francisco. Did that have any particular significance for you, Elizabeth?

BROWN: Not really. As far as the ceremony itself was concerned, the events sort of fade into the background very quickly.

Q: 1965 also brought a different vote on the Chinese Communist representation issue [in the General Assembly]. The vote was 47 for and 47 against, which was apparently the first time that they had been that close. There was much discussion as to whether membership was an important question. Can you say anything about that?

BROWN: The issue certainly had existed from the very beginning, as to whether we were going to require a two-thirds majority or not. We had existed in the specialized agencies [of the UN] with simple majorities where there were greater pressures in many cases to bring Communist China in. They had participated with a delegate to the World Health Assembly in 1965, I guess, when Chinese representation didn't come up. It had been tougher to hold the line there. So, while we talked about Chinese representation as an important question, I think that we would have been quite reluctant to move it into that category.

Q: Adlai Stevenson died in 1965-quite unexpectedly. What effect did that have on USUN?

BROWN: USUN had certainly liked Stevenson, and he had established a place for himself in UN circles. He was a very attractive man, with a positive personality. At the time I felt terribly downcast by his death, but once a successor was appointed, things seemed to fall into place fairly quickly.

Q: Did his successor, Arthur Goldberg, make many changes or did he try to influence our policies in different directions?

BROWN: Well, he became very interested in substantive matters. You'll have to remind me of the chronology. He got awfully interested in Vietnam. I'm now having difficulty recalling dates.

Q: 1965 was the year when President Johnson announced that we were sending major forces to Vietnam. This was just at the time that Ambassador Goldberg was taking over as our Permanent Representative to the UN.

BROWN: At any rate he was extremely interested, throughout his tenure, in finding solutions to the continuing hostilities in Vietnam. He was a very strong-minded individual. I think that he was more difficult for the State Department bureaucracy [to deal with] than his predecessors had been.

Q: In 1965 Indonesia withdrew from the UN. Did this have any ripple effect, because Indonesia is a large country and one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement? They were apparently disturbed over seeing Malaysia elected to the Security Council.

BROWN: I don't think that that was the reason, but that is a point which I am going to have to check.

Q: In 1966 the fighting intensified in Vietnam. Was that reflected in the UN or what we could do there? Were we criticized in speeches about the situation in Vietnam?

BROWN: There were speeches about it, and we were criticized. We also were in a bit of a dilemma because we wanted to maintain our own independence of action in Vietnam. We were not interested in letting the UN [become involved] in Vietnam issues.

Q: Unlike Korea, where we had...

BROWN: Well, yes, but in Korea we still ran the show. It wouldn't have been quite as easy in Vietnam.

Q: 1967, of course, brought the Six-Day War in the Middle East and the glory of [Israeli Foreign Minister] Abba Eban at the UN General Assembly. There was an emergency General Assembly that year. Did that take up a good deal of your time?

BROWN: It took up quite a lot of time for everybody there. By then I think that I had become Director of UNP. It was a very hectic period-one I don't really like to remember too well. There was so much going on. It was extremely difficult to keep up with events. There were very strong, internal passions in the State Department. At the time of the [passage of the] actual resolutions in the General Assembly and the Security Council...

Q: This was Resolution 242?

BROWN: Yes, and prior to the passage of 242. This was the first occasion, I think-and again I think that this is something that I'm going to have to look up-that the resolutions which ended the fighting did not require withdrawal. That had a good deal to do with personalities.

Q: Did you have a hand in drafting Resolution 242?

BROWN: I had a hand in drafting it. Of course, we all lived by it.

Q: The Middle East has preoccupied the Security Council and the General Assembly on many occasions. This was one of the more dramatic ones.

BROWN: Yes, the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli dispute has gone on the longest of any issue in the UN, and it goes on even today.

Q: In 1968 Secretary of State Rusk delivered a speech at the UN which attracted an anti-Vietnam demonstration.

BROWN: Of course, that was at a time when sentiment throughout the U. S. in opposition to our involvement in Vietnam was at its peak.

Q: 1968 was also the year of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. How did that play out at the UN?

BROWN: It played out in much the same way as it did with Hungary in 1956. This was a case where many words were spoken in condemnation of the Soviet Union, but the possibility of any action was just as unlikely as in 1956. It was a very depressing time.

Q: It was also the year of another presidential election [in the U. S.]. Now that year, if I have it correctly, you had four representatives as the head of our mission at the UN: Arthur Goldberg, George Ball, James Wiggins, and Charles Yost-all in 1968. Can you say a little bit about that?

BROWN: It was rather a strange time. Of course, we had all known Charley Yost, who was very good but who really didn't want the job. Wiggins was there so briefly that...

Q: Why did the administration appoint him?

BROWN: I have no idea. I've always felt that it was some form of internal, Republican politics. Perhaps it was out of a desire to get him out of Washington. I really can't say. I'd be speculating there, I think. Goldberg, Yost, Wiggins-who was the fourth?

Q: George Ball.

BROWN: Oh, George Ball. He really didn't like the UN at all. [Laughter] That was very strange.

Q: George Ball was European oriented.

BROWN: He was European oriented and he was in disagreement with our Vietnam policies by then. He was a kind of stop-gap appointment.

Q: The election of 1968 brought in President Nixon. Did our policy in the UN change under the Nixon administration?

BROWN: No, I don't really think so. I'm searching my memory for any examples of any big shifts but I don't think that there were any. By 1968 the UN was the sort of animal which just went on, posing very similar problems to whatever American administration was in office.

Q: In 1969, then, you were assigned to the Senior Seminar [on Foreign Policy in the State Department]. I'm sure that this was a year which you found quite rewarding.

BROWN: It was a very interesting year. It was very different from what it is now. I was the only woman in the Seminar. The makeup of the Seminar was extremely mixed, I would say. We had an interesting time. We had a coordinator, Bert Mathews, who had been edged out of his African post and who was rather disaffected. However, it was a good year because it gave us time to sit back and think and travel around. I found an interesting project.

Q: What was that?

BROWN: I looked at the issue of "interest sections" in the Embassies of countries which represented U. S. interests [in areas where we had broken diplomatic relations with the host state]. At that time it included Switzerland, Spain, I think the Netherlands, and the U. K. We were looking at substitute ways of maintaining a diplomatic presence. It was an interesting exercise.

Q: Then you received an assignment to Athens, Greece, as Political Counselor in July, 1970.

BROWN: That's correct. It was sort of strange. I was initially assigned to Ankara, Turkey, in the same position. I was asked to go over to NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] and told that the Ambassador in Athens had requested me for assignment there. I could choose whether to go to Athens or to Ankara. I had never been to Ankara. I had talked to my predecessor in Ankara about the smog in winter. I had visited Athens very briefly on my way home from a conference in Istanbul. After a lot of consideration, I said that I would go wherever NEA wanted me to go. However, I have never known why Ambassador Henry Tasca [in Athens] asked for me.

Q: Your reputation obviously preceded you.

BROWN: I don't know. I had known him slightly when he was a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs, but that was a very peripheral acquaintanceship. I was clearing various messages with him and working on some of the UN issues at that time.

Q: Were you given any training in the Greek language before you went?

BROWN: About a month of very quick training, which didn't do me much good, although I continued to study the Greek language in Athens.

Q: Those were difficult days in our relations with Greece. Those were the days of the Papadopoulos "junta."

BROWN: That's right-the days of "the colonels." It was really my first experience with a dictatorship with which we were on extremely good terms because it related to [then National Security Adviser] Kissinger's approach to international politics. It was very difficult because we had heard that the U. S. had worked very closely with some of the old political leaders of Greece associated with the governments prior to the establishment of the dictatorship. We bent over backwards to get along with "the colonels." For example, there was a visit to Athens by Vice President Agnew, which was badly received in democratic circles in Greece.

This was my very first experience with that kind of regime. "The colonels" themselves did not want to be seen as negotiating with the U. S. or appearing at U. S. Embassy functions - although occasionally they did on something like July 4. The political section of the Embassy was permitted to deal with former political leaders. When I held receptions, I would invite former members of Parliament. Greek police used to stand outside the gate and would be denounced by crowds standing outside. Barry King and I would stand watch and look out for former Foreign Minister Averoff. We would sit outside, and Greek police would stand behind some trees somewhere. We certainly couldn't have them over to dinner. The Ambassador and the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] did not have any contacts with these people, but I was sort of their "channel." So I went to call on the former Prime Minister. Before I arrived, there would be a policeman sitting there who had come for the purpose. Anyway, it was a different kind of situation and an interesting one.

When I think back about Greece, I sort of wonder how "the colonels" lasted as long as they did. There were two other things about Greece that were very different from anything else in my Foreign Service experience. One of them was the role of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] in Greece, which has been pretty well described. The other was the Cyprus issue, which I had dealt with in the UN and which really was practically the focal point of everything that happened. Certainly, the situation in Cyprus became tougher and tougher. When Archbishop Makarios died in Cyprus, the whole issue blew up, and "the colonels" sort of left over night. It was the most chaotic situation I had ever seen.

Q: That was in 1974.

BROWN: That's right. I had been told by some of my Greek friends - Averoff, for example, had been coming to my house nearly every night. He had been telling me that at any moment the whole situation was going to blow up in the faces of "the colonels." Papadopoulos was going to be pushed out. I never expected things to happen as fast as they did.

Q: How large was your political section [in Athens]?

BROWN: I had a total of six officers, two of whom were nominally "mine" but also worked for CIA. Then I had three other people who were foreign nationals.

Q: Were any of them Greek speaking?

BROWN: Two of them were. One of them worked for CIA and one for a political officer. The language was not a great problem, because most of the Greek diplomats and most of the Greek political people spoke fluent English.

Q: Were you there when a bomb exploded in a parking lot and killed two people in the Embassy?

BROWN: Yes, I didn't think too much about it. I had just had two visitors from the United States who had gone off sightseeing. I had told them what a calm and polite place Athens was. They came back to the Embassy in the late afternoon, joining up with me to drive back to my residence. They couldn't get anywhere near the Embassy because the bomb had gone off. Everyone said that the dead were a man and a woman. She had dropped the bomb at the crucial moment and blew up both of them.

Q: Did the Papadopoulos government have much or any popular support, in your view?

BROWN: I think that it had some popular support because the economy was reasonably good. There had been a difficult time previously, but if you talked to any of the better-educated Greeks, they were very upset about "the colonels." We had a visit from Secretary of State William Rogers when I was there and, as I said before, from Vice President Agnew. They showed that the United States was with "the colonels."

Q: Were there differences within the Embassy regarding our relations with the Papadopoulos government?

BROWN: There were certainly differences between the Foreign Service, if I can put it that way, and the CIA Station.

Q: How about the American military?

BROWN: While we still had a Military Assistance Mission there, they thought that the Greeks were an asset to us. They equated that with stability, which they thought "the colonels" brought. On the other hand they were quick to react when the situation started falling apart. And it fell apart fast.

Q: Then you had a visit in 1971 from Jim Lowenstein and Dick Moose, who wrote a report for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which was quite critical of the Embassy's attitude in this whole situation [in Greece].

BROWN: First of all, those were the days when we were supposed to be extremely nice to "the colonels."

Q: Even though we'd had an embargo on shipping weapons to them? This was rather confusing.

BROWN: It was very confusing. I never thought that I would get into such a mixed-up situation.

Q: We talked about view within the Embassy. Were there differences between the way the Embassy viewed the situation and the way Washington viewed it?

BROWN: Certainly, I think that the Ambassador and Washington were together on the policy line of maintaining a stable Greece with this dictatorship [in power]. At the same time, I think that the Embassy thought-I certainly did-that it was desirable to avoid totally discouraging the figures in the former political world, because everybody believed that, sooner or later, "the colonels" were going to vanish from the scene.

Q: In 1972 you began something called the "Home Port Negotiations." Could you explain that a bit?

BROWN: I think that that was one of the mistakes made by the United States Navy under Admiral Zumwalt [then Chief of Naval Operations]. He visited Athens and felt that it was a lovely place to live. He felt that it had a very equable climate. He thought that he could "home port" a large proportion of the U. S. Navy [Sixth Fleet] there, bring the families over to this very lovely, Mediterranean environment, and everybody would be happy because they had their families with them. It turned out that the Navy, which brought in some part of the normal infrastructure to support the "home porting," found that it didn't work at all. Of course, those who were against "the colonels" were absolutely appalled. So we thought-I should say, the Navy thought-that we needed a bigger naval presence in the Mediterranean. It certainly did not work [in terms of "home porting" in Athens].

Q: The families never came?

BROWN: A few families came. The Navy set up a medical facility there. The Navy unfortunately picked a small community to put these young wives in, who had to deal with a foreign language and a foreign culture. Naturally, it didn't work out very well.

Q: During this period was there any anti-American feeling in Greece which you sensed?

BROWN: There was some. But there had been such a long, family type relationship [between Americans and Greeks] that, even the Greeks opposed to "the colonels" thought that, in the long run, the U. S. would turn out to be helpful to Greece.

Q: Were you invited to go around and speak in various places? Was that common in Greece?

BROWN: No. There are no organizations in Greece which do that kind of thing.

Q: During the later years that you were there, there was a good deal of student unrest and protests.

BROWN: That's right. The student unrest was related to the Cyprus crisis, as I recall. This crisis led to the demise of the Papadopoulos government. At the time the student unrest was described by CIA as inspired by leftists and provocateurs. In the event this turned out not to be the case.

Q: It was a genuine feeling.

BROWN: It was genuine concern over the prevailing political atmosphere.

Q: But they did away with the monarchy, so King Constantine couldn't come back.

BROWN: Well, the monarchy had been done away with before I arrived in Greece.

Q: I see. But they proclaimed a republic. Is that right?

BROWN: Yes. But that all happened in the late 1960's. At this point the issue was strictly the government of "the colonels."

Q: Particularly "the colonels." Did Greece have a republican government at that time?

BROWN: Yes, it was a republic.

Q: Then Papadopoulos was elected president and was later thrown out of office.

BROWN: Yes. He was tossed out by his own colleagues. The situation became very dicey. I had Greek friends who told me that, "any day now, 'the colonels' will be gone." And, in point of fact, they did go-almost overnight. Certainly, we never expected it to happen as fast as it did. And the night when Karamanlis came back to Greece was pretty wild. In the meantime, before he came back, the Army had had the tanks out in the streets. There was a curfew. It was a very difficult time.

Q: Did you feel that you were ever in any physical danger at that time?

BROWN: Well, I don't know. We took different routes to get to the Embassy to avoid the tanks and so forth. Athens is a city where you can cut off the center with no difficulty and with a very light force. We all lived in the suburbs, so it was not a problem.

Q: That must have been an extremely busy period for the political section of the Embassy.

BROWN: It was a very busy period.

Q: Did the Ambassador agree fully with what you were reporting?

BROWN: I think that the Ambassador agreed with us. We were reporting cautiously, I think. I don't know whether we could have done more than we did, although I don't think so.

Q: Then came the problems on Cyprus, to add to all this, with the Turks moving [into northern Cyprus] in 1974.

BROWN: That brought an end to the government of "the colonels."

Q: And then the Greeks withdrew from NATO.

BROWN: They did briefly. Everything happened so fast. I've been over this period with various people. Each time I think it through, I just can't imagine that things happened as fast as they did.

Q: I remember that that was the time when Ambassador Rodger Davies was killed in Cyprus.

BROWN: He was killed before then.

Q: Was he killed in 1974?

BROWN: No, I think that he was killed in 1972 or early 1973.

Q: I remember that I was at the Embassy in Copenhagen when it happened. But that all added to the mix of events.

BROWN: It all added to the mix.

Q: Then you had a change of ambassadors.

BROWN: Yes, we did. It happened very quickly. This account may have to be reconsidered or edited out. As the fighting increased between the Greeks and the Turks, the situation became so dicey that the Ambassador, acting on his own responsibility, sent some very overblown messages to such people as our Ambassador to NATO and to the commanding general of NATO, asking for NATO intervention. When those cables-which neither the DCM nor I knew about-hit Washington, Secretary of State Kissinger became very irate. Early one morning, about 2:00 AM, when I was the Acting DCM, the communications people called me up and said that they had received a cable for the Ambassador and would I come into the office. So I went to the Embassy at around 4:00 AM and took this cable to Ambassador Henry Tasca. He opened it up, read it, and threw it at me. The cable recalled him as Ambassador to Greece.

Q: I have seen speculation that his recall followed a visit by Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco.

BROWN: Well, I don't think...Joe had come to Athens in the hope that we could prevent hostilities from taking place. He had left Athens before hostilities had actually broken out. His visit really had nothing to do with Ambassador Henry Tasca's departure.

Q: I gather not, from your story. Was there any increase at that time of anti-American sentiment in Greece, or did that play...

BROWN: No, there really wasn't any anti-American sentiment. Everything happened very quickly. "The colonels" were there one day, and the next day, they were gone. Karamanlis came back. The people we had been dealing with came back into power. Averoff, for example, became the Minister of Defense.

Whatever was uncertain about the turn that events had taken, Secretary of State Kissinger was certain about one thing. He wanted a stable Greece. He wanted to have a stable Greece and to avoid an outbreak of hostilities between Greece and Turkey. The Embassy's role was cut away back.

Q: Did that include the CIA role, too?

BROWN: That included the Agency's role, as well. I have to go back a bit on what was said. You see, there was a period of roughly two months after democracy had returned to Greece, so to speak. We were dealing with the former Greek political world. Ambassador Tasca was meeting with Karamanlis-usually in the late afternoons and sometimes in the evenings. Sometimes I went with him, sometimes I didn't. The Greeks were appealing for help because they thought that the Turks were going to attack them. I think that this is what led Ambassador Tasca to send those rather extreme messages. It was a very complicated period, and a whole lot of things were going on at the same time. There were people in the State Department who thought that the Embassy in Athens could have done more than it did.

Q: In what way?

BROWN: Well, that we could have persuaded the Greeks to keep out of Cyprus. I don't think that this was realistic. However, there were so many irons in the fire at this time, including Washington, Nicosia, Ankara, and Athens. There was an unstable situation in Greece. Anything could have happened, and maybe the way it turned out was all for the better. [To replace Ambassador Tasca], we got an Ambassador, Jack Kubisch, who had never had anything to do with Greece before. Fortunately, the DCM was an old Greek hand. By then I was ready to leave Athens anyway, as my tour was over.

Q: You had five, action-filled years [in Athens].

BROWN: Four and one-half years. That was long enough.

Q: You had plenty of action in that regard. Did you become involved in the bases talks we had with the Greeks?

BROWN: We had a military affairs, POL-MIL [Political and Military Affairs] officer. We worked together, though not to any great extent.

Q: Those things are usually handled by a combination of military and political people, anyhow. Were you there when Richard Welch [the CIA Chief of Station] was killed?

BROWN: No. The Chief of Station while I was there was Jim Potts, who had a close relationship with "the colonels." One of the first social events I went to in Athens was at his home. Three of "the colonels" were fellow guests. Ambassador Tasca came and subsequently read the riot act to Potts. He told him that he was not to invite such people. He was succeeded by Stacy Hulse, who came very briefly toward the end [of my time in Athens]. Richard Welch came subsequently.

Q: In 1975, then, you were transferred to The Hague [the Netherlands], which was a change of pace.

BROWN: A real change of pace. Since you served in The Hague yourself, you know that the situation is relatively tranquil there. Dutch diplomats not only are very approachable but, like the Greeks, they tell you what they think. It was a very tranquil period, I would say, without any major issues to deal with.

Q: Talking about issues, what about the stories about payoffs to Prince Bernhard by Lockheed and Northrop? Did these stories cause a great to-do while you were there?

BROWN: There was a certain amount of interest in the subject, but there was no great to-do. I think that a more exciting event for us were the South Moluccan takeover of the French Embassy.

Q: Tell us a little bit about the South Moluccans-who they are, what they were doing, and how...

BROWN: When Indonesia became independent [in 1949], the South Moluccas was something I dealt with in the UN context, when the hawks in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs thought the South Moluccas should have been independent. That was years before, and I never expected to hear of the South Moluccas again. Anyway, they had been loyal Dutch subjects. I don't think that they ever gave up the thought that they would eventually become independent. I arrived in The Hague after the time when they had taken over the French Embassy, but I was there when they took over a department store in Amsterdam and for the train incident.

This was interesting. I discovered that the Agency had all sort of fascinating techniques like putting listening devices in trays of food and what not. That was about the most exciting thing that happened [to me in The Hague].

Q: Speaking of the Agency, it was during your period there that Phillip Agee lost his residence permit in Amsterdam and was kicked out of the country. He'd been a thorn in the side of the Agency for some time, I know.

BROWN: Yes, I think so. For me service in The Hague was kind of a nice change. I don't know what your experience was, but the people in the Agency in The Hague [during my time there] were much more open and cooperative than had been the case in Athens.

Q: Yes. That tour in Holland was interesting because it also gave you a chance to "test your wings" as a DCM, which is always an interesting position. Tell me a little about that-how the Embassy functioned.

BROWN: It was an interesting Embassy because the Ambassador during most of my tour was Kingdon Gould, Jr., whose interest in the political scene in the Netherlands was somewhat limited. He really left it to the Political Counselor, Martin van Heuven, and me to do most of the substantive work. In fact, he was absent from the Embassy a good deal of the time. A good example of this is that when Secretary of State Kissinger came to the Netherlands, the Ambassador hadn't been in the Embassy for a month or so. He came back for one day and then left with Kissinger, whose visit was extremely interesting. I don't know whether you experienced anything like this, but Kissinger absolutely sought to cut the Embassy out of everything except one luncheon. He told the Dutch, who ignored what he had said, that they shouldn't share the discussions that they had had [with him] with the Embassy.

Q: I had the same experience in Israel when I was there. That's a difficult situation in which to work, when your own Secretary of State is doing things that you don't know about.

BROWN: Exactly. I'm sure that it was much worse in Israel. Actually, the issues we had with the Dutch were not the kind of matters which were that difficult. There really weren't any great political issues that came up during my tour in the Netherlands. We had a rather difficult battle over whether to close down the Consulate General in Rotterdam. We had a crisis when the Maytag people, who ran an outlet store, came into Amsterdam and sold their merchandise cut rate. We had a lot of stranded tourists there.

During my tour we had a change of Ambassador, when Bob McCloskey was assigned. This gave me an opportunity to see the difference between presenting credentials in Greece, with much military fanfare, as had been the case when we had a new Ambassador in Greece, and that quiet visit down in the country [in the Netherlands] which Bob McCloskey and I made to see the Queen [of the Netherlands]. Ambassador McCloskey had a limousine [and a driver]. Period.

Q: It was a more relaxed atmosphere.

BROWN: A very relaxed atmosphere.

Q: I'm sure that you and Bob worked very well together.

BROWN: Yes. I enjoyed serving with him. Then, at the very end of my tour [in the Netherlands] another new Ambassador came, but he was really there just to "meet and greet." That was it. You had him.

Q: I had Geri Joseph, yes, and a very fine Ambassador, too. Then you were assigned as a Senior Inspector. Tell me about that assignment. How did that come about?

BROWN: I was supposed to be assigned to another job, as you may have heard.

Q: Yes, a senior job, as a matter of fact.

BROWN: I've never really known what happened, because I was never able to find out why. For some reason the assignment was changed at the last moment, and George Vest, the Director General of the Foreign Service, apparently could not tell me why, except that Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher apparently had gotten into the personnel machinery and shaken things up.

So I ended up as a Senior Inspector, which was a perfectly reasonable assignment. I worked with an old, former colleague of mine in inspecting the Bureau of Public Affairs in the State Department. It was then under Assistant Secretary of State Hodding Carter. This was a quite interesting assignment. I can't say that we did anything great, except that we encountered some practices with contract employees in the Historical Office of the State Department which were of a somewhat dubious nature.

It was an interesting experience. After that I retired quite happily and managed to find a good many things to keep me fully occupied.

Q: Do you think that the inspection function is really necessary, now that we've gone through a great retrenchment in the State Department?

BROWN: I suspect that it's necessary because it does occasionally uncover some problems. I'm not sure that it needs the extensive kind of effort that is made. In terms of my own experience with inspections, I've been inspected both in the State Department, in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and in the Netherlands. We were never inspected [during my time] in Greece, when there might have been more reason for it than we wanted. I'm not sure that anything terribly constructive came out of any of these inspections. However, in the Netherlands the inspection was helpful to Political Counselor van Heuven and me because we had been extremely hard on a junior officer. The inspectors thought that there was no reason for us to have been more lenient with this officer than they were. In a subsequent grievance case, it was a nice thing to have the Foreign Service inspectors on our side.

Q: Well, now, looking back on it, your career was unique because you saw things both from the civil service, the Foreign Service, the Department side, and the field side. Could you say a few words about how your perspective differs when you're in one place or another or-how will I say it-when you're almost in a different system.

BROWN: I think that I was extremely fortunate because my initial years with the State Department brought me into contact from the very outset with people I would otherwise never have known-including Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. I knew him [personally] by the time he was Secretary of State. The associations with Senators and Congressmen whom I met in our General Assembly Delegations and other prominent Americans in our Delegations [were extremely interesting]. In New York [my contacts with] senior diplomats were truly unique in a Foreign Service career. Once you move into the more normal, diplomatic work in an Embassy, your opportunities are not nearly as great. I was very fortunate because, both during my career in the Department and subsequently in Athens, I was pulled off to go to international conferences which we haven't talked about at all. However, they were also fascinating experiences.

For instance, in 1964, I went to the conference of the Universal Postal Union in Vienna with a lawyer from the Office of the Legal Adviser [of the State Department]. The Universal Postal Union tried to throw out the South Africans. We went to work on that issue. It was one of the most fascinating experiences I ever had. I had to enlist the assistance of our Ambassador, James Riddleberger, to protect my legal adviser when I needed him. It was really one of my most exciting experiences. I want to discuss my experience with the international organization of the Red Cross [International Committee of the Red Cross-ICRC]. This is a totally different area to deal with, at a different level. This was an unusual experience.

Q: And you were pulled out from Athens to go to conferences like this?

BROWN: I went to Athens and then went to Rome for almost two months to a conference of the International Civil Aviation Organization [ICAO], designed to stop hijacking of civil aircraft. It was a very interesting meeting, but not terribly productive. It's always nice to be in Rome. It was a nice change.

I think that my international organization experience really was, in many respects, the high point of my career. However, I would not have exchanged that for my experiences in Athens or in The Hague, either. All of my posts were interesting, and the contexts were fascinating.

Q: During your years of service you've seen the position of women in the Department and the Foreign Service evolve. Can you say a little about that? Is there a "glass ceiling" that we read about for women?

BROWN: Well, I don't know. I think that I was extremely fortunate because I was initially in an area where I wasn't directly competitive with the Foreign Service. At the same time, before I moved from the civil service to the Foreign Service, I had spoken to the Director of my office about moving ahead and so on. I was told, rather abruptly, as was the other woman in the office, that because we were not married and did not have families, we didn't need any more money, we didn't need to be promoted, and so forth. This was a little tough to take. On the other hand, I think that the fact that I was in a non-traditional area helped me, because I did move ahead quite rapidly-even after I went into the Foreign Service. I went to Bonn as First Secretary. I was promoted while I was in Bonn and promoted again when I returned to Washington. I don't know that it was at all meaningful, but I was fortunate enough to be nominated and then selected for the Woman's Award, which no longer exists. I was given this award strictly on the basis of my UN experience.

I think that today it's easier for a woman to move up in the ranks. I still think that it's perhaps a bit more difficult [than for a man].

Q: Well, looking back, would you today recommend a Foreign Service career to young people?

BROWN: I would, but I think that they would have to be prepared for a lot of frustration and difficulty. Frankly, I remember the young people I have talked to at the college level who were fairly interested in international affairs. They seemed to have no interest in the Foreign Service. I met some students who were candidates for graduate scholarships which DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, an organization of retired Foreign Service people] gives. There were about six of them, from both George Washington and Georgetown Universities. I asked them if they were interested in the Foreign Service. They were interested in economic development and in international corporations and so forth, [but not the Foreign Service]. At the moment, of course, the Foreign Service is pretty much closed [because of personnel limitations]. However, I'm afraid that there isn't too much interest in it.

Q: That doesn't bode well for the future, because if we don't have that life blood coming along-and this interest-we'll suffer in the long run.

BROWN: I think so. But who is to say?

Q: Well, any final comments that you'd like to make about your career?

BROWN: Only that I liked every minute of it-even some of the difficult times. I have some regrets-particularly about Athens in terms of the limitations on our work, largely because of the activities of the Agency. I wouldn't exchange it for a different career. I would recommend the Foreign Service and I did recommend it to some of these graduate students to whom I referred.

Q: Well, thank you very much, Elizabeth. It's been a pleasure, as always, to talk to you.

End of interview