

AMBASSADOR PARKER W. BORG

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Borg]

Q: This interview is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Parker?

BORG: Yes.

Q: All right. Well, let's sort of start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family background.

BORG: I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25th, 1939, the oldest of three children. My two younger sisters attended public high school in the suburbs of Minneapolis. My father was in advertising and public relations. My mother was a housewife. I attended Dartmouth College from 1957 to '61. I joined the Peace Corps and then went to Cornell for graduate studies from 1963 to 1965, and joined the Foreign Service in 1965.

Q: Okay, we're going to go now back over that. In the first place, the Borg family sounds Scandinavian. Is it?

Q: Where did they come from?

BORG: My grandfather Borg was born in Norway. His name was Carl Jensen. He came to the United States in 1905, and when he got to Minneapolis he found that there were too many Jensens, so he changed the name to Borg. Two of his brothers later joined him in the United States and changed their name to Borg also. One didn't like it and went back to Norway.

Q: What does Borg mean?

BORG: Borg means block, city, fortress, like 'berg', the German 'berg'.

Q: Your father, what did his parents do?

BORG: My grandfather was a carpenter, and his father had been a carpenter, and as far back as anybody could remember our people were carpenters in Norway. I think they were building windows and sashes. My grandfather built homes and churches in the Minneapolis area. My father graduated from high school in 1930, was unable to go to college because of the Depression, and went into journalism first and advertising with the local newspaper, and then went off on his own in advertising.

Q: And on your mother's side?

BORG: On my mother's side, her maiden name was Webb, and they've been able to trace her family back to about 1700. They were Quakers in the Pennsylvania area who gradually moved west, the youngest, the dispossessed son, being forced out of the family and moving progressively west until he ended up in Saint Paul.

Q: Did you grow up right in Saint Paul?

BORG: I was born in Minneapolis and grew up in one of the suburbs, Saint Louis Park, and another one, Wayzata. I went to public schools in both places.

Q: Wayzata has quite a name for its high school and all this.

BORG: No, it doesn't. It's not a very good high school.

Q: Isn't it?

BORG: No. I think when I graduated from Wayzata, the idea that anybody could go to an Ivy League school was considered quite exceptional. They hadn't had one certainly in 10 years.

Q: Let's talk about the time when you were growing up as a kid, elementary and all, and your family, just to get a feel for the family. Did you sort of sit around at nighttime and discuss the world or politics or anything like that?

BORG: Not very much. I became interested in foreign affairs when I was probably in second or third grade. I had a stamp collection. I had maps of the world. I thought it was really intriguing that there were all of these places out there. I had no idea. We never traveled to any of these places. We did have foreign exchange students. Three of them that stayed at our house over a succession of years, which, I think, strengthened my interest in people outside the United States.

Q: How about your family? What was sort of the religion and the politics, or was there religion and politics?

BORG: I would say that both of my parents were Republicans of the 1940s/1950s vintage.

Q: Stassen.

BORG: Stassen, and I remember my father was a very good friend of Hubert Humphrey's because he worked on civic affairs in Minneapolis.

Q: Humphrey was mayor, I think.

BORG: Humphrey was mayor, and my father was active in the Junior Chamber of Commerce when Humphrey was the mayor. My father used to speak about Humphrey and how Humphrey had at one point suggested that my father should join him in making over the Democratic Party and turning it into the Democratic Farmer and Labor Party, and my father was appalled and couldn't imagine participating in anything associated with the Democratic Party.

Q: Let's talk about the elementary school you went to. How did you find the school, and was there anything or teachers that particularly interested you?

BORG: The main thing I can remember in elementary school was that I lived in a neighborhood that was, because of the shifting and growing population was constantly being moved from one school to the next. I was thrown each year into a different school setting with different kids. There were only two or three of us who were so thrust, so I never had really close friends when I was growing up, because while we didn't move it was like moving in that I had to develop new friends every couple years.

Q: That's very difficult. By the time you got to high school, where your interests at all solidified? What was your reading?

BORG: I was always very interested in history, geography, social studies, much less interested in math and science, but I took all of the courses. When I was in sixth grade, I went over to the University of Minnesota. I was interested in languages, and they offered an introductory course in Spanish, French, Russian and German, and I went there for the summer and spent two or three weeks learning each language. I thought that was wonderful fun. Then when I was in high school, I studied Latin and Spanish.

Q: While you were in grammar school up through before high school and then in high school, any books or authors that stick in your mind, fictional or nonfictional?

BORG: No, I never was a big reader. I did not read fiction. I read biography, I read history, but I can't remember anything particularly.

Q: Then in high school did you get involved in extracurricular activities, sports, dramatic, music, or anything?

BORG: I was not big enough for athletics. I was a terrible athlete, had bad hand-eye coordination, but was involved in dramatics and in forensics. I had a terrible voice, I couldn't sing, had no art skills.

Q: You were saying Wayzata High School was not...

BORG: It was perfectly fine, but it wasn't...

Q: But it wasn't pointed towards anything.

BORG: No, they did have two streams, a college preparatory stream and a-I don't know what the other one would be called-sort of general education. I did all of the college preparatory courses that they offered.

Q: Was Wayzata an upper middle class suburb or anything like that?

BORG: Wayzata is an upper middle class suburb, but most of the upper middle class people who live in Wayzata sent their children to private schools. The public school is the school where the grocers, the car dealers and the local merchants sent their kids. All of the private schools at that time were single sex, and I always felt that it would be a punishment to have to go to a single-sex school. So I worked very hard at the public school so I wouldn't be sent to a private school, not recognizing that perhaps I would have gotten a better education at one of those places. But that was not the issue. The issue was there aren't any girls there and they make you play sports and I'm terrible at sports.

Q: The reason I ask was I went to Williams from '46 to '50 and we had a number of people from Wayzata, so I always assumed it was sort of like Winnetka or something with the New Trier High School pushing them, but I guess they were coming from...

BORG: It is. They came from Choate and Saint Paul's and some of the local country day schools.

Q: You graduated when?

BORG: 1957.

Q: While you were in high school, did the outside world intrude at all?

BORG: Well, I can remember various events from the outside world. When I was in elementary school, I can remember when the Japanese surrendered in World War Two because of all of the noise and excitement. I remember the beginning of the Korean War and the end of the Korean War. So I was well aware of the major events that were occurring while I was in high school.

Q: Were you getting any feel that the Soviet Union was the enemy and all that?

BORG: No, I thought war was the enemy. I was very concerned that there might be another war and that war was not good and, therefore, war was to be avoided. The fact that it was the Soviet Union I don't think dawned on me until later.

Q: You graduated in '57. Were you pointed towards anything?

BORG: From the time I was in elementary school I was pointing myself towards international relations of some kind.

Q: Well, then, you were looking around for college and all that. How did that work out?

BORG: I was looking around for a college. I think my parents, neither having gone to college themselves, were less focused on it. They did not push me. I had a job when I was in seventh and eighth grade working for a woman who had grandchildren and no males in the household. I was teaching them to ride bikes and so forth. All of her family had gone to Dartmouth, and she took a fancy to me and decided I should be going to Dartmouth. At the age of 13 or 14, I paid little attention to this, but she kept sending me brochures and alumni magazines, so by the time I was a senior in high school I thought, well, why not try this one in addition to others too. I was much more interested at the time in the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. My father, being a staunch Protestant from Minnesota, was very, very concerned about the possibility that I might go to a Jesuit institution and become a Catholic and suddenly became much more enthusiastic about Dartmouth.

Q: If you had avoided, going maybe away to private school or single-sex thing, going to Dartmouth, you know, going up in the hills of Dartmouth...

BORG: Yes, it didn't really dawn on me, until I was getting ready to leave my freshman year, that I hated summer camp, I hated single-sex institutions, and now I was going off to one. It sort of all flowed along until that point.

Q: Well then, you went to Dartmouth, did you, from '57 to '61?

BORG: Four years, graduated, that's right, and in '61 Kennedy was inaugurated and announced the Peace Corps. I thought, oh, that sounds like a fantastic idea. I went down to Washington at spring break to the Peace Corps office and told them I wanted to join the Peace Corps. My family was appalled that I would be considering something like this. The Peace Corps people said, "No, we don't want people from Ivy League institutions. We want people who've gone to ag school and technical schools who could do the sorts of things that we need to do."

Q: We'll come back to that, but in Dartmouth in 1957 how did it strike you? What was it like?

BORG: Well, it's very difficult to judge a school. I've often thought afterwards I might have done better or been more interested somewhere else. Since I didn't go anywhere else, I didn't know. I got very wrapped up in all the different activities at Dartmouth, academic, social and extracurricular, and I was so busy all the time I really didn't have a chance to think about alternatives.

Q: What sort of subjects were you taking?

BORG: When I got there, I had done very, very well on math. My SAT scores in math were very, very high, and my English scores were very, very low. When the dean of freshmen saw what courses I was interested in and what I was interested in majoring in, he called me in and said, "You know, you're making a mistake. You should be taking calculus and all these advanced math courses because that's where your talents lie, not in English and trying to communicate in the written form." I said, "Yes, but my interests are with the other, and that's what I'm going to do." So I took liberal arts with the minimum number of sciences and the maximum number of other courses. In my freshman year I had a professor of geography who had spent all of his outside life in Southeast Asia. He used to show these marvelous pictures of Southeast Asia and the places that he had gone and places he had worked. I became very intrigued with Asia through him and began a focus on the region from my freshman year on. I took the religions of Asia and Asian history and all these sorts of things. My interests shifted from general foreign affairs to Asia. I took Spanish my first year in college, and then I did one French course. I could read enough French afterwards that I didn't feel it was worth wasting, I thought at the time, my time just studying French, so I switched to Russian. Then I took two years of Russian.

Q: Did you find that there was thrust in the international side of Dartmouth whether to internationalist or Marxist or what have you?

BORG: I was appalled by the focus of most of my courses at Dartmouth. The government department, I thought, was right out of the 1920's. They were all very staunch Republicans thinking that John Foster Dulles was just a wonderful person, and I did not agree even when I was in college about John Foster Dulles. The people who taught Russian were all émigrés from the Soviet Union who had left in 1920/21, who had this abiding hatred and talked about how Russia would have become a modern, progressive country if the Bolsheviks hadn't taken over. While I didn't consider myself sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, I thought these people were totally out to lunch. So in terms of developing a great world view, I think I got a lot of it by deduction rather than induction.

Q: In a way, you were fighting the system, which is often a good way to do it, to sit off to one side and understand where these people are coming from.

BORG: Yes.

Q: What sort of extracurricular activities were you doing?

BORG: The extracurricular activity that took most of my time was doing college publications. I, for some reason, got interested in the freshman handbook and then did the freshman handbook for the incoming freshman class after me, then did a sort of a guide for new freshman. I was the president of the yearbook my senior year. Oddly, I never had any particular interest in these areas. It's hard to look back and say, "Why did I go into those things?" Maybe it was because they were there and I wanted to be doing something, and I liked photography. I've always liked photography.

Q: Were there any equivalents to international relations clubs?

BORG: No, I majored in international relations, but there was no international relations club. The only opportunity at that point to take a year outside of the United States at school was if you were a major in a particular language and then you could spend a semester in the country of the language you were majoring in. But all of these programs that they have nowadays, I would have loved to have had the opportunity to do some of the things that kids do now.

Q: Were there sort of campus radicals?

BORG: No, this was the '50s. I remember there was a Republican club and a Democratic club, and I thought both of them were out to lunch, so I didn't participate in either and otherwise not much.

Q: Did you ever run into any Foreign Service types while you were there?

BORG: No, never.

Q: Where did you go for girls?

BORG: One thought nothing then of going two hours down the road to Smith, Mount Holyoke, Bennington, Skidmore, Colby Junior College for a date for the evening.

Q: Oh, yes, I went to Williams.

BORG: If you went to Williams, it was the same thing, but Williams is pretty remote but it's not as far.

Q: I lived on my thumb, hitchhiked, and it worked very well in those days.

BORG: I didn't do that so much. There was always somebody with a car that was going wherever it was. I never had a car at school, but there was always somebody that had one that was going up.

Q: By the way, the Kennedy campaign, Nixon-Kennedy campaign, was going while you were in college. How did that...?

BORG: I followed it very, very closely. I began listening to campaigns in detail, I remember, in 1948, and it was largely because Humphrey, our mayor in Minneapolis, went down to the Democratic Convention and talked about civil rights. I became a Humphrey enthusiast from that point. I thought this man has the right idea about lots of things. My family was always in the Republican camp. I was more skeptical. I followed the Nixon-Kennedy campaign very closely and was leaning particularly towards Kennedy but got very upset about his comments on Quemoy and Matsu in the 1960 election especially how these might be the sorts of things that we would consider going to war over. I thought this man is just too far out, that is totally irresponsible, and so I voted for Nixon.

Q: It's interesting because so many of our compatriots got caught up in this campaign and didn't get onto sort of the particulars, which you did. When one thinks about it, two presidential candidates debating over these two bloody little islands in the Straits of Formosa... Well, what happened to you then? I guess in the spring of '61 you went down...

BORG: I was very turned on by Kennedy's inaugural speech. I thought, wow, I didn't vote for this man but he's saying the sorts of things, he had the rhetoric, that inspired me. So I went down to Washington, went into the Peace Corps interim headquarters, and was told that the Peace Corps had no interest in me because I was from an Ivy League school. I also took the Foreign Service test that year, and I passed it in Russian language but missed, was about two points under, for the other things.

Q: Being told that you were persona non grata for being an Ivy Leaguer must have turned you way off, didn't it?

BORG: No, it turned me to figuring out what it was that I might be. I was very intent on joining the Peace Corps and so I checked on what were the first programs that they were going to be starting. There were programs in Tanzania, Ghana, Santa Lucia in the Philippines. They were all technical ones except the Philippines. The Philippines was going to be an education program. So when I filled out my Peace Corps application, I said that I wanted to be a teacher and that I was really interested in a career in teaching. To my surprise, I was selected despite my lack of teaching background but, I guess, because I had indicated an interest. So I was selected in the summer of '61 when the first groups were being chosen for the Peace Corps. My parents couldn't believe I finished college, came home, sat around, did nothing and talked about nothing but the fact that I was going to be joining the Peace Corps. They said, you know, "You've got to get serious now. You've got to find a job out there. We paid all this money for you to go to an expensive college all these years. You've got to do something now. You can't waste your time and waste your money." But I was intent, and it came through that I had been selected for the first group to go to the Philippines.

Q: Let's talk about the group when you found it. How did you find it? Was it as non-Ivy League as they wished.

BORG: No, it was a mixed bag. It had people from all sorts of different schools. I knew best the people whose names in alphabet were right next to mine because everything was done alphabetically and we ended up living in the same community. One of the guys went to Yale where he'd been in the divinity school. He was an atheist. Another guy had been to UCLA where he was doing theater, and the third one was studying agriculture at the University of Kansas, so almost nobody had educational backgrounds.

Q: This, of course, was extremely early days. How was the training? Did you have the feeling they were floundering?

BORG: They hadn't a clue. We felt they didn't know what they were doing. They sent us to Penn State University, which had no background in anything Asian but because it was a state school that had an agricultural institution. Since they were trying to get funding through Congress, they wanted it to appear-or at least we felt they wanted it to appear-that we were all hard at work at diligent schools, not at any of these soft places that had beaches or tropical locations or anything. They assembled a group of people at Penn State who tried to teach us the language, who gave us some historical background, and they did as admirable a job as one could have expected given the fact that nobody had a clue of what we were going to be doing. I think in the early programs the greatest fault lay with the people that the Peace Corps assigned in leadership positions in the different countries, because when we got to various countries the people who were in charge of the Peace Corps programs were more out of water in these countries than we were. We were at least open to whatever it is we would do, but the leadership was sometimes more closed in their thinking.

Q: Were you being taught Filipino?

BORG: No, we learned Tagalog.

Q: How was that as a language?

BORG: Tagalog is a very difficult language. It's a Malay-Polynesian language, but it's a language that is full of infixes. We have suffixes and prefixes, but they have infixes.

Q: Right in the middle of the...?

BORG: As the tense changes, there are changes in the middle of the word, additional syllables that are added. It was a very complicated language to learn to speak well. You could easily say simple sentences. But I found Vietnamese and Chinese subsequently, despite all of the complexities about them, are basically easy languages to speak, because it's just word, word, word, and you just put them together.

Q: Were they training you to do anything...?

BORG: We were supposed to be teachers' aides. We were supposed to be working in the schools helping the teachers teach English, math and science. I didn't have a specific classroom, but I taught one period a day in a variety of classrooms all the way from first grade up to seniors in high school.

Q: When you were going through your training, were they emphasizing that you be on your best behavior and all this? What seemed to be the concerns? When you think about it, the Peace Corps - there was the kid who wrote a postcard.

BORG: Marjorie Michelmore wrote a postcard from Nigeria. The important thing...

Q: ...everybody that year. It was under great scrutiny.

BORG: You know, I would like to think that there were all sorts of things that they told us, but now I can't remember any of them. They taught us cultural sensitivity, they taught us something about the history of the place, they taught us something about how to go about teaching English and math, but I don't think anybody had developed the big picture of what they might be teaching us at that point.

Q: Was there any feel at going to the Philippines of either paternalism or guilt or...?

BORG: Total paternalism. After we got there, we realized that the Peace Corps program grew huge. They had 750 people within two years. By the time we left, it was a gigantic program. We felt that the poor Philippines were sufficiently beholden to us that they would take as many people as we dump on them, and we hadn't a clue what those people are supposed to be doing. The Filipinos - this was pre-Marcos - are sufficiently nice and they like Americans. You felt they would have loved to become the 51st state if they could, so the response to us was, "Sure, send more and more and more." But it was terribly imperialistic. We used to have arguments amongst ourselves about whether the Peace Corps was a good idea or was a promotion of American imperialism on other people around the world. The way I came out in my own head on this was that, yes, it was imperialistic, but things were changing and all these changes were going to take place anyway at some point, and perhaps our participation might take them in a more positive direction and less harmful direction.

Q: Where did you go?

BORG: You mean in the Philippines?

Q: Yes.

BORG: We spent six weeks in Penn State. We finished our training in Penn State the same day that Congress signed the legislation authorizing us to exist. We then went out to the Philippines, where we had another month of training in country at a place called the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, which is the local agricultural school, where they taught us more of the same without any better understanding of what it was that we were supposed to be doing. Then they sent us out to communities. They assigned three or four of us in a group to different communities in specific regions. They decided, smartly, not to scatter us all over the country but to focus on a couple regions where they could watch us a little better and keep better track of us. Have you been in the Philippines?

Q: No.

BORG: I went to a place called Camarines Norte, which is a province in the southern part of the country on the island of Luzon. It was about a 12-hour drive from Manila because the roads were so terrible but was only one hour by plane. I was assigned to one town that had an elementary school, no high school, and I was the Peace Corps person in that town, but I lived in another town with my cohorts, who were teaching in other communities in the area.

Q: Then you did that for two years?

BORG: We did that for two years.

Q: This was '67 to '69?

BORG: This was, no, '61 to '63, the first two years of the Peace Corps. I taught beginning English to first graders, I taught mathematic skills to third graders, I taught science to some sixth graders, I taught literature to eighth graders, and I taught current events and history to some seniors. That was great fun. I had a wonderful time.

Q: You know, there are techniques to teaching. Some people are just naturally teachers, but had anybody sort of said, "You ought to do a little more here or give a little more emphasis"?

BORG: Nobody ever came around and monitored what I was doing or suggested I should be doing things differently. I learned at a very early point that the key to teaching is to try and keep the attention of the students. I had to do something, I had to be sufficiently animated, I had to call on the kids in a way that would keep them alert.

Q: How did the faculty of these schools receive you?

BORG: They were delighted. They were all very happy to have me come, or, if they weren't, they never said they were not. I was not a threat to them. Mostly I worked with teachers that I liked, that I had met and I said, "Can I help you in your classroom? Would you like me to come in once a week and offer such-and-such a course." Of course, since the teachers would like an hour off, they were almost always enthusiastic about the fact that I was willing to take their class for a while.

Q: How about the administrators?

BORG: I got along very well with the administrators of the school. The people I worked with were very nice, decent people who were probably skimming a little bit of money off the top, but everybody was skimming money off the top. The voluntary drive for the Red Cross never made it to the Red Cross. You just said, well, maybe that's the way things work.

Q: While you picking up, while you were doing this, any impressions of Philippine culture?

BORG: I was really excited about learning the Filipino language so that I could sit in the bus on the way to and from my school and hear the revolutionary thoughts that were going through people's heads. I was anxious to hear them talk about the need for land reform and the need to overthrow a corrupt government, all of the sort of intrigue that one imagines goes on in the third world. I never learned the language really well but I learned it well enough that I could listen in on conversations, and I heard the men talking about fixing their bicycles, fixing their cars, and local sports teams, and I listened to the women talk about babies and gossip and things that women talk about. I never heard a singular revolutionary thought from anybody.

Q: I have to say, I can remember when I used to go to the State Department, I'd be listening to conversations, particularly the women, and if it wasn't about hair, it was about dresses. I couldn't believe how people could talk like that all the time, and these were some executive types. Of course, the guys I dismissed anyway because of the sports thing, which I'm not very interested in. Were there the equivalent to Huks (Hukbalahaps) or were they up in the north?

BORG: There were equivalents of Huks. The Huk rebellion had been mostly eliminated by 1953, and Magsaysay won the election in 1953 having defeated them, but there were still remnants up in the hills and there were certain areas where we lived where we were told that we should be careful because there might be Huks in the area. I never saw a Huk, never met anybody who claimed to have ever seen one, never had any problem. I met Philippine communists later when I was in graduate school...

Q: What about the students? How did you find the kids?

BORG: The town where I was working was a huge industrial overflow city. There was a steel mill in the next town. The kids whose parents worked in the steel mill lived in the next town, but the kids who lived in my town were the kids whose parents maybe serviced the steel mill. They ran the restaurants, there were a couple houses of ill repute, and there was a doctor, a dentist. It was a small town that lived on fishing and I'm not sure what else. In high school some of the boys were much older because they had had a very poor education, so I had 15- or 16-year-olds who were still in sixth grade. I enjoyed working with some of these older kids, trying to get them organized. They wanted to have a soccer team at the elementary school, but there was no one to be the soccer coach. I hadn't a clue how to play soccer, so I acquired a book and read the rules on soccer, and I became the soccer coach. Our team went on and won the district championship. To me it showed that with a little bit of interest and dedication you can do a lot of things.

Q: Did you get any feel for the stratification of Philippine society?

BORG: No, because where I was it was all below the stratified level. The stratification was in the big towns and the cities, but where we lived there were no landowners, there were no wealthy people. There were some professionals. One, the son of the doctor in the community where I was, was studying violin, and he went on and played for a number of years at the New York Philharmonic. So there were people of achievement in the community but there was no significant difference between the wealthiest and the poorest in the places where I was living.

Q: While you were doing that, were you were talking to your fellow Peace Corps colleagues?

BORG: Oh, yes, we talked all the time.

Q: I was wondering whether there was a feeling of 'we can remake the world' or do things or 'gee, it's awful'?

BORG: Well, each one of us had different experiences in different ways. Some people were totally dedicated to only one subject and taught just one subject with one teacher. One of my roommates essentially opted out and really did nothing at all. He would go to the school a couple times a week and sit and talk with the principal, but he really didn't do much of anything. The Peace Corps was sufficiently disorganized that, as long as the Peace Corps people didn't complain or the schools complain or the community complain, we could do just exactly whatever we wanted to do. We were living in an old town that was on the Pacific Ocean with a beautiful beach, and when I first got there I couldn't believe that the Peace Corps was assigning me to this wonderful location with this nice house right by a beautiful beach that I would have paid money to go and spend some time at.

Q: Were Philippine mothers siccing their daughters on you?

BORG: Yes, all the time. The Philippines have a tremendous love-hate relationship with the United States and also with lighter skin. So the idea they might get me to marry one of their daughters was something I felt from time to time. You would even meet pregnant women in the market and find them staring at you. I was told that some Filipinos believed that if they stared at someone with light skin, their baby was likely to have lighter skin. Many people in my group, perhaps a dozen or so, married Filipinos.

Q: Ah, that's always been. It's the right age, and there's always been an affinity, pretty girls and...

BORG: That's right. I almost didn't make it into the Peace Corps because they were very tough on psychological testing at the time. One-hundred-fifty-six of us entered the training program and only 124 completed the graduation ceremony. I was almost one who was selected out because the psychiatrist, the social worker or whoever it was that was interviewing each one of us to find out about our suitability, asked me what I thought I would contribute to the Philippines by being there for two years, and I thought for a moment and I said, "Well, I'm not sure. I know I'm going to learn a lot about the Philippines and I'm going to try to teach, but I'm not sure that I can verify at this point what my contributions are going to be." I was called back for a second interview, and I felt that I hadn't been sufficiently idealistic and certain about what I was going to contribute to world peace, or whatever I was contributing to, but I did make it.

Q: By the time you were getting close to leaving in '63, were you figuring out whither?

BORG: No, I had pretty much decided - maybe the first year that I was there - that what I wanted to do when I left was go to graduate school. I wanted to go to Cornell because it had a Southeast Asia program. I had a summer project my first year. Schools were only operating for eight, nine or 10 months a year or something like that, so I had two months off. I took my summer project and I went up to AID, to the head of AID, and asked about working for free in the office. So I was an AID intern for the summer, and that was where I first met Foreign Service Officers. I was appalled. I thought, oh, my God, what stupid jobs these people have. I became good friends with someone, who remains a good friend, and he told me about how they really went out and they were teaching Filipinos how to do square dancing on the weekends and once a week they would square dance and they went to the yacht club on a certain night and all these things. This whole thing just sounded so tedious to me. The people seemed to be perfectly nice, but the jobs that they had, I couldn't imagine wanting to do any of this sort of work.

Q: This was from the embassy, not from AID?

BORG: Well, the embassy was right across the street from AID. These were embassy people. There were more embassy people my age than there were AID people.

Q: The embassy lived pretty much in a compound there?

BORG: No. There was a compound where some people lived, but a lot of other people lived in various apartments around town. In fact, I stayed with a Foreign Service Officer. He put a sign up in the Peace Corps office saying, "Anybody who's looking for a place to stay, give me a call." So I called him and he said, "What nights are you going to be here?" and I said, "I'm going to be here for the next six weeks." He said, "Oh, no, I'm talking about just a couple of nights," but he relented, and so I moved in and stayed at his place for six weeks. So I got sort of an inside look at the Foreign Service.

Q: What was there about it? It wasn't connected or wasn't doing what you were thinking?

BORG: It didn't seem to have any connection with the country as I saw it. They were mostly younger officers doing visa work and participating in what I thought was the most frivolous sort of life, traveling relatively little outside of the capital, going out on their sailboats on the weekends, and sort of living an American life in this foreign country. By contrast, I was very much into the culture.

Q: In many ways this is, of course, the typical reaction of the Peace Corps volunteers towards embassies. We're out in the boondocks and we're living the real life, and you're up here in the capital and you don't know the country. I think this is duplicated almost everywhere.

BORG: That's right, yes.

Q: What were you doing with AID?

BORG: I think I may have been the post project to the head of AID. Somehow I got an appointment with the head of AID, who was astonished that somebody from the Peace Corps wanted to have anything to do with him. I proposed that I do a study for them of all the other aid that was going on in the country. I said, "Do you know who's doing what?" and they said, "No, we haven't a clue who is doing what other kinds of assistance in the Philippines." So I spent the summer going around to all of the other assistance organizations, both government and NGOs, to find out what kind of things they were doing, how much money they were spending, and where they were focusing. It turned into a report that the AID mission thought was sufficiently interesting that they assigned somebody from the AID mission to continue this project and keep it going. They did it for a number of years.

Q: Did you get a different feel for the Philippines from Manila?

BORG: Have you been to Manila?

Q: No.

BORG: When I first got to Manila, I wondered where were the nice sections of the city. I thought, 'This is a dump,' and then I realized that it was not 'Where are the nice sections?' but 'Where are the even worse sections than where we are right now?' There were glitzy suburbs, but the center of Manila was then pretty depressing. The parks were not maintained, there was garbage everywhere, there were shanties right next to nice buildings. The Marcos period cleaned some of this up. It's not quite as bad, but Manila still is a dump.

Q: What were you getting about Cornell?

BORG: Cornell at that point had what I thought was the premier Southeast Asia program in the country, and I was really interested in building on what I had learned in the Philippines and expanding it to other countries in the region. So I had decided probably even before I entered the Peace Corps that what I wanted to do eventually was go to Cornell and go to the Southeast Asia program there. My father didn't think the Peace Corps was such a great idea, and he didn't think too much of specializing in Southeast Asia. He kept saying, "Economics, economics. You've got to know about business. The world that matters is the world of business." So I signed up to go Cornell. I applied to business school at Cornell, knowing that it was sufficiently open that I could take all the Southeast Asia courses that I wanted to. I also applied to Harvard and Stanford, and being out of the Peace Corps at that point, I got accepted to all three.

Q: That's pretty glitzy, the first group to come out.

BORG: That's right, the first group to come out, and so I got accepted at all three schools, but I stuck with Cornell. In addition, after I had applied, the Ford Foundation announced that they were offering money to Peace Corps volunteers who were interested in development work. This was precisely what I was interested in doing, so I applied to the Ford Foundation and I got them to pay for my two years of graduate work.

Q: So you went to Cornell from...?

BORG: '63 to '65.

Q: That's an interesting period. Tell me about Cornell, what you were doing and your impression, and what you were getting out of it.

BORG: Cornell really didn't erupt like a lot of the other campuses until a couple years later, '67, '68, but while I was there, there was the beginning of the ferment, the beginning of the anti-Vietnam teach-ins and so forth. My favorite professor was sort in the forefront of opposing the war in Vietnam. He was George Kahin. I took all the courses he offered, while being in the business school. I was in the business school but I specialized in public administration so that I would be able to administer things, I thought, but I took all of the Southeast Asia regional courses in economics, history, rural sociology. I also studied Indonesian.

Q: I was wondering on the Indonesian side, because Cornell, particularly at this time...

BORG: ...was very big on Indonesia.

Q: Talking to people who served in Indonesia during the Sukarno/Suharto, early Suharto, period, Cornell, much more than the Viet Cong, was the enemy, and it remained for a long time.

BORG: Yes, the Cornell people had very close ties with the leftists in Indonesia. They probably were a little too close so that it clouded their objectivity. But Cornell was an outstanding school where this professor who was sort of the forefront, the leader, of the anti-Sukarno factions, taught really interesting courses. I never felt he discriminated against me because my views were not similar to his, as contrasted with my experience at Dartmouth where I felt that some of my government professors, if I didn't spout the John Foster Dulles line, were likely to grade me down for it. He encouraged me to think and to look at things. He was into sort of the evil of foreign influence in domestic affairs of other countries, and he offered a seminar on this. I thought, 'Ah, that sounds great,' so I took this seminar, and everybody studied...

Q: Which professor was this?

BORG: His name is George Kahin. I'm sure if you talked to people who didn't like Cornell in the '50's, it was because of George Kahin. I think the key to understanding him was that he was a student at Johns Hopkins of a famous professor who was really crucified by McCarthy...

Q: Oh, yes, he was...

BORG: Owen Lattimore. He was a student of Owen Lattimore's at Johns Hopkins, and this really affected, I think, his outlook on a lot of things, but he was a good professor. Anyway, we had our choice of what we wanted to study about the interference of a nation in the affairs of other countries in Southeast Asia. Since I'd been in the Philippines and I had read the book *The Ugly American* and *The Quiet American* and knew that there was a connection between them in that the hero of *The Ugly American* was the villain in *The Quiet American* and this man really existed, I decided I would study him and what he had done. He turned out to live in Washington, DC.

Q: This was...?

BORG: Edward Lansdale. So I came down and I interviewed him. I came down a couple of times and talked with him, and he gave me papers and said what about this and what about that. I wrote what I thought was a fascinating paper about how he had participated in the defeat of the Huks in the Philippines and the building up of Magsaysay, who became the president. He became so controversial that he had to leave the Philippines and went over to Vietnam, where he began doing some of the same sorts of things he'd been doing in the Philippines. He was a CIA person under Air Force cover, I believe.

Q: And how did that go?

BORG: It was a fascinating experience for me. I got a good mark on the paper, and Kahin wanted me to publish it and he would have published it in the Southeast Asia series, but I was then thinking about the State Department as a career and decided I didn't want something like that published. So I declined the offer.

Q: It's interesting. Why would you feel that...?

BORG: I have no idea right now. I thought that I might want to go back and work in the Philippines someday and that this was a chapter of Philippine history that most Filipinos didn't know about and probably didn't want to know about.

Q: Was the thrust that Lansdale's work was pernicious or...?

BORG: No, Lansdale's work was not pernicious. He basically found a good man and helped guide this man through the bureaucracy and made him an effective secretary of defense and saw that his actions were favorably promoted, and this made him a leading contender to being president, and he really didn't have to do anything. Once he had succeeded at appearing to defeat the Huks, it was a foregone conclusion that this was the most popular man in the country.

Q: In a way, one can say that our policy in Vietnam was looking around for a Magsaysay all the time.

BORG: Yes, and Lansdale was the one who started this.

Q: In Cornell did you find yourself up against either a rightist or a leftist student group or faculty group or something?

BORG: There was at that time an SDS group on the campus. We used to sit around and look with some disdain on them, but I would think that the people I associated with - I didn't associate at all with the people in the business school except for a couple of Asians who were there - were mostly people in the Southeast Asia program, many of whom were also Asians. My American friends were probably a little bit to the right. No, they were a mixed bag, but there was no deep division at this time. There was a general feeling that the war in Vietnam was not good, but this was still only in 1965 and the draft had not been reinstated, so it didn't poke its finger at people in such a menacing way.

Q: I can't remember when Sukarno killed...

BORG: '65.

Q: This would have October, September or October, so you were probably out of school by that time, so you wouldn't have been around to see the school's reaction.

BORG: No, at the time I was in school, Malaysia was just being formed and Sukarno was focusing his attention on opposing Malaysia and the Filipinos were opposing Malaysia.

Q: It was all over Borneo, wasn't it?

BORG: It was all over Borneo. One of the things which I missed earlier, which may be just worth mentioning, was that when I left the Philippines - since we're going into more detail than I ever thought we would - I decided I didn't want to fly directly home. I had my college paid for by the Ford Foundation, so I took a lot of the money that the Peace Corps gave us as a resettling allowance and I used it to spend three months traveling back to the United States. I first went down to the southernmost part of the Philippines and took a smuggling boat across the straits into Borneo. They were taking sugar into Borneo. It flowed from here down to here.

Q: You're pointing to the map and we're doing this on tape.

BORG: We went from the southern part of the Philippines, Zamboanga, then caught an inter-island boat down to the southernmost island in the Philippines, and then went house to house to see if I could find somebody who was taking a boat over to Borneo, and I eventually found somebody. They agreed for 20 dollars or something that they would load me on with the sugar that they were taking and take me across. So I arrived in Borneo, and since the town was a free port at the time, I was arrested and taken up to the customs house, but they said, "Well, there's nothing we can do with you, so you might just as well be on your way." So I went on my way and went through Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak when they were having elections then for the formation of Malaysia, and saw the elections in each one of these places, then went down to Indonesia. I went from Jakarta over, across the island of Java and went to Bali, and came back by another route across Java. I then went up to Singapore and took the train up to Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Bangkok, went around Thailand for awhile and then to Laos, went down the Mekong River from Laos into Cambodia and went across Cambodia, traveled to almost all the towns in Cambodia, and then went to Phnom Penh, flew to Saigon, spent some time in Saigon. Then I went up to Taiwan and spent a week or 10 days in Taiwan, went to Japan and spent another 10 days in Japan, just sort of bumming around seeing what I could about the different places. I thought, if I was going to be at Cornell doing Southeast Asia, it was good to have firsthand experiences in as many places as possible.

Q: What intrigued you about Southeast Asia?

BORG: The culture, the history, the fact that we knew so little about it. When we studied things in high school, we studied what had happened in Europe, but there were as many wars that had gone on in Southeast Asia over the years and there was as much fermentation there as in other places. I was, I guess, very much affected by the fall of China in 1949 and the feeling about the domino theory and what this all meant, and so I really wanted to understand this part of the world. At that time this was where the action was, as far as I was concerned.

Q: Well, it's a fascinating place. It's fun to walk through the cities or the villages. Well, you got out of Cornell in '65, and then what?

BORG: I took the Foreign Service exam while I was a Peace Corps volunteer. The Peace Corps was encouraging us to join the Foreign Service, and so they offered any of us who wanted to come up to take the exam a free round-trip ticket to Manila. Since I was interested in the Foreign Service possibly anyway, I took the exam. This was before I had met my Foreign Service friends who were working at the embassy in Manila. So I came up while I was a volunteer and I took the exam, and I passed the written part of the exam. They scheduled an oral exam for the fall of my first year at Cornell, so I came down to Washington and I took the oral exam and I passed that.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions or how it went at the time?

BORG: No, I don't. I probably have the names of the people somewhere that gave me the exam and so forth. I remember that I was not up to date on a lot of current events, because I sat down and I told them at the very beginning, I said, "I have just come back from three months of traveling around Southeast Asia, I have been a Peace Corps volunteer for the last two years, and I'm not up to date on a number of things that have happened in the United States in the last couple of years." Anytime they asked me a question on something I didn't have a clue about, I said, "I'm sorry. I'm out of touch on that one. I don't have any idea what they might be." So I answered a lot of questions by not knowing the answer and saying I didn't know the answer.

Q: Do you recall, did you find the board interested in the experiences of a Peace Corps volunteer?

BORG: No, I didn't think particularly. They were very polite. I did not have any illusions that I might be passing the examination or that I might be failing the examination. At this point I was not particularly interested in the State Department. I had had some negative feelings about it. So whether I passed or failed didn't particularly matter. I was surprised when they told me afterward that I had passed the examination, and they said, "We will probably have an opening for you. In different times the administration has been different in terms of how long it takes and so forth, but," they said, "you should expect by next summer" - this was in September - "that there'll be an opening for you." I said, "Oh, that's really interesting. Thank you very much, but I've got two years of graduate school and I intend to finish graduate school, so I don't think that will work." They said, "Well, we have a new program now" - the State Department always has a new program; it lasts for about six weeks - "which will permit people to finish their graduate work and come into the Foreign Service." They said, "Would that be of interest to you?" Being always interested in keeping my options open, I said, "Sure, why don't you put me down." They said, "Now, one of the advantages of doing this is they begin counting your retirement time from the time you would otherwise be coming into the Foreign Service." So I said, "Sure, let's just keep the options open." Then when I was finishing up in graduate school, I began going around for interviews, and I went to talk with people at various banks - Chase Manhattan and Citibank were the big ones that people talked to back then - and I was somewhat appalled by what banks did. I went and talked with the AID people, but they wanted somebody who had a Ph.D. who was going to be an agriculturalist, and I was not interesting in becoming an agriculturalist. I wasn't sure what I was going to do, and then I got this letter from the State Department about April of my last year of graduate school saying, "We have a place for you in the class that's beginning on June 30th," and I thought, well, this organization that I don't think too much of, maybe I ought to give it a try and see what it's like, see what it's like from the inside. It would be something to do for two years, and then I could go on and do something else.

Q: What was it about the banks that appalled you?

BORG: I talked about lending to third world countries in development activities, and the banks were much into commercial work. The idea of third world lending was not an issue back then. The banks that had offices in third world countries did the same sort of banking that they did in first world countries, and I was thinking more along the type of sort of institutional banking that one saw 20 or 30 years later.

Q: So you came into the Foreign Service.

BORG: So I came into the Foreign Service one month out of graduate school.

Q: In May of '65?

BORG: It was June of '65, because we had to get in before the end of the fiscal year.

Q: All these maneuvers, either before or after or whatever.

BORG: It was June 30th so that they could put all the money in the old fiscal year.

Q: What was your basic officer course like, the composition of the course first? What was your reading on the people there?

BORG: I felt that it was an overwhelmingly white male group. There were no minorities. There were three females in our group. I found some of the people interesting, but I found a lot of them not very interesting. I remember conversations with them in which they talked about how having been selected for the Foreign Service was sort of the greatest thing that would ever happen in their lives, and the idea that they were going to be doing some work and going on and doing other things, it just struck me they had rather limited perspectives on what it was that they were entering. The course itself was tedious, but not as bad as the consular training course. That was even worse.

Q: Was that with Alice somebody?

BORG: I don't remember his name. He had an Italian name, and we called him Chicken Cacciatore; it was something like that. All of the lessons each day were given by people with Italian-sounding accents telling about our visa law and how we were supposed to be keeping people out of the United States. Look at these people. How did all these people get here if this law is keeping them out. I failed the consular course and was told that I would never be able to do consular work, but since I didn't know what consular work was at that point, I wasn't sure whether that was good or bad.

Q: Was Vietnam at all an issue? Were people thinking about it?

BORG: People were always talking about Vietnam. When I came into the Foreign Service, I remember, there was one person from my group who wanted to go to Vietnam. He had been in the military there and he thought Vietnam was wonderful and he wanted to go there. All the rest of us thought, well, that's fine if he wants to go to Vietnam. There was no strong division within the ranks of the Foreign Service at that point over what we were doing in Vietnam. I think this came probably a couple years later.

Q: Did you want to get back to...?

BORG: I did. I wanted to go back to Southeast Asia. I put down, I noted, that I had Indonesian and I wanted an assignment in Southeast Asia, and the Foreign Service assigned me to Malaysia, which I was quite happy with.

Q: So you went to Kuala Lumpur? You were there from when to when?

BORG: 1965 to 1967.

Q: What was the situation in Malaysia at that time?

BORG: At that point Malaysia had been formed in 1963. Singapore had been forced out in early 1965. There was confrontation with Indonesia. There were various raids across the border and so forth. So the focus within Malaysia was on Singapore and on what was going on in Indonesia. Indonesia was in turmoil at that point.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

BORG: James Bell.

Q: How was he? Did you get any feel for him?

BORG: I was a junior officer. He was regal, above me, pleasant, perfunctory. I understood afterwards that he had been assigned to Malaysia because the previous ambassador had been too sympathetic to the Malaysians and not sufficiently cognizant of our concerns with Indonesia and sympathetic to the Indonesian point of view. I think Bell, after he got there, also became less sympathetic with the Indonesian point of view.

Q: When did you get to Malaysia?

BORG: Summer of '65, August or September. My course began at FSI on June 30th. It would have been six weeks, and then there was the consular course for two weeks, and then I went right out. I was on the first plane out of here, because I already had language.

Q: Were you there in Malaysia when the Night of Long Knives happened in Indonesia?

BORG: No.

Q: That had already happened?

BORG: That had already happened.

Q: Did that seem to be making the change?

BORG: In Indonesia?

Q: In Malaysia.

BORG: Malaysia is sufficiently insular. Malaysia is an extremely interesting country in a Southeast Asian context because it is more like the United States in its relationship to Europe than it is like the other Southeast Asian countries. Other Southeast Asian places all have long histories and culture. In 1857 the first Chinese moved their tin-smelting boats up the Salanga River and found these mud flats where they couldn't go any further in their search for tin, so they put a little trading center there. This trading center became known as Kuala Lumpur, place of muddy estuary, and so they had gone further upriver then overland from there to make their tin mines and so forth. The British had their series of relationships with various sultans who lived along the coast. It wasn't until some years later that this central location between the northern sultans and the southern sultan would be the capital, that this was a neutral city. But Kuala Lumpur is a newer city than Minneapolis, where I grew up, and Malaysia was settled in the 1800's when people came across from Java, from Sumatra, came down from China, came across from India. It was all jungle that the British were opening up for rubber plantations and tin mines. So it was this magnet for workers from around the region, and so Malaysia is very much a new society, unlike the neighboring countries, and it has always been very much focused on itself and its own racial problems. What was happening in Indonesia, when it affected Malaysia, when they were attacking Malaysia, it was something that people were concerned about, but otherwise Indonesia might as well be Brazil.

Q: What were you doing when you were there?

BORG: I was a rotational officer, as many people were, but the consular work was considered too important to give to first-tour officers, because there was only one consular officer, and so I was assigned first to general services. Since I had a degree in public administration, I was put in the admin cone and told that in the admin cone I'd be managing our foreign policy. So I was in the general services section with an absolutely awful general services officer who delighted in berating the locals for no reason at all because he felt that was the only way to keep them in line. I remember he called me into the office one day, and said, "I'm going to bring Yusof in today and read him the riot act." I said, "What did Yusof do?" He said, "Nothing, but this will prevent him from doing bad things in the future." I sat there sort of overwhelmed by this experience, this little Malay guy sitting there cowering in the corner, and the GSO (General Services Officer) shouted at him and screamed at him and told him what an awful person he was. He did this regularly to other people. I sent a letter back to my personnel counselor and I said, "I don't think I'm long for this world. If I'm going to be an admin officer, I don't think I'm going to take another tour with the State Department. This is pretty awful." Anyway, I lasted there through the rotation, which was nine months or something like that, and then they sent me to USIA (United States Information Agency). USIA had an incredibly weak cultural affairs program and they had two officers who for two years hadn't done any exchange programs, and so the head of USIA said, "We'd like you to go down and figure out who we can send to the United States. We've got all this money from the last fiscal year and we've got all this money from the next fiscal year, and we need to have a program. Our people are too busy with other things to do cultural exchanges. Figure it out. We should be sending some young people." So I decided that would be fun. I went out to the university and I started hanging around at the university and hanging around at the various bars where journalists met and tried to get a handle on what was happening in the country so I could figure out who would be good people to send to the United States on these exchange programs. While there was a committee, it was essentially whoever I chose that were going to be the ones that went for the different programs. I had all these categories and put somebody in this category and somebody in that category. That was great fun for, you know, somebody who thought they knew something about the country but really didn't. But through that I met the student leader community out at the university, and when the protests began about Vietnam, as they did eventually, I already knew all of the student protesters. When they came down to storm the embassy, I looked out and I saw my friends in the forefront. Everybody in the embassy was sort of behind a glass door, and I went out and talked with them all because I knew them all by first name and they knew that I worked at the embassy. They were convinced I worked for the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), because why would anybody else come out and talk to students at the university. I sent a number of them to the United States on exchange programs and then was able to write some reports. My first political reporting was about what these people are protesting about and why are they angry with the United States.

Q: Why were they?

BORG: The war in Vietnam.

Q: But...

BORG: Vietnam didn't affect them at all.

Q: Why...?

BORG: In 1968 what happened around the world almost everywhere - no, this was 1967 - whenever there was an incident in Vietnam, there was a reaction in Malaysia as there was in a number of other countries in the region. Periodically the windows at USIS would be broken and there would be a group protesting something or other. I forget the details of what the different incidents were, but there was always something that had happened in Vietnam that triggered a reaction in many third world countries and countries in Europe too.

Q: Was the war in Vietnam protest against us sort of youth protesting against their own government and all that?

BORG: Maybe in some places, but the student community in Malaysia had it pretty soft back then. There was only one university in this entire country, and if you got into the university, you had it made. They didn't have the same racial quotas that they developed in subsequent years, so it was very much on merit and something like 60 percent of the students then were Chinese and another 20 percent were Indian and another 20 percent were Malays. So the idea that these groups that would likely go into business were going to be protesting political issues or showing frustration over the local political scene was marginal at that point.

Q: These were basically the already anointed leadership anyway.

BORG: That's right. I never had the sense that they were angry at their own country. If there was anger, they were starting some technical schools for some of the Malays who were less advantaged, and this would break out in riots in 1969, but in '67 it was all quiet.

Q: Were we looking at the Chinese-Malay-Indian relationship?

BORG: This has underscored the way everybody looks at Malaysia, just exactly who is doing what and how is the relationship working. At that time, I think, most Americans would say that the Malaysians seem to have found a solution for a multiracial society, a more successful solution than we seem to be finding in the United States. This is not the case any longer.

Q: We were going through our civil rights period.

BORG: We were going through the civil rights period. For the Malaysians this was not an issue, because each racial group had its place in the society, and as long as the society prospered, they all prospered. Malays ran the government; the Chinese ran the economy; the Indians were, on the one hand, the laborers and, at the other hand, they were the intellectuals, the newspaper writers, the doctors, the professional class.

Q: Was it Abdul Rahman?

BORG: The prime minister at the time was Tunku Abdul Rahman. Tunku was a prince and he was of the royal family, I think, of Kedah, but he was not the king; he was a politician. He had been a playboy in London for 10 years or something like that while he tried to get through school. He came back and was anointed the leader and was a very accommodating leader who got along with people of all races.

Q: Was he sort of seen as a positive...?

BORG: Very positive.

Q: After the USIA thing...?

BORG: Then I switched into the economic section, so I spent the last nine months or so working on economic affairs. There were three of us in the economic section and I was the junior-most person, so I got all of the other things. Let's see. I looked at hydroelectric power, I looked at the fishing industry, I looked at agricultural production. Anything in which there was an airgram due that nobody wanted to do was what I was assigned to. We set up a regional Southeast Asia development program in about 1967, and there were aspects of the project in each one of the countries, so I was the AID liaison officer. We had no AID mission, so I did sort of what economic assistance there was.

The Malaysians had had a successful experience against communists, so we had many military missions that would come down and meet with the Malaysian leaders. I always got involved in hosting them. I'm not sure why it was that I was designated to go around with these various military groups when they met with the Malaysians.

President Johnson came out for a visit and was there. I was a control officer at one particular site. I remember that I was overwhelmed by this proximity with the power of the White House and the stories about the preparations that had taken place for this visit. We had an advance officer from the State Department who came out three months beforehand to help orchestrate this 24-hour visit. I remember we were told that ships were lined up. The Pacific Fleet had strategically located itself at intervals across the Pacific on the route that the President would be following. We had to have three alternatives for each activity that the President was going to participate in so that, if there was a change in plans, we could shift from one site to the other site, and there had to be a case of Jim Beam at each one of these sites in case...

Q: Whiskey.

BORG: ...the President wanted to stop and have a little party with whoever wanted to drink the Jim Beam or Jack Daniels or whatever it was. Did you see any Johnson visits?

Q: No, I never did.

BORG: But we were also overwhelmed by Johnson's size. He was a big person, tall. I remember they were going to give him a ceremonial shirt, and they wanted to know his waist size and he had 53-inch waist. When we told the Malaysians this, they said we must be mistaken, nobody has a 53-inch waist. He did have a 53-inch waist, I understand, but he did not look fat because he was just a very big person.

Q: At that time one of the things that was being put out was the domino theory - if Vietnam fell, so would other countries - and Malaysia, of course, is in the line. It sounds like this didn't seem like much of a probability over there.

BORG: It did not seem like a real issue there, and I had never thought that it was a real issue. I think it was much more the sort of issue that people who don't know anything about a region decide, the politicians back sitting on the National Security Council would decide, is a possibility, none of whom have any direct experience with that part of the world.

Q: Was there any concern about the Vietnam trouble spilling over?

BORG: I think there was concern in Thailand that the Vietnam problem was going to spill over, and there was concern in Laos and Cambodia, but we were pretty far away.

Q: Did Thailand play any role? Although it has a border, it's really not exactly a main...

BORG: I think the domino theory was based, first and foremost, on Thailand, which during the Second World War had switched sides in terms of Japanese as soon as the Japanese declared war, and the sense was that, if it appeared that the Communists were taking over in Vietnam, the Thais would be very tempted to declare themselves Communist - this was the government - because the Thais were so accommodating in this sense. I don't think anybody thought about the domino theory much beyond Thailand, but I think there was great concern, and possibly the general concern - I don't know Thai issues that well - that Thailand might be next. I remember the USIA people in Thailand had a very big program at this point in which they would go around the countryside in the north showing movies and trying to do nation building and make Thais sensitive to a king and less sensitive to the Communist propaganda threat. The people who ran this program came down to Malaysia and they tried to recruit me to take a tour with USIA for my next tour and go up to Thailand to be a rural public affairs office. I thought that sounded like great fun, and I signed up and I told them I'd like to do that. People in the embassy thought I was crazy, but I essentially told these people that, sure, I'd like to do that, and I think I told the Personnel people that I would be very interested in a tour with USIA as my next assignment.

Q: While you were in Malaysia, what was your view of Singapore? It had recently become independent. Was this considered a real problem or not?

BORG: Singapore had become part of Malaysia as a way for the British to terminate their colonial empire in that part of the world. The Malaysians were induced to include Singapore, which was still a crown colony at the time, within Malaysia, and to sweeten the pot, the Malaysians were told, "We're going to throw in Sabah and Sarawak." This would have been 1961 and '62, and so the Malaysians had gone along with this with the idea that Singapore, with its large Chinese population, would not tilt the balance excessively toward the Chinese. Because of the "Malay" population in North Borneo, the Malays would still be the dominant number. Lee Kuan Yew and his People's Action Party was very aggressive in making Chinese in Malaysia think about their political rights; making Chinese aware of what their political possibilities might be. So once Malaysia was formed, the Malays on the mainland recognized that this minority population in Borneo was largely Christian and, while they might have had brown skin, they were not Muslims and had no interest in really siding automatically with the Malays on any issue. They were much more concerned with their local issues. There was a very heavy Chinese presence, and the Chinese seemed to be in a position that they were going to expand their political action onto the mainland of Malaya. One of the understandings at the beginning was that People's Action Party stays south, but there were sympathizers in the north and so it became apparent that this was a threat to Malaysia. Singapore was ousted a couple of months, I think, before I got there, so this was already history and we didn't think too much about it. Singapore at the same time had a very serious question and that was how to develop a Chinese city-state in the middle of the Malay world, and that was Lee's genius, to figure this out and implement it.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop. We're coming to '67. You had already indicated your interest in Thailand, but what happened?

BORG: What happened was I received a cable - I think it was on the Fourth of July 1967 - saying I'd been selected for the CORDS (Civil Operations, Revolutionary Development Support) program to go to Vietnam. That's another whole story.

I remember a discussion maybe with the ambassador, maybe with the DCM, in Malaysia back in about 1967 in which I expressed concern that nobody from the embassy really got out very much and saw much of the countryside, to which it was explained to me that the countryside really doesn't matter so much in Malaysia because it's what the Tunku decides that matters and the ambassador plays golf with the Tunku once every week, once every two weeks, so we learn what we need to know about the political happenings directly from the horse's mouth and we don't need all of the regional reporting because there are no regional issues.

Q: This works until all hell breaks lose.

BORG: That's right, and all hell had broken loose when Tunku threw out Singapore and nobody in Washington knew about it. The reaction in Washington, from the way it was explained to me, was that we obviously need more people out there to understand these things that are happening, to which my response informally with friends was if the Tunku decided to do this on his own, as all the indications say that he did, there's no way having more people out here was going to get that story, that if this is one man's decision and he's keeping it secret, there's no way having six more people on the ground passing money around is going to make some kind of a difference.

Q: Okay, well, we'll pick this up in 1967 when you received an invitation to join CORDS in Vietnam.

This is the 19th of August 2002. Parker, we're off to Vietnam in 1967. Was this expected?

BORG: No, I was not expecting to go to Vietnam. My tour lasted for another six weeks or so, and at that point the Foreign Service wasn't that good about giving advance notice about onward assignments. I had indicated an interest in going to Thailand and working in rural publications and media, and I was quite shocked to learn that I was going to Vietnam and I was not only selected to go to Vietnam but I was leaving Malaysia early to do it.

Q: So how did this work out? What did you do?

BORG: In the mid-'60's Vietnam was not a particularly popular issue. The riots had begun in the United States, and there were riots in other countries. I had spent time at Cornell and I knew a lot about what people were thinking there about Vietnam. I was not at all enthusiastic about the idea. I had thought about the Foreign Service as only a one-tour experience. I was not so overwhelmed with what I was doing in Malaysia that I was seriously considering the Foreign Service as a career, and then I get the word that I've been selected to go to Vietnam. I gave serious consideration to leaving the State Department at that time, but then reflecting on the fact that I had a great interest in Southeast Asia and Vietnam was for my generation what the Spanish civil war might have been for an earlier generation, a chance to see the most important political event in international relations up-front. So I thought this is it, I'm going to do it, I'll learn Vietnamese, I'll go out to Vietnam and see what it's all about.

Q: You took Vietnamese?

BORG: I studied Vietnamese for a year. I was in one of the long-term language courses.

Q: How did Vietnamese strike you?

BORG: Vietnamese is a Chinese language written with the Roman alphabet. It was the first time I had encountered a Chinese-type language. I had been notoriously tone deaf most of my life and had a very difficult time learning the tones for Vietnamese, but I eventually learned the language and got through the course.

Q: What were you getting out of the course, your students, your teachers, and out of the Department before you went out there? You were doing this from '67 to '68?

BORG: '67, '68, which was at the time of the Tet Offensive. We had about 20-some in my CORDS group that I got to know quite well. It was a mixed bag of Foreign Service Officers like myself after one or two tours being selected to go off to Vietnam. They took large numbers of new incoming junior officers who'd never served anywhere in the Foreign Service, and if they were bachelors they were going to Vietnam at that point, and then there was a group of people who had signed up to join AID, and since we were all going to be working on detail to AID, we had exactly the same training. The CORDS Program was the AID training program.

Q: What were you getting about Vietnam at the time? What did you think you were getting into? Was it a winning/losing game? Was it interesting?

BORG: I had been to Vietnam back in 1963 and I was overwhelmed by the American presence in Vietnam. I thought the domino theory was pretty stupid as a concept, and the idea that the United States was going to succeed with its military forces. This was, again, the time of the build-up, and every time things didn't seem to be going well, we added some more troops. I was not too impressed with this. When the Tet Offensive came, we were still in training. We recognized that this was a much more dangerous situation than we had previously thought. This was the first time that some young diplomats had been seized and were under threat. I think, if there was a second year of Vietnamese that was offered to people, there would have been many volunteers to study the language for another year.

Q: What did you think of the people who had talked to you during sort of area training?

BORG: It was a mixed bag. I think on the whole they did an outstanding job of permitting people who had a variety of views to speak in our CORDS training class. We had a lot of time with Bernard Fall, who had written *Street without Joy* and other similar books that were quite critical of what we were doing in Vietnam. So while the policy at the State Department may have been eliminating people whose views were not similar to the administration's, in terms of what we learned in training it was very broad. There was somebody that had the idea that, in order to understanding poverty and community development in Vietnam, we ought to understand community development in the United States first, and so they took us for a week to Appalachia, where we lived in Berea, Kentucky, and saw community development programs there up close, and we were all overwhelmed at the problems of poverty in Appalachia. None of us, I don't think, had ever been to this part of the country before, and seeing how much effort went into relatively minimal results was a really interesting and eye-opening experience.

Q: Sounds like a very good idea, also a good idea for a Foreign Service Officer anyway.

BORG: Absolutely.

Q: Well then, you went to Vietnam when?

BORG: When I went to Vietnam it was the summer of 1968, and I was assigned immediately to a district headquarters up in the second military region, Province of Binh Dinh, where I was assigned as the deputy district senior advisor.

Q: You were there how long?

BORG: From 1968, summer of 1968, to December 1970.

Q: What was the situation there?

BORG: The district surrounds the city of Qui Nhon, the largest city in the province, but does not include the city. It had islands out in the ocean which had never been touched by the war. It had fishing villages along the sea which had minimal contact with the war. There was a leper colony that had also not been touched by the war. There were valleys where US troops had established their rear support elements, and there were miles and miles of slums. There were agricultural villages that grew rice. In the northern end of the province there were villages that had been destroyed and were no longer inhabited, and on the interior it went all the way into areas where the Montagnards lived. So it had sort of a full range of things that happened in the war, that the circumstances in Vietnam I could see in my district in a miniature form.

Q: What were your responsibilities?

BORG: I was the deputy district advisor. I had a major who was my boss. The district had about 250,000 people living in it, broken up into 26 villages and some 150 hamlets. On our direct team there were about six or seven people, and then I think it grew to maybe six or seven military advisory training squads and one civic action team. I was the deputy, meaning all of the military people reported to me, so I had some six or seven captains that reported to me and I reported to the major. We were integrated into the MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) structure.

Q: This must have been a little difficult for both sides, the captains to report to you and you to deal with the captains and all that.

BORG: Since I had had a year of Vietnamese and spoke the language and nobody else did, if the captains had come fresh from college or been in ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) and come over to Vietnam fresh, I got along well with them. If they were somebody who had worked their way up from the ranks and been sergeants in the military and made it into the officer corps and they were some 40 years old or whatever they might be, they were a little more difficult to deal with.

Q: What were you all doing there?

BORG: My job, outside of the administration of the team, was to work on rural development, and over a period of time the program evolved so that I had a large sum of money - it was almost an endless pot of money - to be used in villages for village development programs. A Vietnamese counterpart and I would go around the country - almost every day we'd go to a couple of villages - and we would talk with the villagers about "What is it that you think your community needs?" What we tried to do was reinforce local government, get people to think about projects that they wanted to build in their communities, and see that they held meetings where they decided on the project, and then we provided the materials and the money in order to implement the project, and afterwards we would come around and inspect the projects to see that they were effectively done. This is what took up my days. In addition, I'd go out with the military advisory teams. Each of them was responsible for a certain number of local units. While there were American support elements that lived in the area, the defense was all in the hands of the local Regional Forces and Popular Forces, and our advisory training teams were training these units in defense of their communities.

Q: During the time you were there, what was the situation on the ground vis-à-vis the enemy?

BORG: This was, again, after the Tet Offensive and so there was a much greater awareness, because of the Tet Offensive, of where the Communist sympathizers were, so we had a pretty good understanding in our community of which villages and which hamlets were most sympathetic to the Communists, the Viet Cong. I remember one particularly illuminating story. I was out at a hamlet that had been many times fought over, and I talked with somebody in the village: "Tell me why is it that this group of people support the Viet Cong and this group of people don't," and they said, "Well, you have to understand that back in 1800/1850, we were invaded. When Vietnam had been unified by Gia Long, he sent his troops up and landed here, and some of the people stayed and they took the land away, and so the people who are with the Viet Cong now are the people who were dispossessed back in the 1890's or whatever it was, and so they've always been against the government and they're against the government now." What I learned elsewhere was that it was a very complicated series of local disputes that determined who was the Viet Cong in every one of the communities. We had a sense of who they were, where they lived, but our approach was to try and provide government assistance programs to all the villages, to all the hamlets, even those that were sympathetic to the Viet Cong, on the understanding that, if they could see that the government was doing something on their behalf, they might become more sympathetic to what was happening with the rest of the country.

Q: The Tet Offensive has been described as just taking the heart out of the Viet Cong because they threw all their cadre into that and so many were killed and all. Did this show itself where you were?

BORG: I think it did, yes. Our compound had been overrun during the Tet Offensive, and the place where my predecessor had lived had been destroyed, and he just happened to be out of town or out of the camp at the time. Otherwise he would have been killed. But the Tet Offensive was very serious in this particular area, and there were many fewer Communists but there were still the older people who were sympathetic and there were the younger people who hadn't quite gotten into the movement, but these were not troops that came in from the north who were fighting. These were local people who disagreed with the way things were going, and they banded together sometimes but more often they just fought individually.

Q: In your area was there any North Vietnamese army threat?

BORG: Not that we saw.

Q: What was your impression of the hand of the South Vietnamese government where you were?

BORG: The hand of the South Vietnamese government was invisible. There were regional officials appointed by the central government. There were health ministries in Qui Nhon and education ministries and so forth, but in terms of the impact, the knowledge that people had about the central government, it was nonexistent. People were concerned about their families first, their hamlets second, their village and their province, and everything else might well have been in South Carolina or Soviet Russia as far as they were concerned. It's not something that they really thought about.

Q: How did you feel that the AID program was going?

BORG: There must have been a macro-economic AID program which was run out of Saigon which, as far as we could see, had no impact whatsoever on anything we were doing. We had military assistance funds. All of the development activities that were going on locally were the things that we were funding. I'm sure I could find a book somewhere that describes what AID was doing, but there were no projects that I knew of anywhere in the area that were AID funded, although we worked with AID and I suppose our program was a big part of the AID effort.

Q: Where did your money come from?

BORG: I'm not sure whose budget it came out of. I suppose I could check, but I don't recall. We did not report anything through the AID bureaucracy in Saigon. The money came through the CORDS office, which was more closely connected with MACV. It wasn't even in the same set of buildings.

Q: How did you feel that the projects you were approving and looking at, were these things done in pretty good shape?

BORG: It was a mixed bag. It depended upon the community. We would go around, and the person who was my counterpart on these projects was incredibly tough on the villagers. He was a local boy, and he would go in and he'd periodically take the cement blocks that they had built and he'd drop them from shoulder height, they would shatter, and he'd say, "This is poor quality. You've got too much sand in these, and they're never going to work. We're not going to pay you any more money. You've got to find some community resources to replace what it is that you lost, and that's the way it is." He was very, very tough. He was subsequently ambushed and killed, but that was after I left. I think that to me would indicate that he was probably pretty tough his whole career.

Q: How did you find the US Army worked in your area?

BORG: Again, the only US military that we had any real contact with were the MACV people, and our CORDS/MACV program was sufficiently integrated that I thought at that time, and I still think, it was a very successful combination of civilian and military into a single organization. Yes, there were problems, but things worked far better and there were many more successes than there were failures.

Q: Did you get any feel about what the embassy was up to? Did you have people from the political section coming around and chatting with you?

BORG: Never. I had more journalists that came around from The Washington Post and the various other publications. I didn't know a soul who worked at the embassy. I guess there were provincial reporters.

Q: Usually it's the provincial reporters that get out and talk to people.

BORG: I could not recall who the provincial reporter responsible for where I was might have been, and I don't recall ever meeting the person although there must have been somebody that came out and did it. But, again, there were how many provinces in the country and there were how many districts? In Nam Dinh alone there were eight or nine districts, so the idea that a provincial reporter was going to come out to my district would have been happenstance. The person might have gone to some neighboring district. You were asking about the things that we did. One, we did the community development, and we also had the civic action team which we used if we needed really big materials for building bridges and so forth, I-beams or something like that. Their task was to go to the nearest US military unit and see what they could scrounge, and there was a group of champion scroungers. The second aspect of it was seeing that the military assistance teams understood the lay of the land, and I spent a lot of time with each one of the teams when they arrived, helping them to understand the section of the district that they were in, to understand that Vietnamese were not an enemy, and to talk with them about how to go about their activities to minimize the casualties. One of the things I discovered in our area was that the local Vietnamese officials did not want to see any casualties, so when I was going about my work, I made sure that I stopped in the local village headquarters and said, "We're here now and we're going down this path on our motorbikes, and this is where we're going to be at lunch," and so forth. We found that this kept us really quite safe. The violence in the area took place at night. Rarely was there anything that happened in the daytime. I spent a lot of time trying to help the young lieutenants and captains understand what it was that the war was about in the area. Then the third component was the evaluation of the security situation in each one of the communities, and I think you've probably heard about the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). I can't believe now the amount of time we spent on the 10 different factors for each little hamlet, and we seriously attempted to make an honest evaluation of what the circumstances were. While there might have been pressure in some places to show improvements in the hamlet security, there certainly was no pressure ever applied to me to see how things have improved over a period of time, or now that you've got this military advisory team, aren't things much better. We certainly saw, when province senior officials came in, that a new province advisor immediately downgraded the security to the extent possible so that by the time they left things had been much better. But we declined to play that game in our community. We used to joke that, while security was bad in a number of communities where we were working, it was bad at night, whereas if you did a similar hamlet evaluation in Washington DC - this was 1968/'69 - some of the hamlets there would appear far worse and you wouldn't want to spend the daytime in some of these places.

Q: The major with whom you were working, was he feeling pressure from the American military to show something a little fancier?

BORG: I worked with two separate majors, both of whom were sufficiently out of their element that they left me alone, and they were quite happy to have me doing different things. They would attend the meetings in Qui Nhon, and I would try to avoid the meetings if I could. But I got along with them all quite well.

Q: How did you deal with something like the slugs, which wasn't a village? It was, I guess, a residue of the refugee program.

BORG: Is that what you call them, the slugs?

Q: The slums.

BORG: The slums, ah. We didn't do much. They were in such awful shape. They rarely had village organization. They were just accumulations of people that had assembled around the area where motor pools and various military camps had their logistical headquarters. So we really didn't even try to work with them. We had enough work with the agricultural communities.

Q: How about the Montagnards? Did you have much dealing?

BORG: Yes, we went down there. There was one village and it had about three or four Montagnard settlements, and the people there were, I think, maybe Banaa. I don't recall specifically, but there was a Korean unit, the Korean Tiger - it wasn't a regiment; it was a Tiger...

Q: Brigade.

BORG: No it wasn't a brigade.

Q: Battalion.

BORG: No, bigger, Tiger Division. The Tiger Division had its headquarters in my district over in one corner, and they didn't have any troops operating around their division headquarters. It was at the upper end of the Montagnard community, and so the Tiger Division provided basic defense down that valley, so there was never a security problem down there. We were able to work well on projects without much problem. In fact, one night we even went with the villagers hunting at night. This was something that was inconceivable in most parts of Vietnam, but they wanted to organize a hunting party at night, and we all put flashlights on our heads and went traipsing around the jungle killing what few animals that hadn't already been killed.

Q: The Koreans had the reputation of being quite tough, and so this meant that everybody avoided them, which included the loyal Vietnamese, the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese.

BORG: That's right, absolutely, but they had already established their security system in the community by the time I got there, so I arrived with a peaceful status quo and it remained that way.

Q: When you left there, were there any incidents?

BORG: We were a district that was continuously under siege, one would say, in that we had rocket attacks at night, probably once a week. When I first got to the village, I had trouble sleeping at night because I was just very, very nervous about where I was and what was happening, but after I had been there for a while - I was there for a year and half - they couldn't even wake me up in the middle of a rocket attack. I was a security breach by not hiding under my bed; I just, you know, slept through. But we did have incidents. We lost two or three people from MAT's, military advisory teams, who were caught in ambushes and killed. But there was no defining event. I remember driving down the road one day and there was a group of soldiers assembled on the side of the road next to a big mountain, and the mountains in this area were not mountains so much as 300- or 400-foot piles of stones with all sorts of caves and so forth in them. They said, "We cornered a couple of Viet Cong in the cave." I said, "Oh, that's very interesting. What are you going to do?" and he said, "Well, we're going to call in air strikes." I said, "You're calling in air strikes, are you?" They said, "Yes, we've already called the base." There was an American military base at a place called Pooka not too far away. So before long the American jets - I can't remember what they were at the time - were circling not far above our heads and firing whatever they were firing at the time into these piles of rocks. We were all sufficiently close that when they struck the shrapnel would come all the way back to where the troops were standing. I'm not really familiar with military operations per se, but I was overwhelmed at how sort of casual and informal all of this was. It was a Vietnamese unit and they were engaging the enemy using American troops. But it wasn't long before all the local ladies were out there selling soft drinks and snacks. Here were the jets going over and people were going around, "Do you want a Coca Cola?"

Q: When you left there in 1970, what was your impression whither Vietnam?

BORG: Well, my impression, which I guess I developed maybe a quarter of the way, maybe I hadn't had at the beginning, was that the United States really didn't care particularly about what might happen in Vietnam as long as Communists didn't take over. The things that we were doing were all pretty marginal. We were holding the line. But what was most remarkable to me was that when I got there the Tet Offensive had ended but we were still under the Westmoreland doctrines of how to fight the war. Creighton Abrams took his place and supported everything that Westmoreland had done in words but reversed everything that Westmoreland had done in deed so that - it was called Vietnamization - we were providing advanced military equipment, the M16 rifles and the grenade launchers, and training local troops in the use of these pieces of equipment. So they were far more effective at defending their communities and they had far greater pride. We provided military uniforms for the first time, so they looked pretty spiffy. I felt that our pacification effort in this area had been a great success in that we had succeeded in building a sense within these communities that - again, I'm only speaking for the communities where I was working - they had pride in their village and the people wanted to defend their villages. We made a point, during the final eight months or so that I was there, of going out and spending nights in some of the more hotly contested villages, the district chief, myself, the major who was with us, and a collection of other officials, and we were defended by sometimes the local popular forces.

I left very pleased with the work that we had been doing in the villages. We also went through elections of the village chiefs and hamlet chiefs, so we had popularly elected officials in each one of the communities. They had their own military forces that reported to these leaders, and the communities seemed to be working. So I left with a sense of satisfaction, again feeling at the same time that the United States was not necessarily in it for the long-term development of places like this, because we were looking at the picture in Saigon and the leadership in Saigon, and that was absolutely irrelevant to what was happening in the villages. The political leadership in Saigon was not relevant.

Q: While you were there, did you have much of a chance to talk to other FSOs out there?

BORG: Yes, there were a half dozen or so FSOs working in the province with me, some in similar jobs to mine, and we had meetings once every couple weeks where we would talk about things. Different FSOs approached their jobs in different ways. Some of them did things very similarly to the way I did them, others spent as much time in their bunkers as they could, and there were some who went really gung-ho and strapped M16s on their backs and pretended they were junior power rangers or something going out shooting up the countryside and participating in ambushes. In our training program before we went out there they gave us weapons training so that we could shoot a .45, I think it was, and once I got there I was assigned a weapon. I was criticized by the other Americans on the team that I didn't spend the time that I should going to target practice and cleaning my weapon on a regular basis. They said it's really dusty and it's going to misfire. I responded to all this by deciding that the weapon for me was more of a threat to me than it was going to ever be of any use, so I made a point of never carrying a weapon. I always tucked my shirt in so that anybody who saw me could see that there was no gun anywhere. It was known that I did not carry a weapon, and I felt much safer this way than if I did have a weapon.

Q: From your other colleagues was there developed an esprit, or was it a job to get through and get the hell out? How did you feel?

BORG: It was a job to get through and get out. Yes, we had esprit in that we were all in this together, but I don't think people were under any illusion that we were making a big difference.

Q: So in 1970 whither?

BORG: In 1970 I was, in about October, getting ready to leave my district because we had 18-month tours. I was really interested in seeing the war from the perspective in Saigon, and so I began going down and talking with people about finding a job in Saigon. I was talking with the people in the office of Program Plans and Policy, which was run by Clay McManaway.

Q: Yes, I know Clay.

BORG: I was thinking very seriously about this. Having spent 18 months in the field, I was really interested in seeing what the war looked like from the Saigon perspective. I got a cable that came out telling me that I was going back to Washington in January and I had been selected to be on the Secretariat staff. I didn't have a clue what the Secretariat staff was, having never served in Washington, and I called a friend of mine, someone who was in Washington who was a staff assistant in the East Asia Bureau, and I said, "What is the Secretariat staff?" and he said, "Ah, that is the most fantastic job. You're the first person from the CORDS program that has ever been selected to this. It's a really terrific opportunity. I would give my eye teeth if I could have a job like that." I thought, 'Hmmm, what's going on?' but I decided ultimately that I really wanted to see the war from Saigon, and so I told them, no, I didn't want to do this, that I would spend six months in Saigon and then I would come back. A couple months later I got a notice that there was another opening that had come up in July or August and that maybe I would take that one. But even before that I had been notified that I was going to go work in INR on Southeast Asia because I had a lot of friends doing INR Southeast Asia, so that's what I thought I was going to be doing, but then I decided I wanted to stay and see Saigon. So I signed up instead to stay in Saigon for six months.

Q: What were you doing? You were in Saigon in the first half of '71?

BORG: No, it was the first half of '70, December through July 1970. I worked in the planning office of the Policy Programs and Plans, Directorate of CORDS, which was under Bill Colby at the time. Our office wrote the pacification plans. Our big initiative at the time that I was there was to extend the political development, which we had already witnessed in the hamlets and the villages through the elections, to the provincial level and to transfer the ministries' budget authorities from Saigon to the provinces so that the provinces decided where the schools were going to be built and what money would be used for health rather than some bureaucrat in Saigon. I thought this was a worthy goal, and I worked on writing the various papers. This was a completely American initiative. We wrote the papers in our office. I did a lot of the drafting. Then we sold these programs to the Vietnamese, who we felt at first may not have understood exactly what the political implications were of transferring so much authority to the provinces, by having a provincial council and then the provincial council would have a budgetary authority. I don't think they had any taxing authority, but each province would be responsible for its own developments. Since I had very strong views that the Saigon government seemed to be irrelevant, it seemed that the most useful thing we could be doing was to strengthen the feeling of province, and then after that one might work for the national level.

Q: How did you find the people in Saigon, Americans? Were they a different breed of cat?

BORG: Yes, a totally different breed, because few of them had any experience in the countryside. Most of the civilians that I worked with had taken an assignment in Saigon as soon as they got there and maybe gone out as far as the resort village...

Q: Vung Tau.

BORG: ...Vung Tau or had gone out to Tra Vinh and that was the extent of their provincial experiences, or maybe they went up to Buon Ma Thuot for a weekend or something like that. So I found them consistently out of it. The person who turned out to be my best colleague in the office was a guy who had been in Special Operations Command, a military major who had been out working on the Cambodian border killing people. But he at least knew what the countryside was like, and everybody else was writing in a vacuum.

Q: How did this work? Did you find yourself sort of trying to be subversive or...?

BORG: No. There was enough work that gravitated to me to keep me totally occupied, and working with this military major there was nobody who changed the things that we had written, so the things we had written were then translated into Vietnamese and were sent on. My boss was quite pleased with what I was doing.

Q: Where was your office located?

BORG: It was out at MACV headquarters. That's where Colby had his office and various associated directorates. I had almost no contact with anybody in the embassy. I don't know if I ever met anybody in the political section. A CORDS friend of mine eventually ended up there, but he hadn't gone there at the time.

Q: You had this hamlet evaluation, provincial reporters and all this, and you had these programs. You would think there would be some sort of cross-fertilization or something.

BORG: I think it was too large an operation for anybody to cross-fertilize. There was an office, one of the directorates under Colby, that looked at all of the hamlet evaluations and tried to assemble them into a coherent whole. I knew some of the people who worked there, and I thought that was a hopeless bureaucratic exercise to sort through all of this garbage.

Q: To show how big this was, you and I overlapped. I was consul general in Saigon...

BORG: And we never met.

Q: Different worlds.

BORG: That's right. I met a couple of people who worked at the embassy in the consular section, and I knew one person...

Q: Lange Schermerhorn.

BORG: ...Lange Schermerhorn, who worked at the embassy. I knew a girl who worked with Lange's roommate...

Q: Sandy...

BORG: No, it was Kay Stocker. Kay Stocker worked in AID, but other than writing reports back to Washington, I have no idea what she did.

Q: It was a funny world.

BORG: That's right. I don't think I went into the embassy more than once or twice the whole time I was there. That first time I came down I was under consideration to be special assistant to one of the ambassadors, and I came down there for an interview, but I was not selected.

Q: It used to be called a beauty contest. Young officers would come in and they would be selected, whoever was the most personable or something like that.

BORG: I was not particularly interested in the job nor was I particularly disappointed that I was not selected for it. You know: "Come down. You're a candidate for this. Please show up," so "Okay." I left in the summer of '70.

Q: Did you get a different view? You wanted to look at things from Saigon, but it sounds like you were somewhat limited.

BORG: I was totally wrapped up in what I was doing, and I thought that what I was doing was a positive contribution to decentralizing the war.

Q: Also, militarily the situation was not too bad because the Viet Cong had been really knocked out by the Tet Offensive.

BORG: Things were going swimmingly, and there was much less violence all over the country than there had been at the time I arrived. So as far as I was concerned, I had had my Vietnam experience, and it was a positive experience in that I thought I made a positive contribution to what was going on in my particular communities. One of the things that we did in the villages was that, if any Naval or Air Force units wanted to participate in any activities in our community, they had to secure our concurrence, and we'd regularly get some battleship offshore that would say, "We have intelligence that there's a Viet Cong unit operating in such and such an area, and we want to use our big guns to smash them," and we'd say, "No way. There are settled communities in here. There's no way we're going to let you." Likewise, with the Air Force: If they wanted to do a bombing mission or an Arc light mission in the area, it had to be approved by us. So we were able to control the American side of the war also within our communities. Another thing I found great fun was that, whenever there was a Vietnamese soldier who was wounded in battle, we had helicopter units that would come and pick them up and take them to the hospital, but they would only go into questionable areas if somebody from the unit, from the unit on the ground, the headquarters, would go with them, and I was always willing to fly at night in these helicopters and go out to the villages. I felt I knew my way around and I was sufficiently young and naive about things that I never had any particular qualms about doing something like that. But I felt that my participation in the field had been positive and my experience in Saigon had been a positive one.

Q: Then you came back in early summer of...

BORG: I came back in the summer of '70, but actually by the time I reported for duty it was probably September, and I was assigned to the Secretariat staff.

Q: You were in the Secretariat for how long?

BORG: I was there for two years, 1970 to 1972.

Q: That's a fairly long period.

BORG: No, people at that point usually stayed for two years. This was a time when people came directly into the Secretariat staff. They did not work in the Operations Center first; they worked on the Secretariat staff. All of us who were there, I think, had two-year tours while I was there. The head of the office was Chet Elliot at the time, whom we all had tremendous respect for.

Q: What did you do?

BORG: What did we do?

Q: Yes.

BORG: The Secretariat staff at that point had, I guess, two main responsibilities. The first one was to staff out all of the papers that were going to the seventh floor principals, most to the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary. When a writer or an inquiry or a request for something or other, information, came in, we would assign it down to the appropriate bureau if it was addressed to the Secretary and determine whether the Secretary should ever see it again. Then we followed up and we brought the policy papers as well as the responses to these actions up through our office where we were supposed to see that they had been cleared off by everybody who had an interest in them and that they met the format requirements of that particular principal, and then we submitted them for signature. The second responsibility at that time was to staff out trips that the Secretary or Deputy Secretary or other principals might be taking. We sometimes did advance work. We were always traveling with the parties.

Q: This was William Rogers at the time.

BORG: This was William Rogers, that's right. Rogers was Secretary of State the entire time, and at that time the people in the Secretariat front office, the Executive Secretary, they never traveled, so the senior Secretariat staff, people on the trips, were those of us from the line. So I think there was much more responsibility then than subsequently when they elevated the level of the people who were going from the Secretariat staff.

Q: How did you find the clearance procedure worked? Was this a place for people to sound off? I would imagine somebody had to have the job of trying to tame everybody by trying to over-edit or over-change.

BORG: Yes, we were the office of over-editing and over-changing. You were supposed to learn what's the fine line between too much editing and sending forward sloppy papers that were going to be rejected. You were held in bad repute if your papers were consistently rejected because they didn't have the right clearances and so forth. So we felt that we were in a sense ciphers but we were trying to establish the standards and maintain the standards according to the principal. There are many stories told about all of the clearance process and how complicated it is in the State Department, but one could tell an equal number of stories about bureaus or offices or individuals who have tried to put forward their own personal perspective on something and avoid all possible clearances because they know it would be shot down if anybody with common sense or anybody from another bureau saw this. So what we were supposed to know was what are the issues and who are the players on all of these issues so that the Secretary would be protected and when he signed something it was not going to come back and bite him, that so-and-so really has a say in this and they didn't see it.

Q: Did you feel this increased blandness and lack of initiative?

BORG: Well, this was the Rogers leadership over at the State Department, which was pretty bland to begin with, and Henry Kissinger was much more involved in running foreign policy from the National Security Council. I don't think that one could have made anything more bland than Bill Rogers was making it.

Q: I interviewed Warren Zimmerman. Warren was one of Rogers' speech writers, and he was told by Rogers, "I don't want anything that's going to make headlines."

BORG: That's right. Rogers was not a very dynamic, exciting person. He was far more interested with the perks of the office than he was with the substance of what he was doing. I traveled with him on a couple of occasions and I subsequently traveled with Kissinger. Rogers would go in a room and listen to what people had to say and say, "Well, there's nothing new here," whereas Kissinger would go into a room and listen to similar people talk and say, "Ah, I picked up a slight innuendo from the last time. Maybe we can play on that and make something out of it." Rogers was not into this kind of nuance. I think he was a very shy man who may have been an impressive attorney general, but he was not at ease in the State Department, and Kissinger certainly didn't make it any easier for him.

Q: Did you accompany him on trips?

BORG: Yes.

Q: Did you find any problems there? I think it was Clay McManaway or somebody was telling me, somebody who was a Japanese hand, who was saying how Rogers went and talked to his Japanese counterpart about golf and the guy didn't play golf, you know.

BORG: There were always stories that came out, but for the most part Rogers took his one page of talking points and he'd perform them. He said what he was supposed to do in a way that was not going to make any headlines. He was not involved on the cutting edge of any issues, but there's more than enough things that at Secretary of State can do that are pro forma. I went with him each year up to the United Nations, because the Secretary of State always spent a month or six weeks up at the United Nations General Assembly doing bilateral meetings. I went with him for both of the years that I was there, and I remember his meeting with the Nepali foreign minister one year in which the talking points had always been our points, their points, and Rogers memorized the wrong points and he made all the Nepali points. In the grand scheme of things it's probably not a big deal, but the Nepalese were overwhelmed that we were agreeing with them on everything because they thought that we were not so sympathetic to their views. So we had a little work that we had to do to turn things around. I think the biggest trip that I took while I was in the Secretariat was in the summer of 1972. We had begun staffing the Secretary of the Treasury as well, John Connolly. I had gone with him on one trip. This was the summer of '72 and he was still a Democrat, and he didn't want to be in Washington for the Democratic Convention, and everybody wanted him out of the country. So we went on a six-week or seven-week trip around the world in which we started in South America. We flew to Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and then we went to Ecuador and then Hawaii, and then went out to Australia and Vietnam. I think we'd been in Southeast Asia the year before, so I think we went to Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and then we flew to Jamaica for a week. He stayed at his house in Ocho Rios, and we stayed at some beach hotel. This was sort of an overwhelming trip.

Q: Did things get a little bit boring?

BORG: No, we were tremendously impressed with Connolly, because he may not have even known the name of the country that he was going into but we briefed him or we organized it so that there was a deputy assistant secretary from each of the regional bureaus that he was visiting who was with him just before he was going into each one of these regions. They would fly out and join us for a while. He got off the plane and he delivered an extemporaneous statement that was perfectly attuned to what we wanted him to say, and all of his meetings left people very impressed that the United States was sympathetic to whatever it was that they were doing. We may have been skeptical but we were sympathetic. He was preceded by lousy press, and after his visit he got consistently outstanding reports from the local press about how this man, who they thought was going to be a disaster, was really a very impressive person. And he was out of town so he didn't have to be here for the Democratic Convention.

Q: That was the convention that McGovern was nominated.

BORG: '72, yes, that's right.

Q: How did you feel about what was happening from what you were getting from the Washington side of things in Vietnam?

BORG: When? When I got back?

Q: No, we're talking about '71/'72 when Vietnamization was going on and you had an election with McGovern talking essentially about getting out of Vietnam completely and all that.

BORG: I think the battle fatigue was beginning to show very much in the United States. We'd been in Vietnam longer than we had been able to explain to the American people and the war seemed to be going on forever. What people didn't realize was that there had been a lot of progress on the ground and things were not nearly what they used to be, but as a result the North Vietnamese were becoming much more closely involved than they had been in the past. And there were the Paris Peace Talks that were going on about this time. Kissinger's trip to China took place in '72, didn't it? It was clear that nobody was paying attention, as far as I was concerned, to what was happening in Vietnam. We were looking at the American perspective on it.

Q: What was the attitude of the Secretariat - obviously you're closely connected to the Secretary of State - about the news that Kissinger had gone to China and all that?

BORG: People were stunned. Now, did the Executive Secretary know it and not tell anybody? Possibly, but we certainly had no idea. We were all surprised. We had stamped up a paper which identified ping-pong diplomacy as a way to open a dialog with China, and I remember this as being one of the better policy papers that I had ever had a chance to review because it set forth here is an opportunity and, if the Chinese do this, then we might do that, and if they do this, then we might do that, and this might lead to that and then we might do that, and it set it all out in stages that I thought were very perceptive, and they played the way that they did. There were six of us on the line at the time, and we each had responsibility for a separate regional bureau, and we had secondary responsibilities. We backstopped one of our colleagues who was on another regional bureau. For most of the time I worked on Latin America and East Asia, so I had much more knowledge of some of the things there.

Q: Did the opening of China sort of change things around from your perspective?

BORG: Well, one of the things that I had studied in graduate school was the China lobby and the ties between the anti-recognized China elements and the various wings of the Republican Party, and I knew that Nixon was sort of at the core of this group that refused to have anything to do with China, but there was no Democrat who had dared to suggest that we might do anything in China because of the wrath that might have appeared from the Republicans. So when Nixon went to China, I certainly knew that it's a new ball game on China and things were going to change very rapidly, because once Nixon's on board, it's going to happen. I was very interested from the very beginning then in going to China myself.

Q: Did you feel that as an Asian-type person that this gave a broader field for you?

BORG: Long, long overdue. I was of the school that felt we had had our head in the sand for much too long and that our recognition of China should have come at least 15 years earlier if not more. You don't recognize countries because you like them; you recognize countries because they're there and there are reasons to deal with them.

Q: In 1972 you're up for...

BORG: I was up for assignment. I was learning how to merchandise myself.

Q: Did you get any feel for the National Security Council and relations between the Secretary and Kissinger and all from your perspective?

BORG: No, my perspective was that we were walked over consistently. Kissinger did exactly what he wanted, and Rogers was an ineffective Secretary of State but he was not fighting to be a more effective Secretary of State. As long as the limousine picked him up at the right place and he could stand next to the President on the various occasions, that's all that mattered. While I personally found this objectionable, there wasn't anything that I felt I could or should or wanted to do. That was just the reality at the time. The National Security Council people, we didn't have that much direct contact with them except for sending memoranda over on occasions.

Q: Did you have any feel or maybe you'd hear something that happened with the NSC in its relations with other countries that sort of bypassed you all?

BORG: I'm not sure when this started, because this was my first time in Washington, and the idea that foreign leaders were also meeting over at the National Security Council, I didn't have a historic perspective to know how new this might have been. My personal feeling was that the National Security Advisor was the person who was supposed to distill the views of various national security agencies and present the President with "Here is who says what, and here's how it plays out," and was not someone to take a substantive role. My sense of who was a good National Security Advisor was someone like Brent Scowcroft, who was not trying to be a player himself all the time but was sort of the perfect staff person.

Q: In '72 where?

BORG: One of the people from the Secretariat, Executive Secretariat, Bob - I can't think of the name; it just escapes me at the moment; he was one of the Deputy Executive Secretaries - was named Director of Personnel in '71, maybe late '72, and this was at a time when there was a Director General and a Director of Personnel. He asked me if I would come over to be his special assistant. Throughout my career, if that's what you call one's life in the Foreign Service, I never did fill out bid forms and say this is where I want to go next and this sort of thing. Anyway, he had gone over to Personnel and so he wanted me to come and be his special assistant. I said okay, I would do that. I was off on a trip with Connolly around the world and I was due to switch as soon as I got back, and I got a call - I think I was in New Zealand at the time - from Ted Elliot saying, "Parker, we want to inform you that we have canceled your onward assignment. You're going to stay for another six months in the Secretariat." I said, "What?" They said, "Because we've got the United Nations General Assembly coming up, and you are helping Jerry Bremer, sort of as the senior person, on the United Nations, and Jerry Bremer has just taken the job as Special Assistant to the Secretary, and so we can't let you go. You have to stay for another six months, and so we've told Personnel that you won't be coming." At this time when we have instant communications, it was just a difficult communication. I said, "Well, okay, that's the way it is." So I stayed on for another period of months, and then, just as when I went to the Secretariat, there was a second opening as a special assistant in Personnel, and so I went there eventually anyway. This time I became a special assistant not to the Director of Personnel but to the Director General.

Q: Who was that?

BORG: At the time it was William Hall. I can't think of the Director of Personnel's name, but he was very impressive. It was an absolutely fascinating time.

Q: This was from...?

BORG: From '72 to '74. This was an absolutely fascinating time to be working in Personnel because the idea of secrecy in the Foreign Service was being overturned. Previously, as you may recall, they had the confidential evaluations that were done on people, and the Director of Personnel was appalled by this. He felt that this was something that had to be changed, that we could not be doing this any longer, and you can't keep secret personnel files on individuals. So he launched a campaign to purge all of the files of any confidential materials whatsoever, including the very sensitive Director General files, which I kept, which were in my office, of real hard-core problems of people, and he got rid of every single one of them. All that stuff was burned. Second, he thought we could go to a system of open assignments where people could bid on jobs. This all happened in '73/'74. I was of the school that I thought this was never going to work. I couldn't imagine how, if people were bidding on jobs, those people who were in Washington wouldn't have a great advantage over people in the field because they would know which jobs were coming open and they'd be hanging around doors to see that they got the jobs and people who were in the field would be screwed. Communications evolved in such a way that that didn't happen. So these two developments happened at that time, plus AFSA became the representative for State Department employees. The job that the Director General had in the past of representing the Foreign Service against management, suddenly now he was negotiating with the representative of AFSA about the same things that he had previously argued to the Under Secretary...

Q: AFSA being the American Foreign Service Association.

BORG: Right, which was a professional association and became also the union for the Foreign Service. It was in this stage that it was being converted from a professional association to a union, and people had voted that it would be the union rep rather than the Association of Government Employees, AFGE.

Q: Let's go back over a few of the things. These secret records that the Director General had, I would think many of these would be secret for the benefit of the person on whom they were. In other words, it wasn't that the Director said, "Now we're going to screw so-and-so"; it was usually because so-and-so had screwed up, was a drunk or something.

BORG: It was a mixed bag, but they determined that there should be no secret records. I think there was a court order about tapping telephones.

Q: Well, this came during the Watergate period. Kissinger was tapping phones.

BORG: That's right. So there was a wholesale elimination, burning, of all of this stuff.

Q: Well, there had to be something. Let's say if I've got a drinking problem and it shows up in the files...

BORG: It no longer showed up in the files. The good side of it was that hearsay and nasty comments that superiors had written about people who were otherwise able officers, when somebody would look at it and say, "Oh, so-and-so gave some really nasty comments about this person," and you never had a chance to rebut it because you didn't know it was there, but there was always this black mark next to your name, and that's what most of the stuff was. Drinking problems were considered a medical issue, and the medical office probably kept records of people who had serious drinking problems and may have provided this information at times.

Q: How about things like marital infidelity? If you're screwing your superior's wife, to put it bluntly, this can have an effect.

BORG: There were no official records which showed any of these things.

Q: In other words, there might be a record, but the person involved had seen it and they could be kept somewhat to one side.

BORG: The performance folders, I believe, at that time had performance reports on one side and then on the other side were commendations and security violations and other miscellaneous documents, which the person had seen, which were in the file. Presumably there could be such files on things like marital infidelity there, but to the best of my knowledge one of the things that was lost in all of this was people who had sexual problems with subordinates or superiors. This was no longer documented. It was something that was in the corridors and people knew about it, but there were some notorious examples, ambassadors and other senior people who took advantage of people of a sexual nature, and this was no longer in the records.

Q: There was always this confidential part of an efficiency report, which you could see when you came back to Washington. I'd been in Personnel in the late '60s, and we would show this to the person, often for the first time, that his former superior had written about him.

BORG: In 1971/72 - Bob Brewster was his name, Director of Personnel - this was all erased clean. There was nothing any longer, because again this depended upon the fact that you had come and even known to ask about it, and there wasn't much you could do about it. I suppose you could have protested it, but you couldn't take it out. But all of these files were destroyed.

Q: This confidential thing, how was this received? I can see an awful lot of rating officers saying this is going to destroy the system.

BORG: And the fact that you can't talk about their wives and how much the wives are participating in the success of the mission. Yes, a lot of the more senior officers thought that this was one more example of the system going down the tubes. But in retrospect I think it was a very positive thing. There were many more benefits.

Q: One of things, of course, this meant that the reports were much blander.

BORG: Yes, but if you can't say something to a person directly, why should you be able to put it in something the person can't see?

Q: Oh, absolutely.

BORG: What that did was encourage sort of the worst elements in the worst people, and it was absolutely unfair.

Q: Did you notice that, say, the bureaus, particularly the European Bureau I would think, would be very unhappy about open assignments? It had been a major card that a bureau could have, because they knew where the assignments were, they could pick their people and...

BORG: Right. This was very vigorously opposed, and the Director General - not William Hall; it was his successor, Nathaniel Davis - started a program called the Global Outlook Program, GLOP, in which he tried to force people who'd been too long in one regional bureau to take assignments outside of their traditional areas of concern. This was a very controversial program in the early 1970's. Kissinger had by then come over to the State Department, and he supported this.

Q: Apparently it was partly on his initiative, having gone to Mexico City and talking to ARA ambassadors who weren't quite sure what NATO was about. He was aghast.

BORG: That's right. So the decision to have open assignments came earlier, and then on top of this was the effort to force people not to concentrate on a narrow set of assignments. Now, in general the people in Latin America greeted this program warmly because it gave them an opportunity to get out of Latin America. Many of them had sought for years to get an assignment in Europe, and the positions were all closed. For something like Africa it didn't make much difference because they always had trouble getting people. NEA didn't oppose or support the policy, because they always had a much better recruitment source and fewer people wanting to go to these hardship places in the Middle East; and the East Asian Bureau was sufficiently insular with all of its languages and so forth that there weren't going to be many people from outside who were able to get in in the first place. So it was the European Bureau that opposed it most strongly and the people in Latin America who liked it the best.

Q: Were there lots of meetings and screams and yells?

BORG: There weren't a lot of meeting. There were lots of screams and yells, but it was decided that this was going to be done.

Q: How did you find dealing with AFSA at this time from your perspective?

BORG: AFSA was feeling its role. I'm sure you've talked with Tom Boyatt.

Q: Oh, yes.

BORG: Well, Tom was the AFSA person at this time, and there were incredibly contentious sessions going on and on and on into the night. I thought one of Nathaniel Davis' great strengths was that he would sit and sit and sit and sit and listen, because he was prepared just to spend an awful lot of time. But he saw his own position alter, because previously he had been the representative of the Foreign Service representing the perspective of Foreign Service Officers against the management, against the seventh floor principals, and now he was the one that was negotiating. It essentially eliminated his position, because it wasn't too long thereafter that they merged the Director of Personnel and the Director General into a single position.

Q: As an officer I welcomed some of this, because I had the feeling that for once AFSA was looking after. I felt that there was a certain carryover of the whole idea that, if you were a Foreign Service Officer, you grinned and bore it and you were supposed to pretty well have a private income or something. There were a lot of little nuts and bolts. They weren't really perks; it was just a little more baggage allowance and things of this nature which the system before was sort of old-boy thing. You had a lot of money, and if you didn't have it, well, you just pretended you did.

BORG: That's right. There's no question that it was an issue that's time had come. I think Davis treated it that way, but I think AFSA was also feeling its way as to what are the issues that are legitimate and what are the issues that are not. Do you contest assignments? What are the legitimate issues for AFSA to become involved in? Yes, nuts and bolts were clear, but there were other things that were less clear.

Q: I sort of had the feeling that AFSA at this time, including Tom as a friend, was basically representing upcoming, very bright political officers who wanted to get rid of formerly bright, upcoming politicals who'd reached the top and get rid of the so-called dead wood so we can have ours.

BORG: There's no question that there was that, and this carried over into the Foreign Service Act of whatever it was, 1982. It was the young Turks of AFSA of the '70s, Tom Boyatt, Bill Harrop, Tex Harris. I always got along personally with these people. Tom Boyatt had been a special assistant in NEA when I was on the Secretariat staff, and so I knew Tom quite well by the time he arrived in AFSA and was participating in these meetings. I remember going to some of the early AFSA meetings. I decided, since I was special assistant to the Director General, I would not be a member of AFSA. I thought that there would be a conflict of interest, so I dropped my membership in AFSA, not because I didn't agree with the organization but because I felt that as a special assistant I should be neutral on these things. But I sat in on many meetings, and I went to AFSA meetings also. I found the AFSA general meetings to be very frustrating and boring because some squeaky wheel would stand up and complain about some particular issue that had affected them but probably didn't affect anyone else or affected a very small number of people, and so I quickly found it boring, but I also thought, boy, AFSA has a tough time sorting out what are the real issues here that they want to make cases with and what are the ones that aren't so legitimate. And I think they in general did a pretty good job of this. There was a lot of junk that they had to deal with, and there were occasional junk issues that they would come up with.

Q: Then you left this in '74.

BORG: No, I didn't. The Peace Accord in Vietnam was signed in January of '73, December of '73. Anyway, there was the Paris Peace Accord, and we decided that we would be sending Vietnamese language people back to Vietnam to monitor a cease-fire, and it was our office that went through the records to pick who it was that would be assigned to go back to Vietnam. The Director General said, "Well, of course, you're going to have to go too." So we found some 50 Foreign Service Officers for a first tranche and then another 50 for a second tranche, and we went out in I think it must have been the first part of '74. In '73 the peace treaty was signed, and we went out in the first part of '74. So a whole group of us left the Department for six months, and we did an awful lot of work to see that everybody's job would be protected and they would come back to the position that they had left, but they would go to Vietnam to monitor the cease-fire.

Q: Okay. Well, we'll pick this up the next time in '74 when you're off to Vietnam again. We'll talk about the reactions when Henry Kissinger came. We'll get that and then we'll go off to Vietnam.

Why don't we pick up sort of the transition when Henry Kissinger came in as Secretary of State. What were your observations? This would be in '73, I guess.

BORG: That was 1973, that's correct. When Nixon won his second term in 1972, there was a decision that they were going to replace a large number of ambassadors and senior people, and the Director General at the time, William Hall, was given the task of calling in large numbers of senior officers and telling them that they had had honorable careers but the time had come and they were to move on, but the administration was unable to either select or get confirmed people to take their places. I don't recall the details of what the nature of the problem was, but when Henry Kissinger came over to the State Department in 1973, there were perhaps one-third of the ambassadorships vacant. Henry Kissinger, more than sometimes happens in a change in administration, wanted to change the whole complexion of the senior part of the State Department to reflect his perspectives, and he sent messages out to people whom he thought highly of to suggest names of people, within the Foreign Service often, who would be good to be in the senior positions in the State Department. Over the course of his first six months, he had removed every single one of the Assistant Secretaries with the exception of the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Barbara Watson. She was the only person who survived. In addition, large numbers of other ambassadors were replaced. My role in all this was that I became the keeper of the Director General's books of who were the really great Foreign Service Officers and which positions were they being considered for. We had brief biographic statements and pictures of all of these people, and they were put together in these big loose-leaf notebooks. The Director General would then go and sit with Henry Kissinger and the other selected group and decide who it was that was going to fill all of these positions. So within the course of Henry Kissinger's first six months, there was a whole new team in the State Department. Something that was interesting to watch was the recent transition from the Clinton White House to the Bush II White House, to see that in the State Department it was a really friendly takeover almost, that people moved out at normal times. Few people were given immediate walking papers. So there was a wholesale departure of people who had worked closely with the former Secretary, Bill Rogers, to the people who worked for Henry Kissinger. Much has been said about Henry Kissinger's contempt for Foreign Service Officers, but my perspective was quite different in that he may have had a certain dislike for a large number of Foreign Service Officers but he surrounded himself at the senior positions with very able Foreign Service Officers. He had Art Hartman running European Affairs, he had Phil Habib running East Asian Affairs, I think Roy Atherton was running Middle East Affairs, a fairly distinguished group of able Foreign Service Officers, and he listened to what they had to say. Bill Hall was one of the people who was transitioned out, and a new Director General, Nathaniel Davis, came in. So I worked with Bill Hall in the summoning of ambassadors. I sat in on some of the sessions actually where he told people that they had had distinguished careers but they had to move on, and then sat with Nathaniel Davis as he put together the books for the new people. He did a very nice gesture. He felt somewhat disheartened that so many people were being forced out, and he started a tradition, which lasted as long as he was there, of inviting each one of the ambassadors in, and close family members, for a glass of champagne and to talk, reminisce, a bit about their careers. He felt very strongly that this was a very decent thing to do, that people served many, many years in the Foreign Service and then were generally kicked out without any ceremony of any kind, and so he tried to do a small gesture. Anyway, I was witness to both of these activities.

Q: Did that give you any thoughts about the Foreign Service at that time?

BORG: I came away with a very wide knowledge of who were considered some of the best people in the Foreign Service by their peers, and many of them, I think, history shows that they were a very able group. Rogers, by contrast, had not really sought out the best and the brightest. He was not a player on most foreign policy issues, and so he sort of let things drift.

Q: Well then, off to Vietnam.

BORG: So we go off to Vietnam.

Q: This would be from when to when?

BORG: This was about January of 1974, and I stayed there through May of 1974. There were some 30 or 40 of us who went back. They divided the country up into consulates general and assigned each one of us to a separate province, and we were provincial political reporters. I think the conception was that the peace treaty had been signed - this was certainly the conception that I had - that it was very likely that the North Vietnamese would succeed in taking over the country within a short period of time, and they wanted people on the ground to observe just exactly what happened and how it happened and what sort of abuses of the treaty might take place. But I don't think there was much optimism that the government of South Vietnam was going to survive for very long with the departure of the American troops.

Q: What was the reading of the government of South Vietnam which you were getting from people at this time?

BORG: I guess I don't really understand.

Q: You'd been in the Director General's office and all. Were you still talking to your colleagues who were coming back from Vietnam and all?

BORG: Well, I was out in Vietnam. I was part of the group that went out...

Q: No, before you went out, or just when you got out there.

BORG: My impression before I got there was that the process of Vietnamization had continued to work quite successfully and that the things which we had put in place before I left were continuing to move ahead, that the Viet Cong was not a serious problem, that it was increasingly peaceful in many, many parts of the country, that there were economic projects and economic development activities going on, and that the problem was a political problem in the United States. I guess I had seen that there were two problems. There was the growing irritation over continuing the prosecution of this military action on the part of the US Congress and there was a disconnect between the senior levels of the South Vietnamese government and what was going on in the provinces, that Thieu and Ky, who were president and vice president, I guess, at about that time, were running things much the way they had before and that things happened in the provinces sort of irrespective of what they might have said and done.

Q: The group that you went out with, I take it this was an ordered group rather than...

BORG: Oh, yes, it was an ordered group. We had some of the best Vietnamese speakers in the country, people who had served in distinguished roles in the embassy or in provincial programs but who generally spoke Vietnamese, people like Frank Wisner, Paul Hare, Dick Teare, a lot of very able Foreign Service Officers.

Q: How about Tony Lake and Richard Holbrook?

BORG: They had been at the National Security Council, and Tony Lake had resigned in '73 over Cambodia and Holbrook may have left at about that time too, so they were no longer in the Foreign Service. They were not part of this.

Q: Did the people, although they were ordered, go...?

BORG: There was no hint that I ever came across of people objecting to this. I think all of us had a tremendous interest in what was going on in Vietnam and had followed the cease-fire talks and the end of the formal war with great interest. We were all genuinely curious about what might happen next. So I think it was a sense of great adventure for all of us.

Q: So what happened for you?

BORG: I went back. I was assigned to the province of Pleiku, a place I had never set foot in. Pleiku is up in the central highlands on the border with Laos, a largely Montagnard where a large number of foreign military units had been stationed there in the past.

Q: What was the situation there when you got out there?

BORG: I arrived and the American troops were still on the ground. I was there to witness the departure of the American troops. There was an organization called the International Control Commission, ICC. I'll have to check what the exact initials were, ICC something or other. This was an observation group of Canadians, Poles, Indonesians and Hungarians who were going to observe the cease-fire. They had not yet begun arriving. The situation within the province was reasonably peaceful. There was no regular hostility as we had seen throughout the time I was previously in Vietnam.

Q: Your consulate general was where?

BORG: The consulate general at the time was in Nha Trang with James Engle as the Consul General. There were six or seven of us in the different provinces doing periodic reports on what was happening. This was really my first intensive experience at any kind of political reporting. I had never done anything like this before, and suddenly I was supposed to go out and find out what was happening and send in reports.

Q: How did you operate?

BORG: I operated sort of by going out and meeting as many people as I could and talking with them and trying to figure out what the trends might be within any particular community. We went out to villages, kept track of what kind of incidents might have taken place, witnessed the last Americans to depart, saw the reaction to the last Americans departing, witnessed the arrival of the International Control Commission team members. We had one of the regional headquarters up in Pleiku, so I spent a lot of time hanging around with them to try and pick up what they were doing.

Q: What reaction were you getting when the Americans pulled out?

BORG: Again, I didn't have a very comprehensive picture, but from the few people that I talked with, most suspected that Vietnam would collapse right away. They felt that without their presence things would become very dangerous. I did not share that perspective. I had for some time felt that the presence of large numbers of Americans had been an incentive for the Viet Cong to attack in many places and that these people might be surprised when things don't collapse once they're gone.

Q: In your area was there a North Vietnamese military presence?

BORG: Not to our knowledge. There were communities that were supporters of the Viet Cong, and there was for a brief period of time sort of a war of flags after the last American troops had left. You would see Viet Cong flags put up on a tree in a certain area, usually not near anybody's houses, and there were some places along rivers that you could see the Vietnamese flags on one side and Viet Cong flags on the other side. But the idea that there were people who were Viet Cong, they did not emerge. They were not a visible presence.

Q: Was anyone saying the 32nd regiment of North Vietnamese is over there...?

BORG: No, no talk whatsoever. This would be in 1973.

Q: '74.

BORG: '74, sorry. This is early '74, that's right. There was no talk whatsoever of any kind of North Vietnamese presence anywhere in the Second Corps Region. There may have been a presence up in the northern part of the country but not along the Laotian border where I lived.

Q: You had this rather improbable collection of Hungarians and Poles who were part of the Warsaw Pact, the Canadians who were our allies, and Indonesians who were more friendly to us since they'd gotten rid of their own Communists.

BORG: The Canadians and the Indonesians were the two sides that we and the South Vietnamese had agreed upon, and the Poles and the Hungarians were the two that the North Vietnamese had agreed upon. They arrived. The Hungarians' and Poles' leadership were pretty much hard-liners. Their younger people were far more interesting when I became friends with some of the younger members of the group. The Canadians were very sympathetic and passed me a lot of information about what was going on. The Indonesians were incredibly pleasant and supportive of what the Canadians were doing. At least this is the way it was in Pleiku. The group operated far better than one could have anticipated during the Cold War, mainly because there weren't very many incidents that had to be investigated. There weren't that many serious issues that would divide them. They would hold meetings. They would discuss here's what seems to be happening in the different places. There wasn't much happening at this time. There wasn't much that would divide them, and so we frequently went out together. They took over one of the mess halls that was formerly an American mess hall, and they took over one of the American military camps, and I used to go up there and eat lunch every day. I made it a point of going up and eating and just hanging around, and everybody knew why I was hanging around and what I was doing, just to get to know people and talk with them about what was going on. But they went out to a number of ceremonies in which villages would perform dances or whatever it was, and they would all sit around. Everybody was very compatible for these particular occasions.

Q: Did you get any feel for the hand of the South Vietnamese government up in that area. This was mainly Montagnard up there. It was not a place sort of native to the normal South Vietnamese administrator.

BORG: The Province Chief was certainly somebody who was trusted by the leadership in South Vietnam, but I can't remember whether he was a Thieu person or a Ky person. I think for the most part they participated in ceremonial activities and attempted to direct local government activities to the extent that they could, but I never got the impression that they were either warlords in a classical sense or that they were stooges for authorities in Saigon. I think they shifted around the province chiefs sufficiently that none of them ever really got the handle on a place that they might have otherwise.

Q: Were you seeing, for example, South Vietnamese, particularly from Saigon, coming up and teaching and...?

BORG: No, no. Almost everything that was happening was happening locally, and the idea that people were coming from Saigon or anywhere else to provide some sort of new support now that the fighting had ended. I think the South Vietnamese government was equally stunned that things were reasonably peaceful. There were no efforts at any particular new initiatives. I think security was heightened for the possibility of some kind of attack. There were no particular attacks. There were a couple of skirmishes but nothing significant.

Q: Was there much of a South Vietnamese military presence up there?

BORG: Yes, there was a South Vietnamese military presence. I don't recall what unit, but I do remember approximately where they were. They were defending a perimeter rather than participating in pacification activities or any of these sorts of things.

Q: What sort of reports were you getting from your fellow observers? I assume you all went back...

BORG: We went periodically back to Nha Trang and talked. It seemed to be pretty much the same in all of the other regions. We were all observing a relatively quiet situation. At Easter of that year, one of the other observers and I, Richard Mueller - I don't know if you've talked with him; he was the political reporter in Kon Tum, the province just to the north of mine...

Q: His name's Richard...?

BORG: Richard Mueller, he was consul general in Hong Kong and he's now the headmaster at Northfield Mount Herman School in Massachusetts. Anyway, he was a good friend and we decided why not take a trip by road down to Saigon. Now, this was something that was inconceivable at the time when I was in Vietnam the first time, driving between provinces over a long distance. We drove down through some of the highland areas, not all of them. We went down to Dalat and other places, and then we came up along the coast, so we sort of did an inland route and an exterior route over a long weekend, a five-day weekend or something like that. What astonished both of us was how peaceful it was and the fact that nobody ever warned us that this might be dangerous or this was something we shouldn't do, that there were troops out there. When I had been there before, no one could have imagined a trip like this. So things were generally much more peaceful

Q: Did you get any feel for the Montagnards, how they were or what they were doing?

BORG: Montagnard is a collective term for a large number of different ethnic groups, and each one of these groups had separate experiences and separate relationships with the Vietnamese government. Most of them had a dislike for lowland Vietnamese based upon many, many years of discrimination, and many of them had looked upon the Americans as an element that protected them from the South Vietnamese, who they felt might exploit them. The Montagnards were probably more upset over the departure of the Americans than any of the local people on the Vietnamese side. I visited some communities where things were incredibly peaceful and quiet and everybody was living a very happy Montagnard life unaffected by anybody on either side. This would have been '74. There was certainly no foretelling of any particular doom.

Q: Well then, when you left there in May...

BORG: We left in May of '75. I left early before the six months ended because I had to help send a second group out. The Director General came out during our tours there. I went with him and we went around and we talked to every single Foreign Service Officer who was serving on a TDY basis to find out what their experiences had been, and they were universally pleased. There were no complaints. Then we sent a second group of people out for a second six-month period.

Q: At the same time we were running a full-blown embassy?

BORG: Oh, yes, but it was not only the full-blown embassy, we had created consulates general where none had existed. There had been Corps headquarters in each of the regions, but there had never been an embassy apparatus, and so there were consulate generals and other consular functions. I'm not sure that we got to doing visa functions at any one of them but...

Q: When I was there in '69/'70, we had had an attachment to the consular section in Saigon and Da Nang, but then under Terry McNamara, it has turned into a full-blown consulate.

BORG: That's right, Terry was the one who went up. He was the one who was up in Da Nang.

Q: But that was it.

BORG: There hadn't been any consular functions, I think, in Nha Trang or down in the delta previously.

Q: This second group, any problems? Did they come in happily?

BORG: There were no problems with the second group either. They went out and did their six months and they returned.

Q: When you came back, what did you do?

BORG: When I came back in May after working with the next group, I was getting up toward the end of my tour of duty, my two years, in the Director General's office. I had decided that I wanted to expand my knowledge of Asia by studying Chinese. We had just opened our embassy in Beijing, and I decided I wanted to study Chinese and go to Beijing. I had learned Vietnamese and I thought, well, Chinese can't be too much worse. So I put in for Chinese and was selected, and then in September '74 I started studying Chinese.

Q: How did you find the study of Chinese?

BORG: I loved it. I thought it was fantastic. I was amazed at what a relatively easy language it was. It was easy in the sense that there was no grammar and you just needed to know words and put the words together, much like Vietnamese, and some of the root words were similar between Vietnamese and Chinese. And I found the study of the writing to be absolutely fascinating, to see how the different characters may have evolved and how different signs had evolved over the years and become particular words and parts of words. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Q: When you came in at that time, did you feel you were part of a new China group? People before the opening to China had been pretty much observers sitting around the periphery of this thing. Were you all coming as a new group?

BORG: There were only three or four of us coming in and we were joining the ranks of people who had previously studied Chinese. The fact that we might be some new vanguard was nothing that entered any of our minds. I was really excited at the prospect of trying to go to Beijing, and it seemed like I was going to get a position in Beijing after one year. I thought that was satisfactory. I could learn more Chinese later, but one year and then going to Beijing, I thought, sounded great.

Q: So what happened?

BORG: I studied Chinese from September through December. I don't know how much you want to get into sort of personal things.

Q: Well, you can bring in a little to show...

BORG: Actually it was Friday, the 13th of December 1974, and I got a call...

BORG: Larry Eagleburger was then the executive assistant to Kissinger, and when I was asked to come over and talk with him that afternoon. I did, and he said, "I've got a serious problem here. Jerry Bremer has been told by his wife that he has to leave the Secretary's office. It's either his job or his wife, so Jerry's leaving, and we have looked around and we've decided that you're the one to take Jerry's place." I thought this is the second time that they're trying to reroute me because of Jerry. I said, "Oh, I really like Chinese. I'm really excited about going to China. I really don't think I'm interested." He said, "Well, you have 24 hours to think about it. Give me a call." I guess it must have been Thursday, the 12th, rather than Friday, the 13th. So I had one day to think about it, and I had a restless night and decided afterwards, as much as I like studying Chinese, the opportunity to be with sort of the Bismarck of our time to see him in operation was really too exciting a prospect to turn down, so I accepted, and within 10 days I was working in Kissinger's off as the senior special assistant.

Q: You did this from when to when?

BORG: I started this in December of 1974.

Q: And when did you finish?

BORG: I lasted until April of 1975, not very long. Jerry was a good friend, and he told me many stories over the years about working with Kissinger. I had no delusions that it was going to be an easy job. I recognized that my job was to be sort of the filter between Kissinger and the outside world in a sense, that I was to take the anger, the frustration, the irritation that he might have been feeling and try to figure out what it was that was the substance of the message and to convey the message to whoever needed to receive it at the other end. We looked at all of the papers before they went into Kissinger's office. He had a curious program at the time: We could no longer tape-record telephone messages, so we listened on the phone. The secretary and I listened on the phone when he was talking with almost everyone. There were a couple of people we couldn't listen in on; they were usually females. Diane Sawyer was one. We could never listen when Diane Sawyer called.

Q: She was a correspondent.

BORG: A correspondent with I'm not sure who at the time. We didn't listen to Diane Sawyer and other starlets. When they called, we didn't listen. But the secretaries would then transcribe the notes from the phone conversations, and I read these all over to see that they were as I had understood the conversation to be. Then these went into some files that we didn't have any control over. They were not in our central filing system.

Q: That type of system had been going on for some time for principals. It was not an eavesdropping thing. You might explain what you were doing.

BORG: We were then translating and passing on, largely to Executive Secretary or one of his deputies, that 'the Secretary just spoke with this person, the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary of Defense, and he told him the following.' It was essentially seeing that people within the bureaucracy knew what it was the Secretary had just decided and had just conveyed to somebody, and that was one of my principal...

Q: And actions that often follow.

BORG: ...that's right, and actions that came from that.

Q: How did you find the atmosphere in the Secretary's office?

BORG: Morale was quite high. Everyone who worked there recognized that this was an impossible man who brutalized his staff on a regular basis, and we weren't going to let anything he said ruin our day. He would have a temper tantrum on a regular basis. He had a difficult time having temper tantrums in front of women, but he had no problems with me. So I had a buzzer in my desk, and when the buzzer rang, I would go in there and he would express his extreme irritation with something or other, sometimes picking up papers and throwing them up in the air and tossing them around because he couldn't find something or something that he thought was important wasn't on the top of the pile. He would make comments: "What have you done, taking the time to see your grandmother," and things like that. And so he would then exit to the back room, and my job was to straighten up the papers, put them back in the files that they had been in, and put on the top the one that he had been looking for. It was somewhere there, but there were so many things. We had a system of 'urgent action' folders, 'not so urgent action' folders, 'urgent info' folders, 'public correspondence that you might be interested in.' Everything was carefully labeled, but there was just too much paper and he was busy and he couldn't always find quickly what he wanted, and he would have a little temper tantrum. We would fix things up and put them back. I would return to my desk. He would return to his desk and he would do whatever it was, and the incident would be forgotten until the next day when there was something else that would happen.

Q: Did he have secretaries? I'm talking about, you know, regular secretaries.

BORG: Oh, yes, there were three or four women who worked there, but the best known was Jane Roth. She became Jane Masellen eventually. She had been there for a long time, and she was a very attractive 42- or 43-year-old woman. I remember on at least one occasion, maybe more than once, when some visiting dignitary had come in and said, "Ah, what a very attractive secretary you have," and then he would say, "Would you believe she's been her for more than 20 years." People would get really angry with him, but nobody let it bother them.

Q: Would you use the secretaries to go in to bring him down?

BORG: No, never.

Q: Your whole idea was get them out of the way.

BORG: My role was to take the heat, and the secretaries did their thing. They answered the telephone, they took notes at meetings. They didn't take notes at many meetings actually; he insisted that the Assistant Secretaries take notes at the meetings because he didn't want anybody to hear what he was saying. In fact, there were some meetings where I had to come in and take notes because he didn't trust the Assistant Secretaries, and here I didn't have a clue what the substance of the meeting was but I was the note taker.

Q: How about when he was having people in? Did you find yourself trying to cool down people when they came out of his office?

BORG: Well, the only person who regularly showed temper tantrums coming out of his office - and it wasn't always coming out of his office; it was because he felt slighted - was Joe Sisco, who was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the time, and Joe was known to pout in his office over perceived slights.

Q: These are two of the most devious people one can think of, Sisco and Kissinger, I think.

BORG: Sisco - and others, but Sisco was the extreme example - used to delight in finding some late-breaking news and being able to pop it at a morning staff meeting that the Secretary didn't know anything about. Kissinger would then go absolutely up the wall and be apoplectic with us that we hadn't provided him with this little nugget before Sisco found it. But other people were very, very decent. Art Hartman in particular I thought was a prince. Tom Enders was the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs at the time. He did an exceedingly able job, I felt, of making Kissinger, the geopolitical strategist, understand what economics was all about and why the oil crises of the moment were important. Previously Kissinger hadn't been prepared to give the time of day to economic issues, but suddenly he was seized with them.

Q: I would think the combination of Enders and Kissinger... I never knew Tom Enders myself but I've talked to people, and he's a very tall man who was certainly an intellectual equal of Kissinger from all accounts and who did not either suffer fools.

BORG: But they got along very well. Enders was dealing with issues that were not in Kissinger's domain, and he could make Kissinger understand them. Enders was the only person who, when he came into my office, I had to cover up what was on my desk, because I knew that he was coming in not to talk with me because he was being friendly but because he was trying to read upside down what the papers were that I was looking out.

Q: When you think of Enders and Sisco and Kissinger, you were in a Byzantine court.

BORG: Again, these were Foreign Service Officers. Kissinger had with him Larry Eagleburger, who had come with him from the White House, but Larry was a Foreign Service Officer and Larry was first Executive Assistant and then he became Under Secretary for Management. He brought Hal Sonnenfeldt with him from the White House, and he brought Win Lord with him to run Policy Planning. Then there were the various people who came in. There was another Bill Rogers, who became Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, who was a political appointee, and there were under secretaries and so forth. But Kissinger did not work with his under secretaries they way Colin Powell works with his. The under secretaries were somebody that had occasional assignments but they were not part of the inner circle.

Q: Were you there when Kissinger was getting the usual stream of foreign dignitaries and other people? Did you sit in on these things?

BORG: Occasionally, if they needed a note taker or the issue was very sensitive, I would sit in. It was usually the Assistant Secretary, though, who sat in. He insisted he did not like having desk officers. He wanted the Assistant Secretary there and he wanted them to be the note taker. We traveled. I did several trips with Kissinger, and they were always a circus.

Q: Where did you go?

BORG: The most memorable one - maybe there were two of them - we weren't out there very long, but I think we did two Mid East shuttles. He was intensely interested in trying to find a solution to the problems between Israel and the Arab world. I think I mentioned before he had a remarkable ability to observe what people said from one time to the next and figure out that there were innuendos or differences in what they had previously said which might indicate openings, and he would convey possible openings in areas for exploration with the other side or one of the other sides. He was remarkably good at doing round-robin diplomacy, listening, talking, engaging people. We did not have any successes while I was there. In fact, a series of Middle East talks collapsed on one of our missions, and everyone knew that he would be in a very foul mood. He assembled all of us. I guess we were at the King David Hotel in Israel at the time. He assembled all of us in a room. We didn't know just exactly what it was that he was going to say, but we knew he'd be angry. So he started talking about these correspondents that had arrived and this young man who was going to have his bar mitzvah. His parents had sent a letter that said, "Wouldn't it be nice if you could send my son a note for his bar mitzvah," and he hadn't seen the response yet. The Middle East talks had just collapsed and so he was focused on this, so when we asked him, he said, "Where is the letter, the response on the bar mitzvah?" I said, "Well, sir, we had a draft of it, but when things happened today and the talks aren't going the way we had thought they were, we had to change the draft because it was in a little more glowing terms about the prospects than we thought you'd want to sign, so we'll have it for tomorrow," and he went absolutely ballistic, just totally crazy. So suddenly this became the focus of his anger, the incompetence of his staff, and blah blah blah. As we walked out of the room when it ended, Roy Atherton came up to me and said, "We knew he was going to blow up at somebody, and it's far better than he blows up at you than anybody else." and I recognized that's exactly what my job was. I'm the one who...

Q: I'm trying to figure out how one works in this. Did you put yourself in the position of being a disinterested observer of human nature or something like this?

BORG: I was his special assistant, and I was there to take the flak and to see that things could go as smoothly as possible. Each day I had to tell myself that there's nothing that this man is going to do today that's going to make me lose any sleep, that's going to ruin my day. There were always humorous things and there's always something or other.

Q: I can't remember. Were you married?

BORG: No, I was not married. I was single, which permitted me to work the incredible hours and do all this. I think that was one of the reasons that I had been selected. I was a friend of Jerry's, I had worked with Larry on keeping the books of the prospective ambassadors and people for Kissinger's meetings, and so he knew me generally from my work in the Director General's office. I think it was mostly because I didn't have a family. I asked Larry, I said, "Look, there are all these people whom Kissinger knows and has worked with. Why can't you choose one of them?" He said, "Because Kissinger knows and has worked with them, and we need somebody that he doesn't know." I said, "How is that possibly going to work?" He said, "We just have to try and see." On the first day, I went in to greet him and tell him - or maybe Larry took me in to meet him - and he said, "Welcome. This will be the last nice thing I ever say to you." And it probably was.

Q: How did Larry Eagleburger deal with Henry Kissinger from your observation?

BORG: Larry was the one person who could tell him, "No, you're wrong on this," and could do it in a very firm, intelligent manner. Larry could deliver the bad news that nobody else could deliver.

Q: I realize you were getting almost vignettes - you're in, you're out, and you're almost too close to the sun to really observe it - but what was your impression of his dealing with foreign affairs and the administration of the State Department?

BORG: Let's look at foreign affairs, people outside the State Department, other Cabinet officers, and then within the State Department. Henry Kissinger had a world view on foreign affairs that we had not previously seen or hadn't seen for a long time. He could put everything very quickly in the perspective of his world view. He was absolutely brilliant in sitting in a meeting. I sat in several meetings with him where people would set forth a scenario, set forth a problem, and he would, before they finish, say, "Well, I think this is what you're trying to say. This is what it all means." You know, I had just heard all of the same information, and he is incredibly able at cutting through things and putting it all in some kind of perspective. He had a world view. He was quick to grasp things. His world view was very much 'the Soviets are our enemy and the enemies of our enemy must be our friends,' and so he had a tendency to look down on India, look up to Pakistan. Anybody who was fighting Communists was on the good side. He did not consider human rights to be a particularly important problem. He had endless problems with the various House and Senate committees that were including human rights as issues, because human rights generally was being played out in places that were fighting against Communists. So his world view was one of 'this is the big picture and we have to focus on the big picture, which is defeating the Soviet Union.'

Q: I was in Greece at the time that you were doing this, and many of us were kind of uncomfortable because you had a set of colonels who were running a dictatorship where democracy was created, in Greece, and it was an uncomfortable situation. We were taking a lot of flak over this.

BORG: But they were anti-Communist, so they would have been our friends. If you look at the books that he's written and so forth, the focus has always been on thermonuclear war and the threat from the Soviet Union. I don't think he had a particularly optimistic perspective on how all this was going to end. He seemed to be much more fearful that the Communists were going to prevail.

Q: In many ways I've heard people express this as he was too European.

BORG: Totally, totally.

Q: Americans are essentially optimistic. 'We'll get through this, and right is on our side.' So he was almost playing for time.

BORG: Yes, I felt that way. It was almost as if he believed about the march of history going against the non-Communist world and that he had to do what he could to hold off the bullet. He was still very brilliant in conversations.

Q: It's interesting, because I'd say most Americans, I think, were optimistic about how this thing was going to turn out.

BORG: I don't think anybody predicted how it eventually turned out.

Q: But still, I think Americans are optimists. Europeans are overly sophisticated. They've seen it all and it hasn't come out very well.

BORG: Yes, that could very well account for it. Going on talking about Henry Kissinger and the outside world, he was very, very talented at talking with foreigners and at talking with journalists. No matter how angry he might have been about something or other that had just happened, he would enter a meeting with a foreigner or somebody from the outside and he would be bubbly and charming and convey all of the best things. He was not like that with his staff, certainly with those of us within his immediate staff, nor with the people within the Department. He could be pretty brutal there, but I felt, again, this was part of my job, to take the flak so that when he met with people on the outside world he had sort of relieved himself of his anger and, when he met with the press or whoever it was, he was able to make very coherent, thoughtful statements of what it was that he was trying to do.

Q: Did you observe how he operated with President Nixon at the time? This was before Watergate really - well,...

BORG: I can't recall listening in on conversations with the President. I did listen in on conversations which he had with other members of the Cabinet, and he was devious, to say the least, in that he would call somebody and pass some information and then call somebody else and say, "I understand that so-and-so knows about this information, and you ought to find out where it came from." One felt that he was playing all sides against the middle, trying to keep everybody a little bit off balance by telling everybody a slightly different piece of a story.

Q: Did you see any of the Kissinger-Dobrynin relationship, the Soviet ambassador?

BORG: There was a direct line on the phone. I don't know if it was the blue button or the red button; we had two buttons. This was in a time of less sophisticated telephones, but there was a red button and there was a blue button and then there were the other extensions. One of these buttons as for the Israeli ambassador and the other was for the Soviet ambassador, and whenever that rang, that was who was on the line and we knew that we had to drop whatever it was to listen on what it was that was being said. The Soviet ambassador also at that time had a parking place in the basement and he drove directly into the State Department and rode up on the Secretary's elevator, so he never had to come in through the main entrance. I think Kissinger had established a very close relationship with both of these people, and I think that these were two of the most important people that he dealt with on a regular basis, and we saw nothing unusual.

Q: Did you get involved at all with relations with Congress?

BORG: I sat in on a number of sessions where he met with people from Congress. I went up to the Hill with him when he testified. I often felt very great sympathy for Henry's role with the Congress, because the entire staff that was holding the hearing usually would not appear all at the same time, but they all needed to be there at some point during the hearing, and so they would dribble in and dribble out after they had made their points or just before they were to make their points, and they would generally ask the same question that he'd just answered to some other Congressman, but they needed to make their statement and they needed to hear the same answer directly from him. This happened on more than one occasion. I certainly began to develop a new understanding of the words 'contempt of Congress' by participating in these sessions. Now, there was another side to it, and that was often from, I think, the House International Relations Committee, which was beginning to make...

Q: This would be the International Affairs Committee.

BORG: ...International Affairs, okay - was beginning to make a big issue of human rights, and there were many difficult sessions, I think all of which are recorded, various hearings and so forth, in which Congressmen asked pointed questions about human rights situations in certain countries and the Secretary would respond with some generality about the human rights situation and try to explain the big picture that was happening and why human rights wasn't the center of our concerns.

Q: You didn't stay there very long.

BORG: No, I didn't stay there very long. Jerry Bremer popped back into the picture. Larry Eagleburger moved from being Executive Assistant to being the Under Secretary for Management, and he called me one day and he said, "I've got good news." I think we were on one of these shuttles, probably in Aswan at the time or someplace like that, the King David Hotel. He said, "I've got really good news." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Jerry's coming back." I said, "Jerry's coming back? What happened to his study of German and going off to Luxembourg?" He said, "Jerry has changed his mind. Now, since I'm going to move up and be the Under Secretary, Jerry's going to be the Executive Assistant, so he's going to sit in the old office where I sat." He said, "This isn't going to change things at all for you." I said, "Larry, I've only been here for three months now. I don't think I've established the sort of rapport I'd like to, and now you tell me that Jerry's coming back." I said, "I don't think this is going to work." He said, "Well, you've got to try, because that's the way it's going to be." I said, "Okay, but let me tell you right now I'm going to lay down a marker that it's going to be much more difficult for me because Henry is going to call Jerry when there are things that need to be done and then Jerry's going to have to come and see me, and then I'll pass it on. I'll just be another layer." So Jerry comes back, and we go off on another Middle Eastern shuttle. This one worked badly, and afterwards Kissinger decides he's going to brief some people about why it went badly, but he didn't want anybody to be in the room, any of the Assistant Secretaries, so he wanted me to be the note taker. So he was asking me to keep notes of what everybody was saying, but then he said, "Where's my map?" I said, "I think it's out in the other room. Do you want me to get it?" He said, "No, I want you to take notes. Get somebody else to get the map." I said, "Well, I'm not sure I can explain where it is." He got really angry because I couldn't find this map. I think it was the British ambassador just sitting there smiling, because he was telling me, "Take notes. No, don't take notes. Take notes. No, don't take notes," back and forth. Also, it had begun to occur, as I thought it would, that he was talking to Jerry all the time and I was being cut out. So I called Larry after this meeting and said, "Look, you can talk with Henry, but he may call you first. I don't think this is working very well, and I think my time in it is over. Maybe somebody else should do this." So I went within a week or something like that.

Q: Who took your place?

BORG: David Gompert moved up. He had been Jerry's assistant, but he was an outsider who was a Naval Academy graduate. He was not a Foreign Service Officer. He had then been my assistant, and he took over and he lasted for a couple of months. Then Paul Barbian took over, and he lasted for a couple of months. Nobody lasted very long at that point. But what had happened in the interim, in April - again we were in the Middle East on a shuttle - the town of Buon Ma Thuot had fallen to the North Vietnamese. I was sitting in the room with Al Adams, who was Larry Eagleburger's special assistant, and we both looked at each other and we sort of saw this at the same time, and we said, "That's it. That's the end. If Vietnam is going to let a city like Buon Ma Thuot fall, the rest can't be far behind." So when I left Kissinger's office, I was sufficiently concerned about Vietnam that I began working full-time on Vietnam. Even before I left Kissinger's office, there was a group of us who were very concerned about what was happening, and we didn't believe that the embassy was responding in a way that was realistic. Graham Martin was the ambassador, and he seemed to be way out in some emotional never-neverland. So Frank Wisner, Paul Hare, Lionel Rosenblatt, Jim Bullington, myself and maybe one or two other people had begun meeting every couple days at lunch - I was working in Kissinger's office, Lionel was working in the Deputy Secretary's office, Frank Wisner was working in public affairs, Paul Hare was somewhere, and Jim Bullington was on the Vietnam Desk - just to talk about what was going on and the fact that EAP (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs) under Habib was sort of overwhelmed with Vietnam, and didn't have much of a Vietnam group to work with, and wasn't thinking about what might be happening in Vietnam they were so concerned about getting the next supplemental through Congress to pay for whatever it was that hadn't been covered in the last budget. The idea that this place was coming apart at the seams, there was nobody that was in a position to work on these things. So I began working on Vietnam.

Q: This would be...?

BORG: This is was in April of '75. We had started right after Buon Ma Thuot, we had begun talking, and then when I left Kissinger's office I began working full-time. I went down and I offered my services to Phil Habib, the Assistant Secretary, and said, "You know, things are happening in Vietnam, but you don't have a staff that's able to work on it. Can I be your assistant to work on this thing?" He was delighted. He picked me up in a moment. Then we continued our regular meetings which became daily meetings. Al Adams was in there too.

Q: Craig Johnstone?

BORG: Craig was not in this, no, but Lionel was. Craig may have come to a couple meetings, but he was not a key player. So we began trying to figure out what are the problems related to security in Vietnam that are different and not being taken care of through other channels. So we would formulate actions from the Deputy Secretary - I can't remember who it was at the time - who would send it down to EAP and ask for a response of what we were doing about this, and then the same group of us would get together and formulate what the response was. So we were doing the questions and the answers in the same office but sort of routing it so it got the bureaucratic chops. And we were concerned about such things as preventing commercial airlines from halting their flights into Vietnam because it was so dangerous, and encouraging the embassy to think about possible evacuation scenarios, and these sorts of things. We also pushed for the State Department to organize a task force, a State Department task force, that would formally just look at these sorts of things. Actually we had been pushing for an interagency task force with other agencies involved, and the State Department didn't want to go that far, and so we stuck with our sort of seventh floor deputy secretary office action group. In the meantime, I think, Cambodia collapsed and I was very much in with the Pentagon's planning process for the evacuation of Cambodia at the end. This all happened very quickly in April. We succeeded in getting an interagency group formed, probably by the 25th, or something like that, of April. Dean Brown became the head of it, and we had representatives of all the different agencies coming over to the State Department to talk about the end in Vietnam. We all offered our services. We all left our jobs. We took leave from whatever it was we were doing and en masse joined Dean Brown as the staff for his new Vietnam group. I think Craig was the head of the line at the time, but Lionel was down there with us. Lionel and Craig were both sufficiently concerned about what was happening - you must have talked with Craig - that they decided that they would go out to Vietnam and see what they could do to bring back as many Vietnamese, to seek the evacuation of the people that they felt had been loyal to us but who would otherwise be lost in a Communist takeover. One of the real frustrations was that the embassy was not even thinking, refused to think, about evacuation.

Q: Was this Graham Martin?

BORG: It was Graham Martin.

Q: Were you able to in a way bypass the ambassador and say, "Forget him"?

BORG: No. We could make policy proposals here, and we got a message at one point sent out to Graham Martin saying that he had to begin making plans for an evacuation. The response had always been, "No. If we begin making plans for an evacuation, that would become a self-fulfilling prophecy. We can't do that." Finally we got a message out and we had the Deputy Secretary sign off on it, and Graham Martin went back with a message to Kissinger saying, "Some twerp, one of your subordinate twerps, is suggesting I'm not running my mission properly here. I work for the President, and I only respond to messages from the President," just whole contempt for what was going back here. This is what, I think, provoked Lionel and Craig to decide that they wanted to go out to Vietnam and see what they could do to organize their own evacuation. If you've talked to Craig, you've heard sort of the details of what went on in the field. My job at this point, I was Lionel's contact in the Department. Lionel was supposed to be working with us, but he didn't want a call-back. He had various code names that he would use, because they would call in each day and talk about, "Here's what we're going, and here's where we are." The ambassador had found that they were there and was trying to locate them and get them thrown out of the country. People on the seventh floor were trying to find them and trying to figure out what had happened. One of my unofficial positions was to cover for them and say, "Well, I'm not quite sure where they are right now," but in the meantime being in contact with them and keeping Lionel's wife anyway informed of where he was.

Q: Was there any thought of removing the ambassador? It's a little bit like the Caine Mutiny, you know.

BORG: I think it was happening too fast. This was all a matter of days that all of these things began tumbling apart. I don't know if it crossed anyone's mind that the ambassador was perhaps too emotionally involved. I know that the progression of collapse was, first, the South Vietnamese army had decided they could no longer support the various outposts that had been established by the Special Forces and so they pulled back from these. Again, we turned down a supplemental at about this time, so there wasn't the money that was necessary to support these things that we had created in Vietnam, a huge military apparatus that required the same logistical tail that we had for our military forces, and suddenly we weren't going to pay for that.

Congress had voted no on the supplemental, and so the Vietnamese, as one would imagine, would look at how their forces were deployed and say, "We can't any longer afford to do some of the things we've been doing in the past," so the first thing they did was abandon the Special Forces camps where there was pressure from the North Vietnamese. The North Vietnamese had decided in early '75 to begin moving their units, their forces, in along the Cambodian border and from the north directly into the I CORPS in the northern part of Vietnam. After abandoning the Special Forces camp, they abandoned the highland provinces, Cong Tum, Pleiku, and then first the I CORPS and Da Nang, eventually moving down the coast, so that by the time Lionel and Craig went out there, all there was was the southern half of the country. I remember there was a message that came in a cable that came in from the embassy noting how Vietnam was a far more sustainable country now that it just had the agricultural heartland and didn't have to deal with all of these highland places. We just sat there and thought this is ridiculous, these people have gone crazy. Now, what was Graham Martin's perspective? I don't know. I never met the man, but there were reports I think I've seen written somewhere that he had a son who died in Vietnam, and so I imagine that for him there was tremendous emotional strain. He had to win the war that his son had given his life for, and so he could not see that things were falling apart.

Q: You do have this. Here was an embassy led by a man who really at that point did not have the perspective that a true ambassador should have.

BORG: That's right. He was totally wrapped up, totally emotional, but again things were moving too fast for people to say, "You're out of there." If it had gone on for another month, perhaps, but it was a daily deterioration that was occurring.

Q: By this time did you have the feeling that Nixon was running - he wasn't out yet; he didn't leave until, I would say, around August...

BORG: That's right. He was President until August. This was '75. Nixon left in '76. Didn't Nixon resign in '74? So Ford would have been President. So was the White House involved? Things were happening so rapidly. Henry Kissinger was clearly in charge of foreign affairs. The action was with the State Department. To the extent it involved foreign affairs, it was with the Defense Department and CIA. I don't think the White House was a strong player in this. But Lionel and Craig returned, and I'm sure Craig told his story about meeting the Secretary and so forth, but we were the ones that put together the nomination for Lionel and Craig to be commended, because we knew they'd be in deep trouble, and a way to overcome the trouble was to receive some type of recognition. We were surprised that they won, actually.

Q: How did sort of the end game come about from your perspective?

BORG: In Vietnam?

Q: Yes.

BORG: The North Vietnamese moved gradually down the coast. There were no significant battles put forward by the South Vietnamese troops. It was an internal collapse, again attributed to the fact that there was no sense of nationhood within the country and no sense that people were fighting for something. The North Vietnamese had stronger forces, and the senior leadership of the South Vietnamese military was not so much a fighting force as a political force.

The regional forces and the popular forces that we had armed and trained weren't in any position to go against the North Vietnamese. I'm sure they hid their guns and pretended they had never been what they had been. So we knew that the end was near, it was just a matter of days, and I think we knew on the night of, I think, April 30th, that it was happening, that we were evacuating the embassy because we all stayed that night and we were in touch to the extent we could be with what was happening in the field. The helicopters were supposed to go in until midnight. They continued to take people off the roof until three in the morning. We were up all night back in Washington observing this.

Q: How did you find the Department of Defense, the military, responded?

BORG: I don't have any particular recollections of any difficulty. They had the ships that were standing by offshore. They had the helicopters that went in and picked up people. I had worked with them on the evacuation of Cambodia. I had gone over to a couple of the meetings on the evacuation of Vietnam, and they had a very clear plan of how it would be done and that it had to be done, and it was implemented. I don't recall any conflicts or any difficulties in the interagency relationship there.

Q: Did you get involved in the planning for dealing with this mass of refugees?

BORG: Yes, that was our principal concern after the evacuation took place. We then switched our focus to the issue of the refugees, and we tasked each one of the services to come up with a temporary holding place for the refugees that would be coming out and coming to the United States. The Marines came up with Fort Pendleton. The Army chose Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania. There was Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. There was a place in Arkansas also.

Q: Camp Chaffee.

BORG: Fort Chaffee, that's right, in Arkansas. So the services came up with these locations, and we began the massive program of airlifting people, of organizing the legislation that would go through Congress to create the refugee program, and to convert our State Department task force into an interagency task force that was chaired by somebody other than the State Department, because once the refugees began arriving in the United States, we all thought very strongly that this was a domestic issue. I remember we sat around one night and talked about who can take this over. Dean Brown would be the State Department person, but we needed somebody to be in charge of it, and so we settled on Julia Taft, who was the representative of the Office of Health and Human Services. So we sort of selected her as a group and then informed her the next day that we were going to convert this State Department task force to an interagency task force and she was going to be in charge of it, and Frank Wisner agreed to be her deputy, stay on and be her deputy. Some of us, like myself, felt after two months or three months of this that it was time to move on, because as long as we stayed there doing the work, the domestic agencies wouldn't step in in the way that we felt that they needed to. There were others of us who felt that it was so important they should continue to work on the refugee questions. So I departed about June.

Q: So then what happened, June of '75?

BORG: Larry Eagleburger, before I had taken the job, said that when I left I could sort of have my choice of jobs at my level that were open and that I should identify a job that I liked. I had a terrible time over this and had a couple of meetings with him. He said, "Well, how about being a deputy economic officer?" I was in the economic cone. I hadn't known for a long time what cone I was. I was not very traditional in doing these sorts of things, but the system informed me at one point that I had been transferred from the administrative cone to the economic cone, and that was fine. As long as I got an interesting job, I didn't care what cone I was in. So I looked at all of these jobs, and I was perhaps sufficiently burned out that I looked at a place in Africa and I said, "I want to go to Africa." I decided I was not going to go back to China, that the world is much bigger than just East Asia, that I was going to try to expand my horizons, and I'd like to do it at a small post where I'm my own boss, in a place where there isn't much happening and I could just sort of meditate on all the things that had been going on for the last couple of years. So I selected Lubumbashi in Zaire, down in the southeastern corner, the former Elizabethville near the camp of what had been Katanga now, then known as Shaba. But that didn't open up for a while, so I was going to take an economic course and then I was going to learn French, and I thought that was just fine. I was very pleased with that.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop, so we'll pick this up in June of '75 when you're off to take the economic course and French.

Today is the ninth of September, 2002. Parker, you took the economic course. Is that right?

BORG: Yes, that's correct.

Q: Have you already talked about that?

BORG: No, I took the six-month economic course.

Q: How did you find that?

BORG: I had come into the Foreign Service in an uncertain cone and was coned admin, told them subsequently that I really didn't like admin work, and learned to my surprise that I had been re-coned as an economic officer without any input on my own part. I had had some economics in school but not much, and so I was quite pleased to refresh and learn a little more economics. The course was really quite good, in six months, taught quite professionally. I relearned some things and learned some new things. I was very pleased with it.

Q: Did you find that when you got out it was practical? Were you able to talk the talk, economic talk?

BORG: The sort of work that we do in the Foreign Service is not directly related to the sort of things one learns in an academic environment focusing on economics. It provides valuable background and valuable understanding of forces that might be at work and theories about how economies operate, but in terms of what we do in the Foreign Service, our work is generally political reporting about economic subjects. So you ask the same sort of questions that you might in a political situation but you try to have the economic background to know where it all might fit. The course is useful for that reason, but the idea that you're going to discuss economic theory or do serious macro-economic analysis at a post in the middle of nowhere, or in most Foreign Service posts, is pretty farfetched.

Q: Yes. Anybody who is going to do that sort of thing, for what it's worth, is doing it back in Washington or somewhere.

BORG: That's right. I think there are a couple of embassies that have a couple of people that do look at big macro-economic issues, but for the most part these issues have been taken over by the Treasury Department in recent years.

Q: Lubumbashi, you got there when?

BORG: I got the assignment by going to the designated ambassador, Walt Cutler, and telling him that I would really like to come out and be his consul in Lubumbashi. I think he was somewhat flabbergasted. We had met and I had worked with him when I was in the Personnel Office, but I had no African experience, I didn't speak French, and I don't think he was very enthusiastic about this assignment of someone whose main qualification was to have recently been Henry Kissinger's assistant to come out and work in one of his consulates. He responded, "Well, let me think about it," at first but then came back and perhaps realized maybe he didn't have too many choices.

Q: You were out there from when to when?

BORG: I went out there in late June of 1975, just before the July Fourth celebration which would have been the 200th anniversary of our independence. That was a big deal, and I thought that would be...

Q: '76.

BORG: '76, yes, and I stayed until June or July of '78.

Q: I've talked to people who were there early on, like Terry McNamara and all, in the era of Shaba I and Shaba II.

BORG: I was there for Shaba I and Shaba II, so that was my principal activity probably, but let me give a little background first on the place and why I thought it was going to be an interesting place to work. Shaba, the former Katanga, is really the economic center of Zaire. It is the place where the mines are located, where they produce probably 70 or 80 percent of the foreign exchange that's earned by the country. It also is a traditional area of rebellion or opposition to the authorities in Kinshasa when it had been Katanga and the secession in the early 1960's. Also, because of its remoteness, the Mobutu government had located the liberal arts sections of the university down in Lubumbashi so that the kids who go out into the streets to protest the government were nowhere near the capital. So as a result we had a much more lively intellectual community. We had a very vibrant economic and business community. Not only the mines were there but there were all of the companies that produced whatever it was that the mines needed. So it was an opportunity to observe how an economy cut off, as the area was, from much of the rest of the world was able to operate in this remote environment.

Q: What was the situation in the Congo overall at that time when you got out there?

BORG: Mobutu had run the country since about 1965. This would have been 10 years that he'd been in power, and he was not even by this point considered a very impressive leader from the international perspective, but he played his international cards well. He would suggest to the United States on any possible opportunity that he was the hold-out against the Communist threat, that the Tanzanians were leftists, the Angolans were allied with the Soviet Union, and that all of southern Africa would be cut off if Congo collapsed, if he collapsed. Likewise, he played the French against the Belgians. Zaire had been a Belgian colony, and the French were unhappy in a sense that this largest Francophone-speaking country in Africa looked to Belgium as its home in Europe rather than to France as the other Francophone countries did. So there were rivalries on at least these two levels. Mobutu also had proven to be a master of internal politics, of keeping all of the different Congolese ethnic groups off guard and irritated with each other so that there was very little opportunity for them to think about lining up together against him. His government was essentially his cronies from his home province of Kivu up in the northern part of the country. Zaire is a country that is the size of Western Europe, and the distance between Kinshasa, the capital, and Lubumbashi is sort of like the distance between Saint Louis, Missouri, and Miami, Florida. There's a big, big distance there. It took two hours to fly by commercial jet between the two cities, and there were no roads, there was no access otherwise, no railroads.

Q: When you arrived what was the state of government that you were dealing with in...?

BORG: ...in Shaba province. Each of the provinces of Zaire at that point had military governors appointed by and loyal to Mobutu, and they functioned on his behalf. There was a judicial system, and I knew a number of the lawyers in town and a number of the justices. They attempted to operate somewhat independently and dispense justice, but that was questionable. It was still very much of a segregated community. Even though Zaire had been independent for 15 years, there were clubs and institutions in Lubumbashi where blacks were not invited and where, if they did show up, they were not appreciated. I remember convincing a Zairewa to participate as my partner in a golf tournament and go to the banquet afterwards. He was the only black African at the whole dinner, and one felt cold shoulders looking at him and looking at me for having brought him along. It was nonetheless a very vibrant economy, and there remained a very large foreign community of French and Belgians but most interestingly a very large community of Sephardic Jews who had settled in Lubumbashi probably in the 1930's and had essentially established all of the factories that produced clothing, produced steel, produced whatever it was that was needed by the mines; and there was a community of Greeks and a community of Italians.

Q: How about Lebanese?

BORG: Lebanese are much more common in west Africa, but in this part of Africa the Sephardic Jews played the principal commercial role. There were even Sephardic Jews who had U.S. citizenship who ran small export-import businesses the way the Lebanese do in west Africa, or further east it's the Indians.

Q: I have heard about how over the years the mining operation has sort of practically collapsed because of lack of maintenance.

BORG: When I was there, it was in the heyday of the mining community. A Zairewa was the head of the mines. He was a well educated individual who was assisted by a number of expatriates that ruled each one of the subordinate sections. The copper mine at Kolwezi was probably the most sophisticated mining operation anywhere in the world at the time. We took many delegations up to see how they produced copper. They had made the entrance to the mine so broad that you could drive a bus down six or seven stories into the ground where you got off the bus to look at the mining operations. None of this cheap ride down the mine shaft. The miners went down in buses each day. They did their mining, and they brought up the copper. There were three major mining areas and many subordinate mines in each one of these places. This was the third or fourth largest producer of copper in the world, the largest producer of cobalt in the world - 90 percent of the world's cobalt at the time came from there - and it had large quantities of lead and nickel. Even the uranium which was used for the atomic bomb at Hiroshima had come from the mines in Shaba, and there were huge slag heaps where the leftovers, the tailings, were located. People said if the price of gold went up high enough, they could go through these again and begin to take out the gold that was in them. It's an incredibly rich mining area.

Q: You're right in the middle of nowhere. How did they get the stuff out when you were there?

BORG: There were two ways that they sent things out, and both of these ways went through South Africa. This was a time when there was great concern about what was happening in Southern Rhodesia, and the struggle against the apartheid government there. Nonetheless, the materials went almost exclusively out through Harare and down to Durban, South Africa. Likewise, the foodstuffs came from the south. Wheat, cattle or beef all came up from Rhodesia, South Africa.

Q: Was Rhodesia at that time, Southern Rhodesia, going through the...?

BORG: This was during the fighting, during the confrontation.

Q: During the time of so-called - I want to say SDI but it's not.

BORG: One rural government and there was a coalition of countries that border Rhodesia - Zambia, Tanzania, Angola was independent in '74, Mozambique, Malawi - which were involved in a confrontation against Southern Rhodesia.

Q: UDI is what I wanted to say, Unilateral Declaration of Independence, by Ian Smith and white government.

BORG: That's right. I think that was in effect. I forget the exact dates, but I think that was in effect then, and Zaire had declined to participate. They went to various summit meetings but they would always back off on signing any documents because so much of the economy of the southern part of the country depended on Rhodesia and South Africa. When the UDI, when the confrontation, became most extreme, there were unidentified airplanes that would be flying into Lubumbashi on a regular basis bringing in loads of meat and taking out other valuable commodities down to the south. I had mentioned a second route. There was an effort to build a railroad that would go from Zambia up through Tanzania to Dar Es Salaam, the Tanzam Railroad. This was there in principle but played no role whatsoever in reality. There was a third possible route out of there and that was by train from Lubumbashi across Angola, but because of the government in Angola and the civil war that had been going on there, that route had been closed down, so it was almost exclusively the route to the south.

Q: What was your both role and task when you got there? In the first place, maybe you'd better describe what the consulate - was it the consulate general?

BORG: It was a consulate; it was not a consulate general. The office consisted of myself and one other officer who worked as my assistant, an administrative consular officer, one American secretary who doubled as a communicator. So it was a very small operation.

Q: Were you married?

BORG: I was not married, no. I was a single person. We also had a USIS officer. It was not the sort of place one would recommend for a single officer, but one made do. When I arrived there, we had a very good community of Americans in the embassy and a couple of people around town.

Q: Were there other consular representations of other countries?

BORG: There were representatives of other countries. The French and the Belgians were there because of their strong economic interests and their rivalry. The Italians and the Greeks were there because of the large number of their citizens that lived in the area. And the Zambians were there, but there were no other African consulates in the area.

Q: The Brits weren't there?

BORG: The British were not there.

Q: At that time Zaire was considered in sort of our lingo as being a CIA country. The CIA was doing a great deal to keep Mobutu in power. How about you?

BORG: Our job in the consulate was to report what was happening in that part of the country and to represent the embassy at whatever function they might need representation. We did visa service; there were American citizens that had problems from time to time; but almost exclusively we reported on the economic situation, the health of the mines, the trade routes for minerals in and out of the country; and had really little concept that we were there supporting Mobutu. Now, we were told on a regular basis by the Zairewa that we'd meet that, "This is your problem. You brought him in. You should be getting rid of him." Our response at the consulate was that, "No, he is your problem. He is your leader; he is not our leader."

Q: I'm wondering now at the Agency shutting down a station in an area which was prone to rebel.

BORG: It had been quiet for a couple years, and I guess they were having resource shortfalls and they needed to put their resources somewhere else. As we do with embassies when resources are tight, we decide to close up our field operations and consolidate everything in the capital, and that's what they had done.

Q: Did you feel that you had a brief to keep an eye on possible rebellion?

BORG: Yes, but we were criticized by the inspectors when they came out that we weren't doing an adequate amount of political reporting, and our response to that was, "There's not much happening of a political nature. This is a police state. This is a military state. It is run by the governor who is Mobutu's buddy. There are soldiers all over. The university is in total disrepair. The classrooms that people are studying in are absolutely disgraceful. Nobody is out on the street. Nobody's talking about any sort of political change."

Q: Then how did you find your relations with, say, the military governor?

BORG: Correct but not close. Again, since there wasn't much happening of a political nature, since he didn't do much other than hold the office and keep things under control, the idea of calling on him to go and talk about political developments or what his plans were, because I knew he didn't have any plans other than try to rake off as much money as he might get. I was more than totally occupied with the people at the mines, the people at the banking community, and the others.

Q: How did you find this economic community? As you put it, they were basically all expatriates.

BORG: It was heavily expatriate. They were a fascinating community because they had become over the years incredibly self reliant, and if they needed something, they attempted to produce it there, and they often produced it quite successfully, so that everybody bought and sold things that were locally produced to the extent possible. The raw materials came in from South Africa and other places, but they were smuggled in. I had a Zairewa friend who had a shoe factory. He was one of the few entrepreneurs that I knew at that point among the Zairians. He brought me a sample of one of his shoes one day, and I said, "These shoes say 'Made in Belgium' on them," and he said, "Yes, we put that on all of our shoes. Nobody would buy them if they said 'Made in Zaire.'" So here was a Zairewa manufacturing shoes and putting 'Made in Belgium' on the label. There was an industrial section of the city where there were two plants that spun cotton, made cloth, made clothing. There were places that fabricated iron into steel. There were places that manufactured things out of iron. They manufactured bus springs, railroad car frames; whatever it was that was needed at the mines or in the local community, it was produced there. So you have a sense of how an economy fits together.

Q: When you arrived there, did you find people in a sense saying, "We're here for today, but we always keep a suitcase packed"?

BORG: No, the people who had their suitcases packed had left sometime before. Now, many of the most prominent members of the economic community had citizenship in another country and often homes or family in the other country, and they spent two months a year at least in the other country, which was most often Belgium, sometimes France. But it was, "We're here to stay. We are Africans" - some of them - "we have lived in this area as long as the local people, and so we consider this our home and we'll never leave. This is ours." It's the same sort of mentality that one heard further south, that this was really an adjunct of the talk that one heard in Johannesburg or at that time in Harare. But Zambia was quite different. Zambia was far more Africanized than Shaba was at that point.

Q: What about the missionary community?

BORG: We spent a good deal of time getting to know the missionary community. The principal missionaries in the area were Methodists, and the largest church in the city was the Catholic church, which was run by Zairewa. The second largest was the Methodist church, which had a Methodist pastor, a Zairewa pastor, but there was a field of maybe 30 or 40 missionaries, mostly Methodists, in the countryside. The third largest religious institution in the area was the synagogue, and there was a rabbi who had been there since 1939 and he ministered to the large Sephardic Jewish community who, I was surprised to find out, had all migrated from the same place. They'd all come from the island of Rhodes in the 1930's, and many of them still spoke Ladino in their homes. Their first language was Ladino; it was not French, it was not English, it was Ladino. They didn't speak Yiddish or Hebrew.

Q: Was there any Israeli interest in the area because of this?

BORG: Not at that time, no.

Q: What happened in '76 to '78?

BORG: There was no advance knowledge that there was any kind of problem, and one day an invasion began from across the border in Angola. We learned of it because the railroad went up to the border with Angola and they maintained a presence on the border at the railroad. The rebels attacked this railroad station and took it over, and so suddenly the word was back in Lubumbashi that someone had taken over the railroad station at the frontier. From there they began moving throughout the villages in the western part of Shaba.

Q: When you say "they" ...?

BORG: Well, it wasn't clear who 'they' were. I can't remember what they called themselves, but they were trying to take Shaba back. They were the Katangan rebels, they claimed to be the Katangan rebels, from the '60s with elements from other rebellious groups who had been in Angola. While Mobutu's allies were generally in the part of Angola right next to the Shaba border, we knew that there were Katangese who had been supported by the dos Santos government, the anti-UNITA factions. Again, the civil war was very heavy...

Q: This was in Angola.

BORG: ...in Angola, and Mobutu supported one faction and the United States tended to support that faction, but the Cubans were with another faction. I'll put all this down eventually. The anti-Mobutu faction did hold remnants of the Katangese, and this group came into the border area.

Q: When was this?

BORG: It was in March-April of 1977. They moved from one town to the next. There were questions from the beginning of exactly who they were. The reaction from the journalistic community was suddenly representatives of almost every single newspaper that had foreign correspondents had their correspondent in Lubumbashi, largely not because this itself was so important but because there wasn't anything happening of great significance anywhere else. This was the first years of the Carter Administration, and this was one of their first foreign policy issues. They had made a point, I believe, at least in internal discussions, that we were not going to be as close to Mobutu as we had been in the Nixon Administration. So here we are with a crisis in Zaire at the early part of the Carter Administration, and what is it that we're going to do? We were five hours, six hours, different from Washington DC, and we provided a daily report, daily sitreps, back to Washington about what it was that was happening. The ambassador did not insist that my reports go first through them, because he knew that they were interested in them right away in Washington, so I was sending my reports from the consulate directly back to Washington with a copy to Kinshasa and other places. So every morning we figured we had until about 11 o'clock each day to figure out what had happened and get a report on the wires. Well, the first reports we had to send over one-time pads because we didn't have modern communications.

One of the first things I got was better communications and a full-time communications officer. We went out and essentially we found that there were a couple of good sources of what was happening. This was all taking place in very remote areas, but the railroad officials knew how many railroad stations were reporting back. Since the main line of attack was along the railroad, we could sense where one of the fronts was. Then the missionaries, the Methodist missionaries, had their morning radio checks, which they had had all the time anyway for people to report particular problems that they might have had, so they went to the missionary radio headquarters and found out from them what the reports were from all of their different mission offices. Since they had missions in all of the little towns along the western part of the province, we could find out which sections had been taken over.

Q: Were the missionaries reporting any problems when they were taken over?

BORG: It varied from one place to the next, but several missionaries were kidnaped, one was eventually killed. We had Peace Corps volunteers out in this area, and one of the first things we did when the fighting began was to bring the Peace Corps volunteers back into province headquarters. So none of the American Peace Corps were affected, but I think there was one American missionary who was killed. He was a medical missionary, if I remember correctly, and they had a trial in which he was accused. The anti local people and others recognized that it was someone who had been fired by the hospital that was making the accusations against him, so it was a local vendetta which was translated into something that the rebels could use as a reason for executing a person. The Agency was also very concerned, we were concerned and Washington was concerned, about a possible Cuban connection behind all of this. We had a lot of TDY people coming down. We had people listening in on radios trying to pick up any communications that might be going back and forth. I made it a point, and the other reporting officer, when we talked with people, we tried to get communications. "Have you seen anybody that doesn't look like a Zairewa that's participating in this? Is there anybody that's speaking Spanish? Is there any reason to think that there might be a Cuban participation?" The Agency, I believe, wanted to find a Cuban role, and I think Washington wanted to find a Cuban role. I don't know what they reported, but I consistently reported that I could find no evidence of any Cuban participation. I said, "There may be people doing training across the border, but there is no evidence that any of them have ever entered the Shaba area."

Q: What was the response that you were reporting or observing of the Zairian government?

BORG: The Zairian government, for the most part, proved its ineptitude there as it did in almost everything that it did, and we felt that the greatest threat to our safety and anyone else's safety was if the Zairian soldiers would panic, leave their posts, run out of food and decide that they were going to leave their quarters, and start stealing things from anybody that they could. This was the sort of thing that kept people awake at night, not the fear of the rebels.

Q: How did this play out?

BORG: The rebels held the dominant position for about 90 days, and they were essentially quite scattered throughout the region. The Zairian military were totally incapable of dealing with them. An international force led by the Moroccans came in and essentially led the fight to take back these areas and push the rebels out. The Moroccans were supported by the United States, and we provided the lift to get them down there. It was a curious situation, because the FAA...

Q: Federal Aviation Administration.

BORG: ...Federal Aviation Administration, had recently determined that the airstrip at Lubumbashi was unsafe for 737's and anything larger than that, so we were theoretically not supposed to fly out of this dangerous airport because the runway was not adequately safe. Of course, there's no other way to get out, so people continued to fly in and out on, I think, DC10's that we were using, so we had bigger planes that were going in and out.

Q: They're big planes.

BORG: Every day there was a DC10 that came in and went out. It was Air Sabena. There were no local airlines. Maybe it was Air Zaire, but I don't think we took Air Zaire. I think we took Sabena whenever we could. Anyway, this airstrip that was considered unsafe was suddenly going to take American aircraft, so we had an airlift communications team that arrived, and suddenly we had C130's and the big one, the C5A's. These things were coming and they were landing, these huge planes. Some came down on just exactly the place that was unsafe for any aircraft to land, but they all came in safely. They brought the equipment, they brought the Moroccan troops, and the Moroccans over the course of a couple weeks, maybe a month, pushed the rebels out of the country. They stayed around for a while and then they left.

Q: What was your impression of Moroccan troops?

BORG: The Moroccan troops were incredibly well disciplined. They did an outstanding job of establishing security. There were no problems reported of any kind. I'm a little mixed up here on details, but they may have been supported in this operation by Senegalese and Togolese troops also. So it was a multinational African force, led by the Moroccans and very skillfully implemented by the Moroccan military.

Q: When they were starting to do this, they must have been able to sort of identify who was doing this.

BORG: Never. They were the Katangese rebels. They came in, they attacked, they melted into the forest, they left.

Q: There was no Mister Katangese Rebel or something?

BORG: No, there was no spokesperson. Moise Tshombe had been the leader of the Katangese. His brother was the head of the Lunda tribe. He was the elected chief of the Lunda, which is the ethnic group that lived along the border area. He had come into the consulate on several occasions, and I had gotten to know him quite well. In fact, one of the Peace Corps volunteers had come in to see me about three weeks before the invasion and said that Mr. Tshombe had asked her to become his fifth wife and did I think that was a good idea. I said, "Oh, I don't know." Actually, because of that, she was out of the province at the time of the invasion, because they invaded the village where Tshombe had his headquarters at a very early point, so she wasn't there. He was conveniently away himself. Now, does that mean he knew what was happening, or was it a coincidence? Nobody ever found out.

Q: But there had to have been some sort of organization to say, "Okay, fellows, let's go."

BORG: I can check my records, but I don't recall that we ever found a spokesperson, an identifiable spokesperson, who was behind all this.

Q: Had there been the feeling that there was a group of lawless people, discontented people, sitting on the other side of the border?

BORG: There were lawless people, discontented people, on both sides of the border. We were always so much concerned with what was happening internally that the idea that there were large numbers of equally or even more unhappy people on the outside was not something that was commonly talked about before or after. Where did they go? They disappeared.

Q: What about tribalism in the area where you were?

BORG: Tribalism remained a very important issue throughout the Mobutu years in Zaire. Mobutu was very talented at keeping all of the ethnic groups off guard, playing one group against the other. The Lunda and the Chokwe peoples were probably the dominant rural population, particularly in the western part of the province, but in the cities the miners were generally Luba people who had come from the Kasais many years earlier and were resented by the Lundas and the local people. So you had a disconnect between the city people, who were outsiders, and the people who lived in the surrounding rural areas.

Q: Well now, this is 15 years or so after Zaire became independent, and there had been much talk about the fact that there were three university graduates who were of Congolese origin and the Belgians had not done anything? Were you seeing the effects of that?

BORG: There was a large pool of well educated Congolese about my age. The older people may have not had university educations...

Q: You were how old at the time?

BORG: At the time, 35. They were people who would have come of age right after independence. I remember one local justice, talking with him about his education. He said that he had been forced to learn Greek, Latin, Flemish and French before he graduated from secondary school. You think, my God, here is this country that's so desperate for educated people, and the traditional schools were teaching Latin and Greek because that's what they did in Belgium, but, of course, there are their two languages in Belgium. They couldn't train them in just French or Flemish; they had to teach them both languages. So you really had to be a very smart, talented individual to make it through the school system at that time. But there were a large number of secondary missionary institutions run by the Catholics in particular that were doing an outstanding job. I remember talking one day with a priest who was a Jesuit who had been there for many, many years, and I said to him, "It must be frustrating to deal with education and see all of the corruption and all of the horrible things around you." He said, "The problem is that you Americans have such a short-term perspective. You're always looking at things in terms of the next year or so, and you expect things to be better in the next year or so. I'm hoping that my successor's successor's successor will see the change that we have begun making now. That's the only way." I thought that was a very wise statement.

The first and most important aftermath for me was the effort of Mobutu to have me PNG'd. Mobutu established his temporary capital for Zaire in Kolwezi towards the end of the Shaba I operation so that he could be in daily control of what happened in the country. Ambassador Cutler was going up to visit Mobutu and pay a call on him prior to his departure for some consultations back in the United States, so he'd be able to report back here, "This is what Mobutu is saying and thinking, and here's where things stand." He asked me to come along, so I went with him to the meeting with Mobutu and then afterwards stayed around Kolwezi...

Q: Kolwezi is located where?

BORG: Kolwezi is about three hours west of Lubumbashi, about halfway between Lubumbashi and the border with Angola. This was the city that was most threatened by the rebels, and this was the city where the most sophisticated mines were located. So I stayed after Ambassador Cutler left, and I went around and talked with people that I had known in the past, and among the people I went to see was Mr. Tshombe, the chief of the Lunda, who was residing there. I didn't realize at the time that he was essentially under house arrest there. So when I went to call on Tshombe, I was then followed by Mobutu's police as I went around and talked to other people. My questions had to do with things like, "Have you received any of this assistance that we've been sending out?" "What are things like?" We'd been providing hospital and other sorts of supplies. I talked to maybe a half dozen people, all of whom were subsequently interviewed. Unbeknownst to me - Ambassador Cutler was back in the United States - Mobutu then summoned the station chief down to Lubumbashi and said, "We have evidence that Mr. Borg is doing things that are not friendly to our nation in our struggle against the Katangan rebels." So the station chief brought back a rough report of what the problem was, and I was then summoned to come up to Kinshasa and explain what this was all about. No, actually we did it over cable; I did not go to Kinshasa; we did it by cable. Lannon Walker was the chargé d'affaires at the time. Lannon is very strong willed in his own way, and Lannon decided that everything I was doing was quite justified and that, if they wanted me to go, they would have to formally PNG me but that the embassy was not going to withdraw me quietly, and if I went back to the United States, they would put me in charge of the Zairian affairs at the Department of State. So Mobutu had his choice, to have me in Shaba or was he going to have me in Washington working on Shaba. So they backed away, they backed off, and I stayed. But the word went out to all government officials that they were not supposed to have anything to do with me. So at the Fourth of July 1977 there was not a single Zairian official that showed up at our Fourth of July celebration. There were people from the economic community and the business community and the academic community but no government officials. So I was essentially cut off from the local political structure, and that lasted for five months or so.

Q: But you were saying before that there really wasn't much of a political structure.

BORG: There wasn't much of a political structure, there wasn't much political to report on, so the fact that the province chief would no longer receive me didn't matter. It didn't make that much difference. I went about whatever I wanted to do. I traveled around the province and went back to reporting what it was like now that the First Shaban War was over.

Q: How did you find American assistance and all? Was it getting out to the people? Was that part of your task, to see whether the money that we were pouring into Zaire was going anywhere but to Swiss bank accounts?

BORG: Yes. Mobutu had thrown out Walt Cutler's predecessor. When Mobutu had asked for Dean Hinton's recall because he was too offensive, the State Department had responded by sending out Sheldon Vance, who was Hinton's predecessor, and Walt Cutler, who was the country director at the time, to see what they could do. Among the activities was a \$60,000,000 assistance package, part of which was in food but \$20,000,000 for an economic assistance program. Mobutu had essentially said that he did like Dean Hinton but that he wouldn't mind this nice young man who was accompanying Sheldon Vance as the next ambassador. That's part of the story of how Walt Cutler got to Zaire. To go from that, the \$20,000,000 program turned out to be in Shaba province, and when I arrived, they were just completing the surveys as to what this project might be like, and Ambassador Cutler had asked me to go up - this was in late '76 - and to look at this project, to see if this was a valid project and whether it was something that we should be putting our money into. I went up and spent 10 days in the project site with the project planners. The project plan was to grow corn in this area that had traditionally grown corn but where they didn't grow much of anything anymore. It was an incredibly remote place that was two and a half hours by missionary plane to the headquarters of the project. The alternative was to fly commercially for an hour and a half over to this town and then take a day's train ride, so this was really, really in the middle of nowhere. It was fascinating to go around and see how services had deteriorated in the years since independence. We went to visit a number of villages where the bridge had broken down, and when the bridge broke down, there was no transport anymore and they stopped coming by to pick up the cotton or the tobacco which they grew, and so there was no commercial life left. And if there's no commercial life, there's nobody in the market anymore and they didn't pay the teachers and the health workers, and so these centers were abandoned also. The place was slipping quickly back into what it had been like probably before the Belgians had even come. So our grandiose scheme was to revive the corn industry in this remote section of the country. I came back and reported that this was really an appalling idea. If we're going to grow corn, you would have thought one could grow it a little closer to some urban areas where it could be shipped a little more easily and would make some kind of a difference and the logistics would not be so complicated. I said, "But if you've got \$20,000,000 that you have to spend and this is the only project which is on the board that they have designed, it's a project that might work. They've done a very careful job of looking at all the different factors, and it certainly is an area that needs fixing." I continued to follow the project while I was there and afterwards, and it turned out that it was moderately successfully. They went on from one phase of it to, I think, another two phases over the years, and perhaps the economy there was temporarily revived. I can't imagine it survived the recent traumas. Anyway, that was the big project. We followed that project. I felt that, as the consul after the Shaba war where we had been providing relief assistance, it was probably my job to go around and talk to people at hospitals, to talk to people at feeding centers and other places that were receiving this assistance. Have they received it? I guess that's what was one of the reasons I got in trouble.

Q: After the Shaba I thing was over and you were subliminally PNG'd or something, were there any other developments basically until you left?

BORG: The Second Shaba War occurred while I was there on my watch also. So I was there for both of them.

Q: So what happened?

BORG: It was just a little more than a year later. I wasn't even in the province at the time. I was up climbing in the Mountains of the Moon. I came back and there was this urgent message from the ambassador that they were sending the attaché's plane out to pick me up and bring me back to Kinshasa because there had been important developments. So I went back to Kinshasa and learned that a second invasion had begun and I was supposed to hightail it down to Lubumbashi as quickly as I could. I think I got down there within two days or three days of when it started. This time the rebels were much smarter in that they didn't bother with all the little villages. They didn't spread their forces as thinly as they had the first time. They went in and they struck at the city of Kolwezi. They just - bang - took over the most important mining center in the country, and they in the process seized large numbers of Europeans, who were held as hostages. There were a number of people who were killed, massacred, in Kolwezi. It made the cover of Time magazine, April 1978. It was a bloody mess. Of course, the Zaire military was as incompetent as ever about what they could do about this. Our great concern was that this could spread to the other mining towns and into Lubumbashi, but the greatest fear still was the Zairewa military and the possibility that they would run amok and start slaughtering people. Again, we called all the Peace Corps volunteers from the whole province. We were told that we could not withdraw any American personnel by the Zairewa government, that everyone had to remain in place. So we rented an airplane and went up to different Peace Corps sites and told them that there was a conference in Lubumbashi and they had to come and attend this conference. So I picked them up individually and brought them back so that we didn't have to issue an order or tell them to go get on a plane. So we got everybody out and brought them back, where they stayed for a couple weeks. The resolution this time was a struggle between the Belgians and the French. There were all sorts of efforts on the part of the Belgians to try and coordinate the rescue and all sorts of efforts on the part of the French to see that they were able to send their Legionnaires in ahead of the Belgians so that they could claim that they were the ones that had rescued Kolwezi and they could establish themselves perhaps in Mobutu's mind as the friend of Zaire, not the stupid Belgians. It was really interesting to see those two nations bickering with each other over how this was to be done, and in the end, I think, the Belgians took the airport and the French took the city with the paratroopers. Again, there was a serious loss of life, and those Katangese rebels that were not killed disappeared. The French evacuated large numbers of people. Did the French do the evacuation or the Belgians? It would be either the French or the Belgians. I have that written down somewhere. They brought people out of the area and back to Europe. The pacification was left to the Moroccans, and so the Moroccans came back for a second time and spread their forces around and attempted to establish a bit of discipline among the various military units and to clean up whatever hadn't been cleaned up outside of the city of Kolwezi. The second Shaba war was much shorter. It was six weeks or something and it was over.

Q: Again, was there any spokesperson, anybody making announcements?

BORG: Not that I can recall. I've got some notes on this, but I do not remember any major communications that could be identified with a particular individual or even a group that one could say this is the name of the group that's doing this.

Q: Was this a looting expedition?

BORG: There was a lot of looting on the part of the Congolese, the Katangese rebels. They cleaned out what they could before they were forced out of Kolwezi. The city was quite a mess.

Q: What about the mines and all this?

BORG: I think the mines began to deteriorate later. The mines were still in pretty good shape. They did not do anything to sabotage mining operations. I think they realized that that was the goose that was laying the golden egg and, if they had it, they would have the resources. The mines began to deteriorate when Mobutu politicized - this was much after I left but as I understand it - even more the leadership of the mining operations and put his finger even deeper in the till so that the goose, rather than laying the golden egg for the whole country, was laying a small golden egg for Mobutu and his cronies. I stayed there until about May or June, when it was over, and I left in July, I guess.

Q: So how did your taste of Africa go? You know, Foreign Service-wise you lucked out. Everybody wants a nice little rural rebellion or something, you know.

BORG: I had gone to Lubumbashi with the hope of having a peaceful experience to sort of restore myself from what I thought was the chaos of Washington and was overwhelmed and challenged by being suddenly at the center of what was considered important to a lot of people, and this was to my great surprise. I had not anticipated anything like this and had not planned for anything like this.

Q: So then in '78 what happened?

BORG: I was selected for what is called senior training in the State Department. I could have gone to the War College, but I politely pointed out that I was in Vietnam twice, I had just come out of being in a war college, and I'd rather go to a peace college. So I went up to the Council on Foreign Relations and I had a year fellowship at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Q: Let's talk about that. What were you doing, and how did you see at that time - this would be '78 to '79 - the role of the Council of Foreign Relations? It's a name that's bandied about a lot.

BORG: The Council on Foreign Relations at this time was under the leadership of Winston Lord, who had spent a number of years in the State Department, had been a Foreign Service Officer, had left, had come back with Henry Kissinger, was head of Policy Planning under Kissinger, and was trying to make the Council on Foreign Relations a relevant outside player on foreign policy issues, making sure that foreign leaders who were going to make presentations in the United States presented their cases at the Council on Foreign Relations before its membership. I enjoyed my time in New York. I liked living in New York. I found the Council meetings interesting. I attended a lot of them. I felt, however, that the concept that the Council on Foreign Relations had of membership and participation by membership meant you had to be very distinguished in the field of foreign affairs or very important in the field of foreign affairs in order to become a member, which meant that most of the members, most of the people who came to the meetings, were well beyond their prime. You came in when you were the CEO or the head of something or other, but you usually didn't have time to go to the meetings, so you came to the meetings when you had more time. So you looked around and it was very hard to find heads in the audience that were not gray haired. They had a program in which they brought younger people in. They had associate members, and perhaps that was doing something to revitalize the organization, but I thought that they really needed to find a different audience for their discussions. I also found it very much a place where people went for receptions to exchange cards with people that they thought were important that they hadn't already met, and I felt on many occasions that, as soon as I gave my card to somebody and they found out that I was a fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations, they were immediately looking over my shoulder to see if there was some important banker or somebody that they would rather talk to behind me.

Q: What were they producing? Did you get involved in any production?

BORG: They produce the magazine Foreign Affairs, and they have a series of special programs where they would do books on energy policy for the 1990's, population growth for the 1980's. They tried to assemble think pieces, broad-term strategy pieces for the future, or maybe that's just Winston from his Policy Planning experience, that this was the focus that he was putting on things. My own experience in government has been that very few people who are in policy-making positions have the time to attend the meetings where these important policy issues are being discussed or read the papers that come as a result of these deliberations.

Q: There seems to be a tremendous disconnect. Ideas may come from other places, but almost everything happens within a rather tight circle in the government.

BORG: I think Henry Kissinger said something very wise about this at one point. He noted that when he was at the National Security Council and as Secretary of State he never had a chance to think about anything. If he hadn't done a lot of thinking about these things beforehand, he wasn't going to have the time to do much thinking there. I think that that's probably the case that most people fall into. It's the education which you bring into something. For me the opportunity to be up at the Council on Foreign Relations was a chance to reflect on some of these things that these people up there were thinking about.

Q: Well then, in '79?

BORG: Actually I was going to write a book on Zaire and what had happened during my experiences there, but in May - I was supposed to be there from September to September and had sort of blocked out my schedule according - April or May, I got a call from Dick Moose, who was the Assistant Secretary, and he said that he wanted me to come down early and take a job as the Country Director for West African Affairs. I think I had met him. He was the Assistant Secretary during the Shaba wars, and so I think I had some contact with him. I responded by saying, "I'm sorry. I've never set foot in any of these countries in Africa. I haven't studied any of these countries in Africa. I'm really not interested in going to any of these countries in Africa." I think I went down there to talk to him, and he said, "That's exactly why I want you to come and take this job. I have confidence in what you did in Zaire, and I want somebody who will take this portfolio and will solve the problems in this region himself and will not bring the problems to my attention. My focus is going to be on southern Africa, and I don't want to have to focus on west Africa." I said, "What do you do about the fact I don't know anything about this. I might consider this if I can get a trip out there before I take the job." He said, "Okay, done," and so I left the Council on Foreign Relations a month later and set off on a month's trip around west Africa. I went to every single one of the countries, met all the people at the embassies, saw what the terrain was like, and then went back and started working.

Q: So you did this from when to when?

BORG: I went on the trip in May-June of '79 and started working as the Country Director for West African Affairs in August of '79 and was there until '81.

Q: Do you think this might be a good place to stop? There's a big thing, and I think it probably would be easier to grab it at one point.

BORG: And I will see if I can get some dates better in mind.

Q: So we'll pick this up next time in '79 when you're going to take over West Africa and keep it out of the hair of Dick Moose.

Today is the 23rd of September 2002. Parker, in 1979 you were going to take a trip, and I understand we're going to get some notes from that trip.

BORG: I traveled from mid-May until almost the middle part of July spending a couple of days in each one of the countries in west Africa.

Q: How many were there?

BORG: There were 18 in the office at the time. I had no experience in any of these countries and knew little about any of them, and so while I traveled I took incredibly detailed notes of what was happening politically and economically in each one of the countries and what the state of our American presence was, what were the problems that we faced and the problems that the country faced. The purpose of the notes was so that I was going to be able to distinguish one of these countries from the next once I got back to Washington and began working on the different problems.

Q: You are going then to type these up and these will be inserted into our narrative. When you came back from there, overall how did you see the growing trouble spots, what the US interests were, and how were things going?

BORG: I came back with the knowledge of how different each one of these countries was from its neighbor despite the fact that they had overlapping ethnic groups and sometimes similar colonial experiences, that in the 15 to 20 years of independence they had each evolved in a different way, and what was happening in the different countries politically was a changing of the guard. The old revolutionaries who had made the fight for independence were moving on. The population was more willing to express themselves in a way that they hadn't been in the past. There were a growing number of riots and protests over food prices and other things that had not occurred to the same extent in the past. Economically Nigeria with its oil had lots of money. It was apparent that those countries which had inherited a lot of resources from the colonial period had for the most part squandered them, and those countries that had no resources and had to get by with what they had were doing much better economically. It was the time of the Sahelian drought, and one of the prime interests of the United States was providing food into the drought-stricken regions of the countries of West Africa at the time. I was overwhelmed on the assistance front by two things: first, how little we had to show for the number of years we had been providing aid into these countries, how much it had sort of gone for studies that paid Americans to look at things and had never been translated to concrete projects. I made a point in each one of the countries as I visited of asking the AID mission director to assume that I was a Congressman that was visiting and to tell me what were the projects that had been completed in each country so that I could go back to Washington and defend the AID program, and I was stunned at how few projects there were on the ground. We had spent millions of dollars and there was almost nothing to show for it. We were in the era when we were no longer looking at infrastructure projects but were looking at basic human needs, and this often translated into things that we didn't really know what to do with and money going for helping people do things better, but after the project ended there was little you could see as a result. The second thing that I noticed was that, since the collapse of Vietnam seemed to coincide with the emergence of our interest in Africa, a lot of the AID people whom I had known in Vietnam had suddenly surfaced and were now doing Sahelian drought, and many of these people shouldn't have stayed on as long as they had in Vietnam, had become quite irrelevant to what was happening there, and now they were the ones that were in charge of a lot of the drought work in Africa.

Q: As you look at it at this time, was there something endemic to our AID system that meant that we ended up with an awful lot of subsidies of American graduate students doing surveys and all?

BORG: Absolutely. The problems of American assistance were, I would argue, almost exclusively American problems. That is to say that Washington would establish priorities and these priorities would change from one administration to the next. The priorities would be sent out to the mission. The missions were supposed to act as independently as possible from the embassies, because the AID missions were doing what was good for the country and were not involved in the politics, were not trying to do things to support our political mission. So the AID mission director would have his priorities, and he would then begin the study process of what are the appropriate projects to build given these priorities. The studies would go to American companies and universities. They would spend a couple of years designing an appropriate project, which would then go through the approval process, and by the time they were ready to start launching the projects, there would be a change of administration, a change in the AID mission director, a change in somebody's internal priority, and the things that we had been working for the first couple of years would no longer be the priority, and rather than continue and implement things that were not in vogue, we would switch to new projects. So we were in kind of continuously revolving door where the projects were coming in and they were being tossed out before any of them were implemented.

Q: Talking to the AID directors on this mission that you did, did they seem to understand the process? Were they frustrated and trying to do something about it?

BORG: Some of them were very able and very dedicated, and they were concerned with making their mark while they were there, of establishing whatever it was that they felt could be achieved in the time frame that they were going to be there. The problem was that five years was a very long time for an AID mission director to be in place and they wanted the projects to be the ones that they had something to do with starting it, so the focus was on their projects and not the last mission director's projects. So even though it may have survived the political process, it no longer had the emphasis because they want the stars, they want the priorities.

Q: Did you find that AID on the American side was overstaffed? One of the things that bothers me is we say we've given so many million dollars to such and such a country but when you add it up a very significant portion of that is paid to American salaries and American housing and...

BORG: There's no question that that is a serious part of the problem. I remember, when I first worked with AID people in other countries, the AID officers were actually involved in projects and were doing things on the ground in the field. By the time I got into West Africa, the AID project officers were all contracting specialists who were supposed to be experts in agriculture or community development or health or whatever it was, but they had another tier of project managers who were contract people. If there was a program of \$20,000,000 in a country, there could be an AID mission of 10 or 15 people and contractors almost equal in that number whose salaries and maintenance costs took up a very heavy portion of the assistance program. I believe members of the AID senior staff even argued with Congress at times that, "You may think that assistance goes to foreign countries, but let us show you how much of it comes back to support American institutions," and this was a selling point that kept our assistance programs alive.

Q: Did you see any areas on the political side where, one, we had real interest and, two, that there were problems?

BORG: At the time I was working in Africa, we had real interests in only one country, and that was Nigeria because of the oil that Nigeria produced and the amount of Nigerian oil that we imported. We had a very difficult trade balance relationship with Nigeria, and one of our priorities was to try and correct that balance so that we were able to sell more things to Nigeria, but they really weren't much of a market. Nigeria at that time was in the process of making a transition from a military government to a civilian government, and so we were watching that very closely. This was one of many periods in Nigerian history when they were moving between civilians and the military, and a lot of the players would keep popping up over and over again. In other places our interests were secondary. Some were more important than others. In Niger for its uranium, we were concerned about where that uranium might be going and would there be adequate controls for it. We were concerned about what the Libyans might be doing throughout the region in fomenting Islamic fundamentalism or the green-book approach to revolution. We had a special relationship with Liberia which had gone back many years. We were concerned about the Russians and the growing Russian interest in that part of Africa and how that might play into our own interests. But, no, we did not have great interests. There were, however, continuous rumblings in each one of these countries of a desire on the part of the local population for a change in government. There was a civil war or a coup going on in at least two countries almost continuously the whole time that I was working these issues, and we were constantly sort of putting out fires and trying to think of what do we do to keep this one under control. One could start in the west with Chad. There was a civil war that had been going on in Chad that began in about March of 1979. In Ghana the military had moved against the civilian government and executed the chief of state in '79. In Liberia Sammy Doe and his group came into power and overthrew the...

Q: Was that while you were on...?

BORG: This was on our watch in 1980, I believe. There had been a change in governments in Upper Volta. There was a war going on in the western Sahara where the Moroccans had claimed this piece of land that had previously been Spanish territory, and the western Sahara was part of our domain although Morocco was not, so we were responsible for following the war in western Sahara but it wasn't primary. Morocco was not one of our countries. So there was always something going on somewhere.

Q: Before we move to some of the individual places, was West Africa on the greater African scheme of things within the Bureau? Did you have the feeling that your people were rambunctious and all that, that "You're in charge and you take care of them," and there wasn't much that got kicked up?

BORG: Within the bureaucracy in AF at the time, Dick Moose was the Assistant Secretary and his focus was almost exclusively on what was going on in southern Africa and trying to bring about a change to a nonwhite-dominated government in Rhodesia. The second interest for the front office was probably what was happening in the Horn of Africa. After Sammy Doe took over in Liberia, there was more interest in our region. Otherwise, the only real interest was what was happening in Nigeria. The Deputy Assistant Secretary with whom I worked most closely was Bill Harrop. He was always very helpful, but he had other things that he was working on most of the time, and so we were pretty much left to our own devices in the west African region.

Q: First, let's do this Polisario problem. I almost have the feeling that here we had American ambassadors who tended to become almost clients of King Hassan in Morocco and took a very pro-Moroccan point of view. Here you are dealing with it sort of from the other side. Did you find yourself, to use a diplomatic term, in a pissing contest with the people dealing with Moroccan interests in the State Department?

BORG: Morocco is not the only case of a country where our ambassadors take very strong protective measure on behalf of the nation. Saudi Arabia comes to mind as another good example of a country like that. India and Pakistan are also places where our ambassadors often take the local side in a conflict. Morocco was special in that we have gone out of our way to see that we only have political appointees there and people who are going to recognize the importance of getting along with the royal family so that the ambassador takes usually a very strong position in favor of what the Moroccans would prefer. This is translated into what the Middle Eastern Bureau often pushes as the policy. We were somewhat in the middle, not completely, but the conflict is usually looked at as a completely Algerian-Moroccan conflict, but there was an overlapping conflict with Mauritania. The Mauritians were initially sympathetic to the Moroccans, and the rulers who ran Mauritania looked upon themselves as part of the greater world of Morocco. There were some incidents that occurred that changed their perspective to make them a little more wary of Moroccan interests. But it was more a question of was Mauritania going to survive or was Mauritania likely to collapse also because of what was going on in the western Sahara. I was in continuous disputes with Carleton Coon, who was the country director for northwest Africa. We had endless arguments about this issue. If I remember correctly, our office was first sympathetic to the Moroccans and then we were much less sympathetic towards what the Moroccans were doing. But when the Reagan Administration came in, we were told to switch back and be sympathetic to Morocco, that we were not paying any attention to the Algerian point of view. There were lots of arguments and I can't remember what they were all about.

Q: Let's go to Liberia. How did this thing burst upon you? Was this sort of something that had been looming?

BORG: Liberia and Sierra Leone had a history that was different from the other countries in Africa. Both of these nations had been settled not by foreign colonialists but by freed slaves who had come back from the United States in the case of Liberia and some of the English colonies in the Caribbean in the case of Sierra Leone, and these people established governments in these respective little pieces of geography where the freed slaves were the masters and the native populations were clearly second-class citizens. So you had a similar colonial situation in each one of these countries that existed in other places in Africa except that the elites were black and not white. Sierra Leone has erupted on the scene in more recent years, but the Liberian problems began in 1979/1980. President Tolbert, who was the last president in the line of what were called the America-Liberians, came to the United States, met with Jimmy Carter, talked about assistance programs and so forth, and things seemed to be moving as well as they might be expected to in this country where there was a great divergence between the elite who ran the country and the people out in the villages. We had offered military assistance training among other things and we trained various units in how to work together more effectively in close combat, and one of these groups decided that they didn't like the government and so they used the military training which we had provided to overthrow the Tolbert government. They took all of the cabinet ministers that they could round up. I think they issued a call for people to turn themselves in, and eventually after much anguish various ones did. The one who is best known, about whom more history has been recorded, is Cecil Bennett, the foreign minister, a very elegant, decent man. I think he spent some time at the ambassador's residence anguishing over what he might do before he turned himself in. He turned himself in, and the Liberians decided that the only reasonable way to bring this thing to an end was to kill everybody, and so they brought them down to a beach, tied them to a post, invited Life magazine to take pictures, and killed them all on the beach outside of Monrovia. We then had to deal with a group of the platoon level at the beginning, maybe 15 or so illiterate soldiers, who were suddenly in charge of this country where the United States had no critical interest but we did have important interests. There was the VOA (Voice of America) relay station for Africa located there. The Coast Guard maintained a LORAN (Long Range Navigation) facility for navigational purposes there. We had an agreement with the Liberian government that, if we ever needed to use the airport in Monrovia for military purposes, it was always available to us. There were all of these things that suddenly made us pay attention to Liberia in a way that we hadn't in the past. It was interesting to reflect on our relationship with Liberia in that most Americans don't really think at all about Liberia - it's just another country in Africa - but the Liberians look to the United States as their mother country in the sense that the Senegalese or the Ivorians might look to France, and many, many Liberians had family in the United States, many had dual residency in the United States, dual citizenship, and could not understand why the United States didn't pay more attention to Liberia and its problems. I remember one conversation with a young man, an official but I can't remember in what capacity, when he said, "Look at Abidjan, look at Senegal, look at Dakar. Look what the French have created in these places, and look at Monrovia. Monrovia's a dump, and it's your fault. Why haven't you built the buildings to make Monrovia a nice place like the French have done in Dakar and Abidjan," to which I responded, "You've been an independent country now for over 100 years. You've got to take responsibility for your own destiny. The fact that you don't have nice buildings in Monrovia is a reflection on the state of your management of the economy and the fact that you've never made foreign companies feel particularly welcome to come there and to invest. You don't have any indigenous reasons. There's nothing going on for the place." Anyway, they lined everybody up and they shot them on the beach, and we then had to try and put together a package of assistance which was going to help these relatively illiterate people to come to grips with the fact that they were now in charge of the country. Our desired strategy was to try to convince the leaders of this group...

Q: At this point it wasn't clear who was leading?

BORG: Yes, there was one person by the name of Sammy Doe who was the clear leader, and there were two or three others who were more prominent. Our interest was to try and convince him that he could be the great savior, the great hero, of Liberia, having thrown out the colonialists and established a new sort of government. What he needed to do was to set up institutions for democracy, for a fairer government, a government that provided for the people in the rural areas, and that they had to overlook and forget about retribution for the past but to focus on the future. That did not work at all. They were not in a position to think about these things. These were our sorts of thoughts. Their interests were in trying to preserve their own power to the extent that they could. There were internal squabbings among the sergeants that erupted, and they eliminated each other one by one so that pretty soon it was down to only a few, and then there were some outsiders who came in and pushed them out. We told Sammy Doe that he had to recognize that, since he had thrown people out through a coup, he was likely to be thrown out by a similar coup unless he could make himself the hero of the country. In the end result, our policy was much more providing dribs and dabs of assistance to sort of buy them off and keep them friendly.

Q: Did we send out a mission there or anything like that?

BORG: Dick Moose had several interesting sessions. We brought the Liberian leadership back here to the United States, and we had meetings with them and sent them over to the Pentagon. It was quite a scene, these people who were barely literate trying to discuss things in this country. We were trying to impress them with our interest and the importance of trying to work out a settlement to these problems. Dick Moose became involved. He met with the generals, the leaders, on several occasions. I remember we found a Peace Corps volunteer that had worked in the same village where Sammy Doe came from, and we organized a meeting one evening where Dick Moose could sit with this guy and learn about the people in the villages of Liberia, where were they coming from, what were some of the myths of their village, so that we could try to reason with these people in a way that we had not succeeded in doing in the past. Dick was very intrigued with this. He liked this sort of activity. He did go out and talk with Sammy Doe using the analogies about "You've got a hole in the pocket and that's where the money goes" and some other humorous stories like this, but it was all to little effect.

Q: Were we concerned about getting our people out? We must have had quite a few people there, didn't we?

BORG: We had quite a few people. The threat at this time was not to the Americans as much as it was to the Americo-Liberians. There was fighting up in some of the rural areas where people were in danger, but we continued to maintain our various facilities for the most part despite the problems.

Q: Did we have any special program to help the Americo-Liberians get out, visas, refugee-type things?

BORG: We had very little, but we didn't need very much because most of them seemed to travel quite easily back and forth to the United States. We met on more than one occasion with Americo communities. I think there was a heavy group of them in New Jersey. Those that could, fled; those that couldn't, didn't have the ties with the United States, generally weren't so prominent that they were threatened. But there was a big exodus, as there are in many countries when such things occur.

Q: What about up in Chad? While you were there, were the Libyans messing around?

BORG: No, when I was there, the Libyans were in the background, but a civil war had broken out in Chad early in 1979. The original problem had been between the southern Christian animus factions and the northern Arab Muslim groups. There's a dividing line across the Sahel between the Arab Muslim in the north and the Christian Black in the south, most pronounced in Mauritania and Chad, but it goes down into Nigeria and hits the Ivory Coast. In '79 the Christians had withdrawn from N'Djamena and pulled down to the southern part of the country, which left two, then three, then more factions in control of N'Djamena. There was a continuous series of struggles between the different leaders, the different groups, some having more Libyan influence than others. In fact, when I made my trip there in June, I arrived right in the middle of the fighting and there was a battle that took place each night that I was there, in which the different factions were trying to eliminate each other, but they were all Muslim factions at this time. They had pretty much destroyed the city of N'Djamena. There were two main players, a man by the name of Goukouni, who was considered closer to the Libyans, and a man by the name of Habrî½, who was closer to the French, among the Muslim factions. They took turns being in the preeminent position. We watched the situation and tried to keep track of who was doing what, but we had no interests in Chad which would warrant the introduction of any resources at this time.

Q: Did the French have the equivalent of what we had in Paris? We had an African watcher in Paris, I think. Did the French have an African watcher in Washington? Did you have any contact with French embassy officials?

BORG: I'm sure I did, but they didn't maintain the same level of portfolio or interest as we did at the embassies in Paris and London. What was more significant was that the French had an office in Paris, which was not part of the Foreign Ministry, which was closer to the President's office, and there was a figure, often a dark figure, who went around solving problems, organizing French interventions in the former Francophone Africa. Again, it was fascinating to see the different roles that the French and the English had taken in their former colonies in the post-independence period. The English felt they had left their British values and just wiped their hands and walked away, and the French seemed far more intent on maintaining a cultural presence, a linguistic presence and, in those cases where they could, an economic presence. So the French remain very strong in a place like the Ivory Coast or Senegal, which had moderate governments that were prepared to work with the French, but even in a place like Chad the French felt that they had a responsibility.

Q: While you were there, did we have any feeling the French had gone too far or should go farther or do anything, or were we just carrying a watching brief?

BORG: I don't think we had a clear vision of that. We on occasions worked with the French; on occasions we didn't work with the French. The French showed great interest in Nigeria because of its oil and they looked to be expanding their interests in Nigeria, but for most of the Francophone countries we didn't particularly have any great interest and so we were not too upset that the French did maintain economic interests and provide stability in these countries. Also, anyplace where the French were located, life was generally much easier for the people in our embassies than it was in places where the French had not been present, because there was a tradition of bakeries and imported wines and things that were generally available, and the French subsidized the economies in these places, as contrasted with the places where the English had been where, once the English were gone, the markets subsisted on local produce.

Q: You were there during the Carter period. Obviously one of the hallmarks of the Carter Administration was human rights. Did you have any problems?

BORG: Well, there were many hallmarks of the Carter Administration: I think human rights and representative government on the political side, and on the economic side basic human needs and trying to promote development from the bottom up. On the human rights front, there were no pronounced problems like ones found in Iran or other places where there were large numbers of dissidents that were held in prison and their rights were being deprived, so human rights was not the issue in West Africa that it might have been in other states. There were no strong police states at that time that were repressing their populations. There were police states, but some of them were more benevolent, some of them were struggling, but none of them had been sort of established themselves.

Q: I don't know if he'd passed from the scene by this time, but in Senegal, Guinea or one of the places along the western, Francophone, there was one quite brutal, well known father-of-his-country figure.

BORG: Sekou Toure?

Q: Sekou Toure.

BORG: In Guinea, yes, he was still on the scene, but he had mellowed. Sekou Toure was the first of the Francophones to throw out the French. They became independent in 1957, and the rest of the countries didn't become independent until 1960, I believe. The French had responded to Sekou Toure's declaration of independence by ripping out the phone jacks and pulling out the lights and making sure that nothing worked. Sekou Toure responded by pursuing a radical socialist approach, but by 1979 this had mellowed and they were beginning to invite back French businessmen, they were trying to build up Conakry and make it into a decent city again. This was not the Sekou Toure of the past. There probably still were some people in prison, but this was not the evil person...

Q: You weren't having to fight Patt Derian in the Human Rights Bureau?

BORG: No, she had many more significant human rights issues to deal with in other places.

Q: Then let's turn to Nigeria.

BORG: Let me go on with the point, human rights. On the assistance side we had to look at basic human needs, and I felt that we poured more money down rat holes in which we were trying to improve health care or education. It wasn't just that we were pouring money down the rat holes; it's that there were so many basic human needs that we were trying to help all at the same time that we spread our money very, very thinly and did almost nothing that made a difference in any of these countries. There were too many different programs, too diverse, and the whole idea that countries were suddenly going to become prosperous because maybe we could change life in a couple villages just didn't work. A third point: Jimmy Carter was known to have tremendous sympathy for Africa.

Andrew Young was making all sorts of headway with Africans at the United Nations, but we found that the Carter White House was very, very difficult to deal with when it came to receiving African visitors. The problems seemed not to be with Carter himself but with the people who surrounded him. Jimmy Carter, being an engineer by training, had an intense interest in the details of everything that was going on, and so anytime he became involved in an issue he became very intensely involved and needed to know an awful lot about what was happening. As a result, his staff, to preserve his time, discouraged him from becoming involved in issues that were not of great importance. I remember particularly two meetings at the White House while I was the country director: one, when the president of Sierra Leone came to the United States and, two, when President Tolbert came. Tolbert may have been the first one. We sent over the briefing books, and I remember seeing President Carter sitting over in a corner outside pouring over the briefing book just before the meeting began, and I was thinking, you know, the President really doesn't have to master the details of these things. All these people want is just a picture taken with the President. But there he was, and he was able to discuss the issues, whatever they might have been, in a very intelligent, concerned, forthright manner. When it came to, I think, Siaka Stevens, the person running Sierra Leone at the time, the White House said no, that the President couldn't see him. Our argument for why the President should see him was that Siaka Stevens was the current head of the Organization of African States and that, since the organization had been founded, every single head of the organization, when they came to the United States, had had a courtesy call with the President and that this would be considered a slight. We were working through Dick Moose and the Bureau, but we just could not get Siaka Stevens an appointment. We had to do something, so we called Jackie Kennedy Onassis' boyfriend in New York, Templeton.

Q: He was in diamonds.

BORG: He was in diamonds and Sierra Leone had diamonds, and so we explained to Templeton's office that we were having problems with the White House, that they knew, of course, that Siaka Stevens was coming and he was expecting to see the President, and we needed some help at getting an appointment. 24 hours later the appointment was on.

Q: That's high diplomacy, to go after the former President's wife's boyfriend.

BORG: It wasn't that; it was the diamond connection. Now, by contrast, I worked these issues for several months when Ronald Reagan was President, and Ronald Reagan never showed the slightest interest in this part of the world, but, boy, when these people came to town, he saw every one of them, he was charming, he'd talk about old movies when them, and they were delighted. It was really interesting to see from our perspective that here is a President that really cares about Africa but doesn't have the time to ever talk to anybody as contrasted with an administration that supposedly has other issues but the President recognizes the importance of his ceremonial role and performs it well.

Q: With Nigeria, because this was the one place you say that had... What was the situation in Nigeria when you arrived? What were we doing?

BORG: Nigeria was at that point one of the largest oil producers in the world, where the United States purchased a large amount of oil. Nigeria had been a military government for a number of years and was making a transition to being a civilian government, and elections were on the horizon. Various political parties were competing with each other as to which party was going to control the country. The politics in Nigeria repeats itself over and over again. You've got the Yoruba people living around Lagos with their candidate, and you've got a couple of candidates from the north, from the Muslim north...

Q: Hausa.

BORG: ...the Hausa commune area, and then there's usually a candidate from the Ebo tribe. So there are usually three or four major groups, but the Christian groups don't cooperate with each other and the Muslim groups don't necessarily cooperate with each other, but the Muslims seem to feel that they have to have the presidency, so if they're not running things, things become unstable. So we were in the process of watching the electoral process, trying to work with the government. I think Steve Lowe was our ambassador. Have you talked with him?

Q: Yes.

BORG: We had a bilateral commission with the Nigerians which met periodically and tried to sort out problems and find projects that we could work on together. Lagos was certainly one of the most awful cities that I ever visited. The embassy usually had terrible morale problems because there was nothing to do in the country other than go to work. The Nigerians were very, very difficult people at that time.

Q: Speaking of which, did you get at all involved in the personnel process of getting people, staffing your embassies?

BORG: The first priority for staffing was taking care of the people at the embassies, but we did what we could to try and figure out which embassies were going to be short on specific kinds of people. It was very, very difficult at this time to find people who wanted to go and work in West Africa. The places weren't particularly pleasant. Those people who liked working in Africa usually didn't want to work their entire careers going from one difficult place to another. There were some very able, dedicated people, but there was trouble finding good people. In a way, we could be more successful with a more senior officer than someone who was younger in this position.

Q: Did you get involved in the process of getting people who had a couple of lousy posts in Africa up into Europe or someplace?

BORG: Not as much as we could have, partly because people didn't bring to our attention the fact that they were unhappy in working in Africa and wanted to go somewhere else. People on the desks were not the ones that they wanted to talk to. They would go and talk with their friends that were working in Europe. Whether we could have made a difference or not, I don't know, but I don't recall anybody ever bringing to my attention that "Look, so-and-so has been here for a long time and deserves to go somewhere else." I worked on this issue more in Personnel than I did in Africa.

Q: When did you leave this job in '81.

BORG: It was May, so I was there for the transition between Carter and the Reagan Administration. Dick Moose left and he was replaced by Chester Crocker.

Q: This was not a hostile takeover, was it? In Latin America it was a hostile takeover.

BORG: I did not feel that it was a hostile takeover. I remember meeting with Chester Crocker. He met with each one of the country directors. He said, "All right, tell me what your priorities are and what you're doing," and I listed the different parts of the region and the different concerns that we had, and he said, "Yes, continue. No, change it." So we altered our policies, I think, in particular with regard to the western Sahara, but that was the only one that I recall offhand that they felt strongly about.

Q: Well, it wasn't really in your province. Were you getting any feeling about why the Reagan Administration switched over to Morocco?

BORG: I may have had some thoughts at the time, but I don't remember.

Q: Did what was happening in South Africa with apartheid and all the tension that that created, did that reflect itself at all in western Africa?

BORG: The Nigerians expressed regular outrage but they really didn't do anything about it. For most of the rest of western Africa, the Francophones were not focused at all on what was happening in southern Africa. The Nigerians were concerned because it was part of the Commonwealth. In Ghana there was too much chaos in their own country at the time. So I would say that it was not a big issue.

Q: You hadn't mentioned Ghana until just now. At one time Ghana was seen as one of the first Anglophone states to cease being a colony and all and there was a lot of anticipation when Nkrumah came in and all. By the time you got there, where was Ghana?

BORG: Nkrumah came to power as a revolutionary leader much as Sukarno had done in Indonesia and others who had fought for independence for their countries. He was a firebrand first and not at all an administrator. He wanted to see Ghana in the ranks of developed countries and he wanted to see this happen quickly. The focus was on industrialization and building steel mills and building a prosperous industrial Ghana. This was 1957. I think Guinea became independent in '58. Ghana became independent in '57, and by the time I came in '79 - that would have been 20-years-plus later - Nkrumah was no longer on the scene, but the remnants of his rule were still there. There had been almost no attention to agriculture in the country, an over-concentration on industrialization, and the country had descended into a very sad level of poverty. There was a coup that had taken place against the elected leaders, maybe in May of 1979, and a group of sergeants had taken over, had selected from among themselves a young flight lieutenant by the name of Jerry Rawlings, a flight lieutenant or something, very low ranking, a half Scottish/half Ghanaian individual that the former government had tried to arrest and execute, but he'd been so eloquent at his trial that he inspired the rest of the army to rise up against the government. They assassinated the former head of state - executed, I guess, is the correct word since they had already removed him from power and then they decided to execute him. So Ghana was very much in a situation of chaos and uncertainty about what was going to happen next. There were talks of elections. There were elections that were scheduled, the elections were postponed, and eventually Jerry Rawlings emerged as the leader of Ghana and proved over the course of the next 15 or 20 years that he was in fact a very effective leader and put Ghana on a path that it followed for a good period of time. It was interesting to contrast Ghana with the Ivory Coast. These were neighboring countries that had similar people, but the different French and English colonial experience and the fact that Ghana had - to make aluminum you need bauxite - Ghana had bauxite and it had some potential for hydropower, and this was going to be the fuel that made Ghana rich. Ivory Coast had nothing except its agriculture to rely on. If you looked 20 years into the independence, there was no question as to which country had succeeded and which one had not. Ghana was a total failure, and the Ivory Coast was doing very well. Abidjan was a very attractive city, it had a very stable leadership, and it showed the difference between what could be done by a government that was management focused rather than rhetorically focused. So Ghana was in very tough shape when I was there. There was nothing available in the market. The soldiers were going around looking for hoarding, arresting people, making life very difficult for Ghanaians. I also developed another political theory at the time, and that was that those people who are truly nice and truly decent end up with the most awful government, and the Ghanaians, as contrasted with some of their neighbors in west Africa, were really friendly, open people, the kind of people that, when you sit down and have a conversation, you felt I'd really like to be a friend of this person. They're really nice people. You really didn't feel this way with some of the other countries where there were people who seemed to have chips on their shoulders and were abrasive in just so many different ways. I didn't meet a single Ghanaian I would have characterized as abrasive.

Q: Well, in '81 you left.

BORG: In '81 I left.

Q: What did you do?

BORG: When Chester Crocker came in, I told him I'd be happy to stay on and extend for another year, but he decided that I was one of the people who was going to leave, so they decided I was going to go to Mali as ambassador. So I went out to one of the countries that I'd been working on as ambassador.

Q: So you went to Mali from '81 to when?

BORG: '84, three years.

Q: What rank were you at that time?

BORG: I may have just become an OC in the new Foreign Service. It was very recent.

Q: So you were in senior ranks at that time?

BORG: Yes, I think I had been just promoted.

Q: We really haven't talked about Mali when you were doing West Africa.

BORG: There were lots of countries.

Q: I know, but I was just going to say it obviously hadn't risen to the top of your interest.

BORG: No.

Q: When you went out there in '81, what was the situation?

BORG: Mali was another poor West African nation that was suffering from the Sahelian drought, had no particular resources of note, and was at the bottom of everybody's list in terms of interests and in terms of potential for the future. Mali did have one thing that gave people cause for concern, and that was that the Russians seemed to have an unusual interest in the future of the country and had spent some money helping the Malians expand some of their airports so that they could take long-distance aircraft. Military strategists knew exactly what that meant, and so if there was a watching brief that I was to maintain out there, it had to do with what the Russians might be doing.

Q: When we talk about the Russians, we're talking about Soviets.

BORG: That's right.

Q: When you look at it, it's all very nice but what do you do with it?

BORG: It leads to where?

Q: You know, I always think of these strategists drawing up these wonderful things, but it is surrounded by a bunch of other countries. Did you ever sit down and try to figure out what does this mean?

BORG: We looked upon the Russian interests just as our military likes to have staging points where they can land aircraft for crises further away, that this was a potential staging craft for southern Africa or possibly even across the Atlantic into South America. None of this was ever specified. Nobody ever told me what this was for, but we were watchful of it. Our own strategic interests in Mali were not on anybody's horizon. That's why they sent me.

Q: Well, you've got to start somewhere. What was the government like?

BORG: The government in Mali when I got there was a dictatorship run by a man by the name of Moussa Traore, a military officer who had taken power maybe three or four years, maybe five years or 10 years, previously and ran the country with a invisible iron hand. I say that because he was considered strong and all powerful and yet his troops were not omnipresent. There was no strong repressive activity that was going on at the time. He had made his points, he had put his enemies in jail, and that was many years beforehand and now he was sort of tolerated by his people and there was no significant political opposition to him. He was a surprisingly uncommunicative leader. One hears about firebrands making speeches and inspiring their people to do something or other. In my conversations with him, I always felt he was ill at ease at the podium and in private conversation. I imagine that in meeting with his cabinet he was probably equally ill at ease. You wondered, just coming in as I did, how is it that this man, who seems like Mr. Milktoast, can be in charge. He just wasn't very dynamic. At the time that I was there, it was a very pragmatic period in the country's governance. We had some excellent ministers that we worked with. My priorities focused very much on economic assistance. As I had seen in the past, our economic assistance programs were a disaster, so I interfered excessively in trying to make our programs effective and trying to prevent AID from canceling programs that were ongoing and seemed like they might succeed just because they weren't the priority of the moment or that some new specialists had come in and said, "This one doesn't make economic sense. We can import wheat more cheaply from the United States than the way they can grow it here." So I was doing almost continuous battle with the economic assistance mission. We established some really interesting programs there. The primary one was focused on food production, in which we recognized that so many countries in this part of the world had done what they could to provide cheap food to the masses in the cities and this had all been at the expense of the rural communities which were no longer prepared to continue to produce the food at the rate that was necessary because the money that they were receiving for it wasn't a living wage. So the food production declined and the economic assistance increased to take its place, and there were food shortages. We recognized that this was something that we ought to try and change. We had a really interesting program with the World Food Program - I guess World Food Program was the name of the organization. Ourselves, the World Bank, the European Community and the French embassy would get together and we actually cooperated on a project that would stimulate agricultural production in the rural areas. The project worked because all of the donors stuck together. We had one minister, the minister of agriculture at the time, who was a very strong supporter of what we were doing, and he'd feed us information: "Put pressure at this point and this point." None of the donors broke with each other. The French did not feel that they had sufficient cause to do anything different than what all of the other donors were doing, and so we worked together and we were successful at forcing a change in agricultural policy in the country which lasted and I think was probably one of the reasons why Mali was able to become a much more successful country in the coming years. It took a couple years to do this.

Q: What were sort of the ins and outs? How were you getting the farmers to receive due recompense for their work?

BORG: This is written up in a World Bank study. The World Bank came out and studied it afterwards. I can't remember all the details, but I know you could find them. We provided food as an incentive. We provided food at one rate one year, a declining rate the next year, and so forth, but we kept the subsidy for food consumption through our food assistance programs but provided a subsidy at the same time for the agricultural producers until we could get a better balance, a level of production that the farmers would produce, at a level that was sufficient incentive for them, and kept food at a reasonable level for the people in the cities.

Q: I was in Korea, and one of the great successes in Korea was that the then dictator, Park Chung Hee, had made sure that the rice farmers did well. The rest of the people paid for the rice at a premium, but there was no great incentive to leave the rice farms to head to the city.

BORG: That was probably a wise policy.

Q: It was considered to be one of the keys. Koreans are hard-working people anyway, but the fact that they didn't denude the countryside.

BORG: The problem in most African nations is that the people who go into the streets and push for an overthrow of a government are the urban people and they are upset most often when the price of food goes higher than what they feel they can pay. So the response in Mali and in other countries around the world has repeatedly been to keep rural production down in order to keep the cost down for people in the cities.

Q: Did the French play much of a role in Mali? Did you find that they were sort of the leading guys?

BORG: I made a point of always telling the French ambassador how much we respected the work that France was doing in Africa. Basically the French were subsidizing the economy of Mali and the other nations in the area because the currency was pegged to the French franc, and when their balance of payments got out of kilter so that the imports exceeded the exports, the French covered the difference. And when the real value of the currency changed, the French covered the difference. The French stepped in. Mali was not part of the franc zone. It didn't have the same franc. They had a Malian franc and there was a West African franc, and the French covered both of them. And Air Mali, the French helped Air Mali survive. So there were many invisibles that were done by the French. As far as we were concerned in the United States, this was great because it kept stability.

Q: Were the Soviets messing around other than laying cement for long runways?

BORG: The Soviets had an even larger presence than we did. Just exactly what they were doing was never clear. This was the beginning of a time with better relations with the Soviet Union. When there would be a signal of some kind of a summit between Reagan and whoever was running the Soviet Union...

Q: Gorbachev.

BORG: No, this was pre-Gorbachev, I think.

Q: Maybe not. We'd run through a series of...

BORG: But we had frequent exchanges with the Soviet embassy in which we would have ping-pong matches or sports competitions or some activity or other. The Soviet embassy was large. The number of Russians and Soviet citizens was greater probably than the number of Americans, and just as I didn't know what all of the Americans were doing sometimes, I couldn't begin to figure out what all the Russians did. Now, the only even greater anomaly was that the Chinese also had a huge embassy, and the Chinese, as far as we know, did nothing at all for the country, but they were large and an important presence. The other country that was an important presence were the Koreans, the North Koreans. They built a cultural center, a huge cultural palace, for the Malians, and I think they imported all of the workers for it. It was an interesting diplomatic situation to become involved in in that the Western nations consisted of the French, the Germans, the European Community and ourselves, and the other representatives were the Chinese, the Russians, the Yugoslavs, the Libyans, the PLO organization, the North Koreans. The Saudis were there too and the Egyptians. There were a number of countries that we didn't readily associate with that were part of the line-up. Whenever we participated in official diplomatic functions, we were always seated in the order in which we presented our credentials, and this is how we moved up the line as people left. But I found myself, for almost the entire time that I was there, between the Palestinian rep and the North Korean, the two people that I had on either side, and I never could figure out just what I might be saying to these people. With the North Korean, of course, there was no language that one could speak in common. He was rumored to have been the chauffeur to somebody.

Q: Was there any political life or anything to report?

BORG: The political life was pretty dead. There were occasions when there were student riots, but there was really nothing happening on the political front. The government was being quite accommodating to outsiders. There was a young man who had gotten his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and he was a very bright economist.

Q: Malian?

BORG: Malian. He came back and could not find any job for a period of time. We followed him very closely because he wanted to talk with us because of his American experience. He was picked up by the Minister of Agriculture, the person that we were working with, and he moved up very quickly once they realized they had this talent in their country. He became a speech writer for the president. So by the time I left he was the president's primary speech writer and he was the one that was writing all of the speeches thanking us for what we were doing and saying that now here's what we're going to do in the future. This man left the country shortly after I did, but when they overthrew Moussa Traore, a group invited him to come back and be the chief of state, so he was the interim chief of state for a couple of years. He was still in his mid-30's when he did this. The point that I was trying to make was that, yes, this was a military dictatorship but it was really quite open to outsiders and bringing talent back. We saw, over the course of the time that we were there, a lot of the Malian people who had fled to France and taken jobs as sweepers and working in the airport were coming back and were involved in commerce, and commercial life was expanding and it was not restricted in any way. Mali, despite its friendship with the Soviet Union, was moving away from being a socialist state. It had never adopted the rhetoric of other socialist states, and it had curiously kept as the Secretary of the Air Force one of the most pro-American military officers I think I'd ever met. Yes, we were concerned about the Soviets, but we felt that Moussa Traore kept the Soviets off guard by having someone who was clearly anti-Soviet as their primary contact. He used to tell us all the time, "Here's what's happening."

Q: Did you have a political section, economic section? What were you all doing?

BORG: It was a small embassy. We had one person doing political reporting, one person doing economic reporting. We had an international relations officer. I focused my attention mostly on assistance matters. Despite the fact that we had something like 30 Americans in our AID office, there wasn't a single one of them that spoke French well enough that they could participate in these meetings where we were trying to adjust the economic policies of the country and make the agricultural sector more productive. So I attended a lot of these meetings myself, and then I found a Belgian who was a World Bank employee whose wife was working in the country, and I got the AID mission to hire him. So we had a Belgian as our principal liaison working on food security because there was nobody in the mission who had the capability in French or who had the portfolio that would let them go out and look at whatever the small project of the day was.

Q: Looking at the AID mission, did you find the problem that you talked about before, that these were people somewhat removed from everything?

BORG: Absolutely, totally. There were some who were absolutely awful, others who tried hard, but the people who implemented the projects were the people who worked for the contract organizations. I used to go out in the countryside as often as I could. I like to travel, like to go out to villages. I went around and I went to every single Peace Corps house and spent time with different people in different villages. The AID people complained that I was going to visit their project more often than they were. I said, "That's not my fault. That's your fault. You should be going out twice as often as I am to see what's happening at projects. You shouldn't be going out there only when I decide I'm going to go and see what's happening." But they were so tied up at internal meetings, writing memos back and forth to each other, getting approval from Washington and finding out where different papers were lost in Washington that they rarely had time to manage the programs that they were supposed to be managing.

Q: How did you get on with your AID director?

BORG: Very well. We had a polite relationship. I got along very well with him. Just as often as I harassed him about various programs, I made a point of going to bat for him and the programs when I went back to Washington. I spent more time on AID issues than I did on other issues, and I battled his bureaucracy for him to get the resources needed to do the jobs that we were doing. So we had a very good relationship.

Q: Was there any change with the Reagan Administration and how AID was administered?

BORG: It was a repeat of what I had seen in previous administrations, that "We have a new set of priorities, so we now want to focus on rewriting everything that we're doing, redesigning everything that we're doing, and refocusing what we're doing. Forget about the past projects. Let's move on to something new." So from my perspective it was one more round of misapplication of resources.

Q: How about the Peace Corps? What was your impression?

BORG: I had followed the Peace Corps very closely. I had been overseas as a former volunteer. The Peace Corps was involved in a number of discrete projects. When I got there the Peace Corps was scattered pretty widely throughout the country, but they had moved so that they were all within maybe a two-day drive from the capital at the most so that they could be managed more effectively. The number of volunteers grew while I was there, and the number of extensions of their people after their two years expired. There was something like a 60 percent request to stay on for a third year. To my mind that signals a program that the volunteers like. It got excellent ratings in the villages everywhere that we went. The volunteers seemed to enjoy themselves, seemed to be involved in specific projects, and seemed to be appreciated by the villagers. They were involved in small-scale agricultural production, they were involved in health care and community development. They were all rural sorts of projects, again still focused on basic human needs. But I felt that per dollar spent we got much more out of our Peace Corps investment than we did out of the AID investment. In fact, if one had to measure the impact of the total AID mission with the impact of the Peace Corps, the Peace Corps was probably more effective. We also had something called the Ambassador's Self Help Fund which we could use to fund projects that villagers had come up with on their own or which Peace Corps had come up with and wanted, I think, up to \$10,000 to build something, to build a dam or a bridge or something or other like that in a particular community. I remember going out and looking at a series of dams that we had constructed for a very small amount of money using village labor and comparing them with the more expensive dams that the AID mission had built, and feeling that for what they were trying to accomplish the small-scale project was probably the much more effective one. I saw this over and over again, that with AID we would try to do things that were too big, that we couldn't manage, that were not appropriate, that we tried to universalize some program or some idea that just didn't take.

Q: With the Peace Corps was there sort of a new breed of cat? At one point the Peace Corps had been full of people who had sort of joined in the movement of the '60's and '70's sort of against government but they wanted to get out and do something, and so they were trying to keep themselves pretty aloof from the embassy and all. Did you find a difference?

BORG: I felt that the idealism on the part of the volunteers wasn't much different from the idealism that I had experienced when I first joined the Peace Corps myself. I never felt any particular hostility from the Peace Corps towards myself or to other people in the embassy, but I'm not sure if part of that wasn't because we went out of our way to talk with the Peace Corps people when they first arrived and go out and visit them when they were in their communities and try to help them solve problems within their communities. If they were having difficulties with some local official, on more than one occasion I would try to meet with that official to see what we could do to solve their problems. Again, I did this usually with somebody from the Peace Corps, and it was only after the Peace Corps staff had said, "Look, this is a tough one. Will you help us on it?" and so I intervened and we could usually work some of these things out. So there may have been less sensitivity to people from the embassy from the non-Peace Corps community, but we also worked at it.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover? I take it the military in Mali was pretty well taken care of by the French.

BORG: We had a military attaché^{1/2} out of Dakar. They came and visited periodically and we would have receptions for them. We had a small IMET training program in which we sent military officers to the United States and, again, particularly with the Air Force but with the other services I also had what I felt were pretty good relations. I could talk with them about any particular subject short of "What are the Russians doing today?" They were trying to keep us off balance and they were trying to keep the Russians off balance.

Q: How about UN votes? Did they go along with the OAU?

BORG: We, as most missions, would regularly take the American position into the foreign ministry and say, "This important issue is coming up, and here is the American position and here's why." There were no serious issues where I was asked personally to become involved in pushing Mali for a particular UN vote. We didn't have much leverage, and Mali was known for being much more in the socialist camp than in the camp of nations friendly to the United States, so perhaps there was nobody in Washington who thought it was worth the effort. But I was happy with that, because the sorts of things that they were usually pushing us on were to condemn the Cubans for something or other - the issues were so far removed from anything that the Malians had ever thought of that they would have considered it rather high-handed, that for the 20 cents that we were providing we thought that they could be stiff-armed. So we let them know, and this was one of the primary activities for the political officer, to take these notes over and make that position known.

Q: Who was your DCM?

BORG: I had a series of DCM's. The first DCM was a man by the name of John Vincent, and John stayed for a year and then he was having problems with his wife. He decided that he really couldn't live in the place where he and his wife had been living and so he left, and his wife stayed for a while and then she left. He married another Foreign Service Officer. Then it was very late in the cycle, so I asked the PAO, who was a Foreign Service Officer on detail to USIA, I asked him if he would stay for another year as DCM. He thought that was a great opportunity, so he did. He stayed for a year. That was Chuck Cecil, who became ambassador eventually to Niger among other places, I guess. Then for the third one I was able to get into the bid cycle and I chose - he's a good guy; he became ambassador to Sri Lanka. Anyway, he came for the third year and he did a very good job. I was very pleased.

Q: It's probably a good place to stop, isn't it?

BORG: There may be some things I think about in retrospect.

Q: So we'll stop here at '84 when you left Mali. Where did you go?

BORG: I went back to Washington. I had just gotten married, and so I didn't want to stay overseas. My wife had joined me in Mali, and we decided we wanted to go back to Washington but what we were going to do we weren't sure. I got a call from Robert Oakley, who had been in Zaire. We'd never crossed paths there, and I didn't know him. He said he'd just been asked to be the Director of the Office for Counterterrorism and he wanted me to be the deputy, and I said, "I don't know if I've had the recent experience that qualifies me for counterterrorism." He said, "Well, neither do I, but I want you to be my deputy." So I agreed to come back and work with Bob Oakley.

Q: Okay, we'll pick it up then. Just one other thing, because I like to get a little of the flavor of this: What was the background of your wife?

BORG: My wife was a Foreign Service Officer. We worked in the same office in West African Affairs. She was working on Liberia when I was working on Mali, but we were each attached to other people at the time. I had a serious outside interest, as did she, and it wasn't until we left and severed our other interests that we got together again. She had gone to Rome from West African Affairs and I had gone off to Mali. We began dating. We got married while I was in Mali, and she came and joined me for the last six months.

Q: Okay, so we'll pick this up in 1984 when you went out to combat the terrorists.

Today is the seventh of October 2002. Parker, in 1985 you were going out to combat terrorism. What was the job?

BORG: It was 1984, it was the summer of 1984, and Bob Oakley had asked me to come back and work with him as his deputy in the Office of Counterterrorism. I knew little about the job. I arrived in August before he arrived. The office was then headed by Ambassador Robert Sayre, and I worked with him for the first couple of weeks before Bob Oakley arrived, but I do recall that the very first weekend that I got there, something like August 24th, there was a hijacking, and that would be the pattern of the way things would be for the duration of the next two years that I worked in that office. There seemed to be hijackings or terrorist incidents almost continuously.

Q: When you say a hijacking, did you gear up if it was a hijacking of a Russian, or at this time a Soviet, plane by Chechnyan people? Or was this only ones that concerned us?

BORG: We were concerned about hijackings especially if they were American aircraft or, secondarily, if there were Americans aboard the aircraft and, in a third position, if they were the aircraft of a friendly government where we might have some kind of other relationship.

Q: These things change. In this '84 to '86 period, what constituted in our definition 'terrorism'?

BORG: Well, the number of incidents increased dramatically about 1983-84, and the predominant view when we came into the office was that there was a very close Russian connection behind most terrorism around the world. Clair Sterling had written a book which tied the Russians to the assassination of the Pope...

Q: The attempted assassination.

BORG: ...excuse me, the attempted assassination - and pointed out that most of the Palestinian groups had had training that was supported by countries that were supported by the Soviet Union, that East Germany provided haven for terrorist groups and that, if you looked carefully at every single terrorist group, you could find a Russian connection. I guess, in addition, there were all of the leftist guerilla groups in Europe, the Red Army faction...

Q: Bader Meinhof.

BORG: ...Bader Meinhof gang. All of them, Italy, France, Belgium, Japan, they all had leftist terrorist groups. Bob in particular felt that this was not correct, that the correct way to look at terrorism was that there were individual causes in each one of the countries that had led people to become terrorists and that in the Middle East it was very dangerous to try and tie the Soviet Union to all the different terrorist-related activities, and that in Western Europe there may have been leftist groups but there was no clear evidence that the Soviet Union was in fact supporting what they were doing, that they seemed often to be independent operators who were pursuing their own leftist agenda.

Q: Now, in a way, given the time period, this would have been rather unpopular in the power structure.

BORG: We suspected that it would be but, in fact, by declining to emphasize a Russian connection and focusing on the local groups that were behind the different incidents and seeking programs to combat the terrorist problem individually within each country, we essentially went beyond the simplistic notion that there was a Soviet connection. There was another issue that was going on at the same time and that was, because of the considered threat to Americans, there was a commission that had been set up in mid-1984 that became known as the Inman Commission that looked at diplomatic security outside the United States and what do we need to do to beef up the protection of American diplomats overseas. This quickly got confused with the whole question of counterterrorism, and we had to fight a bureaucratic battle to stay separate from the new diplomatic security office. We argued that diplomatic security was essential to protect American embassies and American government personnel overseas but that was not our issue. Our issue was the broad question of terrorism as a policy and the way it impacted on our foreign relations and the way it affected American citizens in general, not just the American official community. It took us a while to convince people that this was a separate issue, but eventually we were able to keep ourselves separate from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. We were originally, for the first year or so, operating under the Deputy Under Secretary for Management - I guess he was called the Deputy Under Secretary for Management at the time. After about a year the office was changed from being MCT to being SCT. We became an adjunct to the Secretary's office.

Q: Diplomatic security, was this the normal bureaucratic tug-and-pull of trying to expand its horizons, do you think, or was it just a misperception?

BORG: The Inman Commission created a vast new bureaucracy which greatly expanded what the activities of what had previously had a different name - it wasn't Diplomatic Security - and there was a great augmentation of personnel brought into the organization. Diplomatic security officers were assigned to posts throughout the world, standards were created for what embassies needed to be like, and there was a tremendous emphasis on protecting the American diplomatic presence outside the United States. It was much more a question for us of maintaining our identity and maintaining the policy issue, that this was not a part of protecting American diplomatic personnel. That was the purpose, that was their program and they should do it. We did not feel that the Diplomatic Security people should be the ones dealing with foreign governments when it came to general terrorist issues, that this was a clear and separate issue which would have gotten lost in diplomatic security.

Q: In a way, I can see you had two customers, clients, or people you went after. One would be the intelligence people within the United States, the CIA, the FBI, INR and the military, to feed you information, but the other one would be foreign governments, particularly the police powers or their investigative powers. Let's talk about the overseas operation first. What were you doing?

BORG: Overseas we were, for the first year or so, responding to terrorist incidents as they occurred and participating on almost a weekly basis in task forces back in Washington where we were attempting to resolve these crises. There were the individual crises, individual terrorist incidents, the various hijackings that took place; and the second type of crisis was the continuing presence of hostages in Lebanon, and an organization known as Hezbollah kept taking Americans in Beirut and holding them hostage. This was an issue that was there when we started in the office and was there when I left the office. It was a continuing high-profile and very difficult issue that we spent an awful lot of time on. This goes back to your original question of how were embassies organized. I'm trying to think if we had a counterterrorism coordinator. I don't think so, because if there was an incident, then the ambassador and the DCM and everybody became involved, and when there wasn't an incident, we were focused somewhere else. So it wasn't the sort of thing where there was a continuing problem. The bureaucracies in Washington were far more complicated. We first had to sort out our relationship with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and between ourselves and the different regional bureaus as to who took the lead when something occurred outside the United States. The third level was the relationship with the CIA and military. I think that it came to a draw within the Department, because we were quite successful at dealing with the CIA and the military and the FBI in bringing everything under a common umbrella over the course of the time that we were working in the office. Once it was established that we were separate from DS, we went to Ambassador Spiers' daily meetings where we talked about security, but there was rarely a question again of what was our issue and what was their issue. Essentially that was resolved. When there was a hijacking or something of that nature and a task force was established, there was always the issue of were we in charge of it or was the regional bureau going to be in charge. The way it worked out, for the most part, was that, since the Middle Eastern Bureau had so much experience and so many people who had worked these issues, we had sort of a co-equal relationship with them when there was an incident, but when it was one of the other regions in the Department, we had the expertise and the region didn't, so they deferred to us.

Q: Let's take the Middle East. In a way, the whole time you were there, there were people like Terry Anderson sitting in a closet somewhere in Beirut. I would think, one, there would be a standing committee almost dealing with this.

BORG: There was.

Q: What were you doing?

BORG: This will be a story that will weave its way through all of our discussions. I believe it was in maybe November of 1984 when I went over to one of the first meetings at the White House in the Situation Room chaired by a lieutenant colonel by the name of Oliver North, who informed us - I think Bob Oakley had been to the meeting the previous week, but I was at the one that week - that the President wanted to make sure that the hostages were all released by Christmas, and he wanted us to come back in a week and report what were going to be our initiatives to see that the hostages in Lebanon were all going to be released by Christmas. We scurried about, we tried this and we tried that, we contacted embassies, we met intermediaries, talked with different people about what might be done, and came back and said, "Well, here are the things that we're doing." But Christmas came and passed, and the hostages had not been released. At the next meeting, the first week of 1985, Oliver North said, "The President wants the hostages released by the inauguration." This would have been four years after the Iran hostages had been released, and "the President doesn't want publicity that there are hostages at this time."

Q: So we're talking about January 20th.

BORG: Yes, '85, because it had been '81 when the Iranian hostages were released. So once again we go back and we scurry and we talk with people. Jesse Jackson was one of the people who thought he could get the hostages released. Various distinguished and not so distinguished people in the Middle East all had their gimmick, their reason why they thought something could be done, and we talked with every single one of these people and said, "What can you do?" We would give them facilitation, embassy assistance, when they went out to the region to talk with people and to go into Beirut and see what they could do. But again nothing happened. So these meetings continued over the course of the next year or year and a half, always with some new deadline and some threats that we needed to get rid of this problem, we needed to end this really serious threat to people in Lebanon. The participants at the meeting were ourselves, the CIA, someone from the Joint Chiefs office, somebody from the FBI, and they brought in occasionally people from DEA because DEA had contacts through drug connections in different parts of the world, but the Middle East Bureau generally was not a participant because Ollie didn't trust the people in NEA. So we attended the meetings and we made sure that NEA was informed what was happening and so forth. This was the counterterrorism working group; I'm sure it had some initials, which I've forgotten.

Q: Were there any promising leads? I'm sure everybody's mind was cranked up, but what seemed to be the essential that was keeping them from being released?

BORG: The essential issue that seemed to keep them from being released was that there had been an attack against the American embassy in Kuwait and the Kuwaiti government had caught the attackers and several of them were members of an organization called Hezbollah from Lebanon. The kidnappers let it be known that if certain Hezbollah people in Kuwait were released, then they were prepared to release the Americans. That was one story. On the other hand, there were radicals within Lebanon who were trying to force Americans out of the Middle East, and so by making life threatening in Lebanon they thought that the Americans would all leave. So they focused on journalists, they focused on people at the American University in Beirut, they focused on missionaries, because there weren't many Americans left and those who were there at the time were largely sympathetic to the Arab cause, but they were under continuing threat and there was always danger that somebody else was going to be picked up. I think the CIA station chief was one of the people that they had seized at this time, so we had a somewhat differing approach from that of the CIA that seemed far more interested in convincing the Kuwaitis to make some kind of accommodation than we did at the State Department. We were much firmer in that we don't negotiate with terrorists; and just because some American official is seized, we should not give in to the demands because that just puts more American officials at risk of being seized by other groups who want something else.

Q: Did you feel that, for example, the CIA was sharing what it knew with everyone else? How did you feel about this?

BORG: When we started working on counterterrorism, we were appalled at how inadequate the CIA was at dealing with this sort of an issue. They had someone called an NIO for Counterterrorism, National Intelligence Officer for Counterterrorism, who was supposed to gather information from the various directorates and be able to make a statement from the CIA point of view, but there was no office that looked specifically at counterterrorism. So what you had in the case of the kidnapping in the Middle East was the Middle East office at the CIA trying to solve this independently of any thought of what this might mean for counterterrorism in general. We went to Duane Clarridge, who was the Deputy Director for Operations at the time, the number two or three person within the CIA. Bob Oakley and I went out for a meeting with him - we'd both known him from the past - and said, "Look, terrorism is heating up, this is a very, very serious problem, and we don't think the CIA is organized to deal with these issues in the way that it should be. You have one person working this issue, and he is incredibly ineffective. You need more than a change in this one person; you need a change in the whole way that you're doing business. Duane Clarridge sort of listened and he said, "You know, I hear you. I understand we've got to change things. We will not only change this person but we will set up an office for counterterrorism." So they established shortly thereafter what was an integrated operation between the analysts and the operational people in which they looked at terrorism from the whole and it was no longer just a regional issue. It began slowly and it wasn't as effective in the beginning as it would be later, but we did get things started in that direction, or in a direction that we thought was going to be a positive one. So we were very pleased eventually.

Q: I don't know how it is, and I'm obviously not very familiar with the setup in the CIA, but you always hear about the analytical side and the operations side and that there was a real wall between the two. Was this one of the first times...?

BORG: This was the first time that they broke down that wall. They put the analysts and the operational people in the same offices to be working together. They then did this for narcotics several years later, but at this time this was the first office. It was revolutionary for the CIA, as far as I know. Maybe somebody can cite some previous occasion but...

Q: Were you picking up any sort of disgruntlement, "We've always done it this way or that," or were they ready and willing to...?

BORG: The agency at the top was ready and willing, and the people that they put into it claimed to be ready and willing, but I remember going to a social function where I met some old-line CIA people and talked with them about this very positive development, and this one person said, to me, "Well, you know, that's all well and good, but that's not where our bread is buttered and they're never going to get the good people in there, because as far as we're all concerned the big issue is the Soviet Union and that's where we're going to focus our attention. Yes, this center is there, but it's not going to get the attention that you think it is."

Q: I would have thought that the heat that was coming from the White House - because Ronald Reagan was saying, "You've got to do something," and Ollie North was taking the ball and running with it...

BORG: We think the President was saying these things. I'm sure that the President expressed concern on several occasions about terrorism to Bud McFarland, who was the National Security Advisor, and Bud may have expressed the President's interest to Ollie, but Ollie was very, very good at magnifying whatever might have been said. So we don't know, we never did know, just exactly what the President had said, and in the various Iran Contra hearings that emerged two years later it was even less clear what the President might have said and when he might have said something.

Q: When one looked at the record, he found that Ollie North and the President really weren't sitting down every day and talking to each other. I think they'd met maybe once or twice.

BORG: This was not 'Mr. Hands-On Bill Clinton, President' where he sort of has his pulse on every single issue that occurs. Reagan was far more of a delegator and much more of a generalist.

Q: Were you getting any signs of what became the Iran Contra affairs, in other words, our going around and talking about deals with the Iranians, or anything like that?

BORG: This emerged in November of 1985. I think we can pick that up later because, as I said a little bit ago, this would be a continuing issue. We're talking about early 1985 at this point. I'd like to go back to this, but maybe we can talk about the military and how they were organized, and the FBI and how some of these things evolved. Rather than discussing each one of the incidents and how we dealt with it, there were a number of generalized problems. One of the first that we discovered was that the new Bureau of Diplomatic Security was sending in its own messages through the DS channel and these would not be available for anybody back in the Department, and likewise the embassies were sending things in through their channels that would not be shared with DS if they were ex-dis or whatever it might be. We decided that we really needed to get our own act together within the State Department and also hopefully bring the CIA and the military attachés into a common reporting system. We had a meeting with all of the different parties in which we agreed to establish something called the 'terrep', which was a terrorist report. We worked out what the distribution on these messages would be, how they would be shared, how many copies there would be that were distributed, and so forth. So there were 'terreps' and 'terrep exclusives' that the CIA was to provide contributions to, the DS people were to contribute to, and the embassy people would contribute to overseas, with the objective that the information that was being collected about terrorist suspects and terrorist activities would be disseminated to all the people that needed to know back in Washington and not just to the specific channel that had organized the report in the beginning. I'm not sure how those fare at present, but at that time and for the next decade they were very effective.

Q: One of the complaints that came out - because we are talking about the post-September 11th 2001 attack on the World Trade Center - there have been inquiries, and the implication of it was that the FBI and the CIA didn't get along and really weren't sharing much. They're really two quite different cultures, weren't they?

BORG: Absolutely.

Q: Was this reflected in what you were doing?

BORG: It has become a much more serious problem than it was back then. The FBI was just beginning to move into overseas operations and have legal attachés at a growing number of posts, and the FBI was very interested in interrogating, interviewing, people who had been hostages or been present at a hijacking, had been observers of a hijacking, so that it could build its legal case. It was at this time that American laws were expanded so that we could prosecute in American courts people who were convicted of harming Americans through terrorist activities outside the United States. So they became very, very interested and they began increasing their personnel that they had involved. Let me get back to that one by talking about the military side.

The prime component in the military response was an organization now called Special Operations, then it was called JSOC, and JSOC components consisted of the Delta Force, which the Army, the Seal Team, which belonged to the Navy, and a special airlift capacity belonging to the Air Force. Our office of SCT was the principal interface in the Department with these organizations. We worked with them by having within our office people from the Special Operations Command. We had an Air Force officer and an Army officer who had experience and were accepted by the JSOC community, and these people sat in on all of our meetings, and when there was an incident and something needed to be done, they would be the interface. When one of the hostages was released - I believe it was Father Jenko - sometime in 1985, General Steiner, who was the head of the Joint Special Operations Command, went out and met this man in Lebanon. He had a ship in the Middle East at the time and he was out there, so he went and he interviewed Father Jenko and asked him all sorts of questions that he thought were important for the Special Operations people, questions that were basically operational. How do we find these people and attack them, was the thing that was of interest to the military. Father Jenko then was brought back to the United States, and the FBI wanted to talk to him, the CIA wanted to talk to him, and so forth, because they each had their separate interests. Father Jenko said, "I'm sorry. I gave everything to the first person that interviewed me. I'm not going to go through this all again." Of course, there were no notes that were kept from the JSOC people, so there never was any information that came from this kidnapping for the other agencies. So we pondered on this and came up with a joint approach that we would use henceforth in which, when there was someone who was released, all of the agencies would agree on who was the lead agency for interviewing him, and each agency would submit its own set of questions. This forced the CIA and the JSOC people to begin working together on this, and the FBI to come in also. So they all had their separate sets of questions. Henceforth, whenever there was a release, it was a unified approach that we had put together in our office, but we were the intermediary. We were the more disinterested party. We didn't have the specific operational or intelligence questions that we wanted to present. We wanted to see them working together. There was a second aspect to this, and that was on the operational side, that we established something called the Interagency Response Team - I think that's what it was called at the time. That was because, when a terrorist incident occurred and we were looking for a way to resolve it, each of the agencies, the two main agencies, the JSOC people and the CIA people, wanted to be on the ground first and be the ones who were taking care of it. So we forced the two of them to begin working together to set up a team. At first, they were always headed by a State Department person, which would call in the Interagency Response Team and they would fly into a particular place and try to sort out the problem as best they could and make preparations for JSOC people to come in if they were going to, to provide additional intelligence resources for the host government, but it was a coordinated effort. We used this on several occasions, most notably during the hijacking of the summer of 1985 and then the ship hijacking, Achille Lauro, in the summer of 1985. There were these two incidents that occurred sort of right on top of each other. But we had teams that were flying around, of State Department-led Agency and JSOC people who were consulting with the government in Algeria, the government in Italy, all the different governments in the area: "Here is what we can do. Here's how we can assist. Do you want us to have a CIA team or a JSOC team on the ground." But we made them sit down together and present this as a common front rather than as competing resources, and made them combine their approach and decide, okay, CIA does this best and Special Forces does this best and here's how we can work it together.

Q: There must have been an awful lot of people's noses out of joint at one point or another.

BORG: We did a lot of head banging to get these things. Bob Oakley did most of it, and he's a good head banger. When we set up the Interagency Response Team, he couldn't make it and so at the last minute he said, "I can't do this. You go out to the CIA and just set this up." We went out and banged heads and had agreement. They agreed that the problem was serious enough that they needed to work together and that this was a reasonable solution.

Q: Did you feel that the military in the JSOC group, had they in a way learned their lesson from the botched attempt to rescue our hostages in Iran? It was apparent at the time that it could have been done better, much better.

BORG: I don't know, because I never asked anybody this question and I had the sense that personnel turned over in a manner that in three or four years the collective memory of what might have happened and gone wrong in the past was no longer there and that we were dealing with the players who were there at the time. They came to recognize that they needed to work together rather than to work separately.

Q: Was there any playbook? You know, you look at how you did this and it didn't work or this seemed to work. In other words, was anybody keeping sort of a historical record to see what worked and what didn't work?

BORG: No, because they were too busy and we were constantly modifying what we were doing. Nobody was keeping track of what was working specifically as a record, but we were constantly having meetings and saying, "This one didn't work so well, so in the future let's modify it this way or that way." Again, the key players for modifying all these things turned out to be JSOC liaison officers. They monitored these things very, very carefully and they wanted JSOC to be as effective as possible and so they were prepared to push their people to change the way they were doing things. We had the confidence of the Deputy Director for Operations, so the people who were running the counterterrorism center were not the senior kings that manned the different regional offices but they were people who were more amenable to working together.

Q: We're getting into bureaucracy, but this whole terrorism thing is a bureaucratic problem. You mentioned the CIA were saying the big show is the Soviet Union, but also in the Department of State there's a difference an operational bureau - I'm a consular officer by trade - and the geographic bureaus have the pizzazz and they also have the jobs, which means that if you want to go somewhere you'd better get along with the geographic bureau or you might not get a job next time around. Were you feeling this as getting your people and yourself even. Oakley has a name and he went on to bigger and better things, but how about the troops?

BORG: We were a small office. We had a number of interagency people working there. We even brought some DS people in to run our training program because we had to work closely with DS. We had the money. They did some of the training, so we brought some DS people in to help work on the training but they were part of our office. We had some outstanding officers, people that we had really pushed to recruit. A number of people whom we wanted to get we couldn't because they got a better offer in a regional bureau, and almost everybody wanted to go work in a regional bureau. We has some outstanding GS employees. We had some people who were recommended to us by people in the regional bureaus, people they really respected but who were out of favor with somebody at the moment and so they weren't able to do anything but they would be welcomed back under some future administration. Most of our officers were sufficiently junior that we were taking in people who were relatively low in the pecking order and we didn't care what cone they were from. We got people from a variety of cones, and there were a number of consular officers and admin officers who were delighted to have an opportunity to be operational this way. I think you've raised a real issue that all functional bureaus face. Certainly when I got ready to leave SCT there was nobody that was very anxious to hire me, but I essentially had decided at that point that I'd spent eight years working on African affairs and that wasn't my big interest. I didn't want necessarily to go back and work in Africa. I was interested in other things, and just where or when or how I never thought about.

Q: Where in all this did the NSA fit, the National Security Agency, which collects intelligence from communications intercepts?

BORG: Well, the National Security Agency would have fit into this generally through the CIA. We did not have direct contact with them. We would make our requests to the CIA. The CIA was in that sort of intelligence. They were not in NSA. They were not one of the direct players.

Q: In terrorism these are often amateur groups or something who are moving around quickly and all. Did you feel you were getting good intelligence in time?

BORG: No. I can really understand the dilemma that the people had in looking at the 9/11 attacks and looking at any future attack in the United States. We had a number of people, and the CIA had even more people that were constantly scrutinizing all of the data that was coming in. The problem was generally there was too much data to look at in a timely manner, the data was not very specific as to exactly what was going to occur or where it might occur or when it might occur, and there were all of these generalized threats. It was next to impossible to begin to predict when something might happen. We knew that times were dangerous, and we knew that things could happen at any place. There were at the time a wide range of terrorist groups. There were all of the separate groups within Europe, and I want to talk about them and how we dealt with the European ones. There were the groups within the Middle East. There were the groups within Latin America. One of the points about the groups in Latin America that's very important is that we decided there had to be a distinction between the terrorist groups and insurgent groups. So we declined from our office to consider the various groups in Central America, the Sandinistas and the El Salvador groups, or the Palestinian groups as being terrorist per se. Some of the Palestinians were terrorists, but we declined to accept Yasser Arafat's group as a terrorist organization. We resisted the pressure that came from groups that said, "Well, these guys are just as bad as the other terrorists," so we established an informal definition that those groups that were inflicting random violence with anonymous faces were terrorist groups whereas the groups that seemed to be broader political movements that were fighting for change in governments via a broad-based political effort that included terrorism, that was not going to be terrorism by our definition.

Q: We got our own group, the Contras, as a matter of fact.

BORG: That's right.

Q: In a way, you're harking back to what we all knew as kids and these were called anarchists, particularly in Europe and particularly in Russia. They tossed bombs and all, and there wasn't any great political movement behind it.

BORG: That's right. So we tried to focus our attention on the more anarchist type threat rather than the political movement. We felt we would be lost if we tried to deal with the political movements because then you're getting very much into the internal politics of a particular country.

Q: Did you have a problem while you were doing this because the Israeli lobby is so powerful in our government even today? They want to castigate anything that poses a threat to Israel as being terrorist rather than a political movement.

BORG: We worked very closely with officials from Israel, and there was usually a designated Israeli counterterrorism officer with whom we had regular meetings. We talked about common problems, we shared information, but we declined consistently to accept their definition of terrorism. One man in particular was incredibly persistent. He used to call our office at eight o'clock US time each day because he knew people would be sitting at their desks and it was before the day had begun and so he could reach people and talk with them, and he would make his points repeatedly: "We want to do this, we want to do that." They were very, very strong and very persistent, and we had a working group with them that met periodically on a regular basis, but we declined to accept their definition of who were terrorists. We had our own set of definitions. Because we were working with them very closely, we never got the pressure from the political side that we weren't cooperating.

Q: Let's turn to Europe, shall we? How did we see Europe? In Europe it ends up that an awful lot of it's a police matter, isn't it, or ministry of interior?

BORG: In every country it's a ministry of interior matter. What we found in Europe was separate terrorist groups operating within almost every one of the countries from across the border in the next country, and they were usually given free rein. German terrorists were given free rein in France, and the Belgian terrorists were given free rein in Germany, and the French could get free rein in Italy, and so forth. So everybody was looking the other way and pretending that, well, "As long as they don't bother us here, it's not a problem." In all of our meetings with Europeans, we talked about these sorts of issues and that they were never going to deal effectively with the European terrorism problem until they could recognize that anarchist terrorists against any group are a threat to every group, and that the French had to turn against all of the Germans and the Spaniards that were working within their country, and the Spaniards had to turn against the Italians and the French that were working in their country, and so forth. It took awhile. There was a bombing in Berlin of a discotheque in late 1985, and we said it was a Libyan connection. I'll have to check my dates on this. A delegation went to Europe headed by Oakley, which went around from one country to the next and talked with them about, "We need to do something about this Libyan connection with these bombings, and unless we can get some kind of unified action, the United States will take action by itself." The Europeans said, "Yes, yes, yes," and a month later nothing had happened. I think it was the Deputy Secretary who was the next person who went out on a similar mission to talk with the Europeans about the need for common action against terrorism. Again, lots of head nodding and lots of jawboning, but nothing happened. It was at this point that the United States decided to take action itself. I think this may have been April of '86. We sent our planes against Benghazi and Tripoli. We bombed strategic points in these two cities which sent the Europeans aghast. We went back to them and said, "Look, we'd been talking with you about this. We've said that you need to take action, we all need to take action together, and that if you weren't going to act with us, then we were going to act on our own." The Europeans suddenly sat up and took notice. They did the things that we had suggested they do some time before, close down the Air Libya offices that were being used for counterterrorism purposes, to expel a certain number of Libyan diplomats who had been involved in questionable activities, and essentially adopted our agenda. But, more than that, they began meeting within the European Union about terrorism issues in general and began cleaning up their own act and halting the complicities that separate governments had with terrorist groups within their own country. It was at that point that European terrorism sort of dried up, and there really hasn't been much talk since 1986 of the Bader Meinhof gang, of the Red Army faction, all these groups. They just disappeared, and it was a question in my mind that the Europeans finally got together and said, "Hey, we've got to do something about this. We've each got to halt the terrorist activities that are happening against our neighbors from within our own country." An important factor leading them to do this was the way we had acted against Libya.

Q: One keeps coming back to the problem that often it takes action and usually it ends up by being the United States. The European Union, or then the Commonwealth, I guess, they end to be rather lax as far as dealing with things, hoping it will go away or something, and allowing for a certain level of turbulence.

BORG: I think the Europeans are much more tolerant of this kind of turbulence than we are, and because we are a larger country and because they have closer proximity with their neighbors, they've always had to be more concerned about "We really don't want to bring these problems to our shores, so let's just be quiet." The European Union had had a tough time sort of developing a common foreign policy, a common internal policy, a common internal security policy. It's a very tough issue.

Q: I was in Greece '70 to '74 and we had a couple of Palestinian attacks on airlines, or at least one major one, and the Greeks caught a bunch of people and they let them go after a very short time.

BORG: When I was dealing with terrorism issues, Greece was probably the most frustrating country in Europe to work with. While Bob and I were in the office, we helped the Bureau of Consular Affairs upgrade their security advisories on what places were dangerous, and one of the places we convinced Consular Affairs to list as a security advisory was Greece in 1985, I believe it was. Boy, did they go absolutely up the wall because it really hurt tourism and there were various cultural groups that canceled out on them. They were absolutely adamant, and we responded by saying, "There are serious problems in Greece, and you are the weakest member of the European Community when it comes to dealing with these problems."

Q: You know, the November 17th group...

BORG: They're still around.

Q: It sounds like they've kind of busted it up, but this was in the last couple of months. That's been going around for 30 years.

BORG: When I say that the Western Europeans got rid of their terrorist groups, I would have made an exception for the Greeks, because that group has been so in the shadows.

Q: It's been there. It's an attitude. What about the problem particularly of East German and Czechoslovakia sort of acting as perhaps the cat's paws for the Soviet Union at the time? These people supposedly were training terrorists.

BORG: There were continuing reports about terrorists receiving training in various countries in Eastern Europe, particularly East Germany, and of people transiting through these countries to get into the West. This was a serious issue, and we did have discussions from time to time with officials in these countries about the problem, but we didn't feel that there was very much that we could do other than condemn the practice, but we declined to name these countries as the principal cause of the terrorism because we believed very strongly that the terrorism was rooted in problems in other countries and that we had to deal with it in these other countries. While the French terrorists may have gotten training within East Germany, they were well concealed somewhere within West Germany or The Netherlands. So rather than work on the more difficult East German support problem, why not work on the easier West German and Dutch 'turn the other way' problem.

Q: On the Libyan bombing, what was the initial reaction you were getting from the Europeans: "How could you?" or...?

BORG: They were absolutely apoplectic. If you remember correctly, the British permitted us to use their bases, but the French insisted that we fly around France and not even fly over France for the strikes. I think we had to fly through the Straits of Gibraltar to get there. But it was one of those tempests that lasted for a short period of time and then they got their act together and they were not as hostile afterwards. They were much more cooperative afterwards. It wasn't that we were threatening to blow up any other country, but within each country the shift occurred to the people who were saying, "You know, we've got a serious problem and we have to deal with it," and complacency was overtaken.

Q: Before we turn to the Middle East, what about Latin America? In a way you've sort of taken Central America out of it because these were...

BORG: For us the principal Latin American problem was in Colombia, and it was a continuing problem and it continues until this day. It was one that we could monitor and we could provide limited assistance, but there wasn't very much we could do or that we did, because the Colombian army had a bad reputation and the human rights groups in this country wouldn't allow us to provide the sort of assistance to the Colombian military that we might have provided in the past. So all we could really do was advise people to be careful. Again, it was tied up even then with narcotics, and so you had this interconnection of insurgency, terrorism, narcotics, and probably each year more terrorist incidents directed at Americans than in any other individual country. But it was just an incredibly difficult place to deal with.

Q: In the Far East one thinks of the Japanese Red Army...

BORG: The Japanese Red Army had pretty much disappeared at this point. They were not active in Japan. There were remnants of it that would turn up in Lebanon from time to time or in places in Europe, but the Japanese Red Army had had its heyday in the mid-'70's and had not been a significant player since. There were no groups that we really focused much attention on in East Asia. The focus for us was the doable world of Europe and the explosive world of the Middle East.

Q: Let's turn to the Middle East.

BORG: The terrorist groups in the Middle East that were of greatest concern to us were the radical Palestinians and the various groups associated with Lebanon, many of which operated with the collusion of the Iranian government. The Syrians had their candidate, Abu Nidal, a man who just passed away but had been very active, and he was in Syria. It was essentially these groups. What really emerged in the time that we were working these issues was the concept of state support, that certain groups were getting support from governments to conduct terrorist activities against their country targets, and this would have been the Hezbollah with Iranian support operating out of Lebanon, operating against the Americans in Beirut, and operating against Israel; Abu Nidal supported by the Syrians; various Libyan operatives operating as an intelligence agency within Europe. These were considered the most threatening groups. They were the ones that were taking the hostages in Lebanon, and they were the ones that were hijacking the aircraft. The European terrorists, by contrast, did the occasional bombing within a particular country in Europe, sometimes directed against Americans, but they were not targeting Americans in Europe or Americans who were traveling in the Middle East. So we put our primary emphasis on these groups.

Q: If you want to talk about some of the incidents, you know, the Achille Lauro thing comes to mind. Could you describe how it was...?

BORG: There was one that was earlier that was a very big one, and that was the TWA 847 hijacking which, I think, occurred in the early summer, and Achille Lauro was late summer of '85. We had our response teams organized by then. On June 14th, 1985, Lebanese Shiite gunman hijacked TWA Flight 847 en route from Athens to Rome, and they forced it to land in Beirut after two round-trips from Beirut to Algiers. So the plane took off and landed twice in Algiers and twice in Beirut before it finally ended up back in Beirut. That whole incident took 17 days. They did kill one American, a U.S. Navy diver by the name of Robert Stethem. We had our response team visiting in Algiers trying to convince the Algerian government that we could be of some sort of assistance. They declined our suggestions. There were some Defense Department people at the time who thought that we would insert a Defense Department team of divers who would hang out, pretending they were tourists, outside the Beirut airport, which is on the water, and they would be scuba diving off Beirut airport. We said, "No, that is just too much nonsense. There's no way that we can do anything like that. We can't have a program like that." These were the first incidents that I recall when we got most of our information from CNN, because CNN was on the scene in each one of these places and we were not relying on reporting from the embassies or occasional broadcasts from the main networks, but CNN was on the spot. I believe that this established a precedent for all future terrorist activities or all international incidents, that some way CNN became the big player in terms of keeping us informed of what was happening.

Q: It also kept the hijackers informed too, which meant that you had to work around the cameras or something.

BORG: That's right. We were constantly on the phone with people in the different embassies trying to sort out solutions to this, but it's hard to say that we did much that resolved it. I may find something in my notes to add subsequently, but I can't think of anything offhand.

Q: How did it end up?

BORG: It lasted for 17 days, so that would have been the first part of July. The plane landed in Beirut. I remember now that one of the reasons I don't remember the details of what happened in the end was that it was at this time that the Vice President went off to Europe to meet with European leaders about other issues, and I was detached to go along with the Vice President, Vice President Bush, to be his advisor on counterterrorism, which took the last week of the hijacking. So we were talking with European governments about it, and I wasn't on the ground seeing what was happening.

Q: By the way, along as you mention it, was there any talk about terrorism, counterterrorism, when Bush went to talk to the Europeans?

BORG: Oh, yes. That was not the purpose of his visit, but that became one of the main topics for discussion, and he discussed what was going on in every single one of the countries. He was quite well apprised about terrorism issues, because earlier in the year the Vice President was the chair of the Vice President's task force on combating terrorism which issued a report in February of 1986 that said, "Here's what the situation is, and here are the things that we're going to do." Oh, I'm sorry. My dates are wrong here. It was after these incidents that the Vice President was asked to chair a counterterrorism task force and put all of these suggestions together.

Q: When you went with the Vice President, were you getting remarks, getting a feel, about did he feel he was getting anywhere or was frustrated by the European leaders he was meeting?

BORG: No, he was not. He was engaged at a different level. What he would find at his level is everybody nodding: "Yes, this is a very important problem. Yes, we'll take this into consideration. Yes, we'll do this and we'll do that." The purpose of his trip had not been to secure any particular objective on terrorism. The purpose of his trip was something else, and terrorism was an additional...

Q: But it did keep it to the forefront.

BORG: That's right.

Q: With the TWA plane thing, you felt that you were trying to get advice, but you weren't playing a significant role.

BORG: Well, we had available for the embassy in Algiers a package of assistance that the Algerians could accept if they wanted to. I believe they may have accepted some of it but not all of it. It helped them keep track of what was happening, and it may have been one of those who flew the plane didn't stay in Algiers but shuttled to Beirut and then came back. But the issue of taking down the plane, they were certainly not going to do that. If I remember correctly, there was one plan that the pilot was going to declare - again, the details are a bit hazy - was going to declare he didn't have adequate fuel and was not going to be able to make it to Beirut and so was going to try to bring the plane down in Cyprus, where one could attempt to resolve the crisis in a friendly environment. The feel was that they already had a large number of hostages in Beirut and that if they added all the passengers on this plane and they began mixing the passengers on the plane with the hostages on the ground in Lebanon, we'd have a much greater disaster than we already had. Remember, this was a time when there was a lot fighting between the different elements within Lebanon. So Lebanon was considered at this time an extremely dangerous environment, and we didn't want the hostages to end up there. They did end up there. We were able to arrange the release of all of the different captives with the exception of the one that was killed, so, yes, from our perspective it ended up successfully in that there was only one casualty that we didn't add to the number of hostages that were already being held and they didn't mix.

Q: Now, the Algerians, what was our analysis? The Algerians just wanted to stay out of this?

BORG: There must have been a proposal to come in and take the hijackers away. The JSOC people wanted to do it. They didn't think there was anything wrong with that sort of thing. We wanted to solve the problem without a violent intervention.

Q: That was with the Achille Lauro.

BORG: Just to give a sense of what happened, June 14th was the TWA 847; there was on June 19th a bombing at the international terminal at Frankfurt's international airport which killed four people and left 60 injured; the Bella Rosa attack on June 19th in El Salvador; on June 20th five bombs in Kathmandu; on June 23rd a shaman bombed an Air India flight from Toronto over the North Atlantic killing 329 passengers and crew members; on June 23rd a few hours after the explosion aboard the Air India flight a bomb exploded in baggage handling at Tokyo's Narita Airport killing two Japanese workers; in Spain on July 1st a bomb exploded in the British Airways ticket office killing one passenger and injuring 27 others; the blast gutted the premises and also wrecked the TWA office directly above. All of these incidents occurred while the TWA 847 hijacking was going on. It was just an incredibly intense time of terrorist activities. There were more incidents than all of this in July, August and September, about a dozen or 15 more. On October 7th the Italian cruise ship the Achille Lauro was seized as it departed Alexandria, Egypt, for Port Said. The cruise ship was seized by a terrorist group. We were interested in trying to bring this to a quick conclusion. We dispatched our Interagency Response Team. They were out in the area talking with people about what needed to be done. There was a terrible intelligence failure in association with this in that they had the various Seal teams, the naval-activity Seal teams, ready to take over the ship in a surprise attack, but there was a terrible intelligence failure and the intelligence community was unable to find the ship in the ocean, and so there were no coordinates that they could ever give to the Navy as to where the ship was located.

Q: That seems sort of incredible. We had the Sixth Fleet.

BORG: That's right. This was issue number one for all the intelligence forces that focused on it, and they couldn't find the ship, and it showed up a couple of days later in Alexandria. It just steamed into port. So all these plans that had been made that we were going to take the ship back were unsuccessful. In the process, the one American passenger by the name of William Klinghoffer, a crippled American, was killed, and I believe the body was thrown overboard.

Q: In a wheelchair.

BORG: ...in a wheelchair. It was an organization by the name of Abu Abbas. The Palestinian Liberation Front was responsible. It's worth following up that one because the Egyptians put Abu Abbas in a plane that went to Italy, and the Italians were prepared to let him pass. The JSOC forces tried to capture him, and there was a terrible confrontation...

Q: It was on Sicily at Sigonella.

BORG: There was a terrible confrontation at Sigonella Air Base.

Q: We forced the plane down.

BORG: We forced the plane down. General Steiner, the head of JSOC, was on the ground trying to prevent the plane from taking off. It got takeoff orders and it flew away but not before there had been a lot of damage done between American and Italian air officials as to just who was in charge at Sigonella. Abu Abbas fled the scene, and we had a lot of angry military people. You remember the details better than I do.

Q: Not too long before, I had been consul general in Naples and I talked to people who were there saying that there was a very bad confrontation between the American forces and the Italian forces. They pointed guns at each other. Ollie North had his finger in this one. At least there was something there. But I was wondering whether you all found yourselves trying to figure a way to get better cooperation on something like this, having to repair bridges with the Italians.

BORG: Yes, Ollie North was probably connected with the confrontation, but General Steiner was the kind of person who didn't need directions to pursue a confrontation like this. He was very much an independent operator. Ollie North may claim more credit for this than he might deserve.

Q: You already had the proper mix for a confrontation with Steiner.

BORG: Right. Again, I'm just trying to think how did JSOC know the plane was gone, or did he get intelligence from the...

Q: He had intelligence. The Egyptians tried to hide this from us, and we found out it was and we intercepted the plane over the Mediterranean and forced it to land at Sigonella, where we had a joint base with the Italians. Then I think that the Italians finally insisted that the plane fly to Rome, where Abbas was let go.

BORG: That's right, but he was put on a plane to go somewhere else so we could not get him, and there were judges that were awakened in the middle of the night. I'm sure this is all written down somewhere.

Q: Did this serve as a taste of trying to say we've got to work for better, instantaneous...

BORG: But we'd been doing this all the time, and we had often succeeded, but General Steiner remained very much of an independent operator. Oliver North was in general very, very cooperative. We worked very closely with him. For example, there was a hijacking and we needed to bring the American passengers back to the United States. If we called the Defense Department and said, "A certain number of passengers have been released and we want to bring them home," the Defense Department would say, "Fine, we're happy to accommodate you if you give us the funds for it." Of course, we didn't have funds to charter military aircraft to bring people back to the United States. So on more than one occasion I called Ollie at the White House and said, "Ollie, we've got a problem with the Pentagon. We want to do this, and they want us to provide the money, the dollars. You can call the Pentagon from the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and say the White House wants this done." So we were continuously getting State Department missions accomplished without State Department resources by Ollie's willingness to intervene and push our point of view. Whenever there was a terrorist incident that was going on, we were always on the phone with Oliver. He did not come over to the State Department and participate. They often had their own activities over at the NSC, but Bob Oakley or I stayed in touch with him. We generally handled terrorist incidents by working 12 hours each. He'd be on, then I'd be on, and he'd be on, so one of the two of us would always be there for a terrorist incident, and Oliver tended to be there most of the time. I remember, probably during the TWA 847 hijacking, Ollie called - I think it was four days into the incident - Ollie called with an absolutely wacky idea. I said to him, "Ollie, have you had any sleep recently?" He said, "No, I'm tough. I've been at this for four days now." I said, "Well, you just told me the stupidest thing I ever heard. I'm going to tell everybody here not to take any phone calls from you for 24 hours. You have to go home and get some sleep." And we didn't hear from him for 24 hours. Did he go home or not, I don't know. But he was certainly amenable to our concerns. He listened.

Q: Well, this is the thing. You get somebody like this who's really an activist who can get things done, and then they get farther and farther afield. By the way, you were reading and referring to something. For somebody who's doing some research on the number of terrorist incidents, what were you looking at?

BORG: The Department of State issued each year, certainly during the 1980s, something called the Patterns of Global Terrorism. These reports had in the back of them a chronology of significant terrorist events for each year. They also have highlights in the text of what's different each year, how terrorism was evolving over the different years. I don't know how long they continued these.

Q: I don't know, but a researcher could get them. Did anyone while you were in there, sort of as an intellectual exercise, ask the question why weren't we having homegrown terrorists? We'd had the Weathermen and various groups, and we've had a couple since, the blowing-up of Oklahoma City and all that, but we didn't seem to have the same sort of dedicated young people, usually around a university-type or something like that.

BORG: There were terrorist groups operating in the United States at this time, but they were really minor by comparison to the rest of the world. There were some Puerto Rican nationalists that were operating occasionally, and there were the beginnings of some of the right-wing extreme groups that had guns and wanted to sort of declare their independence. These would emerge from time to time. We were asked, when we were going out and speaking, why there hadn't been more terrorist incidents in the United States, and our answers were perhaps simplistic but we said, "First, the social problems don't seem to exist here at this time that have given rise to very many groups. Second, it's not as easy to get into the United States. If you want to commit a terrorist act against America, it's just as easy to do it in Europe. You can make a big splash and get lots of publicity by doing it in Europe, and you don't have to get a visa to come to the United States to do it." Third, there weren't the support groups, there weren't the urban masses of disaffected people among whom the terrorist groups could hide and find support. Fourth, the FBI seemed to be reasonably effective. An example that we would use was the Sikhs in Canada. I mentioned two of their incidents. The Sikhs were very upset over what was happening in India. This was a time when there was fighting between the Sikhs and Hindus.

Q: When one of their temples had been desecrated.

BORG: That's right, and there was a very large Sikh community in Canada. The FBI, through very strong-arm tactics, made sure that the Sikhs could not spread their violence into the United States. They sort of made their presence known in various Sikh communities here that, "Boy, if these people emerge here and there begin to be problems in the United States, you're going to hear from us." So they, I think, put the fear of God into the various Sikh communities here so that terrorism remained a Canadian problem and not an American problem. There were occasions when Sikhs were pushed back north, but they were quite effective at this.

Q: How about the IRA in Boston for Noraid and all that?

BORG: That was a totally different use and one that was completely political and one that we didn't even try to deal with because it was just too complicated. The IRA obtained its principal funding for its terrorist activities by posing as a charitable organization and was very closely connected to lots of important political figures in Boston, who would argue that these people are doing good for the people of Northern Ireland. It really was not until after 9/11 that some of these groups felt that they had to really cut back. Well, no, this was before; it was in the Clinton years, because there was serious effort to resolve the problems in Ireland at that time. But while we were doing terrorism issues...

Q: This was one you took a pass on.

BORG: ...we took a pass. There were serious problems that one could deal with, but we weren't able to help our good friends the British very much.

Q: How about the Jewish Defense League? Did that come up at all?

BORG: That was an extreme group. Remember Meir Kahane, Rabbi Kahane. I can't remember the years of his activity, but it wasn't on our watch. What would we have done if it had been, I'm not sure. It would have depended on what had occurred. But the Irish one was impossible to deal with.

Q: Was there any concern that something might start with a Mexican connection?

BORG: The only possible Mexican connection would have been connected with drugs, and the Mexicans didn't become intensely involved in drug issues until later in the '80's and the early 1990's. So this was not an issue.

Q: Have we pretty well covered this thing? There might be something more if you think about it.

BORG: Let's go back to Oliver North. We talked a couple times about his activities and how we worked with him and how we were trying to get the hostages released in Lebanon. Sometime in the late summer - there were so many things happening all the time - a British representative of the Anglican Church by the name of Terry Waite came to Washington. Terry had played a role in getting some English citizens released from Libya and offered his services to try and get the hostages released in Lebanon. We heard him out at the State Department and they heard him out at the National Security Council, and I think he had a number of other meetings around town. He was in our minds just one of many people who were offering their services. Our basic policy was we'll provide facilitating support with our embassies for anybody who thinks they might have a connection or a way of doing this, so everybody encouraged him. We didn't really know what might be happening or when it might be happening, but I got a call one day from Ollie saying - this was in November of '85 - "Terry Waite is going to go to Lebanon the day after tomorrow, and I want to go brief him before he leaves. Do you want to come along?" to which I responded, "Why don't we have the embassy in London talk with him. We can send them the information, whatever it is," and he said, "No, it's much too sensitive. I need to go myself." So I talked with Bob and he agreed and said, "Well, I think that we should go along with Ollie on this and find out just exactly what's up." So we scramble about and we catch a flight to London. We arrive not quite on time, but by the time we get out of our own aircraft Terry Waite has already boarded the Middle East Airways flight that he was going to take to Lebanon. So Oliver goes up to the Middle East Airways gate and says, "We've got to stop that plane," and the woman said, "Excuse me." He said, "There's a passenger on there that's of critical national security importance, and we need to talk to him. You've got to bring the plane back." Again, he had chutzpah, and he talked the gate person into bringing the plane back and taking Terry Waite off the plane. They escorted Oliver and me down this ramp to the place where there was a car waiting for us, and the car picked up Terry, and we met in the bowels of Heathrow Airport to talk for 15 minutes with Terry Waite. I still didn't have a clue why we had to do this in person. It turned out that Oliver, after giving his briefing of everything that you would have already thought that anybody apprised of the situation would have known and certainly could have been delivered by the embassy very easily, he pulled out a picture and he said, "This is the man who we think is behind it all. If you see him, this is the man to watch out for." I looked at the picture, and it was about passport size, a little hazy, and it just looked like this person with a beard that looked like everybody else. I thought, oh my God, we've come all the way over here to show this picture. We showed him the picture. He got on the plane and left, and we then caught the same plane that we'd come in on, we caught the round trip, to go back to Washington. So we were back within 24 hours of having departed. It wasn't more than a week later, I guess, that Terry Waite was coming out. He finished up his mission and he was coming out. He had witnessed a degree of fighting and had made some contacts and so forth, but I don't remember if he'd seen anybody.

Ollie called and said, "We're going back. We want to debrief Terry Waite about what he's learned." So I get on the plane again and we go back, and this time we do have a debriefing session with him in which he gives us basic information about what it was that he had seen and how he was blindfolded most of the time and couldn't really see who these captors were, but also his views on prospects and so forth. And so we go back to Washington with our reports. Terry Waite maybe a week or two weeks later decides to come to the United States, and Ollie has set up meetings with people here for him to offer his debriefings. Of course, being sort of naive, I couldn't figure out why, if we've got this information, Terry Waite needs to come back and say the same thing. I never have the big picture that some people do. So Ollie and I went up to New York and met him and participated in his debriefing of the archbishop from New York, the Episcopal archbishop of New York. I went into the room and I couldn't believe what a transformed figure Ollie North was when he was dealing with people in clerical gowns. It was as though he was an altar boy, and the language that he used, the deference that he used, he spoke as though he were a man of the church of himself. He was, he did go to church regularly, but he wasn't a Marine officer, he was an altar boy at these sessions. It was really interesting because there were a lot of high-level Episcopalians there.

Then Terry came down to Washington and met with the Vice President, may have met with the President, and talked about what he was doing and he might do in the future. Terry Waite then went out again, I think, in January '86, and he was this time captured and was one of the hostages himself for the next two years or so. But Terry Waite was a very idealistic individual who was quite convinced that he would be able to do something to be of assistance. We, I believe, misled him into thinking he could do much more than we really believed was possible, because from the State Department perspective we could not see that anything was likely to come from these meetings because these people had specific demands, but they still seemed to want the release of these people who were in jail in Kuwait who'd been sentenced to death, and no amount of goodness was probably going to bring that about. Some political pressure on Iran might help but not this. This was the Terry Waite side, but there's another side of the story. The other side of the story is probably more significant, because on the various flights over and back Ollie started talking about some of the other things that he was doing and how he had found this base in Portugal where there were flights that went to Iran, and he said, "And at this same place is where there are flights that provide support down in Nicaragua." He said that he had figured out that maybe a way to get at the Iranians was to offer them some weapons.

Q: The war with Iraq was going on at this time.

BORG: No, the war with Iraq had ended.

Q: No, the war with Iraq didn't end until 1989, because it was '90, just after the war, that...

BORG: No, no, the war with Iraq hadn't begun. The Iran-Iraq war had not begun when we were doing this. The Iran-Iraq war began in maybe '87 or '88.

Q: It was a long war, about seven years, I thought.

BORG: I'll have to check this out. But Iran was interested in American equipment, spare parts for the planes that they had, and if we could provide these things, then perhaps they'd be helpful in getting the Hezbollah to release the hostages, and he thought they'd be willing to pay for this as well. What he didn't tell me was what he was going to do with the money that they were paying. He explained this story of how they were going to provide the Iranians with some of the military equipment that they needed. I went back and, after briefing Bob about this, I went and talked with the people in the Executive Secretariat, Ken Quinn specifically, and told him, "Here's what the National Security Council is doing right now on Iran." I told Ollie also that I really didn't think this was the best way to go about this because there was a ban on selling weapons to Iran and that we would get in trouble. Ollie made one of his statements - he made this statement more than once - "You know, at some point everybody will turn against me, but I know I'm doing what's right, so I've got to keep pursuing this. This is the right cause." I said, "I think you're going to have problems with this one." Anyway, I explained to Ken Quinn what had happened, Ken Quinn explained it to somebody, maybe the Secretary directly, and there was a meeting of the National Security Council in December in which the issue of arms to Iran came up, and there was a confrontation between Shultz and Weinberger with Shultz arguing very strongly that we should not be doing this. Again, I provided sort of the specifics about how much, what the quantity was, and it wasn't just a few submachine guns; it was a lot of stuff that they were talking about sending over.

Q: TON missiles and...

BORG: Yes, all that sort of stuff. So Shultz argued against it. Oliver called me after the meeting and said, "Well, I want to assure you that this is not going ahead. The National Security Council decided that they're not going to provide arms to the Iranians, and we're not going to be doing this." So we then thought, well, we've prevailed. Little did we realize at the time - this didn't come out for another year or so - that they cut Shultz out of the subsequent meetings, and they went right ahead with their plans for arms for Iran with Weinberger. Shultz was not involved in the subsequent meetings. This came out in the Iran Contra discussions subsequently. Again, we knew what Ollie was doing in providing arms to Iran, but we didn't know the other side of it. We knew that he also had the account for dealing with the Contras, but we didn't know that he was using the money that he got from the Iranians to fund the Contras, so when all of the scandal broke about Oliver North, all of us in the State Department were essentially protected because Ollie hadn't shared the interconnection between his two accounts with any of us. The people in ARA - who was running it at the time? he's back again, Eliot Abrams - probably knew what he was doing with the Contras, but he didn't know where the money was coming from. I guess I can fill in details of things I might have forgotten when I get the written transcript.

Q: Okay, then we'll pick this up in 1986. Whither?

BORG: I became quite ill working in SCT. I came down with a totally undefinable disease, which was later considered chronic fatigue because there was no other name for it, and I had had to take a lot of sick leave while I was doing these terrorist accounts. I'd go off for a while. When I traveled with Ollie, I had to take a week off when I got back because my body was so weakened by the trip. I had to take another week off after the second trip. I had to take off two weeks, I think, after the Vice President's trip to Europe because there was just so much pressure and my body was just totally exhausted. So in 1986 I needed to take a break from things, and I went over to the Center for Strategic and International Studies for a year.

Q: Okay, we'll pick it up then.

Today is the 24th of October 2002. We're at 1986 and you're at CSIS, is that it?

BORG: Those are the correct initials, yes.

Q: Center for Strategic and International Studies. You did it for a year?

BORG: I stayed there for a year.

Q: In the first place, could you explain in 1986 what was CSIS and what were they doing, and then we'll talk about what you were doing.

BORG: The Center for Strategic and International Studies is one of the Washington think tanks that pursued a variety of, in their case, international issues. That have some dozen or so people on their staff, each running specific programs dealing with Latin American, counterterrorism, national security, a whole variety of issues. The specific issue that I was going to look into, the one that was most closely related to my background, was to participate in the counterterrorism project.

Q: Again, we're trying to speak at that time, because things do change. At that time how did a think tank like this fit into the power structure of Washington?

BORG: CSIS at that time was headed by, I believe, David Abshire, who was former Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations. CSIS, Brookings, Carnegie, and the various other institutes often are refuges for people from former administrations who want to pursue policy issues and think about things and perhaps prepare themselves for future positions in new administrations or put together the ideas that they hope will be the primary issues of a future administration by either the party in power or some other power. CSIS attempted also, probably a little more than some of the others, to work with Congress and to get various Senators and Congressmen involved in programs with the thought that they might put forward legislation that would bring into effect some of the things that the panels concluded were necessary changes in American policy. I found it very interesting to go over and participate in something like this. I attended many of the sessions that were not specifically related to terrorism just to get a feel for what was going on, and I realized that for us in the bureaucracy there's a vast disconnect. We're often invited to come to these sorts of meetings, to these panels, to participate in some activity or other, but we're usually too busy and so we never do get the outside perspective. We don't get their perspective and they don't get our perspective from the inside. So in a sense on many occasions you felt it was an interesting dialog that probably wasn't going to go anywhere.

Q: As a Foreign Service Officer, particularly having had your various positions sort of at the center of the State Department and all, did you find yourself saying, "Okay, this is all very nice, a lot of talk and good intellectual exercise, but what's this all about?"

BORG: Well, they could explain for each one of their projects what it was all about, pursuing legislation, pursuing changes in policy, but there was not an easy connect between the administration and what this organization was thinking about. The man that I worked most closely with was Robert Kupperman, who was very, very supportive of my activities, but his primary concerns at that time were chemical and biological terrorism, terrorism that might be conducted against urban centers in the United States. The things that he said then and the things that people are saying now are not much different. Nobody has come up with any solutions to how you prevent somebody from sabotaging the electrical system or the water system or how do you prevent chemical warfare from terrorizing a community, but he was looking at this back then. My own project was much more to review specifically where I thought we had come from in the last couple of years on the issue of counterterrorism, what had been the successes and what had been the shortcomings, and to write something from this. I was there in part because my health didn't permit me to work full time, and what that meant was that I often went in in the morning and went home in the middle of the day, took a little nap, and then returned in the afternoon and participated in programs, but it was not the intensity of a normal program. I didn't do the outreach, I didn't make the contacts that I perhaps could have if I had been in better health.

Q: What part of this terrorism thing were you taking?

BORG: I was essentially reviewing how we had brought together an international consensus over the past couple years, that there needed to be something done not country by country but with many countries working together to pursue terrorism. I also wrote about how we had attempted to engage the Europeans, how we had finally succeeded in engaging them, and how they had gone on on their own subsequently and began working together as a European community rather than as each individual nation.

Q: In '86 to '87 where did we see the threat?

BORG: Again, as I had been working in '84 to '86, the threat that had evolved at that time was the state support for terrorism, the terrorism that came particularly from Libya, from Syria, from Iran. Surprisingly, there was little talk about Iraq at the time although it was known even then that, I believe, Abu Nidal and other terrorists had sought refuge there, but Iraq was not part of the big picture.

Q: With Afghanistan was the war still raging there, and were we still supplying what turned out to some quite extreme fundamentalists with weapons, and were we concerned about this?

BORG: This was not an issue that we addressed at CSIS nor was it an issue that we addressed in the Terrorism office. Afghanistan was somebody else's issue. I'm sure if I checked back, I could find out what people were saying and what was happening at exactly that time, but it was not something that we were looking at.

Q: You would have been there after the attack on Qadhafi.

BORG: That's right. As I explained earlier, I was in the Office of Counterterrorism at the time of the attacks against Qadhafi. We had not only passed a message to Qadhafi and other state supporters of terrorism that we were prepared to strike out if they were going after our citizens, but we were also passing a message through that to the Europeans that, if they were going to ignore our discussions on these issues, we might be prepared to act.

Q: I'm trying to capture the feeling, because right now all the issues you raised have gone up by a factor of 20 or something like that. At the time, how were we looking at Europe? Were we looking at Europe as being an area, or were there areas within Europe, where they were quite willing to let terrorism go by just as long as it didn't overly affect them?

BORG: Very clearly that was the principal problems that we faced in Europe when I started working in the Counterterrorism office. There were, as you might recall, French terrorists striking against French targets, there were German terrorists going after German targets, and Italian terrorists going after Italian targets, but all operating generally from outside their borders in safe havens in neighboring countries. The prevailing view among many Europeans at the time was 'if these guys are peaceful here, we're not going to stir up a hornets' nest, we're not going to cause any problems that might cause them to attack us.' So everybody, all the different terrorist groups, found refuge in each other's country. That was one of the things that we had worked on when I was in the Counterterrorism office and that was one of the things I wrote about when I was at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Q: Again back to specific '86-'87 time when you were looking at it more from the academic point of view outside the State Department, were we seeing indications of a change, say, in Libya and some of the other places? Were they beginning to realize that this business was not without cost?

BORG: No. I'd like to get my dates clear here, but I believe that Iran Contra was breaking at about this same time, so the underlying current was much less what was happening in Libya or Syria but what we might have been doing to tie our connections between Central America and Iran. I listened intently and watched all of these hearings, and I think it was this particular time that this happened.

Q: With Ollie North and all that.

BORG: That's right.

Q: Did you sense a divide between the way you had been looking at terrorism and all and the way the academics had been looking at it?

BORG: No, I had no problems in discussing what I was doing and how we had been pursuing things with members of the academic community at various conferences. First, it's a small community. Second, some members of that community are very dedicated to pursuing one particular type of terrorist organization, and I felt that I had a broader perspective, but with the real experts there was little disagreement between us and what we were doing. As I said, Bob Kupperman was concerned about what might happen in urban areas in the United States. There were others who were especially concerned about terrorism and its impact on Israel and the role of various Palestinian groups. We took a little more distant position from these groups, and I was an outsider, as I had not been in the State Department, prepared to list all Palestinians as terrorists. And we had very carefully disassociated our pursuit of terrorists from the insurgent conflicts in Central America. We hadn't in the office, nor I find when I was outside working in the academic community, people who were vigorously opposed to what we had done because we had worked to suppress the Nicaraguan Contras or the El Salvadorian rebels. We didn't touch these. We considered these insurgent issues, not counterterrorism issues, and that was fine with the academic community among those with whom I associated.

Q: Was there a body of, lumping them together, the European intellectuals, the European chattering class? Did they enter into this at all?

BORG: I'm sure they did, but I think at this time I was much more wrapped up in what we had done and in what was evolving with regard to the Iran Contra case to be really too focused on European intellectuals.

Q: I think this is an exercise on its own. It may be fun but I'm not sure it leads anywhere.

BORG: The European intellectuals, particularly the French, are, one, schooled in the importance of debate and, two, in a more leftist approach to most issues, and it really wasn't until Mitterrand first came to power, when they had their first socialist prime minister, that people began to say, "Well, maybe these guys aren't right." And then with the disillusionment over the Soviet Union, I think, the intellectual scene in Europe was not quite what it was in the '60's and '70's.

Q: Then in '87 you had your, you might say, break or something. How was your health?

BORG: My health gradually came back. I had gone out to the Mayo Clinic and everywhere else for all sorts of tests, and nobody had found anything that was wrong, and it was concluded that I had a variation of something that had been uncovered a year earlier which was known as chronic fatigue syndrome. I guess it was uncovered in 1985 or '86, about the time I came down with it. It was documented in other places, and my doctor concluded that's what I must have too and I just needed to wait it out.

Q: So what did they do with you?

BORG: The State Department process, as anybody in the organization knows, is to make bids at one time for jobs that would come up six months or eight months hence. Since I had gone over to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the idea that, two months after I got there for a one-year assignment, I was going to be up to bid on something with no knowledge of the future of my health was a bit out of the question. So as I was beginning to feel better in the summer of '87, I began making inquiries about where there might be jobs that had not been filled. There weren't too many possibilities, that one that I knew absolutely nothing about the issues but sort of intrigued me was to work at what was called the Office of Information Policy and Communications at the Department of State. This was a new office - perhaps it had already become a bureau at the time - and it had been a break-off from the Economic Business Bureau pursued by a very aggressive political appointee who tried to make the administration understand that information issues, the information revolution, the communications revolution, all of these technology issues, were very important foreign policy issues and that we needed to give them a higher priority. Her name was Diana Lady Dougan. She came into the State Department, I guess, in the early Reagan years and held the job as Ambassador at Large for International Communications and Information Policy. It was an office of about 25 to 30 people. She had a deputy who was leaving, and I was asked if I might be interested in coming over and working with her. I had heard many unusual things about her. She had quite a reputation in the State Department, mostly for being considered really out of it, but that was based primarily on the fact that most Foreign Service Officers had no clue what it was she was working on and thought it was totally irrelevant to the foreign policy process: "Who's this nattering gnat over on the side that keeps telling us about these things that aren't part of our normal concern." Anyway, I went over and talked with her. We had a good conversation, and she offered me the job as her deputy. This was in September-November of 1987, so for more than a year I had been over at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Q: You were the deputy to...

BORG: I was Deputy to the Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy. Now, this office was responsible for attempting to put together American policy positions on some of the high-tech issues that were of importance at the International Telecommunications Union, at INTELSAT, and with regard to undersea cables, fiber optic cables, high-definition television, insuring that credit card numbers were universal, the whole range of high-tech issues that we now take for granted. This office had, I thought, a very interesting way to deal with many of these problems. In France, in Germany, in Britain at the time there was one telecommunications office and there was one mail-delivery office. When meetings occurred at international organizations to talk about these issues, we had one French position, one German position, one British position, but a half dozen American positions because the Bell Telephone system had been broken up - there were Baby Bells, there was Sprint, there was MCI - and somehow we needed to develop a common American position. So in this office we had established a series of committees and we were the honest broker. We were looking at the long-distance issue. We made AT&T, MCI and Sprint, our three carriers, sit down and we said, "Okay, there's a conference next week, next year, in which this issue is going to be discussed. What's going to be the American position? You three guys who are all competing with each other have got to find a common ground. Otherwise, we'll go to the meeting and we're going to get rolled by the Europeans, and this is what they're going to want. There were some two or three dozen technical issues constantly rolling up, and we had these committees in this office that attempted to negotiate among, or find a common position among, the various American private companies that we could then take to the international conferences and put together as the American position.

Q: How did Ambassador Dougan work?

BORG: Well, she was a very dynamic individual who had great flair and could walk into any room and everyone's attention would immediately turn to her. She spoke well, she knew her issues, and she was a very effective negotiator with foreigners. She, however, had become a little too outspoken for the administration and had developed over the years a number of enemies among people that mattered. I hadn't been in the office for more than a month when she was fired, and I found myself the acting coordinator of this office that I knew little about.

Q: Who was behind it, or what were the issues or personalities?

BORG: Again, there's all the history that happened before that I wouldn't have a clue about, but every year there are one or two or three big international conferences that bring together leaders from around the world to sort out the expansion of frequency bands or the sharing of telecommunication links or something of this nature, and we in the CIP, as the bureau was called, would develop the positions in association with industry, and then in anticipation of the meeting somebody would be selected to head the US delegation. Diana Dougan liked to have the key role in deciding who this person was going to be, and her choices were generally excellent. They were people who were CEO's of big corporations, people who had very important jobs on the outside, who brought with them not only the expertise but they had the private sector caché and they were committed to an overall American position. But she liked to choose these people and she also liked to make sure that the announcements occurred sort of on her terms. This is a very dangerous area for anybody who is trying to work with other government bureaucracies, because the Federal Communications Commission, the Department of Commerce in their telecommunications office, they became very upset. These were also high-level political appointees, and they got increasingly irritated over her ability to make the choices for these different conferences herself, whereas they often had their own candidates. So they were involved, particularly the Commerce Department and to a lesser extent the Federal Communications Commission, in a campaign to have her replaced. So she left in December and I found myself in charge of the office.

Q: Obviously you were in the midst of things. In the first place, how about your staff? Did you have people who could tell you what to get up and say?

BORG: There was an excellent staff. The staff was made up almost exclusively of civil servants who had been doing this kind of work for five or 10 years. I made a point of explaining to them that I did not have any pretensions that I was going to know any of these issues and that I wanted them to do their own work to the extent that they could but that, when they needed high-level intervention, they should come to me. My boss at the time - this was a curious State Department organization - was Ed Derwinski. Even though this was an economic issue, he was counselor for security assistance. He had one special assistant who looked at communications problems, and I learned, through working with this assistant and through a couple of encounters with Mr. Derwinski, that if I got in trouble with the Commerce Department or the FCC or any political appointee of any kind, I would lose and the State Department position would be rolled. So I essentially had to run the office on my own and keep issues out of his attention because he would not support me if there was a problem anywhere. That was a curious position. On top of me was somebody who was not going to support me. On the outside were people who were trying to get us, and I worked well with the people who were on the inside.

Q: On the part of Derwinski and company, was this pure politics or he had other fish to fry?

BORG: He's a political animal, pure and simple. He responded to where the power was most significant and who could help him most, not that he had any agenda at any time to pursue necessarily but just "This person is a very prominent Republican and, therefore, we're going to do what he wants."

Q: Talking about some of the influences, let's talk about inside the State Department and then we'll talk about outside the State Department. Inside of the State Department was anybody particularly interested? With some of these issues, it didn't sound like they would be stepping on anybody's toes.

BORG: They weren't. They stepped on nobody's toes, but they were not the traditional political or economic issues, and nobody cared about them, and they found it irritating when we would raise them or try to make them an issue in our bilateral relations. We worked especially closely with the British because they were just going through deregulation on their own at the time.

Q: This is Margaret Thatcher.

BORG: This was the Margaret Thatcher government, but a very curious situation evolved. We in the State Department began negotiating with the British Telecom, the British company that did telecommunications, without notifying the desk or the embassy or anything that we were doing, and we used this new system called E-mail and fax to send positions back and forth, and we eventually negotiated an agreement that we signed on each side that this was the way we were going to pursue things - it was an understanding. It couldn't have been an agreement because agreements require Senate approval. Essentially we decided how we would do things and signed off on documents without either of us informing the office that might otherwise be responsible.

Q: On the outside I would think, particularly with Ambassador Dougan gone, here was a new kid here who didn't know much about this and the heads of various Bell Telephone or what have you would think, 'Ah, here's somebody I can move,' because they all had their own agenda.

BORG: That's right, but they had pursued their agenda within the committee structure, and there was no way that I could come out in favor of AT&T on a particular issue because it's been discussed in the technical committee. Everything was being done at a technical level. I worked with Leonard Marx, a name you might remember, who was a prominent lawyer in Washington, had been the head of USIS. With Leonard Marx we set up an advisory panel and put together key communications and information policy people from around town to work with us and provide us policy guidance on what was the best way that we should proceed on different issues. We ended up with tremendous support from this community. They'd come to us afterwards and say, "You know, it's nice to see a State Department organization that is concerned about some of the issues that we were concerned with." We attempted to relay this information to our superiors at the State Department, that "Hey, we've got something really good going here. Here we have an office that is pursuing US policy but the way we are doing it has the support of the private sector, and we want to build on this. We have tremendous opportunities here, and we should try to see what we can make of this over the course of the next couple years and maybe through it generate broader support for foreign policy that we're doing in other areas that may not be directly related to their concerns."

Q: What was their response?

BORG: Indifference. I was not perhaps the most effective communicator of this. Again, reporting through Derwinski meant that we had minimal opportunities to even raise these issues anywhere else within the State Department.

Q: You had no geographic contacts?

BORG: There was nothing. We were in a vacuum.

Q: It's very interesting. As I pursued my oral history thing, I'd interviewed early on Diana Dougan - I've got to get her to clear it - and I can't tell you how many people, retired Foreign Service or political people, are now consultants of one kind or another in just what you were doing, the communications business. Was there that infrastructure within the Washington legal...?

BORG: There was a huge communications infrastructure of lawyers who represent different companies. Each of the Baby Bells has an office here. Each of the foreign communications companies, the wireless companies from Britain and Germany, they all have offices here, and we work with all of these different individuals.

Q: Did you find that, just by the nature of communications, there was a realization that we've got to get together on this? This was the overriding thing. If you don't do it, it's chaos.

BORG: Everybody recognized the importance of getting together and working on this. We maintained contact with Cable and Wireless, a British organization that had an office out in Reston. We maintained contact with France Telecom. All of these organizations operated within our framework or were somehow included in some of the activities that we were doing. There were many anecdotes about different things that took place at different times. On the one hand there's the International Telecommunications Union and all of its issues dealing with wired and wireless communications. Then there's INTELSAT, you know, the office of INTELSAT up on Connecticut Avenue on Van Ness. INTELSAT at that time was run by Dean Birch, who had been very close to the Barry Goldwater campaign. But Diana Dougan was the person who went out and identified Dean Birch as a likely new head for INTELSAT and pushed his candidacy forward, and he was a very effective head of INTELSAT. But the issues at INTELSAT at the time I came into the office were the competition from independent satellites. Up until that point INTELSAT had a monopoly on satellite communications, but there was an upstart organization known as PanAmSat run by a Hispanic, Renee Anselmo, and he put together his own satellite and he began trying to use it for communications. The Commerce Department was pushing to open up satellite communications to the private sector. On the other hand, I worked closely with the National Security Agency, that wanted to limit the number of satellites up in the sky that would be communicating, to simplify their task...

Q: Which is essentially eavesdropping.

BORG: ...which is essentially eavesdropping. So we had to work out a position that was consistent and that would not destroy INTELSAT. The competition was coming and Dean Birch recognized that it was coming, and our job was to sort of ease into it slowly. We had to go to various INTELSAT conferences where the outrageous American position of privatizing satellite communications went up against the rest of the world where they wanted to maintain INTELSAT's monopoly. So here was this American and this international organization with its headquarters in the United States that the United States was throwing stones at and the rest of the world was supporting.

Q: Was what is today called - and God knows what it will be called in years to come - the Internet a factor at all?

BORG: It existed but it was not a factor. It was growing, and people recognized that it was going to be a factor. This was '87/'88. We recognized that the information revolution would make it increasingly difficult for repressive states to attempt to control access to information in their countries. We spoke about how was the Soviet Union, how was China, going to ever sustain the control of their population once all of this information was available. We went out and spoke regularly with foreigners, and the point that we made with foreigners was that, just as the availability of oil or deep-water ports were important in determining a country's significance and wealth in years past, as we go into the information age those countries that develop the infrastructure for communications and information technology are going to be the leaders in their regions and in other parts of the world. An example that we used at that time, which was one of the first organizations like this, was Benetton, an Italian clothing company that had established outlets all over the world, and they did their production in places like Mauritius and other third world places but they did their marketing right at the site where people were buying things. They could determine that the people in Los Angeles liked pink and purple sweaters, and the order would go to Mauritius, "More pink and purple sweaters," so Benetton was able to supply, through its telecommunications network, the needs of the economies in these other places.

Q: Did you feel that you were being a small cog in a developing machine that was really going to change the world?

BORG: Yes, definitely, and I probably would have pursued it further if things hadn't evolved as they did, but that's ahead of the story. There was no question in my mind that this was the wave of the future. At least one company, and probably more if I put my fingers out, had suggested that I might want to come and see them when I left the State Department. I said, "Look, I can't even talk about this sort of thing." But it was a brand-new field and it was growing very fast. There were people back then who would come in and work a couple of years on this and figure out some new technology that was coming along and then set up their own companies to try and exploit this technology and become fantastically rich overnight. I was not in the State Department to make money, and the idea that I was going to take some idea and try to make money, I wasn't smart enough to.

Q: Were you watching on this, finding some countries or peoples that were really responsive to this, who were, you might say, getting on the bus early?

BORG: Yes, but they were the usual suspects, Hong Kong very much. In Europe the British were in the forefront and the Germans in the back seat. In Africa there were small islands like Mauritius that were doing things. Otherwise, I think what you found in most places was a mixed bag.

Q: You know, the French always are the odd person out. How about on this?

BORG: The French were more in the position with the Germans.

Q: You know, it's an interesting that with Germany one always thinks of excellence in engineering and all this, and yet, you know, really since World War Two Germany is kind of there but you don't think of them as doing...

BORG: I don't think that's quite fair. Siemens is certainly one of the most outstanding and progressive companies in the world. It is right up there with its American equivalents. The German bureaucracy, however, is much more staid, is much less dynamic. I think that what happens in the American bureaucracy is that bringing political personalities in every four to five years brings new ideas into the top of the bureaucracies and so we don't have the rigor mortis that sets in with some of the agencies in other countries. In Japan and Germany in particular, no matter what the government is, it's the same people that are running these ministries and they know exactly how to run them and they're not going to let any foolish politicians influence the way they do things. There are strengths in that but there are also tremendous weaknesses in terms of their ability to be adaptable to new changes.

Q: Were there other people in your comparable position in England, Japan, or something?

BORG: Not in the foreign ministries. We worked almost exclusively with people in the telecommunications ministries, and they found it curious that the foreign ministry was involved in this. We explained that we were unlike most foreign ministries in that we had many active programs in other areas and we didn't just do diplomatic relations. We had more problems with the Department of Commerce that didn't necessarily like seeing us in this high-profile...

Q: Was the problem with the Department of Commerce more one of turf than policy?

BORG: It was turf first and foremost, but the Commerce Department was much more in the forefront of privatization, and we were much more in the forefront of a more traditional view of protecting what we considered the interests of the international community, keeping INTELSAT a strong organization, keeping the ITU relevant. We were much more multilateral in our approach. It wasn't that we liked INTELSAT necessarily, but we recognized that it was considered vital to other countries in that this idea of private satellites, if they took all of the business from INTELSAT, then an organization like INTELSAT would collapse and there would be nobody providing the necessary communications for third world places that didn't quite merit the private attention. So we tried to look at it from the perspective of US international interests rather than just what were the directions of American commercial policy.

Q: What about the Soviet Union? Did they play much of a role?

BORG: No. They attended meetings, we met with them, but they were not a key player. It was interesting the way INTELSAT worked, that unlike other international organizations where every single country has a vote, in INTELSAT your vote is determined by your usage of the system. So if 30 percent of the calls that go through INTELSAT come from the United States in a given year, we get 30 percent of the votes. So we, along with six or seven other countries, had a very strong voice in how INTELSAT operated. We could get together with the other big users and say this is the way INTELSAT is going to operate. We had a curious relationship with INTELSAT because INTELSAT is like an organization like the United Nations and there are annual meetings, but the representative to INTELSAT was a private company called ComSat at the time, Communications Satellite Corporation, which is based out on Route 270. They have now merged with somebody else, but ComSat provided a policy to INTELSAT and ComSat was a commercial company except they had to take their foreign policy guidance from us. So we told ComSat, "Here's what you have to do," and they had to somehow make money listening to the State Department.

Q: Obviously there were commercial interests in wanting to expand this and make it work. Did you find yourself running up against anybody in the State Department, the CIA or, you mentioned, the NSA who said, "Hey, don't do this because it's not in our interest"?

BORG: Nobody in the State Department, nobody in the CIA. I made a point, once I became head of the office, of going out and meeting with the head or number two of the NSA about once every two or three months. I said, "Here's what we're doing. Tell us what your concerns are." I had a very good relationship with them. They were quite candid in saying, "Here's what we would worry about," and I'd say, "I can't guarantee anything, but it's good to know what your perspective is, and we'll do what we can to protect your interests." Otherwise there wasn't very much. Now, another side of this is this makes me think of an office over at the Pentagon which is called DARPA, the Department of Advanced Research Projects, and DARPA was very active at this time. It's an organization that has sought to provide capital funding to enhance war-fighting ability through the development of specific projects that might be useful for some activity in the future. At this time communication was one of their top issues, and so they had a number of projects in which they were attempting to fund communication advances.

The communications project that DARPA was financing came up against the private sector. They didn't like the idea that people in the government were playing God and deciding which sectors of the economy were going to move ahead and which ones might not. So there was a tension between the Commerce Department that was sort of free rein, let the free market control things, then people at the Pentagon would give money off to very specific projects, often in the area of advanced video, advanced technologies of this kind. One of the big issues I worked on was something called high-definition television, which everybody knows about now but back in the mid-'80's was brand new. There had been an effort to establish an international standard for high-definition television. There were interests that wanted to overcome the problems that had existed in the past. We have one system of television and in CSC there's Pal and Secam, all of these different systems which make television signals incompatible. So if you go to France from here, you can't take your television set. It won't pick up any signals, because they broadcast a different kind of signal. So with high-definition televisions coming along, a group of Japanese saw this as the way of the future and they thought 'why don't we try and establish an international standard.' The Japanese were very clever. They realized that we were their most important ally but that we had no industry that produces television sets. Most television sets that we buy in the United States are made in Japan, Sony, Toshiba, Mitsubishi. All we had left here was Zenith, which didn't actually manufacture things in the United States. So the Japanese went to Hollywood and they worked with Hollywood, which was very interested in most advanced technology, to develop what Hollywood thought would be a great standard for shooting movies in the future. So Hollywood together with the Japanese worked out this system that was presented at a conference in 1984. It was all set that it was going to be adopted as the new international standard, and then the Europeans balked and they said, "Hey, this is the Japanese. They're going to do to us what they did to American television industry. They're going to take it over." The Europeans refused to go along with it, and so we were developing several separate standards, and various task forces were getting together on a regular basis and we were involved in trying to figure out what might be an acceptable standard. The position that our office took - we went to many conferences and discussed this - was that we should work toward a single international standard. Maybe this one that the Japanese developed isn't the best one. We will find another one that will serve everybody equally. So we quickly learned that the Europeans, the last thing they wanted was a universal standard, because they didn't want the Japanese to be using the same standard that they were going to use, because they figured that that meant the Japanese were going to penetrate their markets and start selling Japanese equipment. The only way they could see to protect the European equipment community was to have a separate standard, and that's the way it evolved.

Q: Did Congress play any role?

BORG: Yes, there were a couple of Congressman. Markey in particular was very active.

Q: He was from where?

BORG: From Massachusetts. I don't recall the specifics, but Mark Eaton and his staff and a couple of other Congressmen, Senators, were very much involved.

Q: They you left there when?

BORG: I left there in early '88, and I think we'll take up next the circumstances surrounding my departure.

Q: Today is the 31st of October, Halloween, 2002. Parker, we're in 1988. Whither?

BORG: In 1988 I had completed almost an entire year as the acting head of the Office of CIP. We had known that there was a political appointee in the wings who was to be named, but nothing ever came of it. The woman's name was Sonya Landau, and she had previously been on the board of National Public Radio, where she had created such a ruckus - I think she got into a fistfight with the executive director at one point - that she was asked to step down and she was told that she would never be confirmed for a job like this. She seemed to have some strong supporters over at the Reagan White House, but the Senate had said no way is this lady ever going to be confirmed for anything. I think it was about May she was expected to be named. The spring, summer and autumn passed, and two days after the election we received the word. This was the 1988 election in which George Bush replaced Ronald Reagan. We received the word that she had just been given an interim appointment so that she was going to be the new coordinator of the office. I had never met the woman, I didn't know anything about her, but we work often with political appointees and she certainly couldn't be as bad as her advance press.

So we went out of our way to welcome her to the office when she showed up in late November. She had no background whatsoever on the issues. Her background was completely in radio, and she'd made a name for herself as being one of these people who was not what you'd call a friend of public radio. Her husband apparently had been a roommate of a Congressman from Michigan who was very influential in the Republican Party, and it was presumably because of this connection that she got the appointment. Anyway, she showed up, and there wasn't too much time had passed before she attempted to assert her authority. I had tried to work with her from the beginning and said, "Look, I'm a career person. I'm only here as long as I can be of help to you." But when I saw that she had some very strong ideas of the kind that, "Everything that's been done before me is wrong and I've got to change everything. I have to make a mark, my own mark, on this," and she began what I thought was unnecessary berating and belittlement of a very fine staff that had been put together in the office. So I felt it was my role, as somebody who could move on, to explain to her that, "Your interpretation isn't quite right. Let me explain the history and what happened and how it evolved that we ended up doing all the different things that we did." I did this for two or three months, and it became worse and worse. I probably should have just cut my losses and left, but I felt so strongly a need to protect the civil servants who were working in the office that I continued to try to orient her to the work and what it was that we'd been trying to do. I think it was in May there was a big conference that was going to take place in Nice, and she was going to go even though she had no role and I had advised her that we had a chairman for the delegation and that this chairman was the person who was going to run the conference. He was a very senior official in Motorola, and I said, "Now, our role in a conference like this is to go over" - the conference lasted six weeks or something like that - "and the office back here provides the support. We need high-level people here to see that the delegation out in Nice has all the things that they need to run everything else." Well, she didn't think that was a very good idea. There was a conference for six weeks in the Riviera and we were telling her that she shouldn't be spending the whole time there. Anyway, she decided that she was going to go.

In our last staff meeting, she announced that in her absence she had decided that I was not to be in charge of the office but that she would bypass me and have somebody else as the acting head of the office. I said, "That's your decision, but that means I can't work with you anymore. I've tried." And so I left and went to Bill Swain, who was the Director of Personnel, and said, "Look, I've tried to work with this woman, but it just hasn't work, so effective today I'm leaving the job," and so I said goodbye. I was really interested in the issues and I thought we were doing some interesting work and I thought that the office had a very important function that the State Department didn't recognize and that they ought to be paying closer attention to it. But, anyway, I left. I had lunch with an old friend that day and said, "Well, guess what. I've left my job, and I haven't a clue. I have no onward position, but I'll rest for a couple weeks." He said, "You know, I'm leaving my job this summer. Why don't you come and meet my boss. You could come and take my place. He hasn't found anybody yet." He was the Executive Assistant Secretary at International Narcotics. So I went and met his boss, who was Mel Levitsky, and it was sort of a done deal and within a couple of days that I moved over to work in Narcotics.

Q: This would be from...?

BORG: 1989 to '91.

Q: You know, these things have changed. At one point they were Narcotics and International Criminality or something.

BORG: I could give you a history of all that too at some point. It was the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters. Where that M came from I don't know, but that seemed to be what fit. This office was different from most State Department offices in that it was not only a policy office but a program office. At one point AID had run small narcotics and police training offices but it had become so controversial that AID got out of the business. The State Department was able to get an exception for police training on the grounds that it was to work against narcotics traffickers. So we suddenly had an exemption that AID didn't have, and we had these large programs that grew larger and larger over the years. The focus was totally on narcotics while I was working there. We handled narcotics policy around the world. We had large multimillion-dollar programs in each of the large narcotic-producing countries. The biggest programs were in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, Pakistan and Thailand. We used to have programs in Afghanistan and Burma, but these have gone by the wayside because of political problems and we cut out assistance programs. Then we had small training programs and assistance programs, a couple hundred thousand dollars, in about a dozen or two dozen other countries that were used for transiting narcotics. We also handled the money-laundering account because that was very close to narcotics. We had a whole range of activities that were both policy and program related, and we had our own branch of specialists in the Foreign Service. There were FSOs and FSIOs - remember they disappeared at some point - but we also had narcotics specialists, and they were people who would pursue their careers within the State Department but go from one narcotics job to another and compete for promotions in a narcotics cone rather than in the political or economic cone because the work was so different from what was done in any of the traditional cones.

Q: In the '89-to-'91 period how did the Bureau of Narcotics fit within the State Department apparatus? Who did you report to? What were your connections to the geographic bureaus?

BORG: As contrasted with my time in the terrorism office where there was total confusion as to where we fit and constant struggle with the geographic bureaus over who was going to do what, we worked very easily with the regional bureaus because we had the money and we had the very tough oversight over what DEA and other police agencies might be doing. We had a little bit of clout, which the regional bureaus couldn't pull off on their own. Within the Department itself these were the Baker years, and this was not one of the key issues for James Baker. As others may have talked about his time as Secretary of State, he focused on certain specific issues and then let the Assistant Secretaries run their bureaus, if it wasn't one of his issues, in the way that they wanted to. So we had good support at the top but little interference.

Q: How did Mel Levitsky operate?

BORG: Mel is a good, strategic thinker. He has good political skills with the interagency community. While there were two Deputy Assistant Secretaries, myself and a political appointee, I acted essentially as the DCM and ran all of the different offices, and the other Deputy Assistant Secretary ran the policy planning side. We had regional bureaus and then we had financial offices. I supervised the day-to-day activities of all the different regional offices and the finance.

Q: What was the background of the other Deputy Assistant Secretary?

BORG: Good connections somewhere. I don't think he had any particular connection to narcotics.

Q: He wasn't brought in as sort of a DEA type?

BORG: No, no, he was someone who had connections on the Hill.

Q: How were relations with the drug enforcement agencies?

BORG: We went out of our way to establish very close relations with the Drug Enforcement Agency, and there was an Office of National Drug Control Policy, ONDCP, at the White House, and these were our two interfaces in the outside world. ONDCP was headed by Bennett, who had been the Secretary for Education, and his deputy was John Walters, who is now the drug czar in the Bush II administration. The head of DEA at the time - I'll think of his name - went on to work with the New York Mets or the New York Yankees in charge of security. Then after that they had a number of acting directors at DEA.

Q: What was your impression of sort of the top management of DEA during the time you were there?

BORG: DEA had good leadership at that time, and even the people who were acting were very good. We had excellent relations with them. The fundamental problem was one that could never be addressed and that was that DEA was an American law enforcement organization that was operating outside the United States but never established its own sort of foreign cadre of people who specialized in foreign operations. They'd pick people from field offices in Mexico and Salt Lake City and so forth and assign them overseas for a tour, and this was a very tough adjustment because you don't operate in Colombia quite the same way that you operate on the Mexican border. It required much greater diplomatic skills, much closer consultations with the local government, and we attempted to move DEA from being a law enforcement organization focused on finding drug/narcotic kingpins and bringing them back to the United States for trial and tried to get them to assist local governments to uncover these people and help put them in jail in their own countries and get the local governments to do these things. This was a mission that went nowhere. This was so beyond their culture.

Q: How did you find the cadre of Foreign Service Officers who were being brought up as narcotics officers? I think this would be a different breed of cat.

BORG: After that, I'll talk about the DEA people. A Foreign Service Officer could bid on a narcotics job, so we had a number of people who came in to take a tour or two tours from the regular Foreign Service people who were in a consular cone or the economic cone or even the political cone sometimes, and they would come in because the job seemed interesting. What we could offer was program responsibilities at a relatively junior level, something that you don't get, particularly if you're a political officer or an economic officer where you don't run anything at all until you're too old to ever learn how to run things. So we got some really good Foreign Service Officers, but we also had inherited from AID a number of civil servants and we would occasionally come across somebody working for a contractor or in some other capacity who seemed to have a real special skill and we were able to bring them laterally into the Foreign Service, so that we had our own corps of Foreign Service narcotics specialists. It was never more than 15 or 20 people, and they generally held the senior jobs as narcotics officers and they would go from Colombia to Mexico, then to Peru and maybe out to Thailand. The narcotics office in a place like Colombia would have two or three people in it, maybe a narcotics specialist and two Foreign Service Officers, whereas in a country like Ecuador where the narcotics problem isn't as serious we had one Foreign Service Officer, a female who was there while I was working the job, and she said it was the most wonderful job that she'd ever had in the Foreign Service because she wasn't very senior and she had all of this money that she could use and she could travel all over the country looking at "Here's what the problem is, and here's how I think we can use the money that we have." The office was very heavily into training. We had a regular budget for training. In addition, DEA has no program monies. DEA is a law enforcement agency. Anytime DEA wanted to do anything that cost money, they had to come to the State Department because they had no budget, so it was our budget that paid for DEA's activities, which gave us veto power over what it was that they were going to be doing anyplace. A third aspect was that we ran what we jokingly called the fourth largest air force in the Western Hemisphere. We had a fleet of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft that we loaned out to different countries, and we trained local people as pilots and as mechanics to run these aircraft and carry not only the DEA people around but their own counternarcotics teams. We had something like a half dozen helicopters in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru. We had a transport plane, the C130, that made a daily run from Lima into the interior of the country where we had a huge narcotics base that looked just like a Special Forces camp from the Vietnam period. I remember the first time I went out there and here were all these DEA agents, male and female integrated on the same teams, wearing camouflage uniforms and going out and looking for traffickers or whatever they were looking for. They were special forces in a sense, or they operated like special forces. It was ironic that at this time the US military was not permitted to have people staying overnight in any of these communities, but here we had the DEA people dressed like military, male and female, in infantry positions out living in...

Q: Obviously armed, I'm sure.

BORG: Oh, yes, they had M16s. They were obviously armed. A lot of the things that they were doing out at camps like this, they were going after traffickers trying to find trafficker aircraft, trying to bust up jungle laboratories where narcotics were being refined. Again, it was the State Department that built the camps that they stayed at. It was State Department appropriation that provided the money. In order to insure that they had adequate training, we had hired some ex-Special Forces people. We had brought them into the State Department too, so we had former Special Forces, people in their early 40's who had done their 20 years in the military, and they came out and we had them assisting in some of the counternarcotics activities.

Q: Where would you run the training? The School of the Americas, which had been our training place for the military in Panama - was it Panama? I can't remember - where we ran something, got a very bad name, maybe undeservedly, that we were teaching police brutality and all.

BORG: The big organizations we worked with were Customs, INS, and DEA, and they have their own training facilities, and so we set up international sections, international courses, in their training academies. So people would train not at the School of the Americas but at the DEA training academy. DEA has its training facility right next to the Marines down at Quantico. These were the kinds of places that people went. And then I think we did some field training also.

Q: I would imagine that you would run into problems - I certainly heard it from the other side - about the ambassador in Colombia or the ambassador in Thailand would say, "You've got to do something. The DEA or narcotics people are getting too involved, are getting a little off the reservation."

BORG: We looked to each ambassador, and we made a lot of use of the authority of the ambassador to decide the size of the presence of other agencies of the US government within that country. We had much more of a problem with the ambassadors wanting more people and wanting us to help bring more resources into their country than we did with them complaining that there were too many people. I personally felt that having the large number of DEA people that we had in Thailand and in Mexico was excessive, but there was never a complaint from the embassies about this. I had talked with the DEA people about just exactly what are all these people doing in Thailand, because Thailand had been a problem but it was a relative success story in that, through a Thai program, not through much that we did, they had essentially thought of all sorts of crop substitution activities in Thailand that actually worked. They had grown the opium up in the highlands where it was cool, and what they could do was, as Bangkok grew and became more accommodating to tourists, there was demand for all of these temperate-climate vegetables, so they were growing carrots and radicchio and arugula, things I had never heard of. There were refrigerated trucks that would come around and pick up this stuff and ship it down to Bangkok. So they were able to replace the opium crop in Thailand with things that the farmers could earn a profit by growing. This was a very successful program.

The traffickers, of course, switched their attention to Burma, where there was essentially no control, so the large DEA presence was supposed to be looking after traffickers coming across the border from Burma, and we suspected that many of the traffickers were Thais. Since they weren't growing the stuff locally anymore, they could get the stuff that they needed from Burma. Now, South America was a completely different situation. First, the principal crop there was cocaine, the coca leaf, and this grew extensively in Bolivia and Peru in the Amazon River Basin. It was very difficult to do replacement agriculture, tropical agriculture, because of the transportation problem of moving the goods from the Amazon Basin to the cities which were on the coast, and you didn't have nearly the sophisticated market that was looking for the kind of goods. As contrasted with Thailand, where the opium poppy-grown land had been used for many years by ethnic groups that smoked it themselves, what happened in the Amazon Basin, by contrast, was that, once people learned that you could make a lot of money with coca, there were huge migrations that came in from the slums of the nearby cities and sort of cleared the forest down so that they could grow this coca. So you had an infinite amount of land that could have been converted to coca and you had no easy way that you could say, "All right, everybody, now you're going to grow oranges," because what were you going to do with all the oranges that these people would be able to grow. So you had a different circumstance in each of these countries. Colombia was not a production area so much as it was a trafficking area. It was the Colombian traffickers who brought the stuff out of Bolivia and Peru, did some refining in Colombia, and then moved it on either up Mexico or across the Caribbean. So we were working with the Coast Guard and with the military to try and halt the flows of the narcotics up the Mexican coast and across the Caribbean into the United States.

Q: How did you find relations were between, say, the cadre of narcotics officers you were developing and the DEA agents in the field?

BORG: It really depended upon the individual. Some of our narcotics people were ex-DEA agents, and they were looked upon often as turncoats because they had switched and were working at the State Department. But the very best got along quite well with the DEA people, and there were those, some, who would have problems in any personnel regime. There was also tension with the CIA and with military attachés in each one of these countries, because it was during these years the people at SOUTHCOM were very interested in using the military whatever way they could to halt the interdiction. We had regular conferences in Panama with the heads of SOUTHCOM, and they'd bring all the ambassadors up and we'd bring a team down from Washington to try and talk about the way, the plans, to interdict the flow of drugs into the United States. What we found was that, yes, we could be successful in one place, but as soon as we blocked the flow in one place, it went around to a neighboring country, another coast, or by some other means, because there was so much money in it. They were always a couple steps ahead of us.

Q: Which brings up a big point. Here you are working on this thing, and one sees accounts in the papers and people talking and saying, "We talk about a war but we've been losing this thing from the beginning and we continue to lose it." Did you see any light at the end of the tunnel?

BORG: Well, I think that Thailand presented an excellent case of what could be done. We were also able to cut production in Pakistan quite dramatically, but, again, it flowed in from Afghanistan. Burma and Afghanistan are the two largest heroin-producing countries in the world. We didn't have the resources and the administration didn't have the focus on the demand side, which we thought was also an important aspect of it. We, of course, had nothing to do with, you know, "Let's try to cut them in in the United States." We were dealing with supply-side economics. They used it for finance, that we were supposed to work on cutting off the supply of narcotics, and demand would go away if there was no supply, which I personally thought was nonsense. But since that was a domestic issue and we were working on the international side of it, what we could do was use some of our resources for demand problems in local countries and help with advertising campaigns in various places to reduce the consumption. We argued on many occasions with leaders in different places that, "The narcotics problem that you see right now of drugs being produced in your country or transiting your country and going to the United States or some other place, you need to recognize that it's very likely that you will soon have a problem with narcotics yourself and that these drugs are something you want to get off the street. You need to pay special attention to this." By the time I left the office, I think we had statistics that said that one out of every five Pakistanis living in Karachi between the ages of 20 and 35 was a drug addict. There were just astonishing figures. Likewise, the street kids in Bolivia and Peru were all addicted to drugs of some kind or another; many were heavily addicted.

You asked did we see progress. Yes, we saw progress in some places. We saw progress in money laundering. It was while I was in this office that we began some of the first international money laundering meetings and eventually set up a system in which the OACD became the monitor for banking systems in different countries, and there was a peer monitoring system that representatives of France or Britain would review what the banks were doing in Belgium and the Belgians and Italians would look at the banks in Austria and give them an evaluation, a report card. We were able to get the loose banking rules in Switzerland changed during this time and the banking rules in Liechtenstein and some other places. We weren't successful in some of the Caribbean islands particularly. It was the British Caribbean island that remained the center of a lot of money laundering, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and Jersey and Guernsey off the coast of France.

Q: These fell under British control.

BORG: That's right. For some reason they were not able to. They had certain autonomy in these places that the British weren't able to deal with.

Q: Were we sort of carrying the anti-narcotic ball around the world?

BORG: No question. It was crack cocaine that came into the United States in about 1985 that suddenly made us much more concerned about narcotics, and this was when one could date a big build-up in the amount of money we were prepared to spend on narcotics. We had always had a hard-core cocaine community and a hard-core opium community, but these drugs didn't lead to the violence that crack did. Crack, because of its chemical composition, was a very strong high. Opium, by contrast, makes one mellow and falls asleep. So a lot of the crime in the late '80's was tied to the crack cocaine. There were crack houses and crack babies. We still have the remnants of this, although I think it's probably not as serious now as it was, or maybe we've gotten more used to it now, so we don't talk about it so much anymore. But in Europe, by contrast, it was heroin that was the problem. In Africa there was hashish, and in Asia it was heroin. So the crack market was really the United States, and we kept suggesting that the problem that we had in the United States might be a problem that they'd find in the future in their own countries. But I don't think Europeans ever went for crack the way Americans did. So, yes, we were in the forefront internationally in trying to pursue it, and it was because of crack as a problem in our society.

Q: The Netherlands had this sort of tolerant policy. Were we sort of watching that and looking to see if that might be the way to go?

BORG: We weren't looking to see if that might be the way to go, because there were very strong feelings in this country that that was a very dangerous route. We had many discussions about decriminalizing narcotics, but it was very difficult to figure out which drugs to decriminalize and how might you make them available and at what purity level. How do you regulate all of this? And what is the age at which somebody could begin using narcotic drugs? This was an internal discussion. It was not something that we were looking at in any official capacity, but it was the sort of thing that we would toss back and forth, and it was next to impossible to come up with a formula that, if we were to say, "All right, let's ease this problem by decriminalizing marijuana," well, that might work in certain communities, but there's a tremendous backlash against anything like that. Again, this was the Bush years and there was not much tolerance towards any kind of drug use then. My own personal view was that we shouldn't spend too much of our resources on marijuana. We did do marijuana eradication in Colombia and in Mexico, but I thought we should be focusing our attention on hard stuff and focusing our resources on opium and cocaine.

Q: Were there any sort of crises, developments or things during the time you were there that particularly gained your attention?

BORG: It was an interesting contrast with the terrorism office, because there would be a terrorist incident on a regular basis and then we'd have to work around the clock to deal with this incident until it went away, until the hostages were released, or until we recovered the bodies of whoever it was that may have been hit. We didn't do crises in the narcotics office. There were no crises per se, but there were incidents when a DEA agent might be killed on a plane mistakenly shot down, but if there was a task force that would be set up, it wasn't our office that would deal with the task force because we ran general policy and the programs. DEA would have task forces for its people who might have been captured, and in the State Department a regional bureau might do a task force for some special case. Basically we didn't operate in crisis atmosphere. We had a growing level of resources, and we were trying to use our resources as efficiently as possible.

Q: What about the Department of the Treasury, particularly with Customs and with money laundering and all? You must have worked quite closely with them, didn't you?

BORG: Yes, we had one person in our office who worked on the Financial Action Task Force, which was a Treasury-run organization, and we essentially let him carry the ball on this. He handled all of the meetings and follow-up to the meetings. We had a different level of cooperation with Customs, and Customs spent more of its time on narcotics than they probably thought they should have, but it was a big issue and so they had established inspections in other countries, in Canada and the Bahamas, and we worked with them to put these programs together. The Commissioner of Customs was a woman who was later named ambassador to the Bahamas. She did a very good job as Commissioner of Customs, and she's a good ambassador now.

Q: Having done this job for about two years, whither?

BORG: I finished up two years in the job, and my wife and I had been in the United States for seven or eight years. This was '91 and we'd been here since '84, and she kept getting pressure that she was supposed to go overseas, but since I was a Deputy Assistant Secretary all the time, I didn't have the same pressure. So we decided that we didn't want to stay in Washington, we were tired of the Washington scene, and that we would try to find something where I would work and she would have leave without pay to look after our kids. They were quite young at this point. There was a surprise opening in Burma because the Senate rejected the political appointee who was supposed to go there. He subsequently went to Morocco - I'll think of his name. So I said to Mel, "You know, I'd really love to go to Burma. I started my Foreign Service career in Southeast Asia and always found that a fascinating corner of the world." So he went to the powers that be and suddenly I was on the list and I was the prime candidate. In EAP it was 'who is out there?' that came in, and so I was the candidate. I was going to go to Burma. I think it was in late '90 that we worked it out, and then in '91 all the papers went through and the nomination went forward.

Q: So you went to Burma?

BORG: No. In December - I don't know if it was '90 or '91 - at about the time that my nomination was going forward, Aung San Suu Kyi, who'd been under house arrest, the daughter of one of the founders of modern Burma, had gone back and she was fighting for democracy. There were elections held in 1988, and her party won a large percentage of the votes, a very heavy percentage of the votes. There was a Tiananmen-type massacre in Rangoon in '89, and so the country had become quite controversial because of its human rights violations, and she was put under house arrest. She subsequently won the Nobel Peace Prize. All this was occurring at the time my nomination was sort of wending its way forward. As soon as the nomination was announced, we heard that there was trouble, and the trouble came from Senator Moynihan's office. Senator Moynihan had a staff member by the name of Andrew Sanet whose wife was from one of the ethnic groups that had lived in Burma but had been persecuted by the Burmese government. Sanet had made many trips out to this part of the world and felt that Burma was his special area of interest. Moynihan then decided that Burma was his special area of interest, and since we didn't have any programs that we could cut because we'd already stopped all of our assistance programs and our narcotics programs, what we would do to punish the Burmese was we wouldn't send an ambassador. I went ahead. I had my Senate hearing, and it went fine, there were no problems, but Moynihan blocked it. He went to the Democratic Caucus and he said, "I don't ask often for anybody to agree with me on something, but I want all the Democrats to be with me on this, that we don't send an ambassador to Burma." The Democrats all went along. I think the Republicans were in the majority at that point. This would have been...

Q: '94, I think, was when the Republicans took over.

BORG: That's right. I guess the Democrats held the majority position. They were adamant. They felt very strongly there shouldn't be an ambassador out there. I wanted to see if I could negotiate something, but the Office of Congressional Relations at this time held a very tough line on ambassadorial candidates going up and meeting with people on the Hill separately from them, and they said, "No, we will do this. We will take care of this. We will get you confirmed. You are not permitted to go and talk with anybody. If you go and talk with anybody and the nomination gets in any trouble, we wash our hands of it." So my strategy was to push as much as I could from the outside but not to go up and meet with people on the Hill, which I think made people on the Hill even angrier because they wanted to talk to me, the staff people on the Hill, but we were under strict orders. This started in '91 and went all through '92. I studied Burmese for a year and half. I remember the Assistant Secretary in '92 - I can't think of his name right now - said, "Well, let me see what I can do," so he began calling around, and he got a call from the Assistant Secretary - Janet Mullins, I guess, was the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, and she said, "This is our issue to deal with ambassadorships. If you don't get out of it, your name will be mud with Baker, because I'll tell Baker that you're interfering in my work." She was one of the people who was very close to Baker. So he said, "Look, there's nothing I can do." At one point someone said, "Why don't we talk with some of the Republicans," and we talked with Mitch McConnell's office and were told, "Let's work a compromise." The compromise was that they would push for an ambassador to go out if we would agree to pull out all the military attachés. I said, "Well, that's stupid. We've got a military government, and it's very important in knowing what they're doing to have people in the uniformed services who can go out and schmooze with them." He said, "All they do is schmooze and play golf, and that makes it look like we accept the government." I said, "No, military attachés have the position of trying to develop intelligence, and they're in a better position to develop intelligence than anyone else. I can't go along with that." Then I went to the Assistant Secretary and said, "Here's the proposal, and I don't think it's right," and he said, "That's right, it's not." So things lingered. I worked on strategy papers on how do you deal with Burma and what do we do about this and about that? It was a year and a half. If Bush had won in '88, the general plan was that I would get a recess appointment and go off to Burma. But Bush lost and then we were in the Clinton Administration.

Q: So then what happened?

BORG: The Clinton Administration comes in.

Q: This was '93.

BORG: This was early '93, and I'm still in never-neverland because I declined to take the short tours that they wanted to offer me and continued to do my Burmese. But I kept an office in the Narcotics Bureau, and when the decision was made to try to expand international narcotics matters to look at law enforcement issues, I was the point person to set up what it was that we would do in the State Department to move this bureau from narcotics to all law enforcement activities. I had an intern that I worked with, and we essentially went around town and met with the head of the FBI, various people in the Justice Department and DEA and other law enforcement agencies, all of whom I knew from my narcotics years, and said, "Look, this is going to be set up at the State Department, and we want you to know right off that we're not doing this to take over your functions. We do not want to take over your functions. The purpose of this is to bring the law enforcement issues into the foreign policy process." At this point I think one of the big law enforcement issues was the growing knowledge of the mafia organizations in the former Soviet Union. There was smuggling of Chinese into the United States by ships. We said, "Look, our new office at the State Department aims to facilitate what it is that your agencies have been doing, and we hope that you'll be supportive." And it worked out that they were supportive, and the office moved from narcotics to international narcotics and law enforcement.

Q: Known by the wonderful title of...?

BORG: INL.

Q: Thugs and drugs.

BORG: Thugs and drugs, that's right. Again, that's after my time, because I had moved on by then. So I was in the never-neverland of not knowing what I might be doing and where I might be going, and I also served as a mentor for an A100 class. I was with the A100 class out at one of their retreats, and I got a call from the Director General's office and they said, "Are you sitting down?" I said, "No. Should I be sitting down?" They said, "Oh, maybe. We've decided what embassy we want to send you to." I said, "Oh?" They said, "Yes, and since it's very cold out there where you are, you're going to like where you're going. We want you to go to Iceland." I said, "Excuse me. Iceland? I spent my entire career in the third world. I love the third world. I'll go anywhere in the third world. I've never served in Europe. There are only two or three posts that are coming open for career people in Europe. This is a NATO country. I don't know anything about NATO, and you want me to do this?" I said, "I'll have to talk to my wife." So I talked to my wife, and she said, "It could be a lot of fun. Let's do it." It turned out that I went to Iceland.

Q: You were in Iceland from when to when?

BORG: From 1993 to 1996.

Q: I just came back from Paris - this is in late October - and they had posters on the metro: "Visit the enchantment of Iceland for three days."

BORG: To say I was less than enthusiastic would be an understatement.

Q: I would have thought this was a prime candidate for a political appointee.

BORG: Well, it generally had been. My predecessors, many of them, had been political appointees. I think that what had happened was that the State Department, the regional bureau, had presumed that there would be a political appointee whom the White House would insist on for this country and so it hadn't decided who would be a good Foreign Service Officer to go there. So it was one of those places that had no names next to it. I think they felt sorry for me that, for no reason associated with me, I had just been sort of left hanging in the wind for an awfully long time, and the European embassies were the first ones they were looking at, so when they saw there was a blank space, they put my name next to it.

Q: Yes, they can put your name after it, but it's usually the White House that comes up with...

BORG: But the White House didn't have a candidate for it. I think what happens is that different White Houses operate in different ways, that in the Bush/Reagan years there would be a White House candidate and a State Department candidate and they'd duke it out. I think in the early Clinton years anyway they decided in advance, "Don't send us candidates for this, this and this. These are going to be political." So the State Department knew that, okay, we pick the people for these posts. Once I was the State Department candidate, I knew I was the candidate. So then it came about to study a whole new culture and a whole new set of issues, which I had never even thought about before.

Q: When you were getting ready to go there, what were the issues?

BORG: The two big issues at the time were the status of our base and international whaling. We have a curious history with Iceland in that we sent troops to Iceland in 1941, well before Pearl Harbor, because when Churchill met Roosevelt in one of the early conferences, he convinced Roosevelt that the British needed to bring their forces back from Iceland. When Germany invaded Denmark they were all set to pull a coup in Iceland, which was a Danish colony at the time, and the British preempted them by sending in the gunboats and taking over Iceland and placing British troops there. So after the conference - I think it was the Atlantic Conference - we decided that we would send troops to Iceland to replace the British so that they could return to Britain. So this was really our first venture into the war in Europe. It was ironic that my wife's father was in that contingent that went to Iceland in 1940 or '41. So after the war we had promised them that we'd pull our troops out, but the Cold War began and we had second thoughts.

When NATO was established, Iceland came in as a charter member of NATO despite the fact Iceland has never had a military force of its own. It's the only member of NATO that has no armed force. We worked out an agreement, I think, in 1953 that we would be responsible for the defense of Iceland. So the base has been there ever since. It's at a place called Keflavik. Iceland didn't have a major airport, and Keflavik was and remains the international airport for Iceland. It's about 20 miles from the capital city.

After the Cold War we were interested in reducing our presence at a lot of military facilities around the world, and the Icelanders, having pushed to get us out of Iceland through the 1960's and '70's when they had occasional leftist governments, suddenly realized that the goose that laid the golden egg might be going home. So suddenly positions had switched, and the US wanted to reduce its presence and the Icelanders wanted to maintain it. So when I first got into the issue, there were discussions that were ongoing about what was going to be the future presence of Americans in Iceland. I began going to these meetings in Washington, and the meetings went nowhere. Every couple weeks there'd be a team that would come over, and since I wasn't confirmed, I just sat in the back of the room and watched how these meetings went. I learned that, while the Icelanders had a certain position that they stuck to, the Americans never could present the same team from one meeting to the next because it was always a different office or a different person from the Pentagon who would show up at the meetings and they would say, "Oh, no, we don't like that." So everybody would agree to something at one meeting, and then at the next meeting the Pentagon people say, "No, no, no, we can't accept any of that," so they had to go back to zero and start over again. This went back and forth, back and forth. There was no way that this thing was going to be easily resolved.

It was an important issue in that the Navy wanted to maintain a continuing presence at Keflavik because it had been an important intelligence-gathering site throughout the Cold War and it's the place where they monitor Russian submarines moving down into the North Atlantic. The Air Force, by contrast, which was the other main service that was there, didn't think that Iceland served any purpose at all and wanted to pull out its aircraft, its 14, or maybe 16 at the time, that were there. They wanted to pull them out. But the Icelanders said, "No, if you want to maintain the presence at the base, then there have to be aircraft. We cannot be the only NATO capital that doesn't have any jet planes, doesn't have any defense." The Air Force people would argue, "Look, you can't defend a place with the small number of aircraft that we have." They said, "We don't care. We want aircraft." So this went back and forth. We had the different American positions. The basic problem was that we couldn't sort out what was the American position to be. So the Icelanders, they're a very small nation but they are an incredibly stubborn nation, and they kept saying, "No, we insist." So this went on. I got out there in November of '93. We had a couple more meetings at our end, and I saw that absolutely nothing was going to happen. There would be a meeting, I guess, in December, a NATO meeting, and this would be Clinton's first meeting with all the different European prime ministers at the NATO meeting, and I picked up a rumor - I never had any confirmation of it - that the Icelandic prime minister was going to raise the issue with Clinton. I thought, ah, that sounds like a good way we can sort this out. So I sent a first-person cable back to the Secretary of Defense, not to the State Department, saying there is the NATO ministerial thing coming up and the prime minister here, we believe, is going to mention the base issue with the President, and "I think that it is in American interests if we can get this settled before the meeting so this will not be an agenda item for President Clinton." For some reason he bought onto that, and we had a delegation out within a week or two weeks, and it was headed by Deutsch, the Deputy Secretary of Defense at the time.

Q: Later he became head of the CIA.

BORG: That's right. He came out with an Air Force general, the CINC from Norfolk, and a Navy admiral. It was a high-powered delegation. We set up the meetings at a hotel, and he came into the meeting and he listened to what the Icelanders were saying, and he turned to the Air Force general and said, "Well, I think we're just going to have to do it that way." He gave them what they wanted. The way we had negotiated it was that the Air Force would withdraw all but four aircraft and they'd maintain a symbolic presence of four F16's on the ground plus the search-and-rescue operation.

Q: Orion planes, I think.

BORG: No, that was the Navy. The Navy had the Orion plane out there, but that wasn't an issue. The Navy would continue their Orion programs. We learned subsequently that the Deputy Secretary was all set to go with the Air Force position until he got there and he told the Navy that it was just going to have to live with the possibility of losing the base, but after he heard the Icelanders make their presentation, he switched sides. So we suddenly had an agreement - it was called it an agreed minute - for the continued use of the base for the next two years. We could only agree to it for two years. I spent almost the entire next year in battle with the Air Force over their interpretation of what had been agreed. Even though they had it written down, they said, "It doesn't really mean that, and we're going to pull our forces out anyway." They kept trying to think of reasons to pull the aircraft out of Iceland, and I kept thinking of reasons why they couldn't and why they shouldn't. This went back and forth, so this occupied my time. So here I am coming out of working on all these nonmilitary issues and I'm suddenly in the thick of these military discussions, and we were able to prevail by essentially outlasting the Air Force general, who eventually was transferred to another posting. His successor didn't have the same strong view. In addition, the Defense Reorganization Act of 1993 or '94 put the Air Force units that were located down at Langley Air Force Base under the authority of the CINC...

Q: The CINC being an admiral in Norfolk.

BORG: All these units suddenly reported to him, and they didn't have their independent chains of authority up to Air Force headquarters in Washington. So when he left and when there was the change in the legal structure, we were able to prevail, and the Air Force kept its units there. We kept it at four aircraft, and the Navy could do as it chose. That was chapter one. Chapter two was the agreement expired in two years, and so we began talking informally with the Icelanders about what are we going to do when this agreement expires. The secretary general of the foreign ministry and I agreed that the first round of discussions had been a disaster. They had no defense department in Iceland, so we dealt with the foreign ministry, which has a small defense office. We agreed that what we needed to do was to keep the discussions out of Washington, keep the Pentagon out of the discussions, and to the extent possible the two of us would try to manage the process. I worked very closely with the admiral and the new CINC in Norfolk to say, "Look, this last round was pretty much a disaster, and we've got to do it again." We said that, "Now under the new reorganization, you are clearly responsible for this. This is not a Washington issue. This is your issue. We're not changing the base agreement in any way. We are merely working on a status-of-forces arrangement." So he agreed that it was his responsibility, and he delegated that the base commander and I would be the interlocutors to sort out what would be in the base agreement. The new 'agreed minute' was what we called it. This was late '95. We were trying to work on it beforehand, but the Icelanders wouldn't be serious in their discussions until after the thing had expired, because they wanted to sort of prolong it to the extent that they could and just say, "It's in effect indefinitely." We said, "No, no, no, it expires, and we're free to do whatever we like at this point, and so we've got to renew it."

We began discussions, the admiral and the foreign ministry people and myself. The discussions, I think, began in earnest in early '96, and the Icelandic position was essentially what it had been before, that they wanted to keep the four aircraft on the ground. We had a different position at the Air Force at this time. The Air Force was willing to keep its aircraft there as long as they weren't required to actually be physically present all the time, so they could fly off on missions to other places. The Icelanders were acceptable to this, but we thought, 'We've got to extract something or other from this. We can't just give them everything that they want. So what are the biggest problems that we face?' Well, there were some very messy issues. First, all commercial aircraft that land at the Keflavik airport pay their airport fees, none of which go to maintaining the airport at Keflavik because the Keflavik airport is the responsibility of the US Navy, so it's all out-of-country money that pays for the maintenance of the airport. There was just no way that the Icelanders were going to give any percentage of the resources to the US military, because this was essentially money that they used to support their aviation program in the rest of the country. They had these small airports all over the country that they paid for and funded through the fees from the international planes landing. So we decided not to pursue that one. But there was the issue of contracting. There was a monopoly company within Iceland that controlled all of the contracting at the base. Anytime the base wanted to do anything, they had only one company that they could go to, which could charge them just whatever they felt like charging. So we said, 'What we'll do is we'll break the monopoly'. So we negotiated mostly over the course of the next couple of weeks, months, what's the time frame for breaking the monopoly. 'If we're going to provide these things which you like, you're going to have to make the base more something that we can afford. It can't be such a rip-off as it's been in the past.' All the political parties shared in the resources that came in through what was called the Iceland prime contractor, but we eventually worked out a formula. The negotiations got very tense. On our side we had the admiral and myself. We didn't tell the State Department what we were doing, and nobody told Washington. The Pentagon didn't know what we were doing either.

On the Icelandic side you have a coalition government, and the prime minister was of one party and the minister of foreign affairs was from another party. We had a really tough time with the prime minister's office in that they didn't want to make any concession.

The foreign minister was more accommodating, and so he proposed to me - we were no longer working with the prime secretary; this was the foreign minister - he said, 'Look, let's just the two of us do these negotiations. We'll cut the prime minister's office out. I only want one person.' So I went to the people at the base and said, 'Look, this is what he wants to do. He wants to do it one on one, so do I have your confidence,' and they said, 'Sure, you know what our positions are.' We weren't really arguing any Defense Department issues; we were arguing financial issues and so forth. So in the end the prime minister and I worked out what would be the new agreed minute, and we signed it and we got the Assistant Secretary of Defense to come out and initial it.

Everybody was ecstatic on the American side that we had an agreement. The State Department people went absolute ballistic; they said, "Wow! This is terrific. We didn't have to send out a team. This is the best thing that's happened in months. This is the highlight of the first six months of the year for the European Bureau as well. We now have an agreement." To my surprise, the prime minister was pissed as hell about the agreement. I had worked it out with the foreign minister, and what we were doing was breaking the monopoly which had been a big source of revenue for the prime minister's party. At some National Day function - I think it was Icelandic independence day or something - we were at the president's palace. Actually it was the president and the prime minister. The president is the equivalent of a queen. There was this very nice woman who was the president of Iceland. We were at her residence, and the prime minister came up to me. He'd had a couple drinks, and I've never had such a confrontation with anybody as that which he presented me with at this meeting. He told me how I was not a friend of Iceland and I had sabotaged the relations, and blah blah blah. I said, "Look, I'm here as your guest. If you don't like what we've done, then you can declare me PNG and I'll go home tomorrow." He went off. I never spoke to him again. The president had...

Q: Was this the drink talking?

BORG: I never knew. I think it was the way he felt, but I think it was the drink.

Q: It was basically political patronage essentially.

BORG: That's right. I never had another exchange of words with him. Again, this was in April, and my tour came to an end in June. I don't know if there were any visitors that came out. I declined to call on him before I left. I just thought it was unnecessary rudeness. We got an agreement, and one of the things in the end was we've got to be there for five years. We only had been working two years at a time. This was '96 and we had an agreement that lasted until 2001.

Q: That's one of the real problems with some of these base agreements. The Azores agreement has been going on forever; you have permanent Azore negotiators on the Portuguese and American side, and it's a waste of time.

BORG: We put the issue behind us for five years. They hadn't begun to figure out what they're going to do when it expired two years ago. They're living on old base arrangements, and the Icelanders are quite happy with that because we kept changing our presence. I've been consulted on a couple of occasions on what's going to happen and what should we be doing, and I said, "Well, you basically have too many players." They have a special base negotiator, a woman who works for PM (Political Military), whose primary function is negotiating this base and others as well. This issue took a big part of my time up there, because the base issues were sort of continuous for the time the negotiations going on. My successor didn't have to even think about it.

Q: One of the things on the bases that I heard prior - this was when there was a left-leaning or even communist party in control - was they really didn't want the Americans there and the troops were restricted to the base, and I think one of the fears was that one of the pretty Icelandic girls would love to get the hell off the island and all these American males out there would love to take them with them. How did that play out while you were there?

BORG: It had been a much more serious problem in the past. In the '60's and '70's there was great opposition to an American presence in Iceland, and there were restrictions on Americans going into town and so forth. That had pretty much passed, and I guess the size of our mission had declined and the number of single people had declined, so, yes, there were still marriages that took place but there were many more marriages 10 or 15 years earlier than marriages that were taking place. I think that Iceland had become a sufficiently prosperous welfare state that, if somebody wanted to go to America, they went there and they didn't feel they had to marry somebody at the base, generally who had much less education than they had, in order to get away. I never heard of a single romance between people at the base and Icelanders. I'm sure there were some, but that was not an issue.

Q: How about whales?

BORG: Whaling, yes, this was our other big issue. There was a very small but noisy community in Iceland that wanted to resume whaling. Iceland had left the International Whaling Commission - I can't remember the year. Norway and Iceland both wanted to resume whaling after the ban at the International Whaling Commission, and we had put pressure on the Icelandic parliament to go along with the ban. Iceland left the Whaling Commission because they felt it was in the hands of the environmentalists and was no longer serving the original purpose, which was the conservation of the whale resources and protection of the whales. Once Iceland left, nobody wanted them back because they wanted to come back only if they could file an exception as the way Norway could file, but nobody appeared to give exceptions, so they were no longer part of the international community. There was a vocal community that kept pushing: "You've got to resume whaling." My strategy, which I wrote up and sent in to Washington, was: "I'm not going to say anything publicly about whaling because this is such an emotional issue. This is the equivalent of apple pie and motherhood, and for me to say anything in public is going to inflame the situation and make sure that whatever comes to pass comes to pass more quickly." I said, "My strategy is to talk with key exporters of goods to the United States and talk about the impact it could have on them if Americans decide that, after Iceland goes for the whales, they decide to boycott Icelandic products." We talked with the head of the airline, Iceland Air; we talked with the people who ran the two big fish packing companies, both of which export to the U.S. I said, "Look, if you resume whaling, I'm not sure what the official reaction is going to be and I don't know what the unofficial reaction is going to be, but anti-whaling is a very popular issue in the Iceland just as pro-whaling is a popular issue here. It could well be that Greenpeace or others will decide that, since Icelanders have done this, they're going to boycott Icelandic products. I'm not going to say anything about this, but I think it's in your interest to figure out if whaling is more important for you and for Iceland than the other products that you're producing and sending to the United States." This was the strategy I followed for the duration of my time there, and whaling never was a serious issue. I talked every couple months with them.

Q: You talked about the end game of the prime minister. Up to that point, though, how had the relations been with the Icelandic government?

BORG: Just fine. We had very good relations. We brought speakers in. Anybody that came to town could go in and see them. Iceland is basically a very close friend of the United States.

Q: Were there any contentious issues that arose over NATO or...?

BORG: Yes, NATO issues were central to base discussions and their concern was that we maintain a presence. The most contentious other issue which we dealt with was the question of EU standards. Iceland is not a member of the European Union, and because of the importance of fishing to its economy, it was not about to surrender its sovereignty over its territorial waters and permit Spanish and Portuguese fishermen to come in and fish the waters clean the way they did in Canada and in other places. So Iceland had the unique situation that its 200-mile territorial waters was contingent with the bank around the country, so that the shallow water where the fish hung out was all within Iceland's territorial waters, as contrasted with the grand banks in Canada where the fishing waters extend 500, 600, 700 miles out into the sea. So Iceland was not about to join the European Union, but it was a member of EFTA, the European Free Trade Area, which meant that it fell under EU regulations, and it was constantly getting regulations from Brussels that it was supposed to implement and sign agreements with the European Union to do this and that in accordance with European Union regulations. Iceland, because of its location in the North Atlantic, and its ties with the United States over the years, purchased large quantities of American goods, but it didn't purchase them from European subsidiaries, it purchased them directly from the United States. The supermarket chain buys goods from Safeway or someone, the suppliers in the United States. Well, this meant that all of the cans and packages in Iceland had American labeling on them as to percentage of fat and salt and all these sorts of these things, and they didn't meet the European Union standards. So Iceland was supposed to switch its sources for these goods to companies that were in Europe that were providing the packages that had the right numbers on them. Well, most Icelanders didn't understand it, but the import community, the people who ran the various markets, the supermarkets, thought this was outrageous, that they didn't want to give up their traditional sources.

The foreign minister was putting pressure on them to switch wherever they were acquiring their goods. In addition, few goods that we produced in United States the Icelanders consumed in sufficient quantity to print the labels in Iceland to meet the European standards. I think the real exception to that was Cheerios. Icelanders are addicted to Cheerios, and there are manufactured in the United States Cheerios boxes in Icelandic with all the European standards. But they wanted frosted flakes and ketchup and all these other things. So I sent my economic team into the supermarkets throughout the city to find as many labeled goods from European sources that didn't have the correct labeling on them either, and so we were able to find things from Spain and Sweden and all these other places that were improperly labeled, that didn't meet the European labeling standards. So we made a presentation to the foreign minister and said, "Look, you should not discriminate against American products because they don't have the correct labeling. We know all of these European companies that don't meet the European labeling standards.

We also had displays: "Here are all the products which everybody in Iceland eats all the time." We set this up in hotels to demonstrate, "Now, here's what you're not going to be able to get any longer." It was a very effective campaign, and they backed off. I don't know what happened after I left. So trade promotion was a very important part of what we were doing also. We had annual trade fairs. We would take American goods to different parts of the country and try to introduce people to American wine, American beer. We had a Budweiser distributor in Iceland. And each year for the Fourth of July we would bring in American goods duty free, and each one of the importers would use the Fourth of July as a place where people could sample American wines and whiskey and other products. They thought it was wonderful to get all that stuff for free and take possession of the things afterwards that had come in duty free. We introduced Hummer vehicles, the Humvee, the military vehicle, and I went around the country at one point promoting the use of Humvees for the rescue societies, because Iceland has a huge arctic desert and the Humvee is very well suited to the Icelandic environment. So it was, in summary, military issues, whaling, and trade promotion. Those were the key issues.

Q: Well, you left there in '96, and what did you do then?

BORG: We signed the base agreement in April, and I was on holiday at Easter in Norway and, lo and behold, I got a phone call saying, "Peter Tarnoff is trying to reach you." Peter Tarnoff was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the time. So I called back and he said, "We want you to come back to Washington tonight. We want to talk with you." I said, "Well, how about next week? This is Thursday night. I'm in Norway, and my wife is here, but we're leaving and I'll get back with you when we come back to Washington." So I went back the following weekend. What they wanted me to do was to go to Bosnia. We had just signed the peace accord, the Dayton Accords. We had an ambassador in Bosnia who had no program experience, and they were trying to find somebody to send out who would be the equivalent of mission director, who would work on all of the different programs associated with the Dayton Accord. They didn't want to replace the ambassador because he'd only been there for a short period, but he was junior and he had no experience, so they wanted someone who was relatively senior who could go out and work on refugee programs, work on law enforcement programs, work on all of these things, many of which I had experience on. But I think the kicker for them was they thought I got along really well with Nordics, and the person who was implementing things from the European Community was Carl Bildt, the former Swedish prime minister, and they thought that, since I got along so well with the Icelanders, I was an ideal person to go out there. I never disabused them of that although I thought it was rather ironic.

I stayed in Washington for two or three weeks and went back to Iceland and came back to DC a second time to continue the discussions. My wife was being assigned to Malaysia. She was supposed to go off her leave without pay and go to Malaysia. The kids were then seven to 12. Her inclination was that this is why you go in the Foreign Service, to go to jobs like this. I spent time in Washington trying to identify what the job was going to be, what it was that they expected of me, and what would be my reporting chain of command. I met with the person who was the ambassador and explained to him that this wasn't my idea and certainly if I came out there I wasn't going to be interfering in his activities, that he was the ambassador and he was in charge of the diplomatic relations and I would be the person in charge of the different programs, and I thought we could probably work things out. I think he saw me as that would be good, someone else to worry about some of these things.

There was a kicker that came into it in that the White House suddenly came up with a candidate also, and so there were going to be two of us out there, a political appointee and myself. I said, "It's possible if we can identify what it is that each of us is going to do," and I attempted in some papers to sketch out, you know, here are two people and if there was enough to do. He could work on this and I could work on that, and we'll divide it up this way. I was still somewhat concerned that the Washington side was incredibly disorganized, that there was not a single office who was responsible for Bosnia back here but rather 12 separate offices that all reported to the Assistant Secretary.

The Assistant Secretary had established himself as the center of all Bosnian activities, and there was nobody under him that had any authority over anything except their own programs. I thought that's a prescription for disaster. Further, I found that the White House, with an election coming up - this was '96 - was incredibly sensitive to everything that was happening, everything that appeared in the newspapers, and whenever anything came in that was not favorable, they said, "Fix it," so I realized that they wanted somebody out there that they could shout at and say, "Fix this." The political appointee came to town, and even though I had worked out separate roles with him, Strobe Talbott and Peter Tarnoff just sort of said to me, "Oh, yes, is that what you'd like to do? That's okay," and just agreed with everything that this guy suggested, paid no attention to talking points that I gave them. So at the end of two days with this guy I went to Peter Tarnoff and said, "This isn't going to work. I'll retire from the State Department." He said, "No, no, no, why don't you go out. Go to Bosnia just for a couple weeks. See what it's like. There's a lot of work to do. We want you to go out there." I said, "No, I'm not going to go out there. I don't see any way this is going to work," and so I left.

Q: You retired?

BORG: I retired.

Q: Did you get any reports? How did the Bosnian thing work out?

BORG: The political appointee went out there, and he was, I guess, reasonably successful. He was one of these people with great flair and brought cultural programming from Italy to Bosnia, which is something I certainly would not have done. How much did he do that was similar to what I would have done, I don't know. Did anybody do the things that they wanted me to do? I don't think he did them, because he was sort of above the nitty-gritty of program management. He had made his name. He used to tell this quite proudly, that when they hadn't been able to figure out the baggage arrangements at the new Denver International Airport, it was his company that had come in and had sorted that out. So that was the end of my Foreign Service career.

Q: Did you go off to Malaysia?

BORG: I went off to Malaysia with my wife.

Q: How did you find the role of Foreign Service spouse?

BORG: It was fine. I think it's much easier for males to be Foreign Service spouses than it is for females. I did absolutely nothing within the Foreign Service community. I did a lot of camping and hiking and taking the kids around on vacation. I enjoyed it. Malaysia had been my first post, so I was essentially going home, and it was fun to see how things had changed. I spoke the language and I could operate quite freely within the society.

Q: Well, I think we'll stop at this point. I thank you very much.

End of interview