

THOMAS PARKER, JR.

Interviewed by: Raymond Ewing

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Q: Okay. This is a Foreign Affairs oral history interview with Thomas Parker, Jr. It's the 6th of July, 2009, and this interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and my name is Raymond Ewing.

Tom, it's really good to sit down and talk with you. I see that you have your undergraduate degree from Davidson College; why don't you begin with a little bit of background. Where did you grow up, how did you happen to go to Davidson and then I'm also interested in what made you decide to take the Foreign Service officer exam and enter the Foreign Service in 1967?

PARKER: Okay, right. Well, happy to be here. I grew up in Greenville, South Carolina. I lived there from age six, which would have been 1946, when my dad was discharged from the U.S. Navy at the end of the Second World War and that was my hometown for the rest of my childhood and teenage years, young adult years.

I attended Davidson, I learned of Davidson by happenstance, really. I took a trip one summer with a group of boys who would hop into a school bus each summer, different group every summer, hop into a school bus and travel north to Canada for about 30 days and learn something about our northern neighbor, as well as the northeastern United States, which was almost another country for somebody from South Carolina in those days. But on our first night on the road from Greenville north we stopped and slept in the gym at Davidson College, so that was how I learned of Davidson College. Anyway, in due course I applied there and was accepted and got a wonderful liberal arts education with a major in English and American literature, minor in history. Had two or three jobs after that, well, including two years in the U.S. Army. I finished college in 1961. The U.S. Army was 1962 to 1964; as was very often the case in those days I took ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) in college. The draft still existed so there was a strong incentive to take ROTC and become an officer. The Army was after Davidson and before the State Department, which I entered in the fall of 1967.

Q: If I could just ask you, was your Army service all in the United States or-?

PARKER: Yes it was, which is somewhat ironic, as I will relate in a moment if I may. But yes, as I recall I served at Fort Benning, Georgia, Fort Holabird, Maryland, and Fort Douglas, Utah. My basic branch was artillery; my assigned branch was the intelligence corps.

Anyway, after Davidson I had a couple of jobs, neither one of which was fully satisfactory; one with the old Southern Bell Telephone Company, one with Duke Power Company, one much shorter term with one of the Atlanta banks, a law school that I mentioned. I'm sorry, the Army, that I mentioned, and in the six year period between Davidson and State Department I did have a year and a half at Duke law school, which I dropped out of, having learned about the State Department and having learned something about the Foreign Service and actually having one classmate at Duke Law School who had taken the Foreign Service test and passed it, although he didn't enter State. I decided to apply myself, not having been, as I suggested, satisfied with my civilian employment. Didn't like law school, didn't want to be a career Army person so that's how I came to apply to State and passed the tests and joined up in the fall of '67.

Q: Okay. Well, I think that's not an unusual sequence and pattern that- And you probably came into the State Department with not necessarily a clear idea of what it entailed or not necessarily a career commitment until- to see what it would be like. So you came to the Foreign Service Institute, did the A-100 class. This was, of course, the Vietnam period, 1967; is that where you were headed?

PARKER: That was my first assignment and that actually raises a somewhat sensitive point because it was only after my classmates and I showed up in Washington for our training that we were told that, by the way, there's a war on, the State Department is making a big contribution and all of you unmarried young men can anticipate going to Vietnam, at least many of you can anticipate going to Vietnam as your first assignment. Well I was more than willing to go, there was no problem there, but I say it's a sensitive point because later on something was developed called "the CORDS Option" which, as I understood it, accepted people into the Foreign Service who otherwise would not have been accepted but were accepted on the explicit condition they agreed to go to Vietnam for their first assignment. So I don't know how my friends reacted but I was always at pains to point out that I had not come in under the CORDS Option. The irony that I referred to a minute ago, having to do with my Army service in the United States, in the continental United States, was well, I joined the State Department and where did they send me the first thing but off to Vietnam.

Shall I continue?

Q: Yes. Tell me what you- You did the A-100 class; what other training did you do before you went to Vietnam?

PARKER: Another somewhat sore point; there were- it was about six weeks, as I recall, between our graduation from A-100 and the beginning of Vietnamese language training and a lot of my colleagues, not surprisingly, went directly to the consular course and studied that discipline and acquired that body of knowledge. I was assigned, with three or four colleagues - George Moose is the only one I remember - to a project in the basement of the State Department involving computerized analysis, which would be supplemented by human analysis. Computerized analysis of remarks made or the written language of demarches, every kind of communication from North Vietnamese sources to American diplomats or through third country diplomats, coming ultimately to the United States Government, having to do with the terms that might result in a ceasefire or a truce or whatever the term of art was in those days, bombing cessation. So here were all of these computer printouts, page after page, there'd be a dozen sentences from separate conversations, each sentence addressing the same point but one sentence was articulated by diplomat so-and-so at such and such a place and so on and so forth, different sources, different places. And so they varied slightly and the precise wording from sentence to sentence; we were poring over these sentences looking for significant trends or deviations or exceptions or something that might provide an opening. I don't know if you ever heard of that particular project before but that's what I spent six weeks doing.

Q: No, I've never heard of it before and it's interesting to me that this was probably what, early '68?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: So just before Tet, the Tet Offensive-

PARKER: Yes, exactly.

Q: And here we were apparently sort of grasping for straws and hoping that somehow we'd find interest in cessation of hostilities on the one hand, on the other that this was very early use of computers for much of anything.

PARKER: Yes. So that was interesting although I regretted for the rest of my career that I had never had the consular training, just because you were so frequently asked, at every cocktail party, under any circumstances, what about this problem with my visa or how do I go about doing thus and so and I never had the basic knowledge that I thought would have been helpful to me in those circumstances.

Q: Well it's interesting because just about all of us had what was often called "Con Gen Roslyn" or the basic consular training for three weeks, four weeks, whatever it was. So you missed that.

PARKER: I missed that.

Q: And then eventually you went into Vietnamese language training?

PARKER: Yes. It was a good program; it was run by Eleanor Jordan, who was a distinguished linguist out in the world beyond the State Department but did a very good job here at State, running both the Vietnamese and Japanese programs, as I recall.

Q: I think of her as particularly Japanese linguist.

PARKER: I believe that's right, yes. So that was a very structured program, large numbers of people going through the Vietnamese training. There was a new class every few weeks at most, maybe more frequently, and they just came through one after another. And you worked hard, it was highly structured. The model for that particular course was very, very structured with lots of repetition of the dialogues until we really had thoroughly memorized whatever the material was in a given chapter and then on to the next chapter. The instructors were nice; we made progress and actually learned to speak the language.

Q: Do you remember how long that course was or how long you were in it?

PARKER: I think it was 50 weeks; whether that included a week or two of various studies at the beginning or that was exclusively language I don't recall but either of those alternatives, it was just a little bit less than a year.

Q: And do you remember what FSI (Foreign Service Institute) score you got at the end of the time on the five point scale?

PARKER: Yes. Well it was probably a three, maybe a three plus.

Q: Yes, because that was longer than- I mean, you had almost a year or the equivalent of a year's training; that's longer than I think quite a few people had in Vietnamese in that period, especially considering that you were on language probation, you'd just come into the Foreign Service. I assume you didn't have any other language?

PARKER: Oh, I might have had a zero plus in Spanish from 10 years previously.

Q: Yes. But that was the language on which you got off probation, Vietnamese?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: That's great. So you finally went to South Vietnam?

PARKER: Yes, I went to South Vietnam.

Q: To Saigon or-?

PARKER: No, I was assigned to a province south of Saigon. I guess when we arrived we were given a tour, a day or two tour of the country, flying here and there and popping into places and popping out. In any event the dice were cast and I was assigned to Go Cong Province which is, I believe, the second province due south of Saigon. It was at the, I forget the corps designation; I think it was at the top, the tiptop of the fourth corps, which was the southernmost corps area in Vietnam. So I was at the province headquarters just for a few weeks or so and then went out to one of the district towns, lived in a district headquarters. I think the team leader, an Army major, Manuel Citroen, a nice guy, a little reluctant to have me because his hooch was already crowded and he didn't want to squeeze one more fellow in but I think he got used to me. There was no problem getting along with all my Army buddies.

It was a fascinating experience. I did have my own SUV before they were called SUVs, an International Harvester Scout, and so typically on any given day I'd check in with my counterpart, who was the deputy district chief, a nice young man.

Q: Vietnamese.

PARKER: Vietnamese. And chat for a bit and see what he was up to, see if he wanted to go out and see anything using my transportation because he had no transportation so many days we'd go out someplace together and if he didn't want to go out then I'd probably go out someplace, basically observe what was going on. I found pretty quickly that my effectiveness as an advisor was pretty limited because all of the Vietnamese government officials I was dealing with were educated and commissioned officers, competent and hard working and patriotic and it was their country, after all, which they knew a lot better than I did. They knew their local situation better than I did. So, I mean, maybe I would be surprised to the extent that I had some influence but it wasn't as if I was giving them the stone tablets from on high which they were gratefully accepting and then immediately adapting their programs to my advice.

So anyway, I traveled around my district and just to leap ahead to give you the chronology, I ultimately was transferred to the second district and in the second district I was district senior advisor, so that was nice, I suppose, in terms of having a little more responsibility and looking a little better on some r̄i½sum̄i½. One incident early in my career in the first district involved the HES; are you familiar with that acronym? Hamlet Evaluation System, HES. For every teeny tiny hamlet, a hamlet being the very smallest aggregation of dwelling units and barnyards in the country, a system had been devised presumably primarily by the Americans with perhaps some input from the Vietnamese; I don't know the extent of the influence of the two parties. But it's a system for rating every single hamlet and some of the questions were quite objective: Is there a school in this hamlet, a primary school in this hamlet? Others were somewhat subjective, what is the overall level of security? In any event I went through my district's hamlets - there were, let's say twenty-five of them - just as carefully as I could using the HES and in my opinion the typical hamlet was overrated by at least one, maybe two letter grades; I think there were five letter grades but in any event they were all overrated and I proposed to downgrade them all and that proposal did not prosper. What I was told was that with the passage of time, if I wanted to downgrade a hamlet or two now and then that would be acceptable, we wanted accurate assessments of the situation but it simply would not be acceptable to have this wholesale downgrading across the district.

Q: That's very interesting. But when you say "downgrade," in your judgment they should be downgraded, that meant that their security was more- was less an issue or more an issue?

PARKER: It was probably more an issue and not just security but educational level, the condition of the roads. I mean, I forget the various things that were taken into account in the HES but some were, let's say, economic kinds of indicators that would clearly affect the wellbeing and lifestyles of the individuals or social indicators, the extent to which the government was supportive and never showed its face in the hamlet.

Q: So if the overall level of these 25 or so hamlets was downgraded that would show a more difficult security situation, also that other aspects of the various communities were not, perhaps as high as the local officials were claiming they were.

PARKER: I'm sorry; what was the last thing you said?

Q: They were claiming that they were higher than you thought they actually were.

PARKER: Yes, exactly. And I had no ax to grind; I was just going through this list of factors for each hamlet as best I could, based on what I knew, and trying to be factual and accurate and I came up with a different result. So that- downgrading, the wholesale downgrading did not take place. But I always, I did think and I still think that if I were President Johnson back in Washington or General Westmoreland or the province senior advisor or anybody along the spectrum with political or military leadership I would want my decisions to be based on the best factual information that could be had coming out of, in this case, Vietnam. And so I felt it was my duty to provide the best factual information but at least in this instance that initiative did not advance.

Q: And was the resistance to that initiative more on the Vietnamese side or the American side or-?

PARKER: Well I only heard of it from the American side but, I mean, the province senior advisor made clear that that was just not acceptable, my downgrading of twenty-three out of twenty-five hamlets.

Q: So you had to relate to and act as an advisor in the first instance to the deputy district chief and also to the U.S. Army major; what was his position?

PARKER: District senior advisor.

Q: District senior advisor, and then you were- so you were sort of supervised by those two?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: And then you, in the second instance you became the district senior advisor in a different district yourself?

PARKER: Yes. Excuse me, but let me back up. In the first case, where I was the deputy district senior advisor, I advised the Vietnamese deputy district chief; he did not supervise me if that's what you said.

Q: Okay.

PARKER: He did not supervise me.

Q: So who did supervise you?

PARKER: The major who was the American district senior advisor. And similarly in the second place, in the second district, where I was senior advisor and my counterpart was a Vietnamese Army captain, who was the district chief, I advised him for whatever it was worth; he did not supervise me in any way.

Q: Okay.

PARKER: He accepted me graciously and I hope he took some of my advice.

Q: And who did supervise you in the second district?

PARKER: The province senior advisor.

Q: Okay. Who was an Army or diplomat?

PARKER: He was a- I had two; the one rotated out and the new one rotated in. They were both civilians; I think one of them was a retired military and the second was maybe retired USAID (United States Agency for International Development). They were both civilians. But obviously on the provincial team there'd be a lot of military guys there with civilians as well.

Q: And in a province typically there were three or four districts or more?

PARKER: Well this was a small province so we had just four districts, probably very small, so I can't state it as a fact but I would think that the typical province had more districts.

Q: Okay. And as a, well in the first district or the second district did you go to the provinces regularly or there was interchange with them?

PARKER: Yes. Well, regularly is probably an acceptable word; that doesn't mean that I went every day. I probably went at least weekly, sometimes on my own initiative, sometimes there would be a meeting of all the American advisors. Occasionally the province senior advisor and an entourage would come out to the district for some purpose, generally not just only to meet with me but there'd be a ceremony, a school to be opened or a road to be dedicated, something like that.

Q: And to what extent or to what degree did you have contact relations with the embassy in Saigon or the military headquarters or both?

PARKER: Well military headquarters not at all; with the- I mean, in the province I certainly knew all the American military men on perfectly friendly terms but didn't really interact professionally with them to any significant extent except that I lived with them on the district teams. So far as the embassy went the only interaction I had was with a woman whose name I now forget who had something to do with travel and she'd made it kind of her mission in life to make travel arrangements for all the FSOs (Foreign Service Officers) who were serving in CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) out in the districts.

Q: And while you were there they established the CORDS system or-?

PARKER: It was there when I got there so-

Q: You were part of it?

PARKER: We knew we were going to CORDS.

Q: Okay. Which stood for?

PARKER: Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support.

Q: How long were you in South Vietnam in total then?

PARKER: Eighteen months; that was a standard tour after one year of language training, which struck me as a rather short period of time but there was a war going on and you know, I heard some bullets go by and mortar rounds exploding very near by. But here's something that surprised me greatly, given the year of language training, given the presumably successful 18 months in the country; as my tour approached its end I anticipated that somebody would come up to me and say "Parker, are you willing to extend?" No one ever did. I didn't volunteer so I left after 18 months. But I was really very surprised by that; I'd think that would be on somebody's checklist, for heaven's sake, to see if-

Q: Well they were bringing in all these new Foreign Service officers.

PARKER: Well, that's true.

Q: The pipeline was being replenished, I guess.

Would you talk a little bit more, Tom, about the security situation as you experienced it? You mentioned you saw some- heard some bullets fly but you also mentioned that you would have this vehicle that you would go out in. Did you have a, you know, a security battalion that went along with you or how did all that work? Did you go by helicopter sometimes?

PARKER: I probably flew in a helicopter once or twice. Well, in both districts I lived in the little district compound which housed the Vietnamese district government and also the American advisory team so we were all there in the center of the district town, you know, a modest little town, and this compound was surrounded by barbed wire and had lots of- I forget all the designations but there was the regular Vietnamese army, the Army of Vietnam, there were the regional forces, there were the popular forces-I'm very shaky here-and I think there was yet a lower grade of militia so these people had various levels of training and proficiency so the people providing our security worked in the bottom couple of those four or five levels but I think they were adequate to the purpose. So anyway, we slept and took most of our meals in this guarded, fortified compound, notwithstanding which, in the first district, in particular, we were periodically subject to mortar attacks. There was an area nearby called the Coconut Grove, which is where the VC (Viet Cong) hung out, the Vietcong hung out, so every so often- and this would vary so sometimes this would happen on consecutive nights or several consecutive nights and other times there'd be weeks between such an episode. But they'd fire a few mortar rounds; they didn't have anything other than small mortars and so the rounds would come in and we'd all run and hop into our two large bunkers. There was one occasion I remember and cut me off if this is boring, but I was sitting back in the back of our little team hooch, the rest of the team was watching some forgettable movie, there were movies every night, so I was sitting back in the back reading Edwin Reischauer's book, a small book about Japan because that's where I wanted to go on my next assignment, and Mrs. Jordan, who we lovingly called "Ba" Jordan, "Ba" is the Vietnamese term for "Mrs.", Ba Jordan, in light of my performance in Vietnamese had allowed as how I could probably study Japanese next if I really wanted to, so I was reading up on Japan. And heard these mortar rounds go off. The problem was that we also had the district's two or three, 105 millimeter howitzers right there in the same compound that I described and they were always firing out- they were firing outgoing, H&A (harassment & interdiction) fire to harass and interdict the enemy during the night, keep them from getting their sleep. And although you can distinguish incoming from outgoing, at least in my case as a civilian who's reading a book, with a movie soundtrack going on, I wasn't paying much attention but it did finally register on me that I heard lots of chairs scraping and the running of feet and a bunch of the Vietnamese kids had their faces glued to the window screen looking in so they could watch the movie and they all disappeared. I kept hearing these bang bangs and finally realized that it was incoming. So I ran out the back screen door, which was latched, and maybe I didn't realize it, I just sort of broke it open, getting a scratch in the process which sent forth a drop of blood and so I wondered if maybe I might be eligible for a Purple Heart but I guess that was a military decoration and I never pursued that. I went to the back bunker and it was so absolutely, positively full of these Vietnamese children that I could not get in, I couldn't get the slightest bit of shelter from that bunker so I turned around and retraced my steps through the hooch to the front bunker, which was occupied only by the Americans or maybe there were a few Vietnamese officers who had been watching the movie with us so I was welcomed with open arms and relief into that place. So that's an example of one security threat.

On another occasion I was driving down this particular long, straight dirt road, I think paved with this red crushed rock called laterite, it's all over Vietnam, and without incident I got to the, probably, the village headquarters at the end of this road and parked and went in. I had in my briefcase a 22 caliber revolver, which was my personal security since I was a civilian. So I walked in and was sitting there chatting with the village chief, and as I had been pulling in a convoy of South Vietnamese army trucks was loading the troops who had been out sweeping the area, had finished, were getting into the trucks, and they piled into their trucks and left and there was a loud explosion and then this enormous outburst of gunfire from the Vietnamese troops in the trucks towards the tree line over yonder, a hundred yards or so. Well, there had been a command-detonated mine in the road which they had detonated near one of the trucks. They didn't do a very good job; a couple of Vietnamese soldiers had light wounds but no serious harm was done. But the point is that I myself, in my little International Harvester Scout had just driven over that very same piece of roadway 15, 20 minutes, 30 minutes before and, thanks be to God, I guess the guy with his finger on the plunger felt that an army truck full of troops was a more valuable target than me. Maybe they didn't know my importance. In any event, that was a sobering experience.

And occasionally we'd be out doing something, maybe with my American district senior advisor, maybe with my Vietnamese counterpart, maybe with two or three people, looking at a school, looking at a road, talking to people, and there'd be a sniper off somewhere and we'd hear the bullets go by. "Pssssss". An interesting noise, especially if it hasn't hit you. So that was about the extent of the security threats that I faced; nothing dramatic. But of course, I knew that I had to be careful so I was never driving my Jeep around after hours of darkness and I never took a tour of the Coconut Grove that I mentioned; I knew where I could go and where I could not go, where it would be ill advised to go.

Q: But you would drive yourself, you wouldn't have a-

PARKER: Yes, I would drive myself.

Q: -Vietnamese driver. Yes.

How- at the end of your time there, and looking back, knowing all that's happened and happened in the next, say 10 years or even less than that, you know, did you sort of see what was likely to happen or did you think that things were getting better or, you know, you had one perspective from kind of the district level.

PARKER: I did not foresee what would happen. I didn't think that was likely to happen. I saw progress; I saw the performance of the Vietnamese military on various levels that I witnessed. I'm not even sure that I ever saw a regular Vietnamese army unit; they were always provincial and local troops and militia. But they were more effective in their operations; the hamlets even after my initial mental downgrading were more secure. The roads were better; the schools were functioning better with more teachers so things seemed to be moving in the right direction. But as I explained it, I think that some visiting American senior officer on one occasion, I guess he had a question. He didn't ask what I foresaw but he said how are they doing, and I said something to the effect well, they're not doing as good a job as we would do, you know, my hubris-I never used that word before-they're not doing as good a job as we would like them to do but they are doing a better job, they are doing a job and they are making progress. So the general took note of that. So that was about the way I saw it.

So I was there in 1969 and 1970 so obviously that was before- no, that was after Nixon's first election in '68 and of course he had a "plan" to get us out and I suppose our withdrawals had begun. I'm sure they had; at least during my tour they had begun.

I've lost my train of thought.

Q: Well besides the military advisor team that you were kind of a part of as a civilian in the district, the two different districts, was there much other American combat forces there or military presence?

PARKER: No, there were no American combat forces. I don't think the American forces ever came through my province. Now, they may have been in the big province across the Mekong River but never in my province.

Q: Because it was relatively secure, compared with some other-

PARKER: Relatively. It was reported to be the birthplace of the Vietcong but it was relatively secure. There were no B-52 strikes. There was one lone bomb crater on the outskirts of the province capital, which I laid eyes on on one occasion. Apparently an Australian bomber had come over one evening and read the map wrong and was off 100,000 meters or 10,000 meters, you know, the units that the maps use, and they put the bomb in the wrong place. I don't think there were any casualties but this unhappy episode was immediately followed by a cornucopia of compensation and aid from the province headquarters, the American province headquarters to assuage hurt feelings and repair damages. But no, there were no American troops.

I mean, we did have, as I said, the American military personnel on our provincial advisory team so when the local Vietnamese forces went on operations there'd be a few Americans tagging along with them, if it was a big operation, with the headquarters. Down at the district level, for instance, Americans, two or three, might go out with one of the local Vietnamese units that was conducting an ambush that night or conducting an operation of some sort that night. But there were no American units coming through the province.

Q: This was also a period in the United States where there was a lot of anti-war feeling and to some extent that's still with us today. How much of that did you think about, talk about, remember?

PARKER: Well I was certainly aware of the fact that it was going on; it was going on before I joined the State Department, before I got to Vietnam. One thing that- Here is something that did impress me, I must say. I don't want to overstate this but there were certainly members of our entering Foreign Service class, I hesitate to say so many years later if it was everybody but me or a majority or what, but certainly some members were so strongly against the U.S. Government position in Vietnam I just found myself wondering why on earth they wanted to work for the State Department, why on earth does the State Department want them working for it if they can't wholeheartedly in good faith support what is the major foreign affairs undertaking of their government and their country at this time. So that was certainly food for thought. I don't think I myself found the ongoing demonstrations, you know, what I would read in "Time" magazine or "Stars and Stripes" especially upsetting. Maybe one reason was that I thought the demonstrators were wrong and I thought the U.S. Government was right. But I was certainly aware of it, no question about that, and I think it worried, to a certain extent, the Vietnamese.

And I was going to say a minute ago, I'll say it now, but I knew American troops were withdrawing because I was getting a haircut at some barbershop on one of the American military bases that I found myself visiting on one occasion for some reason, and some man was cutting my hair but there was a pretty girl around the shop, I forget if she was a barber or what have you, but I was in the barber's chair and she came over and sort of leaned over, both her hands here on my upper leg, looking up at me, and asked in Vietnamese, which I understood perfectly well, questions about whether the United States would "throw away," that was the translation I had been taught for the word she was using, whether the United States was going to throw away Vietnam. I did my best to reassure her that would not be the case.

Q: You mentioned that you had visits from, I think you mentioned one senior officer; were there visiting VIPs (Very Important Persons) coming through all the time to sort of see, either members of Congress or people from Washington or mostly from in-country, they would come around the district occasionally?

PARKER: Certainly not all the time. I don't remember ever seeing anybody from Congress. I remember William Colby coming through on one occasion and I spent several hours talking with him until he fell asleep sitting on the sofa in the house that I was living in at the time. I was there with him and my province senior advisor and we were going back and forth; they had questions and I tried to answer them. I don't blame the guy for falling asleep with the load he had to carry. It was 9:00, 9:30 p.m., something like that, so it wasn't that late, but he was tired so he fell asleep.

And then a four star general came through, and I can't remember his name, I'm surprised to say. I think this was after Westmoreland left and Abrams became the top guy, maybe the visiting general was Abrams's deputy; I don't know. But he was a four star general and he was a very astute guy, very concerned and sensitive to local concerns and I was very happy to be assigned as his interpreter for the occasion so I accompanied him for, I don't know, a number of hours I guess, interpreted for him with village chiefs and local people and he asked caring questions and insightful questions so I hope I understood and interpreted correctly.

Q: So you used Vietnamese quite a bit and your level probably improved in the 18 months?

PARKER: I would think so. I forget what I was tested for when I came back. Whatever the test results might have shown I certainly believe I improved.

Q: Well this is the- on the 6th of July, 2009, today, I heard on the news this morning that Robert McNamara died this morning.

PARKER: Oh for heaven's sake. Well-

Q: So I thought we should note that.

PARKER: Yes, sure.

Q: Is there anything else about your assignment to Vietnam that we should talk about that we haven't covered yet?

PARKER: Well there was one really memorable experience which I think shows what the people were experiencing. This was in my second district so I was out with my then-counterpart, the military man, the Vietnamese district chief, an army captain, and it was the rainy season and we found ourselves in a building, it must have been a community structure of some sort; it had thatched walls and screen netting above that and then a tin roof; it was pouring rain so you could hear the racket on the roof, and a lot of people from the hamlet had jammed into this building. I'm sure they were summoned, come hear the district chief, and the district chief was giving them a pep talk about, you know, you've got to support the government and your militia has to be alert at night and take its duties seriously and that's to protect the people and you've got to do this and you're going to do that and we are doing this and rah, rah. And there was a young Vietnamese woman with a baby on her hip and she responded and again, what a blessing to have studied the language because I understood her perfectly, she said, in Vietnamese, "Captain, you come in here in the daytime and you tell us what you've just told us. The Vietcong come in here at night and tell us just the opposite and they kill us. And what are we supposed to do?" And tears are streaming down her cheeks and everybody around her was agreeing with her. So that was very moving and I think illustrated how the people suffered, caught in the middle.

Q: What was the main source of livelihood? Were these mostly farmers?

PARKER: Yes, rice farmers.

Q: Was this- Would you call this the delta?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Okay. South of Saigon.

PARKER: Yes, the northern tier of the delta.

Q: Okay. Alright. Well, it was an unusual first assignment.

PARKER: Yes it was.

Q: I know there were many of your classmates, counterparts in that era who did the same thing.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Before, well, before and to some extent after you. So many of us, many of you had that experience and you really- Let me just ask again; you didn't really have much to do with the embassy at all during that period.

PARKER: No, that's correct.

Q: Did you, on R&R (rest and recreation) or otherwise travel in the region or were you pretty much just in the district?

PARKER: Well we had two R&Rs; I used my R&R's to go first to Thailand and second to Australia. I probably went to Saigon half a dozen times during my 18 months. I went once because I had a very bad sore throat and I went to an American military hospital; this nice young doctor treated me. I felt so guilty for even being there, knowing who all the other patients were, the wounded soldiers. But I infrequently went to Saigon and I don't recall what took me there except to transit there on my R&Rs, perhaps. I had no reporting requirement to the embassy and the embassy never checked on anyone because after all I had been seconded first of all to USAID; USAID seconded me to the hybrid organization CORDS, which was half USAID, half U.S. Army, if you don't recall. So I was, it might have breached some written agreement for the embassy to talk to me. I don't know. Anyway, no contact with the embassy.

Q: So did you, you know, you formed all these impressions as you went around and you advised the- you were in contact with the army, senior advisor and so on, did you write reports and if so, to whom?

PARKER: I wrote a lot of reports to my Department of State- my Department of State superior at the province level. He left maybe halfway through my assignment and whether I kept doing it after he left I really don't recall. But I just basically sat down at the end of the day and typed a page or two of an account of what I had done during the day and send those on up to him and he seemed to value them highly. What he did with them I have no earthly idea. I think towards the end of my tour I was asked to write a report- there was an initiative of some sort by the Americans, maybe a joint Vietnamese initiative, a joint Vietnamese-American initiative, I don't know, but I was asked to assess my district chief, this would be in the second district, for evidence of corruption, both pro and con. So I came up with the best report I possibly could and tried to be conscientious. I actually touched on a couple of things which, you know, suggested maybe there was a little minor leakage here and there. I don't even remember what it was; I mean, certainly nothing major. Well, I got, just as I will get the transcript of this conversation in due course, I got to look at my report in due course and even these mild references on the pro corruption side had been taken out of the report. You know, they asked for both sides and they asked for my report so I did the best I could but the negative material came out. And I thought very highly of this young man, but nevertheless the assignment was to assess everything; there were a couple of little things which might have suggested something slightly out of order so I touched on those, but that didn't survive.

Q: Alright. Anything else about Vietnam?

PARKER: It was a lovely country. I was always fascinated by the sky, and the clouds, especially during the rainy season. The colors in the rice paddies, the different varieties of rice, different times of year, different stages of the growth of the rice crop were just fascinating. I lugged a camera around with me essentially every waking moment in Vietnam and came back with 4,000 color slides, so I had fun taking pictures. And I guess that is illustrative of the fact that I was very lucky to be serving as a civilian advisor in a relatively peaceful province, so with just some care as to where I was and what I was doing I had the luxury of being able to take a lot of pictures.

Q: Was there interest on the part of anybody in such, you know, mundane subjects as the state of the rice harvest or, you know, whether- sort of more commercial economic things like that, markers of-?

PARKER: I have the vague impression that occasionally agricultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup>s or experts from the embassy or from USAID would at least come through the province. I'm not sure that I ever laid eyes on them but they were interested, certainly, in the agricultural side of things. So far as the economy goes, I'm thinking there was a report of some sort, which wasn't my responsibility but somebody was working on it, probably at the province level and since I was at the district level I wouldn't have been involved.

Q: Okay. So what, from 1970 you finished your assignment to CORDS South Vietnam and what happened to you next?

PARKER: Well I came home to the U.S., arrived in my home town safely and took several weeks of vacation probably, and showed up again in Washington, got an apartment and started Japanese language training.

Q: As you had wanted to do.

PARKER: Right.

Q: Had been recommended by Elizabeth Jordan.

PARKER: By Mrs. Jordan, yes.

Q: And was she still running the Japanese language training program?

PARKER: I believe she had left; she had left by the time I got back.

Q: And Japanese, of course, is a very difficult language, a very hard language, like Chinese. How long- How much language training did you have?

PARKER: Well I had what was ostensibly the full course although stretched out over several years. I had six months in Washington at FSI, went out to the embassy.

Q: In Tokyo.

PARKER: Had early morning classes for maybe a year and a half, as I recall.

Q: In Tokyo?

PARKER: In Tokyo, at the embassy. And then, after maybe two years of early morning classes, after about two years at the embassy I was chosen to continue Japanese language training so I went down to Yokohama, to the language school there for one more year. So one and a half years full time and two years of morning classes, at the end of which I got, I guess a three/three, maybe a three plus/three plus. I could read the preeminent Japanese economic newspaper, which is the way I started my day, every day, and could speak pretty well. I don't think I spoke Japanese as well as I spoke Vietnamese. The spoken language was tough; it's a lot more complicated than Vietnamese. Of course the written language is-

Q: Different levels of scores.

PARKER: Yes, out in the world.

Q: Yes. So what was your job in the embassy in Tokyo?

PARKER: Well when I first went out I was assigned to work for the little, the small group of people working on the Okinawa reversion negotiations, so that was fascinating, that was really exciting as a first embassy assignment because those negotiations were in the last three or four or five months of what had been a process of several years. The DCM (deputy chief of mission) was running the negotiations at the embassy and that was Dick Snyder. The ambassador, Armin Meyer, really held himself above that particular fray and would occasionally weigh in but Snyder ran that enterprise. Chuck Schmitz was the top working level guy, Charles Schmitz.

Q: Yes, right.

PARKER: And there was a second man, Dalton Killian, who unfortunately died a number of years ago, and finally myself. Well I was the low man on the totem pole so I did what I was told to do. But the- I always thought we had an advantage over the Japanese in terms of physical stamina and mental alertness because we would work hard with our Japanese counterparts, obviously on Tokyo time, all day long, and come back to the embassy and send along whatever they were called in those days; not e-mails but telegrams, back to Washington and then we'd go home, go to a party, go to bed, awake refreshed and get to the office, and new instructions would have come out overnight from Washington. Well, during that same nighttime all of our Japanese counterparts would have been working who knows how long into the night because they did not have the luxury of a second team, you know, half a day and many time zones away. Certainly towards the end I think it was evident just how tired they were, much more so than we were.

But the negotiations progressed. They were- you know, it's been a long time, I don't even remember all the issues. Certainly the extent to which we could maintain our military facilities on Okinawa, a major issue, and they wanted to squeeze us out of as many facilities as they could, thinking there was probably a lot of redundancy and duplication and just unnecessary cases of the American armed forces occupying Japanese territory. I guess our starting position was that every facility was absolutely indispensable. Anyway, that involved a lot of negotiating, whittling down the number of facilities to remain and defending the existence of those that were to remain. That's a big issue.

The Voice of America had a transmitter on Okinawa which was aimed not at Japan but at China probably, Southeast Asia, so it was very important to us to keep that transmitter operating. The Japanese sort of thought that would be an infringement on their sovereignty so that involved some hard negotiating but as I recall we negotiated I think a five year extension with the possibility of renewal but no guarantee.

Q: To what extent was the Defense Department or any other agencies involved in these reversion- Okinawa reversion negotiations?

PARKER: Oh they were very much involved. I mean, I can't speak for the Washington end of things but in the embassy we had a military office with, I believe, a three star admiral heading it up and at least one lieutenant colonel from each of the armed forces. So that was the embassy military presence just working on the Okinawa negotiations; there were probably others dealing with the ongoing status of forces concerns under the security treaty that we had with the Japanese. So there was definitely a military presence that was very much involved in the negotiations. I mean they of course would be concerned with retaining their facilities on Okinawa; they'd be less concerned, I suppose, with Voice of America.

Another touchy issue involved the little American business community on Okinawa, a small group of people whose job really was- whose livelihood was really servicing the Americans on Okinawa and the Japanese felt that once reversion took place then all the normal Japanese laws and regulations should apply and the American fear was that this would put most of them out of business and so we worked long and hard on behalf of a rather small American business community on Okinawa; I think pretty good results which would basically grandfather the people who were there and then over time Japanese law would become fully effective but those people were protected for the short term.

Other impressions, I mean, impressions of a young Foreign Service officer, certainly the night of the signing ceremony was memorable. This still was in the early years of the computer era but one way or another we arranged to have simultaneous ceremonies in Tokyo and Washington with some sort of electronic hook up and big TV screens at both ends so both sides could speak and observe, see what was going on, all highly scripted, of course. And this treaty, even though Japan was getting Okinawa back, was not popular, at least among the left part of the Japanese political spectrum so there were big protests in the streets, there were rock throwings, and the Japanese had some pretty vigorous demonstrations in the old days; I don't know if they still do this or not, they certainly did then. And so the riot police were out in force and the streets had been cleared and we all piled into our limos and went over to wherever we went, some suitable building for the occasion, and I could smell the tear gas wafting through the streets. But it was very impressive with every Japanese official from the prime minister, the cabinet, lots of very senior Japanese officials as well as the working level officials who had worked on the negotiations. And on the American side everybody from the ambassador down to the lowliest second secretary who I guess was me, so that was very nice, a very nice ceremony and the Japanese were very appreciative, obviously, of what we were doing.

Q: Well this brings back memories for me of being in Tokyo in 1960 when the security treaty was signed and-

PARKER: Were you assigned to the embassy?

Q: I was, yes.

PARKER: Okay. I didn't know that.

Q: That was my first assignment and there were lots of demonstrations, lots of generally very well- the demonstrators were on their best behavior so that American individuals really didn't feel under any great threat. It was really the mass of people and the noise and all of that. You know, there would certainly be people on the fringes who would cause trouble but generally probably the best organized and behaved demonstrators that I've ever experienced.

So this- the reversion, Okinawa reversion agreement or treaty was signed in what, 19-?

PARKER: Seventy-one, I believe, yes.

Q: Seventy-one.

PARKER: It was summer, early summer of 1971 and reversion took place a year later at the stroke of midnight.

Q: And did you spend much time in Okinawa or you didn't really get to-

PARKER: I visited at least a couple of times. I mean, not many times but at least twice, maybe three or four; I don't remember now. And it was my duty as the lowliest second secretary to go down and reassure and appease the American business community that I mentioned so that was a challenge.

Q: We'd done as well as we could for them.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Were you involved in checking the Japanese and the American texts of the document?

PARKER: No. I guess I could have read them, probably did at some point but no, I didn't do the checking. We had- If it was done in the embassy it would have been done by James Wickel, who was our very best interpreter in those days who was an older guy by a number of years ago but he did all the interpreting between American presidents and Japanese prime ministers. He was old enough, I think, to have gotten his start during the Second World War and just kept it up. Did you know Wickel?

Q: No. \_\_\_\_\_ Mishima. Does that name mean anything to you?

PARKER: It rings a faint bell.

Q: He was the main interpreter at the time that I was there.

Okay. So, this was the first what, six months or so that you were in the embassy in Tokyo?

PARKER: Yes. I think the agreement was signed the 31st of May.

Q: Nineteen seventy-one.

PARKER: Seventy-one, yes.

Q: And Charles Schmitz was- what was his position in the embassy? The head of the political military section?

PARKER: Well during the negotiations no; he just headed up this little office of Okinawa negotiations but then probably that summer, since the negotiations were done, he became political-military counselor, replacing a man, another FSO named Howard Meyers; I don't know if you knew Howard. So Howard left and Chuck became political-military counselor.

Q: And what happened to you?

PARKER: Oh, I was assigned to the economics section and did some follow up work for Chuck Schmitz on Okinawa matters. So what did I do in the economics section? I probably did have some commercial responsibilities; I think this was before the FCS was formed.

Q: The Foreign Commercial Service.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: A separate entity of the Department of Commerce and part of the Foreign Service.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: So you were what, a kind of an economic reporting officer?

PARKER: Well I had chosen economic cone as my cone, as we were given the choice when we entered State, so I was economics. Yes, certainly early on just reporting. Gosh, this is embarrassing. I mean, I do remember helping American businessmen from time to time but there was one issue in which I was thought to have gained a little expertise. The Japanese, perhaps you remember, were notorious for their allegedly complex, impenetrable and expensive distribution system. Remember that?

Q: Yes.

PARKER: So I had been assigned to write a report on that so I came up with something which might have been some value and there were some useful Japanese experts on the subject who obviously helped me tremendously. So that's one thing I worked on and I do remember talking to some businessmen about that subject. What it may have accomplished I don't know.

Q: Who was the head of the economic commercial section?

PARKER: Well let's see; at the very first Les Edmond was economic minister and Peter, I forget how you pronounce the name, Lande, was the counselor; Larry Dutton was in the section at the time and presently Les Edmond left and Bill Colbert came in as minister and Lande left and Mike Calingaert came in as counselor. So those were the people I worked for.

Q: Good people.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Economic cone of the Foreign Service.

PARKER: Meyer left as ambassador then I believe Ambassador Hodgson, I forget his first name, and not surprisingly influential in Republican circles. But he had been a cabinet officer; he had been secretary of labor, I believe, came out as ambassador.

Q: And Dick Snyder left?

PARKER: Dick Snyder left in due course and Tom Shoesmith took his place as DCM. So the days before language school were really very fuzzy as far as what I did, other than Okinawa.

Q: When you went to Yokohama for the, let's call it advanced Japanese language training, did you move to Yokohama or did you commute from Tokyo?

PARKER: Not to Yokohama; we moved to the town of Kamakura, which is a little further south of Yokohama. We, my wife and I, found a very nice house that belonged to some Japanese diplomat who was out of the country. I mean, not opulent by any means but it was nice, quite nice; convenient to the bus line which took us to the subway station which is how we got back and forth to language school. And during that year, I'm happy to say, we continued to be invited to a modest number of embassy gatherings so- which was important to us because there we were in the middle of the Japanese countryside, which presented great opportunities to learn the language but still we missed our colleagues and friends at the embassy so we'd go out to Tokyo maybe once a week some evening to a party and ride the last train back to Kamakura late in the evening. That was always an experience because all the Japanese salary-men had been drinking their evenings away and poured onto these trains. Oh lord! The trains would just reek of alcohol and sometimes vomit.

Q: The last three months or so of my assignment to Japan, this would have been 1961, I was assigned to the consulate in Yokohama but I continued to live in Tokyo and commuted back and forth each day. At the time that you were in language school, which would have been 1972?

PARKER: Yes, I think probably summer of 1972 to summer of 1973.

Q: Was there still a consulate in Yokohama or had that closed by then?

PARKER: I believe it was still there. I can't swear to it but I believe it was still there.

Q: So the language school was up on the hill-

PARKER: Yes.

Q: -overlooking the port?

PARKER: I don't think we overlooked the port any longer. I believe the language school had moved a couple of times. When we first arrived it was in, I believe the U.S. Army housing complex called Bayside Courts. Does that ring a bell? In any event they did acquire a new, large home on top of a hill somewhere in Yokohama so we moved to that facility pretty early during our year at the language school.

Q: And about roughly how large was the language school; about what, 15 or so students? Twenty maybe?

PARKER: Yes, I'd say 20, maybe. There were a few wives, including my own.

Q: And your wife, her Japanese was at a certain level when she started?

PARKER: Yes. I mean, she did not get the six months in Washington that I got. She was actually an FSIO; we met in our A-100 course; that's how we met. So she was in Yugoslavia when I was in Vietnam and we came back to Washington at about the same time.

Q: And got married at that point or had been married?

PARKER: We got married about three weeks before going to Japan. So once we got to Japan we both started morning language classes; we were not in the same class because she was a beginner.

Q: And was- did she need to resign when you got married?

PARKER: Oh, yes. Somebody needed to resign so of course it went without saying who would.

Q: But she was able to do the early morning beginning classes in Tokyo?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: And then was able to pick up at her level in Yokohama?

PARKER: Yes. So that was good. So she became quite proficient. I mean, she really had a different vocabulary, oriented towards her needs and her life than I did but that's okay; we complimented each other. It worked out very well.

But anyway, at FSI in Yokohama, the language school where we had advanced- thank you for bringing that term back to mind- the advanced language training, in addition to American wives there were some third country students. There was at least one New Zealand couple and one Englishman and one Canadian; you know, at least those that I happen to remember right this minute. So there were probably 20 students in all.

Q: Were there any military? Or was it all civilian?

PARKER: All civilian.

Q: So that was a year or roughly a year, 10 months, nine months; what happened after that?

PARKER: Well, home leave and then back to the economic section for sure. By this time probably or at least some time during the three years after language school that I was in Japan the embassy moved out of that beautiful old building into its temporary structure. And by the way, did you get some language training yourself?

Q: Only part time early morning classes, yes, in the embassy.

PARKER: Well you probably remember one of the initial dialogues, maybe the initial sentence to which students are exposed, "Kore wan an deska?", you know, "What is this?" This is a book. What is this? This is a post office. Anyway, I remember on one occasion late Sunday evening for some reason my wife, probably my wife and I, I don't remember, but I was standing in front of the old American embassy and there were a couple of Japanese men there and I just heard one say to the other, I'll tell you, he spoke in Japanese but I will tell you what he said in English; he said "Oh, this is the American embassy, is it?"

Q: But in fact it wasn't by then. Or-?

PARKER: I think we were still in it; just on the verge of moving out before it was demolished.

Q: And where- So that- the old building was demolished while you were there, and where was the temporary?

PARKER: Sort of up the hill behind it and just a plain rectangular three story building, very simple, very bare bone, small offices.

Q: But on that compound or the ambassador's residence, the old chancery?

PARKER: Probably the far side of the ambassador's residence. As I recall we were across the street if not from the Okura Hotel itself at least from that hotel's compound. It had more property than the hotel itself occupied. So we were in the immediate vicinity; I think we were on the far side uphill of the ambassador's residence and were there for a couple of years while the embassy was built.

Q: And were you still there when the new embassy was occupied or used? Or had you gone?

PARKER: No, I think we must have left before then.

Q: And in terms of your work in that period you were doing sort of reporting, same kind of thing, or-?

PARKER: Yes, reporting, a little bit of negotiating. We had an agreement with Japan stemming from the Second World War; what was this one called? An agreement between Japan and the United States of America concerning the trust territories of the Pacific islands, a lot of those islands that were fought over in the Second World War, some, maybe all of which, I don't remember, had been given to Japan as trusteeships after the First World War. Anyway, we took them in the Second World War and we negotiated somehow with the Japanese an agreement under which they were paying claims of civilians arising out of the occupation and the fighting, something. So I was in charge of that little agreement which had a very small amount of money, I think a few million dollars, and the way it worked was this amount of money could be used for not to pay individual claims but for procurement by the trust territory government of mutually agreed items. So I did, I supervised that. But I don't know if I really did any negotiating or not; I did a little representation to the foreign office regarding aid to Egypt following the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict. But basically it was mostly reporting, I guess. I'm just drawing a blank right this minute but my area of responsibility was Japan's economic relations with developing countries. So that's pretty broad but- so we were interested in Egypt, for instance, or the relations with the Middle East, economic relations, I'm sorry.

Q: And in those days, the early 1970s, Japan was taking on an increasing burden, responsibility in terms of an aid program for developing countries-

PARKER: Yes.

Q: -in Africa and elsewhere.

PARKER: So I paid attention to that. I mean, of course Africa, Southeast Asia, of course, so I paid attention to that. Occasionally there would be issues and I used to talk to them occasionally about aid to Cambodia. I mean, along with us they were providing aid to the Cambodian government so I would discuss that with them, information to be exchanged, questions posed and answered.

Q: Were your main interlocutors, the main people you had contact with about these various issues the foreign ministry?

PARKER: Yes. Not exclusively but primarily. I mean, I knew a few people in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, MITI, or their environmental- do they call theirs the environmental protection agency? In any event there was some issue involving maybe emissions standards and how to measure emissions, pollutants, I discussed once or twice or half a dozen times. Again, you know, not negotiations really, just discussions and exchanges of information.

Q: Let me back up for a second; you at some point declared your interest in being an economic cone Foreign Service officer. You, college your major was English literature, minor in history. You'd worked for a bank; what sort of economic training- you've had wonderful language training in your, what, five year Foreign Service career at this point, roughly; Vietnamese and Japanese. To what extent did you have economic training?

PARKER: I had nothing in college, absolutely nothing in college but my first job out of college was with the telephone company in Charlotte, North Carolina, and I used to walk around during my lunch hour, and as it happened there was a branch of the Federal Reserve right down the street, and in those days they actually had sitting out on the street, well the sidewalk, a tract rack full of all these nice publications by the Fed about the economy and monetary affairs and financial affairs, just free for the asking, so I started picking those things up and reading those so that's how I began to learn something and began to develop an interest and so that's why I expressed the interest in the economic cone when I signed up. So other than on the job in Tokyo and of course I could read, I could write, I could add, so those skills all served me in good stead but at that point it was just paying attention to what I read and what I heard and trying to be careful and accurate. So after Japan, which was the summer of 1976, my next assignment was the FSI economics course so I did that and then several years later I was assigned to, dare I say it, advanced economic training. I don't know if that phrase is used or not.

Q: Yes, it is.

PARKER: I went out to-

Q: Or university economic training.

PARKER: University economic training; went up to the University of Michigan for a year so that's my formal training; FSI, University of Michigan.

Q: Okay. Well you must have done well in the economic commercial section in Tokyo but that's certainly, you know, in that period or probably today as well that was one of the most important embassies in that field in the world.

PARKER: Yes, yes. I'm sure that was the case. Well trade and in particular Japanese exports and our trade deficit and sensitive items in international trade such as textiles from the southern United States, those were all big issues and so a lot of attention was paid to quotas or threats of quotas or voluntary restraints on Japanese exports to the United States. But that would have been done by the minister and/or the counselor and not somebody at my level. And also exchange rates were of great interest. I mean, in the beginning we had the post-war 360 to one exchange rate.

Q: I well remember that.

PARKER: Yes, yes, the good old days which finally gave way and the yen began to float, I forget, 1973, 1974, 1975, something like that. So that was an intense interest but Treasury had its attaché and an assistant attaché and occasionally even higher level visitors would come through. Paul Volker came through; what was he at the time? He was a senior Treasury guy at one point, wasn't he?

Q: Oh yes. He was undersecretary for international policy or something in the early '70s.

PARKER: Probably in that capacity he came through. So not only did I not work on that issue but State Department people didn't work on that issue either. They might have kibitzed a little bit around the edges but I'm sure Treasury guarded its prerogatives very carefully.

Q: In the period 1970, '71, maybe '72, I was in the embassy in Rome working as a financial economist, reporting to the Treasury attaché, part of the economic section. Was there a State Department counterpart in Tokyo in those days in the Treasury attaché's office, do you remember?

PARKER: I don't think so. I mean, maybe there was and I don't remember but I don't think so. I mean, there was the attaché and his assistant, who was another Treasury guy.

Q: Well in Rome we had- Treasury Department had a Treasury attaché<sup>1/2</sup> and assistant attaché<sup>1/2</sup> also from the Treasury Department and I was the third wheel, third officer in that office and did a lot of the financial- the macroeconomic reporting under their direction, supervision.

Who was the economic minister during this period? Was Bill Colbert still there or most of the time?

PARKER: Yes, I think he was there until I came home. I think just Les Edmond to begin with and Bill Colbert afterwards.

Q: Then who did you say replaced Peter Lande?

PARKER: Mike Calingaert.

Q: Mike Calingaert, yes. Well, all very strong, as I said before, economic officers.

PARKER: Well one would hope that Tokyo would get that kind of person.

Q: Right. Although, you know, it sounded like, from my understanding and recollection that you had by far the strongest language skills in that section probably, Japanese language.

PARKER: Well none of the four people I've mentioned had language skills. I mean, some of the other working level people had them. I mean, my contemporaries included, for instance, Don Westmore, who was an excellent language officer; Bill Breer, was a little ahead of me in Japan though we did overlap. We had some time in Japan together and he was superb at Japanese. One of my contemporaries was Ira Wolfe; I forget if he got he advanced training or not, perfectly honestly.

Could we take a five minute break?

Q: Sure. Let's stop for five minutes or whatever.

Okay. Well, we're coming, I think Tom, to the end of our discussion of your time in the embassy in Tokyo. Is there anything else you want to say about your- that period of your career?

PARKER: Well I guess nothing immediately occur to me. I mean, obviously it was a wonderful experience, both Vietnam, believe it or not, the war going on, and Japan, wonderful experiences. Japan was different from the first perspective and also because I was now married and since, as I said, we were married three weeks before going out there, we always considered Japan to be our five year long honeymoon.

Q: So you were there for about five years?

PARKER: Yes, about five and a half, yes. But I did work hard, I stayed busy. I don't know that I've described any traumatic happenings to you; survived an earthquake or two, which always gets your attention. I think it was early in our stay in Japan that we had the first oil crisis; that was late 1973, as I recall. It wasn't that I was brand new in Japan when that happened, but the irony that I recall was that just months before the first oil crisis the Japanese had closed maybe their last coal mine, which is on an island way up north somewhere. It was actually featured in a TV program within the last three or four months; I happened to see it, which made it refresh my memory enough to remember it this morning. But how ironic to have shut down their last coal mine just literally months before the price of oil quadrupled or did whatever it did.

Oh, one very pleasant thing I will say about Japan at about that time, after the first oil crisis, was that the Japanese in very short order introduced car-free Sundays so we could just walk around Tokyo to our heart's content and not breathe the fumes or fear getting run over or be deafened by the noise. Those were delightful; we kept waiting for the United States to introduce car-free Sundays but we never did.

Q: You lived in the period after language training in Yokohama; you lived in what, an apartment in the embassy housing?

PARKER: Yes, after language training we came back to the embassy compound and I think at the time there were three buildings, Perry House, Harris House and Grew House and in their turn we lived in all three. Our first daughter was born in Japan; that was exciting but not especially professionally relevant, perhaps.

Q: It is certainly important to you and your wife and to your daughter.

PARKER: Yes, indeed.

Q: Okay. Did you travel around Japan a lot or not really all that much?

PARKER: Not as much as we should have and I regret that. We had what seemed like a good excuse at the time. You also probably know the name John Emerson, a distinguished American diplomat who finished his career as DCM in Tokyo. It was felt that his career was stunted or retarded because he had been, I don't know, peripherally connected with the China hands during the Second World War and although I think he himself escaped any serious blame or accusations, nevertheless a little something sort of rubbed off and it was thought that that kept him from being ambassador or going further than he did. Nevertheless, the point is he had a very nice rental house in Nikko. Did you ever visit this place, Akamon in Nikko? Anyway, in our day there'd be a group of embassy people who were in charge of the place, we paid the expenses nine months out of the year and he and his wife would always come for late summer and fall.

Q: He was retired at that point?

PARKER: He was retired by that time. So since we had the use of this wonderful house a couple of hours by train from Tokyo we spent many weekends up there and loved every one of them, but that kept us from traveling elsewhere as much as we otherwise might have so that was too bad.

Q: Well I remember Nikko very well but I don't remember that house or that property.

PARKER: It's very close to the big temple complex and to the red Sacred Bridge that crosses the river there, the Shinkyō, if you remember that, the Shinkyō.

Q: Well I think with the consulates, I guess in those days, in Sapporo and Kobe Osaka and Fukuoka.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: I don't remember a lot of encouragement to embassy people to travel, at least in my period officially. I mean, when we would- I was single at the time and would go skiing and you know, do other travel but not so much for professional reasons.

PARKER: Yes. Well I guess I'll have to say I never felt pushed to travel because if I had felt pushed I probably would have done it. Took a couple of trips under the auspices of the language school; they wanted us to do that as part of our training. It was required to go off somewhere and speak the language for a week. So I did that.

Q: Okay. So in 1976 you came to the end of your time in Japan. I think you already said you went into the six month FSI economics course, which was, I believe perceived to be the equivalent of an undergraduate major in economics.

PARKER: Yes. That's what was said and I certainly believe it. There were a lot of courses; I worked harder in that course than I had worked in college and I thought Davidson was a pretty good and pretty demanding college so I don't think people were loafing. And I felt that I learned a tremendous amount and a lot of it stood me in good stead later on.

Q: Where did you go after that course?

PARKER: Let's see; right after that I stayed in Washington, went to the Economic Bureau to the Office of Development Finance, ODF, which for the State Department followed the Export/Import Bank and the World Bank and multilateral development banks and there was a different office that followed the IMF (International Monetary Fund). Very early in my service in that office I guess the Carter Administration had come to power and he began the introduction of human rights considerations into the loan processes of all the lending institutions. That was not without controversy at the time but he was the president so he got his way, of course. But several of my colleagues were very wrapped up in the human rights business; I never was myself.

Q: But you were involved with the World Bank and with coordinating, I guess, with the geographic, the regional bureaus on issues involving proposed loan programs to various countries.

PARKER: Yes, I did. Actually with the World Bank and that was certainly a big part of the job, reading the loan documents every week and consulting with the regional bureaus or country desks, coming to an agreed State Department view.

Q: And then how would the State- the agreed State Department view be expressed? To the Treasury Department or-?

PARKER: In the case of the- Well, there was always a process of interagency discussion and consensus building going on and if there was something really controversial about a particular project then you might have assistant secretaries talking to each other, conceivably even more senior officials, but most of the transactions were just addressed at the working level. Because our general- State's general approach, which the Treasury generally consented to maybe somewhat grudgingly, was to the effect that the loans provided by these institutions - well, in the case of the Export/Import Bank in addition to being good for American exporters - were good for the countries involved and therefore they forwarded our foreign policy goals of development and therefore we ought to be supportive, as a rule. And so certainly questions were raised from time to time and as I said, there were controversies sometimes and occasionally we would oppose a loan.

Q: When you say "we," meaning the United States or we the State Department?

PARKER: Okay, yes. It could be either or both. But if State objected this might just be done in the interagency arena and we might get overruled or we might prevail. In the case of the Export/Import Bank there was a weekly meeting at Ex/Im and all the concerned agencies would show up, all the people that I routinely interacted with during the week, so we pretty much knew each other's positions ahead of time and actually, for every- at least for every controversial loan, every agency representative would be polled, you know, I'm in favor or I'm opposed, and I'm in favor because or I'm opposed because - so it was that sort of dialogue that took place in these meetings. Now, if there was great controversy the decision would probably be carried over until further, you know, behind the scenes conversations and consensus building and coming to an agreement. In the case of the World Bank, of course we had an executive director who was responsible to Treasury so we would make our case in the interagency context and Treasury would instruct the Executive Director. We in the Economic Bureau rarely talked to the executive director.

Q: Directly?

PARKER: Directly, yes, so we would make our case in the interagency context with Treasury. So that seemed to work. So that was a big part of the job, the individual loan transactions and then the other big part of the job in the case of the World Bank was that every so often there would be a capital replenishment either for the International Development Association or the IBRD proper, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, proper, and those took up a lot of time and negotiations and consensus building and consulting with Congress because Congress had to appropriate the money. That could take months and Congress would want to attach conditions or wouldn't want to provide all the money or provide it only in a niggardly way over several appropriations cycles. But that was a big part of the job as well.

Q: Were you involved with any of the regional multilateral development banks, the Asian Development Bank?

PARKER: I myself was not; colleagues in that office, the Office of Development Finance, were.

Q: Okay. And were you involved- You were not involved in debt relief at all?

PARKER: No, there was a different office that worked on debt relief.

Q: But how about individual country situations? For example, I was, in this period very much involved with Turkey. I don't remember that we interacted particularly about Turkey but- And I was in the European Bureau and we were very anxious to get various resources marshaled to help Turkey, other countries but also various multilateral institutions. Is that something you got involved with particularly or not?

PARKER: Well I tried to read the loan documents, which typically would have a lot of information about the economic situation of the country. I myself, I don't recall that I ever did any country analysis.

I might just digress for a minute; this was so funny because when I was in the Economic Bureau in the executive office- well, I started now so I'll finish. One of my duties was to be on an EER review board within the economic bureau to try to strive for consistency and-

Q: Right. EER being Employee Evaluation Report.

PARKER: Yes, sorry.

Q: Efficiency report.

PARKER: And there was one year in particular, it seemed every other official whose evaluation report the panel looked at that year, every other official had done a most astute analysis of the French economy.

Q: Of the French economy.

PARKER: Yes, the French economy. And so many people had done this you just can't believe it.

Q: It was all astute.

PARKER: It was all astute, yes. In any event, I never did any of that beyond, you know; if I was writing a memo about some loan maybe there'd be a sentence or two about the economy but no more than that.

Q: You mentioned the need to consult with Congress, particularly on the replenishment of the capital resources of the World Bank and related institutions; was that something you did a bit, some or was that done, you know, again, with interagency colleagues?

PARKER: Well I'd say it was probably primarily Treasury, as I recall, and they did the nuts and bolts with working with Congress on bank issues. I did write testimony on several occasions; I wrote testimony for Richard Cooper, as I recall, and Jules Katz, as I recall.

Q: Richard Cooper who was then, I think, undersecretary for economic affairs and Jules Katz, assistant secretary for economic and business affairs.

PARKER: Yes. So that was the- And on rare occasions I'd get a telephone call from some staffer- Actually there was a State Department person on loan to the Hill, Genta Hawkins. Do you know Genta who worked for Congressman David Obey years ago? And she called me a time or two with questions of some sort so I tried to answer her questions. But that was a very limited part of my job.

Q: Okay. Who was the head of the development finance-

PARKER: Office?

Q: Office?

PARKER: Yes. Joe Winder, Joseph A.B. Winder, to begin with and he was followed by- Well there were three and now I forget who was third but the second person I will name was Marion Creekmore and the third person I will name was Alec Watson.

Q: Oh wow.

PARKER: So those three guys were the head.

Q: And the deputy assistant secretary that looked after your area?

PARKER: Let's see. At one point it was Chuck Meissner, Charles Meissner who unfortunately was killed in a plane crash on official business.

Q: In Croatia or-

PARKER: Yes. I forget the others. I mean, one principle deputy in the bureau was Paul Boeker, who was very much involved in bank affairs.

Q: Was Bob Hormats around in this period?

PARKER: Yes. Let's see; now I'm- I think when- Did he come back as assistant secretary for awhile?

Q: Later, and I'm told that he's now going to be undersecretary for economic.

PARKER: I mean, I certainly know who he is and I know that he served in EB, I'm just a little confused as to whether I'd moved on to a different assignment when he came back to EB as whatever he was at the time but he was certainly around. I think maybe he left; he left EB to go to Goldman Sachs as I recall.

Q: That's right. At some point he did.

Okay. Anything else to say about the office of development and finance and your experience there? You were there, what, '77 to '79?

PARKER: Two and a half years, as I recall. Yes, so from, let's say January of 1977 to maybe the summer of 1979. I extended for six months to get back into the-

Q: Summer cycle.

PARKER: -regular summer cycle.

Q: Where'd you go next?

PARKER: I went to the OES bureau, Oceans, Environmental and Scientific Affairs in those days. I think it has a slightly different name now.

Q: Okay. Should we talk about that for a few minutes or should we maybe talk about that the next time we get together?

PARKER: If you'd like to talk again I'll be delighted to do so and let's do it next time.

Q: Okay, sounds good.

Okay. This is an oral history interview with Thomas Parker, Jr., and it's the 13th of July, 2009. Tom, I'd like to ask you just a question about the hamlet evaluation system when you were with CORDS in South Vietnam, 1969-1970. You indicated, I believe, that the initial factors, initial determination that you made of the hamlets, the villages in your district was judged to be a little too strict, a little too- lower, perhaps had been expected or had been determined before and you were asked or they were raised a bit. And I guess my question is, was that, do you recall- I don't need to go into details but do you recall that that reinterpretation or that was done sort of locally by your boss, your supervisor or was it something in response to a directive from Saigon or Washington? You know, this was pretty late in the Vietnam War that you were there and presumably this kind of thing had been going on for some time.

PARKER: Well, I'll be happy to talk a little bit more about that. I suppose we had been introduced to the hamlet evaluation system in our training back in Washington, D.C. I don't have a clear recollection on that point but it would stand to reason that if we were having a rather focused, not even area studies but let's say focused area studies concentrating on Vietnam, the soon-to-be country of assignment it would certainly make sense to be introduced to the system which we used to measure our progress in the countryside and the classification effort. Be that as it may, whether I was introduced to it in Washington or not or to what extent, once I got out to my district I knew that I had a certain number of hamlets in this first district and they were all rated according to the hamlet evaluation system and so it was important that I become familiar with the system and so at least no later than that point in time took a careful look and it wasn't an especially complicated system. I don't recall the number of questions for each hamlet, probably no more than 20, maybe fewer, so it was not overly burdensome or, you know, what's the word, gratuitously detailed, wasn't so detailed that the questions were meaningless. The questions were pretty good questions. But the point in my mind was that some of the questions were based on absolutely objective facts; is there a road to the village or not? I think that's objective. Maybe you could have argued whether this was a road or was just a trail of some sort. But I think there were some questions that were quite objective in that respect and others that were more subjective and required more thought or analysis or coming to a conclusion. I think a requirement came out from the province to review all of our assessments and update them and send them, whether this was a quarterly exercise or semi-annual, I don't really remember, but I think the requirement came from province headquarters to review all the ratings and send them in.

So I started looking at the questions and looking at the hamlets and by this point in time I had a passing familiarity with the district and I think I had been to all the hamlets and in some cases it was easy to look at the objective questions and say yes, there is a road or no, there is not a road; yes, there is a school, no, there is not; yes, there's a teacher or no, there's not. And in others it was more difficult. And here my memory is somewhat failing me but I'm sure there were questions having to do with security and maybe what's your, Mr. Advisor, what's your assessment of the security in this hamlet based on does the hamlet chief sleep there, things of that sort. So I just went through the questions, being as objective and factual and accurate as I could; I wanted to send in accurate information. But the result of this was that a good many of the hamlets were downgraded, I'm not sure to- as I recall there was a letter grading system from A to E, probably.

Q: No Fs.

PARKER: No Fs, although E was probably pretty bad. But, actually speaking of the hamlet chief sleeping in the hamlet, if the hamlet chief didn't sleep in the hamlet, and that was a fact that you could objectively determine by talking to the hamlet chief, that told you something about the security situation in the hamlet.

In any event, I went through the questions and addressed each question as carefully and objectively as I could and the results were lower grades for a lot of the hamlets. Now, if a hamlet went from A to B, I mean B was still pretty good in this system; even a C wasn't that bad. But anything less than an A was not as good as an A and if 15 hamlets suddenly were downgraded a letter grade that was cause for concern, all the more so because Go-Cong was looked at as one of the most successful provinces in its pacification effort and there were all these hamlets, all these wonderful ratings and good things were happening, that's a fact. The fighting was very subdued by the time I was there.

So far as I know the only reaction to this reevaluation that I sent in was from the province level. And in retrospect it would have well behooved me, even before I started assessing the hamlets, probably to have had a conversation or two with somebody at the province, get a feel for the terrain and better understanding the situation. Certainly it would have behooved me if I tentatively came to the conclusion that a lot of the hamlets were overrated to talk to somebody at the province level before sending in this report. So that was, in retrospect, a deficiency in my performance.

In any event the word came back that this just wasn't acceptable. Now, if time goes by and month to month or quarter to quarter you want to downgrade one or two hamlets, well that would be okay, but you just can't have this wholesale reevaluation in a downward direction out of a clear blue sky, so to speak, let alone this particular province with this sterling record of performance. So I revised the report or maybe it was revised for me, I don't remember, but the final product had the better grades than I had initially assigned. Well, so far as I knew there were never any repercussions directed at me; I wasn't punished or reassigned or otherwise disciplined but I did take note of that and I gave you my feelings on that the other day, to the effect that, in retrospect it was a little impolitic to propose this across the board downgrading but I still felt that it was essential to provide the best information that I possibly could because people further up the chain of command were relying on that to make their decisions and plot their course and formulate policy. So I think the underlying rationale was a good one but I probably wasn't as astute in the implementation of my evaluations as I should have been.

Q: Let me ask you one other question, which you may not be able to answer. Do you have the sense that it was kind of your interpretation, recognizing that this was largely subjective, at least the part where you could, you know, you might have a different opinion than whoever had done it before, or was it possibly that the situation had changed since it had been done previously?

PARKER: I don't think the situation had changed. I mean, Go Cong was relatively a very peaceful province by 1969. I just think that one way or another- Well, somebody was a lot more lenient than I was. I don't want to spite anyone else or criticize, not knowing the previous person's rationale, but whether it was just being sort of swept up in the good feelings about the province as a whole, the absence of fighting on a significant basis, a large scale basis, that's something that's kind of like it was just zapped. You know, for heaven's sakes, well we've been warned of "irrational exuberance" in another context and you know, the herd mentality develops and they want to go with the flow so these things happen.

Q: Okay. Well why don't we leave it at that unless you have anything else to say.

PARKER: No. If you would be interested I had two more anecdotes occur to me that shed a little bit of light on my experience on a district team in South Vietnam.

Q: Yes.

PARKER: The first had to do with food coming down the American supply chain from what its original source may have been, I'm not sure, down to the province and then out to the districts. By the time the supply chain reached the districts the food coming out the end seemed to be fairly limited in quantity.

Q: Quantity?

PARKER: Quantity; never complained about the quality. But often our larder would be bare, so to speak. I don't think we were at risk of starving to death; we'd just walk into town and get a bowl of soup or something but nevertheless we took note of the fact that there wasn't a lot of food coming through normal supply channels. And I was chatting with a friend at the province level about this on one occasion when that problem was confronting this particular district team and he said "Gosh Tom, I don't know why you can have such a problem. I mean, there's always plenty of food in the province level PX" - commissary, whatever it wa"so far as I can see." And this was a civilian advisor as I was and he lived in his own house and apparently prepared a lot of his own meals. But the punch line is, he said, "I went by the commissary and picked up a dozen steaks just the other day." Well, that was the problem; obviously, the people at the higher levels of the supply chain were just getting everything they wanted and not leaving much to dribble out at the bottom. So I think in due course I did have occasion to report that to somebody else as well, probably at the very end of my tour. I hope no heads rolled for it but I hope some improvements were made. So that was just, hopefully, of some interest in this context.

The other thing, although I was a civilian, as I told you I ended up as the district senior advisor in my second district and we had a military advisory team, MAT, MAT 29, as I recall, and they were very conscientious in training local militia in military skills. But two of the guys, the lieutenant in charge and one of his sergeants went out with a local unit one night to lay an ambush using claymore mines, and they set up their mines very well and were lying in wait and unfortunately they were attacked from a different direction, not from their front but the side, the rear, and I think we found out later that they had perhaps moved into their final position just a little bit early, it hadn't gotten completely dark and so somebody saw them and tipped off the Vietcong, who happened to be nearby that night. So anyway, these two guys were both killed, unfortunately, so that was very traumatic. The first one died of a gunshot wound to the chest so he couldn't leave and the lieutenant, his boss, stayed to defend his comrade so he too was killed. The militia scattered to the winds but the Americans held their ground. So I had the unpleasant duty the next day of going out to look at the scene of the fight; a helicopter had come in the middle of the night, taken away the bodies. And you could see, the good news was that the claymore mines had done their job, they had detonated facing a Viet Cong line of advance, and there were several large, separate blood stains on the ground from VC soldiers killed by the mines, so we could see the claymore mines effective. We could also see the blood and the brains of the American advisors. So that was very traumatic. I did get the district chief, my counterpart who was accompanying me on this expedition, to give the order to get a shovel somewhere, you know, bury the brains so the dogs wouldn't eat them. I did that.

Anyway, there's just a Foreign Service experience for you, in case that might be interesting.

Q: Foreign Service experience for a first tour junior officer, not easy.

Okay. Anything else you want to say about Vietnam? I know we talked at length about it the other day.

PARKER: Nothing else occurred to me. I mean, there were certainly many amusing anecdotes but that's probably enough.

Q: Okay. Well, why don't we move forward then to where we were at the end of last session; I think you'd just finished talking about your assignment to the office of development and finance in the economic business bureau, and then you went next to the oceans and science bureau, to the office of environmental research. What does that office do and what did you do there? This was about 1979?

PARKER: Yes, that was 1979 to 1981, as I recall, so this was when the - this was under President Carter and then under President Reagan, I suppose. Yes, I remember in my office I had a "Washington Post" political cartoon depicting Reagan's victory and as I recall he must have brought a lot of Republicans in on his coattails because the cartoon depicted a mastodon labeled "GOP," with a caveman on top, trodding over some hapless Democrat who was saying something to the effect, "an elephant is one thing but a mastodon is something else." Anyway, that puts it in the time frame.

I don't recall everything the office did, perfectly honestly. We did concern ourselves with endangered wildlife so I and at least one colleague worked on that sort of issue and I believe under President Carter there was these periodic sweeping of intellectual exercises going on to produce-to take a look at the environment and what the future might hold. I think maybe it was called Global 2000; does that possibly ring a bell?

Q: Sounds like it could be.

PARKER: Yes. So some of my colleagues worked on that.

Q: But you primarily worked on endangered wildlife?

PARKER: Yes. I was responsible for several wildlife treaties; there was a treaty, I forget its name, but it has to do with conservation and the Western Hemisphere, our hemisphere, so this involves us and the Canadians and the countries to our south. The most well known treaty is the "Washington Convention" or the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) convention, the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora. Thirdly there was a treaty, with another long name, "Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat" (the "Ramsar Convention"), so I was involved not so much on the Western Hemisphere treaty, nothing was going on under its auspices but there was a lot going on under the Washington Convention, CITES and the wetlands convention. And then finally, on top of that, we had been discussing with the Canadians a proposed agreement of some sort, treaty, executive agreement, something, international agreement, to protect the porcupine caribou herd, which you may recall crossed back and forth over the international boundary between Alaska and Canada twice a year in its migration back and forth.

Q: Porcupine caribou?

PARKER: Yes. I mean, it's a caribou herd but the name of the herd was Porcupine". I think there was a river named the Porcupine River so it was named for the river. So for all three of these efforts there would be lots of interagency coordination, discussion and debate and then there would be meetings. I think CITES generally had a very large international meeting once a year, maybe once every two years. As I recall we sent a- I don't want to mix up my treaties here- yes, okay, so they met in New Delhi, India, that year, for two full weeks. I mean, who knows what they talked about for two full weeks? One thing they would talk about was whether to list an animal pursuant to this treaty's provisions and if it was listed it would then be given certain levels of protection, and in some cases that was relatively straightforward. There was a considerable controversy one year, the year that I was there, because the environmentalists felt that the International Whaling Commission was not being aggressive enough in protecting whales and the whales should be brought under the purview of the CITES convention and the more conservative folks, and I think this was the United States' position, felt we had the International Whaling Commission with the specific purpose of looking at the whale, let's let them do their jobs, we'll worry about everything else in CITES. But actually the environmentalists prevailed and that year the convention did take the decision to begin to pay attention to whales as well.

But I think generally speaking the meetings were workmanlike and there were lots of scientists involved as well as the usual mix of bureaucrats and politicians. And in fact, at the end of that meeting then-Congressman John Breaux held a little hearing in his whatever House committee, subcommittee it probably was, and there were two or three witnesses who had known they would be asked to testify and lo and behold at the end he invited me to come by and say something. So I did, just extemporaneously but he seemed pleased and didn't give me a hard time, and I got a transcript of that in due course and showed it to one or two of my superiors and they were happy so I was happy.

So that was the Washington Convention. With the Wetlands Convention they were very concerned about habitat loss, more so than listing critters. I mean, they wanted to preserved wetlands so that was always their focus. I honestly don't recall any especially controversial issues this given year; a nice meeting in Sardinia, Italy and the reason we met in Sardinia was that there was a large wetland of international importance there with a magnificent flock of flamingoes so they were always flying around. I mean, my image of flamingoes was formed in the southern United States, seeing the plastic or concrete replicas standing on one leg in people's front yards. They are ungainly when they are in that position but boy, when they take off they are just magnificent critters.

The negotiation with the Canadians was the most problematic, not because we couldn't get along with the Canadians, which we could, but because the Alaska Congressional delegation was rather strongly opposed to any significant international agreement on this topic, feeling that yet again the Feds were usurping the rightful prerogative of the state to manage their wildlife as they saw fit. So at least when I worked on the proposed agreement I had three wonderful trips to Alaska to look at the territory and had one town hall meeting all the way up in the Kaktovik; that was the name of the Eskimo village way up on the North Slope so all the native people and a few non-native hangers on showed up, talked about the issues. That was very interesting. But in any event, unfortunately, because of the resistance of the Congressional delegation the proposal when I worked on it, the effort did not prosper but just sort of ground to a halt. But a year or two or three later it was resuscitated in a slightly less ambitious form and some exchange of letters or executive agreement or something less than a treaty was agreed to. And the primary objective would be to take care of the habitat; again, just let the caribou have some place to go.

Q: "CITES" is C-I-T-E-S.

PARKER: Yes, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Q: Okay. I always wondered how that was pronounced so thank you.

PARKER: That's how I pronounce it.

Q: Well, I've always just read it and I'm not sure I've ever heard anybody say it out loud so that was helpful. I will accept your pronunciation.

PARKER: Okay.

Q: So you mentioned traveling three times to Alaska; did you- were you at the New Delhi meeting that you mentioned?

PARKER: Yes, the New Delhi meeting for two weeks and the Sardinia meeting for at least one full week.

Q: And were you the only State Department representative there or was there-?

PARKER: The only State person but typically there'd be people from Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In our talks with the Canadians we'd have a representative of a congressional office along with us, not a U.S. Representative but a staff member.

But going back to New Delhi, the biggest delegations, there would be Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. There'd be Agriculture because the treaty was for fauna and flora. Probably other agencies were also there that now escape me because one normally wouldn't think of them in the wildlife context but they did have an interest.

Q: Environmental Protection Agency, EPA?

PARKER: I don't believe EPA was there.

Q: As State Department representative at these Sardinia and New Delhi meetings, you wouldn't be- were you the head of the delegation?

PARKER: No, no, I was-

Q: A member of the delegation.

PARKER: Member of the delegation.

Q: Really there to handle political or other international as opposed to species kind of issues.

PARKER: Yes, exactly.

Q: Okay. Well that's got a slightly esoteric part of the conduct of international relations that we sometimes forget about but obviously very important to the species.

PARKER: Very important to the species and very important to a lot of human beings who take an interest in this sort of thing. I mean, you of course are familiar with the plethora of NGOs that are very concerned with these things that take the issues very seriously.

Q: Do you remember strong or interaction with, I don't know, Humane Society or PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) or whoever?

PARKER: Well one of the critters that I became involved with was the kangaroo because in its wisdom the United States Government had listed, under our endangered species act, at least one species of Australian kangaroo; that's the only place they live, isn't it, except in zoos? In any event our government had listed under our endangered species act one of the Australian kangaroo species as either endangered- probably threatened, probably threatened, which is not as serious as endangered, and this was to the considerable chagrin of the Australians, first of all because it was their critter and their country; secondly because in their opinion there were kangaroos all over the place.

Q: Hardly threatened.

PARKER: Exactly. In fact, there are so many of them that outback, where the critters live, the people put these big heavy pipes, mount them on their cars in front of their grills so that if there's a collision, the kangaroo and a car, these pipes take the brunt of the collision and the radiator and the engine are not damaged. And these bars, by the way, are called "roo bars". So anyway, the Australians were dissatisfied and the Americans then said well fine, if you want to have them delisted according to the provisions of our law you must do A, B, C and D, and so the Australians did A, B, C, and D-

Q: The Australians.

PARKER: Sorry.

Q: In this case.

PARKER: Australians did A, B, C, and D and then by golly, I mean, this was done at the working level but even so the Americans of the Department of the Interior changed their position so now you've also got to do E and F. I had just begun work in this office and became involved in the issue and started reading this record, it was actually a court case of some sort, and at one point I had to assemble a record of telegrams on the subject and produce a little statement that I submitted to the court. But I remarked to my colleagues at the time that had I been a benevolent dictator in charge of this affair, or the Secretary of the Interior, or the Secretary of State, I would have had somebody fired for that double crossing of the Australians. That was really a very poor show.

So in any event the Australians sucked it up and were still doing their best to meet the requirements of our law to get their critter delisted. That is a pretty long digression, I'm sorry. So it was when I was working on that issue that a woman, I believe from the Humane Society, and I believe her name was Marian Newman and she was known around town as "the kangaroo lady", she came to call on me at the State Department to make a demarche, to make sure that I wouldn't sell out these lovely creatures. So I tried to assure her that I would not "sell out the lovely creatures."

Q: It sounds like you had a very interesting but specialized in distinctive responsibility which, and this is, I guess a question, to what extent were you getting supervision, pressure, interest from higher levels, either in your immediate office, the office of environment and resources, or at the bureau level or beyond?

PARKER: There's not a lot of pressure.

Q: You were pretty much on your own.

PARKER: Pretty much. Now, the assistant secretary at the time was Tom Pickering and I do remember discussing elephants with him on one occasion, I mean, just in a casual way but nevertheless he indicated he knew something about elephants, was interested in them and knew about CITES or whatever was going on that prompted the conversation. So it's not that all of the superiors were totally oblivious to these things but they probably felt that they had bigger fish to fry, so to speak. And the deputy assistant secretary was Otty Haynes. He was very much involved in the wildlife issues, he's very interested. He certainly went to the Canadian negotiations; I don't believe he traveled to the other meetings but he was very much involved so he would provide guidance. The Department's legal advisor's office was certainly involved; they had an attorney advisor to go with the delegation.

Q: You mentioned that they had other fish to fry; that makes me ask did you get involved with fish too, or is that by a different office?

PARKER: A different office. It's funny you should ask; I just happened to remember, one Saturday morning I was in the, probably the bureau front office for some reason and there was some flap dealing with fish, a pretty important flap; strike flap and say crisis, with some significant problem and John Negroponte was in the office, a much younger John Negroponte, this was the end of the '70s, and he was on the phone to someone, talking about what was going to be done with the fish. So, again, certain of these issues did get attention from more senior people.

Q: John Negroponte was the assistant secretary for OES in the late '80s.

PARKER: Yes, he must have been one of the deputies at the time.

Q: I didn't realize he had that kind of background.

PARKER: Yes, a complete man.

Q: Okay. Anything else we should say about that period from '79 to '81?

PARKER: It was an enjoyable period, not stress free because as I said, there were a lot of people who were intensely interested in these issues but if it wasn't stress free I guess it was just a typical State Department job. But it was certainly, I think, unusual for a State job.

Q: You know one of the things I think- I found in my State Department Washington jobs, particularly in, well, in my case the economic bureau, it was that it was hard and took time to establish your credentials with people from other agencies, maybe Congress, who had been working these issues for a long period of time. Was that your experience in this case?

PARKER: Well I think they accepted me, certainly, but they knew they had the expertise and so the relationship was sometimes in some respects sort of that between teacher and student. So we'd be having a conversation and they'd just be explaining this is the way this is. I mean, I never got the feeling they resented State's participation; I think State recognized they had the expertise so we worked things out and got along. They understood the role of the State Department in foreign affairs; we recognized their expertise.

Q: You mentioned going to Alaska I think three times; did you- were you involved in the negotiations with Canada on that, on the caribou issue or anything else?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Where did those take place?

PARKER: I think we always went to Ottawa. When I went to Alaska this was just with two or three other probably Interior Department people just to get the lay of the land, to get the input from the local people, a better understanding of the situation.

Q: Okay. Anything else on that period?

PARKER: That's all that occurs to me right this minute.

Q: Okay. So in 1981, the beginning of the Reagan Administration, where did you go then?

PARKER: I went off to the University of Michigan to study economics for a year under the State Department's auspices. I was an economic officer as I said earlier; I was nevertheless advised that going off to Michigan to study economics would probably not be a good thing for my career but I did it anyway and who knows whether it was a good thing for my career. Obviously I didn't have that long a career but I did feel for years afterwards, probably for as long as I worked for State, that what I learned at Michigan had been extremely helpful to me, both the economics - and most of it was economics, but I took one course in the law school under a man who was the alleged American guru of international trade at the time, John Jackson, in case you should have ever have heard his name. And that, course was the law of international trade and economic relations. I enjoyed the economics program and learned a lot and also thought the law school course was invaluable. So, I thought Michigan was a very good thing for me personally and strengthened my competence as an economic officer.

Q: Well having done university economic training also myself, I really thought it was a great year and a great experience. It went by very quickly and I suspect that was your experience too.

PARKER: Yes, too quickly, unfortunately.

Q: Okay. And what happened after that? In '82 at that point.

PARKER: Yes, I came back to Washington and went back to the economic bureau to the office of special trade activities. I loved that acronym; that was a euphemism; that was what we called our own protective - trade protective measures under various American statutes, hopefully consistent with our international obligations. But this office concerned itself with anti-dumping and countervailing duty cases and then, I'm a little rusty on the terminology but I think Section 201 had to do with escape clause procedures under our trade legislation; Section 301, I don't know, special relief measures of some sorts. I think, for instance, during this period of time we provided some limited import relief to our manufacturers of specialty- of stainless steel, which is a specialty steel, and I believe that occurred under the provisions of Section 301 of the Trade Act of 19- whatever year it was.

Q: Trade Act of 1960? I don't know. Well, it doesn't matter. Okay. So in that- you were the assistant chief of that, what? Office, division?

PARKER: It was a division, yes.

Q: Part of the office of international trade, I think.

PARKER: Let's see. The section chief reported directly to Teresita "Tezi" Schaeffer, who was the deputy assistant secretary for some part of trade.

Q: Yes.

PARKER: I mean, I know there was a different office under Ralph Johnson at the time; I think that was the office of international trade, so-called, but we were not part of his office. Ralph also reported to Tezi Schaffer. We were a separate section. I think that's right. Anyway, it's a long time ago; I'm sorry I'm very vague on it.

Q: Who was the division chief, do you remember?

PARKER: Yes, Tom O'Herron. Did you know Tom?

Q: No. So you primarily were dealing with the International Trade Commission, with the Office of the Special Trade Representative, STR.

PARKER: Yes. Department of Commerce; Commerce played the role not in the specialty steel proceeding I just mentioned but in negotiating with the European Union "voluntary restraints" on the export of steel and steel products to the U.S. Commerce took the lead on that particular issue. So it was fascinating and I must say, as far as the economic assignments went I enjoyed this, dealing with international trade more than any of the others. You got to meet a lot of interesting Americans and representatives of the steel companies or other companies seeking relief from import competition. One of the import relief cases involved Harley Davidson motorcycles. Harley Davidson was feeling a lot of pressure from imported Japanese motorcycles and wanted some relief and got it. So it was fascinating talking to all of these non-State Department, non-U.S. Government Americans with their legitimate interests and concerns. And I think the interagency process did a good job in assessing the situation and where relief was warranted, providing relief which typically would be not as much as had been asked for; it would be digressive, which meant that over time it diminished and then went away. So I think we felt pretty good about ourselves for weighing the competing interests and balancing considerations and doing the right thing. I hope history judges us that way. It's nice to see in Harley's case, for instance, still in business, so that's good; the Japanese competitors are, too.

Q: The role of this office was really to introduce into the calculation the foreign relations, the broader perspective perhaps, than just to protect the American manufacturers.

PARKER: Well yes. So we performed that function and in addition we weren't the office in State with a foreign country-specific interest. I mean, depending on what the issue was, this was probably more true- well, it would depend on what products were involved and where the products were manufactured. But sometimes the country desks would be quite interested in a given proceeding so we would interact with them. And I think they would- my perspective- their job was to look after the relationship with their counterpart country so their focus was somewhat different from ours, which was maybe moderating the protectionist impulses of some of our colleagues here in town and making sure the foreign policy considerations got taken into account and trying to keep us within the letter and the spirit of the law. But in any event, we would interact not infrequently with the country desks; that was always useful and informative.

Q: Did you have much directly to do with Congress on these issues or was that pretty much handled by Commerce Department or the other-?

PARKER: I believe on one occasion I wrote some brief testimony on sort of a crash basis over one weekend when the primary person responsible for this sphere of activity was out of town for the weekend and the hearings, you know, say had been announced Friday for Monday morning so I produced something pretty simple for James Buckley, I believe was undersecretary for coordinating security assistance; he was one of the top three or four guys in the department at the time. But personally, I mean, I, myself never testified; probably had to answer some Congressional correspondence although I don't have a clear recollection of any particular letter.

Q: This division, special trade activities, was fairly small, I think, but you were the assistant chief so you had some supervising responsibilities, which probably was about, other than Vietnam, perhaps the first time in your Foreign Service career that you had had that.

PARKER: Yes. I think there were two junior officers who reported to me. One of them did intellectual property issues, so that's something the division dealt with. And-

Q: So that was special trade activity as opposed to import protection.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Which was the bulk of the offices?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Even though you didn't want to call it that.

Well, I've had, from my first assignment, which was back in 1959 to- no, 1958, '59, I've known about STA; I had a roommate who worked there and so I know there are pressures to kind of find a balance and sometimes you get pushed hard by the, say the Japan desk and at the same time there's a lot of pressure to go along with whatever is being done.

PARKER: We had- One of our cases, and gosh, it's embarrassing that I can't remember which case it was; I sort of think it must have been the case involving our steel trade with the European Union because after we announced whatever import relief we announced the Europeans just blasted us and hammered all of our embassies. I put together a telegram, just making seven or eight points about how much more import relief had been requested and we, the U.S. government, could have granted much more relief. I also made the point that the relief was digressive over time. As I say, seven or eight points with a paragraph for each one, sent it out to all the embassies where I think it was well received. What tickled me most was, we had a subsequent trip somewhere, I guess to follow the same issue, and the top USTR (United States Trade Representative) person on the particular trip had a copy of that cable in her briefing book so I felt that I really had arrived, with my outgoing cable in her briefing book.

Q: Did you travel much in this office or did you- were you involved with discussions, negotiations with the European Union, with Japan, with others that were affected?

PARKER: The only travel I remember was to Europe, Paris, Brussels; I don't clearly recall- I had more than one such trip and this was for meetings with the Europeans to talk about the steel trade so I do remember those trips. For the, what must have been the specialty steel, Section 301 proceedings, I attended a lot of meetings but they were all at USTR and all the foreign embassies would come in, maybe with somebody from the capital, maybe just by themselves, to argue and discuss. One of the mildly embarrassing aspects of those negotiations were that, as I recall, the deputy USTR, a hotshot young lawyer named Robert Lighthizer. You know Lighthizer?

Q: I've heard the name.

PARKER: He had told his people who would be negotiating with each country, what the quota for that country would be, and he had told all of his staff, for your country, you come up with a rationale to defend that quota. All the foreign countries, of course, consulted with each other about how the negotiations were going and what the rationales were and I think what was troubling, and I apologize for the vagueness of details, it's not necessarily troubling that different countries had different rationales but there was one particular rationale which, let's say at the Lighthizer level had been explicitly disavowed and we were ostensibly not setting these limits for these reasons. But half of his subordinates hadn't gotten that word so that was precisely the rationale they were using with their counterparts, and so this was, as I say, somewhat embarrassing. But I think in this particular case we ended up being generous enough with our quotas that the protests subsided, people moved on.

Q: Okay. Anything else about your time in special trade activities?

PARKER: No.

Q: Okay. So that started in '82; how long were you there?

PARKER: A little under two years. I think the tour was cut short just by two or three months so I could get into language training at FSI in the summer of 1984, Spanish language training and then on to my next assignment, which was Uruguay.

Q: Okay. So you did some FSI Spanish language training to supplement your Japanese and Vietnamese, which wouldn't have done you much good in Montevideo, and you went to Uruguay, to the embassy in Montevideo in what capacity?

PARKER: I was the economic counselor in that small embassy. It was a very exciting time because I think the election- no, the elections took place while I was there so the military junta, which had been in power for X number of years, had agreed to step aside peacefully. This was after the Falklands/Malvinas war between Great Britain and Argentina, which brought the junta in that country into great disrepute and led to their collapse pretty soon thereafter, as I recall.

Q: That somehow affected things in Uruguay?

PARKER: Yes. I think the junta in Uruguay saw the handwriting on the wall or decided to get out of the way of the steamroller so they stepped aside gracefully. And the elections were pretty free and fair; they were a heck of a lot freer and fairer than the recent ones in Tehran but what they had in common was that the junta, on its way out, said each political party can choose its candidate except one party cannot choose their top guy as their candidate; he was forbidden to run so he didn't run. But after that it was a contested and hard fought election so new leaders were peacefully elected and sworn in, took their places. We all trooped over in due course and our ambassador presented his credentials and I accompanied him, a lot of people accompanied him, so that was exciting and the most interesting part was the imitation moon walk after you- whatever we did, shook hands, I guess, and probably bowed a little bit, but walking backwards away from the new president so you didn't turn your back on the president. That was amusing.

But it was an interesting time for an economic guy because the country had been struggling with the long, severe, not just a recession or depression but really a generation or so of economic decline as the fortunes of the world shifted away from agriculture-based economies and some countries just didn't adjust as quickly as they needed to. So Uruguay had been going downhill economically for a long time; the evidence was very clear all over with very lovely European style buildings but all of which were dirty and dilapidated. Anyway, lots of interesting economic issues; the United States was trying to be helpful without giving away the store. I mean, everybody has constraints; the United States Government can't open up the bag of goodies for every needy country, I suppose. We tried to be helpful to the Uruguayans, also pointing out that it was important that they help themselves, but there was a lot of concern about their debt, you know, external debt of developing countries so Uruguay was among that group of debtor countries. Of course they were concerned with the protectionism facing their exports.

Q: Particularly what products?

PARKER: Textiles. And in fact, unfortunately during my tenure there, we began imposing quotas on their woolen textiles. Dick Imus, who was a textiles negotiator for USTR, came down on one occasion accompanied by two or three minders from the textile industry, and boy, they gave him a hard time. I mean, I don't know how he stood it; they were in his face, shouting at him some of the time because he was giving the Uruguayans a little something that was a big something in the view of the American textile reps; it was coming out of their hides so they were being very aggressive, vociferous in defending their interests.

Q: Did the United States have an aid program in Uruguay?

PARKER: One was started when I was there, so USAID sent down, I think just one full-time employee about halfway through my tour so that would have been 1985, maybe 1986. A nice guy, we were friendly, and I was more than happy to relinquish a chunk of my portfolio to him.

Q: Did you supervise him? Or how was that-?

PARKER: No, I did not.

Q: Part of the country team.

PARKER: He was part of the country team, yes. A very nice relationship; friends as well as colleagues and so we exchanged information, coordinated things.

I think we saw the same thing in different ways in Uruguay. On the housing front, when we got to Uruguay, embassy staff would live in separate houses, which we had to find ourselves, it had to be within the budget approved by the embassy, which got us very nice houses but all the military guys had houses that were twice as large and twice as nice because they had allowances that were presumably twice as large, so that was an inconsistency, I suppose, it seemed to me. And similarly, I could not but notice, since I had to buy a second car, some 10 year old, beat up VW to drive back and forth to work, and the USAID guy came and he got his own car provided by USAID and his own driver. So that rankled a little bit. But that's life.

Q: You talked a little bit about United States economic interests in Uruguay at the time; are there others in terms of U.S. business or investment, commercial opportunities?

PARKER: Well, there was certainly an American business community. In most cases these were Uruguayans who were heading up the Uruguay operations of the American business. There were lots of those around. There were several American banks; CitiBank was there, Bank of America; a couple of others, Bank of Boston, so they had offices. At least in the case of CitiBank and Bank of America they had Americans in charge. I think in the others they had Uruguayans in charge. So there was certainly a local business community and the ambassador would host get-togethers I think once a month, bring all these guys together, shoot the breeze, talk things over. But I think our major interest, occasionally an American businessman would walk in with a problem of some sort which he expected the American embassy immediately to resolve for him so we would do our best to be helpful, offer our good offices. But the major interest was in trying to encourage Uruguay to follow good economic policies so as to breathe some life into its economy, and I think they were heading in the right direction.

It was interesting; they had a number of very well trained economists; I mean, many of them had been trained in the United States at University of Chicago or Harvard or-

Q: Michigan?

PARKER: I don't remember any from Michigan but I don't doubt it. And these were all, you know, free market guys and gals. I almost hesitated over the word "gal." The only female colleague that I recall happened to be in the foreign ministry but she was concerned with economic affairs. I don't think she had been educated in the United States.

So we nudged and prodded and they seemed to be making progress with their external debt. I'm sure there was a rescheduling or two and I think I was involved in that. I did observe one interesting thing with the passage of time. We had several visits; we had one from Secretary Shultz himself who came down to show support for this nascent democracy.

Q: Secretary of State George Shultz.

PARKER: Yes, Secretary of State George Shultz. And, well, we had other senior officers come through from time to time but I noticed it just always seemed that the Uruguayans were extremely friendly and comfortable with the senior Department of State colleagues and I wondered why until one day I think I saw some international conference on TV somewhere and then it occurred to me, delegations are seated alphabetically in these big halls and Uruguay was right next to the United States and so they got to know each other that way, I think. They were quite friendly.

Q: The kind of advice the United States was giving and you were giving in terms of sound economic practices in this period was also probably the advice they were getting from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

PARKER: Oh, I think so, sure. And probably those institutions, I'm sure it was safe to say, would take the lead. I mean, that's their job as impartial, authoritative, but they both had, you know, small offices in Uruguay.

Q: And you kept in touch with them.

PARKER: Yes, indeed.

Q: How was your Spanish after FSI training?

PARKER: It was pretty good.

Q: Certainly good enough to conduct business.

PARKER: Yes. I could do that. It varied, I guess you probably experienced this yourself, but somehow these things just sort themselves out and with some people you speak your language and some people you speak their language, whatever seems most comfortable.

Q: The- Who was the ambassador during this period?

PARKER: When I first arrived it was Thomas Aranda. He was from one of our southwestern states and a Republican donor. And he was followed by a retired federal appellate judge, Malcolm Wilkey. Wilkey had been active in some part of the Watergate legal proceedings; he had issued some important rulings and he was one of these guys who has a gallery of photos going back over his career that shows him with everybody under the sun. So he brought his collection, had them up in his office. But he was, in addition to being extremely smart and accomplished and a good ambassador, just a genuinely nice person who was happy to associate with relatively junior people, get along with them very nicely. He was very wise; he gave me good advice more than once.

Q: And your immediate supervisor was the DCM?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Do you remember who that was?

PARKER: Let's see. When I first arrived it was Richard Melton and then he left and his place was taken by Richard Brown. So those were the two. Just very different styles. I mean, I think they were both equally competent and good at what they did but I'll say Richard was, I think his subordinates found him easier to get along with.

Q: Which Richard?

PARKER: I'm sorry.

Q: Since they both have the same first name, right?

PARKER: Melton.

Q: Melton, okay.

PARKER: And I can say that now with a clear conscience, I think, because unfortunately Richard Brown died several years ago; he was pretty young. Too bad.

Q: And why don't you say something about the composition of the economic/commercial section. You were the counselor or the chief.

PARKER: Yes. Oh, well this was greatly amusing because when I arrived the economic section, of which I was counselor, consisted of one American, me, and then two local national professionals who focused primarily on commercial work. There were three, actually; I think three local national professionals. There was also an agricultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup> who pretty much went his independent way. I mean, we were perfectly friendly and exchanged information; we were both on the country team but I didn't supervise him.

Q: He was resident in Montevideo?

PARKER: Yes. I'm sorry if I wasn't clear; he was Uruguayan and not American.

Q: Oh, okay.

PARKER: He was Uruguayan.

Q: And you didn't supervise him so he was supervised by who? The agricultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup> in Buenos Aires?

PARKER: Yes, yes. It was interesting because at some point during my tour agriculture determined that it was going to eliminate this position so practically overnight this guy became my best friend and I think, it wasn't me personally but with the help of the DCM and the ambassador he might have been made part-time or reduced hours of some sort, some belt tightening but at least he kept a job.

But I was always amazed because economics was so important to Uruguay and we wanted to be supportive and most of the ways we could be supportive were economic ways, and yet I was there as the only American, physically separate from the political section, by the way, which was up on the third floor in the secure part of the embassy; I was down on the first floor, the less prestigious, less secure, more accessible part of the embassy. The point is, there must have been, let's say the ambassador, DCM, three or four political officers up there and one economic officer. When I looked around the embassy and every other section, whether it was USIA or the two military offices, I can't even recall what the two were but they were two distinct military offices and every other office in the embassy had three or four or five people and the economic section had one. So I actually put this into a telegram at one point, obviously the ambassador signed off on it, said it would be nice to get some help in the economic section, so they did send a brand spanking new junior officer but at least we then had two Americans.

Q: While you were still there?

PARKER: While I was still there, yes. So that provided a little relief, which was good.

Q: You mentioned, I think you said, that two of the locally engaged nationals, Foreign Service national employees in the economic/commercial section mainly worked on commercial work. Did the commercial service from the Department of Commerce have anybody in the kind of the region that looked after Uruguay or were you pretty much doing whatever you could on the commercial side with no input from FCS?

PARKER: Yes. I don't recall any input from FCS. I mean, there were probably written communications occasionally but that's all that I remember right now.

Q: There was no- Buenos Aires didn't supervise- get involved in Uruguay? Because I'm sure there was an FCS presence there.

PARKER: Well, I don't want flatly to deny it; let's just say that I don't remember. I mean, I wouldn't be surprised if there were some communications. I remember talking to the agriculture guy in Buenos Aires so, I'm sure of that.

Q: Okay. Anything else about your time in Uruguay?

PARKER: Well, let's see. What had happened? I guess at this point in time Qaddafi, leader of Libya, was still in his full bad guy mode, and he had done something to irritate President Reagan, so we had bombed Libya, as I recall, in the mid '80s for whatever reason, which seemed like a good reason at the time. So as a result of that we were heightening our security level in Uruguay. There was, just across the estuary, the River Plate, in Buenos Aires, a representative office of Libya, whatever it was called, Peoples Office or something like that, but there was a Libyan establishment in Buenos Aires so we felt threatened so we spent a lot of time and money tearing down a particular fence around the embassy and building a much larger, stronger, concrete perimeter fence, perimeter wall, to protect us, and we were also advised from time to time to take certain security precautions in our daily routines, do this and don't do that. So that was obviously just a foretaste of what was to come later on, after 9/11. But security was heightened because of concerns about Libya so we all took note of that. Otherwise the Uruguayan military stepped aside quietly and watched their budget be cut.

Oh, here's an interesting little tidbit on the utility of the Foreign Service. I mentioned these two large military offices but it was one of the three Foreign Service nationals I had who in doing his job came up with some detailed budgetary data, unclassified Uruguayan military budget data, which he passed along to one of the military offices and these guys thought this was the best single piece of information they'd ever gotten their hands on about the Uruguayan military budget. And he gave it to the wrong office so that office gave it to the other office. In any event they were all impressed with the intelligence collection skills of this guy. It was, again, apparently publicly available data but this guy had the expertise to get it out for whatever reason.

Q: To know where to look for it.

PARKER: Know where to look and how to find it.

Q: Montevideo, as you said, is very close to Buenos Aires, across the River Plate. Did you have much to do with the embassy in Buenos Aires or with anything related to Argentina?

PARKER: Honestly the only contact I recall was with the agricultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup> and that was in the context of the proposal to do away with the position in Uruguay. I visited Buenos Aires two or three times for fun; on one occasion the CITES member states were having their big meeting in Buenos Aires so I actually ran into several of them on the street and I could recognize from a few years previously so we chatted a bit. But I think there was essentially no contact with Argentina.

Q: Okay. Anything else about your time in Montevideo? And it began in '84 and continued until?

PARKER: Spring of 1987.

Q: Eighty-seven.

PARKER: Well, probably the least pleasant aspect was hosting the- was welcoming the team of U.S. negotiators who had come down to impose quotas on Uruguayan textile exports. So that wasn't fun but as I believe I said already, quotas we handed out were about as liberal as we could make them. Uruguayans soldiered on, noting the difference between our stated devotion to principles of free trade on the one hand and imposing quotas on exports from the country which ostensibly we were trying to help on the other.

Q: Were there any other significant Uruguayan exports to the United States in that period?

PARKER: Well this is embarrassing; I honestly don't recall.

Q: How about U.S. exports to Uruguay?

PARKER: Well probably machinery and information technology stuff of one sort or another.

Q: Were you able to do much in the export promotion area or was there-?

PARKER: Well, there was a big agricultural fair in Montevideo every year. We participated in that with a U.S. pavilion.

Q: Agricultural?

PARKER: Yes. And every year for a number of years the American embassy had rented a certain building and then we would line up representatives of the American business community to rent space and display their wares. So we did that for three years and it was generally a tough selling job because we didn't give these spaces away; they were, I mean, they were not exorbitantly expensive but for a small country, depressed economy and struggling business any expenditure is an important one, I guess. Nevertheless we generally filled the pavilion and had nice displays and the ambassador would go over and open the pavilion with a nice speech. I guess the last year we were there we actually solicited local artists to bid on a project to create a miniature Statue of Liberty and by golly some local artist created this beautiful replica of the Statue of Liberty, maybe 20 feet tall, made of papier-mâché or something but it really looked good and that was a nice touch.

So these things were always fun; I mean, I'd go out every day while the fair was running, since I was responsible for the American participation, I'd walk over and talk to the exhibitors, getting the feel for what was going on. Another trade promotion effort was this. The Uruguayans actually mounted, with the help of the commercial section, they mounted- I'm sorry, the economic section with its two FSNs focusing on commercial affairs - the local Uruguayan-American business community did put together a trade mission to the United States which went, as I recall, just to Miami, and it was moderately successful. We were actually cautioned once or twice by our Washington colleagues, I mean, no more than the country desk, to the effect that the United States was also concerned about its enormous trade deficit at this time so let's concentrate on American exports rather than Uruguayan exports. So I did have my chain jerked a little bit but the trade mission went forward and had some modest success.

I do feel embarrassed, I just have to say this, it's just been so long and my memory is so vague but I've had another career since then and the years have passed. I'm sorry I can't remember more detail for you.

Q: Okay. Well, why don't we leave it at that? But let me ask you; Uruguay is a relatively small country in South America and Montevideo I guess is, having never been there I'm really sort of guessing at this, but I assume that much of the action, much of the business activity is centered in the capital, in Montevideo.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Did you travel much around the country or did you really need to do that?

PARKER: Well I think it's always desirable and traveling around the country probably helps you do a better job. I did a little of it but not a lot. I wasn't pushed by the ambassador to do a lot but I had a few trips, primarily agricultural orientation tours. And once or twice in addition low level delegations of working level executive branch people, the USTR, State, somebody would come down, we'd organize something and get them out into the countryside to talk to people and look at things. So we certainly did see the countryside; saw lots of sheep. That was their most numerous kind of animal. And the country is famed for its- its well-known for its wool and textiles, produces very nice wool and textiles. I still have, as a matter of fact, 20 years later, some very heavy, hand-knitted wool sweaters that I bought, I don't know, I think they might have been \$25 a piece back in the mid 1980s; beautiful sweaters.

Q: What's the name of the- is it a resort where a number of major hemispheric conferences have been held?

PARKER: Yes. A nice beach resort on the Atlantic, Punta del Este, which means Eastern Point or some such. It's where the estuary reaches the ocean and the shoreline sort of curves so I guess that's the point of Punta del Este. Oh, an amazing place, nothing but- I wouldn't say nothing but, but plenty of beautiful high rise buildings and then a little further from the beach these gigantic luxurious homes of the wealthy Argentineans, primarily. Oh, there used to be a funny little story about how the Russian invasion of Afghanistan led to the building of Punta del Este; just two or three steps but I don't know, the Russians invade Afghanistan, the United States embargo imports of Russian grain. Did that happen? Well that's the story and since we weren't purchasing grain from Russia any longer we had to buy it somewhere else; we started buying from Argentina, which expanded its production substantially; couldn't meet the American demand. A lot of people got rich in Argentina selling grain to the U.S. They had to put their money somewhere so they put it into Punta del Este. So that was the story at the time.

Q: Well it sounds like- plausible. What- Did any major international meetings take place there while you were there?

PARKER: The Uruguay Round got started while I was there.

Q: Of trade negotiations.

PARKER: Of trade negotiations, yes, I'm sorry, which I think was a successful round, ultimately. I mean, I don't think anything necessarily happened during the 10 days that they were at Punta del Este but at least that round was successful over two or three years. I mean, the current round has been going on for eight or nine years, hasn't it, with no end in sight.

Q: The Doha round.

PARKER: Doha round.

Q: Yes. Were you involved in that meeting that led to the Uruguay round?

PARKER: I was officially on the delegation; I did not go to Punta. You know, I greeted some of the people as they came through. I might have gotten a telephone call or two from Punta asking, you know, something about-

Q: Uruguay.

PARKER: Uruguay and trade and how it all tied together. Nothing more than that.

Q: Okay. Anything else about your time in Uruguay, '84 to '87?

PARKER: Well, it just came to mind, thinking of the visitors from USTR, we did have a visitor from the U.S. Treasury Department, then-assistant secretary for international affairs, let's say. Mulford was his last name but he was definitely-

Q: David.

PARKER: David Mulford, a very high powered guy, driven, demanding of his staff, allegedly hard to get along with. But he came down and had several nice meetings with the topmost Uruguayan economic and financial officials and I was his escort officer and accompanied him the entire time and he was just as nice as he could be to me, I'm happy to say, and actually in the evening, he was free one evening so my wife and I took him and his wife who accompanied him out to dinner, so that was nice. But obviously I was on pins and needles the entire time because of the guy's reputation but he was just as nice as he could be to me.

Let's see. I guess it was Enrique Iglesias who was minister of foreign affairs when Mulford came through and for some period of time, and the United States liked Iglesias a lot, which had something to do with the fact that he ended up as president of the Inter-American Development Bank. Anyway, Mulford's visit was a challenge but it turned out well so that was good.

Q: And when you didn't have a visit like that I assume that a good part of your time was spent on seeing senior economic finance officials, head of the Central Bank and stuff.

PARKER: Yes, I had access to the minister of finance. I mean, the ambassador did too, when he wanted to, but I had access to the guy; the guy would call me on the telephone. The same with the head of the Central Bank and initially with the head, I forget exactly the name but some planning organization but I passed this guy off to the AID man when AID came in because this entity of the Uruguayan government was concerned with its own development efforts so that seemed the logical thing to do. But one thing I did which perhaps served to ingratiate me with the officials was we used to get this sheaf of paper from USIA every day; I don't even recall what it was called.

Q: Wireless file?

PARKER: Wireless file, probably, with all the speeches of the top level guys or policy pronouncements or what have you, and I would carefully tear out the ones that I thought would be of interest to the respective people; often they came in Spanish as well as English. Send them along so I think that was appreciated.

Anyway, Uruguay has very nice people, very well disposed toward the United States. I should qualify that a little bit, I mean certainly on an individual level just as nice as they can be. As you no doubt well know the political spectrum in Latin America is considerably to the left of the spectrum in our country so I think there was a bit of criticism towards some of the things we did and some of our general policies and approaches to life. But in any event, under this particular president, Sanguinetti, who led the conservative party in Uruguay, all of these senior people I mentioned earlier were very well disposed towards the United States; I think we had a good relationship at that time .

Q: Okay. So your time came to an end in 1987 and where did you go then?

PARKER: Back to Washington to MMO.

Q: Which is the Office of Management Operations.

PARKER: Yes. I thought I'd try something different and that was different. I wasn't there awfully long, maybe a year and a half; I forget what my  $\ddot{r}\ddot{u}\ddot{m}\ddot{a}$  may say, if anything, because something came along that appealed to me more, which was to go to work for the- in the executive director's office of the economic bureau, EB.

Q: Economic and business bureau.

PARKER: Yes, I'm sorry. But in management operations, gosh, I'd be hard pressed to tell you a lot of what they did. I do recall- I was chatting with somebody recently; it must have been you, maybe not, about the historian at the State Department. No, discussing at the DACOR lunch the other day, Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired luncheon, talking to somebody about the historian and funny experiences and FOIA process, Freedom of Information Act, all those things. But in any event during my tour in MMO there was some little issue that had the outside historians and anybody who's interested in foreign affairs want to get their hands on all of these documents detailing the foreign relations of the United States, the sooner the better, and I think the practice has been to publish papers which survived the review process and were felt suitable for release, somewhere between 25 and 30 years after the fact, so this was too long for people to wait in the opinion of the outsiders but the Department was pretty well satisfied with the system as it had worked over the years. I don't recall the disposition of that particular issue or even exactly what it was except that the outsiders wanted speedier access to the papers.

But each analyst in the MMO office had a geographic bureau with whose structure, both domestically and in the embassies overseas, they were supposed to be familiar, quite familiar; knowledgeable, keep track of all the number of positions, FTEs, full time equivalents, as they were called. When budget cuts were required we would talk to the bureaus about reducing the number of FTEs; you probably experienced this from your end; I don't know, maybe not. But I wasn't there for very long. Oh, and then actually, oh sure, for one point, there was a big budget cutting operation underway and a career person, Ambassador Brandon Grove, had been designated the point man, I guess under the secretary or maybe under the undersecretary for management, to pull together budget cutting ideas so three or four people were seconded to his little ad hoc office, probably one from the comptroller's office, me from MMO, one or two others from somewhere, and so we spent a month or two or three on this budget cutting exercise, and again, I don't know the results. We just always seemed to be cutting. Budget cutting is painful, as you know. Of course you save big bucks by closing consulates or closing embassies but doing that is somewhat at odds with our purpose in life. So as a result we were just always looking for these really rather small savings which hopefully if they added up would amount to something without crippling the Department.

Q: Trying to do it at the margins.

PARKER: At the margins, exactly.

Q: Rather than the core.

You mentioned that in MMO each analyst had a geographic bureau and then you also had some of the functional offices, and maybe that's where you got involved with the historian's office?

PARKER: I don't know how I happened to get that assignment. I honestly don't remember if I had any continuing responsibilities for the historian. I don't think so; I think this was just something that bubbled up and had to be given to somebody to work on so it was given to me.

Q: Did you have a geographic bureau?

PARKER: Yes, ARA, American Republics, Latin American bureau; from Mexico on south.

Q: Okay. And you mentioned that you weren't there all that long and then moved over to the economic business bureau. Anything else about MMO or should be talk about what you did in EB?

PARKER: Well I don't know if this would be out of line to report but of course everything this little ad hoc office under Ambassador Grove did was supposedly- it was extremely closely held and generally I think it was but occasionally some budget cutting idea aimed at one's own sponsoring organization would arise so I would, for better or worse, right or wrong, get on the telephone to somebody in MMO to tell them to prepare themselves, prepare to defend against this particular proposal. I suspect my colleagues from the other branches were doing the same thing but I'll tell you one other recollection I have from this time, getting away from my own ethics now. But it was the darnedest thing; times were tough at the State Department, all this cutting here, cutting there, and you'd go down to the comptroller's office, what was his name? Was it Roger Feldman?

Q: Yes.

PARKER: He got fired ultimately; not for cause, just for change of administration or something. And they had the best lighted, most nicely furnished offices with the latest contemporary modular furniture. This was just such a contrast between the rest of the Department and the comptroller's office. I mean how on earth he got away with that I don't know; whoever approved that I don't know but certainly it did not seem appropriate.

Q: So when there were savings and cuts they didn't seem to be absorbed into that office?

PARKER: No.

Q: Okay. Then you became deputy director of the executive office, the economic business bureau. What did you go there?

PARKER: Well I guess I had some responsibilities for the bureau budget, because I seem to remember spending a lot of time pouring over the budget as time passed through the year. The comptroller would authorize the spending of money quarter by quarter so we had to live on a quarterly budget. So I did spend a lot of time paying attention to the budget.

I spent a lot of time; I guess I mentioned this the other day, at least in the annual cycle I spent a lot of time reviewing efficiency reports throughout the bureau. The executive director would be absent from time to time; it was an extended absence or two, maybe just a two week vacation so I'd fill in for him and whatever was of interest to the assistant secretary at the time I had to be on top of. Go to the morning staff meetings and report for EX, the executive director's office to the bureau staff meeting.

Q: Who was the executive director during this-?

PARKER: Dave Burns, David Burns.

Q: And the assistant secretary?

PARKER: All of this time I believe it was Eugene McAllister.

Q: And did you get involved, besides budget issues and efficiency reports, evaluation reports, also in personnel assignments, personnel selection?

PARKER: No. I mean, I certainly would be aware at the time of year that it was going on but the top guy, David Burns, handled that. He probably kept me informed, maybe I sat in on some of the meetings but I honestly did not have any direct responsibility.

Q: Now the economic business bureau in those days was largely Foreign Service, Civil Service, some combination of the two?

PARKER: I'd say mostly Foreign Service. Well, the executive director's office might have been an exception. We certainly had the Civil Servants in that office for year in, year out to provide continuity, the nuts and bolts of running the bureau. But the bureau as a whole was mostly FSOs.

Q: Okay.

PARKER: I'll tell you what; I may or may not have anything else to say but may I break for five minutes?

Q: Sure, let's take a break.

Okay, Tom, you were going to say something about your experience in Japan, which was much earlier.

PARKER: Yes, one incident that I recalled and I think is amusing and you may find it so. But as I told you, my first assignment in the embassy in Tokyo was working on the Okinawa reversion negotiations, and the agreement that we ultimately arrived at consisted of a number of documents. I mean, first of all there was the formal agreement between the United States of America and Japan concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands, but there were a number, and whether that's 10 or 20 I don't recall, but there were a number of other ancillary documents addressing particular issues or points, and these were of various levels of formality and various levels of confidentiality; some were quite sensitive. So once the negotiations had concluded, before the agreement had been signed, as junior guy in the section I was sent over to the foreign ministry, one guy with our complete collection of all these documents, to go over them one by one with the foreign ministry to make sure they had the same set of documents or see if they had any other ones, and so make sure that the set of documents was consistent, and also to agree on the degree of confidentiality of each document. So I did that.

So I went back to the embassy and we had our set of documents and they had theirs, and I guess maybe even before the agreement was signed at the ceremony I previously described, or within a day or two thereafter, the office of which I was a part of at the embassy, one way or another bundled up a lot of stuff to ship back to Washington, and within a day or two after that we started looking for a copy of the agreement. We couldn't find one. We had apparently, I say "we," I think we ended up blaming it on the secretary, but we had apparently shipped all of our copies of the set of papers back to Washington, couldn't find a single one. And we needed a set to talk to Washington and to talk to the foreign ministry. So we, "we," the boss, Charles Schmitz, got on the phone to one of our counterparts at the foreign ministry and just explained. I don't think he said we had shipped it back to Washington; I think he said something about disarray here in the office and can't find it right this minute and could they please send us a set, and they were happy to do it. And luckily each set had the documents in both languages. So that was our set of the agreement for some time thereafter. But that was mildly embarrassing and it could have been inconvenient but it all worked out.

Q: I think I may have asked you this before but let me ask it again, were you involved in the two languages or only in English in terms of that negotiation.

PARKER: Only in English. I did remember, after you asked me that the other day, that at one point I looked at the primary agreement, whose long name I gave you a minute ago, and I was able to read that in Japanese so my Japanese was that good, but it was never my responsibility to make sure the Japanese was accurate and-

Q: Could conform to the English.

PARKER: -conform to the English.

Q: Alright. Anything else about that or-?

PARKER: No, I think that's it for Japan.

Q: Anything else about your assignment to be deputy executive director in economic business bureau?

PARKER: No. It was useful, getting an idea of how a bureau functions. It was nuts and bolt stuff. I might have brought a little more organization into the office; I think I came up with some sort of tracking system for all the dozens if not hundreds of issues before the executive office at any given time.

Q: You were beginning to use- computers were beginning to be used more widely.

PARKER: Yes. Actually, we were quite happy because Dave Burns had placed the order before I arrived and I believe just about the time I arrived we got our first tranche of modern computer equipment, costing of two, count them, two CPUs, which I believe at one point later on, maybe the comptroller questioned whether that had not been extravagant. Nevertheless we had a back up so if the one ever went down we came right back up. So we had the CPUs and the work stations were being distributed very rapidly through the bureau so I saw it happening, yes.

Q: Okay. Anything else about that? And, I think it's getting close to the point where you left the Department of State and ended your Foreign Service career route.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Twenty-two years.

PARKER: Yes, that is true. I don't mind telling you that it was while I was in EX that I got the dread telephone call from the director general's office, informing me that I would not be with the department for 20 more years. But the good news about that was that I was in Washington when I got that bad news and so I had another year in which I could do networking and pounding the pavement and interviewing, and I did do a lot of that, although I was very conscientious, counting as annual leave every minute that I was out of the office looking for a job. And it was a fascinating experience; met lots of interesting people, had lots of interesting conversations. And just in the nick of time-I think I'd left the Department the first day of October-

Q: Nineteen eighty-nine.

PARKER: Yes. And so, no more than a month before that I had landed a job with a trade association. I guess I started with them the 10th day of October of 1989.

Q: Did you go through the, what's sometimes called the out placement program, the retirement-?

PARKER: I did, yes. That was very worthwhile.

Q: It was helpful to you. Or at least- And it also gave you some time to-

PARKER: Yes, yes I think- Does that last as long as three months?

Q: I was going to say 90 days, yes, three months.

PARKER: In addition to maybe two or three weeks of pretty intense training, instruction of one sort or another and the nuts and bolts of job hunting. Then you've got two months to pound the pavement and look for a job while you're still on the payroll so that's very nice.

Q: And you took a position with the Trade Association, which was what?

PARKER: The trade association, which was the Chemical Manufacturers Association, worked through committees made up of its member company representatives plus staff from the association, so they had an energy committee, since the chemical industry is a big energy consumer, and they needed somebody to run that committee. So they hired me to do that, which fit very well with my economic cone experience, although ironically, I think energy was maybe the single part of the entire panoply of economic work that I'd never done. I dabbled in agriculture and then civil aviation; I mean, almost everything you could think of.

Q: Trade.

PARKER: Trade but never energy. But, haven't been present, I'd obviously read lots of traffic and was aware of progression of events the previous 15 or 20 years. So that worked out very well.

Q: Okay. Anything else you want to say about your Foreign Service career?

PARKER: Well, I would say in retrospect, I mean, I'm sorry I didn't have a longer career. The three overseas assignments were all fascinating, whether or not I conveyed that appropriately they were all great assignments, even Vietnam. Obviously I was careful in Vietnam but for a young guy that was a fascinating experience. And knowing the language made all the difference.

Q: It also helped to be in a relatively peaceful-

PARKER: Absolutely.

Q: -province, district.

PARKER: Absolutely, yes. So, sorry the career wasn't longer. I had three great assignments. I guess towards the end in Uruguay we were beginning to get the feeling that maybe it was an especially good career for young people. I mean, I had gotten married and our first child was born in Japan, as a matter of fact, and we had two more, a total of three by the time we got to Uruguay. And my wife had become a CPA (certified public accountant) during our eight consecutive years in the States, between Japan and Uruguay. And so it gets tougher when you've got a spouse who's got her own career and you've got children. You know all this stuff but nevertheless it was a great 22 years.

Q: Did you have all three children with you in Uruguay?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: And there was an adequate school for them there?

PARKER: Yes. There was an "Uruguay American School", which was quite satisfactory. I mean the young one was just an infant, literally three months old when we went down there. So we had the opportunity to watch her as an infant learning two languages simultaneously, which is fascinating. As soon as she could speak in English she could speak in Spanish just as well. In fact, towards the end of our tour we would amuse ourselves by asking her to interpret between us and our maid, our 40 hour a week maid; never had a live-in maid; and our daughter would do it perfectly. We'd say, "Susanna, tell the maid", whose name was Santa, "tell Santa we're going to the ice cream store." And Susanna would tell Santa this in Spanish. And the maid would say something in Spanish and it would come back would come back to us through Susanna in English. We could monitor both ends of the conversation. Anyway, that was just fascinating to watch that process.

Q: How is Susanna's Spanish today?

PARKER: I'm sorry to say it's not very good. Her oldest sister kept it up very assiduously. She took Spanish all through the remainder of middle school and high school and I think maybe even ran out of courses her senior year in high school. Took it again in college; spent her junior year in Spain, all of her classes were in Spanish in Spain, and then lived three years in Argentina, just enjoying a young person's adventure down there, on her dime, for three years. So her Spanish is still excellent. I guess she's a little rusty now since she's been back for seven years. But the number two daughter's also pretty conscientious; at least she kept it up through high school but that was probably the end of it. And number three, Susanna, just was never that interested, even though she learned it as an infant. So she let hers get away from her.

Q: Was your wife able to work either in Japan or Uruguay?

PARKER: Well, in Japan, not legally, but she found employment with a little publishing company which was an arm of MITI, Ministry of International Trade and Industry. They put out a little English language magazine, I don't know, "Japan's Trade," or something like that, so she would both edit the English writing of her Japanese colleagues or she would write articles herself. But she never had her work visa so this was illegal.

Q: But for a government agency, or at least an aspect of it.

PARKER: But she would go, I mean, her Japanese colleague took her down to the immigration office about every six months. And there would be a long, inconclusive conversation about my wife's status and what she was doing and they would part company with many bows and-

Q: Tea. Every good drunk, yes.

PARKER: And this would be good for about six more months and they'd repeat that process. So she survived that without being arrested or expelled.

Q: And in Uruguay she had an infant, you said.

PARKER: Had an infant and also had the advantage of having a 40 hour a week maid. So, she was a brand new CPA in Uruguay so she did individual income tax returns for Americans. Or for anybody who needed to file a U.S. income tax return. She was the auditor for the embassy commissary and I think that was about it. So basically she had a very good time in Uruguay. She and the oldest daughter enjoy horseback riding; they ride in the form of riding dressage. So they had a good time doing that. And, of course, she was a wonderful wife and mother and also very good at representational functions, one reason being, as I think I said, she was formerly a Foreign Service officer herself.

Q: With the then-United States Information Agency?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: In Belgrade.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Was her one overseas assignment.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: And you met in-

PARKER: Our A-100 course.

Q: So in those days the USIA new officers were in the A-100 classes at FSI with State Department new officers?

PARKER: Yes, although they had had a head start of several weeks of USIA training before coming over to the State course.

Q: But they were in the full length of the A-100 class with you?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: Well, that was good for you.

PARKER: Yes.

Q: And the two of you, personally, but it's probably good for the organization, both the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency, to do that kind of training together.

PARKER: Yes, I think so.

Q: Okay. Anything else, Tom, or shall we bring this to an end?

PARKER: That's all that occurs to me unless you have any more questions.

Q: No. Thank you very much. I've enjoyed this.

PARKER: Okay. Well, you're more than welcome.

End of interview