Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR E. MICHAEL SOUTHWICK

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Southwick.]

Q: Today is the 4th of May, 2004. This is an interview with E. Michael Southwick. What does the E stand for?

SOUTHWICK: The E stands for Elmer and that was my father's name.

Q: Okay. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Do you go by Michael, Mike or something else?

SOUTHWICK: Well, normally these days by Michael, but occasionally, it's Mike.

Q: Try and keep it a little more formal if you can.

SOUTHWICK: Right.

Q: I wonder if we could just kind of start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and then we'll move on to something more.

SOUTHWICK: Okay. I was born on January 12th, 1945 in Charles R. Howard Memorial Hospital in Willits, California and that is the hospital that was erected by the Howard family, which owns Seabiscuit. It was a memorial to their only, well, it wasn't their only son, but their teenage son who was killed in an auto accident some years before that.

Q: Was this in San Francisco?

SOUTHWICK: This is in Mendocino County. It's about 135 or 40 miles North of San Francisco.

Q: So, you're really way up close practically to the Oregon border?

SOUTHWICK: No, you're about halfway up. Yes.

Q: That's longer.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, it's about 300 miles from San Francisco to the Oregon border.

Q: What was the area like?

SOUTHWICK: Mendocino County is one of the most interesting places topographically I think in the United States. The lower half of the county is agricultural, pears, grapes, wine, it's the Northern extreme if you want to call it that. It's a wine country. The Northern part of it is heavily forested and that's where the big Redwood forests begin. My father was in the lumber business.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about your family. Let's take the Southwick on the father's side, first. Where did they come from and what do you know about them?

SOUTHWICK: Okay. A fair amount about my father's, I guess it would be his grandfather who as a very small child immigrated with his family from England, the family had converted to Mormonism and they traveled by a ship to New Orleans and they got on a boat and went up to St. Louis and there they were supposed to be regrouped and put on wagons to go to Salt Lake city. At that time there was a cholera epidemic. My great great grandfather died leaving his wife a widow and several children, only one of whom was by that union because he had been married before, but my great grandfather Joseph at about age five walked across that part of the United States eventually in 1852 from St. Louis to Salt Lake City.

Q: I remember there was a thing about so many came and pulled handcarts across, some must push and some must pull.

SOUTHWICK: There were some. Some must push and some must pull. There were a couple of handcart companies. As near as we know, my great grandfather was not part of that and it's only with some difficulty that we've tracked down some of the details because my great grandmother was a widow and she died a few years after they got to Salt Lake City.

Q: Well, what do you know about your grandfather's life?

SOUTHWICK: He was left with a stepfather as it turned out and life was not very good for him at least that's the family legend. At about age 13 or 14 he went off on his own. This would have been the 1860s and he got a number of different kinds of jobs, but towards the end of the century he got a land grant in Ogden Valley which is east of Ogden, Utah and there he settled to take up farming. By that time he had married and had about five or six children.

Q: Did Mormonism stick with the family?

SOUTHWICK: It has to a large degree. I'm probably the only one who has emerged in other directions. I don't consider myself a Mormon and I don't consider myself anti-Mormon and I certainly value the heritage.

Q: Is it Jack Mormon?

SOUTHWICK: Well, Jack Mormon was a term and I don't know how it started, but it may have had something to do with Jack Dempsey who was a Jack Mormon, but it's for a Mormon who may have still believed, but did not practice, like smoking and drinking. Mormons don't smoke and drink and they're not supposed to carouse around.

Q: So, you can carouse around if you want?

SOUTHWICK: I suppose, but the idea of Jack Mormon really concerns, they're not really people who are against the church, they're just not living it.

Q: It's basically a lapse.

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: Well, then what happened to your grandfather? What happened to your father?

SOUTHWICK: Well, let's see, my great grandfather had this land grant and he settled his sons in that area in the Northern part of the Ogden Valley and divided the parcels among the sons and my grandfather had one of those and that's where my father grew up. He was born in 1911 and he grew up in that kind of farm environment. I know a fair amount about that because a fair amount has been written.

Q: Tell me what was life like then?

SOUTHWICK: In many ways it was good because they had all of nature. It was a beautiful valley. There were mountains. People had horses. They could ride around. My father and I went on a visit there with my family in '85 and I have a recording of it and he knew every nook and cranny in that really quite extensive valley. He'd ridden a horse to the top of Ben Loman, which is a high peak there west of where he lived, but East of Ogden and they went to school. They had to track a little bit a few miles to school. There was a lot of snow during that period. Nobody was rich and the farmland was okay, but people had to supplement their income with odd jobs of various kinds.

Q: Well, then would your father break away, not break way, but go elsewhere?

SOUTHWICK: He only went to the eighth grade in school, then by that time his father had moved the family to Ogden and had a job with a cannery, a Del Monte cannery. This was part and parcel of having an extra job other than the farm just to make ends meet. My father started in the truck driving business basically and transportation and one thing led to another with his brothers and he wound up first in Oregon in the lumber business and eventually in California, but he always stayed with the Mormon church.

Q: On your mother's side, where did she come from?

SOUTHWICK: My mother grew up in Logan, Utah and her mother was an immigrant from Norway and her father was an immigrant from England.

Q: What was her maiden name?

SOUTHWICK: Abrahamson. She was from Larvik, Norway. The father, this is a little bit hard to trace, but he had lived in a couple of different places in England before he immigrated. They lived in Logan, Utah, which was a university town. It had a land-grant college, Utah State University. My grandfather suffered from poor health and had a meager living really, but he did raise chickens and sold eggs. That was the main livelihood that they had.

Q: Your mother's, your grandmother and grandfather, he was the one with poor health?

SOUTHWICK: He was in poor health. He died of cancer weighing about 65 or 70 pounds when he died in the '30s, but my mother never complained of having a difficult time. She knew the family was poor, but she went to school. She was a very good student; she was the last of the children in her family. There were seven children. There were seven children in my father's family as well. In each case one of the children, a daughter in each case, did not make it to maturity. My father was more in the middle. I can't remember exactly the number for him.

Q: Coming out of a farming community in that area, the Depression wasn't as major a blow as it was to many people in more industrialized areas.

SOUTHWICK: My parents often talked about the Depression, but I always had the feeling that they had made do okay partly because, they weren't necessarily on the farm during that period, but they managed to get jobs of one kind or another.

Q: Yes. Well, then how about your mother for schooling?

SOUTHWICK: She went all the way through high school. She graduated in 1933. Eventually she got a job as a bookkeeper at one of the local appliance stores and that's where she met my father because my father was a delivery person. It was a small chain of these stores in that part of Utah and he came by one day and my mother saw him and he saw her and that was the beginning of things.

Q: Otherwise we wouldn't be here talking.

SOUTHWICK: That's right.

Q: You say your father, they were married before they went to Oregon?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, they were married before they went to Oregon and went to Oregon not too long after that.

Q: Not Oregon, I meant California.

SOUTHWICK: Well, first Oregon and then California.

Q: What do you recall, in the first place how big was your family?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it's another big family. My parents had seven children and I'm smack dab in the middle. I have two older brothers and an older sister and two younger brothers and a younger sister.

Q: You're not the seventh son of the seventh son?

SOUTHWICK: No, it doesn't quite work that way.

Q: What was it like growing up there, I mean what was the town like and what was it like growing up?

SOUTHWICK: Well, my father when I was born had a sawmill with his brother, his older brother, in a place called Branscomb. It is in Mendocino County, west of a little town called Laytonville. This was the early '40s. The war was on and that was a very good business and they did quite well. By the time I was born they were doing very well. My father had a number of investments. I guess it was 1947 or 8 my father acquired a motel in a town called Ukiah which is one of the larger towns in Mendocino County and that's what I first remember, the town of Ukiah which is a town of about 8,000 or 9,000 people.

Q: How do you spell that?

SOUTHWICK: It's an Indian name. U-K-I-A-H.

Q: What was family life like?

SOUTHWICK: I remember those early years up until 1953 and I'll get to that in a moment as being quite pleasant. At first we lived in this motel and I remember that and it was fun seeing a lot of people everyday. There were vineyards all around and it was fun to play hide and seek in the vineyards. As I said, this is the northern part of California wine country, but my father decided to retire. He was only in his '40s, but he had done pretty well. So, he built a new house, one of the nicer houses up on a hill overlooking the town and he sold the motel and sold some of his other interests and moved there. He had acquired an airplane and he had a lot of fun riding around in his airplane and he had horses and he had a fair amount of property. He was living pretty well and then something happened, which is very critical in the family, critical, or pivotal I should say. I think he got restless in retirement. He probably retired too early and he decided he wanted to move into a cattle ranch and go back in some ways to his roots. With a cousin he got wind of a cattle ranch in Northern Nevada north of Elko almost to the Idaho border. In 1952 he and his cousin bought that ranch and in early 1953 we moved there. This was way out in the sticks, 40 miles from a paved road, no 24 hour electricity, mail two times a week, crank phones. We got snowed in in the winter. We had a one-room school house with children from two families at it and that's where I spent third, fourth, fifth and part of sixth grades.

Q: What were you doing? They must have put you to work, too.

SOUTHWICK: Well, this was the ranch life and this was not Hollywood, this was the real McCoy. This was roundups, branding, learning to be a good horseman, raising hay during the summer, it was the River Valley, the Bruno River Valley which is very hard work. We used horses; we didn't use tractors. It was very 19th Century. It was feeding the cattle, which are brought in during the winter to keep them alive basically. We fed them from the hay that had been raised during the summer. There was the one-room school house which only went to eighth grade, so the dilemma for anyone living in that very small community with children, you'd either have to board your older children out in a nearby town, nearby meaning Elko, Nevada 90 miles away or Twin Falls, Idaho, 110 miles away.

Q: Good God. Well, how did you find the one-room schoolhouse?

SOUTHWICK: Well, in some ways I feel that that was one of the best intellectual academic experiences I ever had. We couldn't keep a teacher there too long because the teacher had no electricity, had running water, but no pressure, nothing for a bath or anything like that, an outside toilet. The first teacher I had there was Laura A. Early who was 72 years old, very formal, very Victorian I would say now. I didn't know what the word Victorian meant then, but you had to call her Mrs. Early and you had to stand when you recited and the thing about the school was every student essentially went at his or her own pace. So, after three and a half years there, when we moved to Twin Falls because of the children having to go to school I found that I was way ahead of everybody. I didn't know I was, but I was way ahead of everybody.

Q: You were listening in on the other classes.

SOUTHWICK: Listening in on the others and my older brothers were bringing their school books home. The big event about school was every couple of weeks we'd get a box of books from the Nevada School State Library with a kerosene lighter, gas lighter, an electric light if we could get the generator going. The entertainment was to read books.

Q: Radio didn't?

SOUTHWICK: Radio was good. We had a battery radio. If the generator could get going most evenings we ran it for a couple of hours. We could listen and the only station that came in clearly was KNX in Los Angeles. At that time this was the early '50s, you still had radio shows. You had Bob Hope, you had suspense, you had The Shadow, you had all of that stuff.

Q: I lived in San Marino and I used to listen to KNX.

SOUTHWICK: Wasn't it 1170 or something, I can't remember.

Q: How about churchwise?

SOUTHWICK: Well, my parents had not been strictly religious about going to church all their lives, but by the time the children came around, and this happens with many people, they decided they needed to get with the program. Certainly by the time I came along they were going regularly. In this little community in Rowland, Nevada where the cattle ranch was, R-O-W-L-A-N-D, there was another Mormon family and the two families got together and one family would host church services one Sunday and one family would host them the next Sunday. Afterwards we would share a meal together, picnic or what have you. It was all quite good.

Q: I take it you were far enough away so that you didn't feel the weight of the hierarchy and you know, I mean the Mormon Church can be quite a discipline and have a pretty heavy hand.

SOUTHWICK: Well, it is. If you're on the wrong side of it. No, I think Mark Twain was the one who said the Mormons are organized like the Prussian army and he was not far off with that assessment. Certainly we were part of a stake there which is like an archdiocese, so we had visitors from the hierarchy from time to time. We managed pretty well there on our own and we had Sunday school lessons and so forth.

Q: What about friends?

SOUTHWICK: Well, with this other family I had someone who was exactly the same grade as I am. We're still in touch to this day. He's now in farming and agriculture in Southern Utah and the community bonds that form at a time like that when you're so isolated are extremely strong. Interestingly, of the six or seven children at that school most of us went on to good universities eventually. My friend Dennis' older brother Brian went to Stanford and then to Harvard and got an MBA and a law degree from Harvard. I went on to Stanford. The others went here and there at least to undergraduate.

Q: What about intellectual food, reading and all that?

SOUTHWICK: It was again mainly this Nevada State Library and I don't know how they came up with the books that they selected. You'd just get a bunch of books and some of them might interest you and some of them might not. It's then that I started reading Dickens, this is like 10 or 11 and I mainly remember Dickens and I remember reading David Copperfield and I thought it would be a book impossible to read because it was over 800 pages and I got into it and I couldn't stop. There are other things there as well. Then I think something that may have relevance to the Foreign Service. My older brothers were studying world history and American history and they would bring their high school textbooks home and I kind of devoured them as well.

Q: Did you get out some on your own and ride the country and all that?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, the school was about a mile and a half away. In the summer there were these roundups and branding, we had branding and other things that were done to cattle which I don't need to mention, but yes, you could ride and at that age I didn't go anywhere very often by myself. There were rattlesnakes around. There were mountain lions; there were things you could get into trouble.

Q: While you were there, you were there, how old were you by the time you left?

SOUTHWICK: When I moved there I had just turned eight and by the time I left I was almost 12.

Q: So, you were about getting ready for high school?

SOUTHWICK: Getting ready for high school. We moved into Twin Falls. My father bought a house there and that was the middle of the sixth grade. I guess I was 11 when I left and I started, resumed I should say in Twin Falls, Idaho.

Q: Was your father still in the cattle business?

SOUTHWICK: He stayed on. The cattle business had gone into a big decline shortly after my father bought that cattle ranch. He essentially lost a lot of money on it. At a certain point after we had moved to Twin Falls he decided that it was not sustainable and that he had to do something else. So in 1956 or 7 I believe it was he sold out. For a while we still lived in Idaho, but eventually my father went back to California and got back into the lumber business essentially to recover.

Q: How long were you, where did you go to high school?

SOUTHWICK: I went to high school back in California. I did a little bit of junior high there and then I went to high school in Willits.

Q: How did you find the big city or the little city?

SOUTHWICK: First of all it was Twin Falls. I think the difference was that the things that we had been able to do on a ranch you don't do in a city. You're not riding horses. Sports was not something you did very much because you didn't have enough people to make up a big team or anything and it was really cowboy skills. The whole business of preoccupation with sports frankly was something a little bit foreign to me. Academically though it was fine. I found myself in the sixth grade in I guess it was the junior high school, in Twin Falls. Twin Falls is a town of about 20,000 people. I found I was way ahead of everybody in virtually everything. I think eventually it kind of equalized. We moved to California when I was I think I was in the eighth grade and I continued on in high school. I liked the little high school I had in Willits. It was a high school of about 300 students.

Q: Well, did this give you a chance, eventually you're going to end up in the field of foreign affairs, I can't think of, you know, I mean, stuck in these valleys in sort of basically in the hinterland, you would think you would be kind of far removed from foreign affairs.

SOUTHWICK: I guess so, but in some ways I didn't feel that way. I liked to listen to the radio. I liked to read the newspaper. Both of my parents read the newspapers a lot and when we were in Rowland, the cattle ranch mail came twice a week and my parents were subscribers to the Ogden Standard Examiner, not one of the great newspapers in the world, but it had foreign news. It told you when Stalin died. It told you when other great events happened and again this was pre-television. People read more. I think kids read more. Kids would read newspapers. These history books I think kind of took me out of things and into the wider world. Another part of it, I didn't mention this yet, but my mother's sister was married to someone from Scotland and he was my favorite uncle. He lived in Logan, Utah. Occasionally he would visit us or we would visit them and he never lost his thick accent, which I thought was the most marvelous thing I'd ever heard. He would tell me stories about Scotland. They were just fascinating to me, so I think this sort of pricked my imagination.

Q: How about did movies enter your?

SOUTHWICK: Movies were a big factor. One of the things even as a child I found neglected or disadvantaged out in the sticks in Nevada because we didn't have movies so I still remember going to these little towns in the great basin like Elko or Snake River Valley, Twin Falls. The first thing that I wanted to see was the theater, the big marquee and the lights and see what was playing because I had always liked movies and I still do like movies. I think it's a great art form. I think there's enough to carry you out if you somehow react to it. A lot of people have asked that same question and even some of my relatives. Why on earth are you the one who went so far and wide?

Q: At the high school did you find yourself getting into any extracurricular activities?

SOUTHWICK: I was not so much involved in sports. I was okay at sports, but not very good at them. It was more academic things. I worked on yearbook. I worked a little bit on the newspaper. I did student office. I was class president of the junior class; I was student body president for the school when I was a senior; I was in a couple of the school plays all of which I liked. I still remember a couple of the teachers there very well and am still in close touch with two of them.

Q: What subjects turned you on particularly?

SOUTHWICK: History mainly. The other subject, which I didn't learn much about in high school, academically at least, was music and I'd always had an ear for music. My father was a self-taught musician. He played with little combos for church socials and so forth. It was a lot of the music from the '20s and '30s and into the '40s. He played the saxophone.

Q: It's great music.

SOUTHWICK: It's wonderful music.

Q: That was the golden period.

SOUTHWICK: It is the golden period. I think my father's favorite song was Stardust and he played it beautifully on the saxophone. My tastes went into classical music, which made me an oddball.

Q: Did you get involved with an instrument?

SOUTHWICK: Yes I did. I had taken piano lessons when I was in high school. I started taking the clarinet and then at the Mormon Congregation in Willits they didn't have anyone to play the organ and I ended up playing the organ; not well, but I played it.

Q: How did you find being in the big time with a church and an organ and all?

SOUTHWICK: It was different and at that point Mormonism was a fact of life. It's a very dynamic religion. It's the sociology of it where everybody is busy. Everybody has jobs, everybody has responsibilities. All of that worked very well. No one that I was around really questioned the church or asked questions. They just kind of accepted it. Even in a place like Willits Mormons are distinctly a minority.

Q: I've always thought, I've been fascinated by Mormonism as an American history major, but I would think one of the sticking points of Mormonism would be the history of the thing. When you get up to Joseph Smith, okay, that's a little too close. Let's go back to Moses, that's far enough away.

SOUTHWICK: It's all right if a burning bush talks to Moses.

Q: Yes, that's.

SOUTHWICK: It is a fantastic story. If you hear this all the time when you grow up it doesn't seem as fantastic, I'm not sure how to define fantastic in this context, but its well organized as I said. It has a systematic if not always consistent, I would say, theology. It was only towards my later teenage years that I started questioning some of those things.

Q: History is a bothersome thing. The way back history, lost 10 tribes wandering around the Great Plains, doesn't I think Brigham Young University still has a problem with that.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, the historicity question with the Mormon Church. Most of the time they have been aggressive/defensive about it not wishing to deny it, that their version of history, should I say, is the correct one. But somebody said if you can believe the Virgin Birth you can believe anything, so. If you look at Mormonism in the context of a lot of other religions and when I got to college and read an imaginary account of Voltaire of some Jesuit trying to explain Christianity to the emperor of China and Virgin birth and resurrection and all the rest of it and I think at the end of it the emperor of China says that's as plain as day. Well, Christianity, most religions don't make a whole lot of sense empirically.

Q: Nicely done. So much of it is at a great remove. It's not bad.

SOUTHWICK: It's not so bad.

Q: A problem with the Mormon Church is it's not a great remove. I mean your great grandfather could have been, so I mean it's.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely. You know, I think one of the things that sustains the Mormon Church is the mythology of the trek and being driven out and the hardship that occurred and all the rest of it, the martyrdom of Joseph Smith. The best book about Mormonism in the 19th Century is by Sir Richard Burton the explorer who was interested in sexual customs among other things. He made a trip out to Salt Lake City and wrote a book called City of the Saints and he said that if you look at a lot of religions most of them have a mythology. They usually have a martyrdom in it. Mormonism has that. They have some kind of dramatic event that kind of pulls people together and certainly that was the case with Mormons, early Christians who were persecuted.

Q: All right, you're now graduated from a small high school, what are you going to do? I mean neither of your parents have gone to college, how about your older brothers or sisters have they?

SOUTHWICK: My two older brothers were probably not the best examples. One of them never wanted to go to college and didn't. My second oldest brother went to college for a while and didn't like it and left. My older sister had gone to college and she had stayed there for about a year or two and then there were some money problems. She was going to earn some money and go back and frankly never did, but she had gone to college. There was never any doubt about me going to college because I was a good student. I was in a scholarship federation with very good grades and very good board scores. The question was where. For most Mormons what goes to the top of the list is Brigham Young University (BYU). Again, this is my late high school years and I was beginning to have these feelings about Mormonism and questioned some of its premises and so forth and I wasn't so sure I wanted to go there. Some of my best friends were going to one of the UC campuses, Berkley, UCLA what have you. Stanford was around and I kind of fixed on it. I applied to all three of those places, got into all three and then I decided well if I've gotten into Stanford I might as well go to Stanford. I had never seen Stanford even though we lived 150 miles away. I never saw the place until I went down there to enroll.

Q: Stanford of course not being a state run school, how did you pay for it?

SOUTHWICK: I applied for scholarships. My father was still having his ups and downs in the lumber business, but I did get a scholarship from the state of California which was fairly substantial. It was still expensive to go there, but my father and my summer jobs, we felt it was feasible, so the money wasn't an issue. My parents didn't quite understand why I didn't want to go to BYU; they didn't quite understand that.

Q: Incidentally while you were growing up with your parents, where did they fit in the political spectrum?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it's interesting. My father was a small businessman and he didn't like unions, but he also felt that government should take care of the little guy, should watch out for the little guy. He was not terribly ideological about politics. My mother was much more curious about it. I remember she would listen on the radio during the conventions. I remember making a trip in 1952 and we were listening to the Republican convention and my mother was for Taft. I didn't know who Taft was, but I knew who Eisenhower was at age seven. It's interesting because I remember her driving home after voting in 1952, this was when we were living in this beautiful house in the field overlooking Ukiah and I said, "Mom, who did you vote for?" She voted for Eisenhower. She was sort of middle of the road to conservative.

Q: Also, Mormons as a group have always fallen fairly solidly within the Republican ranks.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, very much so today in Utah. Clinton I think in 1992 came in third after Ross Perot.

Q: You got to stay in Palo Alto when?

SOUTHWICK: That was the fall of 1962.

Q: So '62 to?

SOUTHWICK: '66.

Q: Had the Kennedy phenomenon penetrated where you were I mean, government worker, or were you too far down in the school system?

SOUTHWICK: No, as a matter of fact in 1960 I was red hot about that election and I followed it closely, watched all the debates. My girlfriend at the time was a very committed Democrat. I wasn't necessarily a committed Republican, but I must say I really didn't like Kennedy very much, just personally. Something about him rubbed me the wrong way. I wasn't all that enamored with Nixon, but my father had a pickup and a little car and I plastered them with Nixon-Lodge signs. He thought that was awful and wanted me to take them off. He just didn't want his cars having stickers on them. I think part of it was that it was Nixon. By the time I got to college, I sort of evolved I guess. I found when I arrived that there were people who weren't going to continue at college, they were going to get on buses and go to Mississippi.

Q: Well, I was going to say, I would think things like the civil rights movement really passed you by, you just were far removed from this.

SOUTHWICK: Certainly we had the race issue. There were no blacks in Willits, California and as near as I could tell there were no blacks in Mendocino County. If you wanted to see black people you'd have to go to Oakland or to certain parts of San Francisco which we did quite a bit, but the knowledge of the African American black people was certainly not first hand, it was only abstract. The whole civil rights revolution was something that in a way made me very curious, but it wasn't something I had a good instinctive understanding about. I feel I do now, but I certainly didn't then.

Q: How did you find going to Stanford which is one of the top schools in the country, I assume it was considerably a sophisticated place and you're really a small town boy.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I ran into people who had gone to prep schools although most people had gone to public schools. People from all over the country, people from all over the world. I had a roommate when I was a sophomore who was from one of the wealthiest families in California whose wealth went back to the gold rush and who owned banks, Chronicle Publishing Company and all kinds of things in the Bay area. I got used to seeing wealthy people and being around wealthy people and also people who had ostensibly on paper a better education than I did from my little high school in Willits, California. I found, however, over time and I have since learned this from people who study how people adjust that what really counts is something that maybe you learn, maybe you don't learn, but it is a curiosity, a drive to learn, openness and trying to learn as much as you can. I had that from the word go. I don't think I got it at Stanford, but I had it. By the time I was a junior I felt that I was as good as most students, not the best, but as good as most students.

Q: What sort of things were you concentrating on?

SOUTHWICK: I wanted to do history some more. I somehow maybe had it back in my head perhaps an academic career although it was all very vague. At Stanford then every student took something called Western Civilization, it was part of the core curriculum. It was basically an intellectual history of the West. I had never had anything like that before. Like a lot of other students from Stanford of that generation, that was the best course we ever took and I still read stuff over and over again that I was reading then.

Q: How did you find social life at Stanford?

SOUTHWICK: It was pretty good. We were first of all in dormitories, men's dormitories and women's dormitories. There was no mixing of the sexes at that point. That happened and was shocking when it happened about 10 years afterwards. There were plenty of mixers and there was a dining hall so you met a lot of students. One of the things I liked about Stanford as I think is true of other elite schools, is the quality of the students and what people called peer education and I developed some lasting friendships there.

Q: Did you find yourself getting involved in political or social movements there at all?

SOUTHWICK: There were two things going on. Certainly from the outset the United States is involved in the civil rights movement. As my four years progressed there Vietnam became a bigger and bigger issue. Then, of course, in 1963, when I was cutting up frogs in the biology lab, we had the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Q: '62.

SOUTHWICK: '62, excuse me. October I guess of '62. You were aware of these things and the Vietnam issue was building and a lot of other student torment was beginning to build up particularly not so much at Stanford, but across the Bay over at Berkeley. Berkeley was the center of it.

Q: Yes, I was wondering how much though that you were having free.

SOUTHWICK: Free sex movements, free speech movements.

Q: Yes, all that sort of thing.

SOUTHWICK: Some of that it was spilling over, it was a little milder at Stanford, but certainly affected much more ferment in Berkeley. But Stanford was not unaffected by it by the late '60s by which time I was gone. Stanford had the campus sit-ins and the riots and all the rest of it and so did everybody else.

Q: Did you find that Stanford turned more towards Asia than say, than maybe a comparable school along the East Coast?

SOUTHWICK: It may have. At that point I really couldn't have compared. Certainly California in general is more conscious in Asia in the Pacific; there's a big Chinese population, big Japanese population. The Chinese that went back to the gold rush. So, you had that. Stanford had programs for six months abroad. They had little campuses in places in Europe. I didn't go there, but they had them.

Q: Did you find lack of money or were you dealing with kids with a lot more money and cars and all that sort of stuff?

SOUTHWICK: It didn't seem to matter a whole lot. People dressed the same. They sort of dressed shabbily.

Q: Chinos?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, it didn't matter too much. I had little jobs that I would get to take care of spending money, but I was fairly frugal. I didn't feel a real lack of money.

Q: Were there fraternities?

SOUTHWICK: Fraternities had not been abolished, but they were going through a period not just at Stanford, but I think throughout the country then of disfavor and disaffection. So, Stanford had kind of moved them all to new housing around a little lake which was on campus. For women there were not sororities, but I can't remember what they were called, houses where the women went. But for fraternities there you could rush them. I frankly was never interested in fraternities.

Q: Yes, I mean some places they, about that time I think I know at my college. I went to a small one in Massachusetts, Williams, and they stopped about that time. When I went there in the '50s, well, actually in the '40s they were the thing. I mean you had to belong to something, but by the '60s they were gone.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, the '60s at Stanford, you really felt they were on their way out and that some of the animal house kind of things, all that was sort of disdained and people weren't interested in it.

Q: Well, in courses you continued with history?

SOUTHWICK: History, English and a variety of other things, a little bit on the social sciences, particularly anthropology. I was interested in that.

Q: Did the Hoover Institute play any role?

SOUTHWICK: Not at lot, but I studied Russian history and they have a lot of archives there from the revolution and so forth and I would go there occasionally to look up diplomatic correspondence during World War I and II.

Q: How about were there any professors that particularly stood out for you?

SOUTHWICK: A number of them. Stanford has some great professors. They were on the make. They were robbing, stealing professors from other universities. One of the really wonderful ones that they got was Gordon A. Craig. He was a historian of Germany that I think they kidnapped from Princeton. Gordon Wright who was an expert on modern France. He was absolutely fantastic. My biology teacher was somebody who went on to have a career in government to some extent, Donald Kennedy, he was the head of the Food and Drug Administration and eventually became president of the university. I was, I didn't consider myself terribly good at English, but the few English courses I took there I thought had some very good professors.

Q: At this time did a peculiar profession called the Foreign Service come across your way?

SOUTHWICK: It really didn't until I was a junior. Then a friend of a friend who was a year or two ahead of me had taken the Foreign Service exam. I happened to be around one of these dorm room conversations where you're just sitting around talking about this, that and the other thing. This person said that he had taken the exam and he had taken the physical and all the rest of it and that was what he wanted to do with his life, but he had asthma and he had been rejected. In the process of hearing his story I heard for the first time in an immediate way about somebody who had tried to get into the Foreign Service. I knew very little about the Foreign Service, but when I learned you take an exam, I said, well, I think I'm going to give that a whirl.

Q: So, what happened? You graduated in '66?

SOUTHWICK: I graduated in '66.

Q: Was the military at all in the offing?

SOUTHWICK: The issue of the military was getting to be somewhat critical because they were giving student deferments and I did not want to go on to graduate school. I knew it would be an easy way to stay out of the military and I didn't want to go into the military and frankly that would have been the case whether there had been a Vietnam War or hadn't been a Vietnam War. I just didn't feel an affinity for the military. I think I got some of that from my father, I'm not sure why. The only person who I had ever known who had been in the military was my oldest brother during the Berlin Crisis. I had an uncle who served in World War II in Italy and had nightmares most of his life as a result so the whole military tradition was not something that attracted me. It wasn't so much about Vietnam.

Q: Well, the Mormons are generally, I won't say militaristic, but I mean they've always been a strong supporter of the military.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, absolutely, but somehow that didn't much rub off on me. I mean in an abstract way a student of history, the Civil War. I'm not a Civil War buff, but I know a lot about the Civil War, Revolutionary War, Second World War, First World War. All of that I valued. I didn't look down on the military as a lot of people of my generation in the '60s. That never happened to me. I didn't have the anti-Vietnam War feeling that a lot of people in my generation did. I had bought into it as balance of power terms. I thought it was the right thing to do, that frankly we didn't have any other choice. You didn't need to draw a line in the sand. Maybe the domino theory existed. We still had the legacy of Hitler and Munich and all that kind of thing behind us, so it made sense. What didn't make sense was how we were doing it. Even then I was aware of the British example in Malaysia. This was done basically using Malaysian forces carefully trained in relatively small groups with British soldiers.

Q: Well, so what happened to you?

SOUTHWICK: I took the Foreign Service exam. I can't remember the exact date. I do remember.

Q: '66ish?

SOUTHWICK: '65, '66. I went into San Francisco and decided that I would treat myself the day before to a nice evening. I went out to a play and saw The Hostage, still one of my favorite plays. Then I went to what I considered to be a nice hotel and the next day I took the test at a high school out in the Western part of San Francisco. Someone who had taken the test, lived on the peninsula, so he took me back to school. It's about 30 miles away. I didn't think anything of it, but I did take the oral exam and they said that was fine.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions or how your oral exam went?

SOUTHWICK: I remember two of them that I fouled up on. It seemed like it lasted about an hour and a half. I didn't know what E Pluribus Unum meant. I think it was one of those things that for whatever the reason it sort of blanked out of my head. I tried to explain what E Pluribus Unum meant and it was just a really awful explanation. Then there was one other thing that slips my mind. I frankly didn't think that I had done very well. This was a period when it's not like now. You're sitting there in front of three people and they just talk to you. They talk to you about all kinds of things and you can kind of control the conversation, the candidates to some extent, but not completely. They will pick on some things you say. I later learned it was basically a question of how you handle yourself.

Q: Yes, I used to give that exam, the three on one and we'd look for strengths and weaknesses.

SOUTHWICK: Sure. Well, I think I had some weaknesses, but they told me right away that that was fine. I went into the summer and at that time my romance was developing with someone that I'd known through college. I got to a point where I kind of wanted to get married and I was also being pursued by the draft. I also found that if I wanted to avoid being a grunt in Vietnam I better be an officer, so I decided well, I'll join in the air force. My father had been a pilot in a private plane, not in the military, but being a pilot sounded like a nifty thing to do. I was pursuing several tracks that were happening to me at once: the draft, the air force and the State Department. I was not pursuing graduate school. I wasn't going to go to Canada. I had a job working for an electronics company somebody who went around to the stores that sold these products, not a career job, it was just a job to have a job. So, I knew at some point something had to break. In the space of about a month the Selective Service system gave me a deferment on health grounds. The State Department accepted me. The air force accepted me and I got married all in the space of a few weeks. When Susan and I got married I didn't know which way all of this was going to break and neither did she. I said you might be a Vietnam wife or who knows what's going to happen. When we analyzed all of that afterwards we decided that if I'm not going to be drafted I might as well just go into the Foreign Service just because by that time I was quite curious.

I had a small arthritic problem. I still don't quite understand this and it wasn't the case that I was trying to avoid the draft. I was just filling out questionnaires and they asked me whether I had this problem and I said yes and a doctor at Stanford ended up writing a letter which I still have which was kind of an ambiguously worded letter. That got me a deferment. Now, when I went to join the air force and took all of their tests to be a pilot which was among the most rigorous, I spent all day with the doctor, I mentioned this as well. I said, "They seem to think it's important, but I personally don't think it's important." They were willing to take me. I decided that part of this was the prejudice at the time, that they weren't going to draft somebody at Stanford, they're going to draft some poor kid who didn't have that kind of advantage. I really think that was what was at work.

Q: There were an awful lot of kids coming out of small town America.

SOUTHWICK: If you were 18 and you have anything else going on in your life, but I think that people had other things going on in their life, the prejudice at the time was to let those people continue.

Q: Well, tell me a bit about your significant other. Where did she come from and all this?

SOUTHWICK: She was an air force brat. They had been in Germany, but Susan did her high school in Novato N-O-V-A-T-O and graduated the same year I did and went to Stanford and we were in the same freshmen English class. We had a few classes together and we were always kind of good friends and even went out on a couple of dates. I have to confess that nothing really boiled over until after we were finished with school and that summer after graduation she was in San Francisco and I was in San Francisco and we got together from time to time. I had this irritating habit of dropping by just as she and her roommate were fixing dinner.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, was she pointed towards a career?

SOUTHWICK: She didn't want to go on to graduate school either. She wanted a pause. I think frankly a lot of people want a pause and need a pause and she had gotten a job at the Social Security administration in kind of a track where eventually she could have gone up the ladder there. She was interested in social work and that is a way to do it. She had by the standards of the time a decent job. I don't think either one of us when we started dating after college had in mind within a matter of months that we would get married, but we did get married in December of '66 and in January of '67 I got a call from the State Department.

Q: So, you came in when?

SOUTHWICK: They wanted me right away and I said, oh, I can't go right away. I mean I'm moving and everything else and settling down. I decided to enter in February, the next class and so Susan quit her job, I quit my job and we packed up and drove across the United States.

Q: Had you ever been in Washington before?

SOUTHWICK: I had never been in Washington. I had never been East of Yellowstone Park.

Q: There's a lot of country beyond Yellowstone Park.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, that's right. This was a wonderful experience. I liked that trip so much that I have replicated it a number of times sincdriving across the United States, East to West, West to East, whatever.

Q: So, you took the A100 the basic officer course. What was your class like?

SOUTHWICK: I can't remember the total number of people in it, but it must have been about 35 or 40. Some women. Vietnam was bearing down on us and as the class progressed if you were a single male you were going to have to go to Vietnam. If you were married, you were not. One of our number resigned over that. He fell in love with a woman in the class and he had been in the navy. He had served off the coast of Vietnam. He said, I've done it, I'm not going to do it again. The State Department is rigid and said, yes you are and he said, no I'm not. He was probably one of the most able people in the class. The class was a little bit more diverse than I thought. The number of people let's say from Ivy League schools was very small in that particular class. The other thing that was notable to me was that I was among the youngest. I had just turned 22 and that was young. Most of the people there had either been in graduate school, had been in the work force, had been in the military and college and were in their mid to late '20s.

Q: How did you find the training in the A100?

SOUTHWICK: I thought it was good. I'm not sure how it would stack up with what people get now, but I was impressed. Again, I was impressed with the people who were in the Foreign Service. I was impressed by the course presentation and so forth. What didn't impress me was my score when I took the Spanish test because I thought I would do well. I got a 0+/2+ which I found out later was respectable, but it seemed to me to be disastrous. I told them I don't want to take Spanish because it's obvious that I'm no good in it, I have to do something else. When I got out of the A100 they put me in French which was fine.

Q: When you were in the A100 what did you envisage to be your career and where did you want to go?

SOUTHWICK: They didn't have the cone system in. To the extent that I had studied European history, a lot of it had been Russian history. Although I had never studied Russian I somehow felt that I was going to end up in Russia doing something or in Eastern Europe even though my knowledge of the area was really superficial compared to some people who had either lived there or done graduate work. There was no such thing then as the cone system so you weren't sort of typed at that point. We were not really consulted about where we wanted to go, we were just told. I was told Kathmandu and when I was told Kathmandu I had to do a double take and say, where is Kathmandu for a second or two and then it clicked in. I called up my wife who was working in the Social Security office on 11th Street in downtown Washington and she knew where it was because she'd seen the Lowell Thomas Cinerama.

Q: You went to Kathmandu?

SOUTHWICK: We went to Kathmandu.

Q: You were there from when to when?

SOUTHWICK: '67 to '69 and Carol Laise was the ambassador.

Q: Just two days ago I was interviewing her DCM. I don't know if you overlapped and all.

SOUTHWICK: Let's see, Harry Barnes was the DCM.

Q: Harry Barnes.

SOUTHWICK: Harry Barnes was the DCM. He left about the time I arrived.

Q: He learned Nepalese.

SOUTHWICK: He was a whiz at languages.

Q: Yes. What was Nepal like in those days?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I'm going to do a little bit of transition with this first. Because I'd never been out of the country, I'd never been in New York; we spent about a week in New York before we left. We got on a ship and went on the Constitution across the Atlantic into the Mediterranean, stopped a couple of places and then we got to Naples. I saw Pompeii, which I had always wanted to see. My wife had a college friend in Rome. We spent a few days there. Then we went to Delhi, spent a few days there. In Delhi I got culture shock. We had rented a cab. We were going around and seeing some of the sights. We were mobbed by beggars and lepers and all the rest of it. We were staying at a very fancy hotel, the clash between the hotel and sort of what was going on in some of these slums in Delhi was striking. I said if Kathmandu is like this I don't think I'm going to make it. I told her that. I could tell she was upset, but I think she was made of sterner stuff.

Anyway we got to Kathmandu; it's about 4,500 hundred feet high. It's beautiful. The temperature was nice. We were met at the airport. People were smiling and not just sort of staring at you. It just seemed totally different and we were driven into town and to our apartment and it seemed nice and people were welcoming and we got involved with the community and involved with the work and it was an extremely exciting time.

Q: What was the political economic situation there at that time?

SOUTHWICK: Well, this was this little country between India and China. There's a big Chinese embassy. We had a big installation there to listen in on what was going on. There was some unrest among the Tibetans. Some of that was being run out of that embassy I suppose at this point knowing what I know now. This is what I knew then. It was the Cold War and the game there was to keep Nepal out of China's hands. That meant cooperating with the Indians, although even then it was hard to cooperate with the Indians. It's always been hard to cooperate with the Indians. Also at that time we started getting a big influx of American tourists, mainly hippies. It became very fashionable in the late '60s to go to Kathmandu because drugs were cheap, life was good. It was a good place to disappear. Life was good in the sense that you could live very cheaply and if you were interested in Hinduism or Buddhism and mysticism, where else is better?

Q: Well, before we move and we will be talking about that, how did you, how was Carol Laise as an ambassador?

SOUTHWICK: I found her interesting, but I must say I couldn't quite figure her out. I found her somewhat mercurial, up and down, very professional. She was one of the most senior women in the State Department and had a very good career, had married Ellsworth Bunker a few months before Susan and I arrived in Kathmandu. Ellsworth Bunker by that time was down in Saigon as our ambassador, but he made an agreement with Lyndon Johnson that a plane would take him up to Kathmandu every few weeks for what we referred to as conjugal visits. Carol I thought was professional, but I found her a little bit hard to figure out. I don't think we clicked very well. The first two years we had a rotational system in the embassy, six months in one section, six months in another, but with a slight modification there. You did this rotation thing, but for the first year you took care of the consular section in addition to these other things and the second year you were the ambassador's aide, so I did have a year as her aide. During that period I felt I got to know her a little bit better. I felt that she was kind of a frustrated person and nothing was ever right. I frankly didn't find her very pleasant. I thought that from a professional point of view in terms of running the embassy and conducting diplomacy, I thought she was professional in that regard, but as a human being I must say I didn't have all that much regard for her.

Q: How did your wife find this all?

SOUTHWICK: Well, having lived in an air force environment traveling as a child, it was a little bit easier for her. It was still the old Foreign Service, wives didn't work. She got involved in various little projects, the community newsletter, worked on a couple of books, nothing major, did a little bit of volunteer work and then towards the end for about a year she managed the office for the Fulbright Foundation. She had plenty to do and we did not want children and deliberately decided we would wait a few years before we had children.

Q: What was the role as you saw it at the time of the royal family there?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it's a Hindu monarchy and the king was the incarnation of _____. It was sort of hard to rebel against a country run by God, but it was stable. It was clear that it was a system that couldn't last. They had suppressed _____ was democracy there had arrested the leading person in the Nepali congress party and the royal family and the whole power structure there was very resistant to change. I think they recognized that change was coming. The question was how fast was it going to come. The king when I was there was Mahendra and his son Crown Prince Birendra succeeded to the throne not too long after we left. It was Birendra, King Birendra who was murdered in this palace bloodbath that occurred a few years ago.

Q: The son or a nephew or something?

SOUTHWICK: It was one of their children I think. He was being asked to marry somebody he didn't want to marry. That's the story and the person who acceded to the throne was someone named Gyanendra who we knew a little bit because he represented the government at a 4th of July celebration, came to Carol Laise' residence. He retreated to the living room and wouldn't leave or didn't leave and spent the whole night there until 6:00 AM. A few of us in the embassy were caught up in this and so we played records, danced and kept having food brought on wondering when on earth this man, he was only 19 or something like that at the time, his entourage would leave. We later learned that this was how he lived his life. He was sort of a playboy, play all night and sleep all day. Why not?

Q: How about did you observe how the Chinese and the Indians operated within the country?

SOUTHWICK: The Chinese were kind of off limits. We weren't allowed to speak to them. The Russians we had to write up little reports if we spoke to them. We still had a little bit of contact, a little bit more open with the Russians. The British loomed large there because it had been, I don't want to say a British protectorate, but they had been the only ones allowed in the country until the late '40s and they recruited Gurkhas and that was about it. Then the tourism thing. It was a dirt poor country. People lived in these little patches of ground. Very picturesque, very pretty.

Q: Did you get out and see the Peace Corps?

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: Harry Barnes talks about getting out there.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we had a big Peace Corps there. It was about 200. It had a very good program, very adventurous. Peace Corps volunteers would be sent out of the village. They'd have to walk a few days. There were only two roads in the country, one to India and one to China, so everything was either by helicopter or by aircraft or by walking. One of my adventures after about two weeks there we had an American who was hiking in the Everest area. He was trying to get up closer to the base camp area. You could not climb mountains then when I arrived in '67. The mountains had been closed because some American climbers had strayed into Tibet, so the Chinese government told the Nepalese no one is climbing mountains until we say so, but still people would come and go to more than the foothills. They'd get to about 20,000 feet.

Anyway, one of these wealthy Americans was up there and broke his leg in a fall. We got a message, kind of a garbled telegram saying, please rescue me. I first went there with a short take off in a land vehicle to the nearest airstrip to Everest thinking he would be there based on this message. He wasn't there. The next day AID (United States Agency for International Development) had these short take off and land aircraft and a couple of helicopters. I went in a helicopter all the way up to Khunde about 13,000 feet where Sir Edmund Hillary had a clinic and we picked the fellow up and it was just the most exciting experience that anybody could have. Flying in a helicopter at that altitude going up this valley and seeing Everest in the distance. It's like this IMAX, the exact same thing as in the IMAX about the ascent of Everest in 1996. So, I thought the Foreign Service was pretty good.

Q: IMAX, it's a movie presentation on a very extra large screen that is shown on the Smithsonian Museums.

SOUTHWICK: Exactly.

Q: Well, now, let's talk about being a consular officer and dealing with this. This was at the height of, well not just Americans, it seemed like a whole generation of '60s were wandering around that area.

SOUTHWICK: Something happened in the fall of '66 and the word went out among this group of people worldwide, Christmas in Kathmandu. So, I don't know what the exact number was, whether it was a few score or a few hundred of these hippies converged on Kathmandu and that led to a kind of migration of these people, usually people in their early '20s who were fed up with Western society and interested in Eastern religions. Some of them would come overland, some of them would fly in, what have you. By the time I arrived there was a fairly substantial population, a couple hundred. That made consular work a full time job because at that time, as you know, as a consular officer, the welfare whereabouts kind of cable and at that time you could kind of track people down and find out how they were. People would get sick and my greatest worry was that people would die of dysentery or some such thing. In that place they had to either be buried or burned in Nepal. I had this fantasy of having to write letters to some bereaved parents saying we burned your son today according to the Hindu rituals which is what he wanted, you know? Probably some poor kid who had been raised an Episcopalian or something. My job as I conceived it as a consular officer was to make sure no American died. They weren't going to die on my watch.

Q: You didn't have any die on you?

SOUTHWICK: No. I got them out of the country and two of them did die after they got out, one of dysentery and one of a dysentery related illness.

Q: How about the drug situation?

SOUTHWICK: It was all over the place.

Q: What was this, hashish?

SOUTHWICK: Hashish basically. I don't know if there were stronger things or not, but it was almost a joke. It would be advertised in the paper. It was very cheap. As a joke for the outgoing Peace Corps doctor we gave him a little bit of hashish in a little plastic bag to kind of remind him of his years in Kathmandu. I was never attracted to the drug culture. Being raised a Mormon, one of the things I kept was I didn't smoke, I didn't drink. I didn't drink until I got to Africa and I had very little, I just had no interest in it.

Q: Did you find with, I would imagine this would be a group, the students at this point, but a difficult group to deal with because part of it was anti-authoritarian. I mean God knows a consular officer is as authoritarian as all hell.

SOUTHWICK: Well, it was funny because I must say having that job, my first job, in some ways I felt more powerful than in any other subsequent job that I ever had in the Foreign Service. I had, it was a shabby building, but I had a big office, one of these GS-16 desks, two flags and all the rest of it. Some of these people would come in to see me and find a contemporary of theirs across the desk. This was I think in many instances disarming to them and to me. I think it helped create a kind of a sense of community just in terms of age and so forth, but even though I may not be living my life like them, I could understand them. That helped a lot and I made a lot of acquaintances because I decided that I didn't want to spend a lot of time finding people. I established a little network. After I did that I felt I could find anybody, any American within a day any American anywhere in Kathmandu Valley just through the little network that I had built up informally. I was able to build it up because I was not hostile to people and I was respectful of what they wanted to do and I tried to be helpful if they had medical issues to deal with.

Q: What were the Nepalese authorities doing? I would think this would be a difficult group because many of the tourists would be hoping for sustenance from the authorities.

SOUTHWICK: Oh, yes. There was some worry that some of these hippies would become public charges and would not be able to support themselves. They might engage in activities that were not desired. In fact one group tried to establish a commune on one of the hillsides of the Kathmandu Valley and a few of them were arrested. I got to know the police chief pretty well. Then towards the end of my tenure there my successor in consular work had to deal with what I would call roundups. The government would run around and pick up some of these folks, put them on a truck, take them down to _____ which is the highway, it wasn't a highway, it was an extremely curvy road down to the Indian border. It took about five hours to get there and try to dump these people into India. That worked a few times and then the Indians said, oh, no, we don't want them either. Part of what we had to do was occasionally was the whole repatriation business. I think what happened with the Nepalese was that they, although it is kind of a mixed Hindu Buddhist society, and essentially very tolerant, I think they felt some of the behavior of the hippies was something that they didn't like.

I remember when a couple of white people were there and they had frizzy hair and they had Afros. If you were an African, you would have an Afro. I remember one day my consular assistant came in to me and he said, "You know those two people with the big hairdos, the fuzzy hair." I had already nicknamed them the fuzzy wuzzies. He said, "The foreign ministry just called and apparently the royal palace called the foreign ministry and told the foreign ministry get those two out." So, the foreign ministry called us and said get those two out. I can't remember what we did. I think we went to talk to them and told them that they probably should think of leaving and they did.

Q: How could you get people out?

SOUTHWICK: The visa structure for India was you'd go there for about six weeks, I think it was six months, then you had to leave and then you could come back and so some people did that. I think some people despite the romance of Kathmandu got bored with it and wanted to be at home where they could drink the water without getting sick. Health was a huge issue. It's one of the most unhealthy places in the world for anybody. It's dysentery, malaria. I think it's all right maybe for a few months or a few years. I met some people there who stayed years.

Q: Well, then what were you looking towards doing when you finished there?

SOUTHWICK: I worked on political reporting and that went not terribly well. I think I needed more help getting going than I was getting from the supervisor of the political section. It worked better with the economic section even though I'd never taken an economics course. In administration I found I could do it, I didn't like it, but I could do it pretty well. I didn't feel I knew where I fit in the Foreign Service after that tour. I really didn't know where I fit best. Then the system at that point makes decisions for you and they decided to send me to Kigali, Rwanda as administrative and consular officer. Kigali is a place that I did have to look up on the map because I did not know where it was.

Q: So, you left Kathmandu in '69 was it?

SOUTHWICK: '69.

Q: And went straight to?

SOUTHWICK: Came back because I was not off language probation. I had taken 16 weeks of French and gotten like a 2+/2+ after 16 weeks. I was not off language probation. I had hired a French hippie to give me lessons while I was in Kathmandu and I think that helped. If nothing else he was quite attractive and may have improved my accent, I'm not sure. I went back to Washington to get off language probation, more classes at FSI and also take the administrative officers' course, which is about a 10 to 12 week course. It's a very extensive course and then go out to Kigali, Rwanda. So, we spent the winter of '69 and '70 basically in Washington and lived in the Shell Towers, which is on F Street. It's now part of the State Plaza Hotel.

Q: Then you were in Rwanda, was it?

SOUTHWICK: Rwanda, we went there in 1970.

Q: You were there until when?

SOUTHWICK: Until 1972. It was a two year tour. This was a tiny post. It was shrinking during the year before I arrived. There had been probably about 25 to 30 Americans there. Most of them had gone by the time I had arrived. During my period they closed USIA. It became a State only operation.

Q: Was there a purpose behind the contraction?

SOUTHWICK: Vietnam. I don't think there was much of an appetite for doing much in other parts of the world at that time. Rwanda was not high on anybody's list of countries strategically important to the United States. It's not just when I went there. I knew a wealthy American Wall Street type who collected Asian art. He said, "You're going to Kigali? Don't you know anybody? Do you want me to make a phone call?" I said, "No, I've been reading up on this place and I'm kind of interested in it and I'm going to give it a whirl." From a personal professional point of view, the work was okay. It wasn't great, but we made a lot of friends. Our first child was born there. We did a lot of safari type travel and we got a great affection for that part of Africa.

Q: What was Rwanda like, sort of politically, socially and all of that?

SOUTHWICK: It was 10 years after independence. At independence the Belgians had engineered a transfer of power from the old Tutsi aristocracy that had run the country for 400 years to the Hutus. The Hutus were kind of an underclass if you want to put it that way. Much more of this is known now than what was known then because of the genocide in 1994. It was a very quiet country. The government did not function very well, but it was not necessarily a very oppressive government. It certainly was very watchful of Tutsis and didn't want Tutsis to regain power. Everybody felt that the situation was decided for all time. The ethnic situation and over time the country would begin to develop. Most of Africa didn't start falling apart until a year later in 1971 when Idi Amin came to power in Uganda next door.

Q: What were you doing?

SOUTHWICK: It was administrative and consular work. There was a little bit of consular work, not much. Administration, we were disposing of property, we were consolidating the embassy into one building as opposed to another building. I was supervising a GSO crew. We had plenty to do, but it was basically kind of keeping the store open. There had been some excitement the previous year. I guess it was the year before I arrived because some of the rebels in the Congo had transited through there. To the extent there was interest in Rwanda, it was a function of what became Zaire and possible anti-Mobutu activity. Not that the Rwandan government would stage anything like that, it's just that Rwandan territory was involved because the government was essentially incompetent.

Q: How about dealing with the government? How did you find that?

SOUTHWICK: It was friendly and straightforward. The ambassador when I arrived there was Leo Cyr who was one of the Department's first Africanists. It was his last tour and we went through a period where there was a chargï¿½. Then we got an ambassador who spent all of his career in Latin America and wound up in Kigali. Robert Corrigan had previously been consul general in Sao Paulo. He went from Sao Paulo to Kigali, Rwanda that has about 25,000 people and there are no traffic lights. I think it was a little bit much for him. He got the title. There was a lesson in that for me, which was, the title isn't everything. If you get to a point in your career where you can be ambassador do it somewhere that you really are interested in, not just to become ambassador.

Q: Well, how did you find the people in dealing with Africa?

SOUTHWICK: People were friendly. People were quiet. The Hutus were self-effacing. They were not self-confident people and I think it was because of this caste system that they had lived under for 400 years. The Tutsis were stereotyped that they were proud, they were aristocratic, they were devious, they were self-confident, they felt themselves equal if not superior to everybody. A huge difference in the way they behaved, but the Tutsis were out of power. We were just keeping things going, a vestige of an AID program, self-help program. That's all that was going on. There was nothing really demanding.

Q: Was there any reflection from say when Idi Amin did his thing?

SOUTHWICK: When Idi Amin came to power it was a jolt. At first people didn't know really what it meant. There's a lot of feeling against him on the part of the diplomatic service of the United States. We thought he was leftist. He was nationalizing things. He was sort of an African socialist. Idi Amin at first didn't seem all that bad. Then he started showing his true colors very quickly and took the country right down to rock bottom.

Q: How about Tanzania?

SOUTHWICK: Tanzania, those countries were interesting and Kenya was the main regional post there.

Q: Was that were you would kind of go to get away?

SOUTHWICK: Nairobi was the place. Nairobi was the big city. You could get a gin and tonic. The hotels were nice. It was cosmopolitan. You could fly any day of the week to Europe. Frankly you could from Uganda at that time. At the time, both TWA and Pan Am time served Entebbe and there was a big tourism industry in Uganda and in Kenya. The game parks in Uganda were the equal of anything in Kenya. Uganda at that time didn't know they had a forest where they had half the population of the world's mountain gorillas. Subsequently a decade later, they discovered them.

Q: How about I guess it was called the Congo in those days.

SOUTHWICK: It was Congo, but then Mobutu had taken over and I think it was during the period I was there, '70 to '72, that he changed the name of the country.

Q: Zaire, But, was there, rebellion seems to come out of Rwanda or at least going across the lake or something?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it could be a transit point or a staging point for rebels. It never figured very heavily, but the Congo, Zaire had had this turbulent history and then Mobutu established some kind of order and basically became a kind of a cleptocratic leader which Africa has had in too many instances and kind of neglected the Eastern part of the country.

Q: Did the Belgians play a significant role?

SOUTHWICK: The Belgians were the main country because they were the colonial power. They had a big AID program. They had some investment there. The Belgian Catholic church had been instrumental in establishing the Catholic Church in Rwanda, so if you traveled around Rwanda you'd see a lot of big churches and mission establishments. They were quite powerful socially and economically there. They had a big force in educating people. The country was regarded as about 60% Catholic, probably more than that actually.

Q: Did you have to deal with the Belgian expatriate community?

SOUTHWICK: Somewhat. We didn't have children in school. Having a child in a school makes a huge difference in what kind of people you know. We didn't have that, but we knew other young couples. People from UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). People from some of the other, small diplomatic service, had to work on French because not that many people used English. My French improved quite a bit in that period. Dealing with other people was fun, but it wasn't, this was not a main focus of diplomatic activity. You could be interested in the place culturally, anthropologically, things like that, but the business of diplomacy there just wasn't much.

Q: I take it the ambassador, I mean was he looking for something to do?

SOUTHWICK: I think some of them were. Cyr had an appreciation for where Africa had come from because his experience in the State Department had gone back to the '40s and he could see how these countries were developing, their elites were developing capacity to govern and he could have some patience with that. Corrigan having been in Latin America, Sao Paulo, places like that, I think it was just some point of exile. You could do the safari thing. You could drive to Uganda to the major game park there Queen Elizabeth Park which is one of the most spectacular places in the world. You could go to Lake Kivu, which is spectacular. There are volcanoes. There were gorillas up in Northern Rwanda.

Q: What's her name?

SOUTHWICK: Dian Fossey was in Rwanda. I got to know Dian quite well, very well as a matter of fact.

Q: She was quite a figure, how, she has a thing of being rather single minded.

SOUTHWICK: She was, she was very devoted. I thought she was a very attractive person in a lot of ways. When she first came into the embassy I still remember this. She was wearing kind of like khaki trousers, men's trousers, some kind of shirt, I don't know what it was. I had to look at her twice because I thought it was a man. What I found with her dealing with her over the two years I was there was that she was single minded about her work, very devoted to it, put a lot of energy into it. She knew she couldn't keep it all to herself, but she wanted other people who got involved with it to share her passion, share her respect for what it was all about and she didn't always find that. She did not become the weirdo that some people say she became until much later.

I remember one night, the one time she came into Rwanda, into Kigali. She was going to be leaving for London for a couple of days. She stayed with us. She was going to go up to Cambridge and spend some months there to do research. She had a lot of stuff to get on the plane, trunks and so forth, but she got up the morning I was to take her to the airport. She put on clothes from Saks Fifth Avenue. She looked stunning. She looked like she stepped out of a fashion magazine. This was the woman that I had mistaken for a man when I first met her. I took her out to the airport and she was very aggressive and she got Sabina Airlines to take all of this stuff free and frankly I did stuff for her. I misused the pouch on her behalf, but I thought it was for the greater good so what the hell, you know?

Q: Were you getting sort of the jet set coming in to take a look at things?

SOUTHWICK: Very few. Dian Fossey I think published her first article in National Geographic in '71. That created some interest. I remember one American mega-millionaire that came out. He made a lot of money in the electronics business in California and his thing was the origin of man so he was interested in gorillas. He was a contributor. He found that Rwanda didn't have stamps with gorillas on them, so he had some printed on them with gorillas. If you are in Rwanda and you have gorillas, you should have gorillas on your stamps.

Q: Well, how did you find the Foreign Service at this point? I mean you were doing something, which was you know, was.

SOUTHWICK: I was in an obscure post and I was doing work that I found interesting enough. I found the life interesting, but I think at the end of Rwanda I probably came closest in my career to saying I think I really need to do something else. I started looking at other kinds of things, not interestingly, but to some degree. I felt somewhat restless. When I left Kigali, in 1972, I landed in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for my first Washington assignment. This was regarded as a backwater and as my friend on Wall Street would have said, don't you know anybody? Do you want me to make a phone call? I said no and I got into the Fulbright program, cultural exchange. My first job was what they called the short term American grantee program. This was sending American short term lecturers and other people out to Africa to lecture on whatever it was that the post wanted them to do. I found out that this was fun. For one thing I found out how to make cold calls including to people like Sugar Ray Robinson, Peter F. Drucker and anybody that somebody thought might be of interest. In a way I learned how to do these cold calls. I started dealing with the African American elite and other parts of the American elite. I arranged a visit for John Updike to Africa and had arranged briefings for people. I saw all of these international visitor grantees come in with various programs, individually or with groups. I became a big believer in the Fulbright program and still believe it is one of the very best things that we do as the U.S. government.

Q: Oh, absolutely. The whole exchange program has been a great weapon, which I think unfortunately, has fallen on bad times.

SOUTHWICK: It has and it's a great shame and frankly we need it more than ever.

Q: Absolutely. Had you experienced any of these exchange programs and all when you were in either Kathmandu or Kigali?

SOUTHWICK: Not very much, just on the periphery. As I said my wife had run the Fulbright office in Kathmandu, but there it was basically to help support academics who were coming to Nepal to do research and to a lesser extent to prepare Nepalese students to go off to the United States usually to graduate school. I had an understanding of it, but I didn't understand the full dimensions of it. I didn't quite understand how effective it was. How it really did transform someone's life by being in one of these programs even if they came to the United States for 30 days and ran around to various cities and met people and stayed in peoples' homes. They were not the same person when they went back. They were not the same person.

Q: Did you sort of oversee them or how did this work?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I did this lecturer program for the first part and then I got involved in the East Africa program.

Q: Well, then the lecture programs, were there problems. I mean was this something that was desirable or was this simply we had to use skills to get people to?

SOUTHWICK: We paid the grand sum of $50 a day honorarium which even then was chicken feed. A lot of people did it because it was interesting. It was fun. It was doing good. It was doing service for your country so we'd get quite eminent people from great universities to go out and do these lectures and they found it added to their resume, to put it that way. I thought it was really good stuff, but at the end of two years I knew that this was not a career. I couldn't do this forever.

Q: In your tapping into these communities this was a time of, this was '70 what?

SOUTHWICK: '72 to '74.

Q: '72 to '74, sort of an intellectual community was having problems with our involvement in the Vietnam War and all that. I mean were there blacklists or problems of sending somebody out who was going to take it?

SOUTHWICK: Everybody had to be vetted. If you had some American professor or some poet or whatever, cultural figure that you wanted to send out, you had to run a check through the FBI. Quite often the FBI would send over a file, the raw file on person X that you would review. That gave me some understanding which I had not had before about the quality of information that the FBI has on people which I thought was shabby and misleading at best. I got a request from someone in the field to send an American black poet, female, to Africa and I'd never heard of her before. Nikki Giovanni was at Rutgers. I found out that in the African American community she was a notable figure and she had published books. I decided that this would be just nifty if we sent her out there because she's good in her own right and she's also good as a statement from the United States. My bosses were a little bit leery of her because they thought she was like Stokely Carmichael or something. She wasn't, but she certainly knew who Stokely Carmichael was. I just went out on a limb and this is probably one of the earlier adventurous things I did in the Foreign Service. I really pushed this and I decided that if this thing came to an abrupt end it might be the end of my career because I'm asked to leave or I find it intolerable to go on. We sent it over to the White House. The White House had to chop off and eventually they agreed and we sent Nikki Giovanni on a trip to Africa. She came back and she had lots of good things to say about it. It was a very good experience for her that she's used in a lot of subsequent writings. She's still publishing.

Q: How did you find the African American intellectual community?

SOUTHWICK: I was troubled by it. I went to a number of programs where we had visitors from Africa and some of them would be done at Howard University and some of them would be done by the African American Institute. You'd get African academics or some of them, I guess you'd call them more leftist American academics, very critical of the United States, very critical on race and I felt that they weren't in some cases fair. Considering that I'd seen very few black people growing up, I had by living in Africa and just living generally in Washington and experiencing 1968 and so on that we as a country deserved pretty good marks for struggling with the issue. I didn't think that the African American intellectual community by and large was giving us enough credit. I was troubled by that. I remember writing a big report to my boss about it and saying I don't know what we're trying to do with these people? The people would come in, our visitors and is this what they really need to know?

Q: Were we tending to say, let it all hang out and taking our visitors and putting them in sort of into the you might say the dissident African American community?

SOUTHWICK: I think we were and I think we were falling into this fallacy which frankly still exists which is that Africans have a natural affinity for African Americans and African Americans have a natural affinity for Africans. This is at minimum highly exaggerated and I would also say very false and misleading and even destructive on both sides because you make a lot of assumptions which don't exist.

Q: I mean there really two different breeds of cat. All you have to do is look at African Americans in our context and in Africa I mean I go to Home Depot and I can pick out the Africans immediately.

SOUTHWICK: Oh yes, in a split second.

Q: Yes. The ones we've known I mean they're completely different motivations and all.

SOUTHWICK: I had a kind of a boring period. I told my boss, I said, "I want to do something. I want to go on a trip, is there anything I can do? I don't care what I do, I just want to go somewhere." They had something in mind. I became the escort officer for the Southern University Jazz Ensemble from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. They were shipping them off and going to a cultural presentation. They had won a competition. We were shipping them off for eight countries in West Africa over the course of 30 days and they needed somebody to help them get thorough airports and just be the kind of a flunky for them and I said I'm your guy. I went with them and I was the only white guy. These were not only African Americans, these were Southern African Americans. These were musicians and more than that they were from Louisiana. They were quite several steps removed. I remember getting off the plane in Baton Rouge and being met by Alvin Batiste, the head of this group and having a hard time understanding what in the world anybody was saying. It was this New Orleans, I wouldn't call it jive talk, but I guess it's akin to that, but it was vocabulary that was different. It was the accents that were different. I had the time of my life for 30 days with those guys. As a token white and on the plane ride up from Baton Rouge to New York I met Julian Bond. We struck up a conversation in the plane and he was interested in this whole trip. Then he looked at me and said, "Well, why are you here? You're a white guy." I didn't have a ready answer for that. I know I said something, but I don't know what it was.

Q: How did the tour work?

SOUTHWICK: Well, the tour worked pretty well. I found out, I'm a hi-fi nut. I know a lot about sound and equipment. I became the soundman for the band and getting all the balances right because they were carrying all this electronic equipment with them. I had sort of an additional job, which I did not anticipate, and this is another thing about the cultural differences. American black musicians are very different from African musical traditions even though the American stuff grows out of to some degree, not completely, the African stuff. The first couple of concerts were not really good and I talked to some of the Africans about this. They said, well, we like music, which makes you move. They like strong rhythm and some of the stuff that Al and the band were doing was quite sophisticated jazz where you had to listen closely to even know there was a beat. That was so far removed from anything that Africans had experienced that they just couldn't relate to it. I told Batiste that we had to change. I thought we had to change; it was up to him. I said, we're not going to get very good reviews and it might mean you'll have trouble down the road. The posts will hear this and they won't want to have us come. I said, I think you need to do something, which has mass appeal. He says, well, he was quoting some musician. He said, okay, we'll give them some of what they want and some of what they need. He had a kind of a dual track program, some of it was the stuff that had people dancing in the aisles. They knew how to do that; they could switch that on in a split second. Some of it was the more sophisticated audiences and some of the most remarkable jazz I've ever heard.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up. We do it in segments, so, we'll pick this up the next time. You left CU, Cultural Affairs in?

SOUTHWICK: In '74.

Q: '74. Where did you go?

SOUTHWICK: By that time I decided I needed to reorient my career. The cone system was there. I was nominally in the admin cone, but I felt that was not where my future was so I decided I wanted to be an economic officer so I got a job as a staff assistant to the head of our delegation to the trade negotiations in Geneva. So, I packed up immediately.

Q: Okay, well in '74 we'll pick this up when you're off to Geneva. Good.

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This is the 2nd of June, 2004. Michael, 1974, how did you get yourself on to the trade negotiations?

SOUTHWICK: I think as everyone in the Foreign Service approaches the assignment rotation, they start looking around to see what is available and looking at all the possibilities and see how they fit into both short term and long term aspirations. As I said I felt my future was not in the admin cone. I didn't mind the admin work, but I couldn't see myself doing it for the duration of my career and I wanted to do something that got me a little bit more excited. Oddly enough the job I had in the Cultural Affairs job had a lot of excitement and a lot of satisfaction.

Q: I can imagine it would be yes.

SOUTHWICK: It was one of the more satisfying jobs I ever had. One of the best jobs in terms of creativity in inventing what you do. Selecting people to go on grants and scholarships and so forth. I looked around and economics seemed to be the thing to do. There was an effort then to build up the economic function in the State Department, which was seen by management as woefully lacking, probably a correct assessment. A way to get into that was to do a job related to economics, in this case trade negotiations and then possibly take the economics course at the Foreign Service Institute. In all honesty I can't remember whether the Foreign Service Institute economics course was being offered in '74.

Q: It was beginning.

SOUTHWICK: It was beginning. So, anyway, I packed off to Geneva, which was also exciting, because it was a European assignment and I'd never had one before. I'd been in the Third World, Kathmandu and Kigali. I was hired by someone at the office of the special representative for trade negotiations named Harold Malmgren and he was kind of the boy wonder of the '60s Kennedy round trade negotiations. In the '60s as you know the trade function moved out of State where it had been for decades if not forever and moved into an office which was part of the executive office of the President. The State Department still had a considerable role because it had an office in trade and a lot of the people who were involved in trade negotiations were people who had come out of the State Department. I didn't feel that it was an entirely alien thing and the staff assistant job is very much connected with the chemistry between the individual and the boss and Malmgren and I hit it off pretty well. So, the big variable then was that the administration did not have a mandate from congress to do a trade negotiation, but they expected to get one. They wanted to be ready to roll as soon as the mandate came. This was the summer of 1974. I went over to Geneva to help set up the delegation which was going to be a resident delegation, something that we had never done before. It was anticipated that the negotiations would take two, three, four years. I helped get office space, set up the offices, do a lot of the administration liaison work at that stage. We had a very tiny resident operation, STR as it was called, in Geneva in a building about five blocks down the Rue du Lausanne away from the mission which was in the Proctor and Gamble building at the time. I went over there and it was just one other resident Foreign Service Officer, somebody named Carlos Moore who was an economist, Ph.D. economist and we had a secretary and that was about it.

Q: Okay, well, first you were there from when to when?

SOUTHWICK: '74 to '76.

Q: All right. Now, what was the status of trade negotiations, what had been going on before so that when you, what were you all going to be doing, but a little more background?

SOUTHWICK: Okay, the trade negotiations were and still are conducted in rounds and there are big multilateral efforts every 10 or 15 years to reduce tariffs and reduce non-tariff barriers. A lot of this work is mathematical when it comes to tariffs. A lot of it is more theoretical and more practical with regard to things like non-tariff barriers like quotas and subsidies and so forth. You can get very arcane as I found out as I went along. There were people who were very specialized with PhDs in what seemed to me to be obscure recondite aspects of this thing. There had been in the '60s the Kennedy round of trade negotiations, which was widely regarded as successful and helped pave the way for this prosperity that the whole world enjoyed in the'60s and into the '70s. There's also thinking among trade circles that it's like a bicycle: it has to keep going or everybody falls off. You have to keep liberalizing. If you don't keep liberalizing, the forces of protectionism will gradually gain hold. The idea was to do another round of negotiations. This one was going to be called the Tokyo round because the ministerial meeting that launched the negotiations had taken place there. It couldn't take place unless the United States had authority to do so from congress because constitutionally congress has a big role in trade setting tariffs. We were waiting for this bill and there were a lot of complications with it because a trade negotiations bill is a big magnet for protectionist forces as well as liberalization forces.

Then a big issue as often is the case, which was not specifically related to it, gets entangled with it. This was the question of emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. At that time the Soviet Union was very restrictive in allowing Jews to emigrate to Israel or to any other place for that matter. Eventually a compromise was reached on this called the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. I had already been in Geneva several months by then, but I think it was in December of 1974 when this amendment came on which specified what the Soviet Union had to do and the bill was passed.

Now, in the meantime, the person that hired me, Mr. Malmgren, for some reason didn't catch the fancy of the leadership of the White House. Remember 1974 this was Nixon resigning and Ford coming in. Ford came in with a somewhat different crew. It certainly wasn't wholesale, but he had some different people among who was Donald Rumsfeld and somebody named William Walker. He was a protï¿½gï¿½e of Rumsfeld. Mr. Walker, who was the chief of presidential personnel in the Ford White House, decided he wanted the job that had originally been slated for Malmgren. He was a political appointee obviously well wired with Rumsfeld and saw this as a stepping stone. As I learned, I didn't know about this totally then, a lot of political appointees come in and it's not just to serve their country for a few years, it's to do something that launches them in the private sector in a very big way. Bill Walker decided that the route for him was to get expertise in international trade. That would land him a good job on Wall Street or in the banking industry or somewhere. Anyway it would be a route to this. He knew virtually nothing about trade.

As I began to learn in this case with the Republican administration, there are some animosities, suspicion and so forth about the career service, the Foreign Service or the civil service. You're dealing with a set of prejudices there which do not seem to afflict if you want to put it that way the Democratic party so much, although it's there I believe frankly in both parties. I ran into this and when Walker got there he was new to it. He was uncertain and he was a very aggressive person, extremely intelligent in many ways.

Q: Where had he been?

SOUTHWICK: I think he came out of Illinois. His detractors said he got his start handling the parking lots for some of the Republican leaders. Then he had moved following Rumsfeld a bit.

Q: Rumsfeld is from Illinois.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, an Illinois Republican. Walker had never held a job for more than about six or seven months and I guess the biggest job he had was when Nixon established a wage and price control board. This was to help stem inflation. He had a stint on that. This White House job, chief of presidential personnel, was a very good job. It was also a very good job from which to land your next job ergo the trade negotiations job. He was the assistant STR and the person put in charge of him was somebody named Frederick Dent. He had been the Secretary of Commerce. Frederick Dent was a very wealthy Southerner, I think from one of the Carolinas, family fortune in the textiles industry. This was very important because textiles are one of the most heavily protected sectors in the United States.

Q: Nixon did everything he could for textiles.

SOUTHWICK: So, putting Frederick Dent there was a way to tell the textile industry, don't worry too much. You might have to worry a little bit, but don't worry too much. You're not going to get sold down the river. Well, with this change I was suddenly working for somebody who, as I said, had these prejudices about career people. Walker also had these anxieties because of the invidious comparisons people were constantly making about him with regard to Hal Malmgren who everybody regarded as sort of the stellar trade negotiator. He didn't get the job and this person with the zero qualifications got the job. None of that bothered me. I mean, my job was to support him, support the delegation in every way I could, but there was, to put it mildly, a personality clash. So, this tour, after he arrived, took a definite turn for the worse for me.

Q: Well, let's talk, first before we get into the personalities, which are very important in this, but here you are the new boy on the block too in economics.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I don't know anything either. So, that should have been a bond between us.

Q: How did you see them going? What were some of the currents and eddies in this process?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we gradually built up a delegation of people from STR, people from the Commerce Department, from the Agriculture Department.

Q: STR is?

SOUTHWICK: Special Trade Representative, that was the nickname for it or the acronym for it. So, we ended up with a delegation of about 25 people full time. A lot of them were extremely capable people, people who were wonderful as, I don't want to say mentors, but people from whom you could learn a lot and I formed some very good associations with any number of these people. I got involved in a lot of different kinds of things, so I could tell that things were not going as well as they should be vis-ï¿½-vis Walker. After some months he brought over someone from the White House to be his special assistant. I found myself moved out of the office next to Walker and moved down to another to another floor in the mission. Frankly I didn't mind at that point because I felt things were going badly. I just felt getting away, sort of redefining the job, might be a way of surviving for a while.

Q: Well, how did you find other members of the delegation, the American delegation reacted to Walker and to the negotiations?

SOUTHWICK: Well, his style was fairly aggressive. His style was basically humiliating and putting people on the spot and so forth. He did this at staff meetings partly in an effort quite frankly to just show people who was boss. Some of these people were like GS16s and 17s from other agencies. On a personal level it was sort of palpable. I wasn't the only one who was having trouble with this person. At the same time we were all professional. They were representing the different agencies in Washington, different constituencies and they didn't necessarily think that their job was to help STR or help the United States of America which was something that I can't say came as a shock. I wasn't that naï¿½ve, but I was surprised at how prominent those kinds of what I would call sectarian narrow kinds of considerations drove what people did. In an embassy we know what the hierarchy is, a typical embassy, with the ambassador in charge and we're all working there. I think the State Department, and I still think this to this day, we are better at representing the national interests than any other agency. Absolutely. There's very little doubt about it in my mind.

Q: Well, of course the other side argues that the State Department for good relations will sell out the textile industry or the toilet bowl industry or what have you.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we're looking for in some sense the good of the country as a whole. That means that we're not defending certain specific items sometimes and this is why the trade function was taken away from us because the State Department was not regarded favorably. This was a huge lesson for me, that you have to pay attention to domestic politics. You have to pay attention to that and you should not feel its something that's dirty or ugly or something to be avoided which I think a lot of Foreign Service Officers do.

Q: Did you feel that that was the delegation sort of not overly cohesive?

SOUTHWICK: It wasn't very cohesive really at all, but it had a number two who was State Department who was an experienced economic officer who had done a lot of the trade negotiations. He was well regarded.

Q: Who was that?

SOUTHWICK: Bill Colbert. I had a decent correct relationship with him, but not a terribly good one. I don't think he was going to go out of his way in particular to help me deal with the problems I had with Walker.

Q: What were you doing? I mean first when you were working for Walker, what were you doing then?

SOUTHWICK: Sometimes it was going to meetings with him and writing at meetings. Sometimes it was little oddball chores. A lot of it was sort of the administrative management liaison so that we were still setting up this office suite on two floors in the Botanic Building in Geneva and we were also getting him a house which took a lot of trouble. I spent a lot of my time because the real estate market in a place like Geneva was very tight and he felt that he was the most important person there. We had a couple of other ambassadors there at Arms Control and Disarmament in the same building. They thought they were the most important. The representative of the UN there, of course he thought he was the most important. It was also this kind of junk. It was a very balkanized mission. It wasn't an embassy. It was a mission and you had people there who would be there for much longer than a Foreign Service tour. They were there to represent the United States at things like the World Meteorological Organization or Telecommunications Union. It's a UN city. We were there with the GATT, General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. People were dealing with different organizations even within the mission and representing different constituencies in Washington.

Q: Did you get any feel for how Walker was in dealing with other countries at these meetings when you were taking notes?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I think at the beginning he was edgy and uncertain. As I said he was very intelligent and I have to give credit where credit is due and he did learn very quickly. He did become very astute about the issues and as time wore on I think he did gain respect, sometimes grudging, with people both within the delegation and also the colleagues that he was dealing with in other delegations. Not enormously, but he did have respect.

Q: Was during the '74 to '76 time granted you were sort of all setting up and all, but were you having any feeling of momentum as far as what they were doing?

SOUTHWICK: It was very slow and very problematic. The big issue in trade negotiations then and now is agriculture. The Europeans had the common agricultural policy, which was highly protectionist. We were highly protectionist too, although we didn't want to admit it. You might say that we're bad, but they're worse. They were worse, but we were both bad. It was a kind of a three way fight if you wish. It was the United States, the European Union and Japan. They were the three major trading entities in the world, but everybody else was sort of like the junior varsity or you don't have to pay much attention to it. The Third World was not really either well equipped to negotiate or were terribly represented because this was not like the UN, it did not have universal membership.

Q: Did the Soviet Union play any role there at all?

SOUTHWICK: I remember them being there, but they were not a big factor in trade.

Q: What about within the European Union what about Germany and France? Did you get any feel for them?

SOUTHWICK: Well, this is it. In that arena the enemy was the European Union which is sort of a strange thing. It was shortly after the point where the UK had entered the European Union. It seemed to me like we were dealing with eight or nine countries, I can't remember. It certainly wasn't the original six, but it was a couple of others. It was my first taste of dealing with the European Union because they have a lot of difficult, huge internal coordination problems. As everybody who has dealt with them knows, the European member statesmen spend enormous time hammering out their common position. There's blood all over the floor. The thing gets set in cement and there's very little room for change after they set their position. It's a very tough thing and then they don't like countries like the United States trying to manipulate the process of their internal negotiations so that when it is finally concluded it is something that the rest of the world can deal with. That was kind of a good object lesson. I was picking up a lot more then even though I felt more and more uncomfortable and this is the only tour that I ever had in the Foreign Service where I finally got on the phone and said, I want to curtail. I'm ready to complete my tour for the two years and then I want to get out.

Q: The latter part when you had been supplanted by a White House person what were you doing?

SOUTHWICK: It was mainly the administrative stuff, less and less substance as time went by. I was talking and I didn't mind in a way because I felt that my idea then was to go back and take the economics course and do something more mainstream with economics in the State Department.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Swiss?

SOUTHWICK: My wife didn't like them at all. She found them aloof, uncommunicative, concerned only about money. Geneva is a very strange town because there's a large foreign population and the Swiss are there to benefit from that basically as they do from the rest of the world. The Swiss stayed out of World War II. They were a haven for a lot of stolen money from around the world. They treated foreigners not very well, particularly the desk workers. So if you wanted to write some kind of essay about all of the things wrong with the Swiss you'd fill up a lot of papers.

Q: How about dealing with them as a sort of from the administrative side?

SOUTHWICK: They were correct. I mean they'd been doing this for decades, so they had a well set up bureaucracy for dealing with that. I think basically it worked pretty well. You would think that the European society, a developed country, worked pretty much like us, like we do. I had come from a third world country and I thought that things would work a lot better. I found that they didn't work a lot better. There's a heavy bureaucracy, everything was highly bureaucratized. The Swiss pay a lot of attention to detail. Somebody said that they have a lot of rules. They enforce them all and everybody regards themselves as a policeman. I think there is that kind of mentality. Maybe you can blame all of this on Calvin.

Q: Yes, they don't strike, one doesn't hear about famous Swiss jokes.

SOUTHWICK: No. I mean, I think all of us have learned in the Foreign Service, people are people and pretty much they're the same everywhere you go. We had some Swiss friends, but it was a little bit harder to break through.

Q: Also, too to be saying, when you've got a large resident foreign community which comes and goes at a certain point people who live in the country say oh, the hell with this. It's not worth making friends because they'll be gone and what's the point.

SOUTHWICK: We had some friends there from our Rwanda days, a Swiss American couple, and they were about our age and were beginning to have children at the time we were having children and that was kind of a saving grace for us to some degree.

Q: Then you in '76 were leaving this haven of tranquility.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, what I would have to say then and in retrospect, it was probably the least pleasant Foreign Service post that we had. We did travel. We had our second child. Our son was born there in Geneva and there was some good aspects to it. I formed some good friendships. I learned a lot, but a lot of what I learned was learned the hard way dealing with this country is very difficult.

Q: Yes. Do you know what happened to Mr. Walker?

SOUTHWICK: He went on to a firm in New York to handle an aspect of non-tariff barriers called Counterfeit Merchandise. He developed and this was like phony Rolex watches, phony Cartier watches, phony Levis. There was a big area there for the international community to develop rules and enforce them.

Q: Well, then, in '76 whither?

SOUTHWICK: I came back to Washington to the economics course at FSI. By then it had been going a couple of years. It lasted about six months. It was back in a very academic setting, very tough because it was essentially the Berlitz approach to economics. You were getting the rough equivalent of a bachelor's degree in economics in six months.

Q: I just finished interviewing Arma Jean Karaer who took the course and was talking about her time and saying, you know, trying to stay afloat within the mathematics part of it. So many of our people in the Foreign Service do not come out of a mathematical background. In fact I think that's why they get into the Foreign Service to avoid it.

SOUTHWICK: I think there's some truth to that. Oddly enough I've always been good at math and the mathematical part of this whole thing was the part that I did the best. Not that I really liked it, but I've always been good at it. I was less good at some of the other aspects of the course. It was pretty heavy duty. By that time we had two kids at home. My wife was trying to take care of them. It was not easy.

Q: Tell me in retrospect, what did you feel you got out of it? How useful and what parts that you got out of it did you find useful?

SOUTHWICK: I thought the whole thing was tremendous. I thought it was one of the best things I ever did. It filled a gap in my own education. I never had taken an economics course at Stanford. I thought the professors were good by and large. Obviously some were better than others. Some of them were absolutely stellar. It demystified this whole thing and it made you learn the vocabulary and subsequently talking to anybody, including John Kenneth Galbraith or anybody else, I never felt a disadvantage in economics. I know economics well enough to be conversant and to be able to know how to manipulate the symbols and it was a tremendous value to me when I became a DCM subsequently. Absolutely tremendous value.

Q: After this course, where?

SOUTHWICK: Then I landed in the office of trade in EB (Economic Bureau). EB was a bureau then on a roll. I think Thomas Enders had left by then. Thomas Enders, you've heard of him I'm sure?

Q: Oh, yes.

SOUTHWICK: Sort of a big guy. I can't remember ever meeting him, but he was well over six feet and the economic part of the side of the State Department was on a roll then, so it was in theory a good time to be there.

Q: Did you run across Frances Wilson?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I did. She was the Executive Director of the bureau. She'd been there since year one.

Q: From people who have known her, run across her, she was the power in the place as far as who got what jobs.

SOUTHWICK: She had a big role and she was somebody you wanted on your side. I went initially into an office that was part of a kind of executive suite of the assistant secretary. The Assistant Secretary was Julius Katz. We were working on congressional relations and public affairs. We had our own little unit there led by Alexander Watson who later went on to a distinguished career in Latin America. There was a civil servant there named Colton Hand, very interesting name, who was from an old Pennsylvania coal industry family, quite wealthy. Like a lot of civil servants he had kind of run down a bit and so Alex Watson brought me in. I did that for about a year with Alex, working with congressional stuff and spending most of my time on the Hill on trade legislation issues.

Q: I've interviewed Alex. Could you talk about how you saw him and how he operated and all?

SOUTHWICK: He was very dynamic. He had good rapport with the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Paul Boeker. Alex was very dynamic, very aggressive, but nice in a lot of ways. I think that I seemed a little bit slow to him, is one way to put it, but we got along fine. He took some issues which were the sexiest and sort of gave the less sexy stuff to me like the tomato tariffs with Mexico or something like that. I had never done congressional work before. I felt to a certain extent I was kind of on my own. We worked hand in glove with H. There was one person in H, Paul Stankey.

Q: H being congressional relations.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, congressional relations. There were so many arcane issues on the economic agenda at the State Department, they needed more people than one person in H. That's why this office in EB existed. I ended up going on the Hill every day. I found it was a tremendous exercise in writing. You had to come back at the end of the day and write something like three or four sentences at most summarizing what happened. I'd never had to summarize what happened in a whole day in four sentences. I found it tremendously difficult, horrendous. It was the most difficult writing I had ever done. I'm not a naturally easy writer. I think all of us in the Foreign Service get better, but fortunately Paul Stankey was tremendous at it. He could come back and just dash these things off. Just by osmosis I learned from him.

Q: Yes. By the way you were doing this from '77 until?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, '77 to '79.

Q: You were saying this was the first year?

SOUTHWICK: First year in EB.

Q: First year of the Carter administration.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. We were in the Carter administration, and the Carter administration for many was an object lesson vis-ï¿½-vis congress and how the Carter White House and congress was doing everything wrong. A lot has been written about this. People who were on the Hill at this time and watched Carter stumble in his initial days even, weeks and initial months in his relationship with congress felt that he never recovered. Part of it was that Carter exaggerated rationality as a force in government. The standard comment was, I think it's true, that he looked at things as a kind of a problem, an engineer. You study the problem, you worked all the components of the problem and you came out with an answer. Then you announce the answer to everybody and explain how you got to that answer and everybody was supposed to say fine. Okay, the case in point was that he had an energy program. Part of the energy program was a five cents tax on gasoline. I'm sitting in the back of the chamber of the House Ways and Means Committee. I'm hearing all this demagoguery about five cents on the gasoline and how it will be the end of civilization, it will be the end of the republic, it will be the end of the farming sector, the end of the American economy was we know it.

From congress' point of view, we should have had the five cent tax. We probably should have had a 30 cent tax in terms of the good of the country. As a matter of politics, impossible. Okay, so Carter sent up his people, Charles Schultz. All of this was just stumbling all over the place right and left for things like the gas tax, which was part of it. So, again you learn an enormous by watching all of this.

Q: What were you, I mean who were you talking to and what sort of things were you working on?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I was a lowly worm, a junior. They regarded me as just another person. I dealt mainly with other staffers, occasionally with members, but mostly the staffers. Anyway I'm talking with them, finding out what was on their minds. What their concerns were. You would write it up. It wasn't all these little three or four line segments. Sometimes it was more analytical.

Q: Were you passing on I mean were the staffers able to say look this isn't going to work or maybe we can work a deal or something like this?

SOUTHWICK: No. Aside from Carter's own personality and the liabilities that that brought something else was going on which I don't think many people anticipated, certainly I didn't. This was post-Watergate. We suddenly had a U.S. government as we do now where one party has the whole show. The Democrats had the White House, the Senate, the House of Representatives. I thought that the Democrats would want to push a common program forward in general, no. What you had was on the Hill, the Republicans to Democrats a great deal of distrust of the White House, of the executive branch of government. The lesson for them from Watergate was that you had to be suspicious. You had to be on guard. Some of this is going on all the time anyway, but it was heightened by what had happened in Watergate and Nixon even though Carter was a completely different person. When Carter came up with this sort of intellectual arrogance and this feeling that he didn't have to answer phone calls, there was a lot of this. This is another thing I learned. The courtesies, vis-ï¿½-vis congress are absolutely essential. A lot of Foreign Service people don't understand this, but after you get run over a few times because you didn't observe it then you observe it. Carter did not do that terribly well. His people didn't. Some congressional relations people didn't do that very well at first. As I said, a lot of people felt he never recovered.

Q: Yes, Jody Powell was noted, Jody Powell was his chief of staff and he didn't return calls.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. This was not a terribly good situation.

Q: What about tomatoes or whatever you were dealing with. What sort of things were you able to talk on these subjects?

SOUTHWICK: There was something called marketing orders. Tomatoes ripen at different points in America depending on where they're grown. And there are some months of the year, when there were not ripening tomatoes anywhere. So, what do we do about tomatoes? We get them from other countries, chiefly Mexico. Well, the Agriculture Department had this system which was frankly designed to keep Mexican tomatoes out even though Mexican tomatoes were needed to fulfill the market needs. There was a portion of a bill coming up that dealt with this in a very protectionist way and this was something that I got into and I worked a lot with the staffers. I worked a lot with USDA, worked a lot with STR. STR has the lead on trade and the State Department and we managed to get that harsh provision out. This involved testimony from somebody from the State Department, somebody from the STR testifying. It's one little tiny episode where I felt I had a major impact.

I did a lot of what I would call covering, helping prepare people for testimony, carrying bags for people including Cyrus Vance. Cyrus Vance was a tremendous person. He certainly knew economics and he would go off and testify on foreign assistance legislation and so forth and often get a very rough treatment. I thought nasty treatment from certain congressmen. This was another thing where I found, this was the '70s, it's a very different political scene. I thought the crazies were mostly on the Democrat side. I'm a Democrat, but I felt the crazies, the people you wouldn't buy a used car from were Democrats. The Republicans were sort of upstate New Yorkers like Barber Conable and so forth who were quite reasonable people. The crazies on the Republican side and it was just a portion of the spectrum there, not terribly numerous, people like Rousselot, a John Birch conservative.

Q: John Rousselot and I were in Ms. Wilson's sixth grade class together in San Marino.

SOUTHWICK: Okay, so you know him? All right.

Q: He became a member of the John Birch Society.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely. See this is what I call the radical right, which is what I think we have now in America with the Republican Party. It was a factor but it was a sideshow. It was a lesson to me that demagoguery and playing to the crowd and grand standing and all that stuff knows no bounds. There was one congressman Rosenthal who was quite certain that the United States State Department was responsible for the frost in Brazil to manipulate the coffee prices and the State Department controlled the weather. I wish we did, but we don't.

Q: What was your feeling, you were sort of the fly on the wall in some of this. How did you find sort of the State Department apparatus responding to a Carter administration, which was not playing the game very well? Did you find that the professionals, I mean was there a cadre within the State Department that seemed to understand how things worked or were they not too good?

SOUTHWICK: The Assistant Secretary for H then was Doug Bennett who is now president of Wesleyan College. I thought we did a pretty good job of gathering intelligence and understanding what was going on and trying to help shape the administration approach on a number of these issues. I thought we did a pretty good job. There was this hostility to the executive branch, which I attributed mostly to Watergate, Vietnam, and there was ineptitude of the Carter White House. So it was a year of learning things because things were being done wrong.

Q: But did you feel that the EB bureau, did they understand that things weren't going right?

SOUTHWICK: They knew it. It was in the wake of the energy crisis and those kinds of big issues that we were dealing with. The Tokyo round of trade negotiations was still going on. I think the machine kept working. I think the professionalism of the State Department then as now was always present. Vis-ï¿½-vis congress certainly that taught me that the State Department is regarded with some suspicion by staffers. A lot of it is connected with the, I don't like to use the word, arrogance. There must be a better word for this, but I think Foreign Service Officers had a stereotype, stereotypical image of a lot of staffers. Part of it was they don't care about me and my problems. They're above it all. They're about the United States, the national interest and so forth, so they're not down and dirty with things like the tomato tariffs or tomato marketing or this kind of thing. Again, it was a lesson for me that you have to pay attention to domestic politics to take these things seriously.

Q: Then after this, what a year and a half?

SOUTHWICK: It was about a year in that part of EB and then I said I wanted to do something that was more nitty gritty economics. So, I went to the trade office because that's where I'd been. I worked on some of the bilateral issues, a little bit with multilateral issues, but Far East. Our problems with Japan, our trade deficit with Japan was worsening then. That was not as satisfying partly because of the composition in the office and we had a division chief there who was a Foreign Service Officer, but who was one of these people that none of the staff liked.

Q: Who was that?

SOUTHWICK: Harry Kopp, K-O-P-P. He left the Foreign Service. He was a brilliant person. He wrote extremely well and he just made it clear that he didn't think anybody there was up to his standard. He had a very poor leadership style.

Q: Yes, this is often the type of person who gets hired.

SOUTHWICK: I mean if I was hiring somebody, I'd have Harry Kopp working for me, but I think I feel from a management point of view and as my career went on I became more managerial in what I did. You have to play for people's strengths and you have to work with what you have by and large. You should try to do that and you should play to people's strengths and not expect everybody to be the same or everybody to be like you. Another thing is, if you've got somebody who is extremely talented give them plenty of scope to run with their talent. You should not be in the way of that talent.

Q: What sort of issues were you dealing with?

SOUTHWICK: With Japan it was the trade deficit. We had a lot of issues there like whether we could sell oranges, or beef there, try to right the balance by opening up the Japanese market.

Q: This is early days when it was very much an exporting country and very much not an importing country.

SOUTHWICK: Not an importing country. Like rice. They were growing rice in downtown Tokyo and wouldn't let our rice in. We were a rice exporter, subsidized I might add, but we were a big rice exporter and you didn't get a fair shake in the Japanese market. There was absolutely no question about it.

Q: Were you seeing I mean were you having any piece of that particular effort?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I got a piece of it.

Q: Well, I mean in dealing with Japan were you involved with it overall or with rice or with automobiles?

SOUTHWICK: Different parts of it. Different kinds of issues would come up with them. One of them was auto standards and whether the amber in the signal light in an American car was appropriate for Japan. Okay? The Japanese handled this by inspecting individually every car; there were only a few thousand of them from the United States to check the amber. This was just to hold up the whole process. I mean silly things like this.

Q: Were you sort of backstopping somebody who was fighting this?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we were writing State Department positions on some of these issues which is stating the negotiations with the Japanese on some of these. I was still at a quite junior level, but I was in the room.

Q: Did you get any feeling for dealing with the Japanese? Were people coming back and saying oh my God, how awful it was or anything like that?

SOUTHWICK: I thought the Japanese were very tough, were very skilled, knew that they could get away with a lot with us and it stemmed from World War II, it stemmed from the occupation. It stemmed from our need for Japan as an ally in the Pacific, so they had quite a bit of room in which to operate. Every once in a while we had to whack them and basically you had to really sort of read the riot act to them. As somebody said, hit them with a two by four or nothing is going to happen.

Q: Did you feel you were part of sort of the new economic cadre there?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, to some degree. I thought I was doing pretty good work. It wasn't as appealing to me and I wasn't having as much fun with it, not that we all have to have fun all the time, but it helps. When it came time to rotate I started looking around. I was trying to work up a detail to an office on Capitol Hill which would deal with the implementation of the CSCE agreement. The Helsinki agreement on trade and some other things and this staff that was being put together would have people on detail from other executive branch agencies. I was working on doing that and seeing how that would work when I got a phone call from Mary Ryan. Mary was in personnel at the time and she said, "We're looking for a DCM in Bujumbura." I said, "Good luck." I said, "I served I Rwanda. These countries are very similar, Burundi and Rwanda. I don't particularly care to go back to Africa although I really enjoyed the African tour and I'm basically not interested." She kept calling me and finally I kept thinking about it and I decided, after talking to my wife, why not. By that time we had a third child, our daughter was born here in 1978. There was no American school out there and we thought that maybe we could put them in French schools. It was a difficult decision. I have to say some of it was financial. It was hard for us to live here on my FSO salary at the time in Washington. We'd bought a house. My wife had a part time job, but it was still hard and one way of solving the problem was to go overseas and rent your house and have government provided housing, get a differential and so forth. A little bit of that. The other thing was being DCM even at a tiny post, this was 19 Americans, is a way to move ahead.

Q: Well, it certainly is. So, you went to Bujumbura? Now, this is the capital of?

SOUTHWICK: Burundi.

Q: Burundi is the upper or the lower of the two?

SOUTHWICK: The lower of the two. Rwanda is to the North. Burundi is on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The reason they wanted me to go is because I had some experience in the area and the ambassador we had out there was regarded as problematic. I don't want to say difficult. It was Thomas Corcoran who was a career Foreign Service Officer who was given Burundi as an ambassadorship to wind up his career.

Q: Well, he was, his major time was spent in Vietnam. Our last man out of Hanoi.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely. I didn't know him from Adam.

Q: Excuse me, but you were there from when to when?

SOUTHWICK: From '79 to '82. I'd had three years in Washington basically. The economic course, the public relations part of EB and then the trade office in EB, so the three segments of that. Burundi was a post with a history of people either leaving, some of them feet first, being thrown out of the post or leaving because they wanted to leave, they couldn't stand it anymore.

Q: What was the problem?

SOUTHWICK: I knew some of this before I left. I wasn't kept completely in the dark. Corcoran was kind of a quiet old bachelor. He was not warm, fuzzy wuzzy to people. It's a tiny post. You're out there in the middle of nowhere. We're trying to get things going a little bit because there was a horrible genocide in Burundi in '72. So, this is seven years later and we're trying to build things up. There's no American school there, so you have either people who are ready to put kids in a French school or are single. This is sort of a sociology of posts and kind of a critical mass of unstable people. That had been going on for a while. I come out there as a family person, by definition stable, although we know that not all families are stable. I found I grew very fond of Corcoran. I really liked him. I'll give you an example of this. He had the only decent swimming pool, but he wouldn't let anybody use it. He opened it one day a week for like two hours. After I got to know him I said, "It would help morale around here if you could let people come on Saturday and even more often frankly, after work and just open it up because people need an outlet."

Q: What was the problem with him?

SOUTHWICK: He was a little bit reclusive and lived a very quiet life. He wasn't terribly thrilled to be in Bujumbura after spending all his career in Southeast Asia, but he wanted to wind up as an ambassador. He was kind of quiet, I don't want to say timid, but he wasn't going to get anything better than Burundi. I can say that now. I didn't quite understand that at the time. Our relationship with Burundi was okay, but it was a Tutsi government in a Hutu country. The Tutsis were only 15% of the population. There had been a coup there in '76 to get a young guy, somebody named John-Baptiste Bagaza, as the president. They were trying to reconcile the country and overcome this horrible past where a couple hundred thousand people had been either killed or driven out of the country. It was the first genocide. Certainly eclipsed by what happened in Rwanda in '94.

Q: At that time sort of looking at the picture, how were relations with Rwanda?

SOUTHWICK: Rwanda was going very well and was always regarded as the place where things could happen because they had resolved this Hutu-Tutsi issue because the Hutus were in charge. They had a military government, but it was democratizing. We were putting a lot of aid into Rwanda and Rwanda was sort of regarded as a good boy and Burundi was the bad boy because you had this minority government sort of akin to South Africa. We were still trying to move things along. Corcoran was cautious, didn't want to shake up anything. Just wanted to kind of move things a long and I got there about the last year of his term.

Q: How about Burundi and did they get involved with the problems across the lake in the Congo and all that?

SOUTHWICK: The Congo at that time was fairly stable. It was Mobutu. I mean the whole place was deteriorating, but you weren't having mercenaries coming in. You did have mercenaries to Katanga; it used to be called Katanga, Kolwezi. I think it was '78 or something.

Q: Those were the Shaba I and Shaba II things?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we brought in our plans to parachute Belgians and others in to take care of the situation. There was a massacre of white people in Kolwezi, mainly Belgian workers who worked in the copper mine there. It's one of the biggest copper mines in the world.

Q: There weren't the kidnappings and things of this nature?

SOUTHWICK: No.

Q: How did you find the Tutsi government to deal with?

SOUTHWICK: They were easy to talk about in terms of clichï¿½s and people did and some of them were true. They were closed, suspicious, somewhat manipulative and devious. These are things we are not supposed to say about people, but it stems from their status as a minority group in charge and therefore feeling under constant pressure which erupted in '72 to the point where they had to kill 150,000 people. Essentially every man, woman and child who could read of the Hutu race.

Q: Were you feeling you were sitting on a time bomb?

SOUTHWICK: Joseph Conrad in Heart of Darkness I think there was kind of a sadness, kind of a melancholy aspect of the country that you could tell that they were trying very slowly to make things better. We were part of that and then when we switched ambassadors in 1980 we got Frances Cook. Frances Cook was a young USIA officer who was 36 years old who was a protï¿½gï¿½e of the person who became the Assistant Secretary for African affairs.

Q: Dick Moose?

SOUTHWICK: Dick Moose, yes. She came out with a lot of energy, a lot of imagination, even though she was a Democrat, a Foreign Service Officer was a Democrat kind of associated loosely with the Kennedys and what not. She had been close to Dick Moose and got this ambassadorship which the Republicans allowed to stay in when Reagan was elected in 1980.

Q: Well, then before we get to the ambassador, what was happening? What were the Hutus doing there? Were we monitoring them to see?

SOUTHWICK: We were monitoring them. We were trying to find out whether they could get ahead. Could they get into the civil service? Could they get into the university? Could they get into the army? It was very difficult to find out. You can't look at somebody on the street and say definitively whether they're Hutu or Tutsi. All the Hutu had either been killed or driven into exile. The major dispatch that I wrote before I left was sort of where does this thing stand? Where are the Hutus? Are they slowly being integrated into the government? Are they being given opportunities for advancement and we found that there were only three or four prominent Hutus in government. There were very few at the university. There were very few in the army and they had the lower positions. They had no leadership positions.

Q: What about missionaries and all?

SOUTHWICK: Missionaries were there. Some of them had stayed through. David Rawson, I don't know if you've come across him, a Foreign Service Officer, a missionary brat, grew up in Burundi, eventually became our ambassador in Rwanda during the genocide in '94. The missionaries were always there, mostly Protestants from America. The Catholics who dominated, the country is about 60% or 70% Catholic, we're generally speaking French or Belgian, although there are a few Americans.

Q: Were they identified with the Hutu more than with the Tutsi?

SOUTHWICK: The Catholics and the Protestants tended to identify and be identified with the Hutu as the downtrodden. This could lead to problems, but both sides tried to be careful because they knew they could get into trouble with the government if they were too obvious, siding with the Hutu.

Q: During the time Corcoran was the ambassador, was sort of relations with the government fairly placid?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, you could say that. It was slow and careful and cautious. He felt that it would take time for this situation to mature. We were building at the aid mission a little bit. Other donors were coming back, but we felt we were engaged in a long term process.

Q: Was there a Peace Corps there?

SOUTHWICK: No, there wasn't, but the subsequent ambassador tried to lay the groundwork for the Peace Corps and eventually the Peace Corps did come back. That's one of the things I worked on.

Q: Well, talk about Frances. I've interviewed Frances.

SOUTHWICK: Okay.

Q: But I'd like your impression of how she operated and how she worked in that environment.

SOUTHWICK: Frances is very creative, very dynamic, a lot of fun. She arrived there with frankly a bad rep. Everything that I had gotten from my grapevine on her was pretty negative.

Q: What was it?

SOUTHWICK: The negative was that she was arrogant, that she was selfish, that she was hard to please, that she's only interested in herself, just a whole litany of things. Okay. She got there and we hit it off. She was there three days. I came in and I said, my tour is up next year, but I would like to extend. I said I think we can have some fun here and do some interesting things. She was very creative and all the rest of it. I think if I would fault her is some of these things that I heard on the grapevine which were to some extent true, but she and I always got along well, personally and professionally and still do. We're still very close to this day.

Q: Where had she been before?

SOUTHWICK: She had been in Dakar, I think that was her earliest post and where she got her reputation for being an English teacher for the president of the country, Senghor. Then she was in Paris at the time of the Vietnamese talks. Frances is very impressed with celebrity and power. She liked the Shrivers. She liked the Kennedy family, all of this kind of stuff and she still gravitates to some of it. She's overly impressed with it at the same time. I think she thinks that their shit doesn't stink and maybe everybody else's does, but all shit stinks.

Q: Had she been an ambassador before?

SOUTHWICK: No. She was 36 years old, a career person, an FSO-3 in the old system.

Q: How did it go putting a woman sort of activist into Burundi?

SOUTHWICK: Well, she shook up the place and the Burundians didn't quite know what to make of her. She was somebody that felt that they needed to work harder on reconciliation, they need to work harder on everything. In some ways she soaked up the zeitgeist of the whole Kennedy era: we've got to do better, and change things and be a force for change. I think for force of personality and charm and so forth she really made headway getting to know quite a number of the senior government leadership there.

Q: Sometimes somebody like that can be a bit bewildering.

SOUTHWICK: Oh, she was and she used that to good effect. They didn't quite know what to do with her, and they had trouble saying no to her on things. I can't think of a specific example, but they wanted to please her I think to some degree up to a point. I mean there are some things that they're never going to do.

Q: I recall in my interview with her, she mentioned something about there had been a meeting of women and the government didn't want the meeting to take place and she walked with the women to make sure that the government didn't go after them.

SOUTHWICK: I don't remember it, it might have been after my time, yes.

Q: As I go through these interviews I think it's interesting. Sometimes you find the American ambassador is usually the catalyst where most of the other ambassadors of France, Belgium, Great Britain and all are usually status quo type things and we try to mix things up, for good or bad.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely, I tend to share that.

Q: Did you find this?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. You found that the French and the Belgians had a little rivalry going because the Belgians had been the colonial power. The French were trying to in effect supplant the Belgians. They were quite aggressive. They were training the military, something we wouldn't do. After all, this is a military that had massacred civilians and we had zero wish to get involved in that. We started working with the military and started an IMET (International Military Education and Training) program and sort of building things up. Frances had some razzle-dazzle sort of personality. I think for a kind of a quiet backwater effort at post this was quite something. I think the other diplomats found her interesting, but the French had a very capable ambassador there who was my next door neighbor. We became very good friends and he'd known Corcoran because he was a Southeast Asia person and had a Vietnamese wife, the whole bit. We were all watching what happened to Zaire at the time. Zaire was an important country and it was still important for cobalt, a lesser degree for copper because you can get copper other places. You couldn't get cobalt in many other places. You couldn't get chrome in many other places.

Q: Now, did Lake Tanganyika play any role or was this a place, you couldn't swim in it could you?

SOUTHWICK: You couldn't swim on the shore. The embassy had a couple of boats. You could go out away from shore, which I did with my kids. We would swim off the boat because the disease schistosomiasis is caused by a snail and it lurks in the reeds along the shore.

Q: If you go farther out.

SOUTHWICK: Farther out you're presumably safe and the lake at that point was about nearly 400 miles long in most parts 15 to 25 miles wide. You could go out a few miles and you were okay.

Q: Was there much commerce up and down the lake?

SOUTHWICK: Not a lot considering that this was essentially a 400 mile highway. If you go back to the 19th Century you could see where the 19th Century colonialists thought that eventually this would be developed. The Germans built a railroad across Tanganyika to Kigoma, which they completed just on the eve of the First World War. Then there was a boat which, in memory for all time, is the African Queen which was still the boat, a historic boat which was still going up and down Lake Tanganyika. It's called the Louisa in the novel.

Q: Yes the Graf von Gï¿½tzen.

SOUTHWICK: The story was, despite Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn, the Germans scuttled it. The Germans scuttled it and they greased it all up, sank it in shallow water with the idea of bringing it up afterwards because they knew these two torpedo boats were coming and if they didn't do that they were going to be sunk by the British.

Q: This is World War I.

SOUTHWICK: This is World War I. Well, after the war it was raised and refloated eventually equipped with a diesel engine and from a distance looked pretty good. Up close it was a wreck, but from a distance you could see it from my porch. I was high up on a hill and you could see it in the middle of the day on Wednesdays I think floating up from Tanzania. A magnificent sight.

Q: About Tanganyika, I mean Tanzania, did it play any particular?

SOUTHWICK: Well, you know, Tanzania was one of the interesting African countries because it was led by Julius Nyerere. He had these socialist views, and he was an egghead, educated in the UK and he was going to have a different approach. Tanzania was a lifeline to the sea for Burundi, less so for Rwanda. Rwanda went to Uganda overland through Uganda and then Kenya.

Q: Did you get any kind of tourism or interest of other areas people from the U.S. or elsewhere?

SOUTHWICK: Rwanda had Dian Fossey there and we had access to the Ugandan game parks and Rwanda had its own game park, Akagera, on the Tanzanian border. Burundi had no game parks. There was very little tourist interest there. There were some things, but they didn't have the allure of let's say a Queen Elizabeth Park in Uganda, which was one of the most spectacular places in the world.

Q: As the embassy's DCM, what did you find yourself doing?

SOUTHWICK: It's as I think with a lot of DCMs, people issues. A lot of DCMs come out of the political cone and think they're sort of super political officers and write reports and so forth. I started doing a fair amount of that or certainly my share of it and I liked doing that, but it's a lot of people problems. We had a PAO (Public Affairs Officer) who was an alcoholic. We had a dysfunctional communications officer, a succession of dysfunctional communication officers.

Q: It's a real problem sometimes with that. Often they tend to be kind of loners or at least they used to be. It's something about being cooped up in that damn office.

SOUTHWICK: I think it had something to do with that and we had one relatively junior officer thera second or third tour officewho clashed with the ambassador, stuff like that. We had an AID director who felt that he was more important than the ambassador. That was a continuous source of tension.

Q: Did you find for example that AID, sometimes AID administration is different from other, I mean were they able to get more goodies for their people?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I mean they take care of themselves better. They spend a lot on creature comforts. Despite the criticism of State Department people in my experience, there's a distinct difference between housing and how much attention the State Department pays to housing and AID people. The educational level is higher with AID. They all have PhDs, most State Department people don't care about, but they had PhDs and they were there to help people. We were there to do God knows what, but it wasn't necessarily helping people so they had a more noble, long term mission which they tried to keep away from politics, whereas we were kind of bouncing up and down with the ebb and flow of the relationship.

Q: Did you note any difference. You got there in well, the Carter administration; the Reagan administration came in.

SOUTHWICK: Came in in 1981.

Q: Did you see any difference towards Africa at all?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I had known that Africa was sort of a backwater, but it never bothered me. The United States didn't care about Africa during the Cold War. All it cared about was making sure to keep the communists out and we coddled dictators as a result. Some of that is true, but within that there was a pretty serious effort going on by Africanists in the State Department, development specialists to get this continent on its feet. It was a serious effort and a lot of money was put into Africa during the Cold War and it wasn't done cynically. It was done, maybe the reason we got the money was a cynical reason, but the use of the money was certainly not cynical.

Q: Well, by the time you left, did you see a change, I mean was the Burundi government beginning to come more to terms with the Hutu problem?

SOUTHWICK: They were working on it and their method of working on it was basically to say it didn't exist. This was not only in Burundi, but Africa is afflicted with tribal and tribal related problems and so says we're all one people. All these differences don't count. It's a one party system. There's only one party and within that I think they were doing a little bit of good, but they were far from working out acceptable arrangements and still are in Burundi. Acceptable arrangements which were fundamentally democratic in nature, but then Bagaza, the president who came to power when he was 29 or 30, still young in his '30s when we were there with Frances, he started flirting with the Libyans and started fighting with the Catholic Church. I think through history it is sort of a bad, I'm not Catholic, but it's sort of a bad idea to fight with the Catholic Church. It's just not a good idea. You can do things to contain them or whatever, but you don't pick gratuitous fights. They've been around a lot longer than you have. So, you can see that things were beginning to go wrong.

Q: This is tape three, side one with Michael Southwick. We missed that last thing, you said you like management?

SOUTHWICK: I like management. I like being chargï¿½. I'm an eclectic person. This is what I found out about myself. I'm not an economic officer. I'm not an admin officer. I'm sort of a jack of all trades perhaps master at none, but because of all the experience even as I had up to being DCM in Burundi, I could do economics, I could do political work. I could do some of the USIA stuff because I'd been in the Fulbright program. I didn't know much about Intel stuff, but I pretty well filled in that blank later on in my career. I knew the whole system with the exception of Intel pretty damn well.

Q: Well, speaking of not quite Intel, were there any at that time, was Libya messing around. I mean were there threats? I mean Libya was considered to be sending out agents.

SOUTHWICK: During the period in Burundi they burned the French embassy and I don't know what they did with our embassy, but we broke relations with them. We did not have, to put it mildly, a good relationship with Libya and we kept our eye on them and they kept their eye on us. They were up to no good as far as we were concerned in Burundi. Their mode of operating was passing money around. Not that we weren't passing money around.

Q: What about with Rwanda, were our embassies talking our ambassadors talking to each other, I mean was this sort of a collegial thing or what?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, well, this is what happens when if you're an ambassador in one country that has a kind of a poor relationship with a neighboring country, some of this spills over to the respective ambassadors.

Q: I served in Belgrade back in the '60s and you know the enemy was not quite Zagreb, but. It happens.

SOUTHWICK: For people who pride ourselves on being pretty good specimens of the human race, this is utterly childish. We do it, we do it, it happens. Utterly childish. Burundi was the bad boy because they had the Tutsi minority government. Rwanda was the good boy because it had the Hutu majority government.

Q: So, there wasn't a brother to brother or brother to sister relationship?

SOUTHWICK: No. The DCM up in Kigali when I was in Burundi was Bob Gribbin. I don't know if you've done Bob Gribbin.

Q: Oh, yes. I've interviewed Bob.

SOUTHWICK: Well, Bob was always to me then and subsequently when he was ambassador in Rwanda, I think he feels a little bit more than I do that you have to have this kind of warm, cozy relationship with the government. You support the government and you take pretty much, let's put it this way, I mean charitable, more at face value what they're telling you than I do. So, from the perspective of our embassy he was exaggerating the importance of Rwanda and the virtue of its government. Now, we knew that we weren't dealing with a virtuous government. Frances Cook felt that wherever she was was the center of the universe. Corcoran didn't and I didn't.

Q: Well, coming out of Hanoi, Saigon.

SOUTHWICK: I took my role seriously and all that, don't get me wrong, but World War III was not going to start in Burundi. Having worked in trade negotiations I had a pretty good idea of what was what in terms of what makes this planet tick.

Q: Were you too far away down the feeding chain or something to get a feel as the Reagan administration came in and Chet Crocker, the assistant secretary, was deciding a constructive engagement with South Africa which seemed actually to produce things, but later on. I mean at that time did you feel these guys were on the right track, wrong track, what?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I got to know Chet Crocker then and subsequently including my job with the think tank because he was chairman of the board for the U.S. Institute of Peace. I had quite a bit of respect for Crocker as an intellect, as a good strategist, strategic thinker. You might criticize it, but it was at least a plan for dealing with something that could bedevil all of us, apartheid in South Africa. I think a lot of people like me, Foreign Service Officers, who worked in Africa, to some degree for some amount of time felt skeptical that it was going to work. Trusting too much to the South African government, the apartheid government, to come to its senses.

Crocker was not then terribly interested in the rest of Africa. I certainly had that feeling. He was the assistant secretary for Africa, so he did Africa, but his main interest was Southern Africa.

Q: Dick Moose was all over the place?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, absolutely.

Q: Well, then you left there in '82?

SOUTHWICK: '82 when Washington asked me to be DCM in Niamey, Niger, West Africa. I felt flattered and I felt it was nice and all of that kind of stuff, but Niamey is not necessarily the big prize. It was a bigger post. I'd been at posts with 19 direct hire Americans to one of about 80 direct hire Americans. They had a political appointee ambassador there who I had never met and he was already getting into trouble. Peter Chaveas was his DCM and they already had a parting of the ways.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a good place to stop and we'll talk about your going as DCM to Niamey in '82 the next time.

SOUTHWICK: Great.

Q: Good.

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Today is the 7th of June, 2004. Dick, let's see we're going to Niger, Niamey in '82?

SOUTHWICK: That is correct.

Q: Tell a little bit about Niger at that time.

SOUTHWICK: I tend to divide African countries into sort of three tiers, bottom tier, middle tier and upper tier. This was a middle tier country, large geographically, fairly small population, poor, although in the late '70s it thought it would get rich because it had some big deposits of uranium. Unfortunately in 1979 there was an accident, incident not too far from here called Three Mile Island and that knocked the wind out of the uranium market. So, suddenly countries like the United States were no longer building nuclear reactors, a lot questioned about whether that was the way to go. Uranium which was going to be the key to transforming this very poor country into a country with some wealth, it all vanished.

Q: What sort of government did it have?

SOUTHWICK: It had what I call a nice tidy military dictatorship, a form of government to which I grew increasingly fond as my career progressed despite the fact that I often associated with democratization, human rights and so forth. It was run by somebody named Seyni Kountche, K-O-U-N-T-C-H-E, who took over in a military coup in the early '70s. The then democratically elected government was botching to a terrible degree a major drought relief effort. In the early '70s the Sahel region, this region of Africa just South of the Sahara, experienced one of its worst droughts in recorded history. A lot of people were starving and the military took over to do things right.

Q: How about did it have any particular problems with its neighbors?

SOUTHWICK: Not really. There was concern about Libya to the Northeast.

Q: I can't remember, it has a boundary with Libya?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, it's a landlocked country. On the south is Nigeria, to the north Algeria, to the west what is now known as Burkina Faso, it was then known as Upper Volta, east is Chad. A lot of it is essentially the Sahara Desert, the lower latitudes, what they call Sahel where you do get rain and where there is some rain fed agriculture.

Q: Do they have Muslims and Christians?

SOUTHWICK: No, it was essentially all Muslim, but Islam did not get there until the latter part of the 19th Century in any major degree. What I would call the old time religion was still a factor although everybody kind of identified themselves as nominally Muslim. It was not a fierce radicalized Muslim. It was really quite straightforward.

Q: In Chad it had the Toyota wars and all with Libya. Was there any spillover, was that at the time you were there?

SOUTHWICK: No, I think partly because it was essentially a Muslim country. You did have this distinction between the people who lived in the Southern area, the agriculture areas, who were strictly black African and then into the desert you've got a group called the Tuareg which historically had been slave traders.

Q: The blue men.

SOUTHWICK: The blue men. They had camel caravans. There was another group of nomads called the Fulani and they also used camels and moved around from place to place, had cattle and what not, not regarded as fierce and warlike the way the Tuareg had been. They stretched all across that Sahara area and the French had fought them quite a bit, literally the last part of the 19th and early part of the 20th Centuries.

Q: Did the United States have any particular interest in the area?

SOUTHWICK: Well, in Africa generally there were kind of three sets of concerns. One of them was keeping the Russians out to a certain extent. That also applied to the Chinese, so that they didn't get the upper hand. That's the main reason we were represented everywhere in Africa. The Russians were represented everywhere so we decided we had to be represented everywhere and likewise with the Chinese. The second tier kind of threats were things like Qadhafi and his kind of expansionism. Zaniness is the only way to describe it, trying to establish a Libyan hegemony over preferably the whole continent of Africa, but certainly neighboring states. Then you had the ongoing kinds of things that I think concern most Africanists in the Foreign Service which was poverty, development, lack of democratic institutions, the whole question of lifting this very poor part of the world up to a better standard.

Q: From a practical point of view, we had no.

SOUTHWICK: No vital interests there. The ambassador we had there, William R. Casey, Jr., was a mining engineer. He had come to Niger in the late '70s working for Conoco to explore the possibility of Conoco investing in uranium. Niger has a sizable deposit of uranium and not every country does. The French had been installed there for some years and had two big uranium mines in the Northern part of the country. When Three Mile Island occurred, the wind just went out of that completely. What it left was you had an American who had some Republican connections who knew something about Niger. After Reagan was elected in 1980, the local Republican group in Longmont, Colorado, which is where William R. Casey lived, decided that they should get one of their own named an ambassador somewhere and the divine fire, or whatever you want to call it, landed on William R. Casey, Jr.

Q: You served there from '82 to?

SOUTHWICK: To '85. It was a two year tour, but I extended for a third year. It was '82 to '85 and partly because I've always hated moving.

Q: I know exactly what you mean.

SOUTHWICK: If things were reasonably tolerable, I didn't want to move.

Q: I thought every post I'd sit at I'd look around and figure out and start looking at the walls and the books and figure out the effort it would take to pack these things.

SOUTHWICK: It gets worse. You get better at it, but it gets worse.

Q: It gets worse. Well, tell me about Casey.

SOUTHWICK: Well, Casey was a mining engineer. He'd gone to the Colorado School of Mines. He and his wife were both Republican party activists in Colorado, not at a statewide level, more at sort of a county or regional level. I think he felt that this would be a very honorable thing to do. Also, the pay wasn't so bad. He was still well remunerated as a mining engineer, but he certainly wasn't a rich man. The local kingmaker in the area, someone I later met, was telling me this story of how he became ambassador. After Reagan was elected the local Republicans sitting around decided how they could profit from this and the idea came up of one of their members being an ambassador. This woman who was the kingmaker, who used to deal with local politicians and so forth, putting them in office, told me to my face that she had never before made "an ambassador." She decided that she would just set out with that as a goal and she said it took three phone calls. She had somebody from their community getting to be a political appointee to an African post. Now, one of the things I learned from Bill Walker when I worked in Geneva, Bill Walker had been head of presidential personnel, was that the Republicans have a harder time generally, at least this was the feeling then, filling federal jobs, political appointee positions. The typical Republican does not necessarily want to work for government, does not regard government in a favorable light. The Republicans felt that the top echelon and I think there might be some truth to this, secretaries and what not, they get better people than the Democrats, but then when you go down it's a little bit harder. The Republican from Longmont, Colorado that worked hard on a campaign wanted to be ambassador to Niger, a place that nobody cared about, fine.

Q: How did he relate to the job? He'd already been there as a mining engineer, so he was kind of used to roughing it and all that.

SOUTHWICK: Somewhat used to roughing it. He knew nothing about diplomacy, nothing about the State Department, nothing about the Foreign Service. I guess he came through the two to three week charm course that they give ambassadors. What he came with was I think a good heart, a good mind in some senses, a lot of prejudices against government people and Foreign Service people and thinking that all of us were Democrats and therefore unreliable and also because we were government workers and he would articulate this at times, people who weren't really, didn't have much moxie. If they were really good they'd have gone in the private sector. The only reason people went into government was it was nice, cushy and didn't have to work hard and you never got fired. This didn't go down well to put it mildly.

Q: How did you find working with him?

SOUTHWICK: He tended to be pragmatic. He looked at things as an engineer did. He was kind of jealous of his prerogatives and so forth. I had a good antenna on all of that kind of thing, but by and large we got along pretty well, largely because I carved out a big area of the business of the embassy to take on myself, stuff that he basically wasn't interested in. It was a lot of the political reporting, economic reporting, running the consular section and dealing with the AID ministry and so forth. He was jealous of his relationships in an African country; an American ambassador could have a relationship with the head of the state. What happened as time went on was that Casey, who didn't speak French very well and was somebody that people kind of had a hard time relating to and to understand, government people tended to rely on me a little bit more than would ordinarily be the case. That didn't bother me on one level. On another level it was something that I had to worry about. It came to the point where for example the President would schedule a meeting with Casey and they would suddenly have no translator and they would say, well, can you please send Mr. Southwick, he can do the translating. The idea of our ambassador having a one on one meeting just kind of disappeared. I think Casey figured out what was going on, but I got that through the grapevine that they just felt that they could communicate with me much better than they could communicate with the ambassador.

Q: Were there, you mentioned political reporting. What does one report politically about a neat, tidy, little military dictatorship?

SOUTHWICK: There were things along the border a little bit with Libya that needed watching. You had some of the regional stuff you had to be concerned about. Even then there was this issue of Western Sahara and which countries are supporting Morocco, which countries are supporting Algeria.

Q: The Polisario movement.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, the Polisario movement. Nigeria was a big regional fish there and whether they were exerting too much influence. You'd try to get their votes in the UN. You'd try to get them to adopt reasonably good development polices and not be oppressive. There was an ethnic issue there that erupted when I was there, vis-ï¿½-vis the Tuareg and apparently late in my tour the government decided they had to get rid of them. They just started rounding them up, rounding them up and shipping them off, but where did they ship them to? These people are used to wandering, they'll just wander back. You had those kinds of issues.

Then it wasn't clear totally clear despite what had happened at Three Mile Island that the uranium sector was dead and the potential still existed we thought early on in this. Maybe if the nuclear power industry revived it there would be a need to invest in uranium again.

Q: Well, were we concerned at that time because certainly it got into the headlines and into the state of union address about the Iraqi connection. This is at the turn of our present century, but were we concerned about Niger and nuclear proliferation?

SOUTHWICK: We were. That was an issue and we tried to get them to sign the NPT, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They had not signed it at that point, so that was a major goal. I tended to feel a lot of this concern was bogus. It takes a lot to get uranium from a mine and get it transformed into something that could be used to make a bomb. Certainly the first stages of this is of course having uranium. There was a Pakistani embassy there. It was plain to everybody that the reason the Pakistanis were established there was that they wanted a source of uranium because they were even then thinking about having an Islamic bomb. So we were kind of keeping an eye on them. We didn't think about Iraq in those days. It was not a factor, but getting enough yellow cake, semi-processed uranium into the wrong hands where people could transform it into something useful, was a concern.

Q: What about the role of the French there?

SOUTHWICK: The French regarded a lot of their part of Africa as a hunting ground. They wanted to be the principal foreign European power there, somewhat concerned about the United States supplanting them just because we were the United States. I tried to be very reassuring on this. They had a military assistance program. We began to develop one when I was there, but we always felt that ours was just sort of a supplement and more political rather than training people and really help the Nigeriens run their army. We did sell two C130s to the government.

Q: The transport plane.

SOUTHWICK: The transport plane which is a prestige item for a lot of people in that part of the world. It's a superb aircraft of its type. There really wasn't anything comparable to it then. I don't think there is anything comparable to it now and a very expensive purchase for them to have two planes that just sort of sit around.

Q: Well, I mean did you find that, how were our relations with the French embassy? I mean did we have to try to keep them from getting too suspicious?

SOUTHWICK: As I said, I tried to be reassuring and I think Casey did, too, because the U.S. had a history then as now of sort of infatuation with Africa, then it just sort of all vanishes and it comes back. Whereas the French especially had a kind of an ongoing sustaining interest in Africa because it shored up their status as an international power because they had in a sense a dozen or so client states in Africa. They were also worried about the French speaking world and trying to maintain French as an international language. That was much more alive I would say through the '80s. In the '90s it started vanishing and I would say by now it's vanished almost completely.

Q: Did you get any major visits to your area?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we had Chet Crocker come there and we had George Herbert Walker Bush come there.

Q: The Vice President?

SOUTHWICK: The Vice President came there.

Q: What was he doing there?

SOUTHWICK: He was looking at a number of things including the drought in that part of Africa and it was just part of showing the flag. He went to a number of countries, I can't remember if Niger was the last one. He went to about four or five countries. He started in Ethiopia and moving back across. That was a spectacular thing because it had been a long time. I think Mondale had been there, but a vice presidential visit in a little place like this is very important. We had planned at the invitation of the government to take him down to a regional town called Maradi. There was a big wind storm that day and we didn't get him down there. The government had arranged for about 2,000 to 3,000 Tuareg on mounted camels to line the route from the airport into town. The news people had gotten there early thinking that Vice President Bush would come, so it was the most spectacular thing they'd ever seen outside of Moses and company leaving Egypt and the ten commandments. It was spectacular, but we couldn't get Air Force Two to fly down there because there was too much dust in the air. I wrote it up as the most picturesque Tuareg I could find. This was sort of thinking, you know, if you've got lemons, make lemonade. The most picturesque Tuareg I could find and putting them on an aircraft and taking them back to Niamey because we could take off and that's what I did and took them to the reception. Vice President Bush met a few Tuareg that he never expected to meet.

Q: Were there any, how about the drought? What were you doing? How stood the drought at that time?

SOUTHWICK: Well, there had been a drought in the early '70s and then in I guess it was '84 or '85, I'm not going to make myself a hero on this, but I have to say I sometimes wonder what would have happened had I not had my ears cleaned. I went over to an AID staff meeting and I ended up talking to a young agricultural economist there who was a Russian immigrant it turned out. He told me he couldn't get anybody in the AID mission to listen to him. He had been doing rainfall analysis and this rainfall analysis indicated to him that Niger was going to have its worst drought ever, worse than anything in the '70s and nobody was listening to him. I went back to the embassy and read up as much on all of this as I could. I called the AID director and said, look we've got to have a meeting, you've got to bring this guy. We've got to sit down and we've got to talk together and we've got to figure out what we think we're dealing with here. Well, within a matter of days it was pretty much apparent to everybody that something serious was going on. We signaled to Washington that we thought we needed more analysis, we thought that we were going to have a bad situation there. We would need to import a lot of grain from the United States and we launched a program, which over time worked very well. That was probably my biggest achievement there because I felt I did not want another disaster story. I had read the literature on the 1972 drought and I said this is not going to happen again. It is not going to screw up. Food is going to arrive, the government is going to do it, we're not going to botch it and we're not going to have Mike Wallace or anybody else from 60 Minutes coming to this country on our watch to report on the disaster. We had the usual logistics problems because we knew that we needed more port capacity than what was available in Cotonou and Lome, Togo and the key to success was to get Nigeria to cooperate. Nigeria had a very uncooperative relationship then. In Bujumbura I had met the estimable American General Vernon Walters who had been on a tour there. He'd known Frances Cook and I decided that the only one who could fix this is General Walters. He could go down and talk to the military regime in Nigeria, general to general, and get them to open ports and he did. We got cooperation from them and started when the time came to move food through the Nigerian ports and get it up there in time. It worked well.

Q: What had been the problem in the '70s?

SOUTHWICK: Some of it as I recall was logistics and a lot of it was ineptitude on the part of the local government that it had never had to manage anything of that complex nature. A lot of corruption and so forth. There were issues, too, that frankly still plague relief efforts and that is if you start feeding people do they stop trying to work to feed themselves. One of the things that we had a big argument about with the government was whether our food would be supplied free or whether people would have to pay for it because in the country very much like Ronald Reagan said nobody should get anything for free, they should work for it, do something, anything. I thought frankly that he was right. He knew his people better than I did and it just intuitively made sense and I frankly think it made sense vis-ï¿½-vis the reigning philosophy of the Reagan administration, but it was hard to change that policy. We just felt it had to be free so we eventually prevailed on it.

Q: Well, did the predictions about rain turn out to be right?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, it was the worst, it was a huge dip. In the early '70s it was a couple of years of bad rain and that's sort of a cumulative thing. What happened in '84 and '85 is the rain just stopped. I made a field trip at the kind of the height of this out into the Sahel region, which was normally agricultural, just looking at the situation. It was about a 2,000 mile trip and whole villages had decamped, had left. There was no one left, there was no water, there was no food.

Q: They headed south?

SOUTHWICK: They headed south towards better climates and where there was rainfall. They just sort of disappeared into the coastal areas of West Africa. Those who stayed did work. I went on another field trip just when the drought broke and I think it was probably one of the most dramatic moments of my life. I was glad to have my 12 year old son with me and two people from the AID mission and it started to rain. It was the first rain since the drought. All over everywhere you could see people were out planting. People just stood out over the hillsides, over the fields for miles on end and they had rain so they had to plant even though they had no idea when the next rain would come. It was a very dramatic scene.

Q: Did we supply the seed?

SOUTHWICK: We did some of those kinds of things, yes. We had some good people in AID. I just don't think they had their antennae up and they tended to be a little bit more cautious. I was responsible for doubling the amount of food to bring in. I said, we've got a plan. They were saying, I can't remember the number, like 50,000. I said, let's just say it's 100,000 and it turned out to be closer to what the need was than they were. I was just flying by the seat of my pants, but I felt I was dealing with sort of cautious people who wanted to wait for information to come in and by then its too late.

Q: What was the role of the ambassador in this?

SOUTHWICK: He was interested in this and wanted it to work, and that's one area where he and I worked very well together. He was quite happy for me to work the circuits. The circuits both within AID and in Washington. Towards the end of my time there we did have a coup attempt one night.

Q: How did that play out from your perspective?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we had a station there and we thought we had the place pretty well wired. But one night I tried to make a phone call and couldn't get through. I think it was an overseas call and I was dealing with the operator and then I started making some other calls. Something just seemed strange that the phone system was screwed up, not that it ever worked perfectly. I started calling more and more people and in the course of the night I decided that something was going on and then we started hearing in various parts of town some shots. This did not seem to be ideological; it was personal in some units and basically rebelled and they were trying to take the telephone system, radio station and a few other things. In the morning we had gotten word to everybody to stay at home. The ambassador lived right across from the embassy. About mid-morning a junior officer and I started going out just to test the waters. In retrospect this was sort of foolish and silly, but that's what we did. We kept going and we wound up back at the embassy. The ambassador was furious because he wanted to be the one who was feeding all this information to Washington and then we were reporting what had happened. He wanted to completely suppress my role in discovering that something had been happening. I was the first one to know. It was just by chance. It was not something I smelled until I couldn't make the phones work.

Q: How responsive did you find the government of Niger? Who was the president?

SOUTHWICK: The president was an extremely intelligent capable person who ran the place like Louis XIV. He was in touch with all his provincial governors and the senior military people every morning of every day. He was kind of thin and wiry. Quite intense, but basically a good benevolent person. For example when he found out about head injuries with motor scooters which is what a lot of people use there, he said, despite the cost everybody's going to have a helmet. By God everybody did have a helmet. No ifs, ands or buts, you know? He was an enlightened despot in a sort of classical platonic view of that form of government. He subsequently got sick some years after my departure and died. People say he was an early victim of the Aids, I don't think that was the case, but it could have been.

Q: Did we have Peace Corps there?

SOUTHWICK: We had a big Peace Corps there. Very big Peace Corps.

Q: How did they work?

SOUTHWICK: They liked it. They were out working on the usual array of things everything from teaching English to little projects, well digging projects and better uses of resources and so forth. We did have a couple of tragedies there. One Peace Corps volunteer died in a motorcycle accident. A few weeks later another volunteer was on a bus going out to his post. He was sitting on the window side inside and a dump truck with a driver who misjudged or was drunk or something just sheered off that side of the bus and this Peace Corps volunteer was killed. Because the Peace Corps director had just a few weeks before accompanied a body back to Washington of another Peace Corps volunteer, I was asked to do this. I went back to Washington, first to Baltimore in this case with the body of a young, he must have been like 20 or 21 years old. It was a very tragic thing and a nice family from Baltimore, Catholic family, just absolutely devastated by this. There's nothing worse than the loss of a child.

Q: Were there any reflections while you were there of any interest of what was happening in South Africa and all?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, there was. Chet Crocker visited and he was preoccupied with South Africa. He found Niger as elsewhere and much of the rest of Africa, they really didn't care very much. One group oppressing another group in Africa. There's nothing new about that. You know? I think that there was about as much interest in that as they had in Poland. I'm exaggerating this a little bit, still this notion that all Africans and African solidarity and apartheid in South Africa was the worst thing that anybody could imagine, just wasn't the case.

Q: What was life like there for you?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we had three children. Initially they were going to French schools and then in the course of time there we got the American community that was building up, we established an American school. It was very tiny at first in a house and then by this time my wife was very active in this. We got plans to build a school, a small school on the embassy compound which was about 13 acres, 16 acres, something like that. There was room for it. Life was good. I mean I think life in these places for families was okay. You had a community life with other embassy families, diplomatic community and so forth. The Nigeriens were not the most open, warm, hospitable people in the world, but they were not bad. It was possible to get invited to a Nigerien's house. Then you had R&R and there were little places to go to. There was a fantastic camel market every two weeks up the Niger River, about a two hour drive, colorful things in Africa that people would go to. Then I did make two Sahara trips, one all the way across to Algiers and one sort of up in Niger.

Q: How does one go across the Sahara?

SOUTHWICK: Ambassador Tom Pickering who had been in Nigeria had made a trip all the way from Nigeria to Algiers and back I guess, I can't remember, but Casey said, oh we should do that, too. I thought who is we? He wanted to do it. I frankly was not terribly interested in doing it because I didn't feel I needed to do that to experience the Sahara. One thing led to another and in early '84 we worked out a deal where a convoy of two vehicles. I would go to Algiers and he would fly up and come back. Okay. I got a little group together of people who just sort of wanted to go for the hell of it and then people who had shall I say more professionally related reasons like the military attachï¿½. We got a group of I guess it was four Americans and the two drivers and off we went. It was a nine day trip. There were 600 or 700 miles of this where there are no roads and you have little posts that you sight, you get to one and then you get to another and head for that one. A lot of camping out. We had I guess it was six Americans. We had a very good group and it was probably the best trip I ever took. The desert is wonderful. It's mystical, it's beautiful. You experience total silence and you meet a lot of interesting characters along the way, not too many, but when you meet people, they're interesting. It was a very good trip. We did end up having vehicle trouble with one of the vehicles. These were the diesel Chevrolet carryalls. This is a bad engine to begin with and one of them started leaking oil, but by begging basically with everything from Nigerien road crews to everybody else, we managed to keep enough oil in the crankcase to keep the thing going. It was a wonderful trip.

Q: How did you find the Algerians?

SOUTHWICK: I thought that they would be hostile, they would not be receptive, they were anti-American, blah, blah. I had read Pickering's account and he had suggested the opposite, but just to be sure I brought along a stash of currency in the form of a case of Johnnie Walker. I thought one way or another this would get us out of any jam. We found that the Algerians were wonderful. They were helpful. They were informative. They were pleased to see us. They were curious about us. They would ask us a lot of questions and not in a kind of intelligence way, gathering way, but just because Americans crossing the Sahara was a very oddball thing. Europeans did it, not a whole lot, but a few did, a few hundred a year, but hardly ever any Americans and certainly not from South to North as opposed to North to South. They were good and for example, one time when we needed oil, we found this road crew, this Algerian road crew, they came over. They got oil, they helped us, they wouldn't allow us to pay for it and they said when you come back this way and you see us, just think of us. It was all this sort of desert hospitality, a legend.

Q: Well, then you left there in '85?

SOUTHWICK: '85.

Q: Whither?

SOUTHWICK: It was back to Washington and I think I had tried to get a job in the African bureau. Because of the drought and some other things I had gotten a good reputation, I thought that this was going to be the promotion that got me from 01 into the senior Foreign Service. Anyway, I didn't get a job in the bureau. I got a job in personnel, which I didn't want, not the first time that I had gotten a job that I didn't want. This was at the behest of James K. Bishop who had been once ambassador to Niger and was then a deputy assistant secretary in the African bureau. I knew him and he knew me and for whatever reason he thought that I would be just the guy to run personnel for the African bureau. I'd be not only working for the personnel bureau, but my responsibility would be to fill positions in Africa. They also included INR, the AID bureau and a few other cats and dogs in the State Department. I landed back there with that job and I thought I was pretty safe because I did have confidence I was going to get promoted from 01 to senior Foreign Service out of Niger as DCM. It didn't happen. I missed as usual by about four or five spots. I looked it up, but I thought that my goose was cooked because a personnel job is typically regarded as having no promotion prospects attached to it. The best you could do was to engineer yourself a good next assignment. Anyway, the personnel job like a lot of other jobs, I found I liked it. I had a lot of fun with it. What it reminded me of was the camel market in Niger. It was like getting a whole bunch.

Q: You were saying it was a trading operation.

SOUTHWICK: It was a trading operation. I found that there as I knew before, but not nearly as vividly, there are several Foreign Service posts in Africa which appeal to a few people, but not nearly enough to keep all our posts at full strength. You had European posts, which had an excess of applicants, and then you had sort of everything else in the middle. The NEA bureau had carefully cultivated enough Arabists to keep things going. You had the EA club and you had the ARA club, the Latin America club and so Africa to me it attracted a different breed of officer, frankly a more adventurous officer. A more in some ways resourceful kind of officer whereas I felt that some of the other areas, some of the factors were going on which weren't as desirable. According to the European bureau where the whole object seemed to be living in Europe, not necessarily to do or accomplish something. This didn't bother me very much because I've always been something of an individual and I really felt then as I do now that everybody is different and you have to capitalize on the differences and not try to force everybody in the same mold. The Africa job was difficult because you had to use powers of persuasion to fill those jobs which otherwise wouldn't be filled. I did a lot of lobbying, an awful lot of lobbying.

Q: You were doing this from '85 to when?

SOUTHWICK: '85 to '87.

Q: Well, what did you have to trade I mean to get somebody who just desperately wanted to serve in Paris or Rome to come on down to Ouagadougou or something.

SOUTHWICK: Ouagadougou and for some people this would be a fate worse than death. You certainly didn't want to, they had a system of forced assignments there, which we resorted to occasionally, but it's not necessarily a desirable thing. You want people to be motivated. You could get people motivated by a sense of adventure, a sense of being a bigger frog in a smaller pond, having more responsibility. There are a lot of African posts, there are a lot of DCMships to go around. The DCM positions were desirable. Africa had not on a continent wide basis hadn't really gone to hell then. There were places that had gone to hell, but the general feeling that Africa was terrible and a place of utter hopelessness. We had a few posts there, which were essentially like European posts in the sense they had a lot more bidders. For Nairobi every job had a couple of dozen people bidding on it and would be happy to go there. To a certain extent Southern Africa, South Africa, although it was harder to get Africanists to go to South Africa because of the apartheid.

I ended up in personnel doing well by the African bureau. I ended up backstopping the DCM committee. I developed my own little affirmative action there and it was kind of on my own without really consulting with anybody. I decided that it was the bias in the Foreign Service to get only political officers for DCM positions and that was wrong. It was wrong on all kinds of counts certainly in terms of equity, certainly in terms of the kind of skills that one needed as a DCM. I felt these were things that you acquired at least as well in the administrative cone, the consular cone or the economic cone as you did in the political cone. A DCM job even in a small post is fundamentally about management and making people do their jobs well. That doesn't have much to do with sitting down and writing a piece of political analysis to relate to the Foreign Service, but that essential task of being a DCM is not the essential task of a political officer.

Q: At the time you were doing this was there a lot of pressure to start getting female officers as DCMs?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. I decided there were several steps of prejudice. There was the cone prejudice of only political officers. There was the gender prejudice. You only get white males. There was the race issue and we were beginning to get a number of blacks there. I've been preoccupied throughout my life with the race issue in America even though in the little town where I grew up, the only black person in the town was the person who ran the city dump. I was influenced by what had happened in the '50s and '60s, the civil rights revolution and I felt that we should do better by black officers. When I got that job there were no black DCMs in any Foreign Service post. When I left there were five. I had something to do with four of them, nothing to do with the fifth one, but four of them I did. What I invented just on my own was a system of basically running out and spotting people. I would look for women. I would look for blacks and other minorities. I would look for people in other cones and make sure that when the list went up on the DCMs for post X there were some, I don't like to use the term diversity because that's kind of a bad connotation, but there was a variety of people there. What I would not do, I would not put anybody on that list unless I felt they could do the job, that their record proved it and I'm not just talking about the record in the files, I had access to everybody's files, but my grapevine, you know? I decided in five phone calls I could establish with almost pinpoint accuracy the capability of any Foreign Service Officer. I really felt very confident about that. If I proposed people I'd make sure there was a black woman and somebody who was not in the political cone on every list that went up.

Q: You know if that's all said and done, it's still, is it still at that time, I don't know how it is today, but the ambassadors' prerogative?

SOUTHWICK: Yes it was.

Q: I mean there has to be a certain amount of arm twisting on the part of mostly ambassadors belong to the old boys club anyhow.

SOUTHWICK: And they have somebody spotted, that's true, particularly career people. Oddly that was not as much of a factor as I thought and most ambassadors I felt wanted to look at this list. The system then was the upper echelon in personnel would vet four or five names and a slate would go out for a perspective ambassador and the ambassador is expected to choose one. He could reject it because he had his heart set on person X, but by and large that worked better than you might think. They would go for that list. My feeling about the black officer or the female officer or the consular cone officer was that I got them to that list. After that it was up to them and I would coach them. I would coach all of them about how to interact with the ambassador and the rest of it, but that's where they had to make their mark. We weren't going to play the game which they later started playing like the director general, why you have to give us a reason for not selecting X. Eventually it got to that. As a matter of fact the people in personnel did not catch on to what I was doing immediately. I was kind of inventing this as I went along. Then they kind of got onto it and they wanted me to write it up as a personnel policy which would extend not to just DCMs, but to other desirable positions in the Foreign Service because the idea was if you could get these people who had suffered some form of discrimination into these kind of positions over time it would help sort itself out. So, I wrote it up and that was one of my last jobs there. In the process I got to know George Vest very well and he and I got along very well.

Q: He was director general?

SOUTHWICK: He was director general. It was one of those things where you forge a bond on the basis that has nothing to do with your professional responsibilities. I had gotten to know him because I was a bit of a rabble-rouser. I did not like it when they had directed assignments. I felt that the panel system which was certainly not flawless was much fairer a system than the backdoor. When he sometimes overruled the panel, I made sure that he knew that people weren't happy that he had done that. That he had yielded to some old boy network.

Q: I would imagine in the African bureau you were probably given considerably more leeway certainly than in the European and probably the Latin American bureau where one you have a lot more political appointees and two a lot of pressure from people who want to go there.

SOUTHWICK: You see I was doing DCMs for the whole system.

Q: Oh, you were?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. You have that.

Q: How did the DCM for the whole system? I would imagine the European bureau.

SOUTHWICK: Well, they would help select these lists and they were on an informal basis they were quite happy with what I was doing, as long as somebody that they favored was included because they thought they could work it from the inside and they often do.

Q: One of the things that is quite noticeable I think most of us will agree is that people who were staff assistants to somebody at some rank which is not a particularly good place to learn anything other than how the Department of State works.

SOUTHWICK: After a fashion, yes.

Q: It might be unfair, I think that there is validity to this because they're not running anything, not picking up management skills. They're picking up court skills you might say more than anything else. This is often a way to be put into positions which will lead to ambassadorships and all this, positions of power. Did you find yourself up against that situation?

SOUTHWICK: Somewhat. Marc Grossman who is currently the Undersecretary for Political Affairs he's somebody who went that route and a number of others. I have to correct myself. I was not all the time doing the whole system. I was doing Africa most for sure, but I was certainly involved in the process of others as well. Yes, you run up against that and I think the relation between an ambassador and a DCM for example is a very special one. It's like a husband and wife. It's a very intimate relationship and it has to be good. There has to be a kind of a comfort level there. I'm very respectful of that. It's just I felt that there should be more openness in the competition for that position as well as these 10 other positions that we selected as being like office director, DCM, consul general.

Q: Were you sort of on the lookout for whatever those unique qualities that make for an Africanist?

SOUTHWICK: Well, a lot of it is a sense of adventure. I mean they don't have to be T.E. Lawrence and they don't have to be Sir Richard Burton, but a little bit of that helps I think. Somebody like me who wanted to go across the Sahara. I mean I'm not, I'm timid compared to some of the people who would do that. I've always had a lot of respect for most Foreign Service Officers. The system gets really good people. Good people not just in terms of their professional ability, but good specimens of the human race. We can all think of lots of exceptions, but by and large I think we are a pretty civilized group.

Q: Were you finding that serving in Africa for people could you often say, promotions are probably come along rather nicely or not?

SOUTHWICK: They would be better for Admin because Admin problems are legion in a lot of these African posts. You go out there and clean things up and make things work and get a very good write up. It was good for that. DCM jobs it was good, despite the fact that I didn't get promoted into the Senior Foreign Service from that. I got promoted to the Senior Foreign Service from the personnel job. I got an award in the personnel job. I got into the Senior Seminar from the personnel job and it was because of all of these things that I'd been doing with my particular form of affirmative action and doing a good job for the African bureau and trying to be fair for people. Trying to make the system work more fairly.

Q: From there in '87 where did you go?

SOUTHWICK: I did not know that I was going to get promoted out of that job. I decided I had another two or three years left and the rage then in the late '80s was to be managerial, management. So, one of the bureaus I serviced was the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. I decided I would go after the executive director job of INR. I went after that and I got it and I was in the job just a couple of months when the promotion came through which was based on the service in personnel.

Let me go back to something about George Vest and my rapport with him. One time I went up to his office to complain about something, I can't remember what it was. I can't remember how it happened, but we got on the subject of Gilbert and Sullivan. Now there's not a lot of hope, there's not a huge number of people in America who like Gilbert and Sullivan. I happen to be one of them and he happens to be one of them.

Q: I can say _____.

SOUTHWICK: Okay, yes, you know, so if you like Gilbert and Sullivan and you find another person who likes Gilbert and Sullivan, it's like wow. One time I went up there and it happened to be at that time two productions of Gilbert and Sullivan going on in Washington, both at the Kennedy Center. He started talking about these and he started talking about going to his first Gilbert and Sullivan performance in the '30s when an opera company came to Washington. That company was regarded as the best that ever existed. So, anyway we just had a rollicking good time and I think the conversation went on for well over an hour. Nothing to do with personnel. Everything to do with Gilbert and Sullivan. From then on it was just, you know, my relationship with George Vest was about as easy as my relationship with anybody in the world.

Q: How long did you do the INR executive director?

SOUTHWICK: I did it for two years.

Q: That would be '87 to '89?

SOUTHWICK: '87 to '89. I went up there and I knew a little. I knew the personnel side of it. I didn't know the rest of it. I was sitting there after I'd been there for about a week and I was kind of confused and didn't know what to do, so I went down to the African bureau. I don't know if you know Jim Moran.

Q: Oh, I know Jim.

SOUTHWICK: Okay. Well, I knew Jim because he was the executive director and I said to Jim I've got to see you. I said, Jim I've got this job. I'm executive director of INR. I said, what am I supposed to do? I said I don't have a clue. I said, I know kind of we've got personnel and we've got budget and this and that and the other. How am I supposed to do this job? He kindly took some time with me and talked about a few things. He's a great person, a lot of good advice, very salty and fun and interesting. At the end of it, I'm not quite sure I knew how to do the job, but I felt a lot better about the situation. I went back up there and started doing the job. At that particular time it was late '80s and there was a feeling that with the fall of communism there would be a huge change. The fall of communism was not totally anticipated.

Q: I mean '89 was when the whole thing, the Berlin Wall and all.

SOUTHWICK: '87 to '89. The whole intelligence community decided to talk about its resource needs, human resource needs. It was a community wide personnel study. I got to represent INR in this. In the process I got to spend a lot of time with people from the other parts of the intelligence community on their needs and we're talking about agencies like NSA which is tens of thousands, the CIA. INR was a mole if that on this whole thing, but we had a place at the table. There was DIA and the service intelligence services, the FBI, CIA. Anyway I spent a lot of time with these people. By the time it was all over I knew a hell of a lot about how the intelligence community works.

The other thing I liked, even though it was not my job, I went to the morning staff meeting where Mort Abramowitz got briefed by his staff so that he would be in a position to deal with the person he reported to mostly who was Michael Armacost. He did have a relationship of sorts, I could never tell how good, with the Secretary, George Shultz at the time. I found that the service in INR was again something that you don't anticipate. It demystified the intelligence community completely for me. I knew how it worked. I had all the clearances except one which was not of much relevance to the State Department anyway. I had gotten an enormous respect for the analytical function of the State Department. We have some superb unsung heroes in INR who did that work.

Q: You know its been coming out lately that how going back even to Vietnam and up that with the very small, but compact INR it essentially has out predicted this very huge intelligence apparatus maybe because it is small and also is located within a policy oriented department. The CIA you know even the military, I mean unless it's a war time thing they don't have that policy direction. I don't know what it is.

SOUTHWICK: You're right and this is often true. It is small, it's nimble, the people at it are good. They have a high sense of professionalism. They have a lot of access to things. I mean they have total access. The layering is not extreme. Somebody who comes in as a FSO-4 over there and learns to be an analyst over two months they're writing things after a few months which go with very little editing right up to the Secretary of State. It was to that extent it was kind of heady. The person I helped bring on there, this is a civil servant and has been for a long time acting assistant secretary of INR. He has been in the middle of all the nonsense of the last couple of years about Iraq. I know him well enough and had good enough conversations with him to realize that INR did not do any disservice to the Secretary and the President when it comes to Iraq.

Q: Who is this?

SOUTHWICK: This is Tom Fingar, F-I-N-G-A-R.

Q: Well, now I served in 1960 '61 in INR actually on the horn of Africa and I have to confess I came there with experience because we'd had an Eritrean houseboy when I was in Dhahran and that was my connection to the area.

SOUTHWICK: That's not bad, I mean honestly, that's not bad.

Q: I was wondering the point was my impression was you get smart people and you put them in this job, but its not a very desirable job and it doesn't lead to promotion.

SOUTHWICK: Generally speaking that's true.

Q: But at the same time, how did you find, I mean to recruit real thinkers or was there a particular type you would go after or was this kind of a last resort?

SOUTHWICK: It's not for everybody because the way I analyze jobs is how much of you is in a job. How much of your job is interaction with other people. When you're DCM that's a good part of your job. Here in INR you could be completely socially dysfunctional and a lot of them were, but if you knew how to write and write well and get the facts right and interpret them properly, that's great. I didn't care whether you were social. I was conscious of this whole thing with Foreign Service Officers and my method of dealing with it was I was going to get more people promoted. We had a kid in there who was the first person in the U.S. government who said the Russians are in trouble in Afghanistan and they're going to get out. He was the first person, an FSO-4. He was socially dysfunctional. He was a Foreign Service Officer. I don't know how he got through the exam, the oral part of the exam. We had one person who was a semi-nut case who traced armed ships of certain kinds of missiles to Saudi Arabia, outwitting and outperforming a vast bureaucracy in other parts of the system. So, you had some extraordinary people there and I felt that they should, people like Craig this person who divined what was happening with Russians in Afghanistan. They should get rewarded. It's probably not kosher, but I read every single Foreign Service evaluation and even when they were written by ____, I decided that every one of these things is going to sing. They're going to put as much attention into this as they do into the thing for the Secretary of State and I had no authority to do this, but I just kept sending them back until it got right. That doesn't mean that I wanted somebody that didn't deserve it. I just wanted the story told as best as positively as could be done. We got better promotion rates.

Q: How did you find recruiting? Was there an identifier that said, oh, this is a Foreign Service type or was it well, we don't know what to do with him. Let's put him in INR.

SOUTHWICK: There's a couple of things. One of the things that would happen is what I would call career hopping. These would be people who started out as consular officers and Admin officers or something else and wanted really to do political work. How do you get to be known by a regional bureau? We had a lot of cases of people who came in from that different kind of background, came into INR did really good work, got well known by the regional bureau and then the time came for a good political officer slot out in Paris or God knows where, that's the person that they wanted. That was a way to move or break into something whereas if you took another Admin job or a consular job it would simply never happen and it was different kind of work. I used to spend, because of my time in personnel, I used to spend a lot of time looking at PARs all day long.

Q: You might explain what a PAR is.

SOUTHWICK: Personnel Audit Report. It's one little sheet of paper where you went to school, what your assignment history is, what your language aptitude is, what your award history has been. I used to look at these all the time, but for the life of me I could not tell a huge difference in people who were political officers and people in other parts of the Foreign Service. You'd have people in any of these categories who majored in philosophy or majored in journalism or majored in God knows what. I was a history major, but you'd find them all over the place. You couldn't sort them out at least I couldn't intuitively.

Q: I was on the board of examiners giving oral exams and we couldn't tell. I mean the attributes, I mean somebody whose administrative more or less stuck out, but usually the case is that they'd done it, but the difference between what made a good consular officer and a good political officer, zilch, nothing.

SOUTHWICK: You wouldn't dissent it from the PAR.

Q: An economic officer, only because they'd taken some courses in economics, otherwise I don't think you could tell by it.

SOUTHWICK: I felt that there were a lot of people in the Foreign Service who had unused, undiscovered talents in getting them into INR was a way to expand that and see where it led. I felt I can't cite too many specific cases, but I felt that that was happening to some degree of success. It was very gratifying.

Q: Did you get much feel for the effect of INR during this particular time?

SOUTHWICK: A lot of it rests on the assistant secretary. I think that Mort Abramowitz did use it very well. I think that Armacost used it well and Shultz used it well. One of the things that was going on during this whole period was Iran-Contra and a lot of other, to put it mildly, funny stuff in Central America. Okay, now if you're George Shultz how do you get reliable information and reliable analysis when you have a highly politicized Latin American bureau, Elliott Abrams and some of those people. I ended up leaving my career working very closely with Elliott Abrams, but that's another story, we'll get to that. How do you get the truth? So, George Shultz really valued that, and he would have briefings out at his house and offices.

Q: Also, the CIA at that time would get the quick political, too.

SOUTHWICK: It was. Some of the operations side versus the analytical side.

Q: As has happened I guess in the Iraq business as of today I mean you get a president or people around him who want to have a certain message come out and often it is the State Department that is the odd man out because in a way less responsive to you might say the political whims.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, and God bless us we have a lot of stubborn people. Stubborn people, very stubborn when they feel that they have done their level best professionally and that leads to a certain outcome or certain viewpoint, they're going to stick to that. Generally speaking I find that to be true. There are a lot of people that wanted to just lick their finger, hold it up to the wind and see which way it's blowing and run with it.

Q: Did you find was there a problem during this time between the regional bureaus and INR as far as, theirs in a way they're doing somewhat the same thing, figuring out whether Niger.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. I didn't discern huge issues there. The breakdown and designations in INR are a little bit different from the State Department that follow community to their designations. There was more sympathy I would say for the Arab situation than there was for Israel and a lot of people accused the Arabists in the State Department.

Q: I'm not an Arabist, but I mean during most of our careers we've seen the politicals paying attention to the Israeli/Jewish lobby whereas there was a very large Arab interest. I mean beyond the State Department, beyond the United States. It's only fair that it is sort of to compensate, at least this is my view that this is not if you're not being political.

SOUTHWICK: Well, it goes back to what I learned when I was in the trade office in Geneva doing trade negotiations. There was often a feeling that State Department Foreign Service Officers don't pay enough attention to domestic politics and how that influences what we do. I must say I didn't come to terms with all of this until much later in my career, the last five years when I was working in IO and regularly working on negotiations with the Palestinians and the Israelis on international conferences. When I became an expert fast, you get run over a few times and you learn fast. Then yes and I think I had the bias. I think Foreign Service Officers look at foreign policy considerations sort of in the abstract, viewed apart are what should dictate foreign policy. In democracy you have to flow into that.

Q: I was interviewing somebody who had the executive directorship of the president's board, the national security council, NSC and he came in at the very beginning of the Clinton administration and people were looking at him and saying, you know, foreign affairs is a waste of the president's time.

SOUTHWICK: I've got a story about that.

Q: I was just floored. I would never have conceived of this.

SOUTHWICK: Well, the early part of the Clinton administration is very clear that the agenda was basically domestic. The Cold War was over and we pay the electricity and everything else that's wrong with the United States.

Q: Okay, well, in '89?

SOUTHWICK: In '89 I was looking around. I wanted to stay in INR. I felt I had done that and I enjoyed it and we did good things. One of the things we did was renovate 6510 which was the main room of the State Department where all the word information is kept, whatever and that was a major operation. I looked at the Senior Seminar and I decided I wanted to get into that and I got into that. I frankly think George Vest had a role in making that happen.

Q: Before we go to that, what was the status of information retrieval in INR?

SOUTHWICK: INR, this is something that was done a little bit more by my predecessor in the job than I did. INR got its own system which is a little bit separate because the main State Department is separate and gets all of the news wires, all the sort of stuff that you can get electronically. INR was in the forefront of getting some of this very nimble advance data retrieval system. Sort of a precursor like Google now. One of these search engines. I'll give you an example of this. When the Pakistani president was killed in a plane crash in the late '80s and suddenly there was a new Pakistani government with 12 new people. With this system you could just plug in those peoples' names and you could get everything that was known about them in a few seconds. You could find their careers and you could find out where they had been and where they had been referred to in a newspaper article or something like that. So, in a matter of a few hours you could write up something. We had that and again it was sort of primitive by today's standards, but it was very advanced then and the only other system that existed that was like it was at the White House. It was better than what the agency had, strangely enough, and allowed us to be somewhat more nimble. It did cost a fair amount of money, but it wasn't all that expensive.

Q: So you did the Senior Seminar from '89?

SOUTHWICK: To '90.

Q: How did you find that?

SOUTHWICK: It was absolutely wonderful. I mean that's the way most people find it. You're busy, but you're not working. You're reading, you're talking to people, you're listening to people, you're traveling, it's a great big feast for the mind and its good for the soul because it's a system then, I guess it has been abandoned, the Senior Seminar?

Q: Well, this is the last, this year, the last class just graduated.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I think it's a great shame.

Q: I was class of 17, back in '74 or '75. It's amazing really how my estimate was that not more than about 14 or 15 FSOs go to that each year, but how many of the people I've interviewed there's no great effort to do it, to have gone through that process.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, because they had one every year and it was 30 people, half Foreign Service and half the other foreign affairs agencies and military. I was at Powell's staff meeting, the Secretary's staff meeting when they announced the end of that. I was absolutely shocked and I wanted to raise my hand and say, denounce the whole thing, but I didn't know enough about why. I asked how the hell did this happen. He said they felt the Senior Seminar was not touching enough people. I think the people it did touch, though, it touched in a lot of depth in a way that you don't get by going over there for five or six two week courses. It just doesn't happen. You get to know people. You have time to study issues. We had about nine or ten issues, a dozen issues, whatever it was. We studied them in depth. We did a lot of traveling. We got to know people well. It really helped me demystify the military. I got to know the military in a way that I had not previously done. It was good. It was a heady time, '89 to '90, the fall of the Berlin Wall; we went to Germany for a week. Visited Berlin, went on both sides of the wall as it was coming down. There were still some controls then, but it was very interesting and I felt it really got me equipped to go on to my next post. I was hoping for an ambassadorship then and I'd been promised one by the then assistant secretary for African affairs. I found he had promised a lot of other, a lot of girls. There were a lot of other girls at the dance, too, but this was another disappointment because at the end of that I did not get an ambassadorship. The prize was going to be in Africa, something like Burkina Faso or Mali. I ended up with a choice: they at least gave me a choice of consul general in Johannesburg or DCM in Nairobi and I took DCM in Nairobi. The seminar I think was a great treasure. There's nothing like it comparable in the private sector.

Q: The great thing I found was that was exposed to me an awful lot of political trends and cultural trends in the United States.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. For my big project I took the month of February, which is what people did then, and I got on Amtrak and I made a study nationwide going to high schools about the study of American history in American high schools. I went to places I'd never been before. I stayed longer, I had adventures on the train. I got a really good feeling about what was going on in the United States with what was then a kind of a crisis of confidence because we'd had the rise of Japan and so forth. The United States looked like it was going down and I didn't explicitly want to do it, but what I ended up doing was looking at the way race and class affected education and also how notions have changed our American history. I know when you went to school and when I went to school it was pretty much the same: America was a wonderful place and that's what we were trying to find, what made it so wonderful. What has set in recently is America has done a lot of horrible deeds. This probably is a good place to stop, the senior seminar.

Q: All right, so you left the senior seminar and you were going to go as DCM?

SOUTHWICK: DCM to Nairobi.

Q: All right. So, we will pick this up when you went as DCM to Nairobi in 1980?

SOUTHWICK: I990.

Q: 1990. By the way, before we move to that, how did the fall of the Berlin Wall hit? I mean there were elements, you were in INR during the leadup, sort of with the summer of '89 and you still had people who were saying people would expect the German Democratic Republic was getting ready for its 30th anniversary and it looked, it didn't look like things, particularly were going to collapse. I mean you in your thing and the rest of the intelligence community.

SOUTHWICK: It was kind of churning and things were happening, but very few people believed it was all going to happen as quickly as it eventually did. We had some people in the senior seminar who were Europeanists. Tom Weston had spent a lot of time in Germany and he was predicting that all of this stuff would take a long time to work out and the role of the allies in the post-war agreement would take a long time to get settled. In a matter of months all of this stuff just vanished.

Q: Were there movements within the intelligence community during the last six months of '89?

SOUTHWICK: In '89, yes, our principal deputy in INR at the time was somebody named Curt Kamman who was a Russian specialist and served there. I remember one time he was told to go to the White House to brief President Reagan on glasnost and perestroika. I remarked to him somewhat cattily I said, I don't know if you should do this in that way, I think that you should make a video of this because that's what the President relates to. He likes a production. I said we should do a little production, gussy it up, make it kind of interesting. Curt is a brilliant person, but I would think after a while the president's mind would begin to wander. How do you keep him riveted on this kind of thing? Curt went over there and did his thing and apparently it went over well. We felt what Gorbachev was ostensibly trying to do was to reform the system. That's what was going to happen and the system would kind of lighten up rather than sort of fall under its own weight. We're revisiting this now because of the death of President Reagan.

Q: Yes. Okay, well, then let me switch tapes.

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Today is July 12th, 2004. Mike, 1990, how did you get the job as DCM in Nairobi?

SOUTHWICK: Something that happens to some of us, maybe most of us. I thought this was my time to be an ambassador and I had been given to understand by a number of people that this would be happening. I was in the senior seminar. It looked like a logical kind of progression. I'd been a DCM three times. I was pretty well known in the African bureau, but to make a long story short, that was not to be. It came down to two possibilities, one being consul general in Johannesburg and two being DCM in Kenya to a political appointee ambassador, Smith Hempstone, who was a journalist by profession. He'd been an editor at the Washington Star and the Washington Times, known as a conservative in the old sense of the term. I started looking into this. Our ambassador in South Africa at the time was Bill Swing, a very eminent Foreign Service Officer and somebody for whom I had worked in personnel. I called Bill and said you know, this was a possibility for me. I would think that he knew that I was in the running. What did he think? He said, "Oh, Johannesburg is a great place. I've been here two months and I've been down there 52 times." I said mentally at least, thanks a lot Bill. That's very interesting. I could have my numbers mixed up, but the gist of it I'm pretty sure is correct and I put the phone down and I thought, you know, Bill was a great activist, he's a compulsive worker, he's a workaholic. If I go to Johannesburg, I'll have no independence. I'll see what I can do in Nairobi. It was one of the best decisions I ever made.

Q: Well, I think it would be a lot of fun. I've interviewed.

SOUTHWICK: Bill Swing?

Q: Not Swing, Smith Hempstone. An interesting chap. How did you contact him? How did you two mate?

SOUTHWICK: Okay, a very good friend of mine was the desk officer for Kenya, He and I had served together in Niger where I had been DCM and he was the sort of relatively junior officer doing political and economic work and he told me, you know, you might like Hempstone and he might like you. I said, really? He said, yes, you should talk to him. So, we arranged an appointment and I had a meeting with Hempstone and I think maybe this is recorded in his book, Rogue Ambassador, that he was down to me and one other officer. One of the things he had against the other officer was that he was short and he felt that short people were always trying to make up for their "shortcomings." I had a little bit of an edge, not a total edge, but we had a very interesting interview. Hempstone asked me, kind of the classic question, is what was the last book you've read. I said, well, I've been reading a history of the American West in the year 1846 written by Bernard DeVoto. This is kind of obscure to people now, but it's part of a trilogy.

Q: Year of Decision?

SOUTHWICK: Year of Decision, very good. Anyway, this led to discussion of the West and Bernard DeVoto and we obviously just hit it off. I liked him. It was pretty clear to me that he would be interested, as I think most ambassadors should be, in bigger picture things, relationship with the very top officials and establish them and a lot of running the embassy should be left to the DCM. That's sort of where we left it. He had proceeded me to post by some months. The interesting thing was over the course of those months his relationship with the government steadily deteriorated. He was beginning to challenge them on democratization, human rights and basic governance issues, particularly corruption. This was put together in an article in the New Yorker written by Ray Bonner who earlier made a reputation exposing some of America's misdeeds in Central America. Ray Bonner was then married to Jane Perlez who was a New York Times correspondent. Basically the issue in 1990 in Kenya as it was in a lot of countries was that the Cold War was coming to an end. What did that mean for U.S. policy particularly in Africa where the record on democratization, human rights and so forth, general management had been very poor? The excuse had always been, well, we can't be too hard on them because we've got this Cold War and if we are nasty to these dictators they will kiss up to the communists, the Russians and the Chinese. That was basically it. Hempstone kind of wandered into this. It's not as if he had a big strategy. He was kind of reacting to events and a lot of what he saw on the ground was an effort by indigenous political forces to change things.

Q: What was the thrust of the New Yorker article about him?

SOUTHWICK: Well, that he was out there trying to define these issues and trying to be helpful, but to also be kind of forward on it. I think the Bonner article was basically how far do you push? How up front do you get or do you even get up front and how does American diplomacy operate in those circumstances?

Q: The articles came out before you went out there?

SOUTHWICK: It came out about the time I went.

Q: I was wondering how this reverberated within the African bureau and all.

SOUTHWICK: The issue had certainly been engaged. I went out there in August. There had been in July a big rally that was put down by the government and the opposition leaders had called for multiparty democracy. Hempstone had given a speech at a rotary club, which frankly was written by the Econ officer, but you know, it's his speech so he got the credit and the blame depending on your point of view. He had a mild formulation which basically said that the Bush administration would be very mindful of how countries manage their affairs, how they lead their countries, democracy, human rights, economic management and so forth in their relationship. That would have an impact on the relationship. It looked to the government, which was paranoid, that Hempstone was in league with this opposition.

Q: You were there, I just want to get it, from when to when?

SOUTHWICK: I got there in August, I'd have to check the precise date, and I was there for four years.

Q: So, '90 to '94?

SOUTHWICK: '90 to '94.

Q: Did you get anything from within the African bureau of saying my God, keep an eye on this guy. In other words, sort of an unease or something like that or not?

SOUTHWICK: Well, interestingly nothing ever explicit, although my final interview with the Assistant Secretary of State who was Hank Cohen was a strange interview. He said that he was going out to Nairobi to try to rescue the situation. Hempstone was in trouble and he said, you might be chargï¿½ when you get out there and you might be chargï¿½ for a long time because this is going very badly. In fact, Cohen did get out there a couple of days before I did and he was leaving on the same plane that I arrived on and I never got a chance to compare notes with him. Cohen did have a private meeting one-on-one with the President. An unusual thing to have a meeting like that with the American ambassador not present.

Q: Yes. I mean arriving in this thing, in the first place, what did you make of what the Cohen visit and the situation was with?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I knew quite a bit about the political situation there. I had had very good briefings. I had studied up. I had followed Kenya off and on for some time. My feeling was that the government really did need to change. I never had a problem in a broad sense with what Hempstone was trying to do. I tended to feel that the government was kind of making him an issue and to a certain extent he was making himself an issue, which kind of clouded this whole thing up and got it a little bit more personalized. The fundamentals of Hem stone's analysis was that the country was going downhill, corruption was rampant, it needed to open up its political and economic system. All of that was right.

Q: So, how did you find the embassy when you got there because you're in charge of morale, effectiveness and all that?

SOUTHWICK: Morale was high and part of it was Hempstone's wife, Kitty Hempstone who is a warm, engaging, fascinating, energetic person in her own right, interested in what people do. I found morale there to be quite high because most of the people in the embassy kind of understood what was going on and were trying to do their best to aid our efforts to bring some liberalization to Kenya. Hempstone for his part thought that I was there to spy on him and that I was there to report back to Washington and make sure that he didn't go off too far on policy initiatives that weren't approved. But despite what some people might think, we had a very good relationship and there's only one point where we got into a big fight and that kind of settled when I got the help of a U.S. government employee there who was also a Marine and he could talk Marine to Hempstone.

Q: Where does that come chronologically?

SOUTHWICK: That came about oh, a year or so later.

Q: Okay, well, let's talk a little before it. Did you have the usual sit down and divvy up what you were going to or sort of what you were going to do?

SOUTHWICK: We had done that in effect over a lunch at the Metropolitan Club before both he and I went out. He was in for the big picture, the relationship. He had tried to cultivate President Moi. He tells this story in his book. He wanted to bring out a prize bull from America to give to Moi who was a big farmer, rancher and this would improve Moi's herd and sort of cement the relationship. That initiative didn't get very far because who's going to pay to bring the bull out. The bull, the visuals were a pile of bull semen and were not quite as good as the visuals for a big prize American bull. Then, Hempstone had the notion of maybe the Kenyan air force could get a C130 airplane. Basically these were initiatives to kind of butter up Moi and cement the relationship, but it wasn't getting very far. It didn't get very far at all.

Q: What was your reading and Moi,, not from Hempstone at this point, but your reading on Moi and his government, first the personality of Moi and then his government when you got out there?

SOUTHWICK: I really felt his government was corrupt and that he himself was corrupt, but I didn't feel I knew enough initially about him to make some judgments. Nor did I know enough about the kind of political culture there because my training had made me want to concentrate on the political culture of the country as much as the individual personalities. What I began to find as I went along was that Moi was a very underestimated person because he wasn't very articulate in public settings. He was very articulate privately I came to find out and he was a very complex man. I used to think he was either a schizophrenic or somebody with multiple personalities. He was the guy who turned up in church every Sunday. He fancied himself a good Christian. He gave lots of donations to schools and individual students and so forth, yet he was also the person who was shipping millions of dollars outside the country.

Q: Well, that could describe certain leaders in our business, I mean going back through the centuries in any country.

SOUTHWICK: I guess it was Dorothy Parker, a reference to some individual, but I think it applies to politics, most politicians are as pure as the driven slush. I didn't have these expectations and I also as time went by began to have a split with Hempstone because of my analysis. The problem with Kenya was not Moi as a person. It was a political culture which was basically corrupt. The question was whether a change would necessarily bring in a new regime which would be any different from the other one except that it would have a different name and face. I had a different analysis on that.

Q: How did you analyze the political culture of Kenya as say to some other African countries that you had served?

SOUTHWICK: Much more highly advanced. It had never really broken down. It had one coup attempt in '82, which was put down. They'd had a record of continuous elections, which by the standards of the Third World or Cook County, Illinois in former days in America were not bad. Regularly, despite the fact that it was a one party system, a lot of the bad apples would get tossed out. It was a very vibrant political scene. I hoped they could start opening up and have a policy of gradualism multiparties and peoples' rights to assembly and freedom of speech, right of assembly and right of association, things fundamental to the democratic process. You had a lot of intellectual capital at the embassy. They had very good people in the AID mission. The best AID director that I ever worked with.

Q: Who was that?

SOUTHWICK: John Wesley who later became our AID director in Egypt. It was a gung ho staff and morale was sky high. We were rocking and rolling.

Q: Tell me on this I've heard people say they were concerned to go to Nairobi particularly for some years now because of the crime.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, crime had been a problem with urbanization and slums. If you go back to the colonial period or the period of independence, Nairobi was a town of maybe 100,000 people and it had gotten to be well over a million by the time I got there. It's probably over two million now with these vast slums. A lot of poor unemployed or scarcely employed people and street crime was high and crime out in the suburb was high. Hijackings and so forth. We calculated at the embassy that a person had like a one in 20 chance of being mugged, robbed or otherwise assaulted during his tour there.

Q: How did you deal with this?

SOUTHWICK: Well, the embassy had guards. Each individual residence had guards. I felt pretty safe because I had a driver who had been in the General Services unit and was military part of his career. He was a big, tall Kalenjin, which is part of Moi's tribe, but he was part of a subgroup, which happened to oppose Moi in some respects, so he was kind of perfectly positioned which is often the case. You get very well acquainted with a driver if you have the same driver year in and year out. The only time I really got worried about security in the sense that it could hit me personally was when my son started to drive. He turned 18 and could drive and he was driving around and I told him if anybody ever wants this car, you give it to them. You don't do anything crazy or try to resist or be smart-alecky or anything else. You be cool and give them the car. You know, he's an 18 year old and I was kind of worried about it, but fortunately such an incident never occurred.

Q: How about say the secretaries and all this? Was there a problem particularly of rape and robbery and that sort of thing?

SOUTHWICK: We had a rape incident when I was there involving two women who worked for AID. They were just out for a stroll at a fairgrounds when the fair was going on, but they were kind of off into the sidelines and they were accosted and they were raped. Rape per se was not usually what you had to worry about there. What you had to worry about was petty street crime and thievery. Household staffs were notorious. My own was notorious. I could never get to the bottom of the thing. Bottles of liquor, cameras, clothes. Never anything super valuable, but very cleverly done. It was kind of a continuous drain and that marred my attitude about a lot of things.

Q: How tribal were politics?

SOUTHWICK: Very tribal. This was not fully appreciated in the lead up to the 1992 elections by which time there were multiparties in Kenya. When that election took place we found that it was virtually all on tribal lines. The estimate we had going into the election that Kenya was to some extent urbanized. There was an educated, somewhat middle class there, unlike the middle class in a lot of other countries, that they would kind of be above this and that did not prove to be the case. Getting to that point in '92 when they had multipartism, was a combination of things. Hempstone was a public voice at the embassy setting the tone that Kenya needed to change and clearly challenging the government to do better. Then some steps that some of the rest of us took and I was involved, the ring leader, if you will, of a group of development people that decided that Kenya would not change, Moi would not change on the basis of dialogue. There needed to be some clear pressure. You're obviously not going to send in the Marines and we fastened on the idea that we needed to do something about the aid flows, particularly the cash aid. Kenya was getting about a billion dollars worth of aid, about 200 or 300 million dollars over a year cash, loans from the World Bank primarily. We felt that a message needed to be sent on that. I, with my Japanese counterpart and my Dutch counterpart, we essentially launched a diplomatic campaign, lined up our capitals lined up our representatives in the World Bank, much to the surprise of the World Bank who kind of mouthed a lot of sentiments about other concerns about governance and so forth, but they stayed out of that and they just did development. We cornered the government in the fall of 1991 and suspended all cash assistance. The first time that this had happened in an African country. Within a month of that Moi had his worst two people in jail, who didn't stay there very long, his worst two people were in jail and he had decided to change the constitution. This policy of putting on economic pressure had been by that point an absolutely resounding success. The next elections a year later in '92 were going to be multiparty elections. The political officer then was Al Eastham, a very talented guy. He said, you know, you're doing a lot of things and he says, he didn't think that the ambassador really understood what I was doing. I said, well, I sent him all these memos and we've talked about it. Al said, well, you need to talk to him about it again. I ran into Hempstone and I said it's pretty plain to us that sweet reason isn't going to get us very far and we need to do something more. Some economic pressure would help and this is how I intend to proceed lining up all these other Western countries, Japan and doing something about aid. It was a little bit unclear exactly what we were going to do. Hempstone was kind of hesitant for a moment and I thought, oh my God, this is going to go down the drain. He said, well, all right, he didn't want anything to interfere with his relationship with Moi. I thought to myself, what relationship with Moi. I said quite honestly I don't think this will inflict any further damage to the relationship with Moi.

By that time I had been chargï¿½ enough and I had seen Moi personally myself a couple of times. There was one kind of strange incident when the government was in this campaign to discredit Hempstone. They had all kinds of planted articles in the newspaper that he was an unfit ambassador. They tricked me into a meeting which I was supposed to have with a minister. I arrived there and who did I have the meeting with, but Moi. I couldn't get out of it, but as soon as it was over and this was at Moi's private residence in Nairobi, I went to Hempstone and I said, I want to tell you this. I didn't plan this. This just happened. We just had a good conversation and I told him everything that had happened. Hempstone was terribly upset. I probably could have been canned right then and there. I frankly expected to be, but I said, this is something we've just got to put in the past and just keep going. I think Hempstone knew or came to appreciate that I was not trying to undermine him there and that as a matter of fact the staff was very good at supporting him. I think he always saw me or tended to see me as someone who represented this kind of vile State Department system of careerist bureaucrats who don't want to take risks.

Q: But actually we were, weren't we?

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely.

Q: Could you talk a bit about the diplomatic corps there. You were saying you got support. So often the United States ends up acting on its own because nobody else will support it. I mean it's not like you had more proactive group.

SOUTHWICK: It was a group of DCMs there, basically deputies. I had very good relationships with the key ones and one of the institutional things there was a kind of a DCM lunch that happened every month and it would travel around among I guess 12 or 13 DCMs. It wasn't everybody and who was in it and who was out of it was, there was no rationale for it, it just didn't include everybody. The problem we had was with the British who had more interest there than we did. They had more investment, they had a longer history, they had more of their nationals living there and the ambassador there I think kind of found Hempstone a loathsome character and was very condescending in his treatment of him. This was Sir Roger Tomkys, a very venerable Arabist and sort of central casting of the British diplomat. I was well acquainted with the deputy there, Hayden Warren-Gash who had spent the first 12 years of his life in Kenya. He had this kind of visceral feeling for Kenya. The British kind of went along with this because the Dutch and even the Japanese who usually are very _____, but _____ and I were frankly asleep at the stage and he was unlike most Japanese diplomats I ever met. He was diffident and careful and so forth. He'd been educated in the West and he was an advocate of Japan using its tremendous economic power particularly in aid. It was about that time that Japan was surpassing the United States as the biggest bilateral donor and thinking that it should get something out of it. It should produce some results in these countries, which badly needed some change. I have never ever felt comfortable with the United States acting alone unless it absolutely has to. It's just far better for us given our power then and it was even becoming clear then, you know, Russia had faded from the scene. We are sitting astride the world like a colossus that if we didn't work carefully with our friends, we would engender a very bad reaction over time. We really had to work with them. The British were important, the French were important to some extent, the Dutch, the Japanese. If you couldn't convince them to go ahead I felt that we were just pissing in the wind, excuse me.

Q: How about getting out and around and talking to leaders and others?

SOUTHWICK: There was quite a bit of that. Hempstone himself liked to go on these big trips and I didn't want to go with him and I didn't think it was appropriate. If he's out running around the country, the DCM should be running the embassy and vice versa if I needed to go on a trip. I would always defer to him. He would take a lot of people with him. These are beautifully written up in his book. He's a great travel writer. He brings in a lot of history and incidents and personality portraits. Some of his dispatches were just wonderful to read that he sent back. I did somewhat less travel than he did. My wife and two other women were working on a book, a tourism book of Kenya. It started out to be a little pamphlet on the best hotels in Kenya and ended up being a full length book which covered over 250 places to stay and required two years of research. She was going all over the country, my wife, with these two other women and trying to put this book together about Kenya's best hotels. It became eventually Kenya's best hotels, lodges and homesteads. She was getting out.

Kenyan society is very fascinating. It's a mixture. You have different kinds of Asian groups from the Indian subcontinent. People who have been there for decades originally brought over to help build the railroad. You had a big European population, which was aid workers and so forth. You had vestiges of the old white Kenyan culture.

Q: Was Happy Valley still going?

SOUTHWICK: Happy Valley was not going, but I'm sure a lot of happy stuff was going on. Then you found Kenya attracted all these sort of wildlife people. It was sort of a Mecca for that and then the democratization. There was a lot going on. Partly through Susan, my wife, and partly through my own efforts, we ended up knowing lots of people. I don't want to brag, but I don't think there was anybody of consequence in that country that we didn't know from the president on down.

Q: What about the South Asian community? They'd been sort of expelled, many of them from Uganda and Idi Amin and all. Had that increased, what was the South Asian influence?

SOUTHWICK: They were the commercial class and to a certain extent the industrial class. They were astute enough to form alliances with prominent Kenyans in many instances. They clearly brought revenue and entrepreneurial skill to the country. Even though there were sometimes accusations of racism and accusations that they have all the money, the Asians have all the money and they're not sharing well, it was not a nasty, hostile relationship by and large. I think the Asians were fairly careful although in individual instances, and I watched this sometimes in shops and so forth, Africans would be treated very poorly by the Asians. By and large I think the Moi government had made a decision, a consensus decision on the part of the indigenous African elite, that they didn't want to do what Idi Amin had done, expelling the Asians that helped lead to the ruination of Uganda and to make the best of it. The Asians I think responded to that by in many instances doing good deeds, foundations, public works, bringing money back into the country.

Q: How did the government work? Was this a parliament? Were decisions made in back rooms, consensus, how did things work?

SOUTHWICK: Well, the president was clearly the dominant figure and everybody knew that. He had some trusted aids, which were people of his own tribe. He had a very uneasy relationship with the Kikuyu tribe which is the tribe that in some ways is still the dominant tribe because it was the entrepreneurial class, had most of the best farmland in Kenya and Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya had emerged from their ranks. What I found about the political system was that even though there was tribalism and personalities jockeying and so forth there were some breaks. Forces for stability to keep things from going seriously off track. You noticed that time after time that Moi seems to be kind of heading for something bad and they would go back from the brink. This didn't work all the time. During the period we were there, there were tribal clashes in the Rift Valley.

Q: How were relations with Tanzania and Uganda?

SOUTHWICK: They were fairly good. Those three countries had been together at independence in something called the East African Community, the EAC. It broke up in the late '70s I believe, but they were making some efforts to put that together realizing that they had a lot to gain by cooperating economically and maybe adding a customs union, kind of a European union model thing. They were taking steps in that direction. Moi also kind of fancied himself as kind of a peacemaker in the area. He had a very able current secretary for the ministry of foreign affairs who had worked on the Mozambique issue. Moi tried to work on the Somalia issue and tried to be a regional statesman. During this period the whole area was kind of in flames. There was a civil war in Ethiopia. There was a civil war in the Sudan. Things were building up in Rwanda by the end of my tour. There was the genocide in Rwanda. Biggest of all in terms of involving the United States was the Somalia intervention. I was intimately involved in all aspects of that.

Q: Well, who, those particular things and we'll talk about that. How did we find Kenya worked as far as the United Nations and things we were trying to get support for and all that?

SOUTHWICK: They were fairly good. Kenya had distinguished itself from our point of view by being one of the African countries that had boycotted the Olympic games in Moscow in 1980 because of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. That was kind of interesting because Kenya as a sports country, an athletic country, is a powerhouse on the African side, particularly in running, long distance running. They had stayed out. They had cooperated with the Israelis on the Entebbe raid. In the UN generally they tended to go along with the African consensus. That unfortunately then as now is kind of manipulated by countries are mired in some of the issues of the past in North-South approaches. That wasn't as good as we had hoped, but on the Marines in Somalia we could count on them for support if we really needed it and often got it.

Q: Let's talk about these conflicts. The Somali one was the big one and the famous quote of Smith Hempstone.

SOUTHWICK: If you like Beirut, you'll love Mogadishu.

Q: Yes.

SOUTHWICK: He was absolutely right. There's a contradiction here. A huge contradiction because there's a civil war in Somali, but there was also a huge drought. The two things kind of came together to have a devastating effect on the population and refugees were pouring out of the country. Many of them into Kenya. We started having visitors from Washington and we increased our reporting on this phenomenon. There was still an embassy in Mogadishu headed by Jim Bishop and Hempstone visited some of the refugee camps. The civil war though was going badly for the government and it was pretty clear to most of us it was only a question of time before the rebels took over. It also seemed to us that Jim Bishop, our ambassador in Mogadishu, felt that this would take a lot longer than any of the rest of us thought it would take. One of the things about my career in Nairobi, stemming from my time in INR, I knew how to deal with the intelligence community. I knew how to get analyses. I knew how to get more information than what they would otherwise provide. I could conjure up analyses if I wanted to. I could get access to a lot of their reporting just because I think once you've been in the intelligence community, you're sort of part of a fraternity or sorority depending on your point of view. Anyway the boys and the girls respect each other. It's more common I agree at least at that time I felt in the agency than there was in State. There was more esprit and more in the seriousness about the importance of the work. We had an extremely talented station chief. Anyway, this whole situation in Mogadishu was deteriorating. I went off on home leave to Washington and then California. About the time I had left Nairobi Hempstone had filed a big report about his visit to a refugee camp on the border with Somalia in the northeast of Kenya. He had focused on an eight or nine or 10-year-old refugee. It was a brilliant piece of journalistic reporting, not necessarily Foreign Service reporting, but journalistic reporting. By this time we'd had the evacuation of our people from Mogadishu. Where was Jim Bishop? He was back in Washington I think in the human rights bureau. Jim had been a friend of mine for a long time and a mentor and I went to see him and obviously Jim was still following things in Somalia and said, why did you send this Hempstone cable classified? There's no reason to have it classified. I thought for a minute and I said, you're absolutely right. I honestly don't know. He got on the phone with Hempstone and said, send it again, and send it unclassified. A couple of days later it was in the Washington Post. The story goes that President Bush read it, was deeply affected by it and it was one of the things that made him decide, among others, I'm not saying it was a sole thing, but it was an important element in his decision to do something. We'd already had congressional delegations out there who felt that despite all advice and I'm a big one for trying to get all of the best information from all of the wisest and people about the situation. I organized briefings and to a man people said the worst thing that you could do is to go in there militarily. Everybody said that, but I remember John Lewis, the congressman from Georgia, after a briefing with the press after his visit out there and he says, we can't, I know I'm hearing that we can't intervene, but we can't just do nothing in the face of all this human suffering. Things were kind of brewing. I went back to Nairobi.

Q: Had you sounded out Washington before you went back or did you go sort of?

SOUTHWICK: I sounded out Washington and I felt that they were watching the situation very closely. They were trying to as they usually do in the State Department, they manage things. I didn't sense there was any big idea for doing anything drastic. I honestly didn't, but we were going to excuse me, piddle along with working with the UN and working with the NGOs in trying to alleviate the suffering caused by the drought and the civil war.

Q: Just to clarify, when you say civil war, civil war usually implies there's a red side or a blue side or what have you. Did you feel there were two different sides because it didn't turn out to be that way?

SOUTHWICK: There are very few people who understand Somalia, and I'm not necessarily one who does, but I understand it well enough to realize that it was not a country in the classic sense. It had tribes. It had clans, it had factions. It was governed in the colonial era by both the British in the northeast and elsewhere by the Italians. Those two things were glued together at independence. It was basically kind of a rival clan structure, king of the mountain kind of place. I remember very clearly this vivid conversation that Hempstone and I had with a couple of Somalis who had been with the previous government who were in Nairobi after the government was overturned. I remember asking one of them, I said, everybody said Somalis like to fight, but how do you envision this coming to an end. I couldn't understand people wanting to fight because you had this Hatfield McCoy kind of stuff, in some ways defined Somalia. He said Somalis don't stop fighting until they're exhausted. It wasn't a question of one side winning, no it only happens when everybody is exhausted. They can't fight anymore. I took that to heart and it seemed to be sensible.

Q: Were we seeing this though as a classic civil war or was this a complete breakdown of authority at the time?

SOUTHWICK: At the time, there's nothing ideological about this. It was just in effect like two rival gangs. Even the gangs had their alliances and so forth, but nothing was terribly clear cut or organized. The huge problem was legitimacy of African governments and it's whoever gets the power holds power. It was one bad apple replacing another bad apple.

Q: When you went out there from home leave you didn't feel there was any?

SOUTHWICK: I thought that this thing would just keep bubbling. The Gulf War was over by then and I thought that my experience with Africa is that the United States does not like big adventures in Africa. It will occasionally be drawn into them, but when it does it doesn't like it. There's no sustaining power. I felt the best thing to do was to try, however clumsily and however messily, to work in a political process with our allies in the UN and trying to do what we could for Somalia. I was back in Nairobi. While on a trip to Lake Naivasha I got a call from the embassy saying come back to Nairobi now. I got on the phone with Washington and Washington was making this decision to send out a bunch of aircraft to help with humanitarian airlift, some C130s under the command of a Marine Corps General. I said, well, where does this stand now? They said the planes were coming, C130s, C141s and they were leaving tonight and they were coming my way. I said, well, has anyone in Washington had any conversations at all with the Kenyan Embassy? No. This was Robert Houdek on the phone. I said, "Robert, it seems to me that given time differences and so forth that is where you need to make the contact. Obviously we need to make it here, but we need to double track this thing." He wouldn't do it. He said, "No, you do it out there." This was a weekend, Saturday. I finally got in touch with Hempstone. He was at the embassy, but he wanted me to handle this or at least I was handling it and he didn't want to get involved. Anyway, I started trying to phone people in the government that I knew, the secretary of the foreign ministry that was close to the president. Other people that I knew. Couldn't get anybody, left notes, sent my driver with notes. He spoke the language and all the rest of it. Called where the president was. Tried to speak with the president's private secretary who I knew very well. Couldn't reach him. He was off somewhere and somebody else was taking his place. Didn't get him until midnight. I finally said, someone needs to talk to the president about this because these aircraft are heading our way and will want to land and its with this humanitarian relief.

Q: Nairobi was the only place they could land essentially?

SOUTHWICK: Well, there were several places. There's an international airport there. There's a military airport there and there is a big airport in Mombasa. The feeling was that the relief effort for a Somalia was really being run from Mombasa. We needed to land in Mombasa. We had a security agreement with Kenya, which gave us access to port facilities and bases, but it didn't, it assumed consultations with the government. You don't just show up and land. I was, to put it mildly, getting a little bit frantic, finally talked to, got a substitute secretary to the president. I said, could somebody talk to the president about this? _____ talked to the president. Ambassador Hempstone talked to the president: but these aircraft are coming and could you please give them clearance and then we'll have discussions about how to do this. Moi was livid, as one would expect him to be. Absolutely livid. All of this sort of emerged the next day. By the next day I had gotten them to let the planes land and they landed. The poor general was there and we asked for a meeting with the president and Hempstone was there. We had a meeting with the president, which was a kind of a stiff meeting, and he had some of his ministers there. Hempstone was there and the Marine Corps general and a couple of us from the embassy and it was not a nice conversation.

Some of my colleagues in the Kenyan government denied they had been contacted on Saturday when I knew they had. I had left a written message with one of them. They knew the essence of what was going on and they could have called me back. This was a Third World government. It doesn't work very well. Kind of paralyzed on weekends and they didn't like what was happening and they didn't know what to do about it. I guess I'll credit myself and disappoint Hempstone a little bit. I just thought maybe the way out of this was to co-opt Moi, that this was all his idea and that he's in charge of it. So, we put forward the view that there could be a kind of a joint committee established with key people in the government, people from the embassy. We would work under President Moi's direction to use this capacity we now had to enhance the humanitarian relief effort and the first area of concentration would be Somalis in refugee camps in Kenya. Anyway, this worked. Hempstone and a couple of others worked on as a joint statement and Hempstone appeared with the Kenyan foreign minister and they detested each other. As I said, to try to be sweetness and light, but we created this. In some ways it was fiction, but by then it was fact. There was a U.S.-Kenyan joint effort to beef up the humanitarian relief effort and wasn't this just dandy? Isn't this what the world wanted? Off we went. We started delivering food. I went with one of the planes. Then the effort was to move this into Somalia proper. We did have problems with Hempstone because he wanted to get in one of the planes with the Marine General and lead the charge and be the first American political figure to land in Somalia and show the flag and announce salvation, compliments of Uncle Sam. I was not too happy with this. I told him, I said, "Our job is to make sure that Kenya is the 51st state. We have the airport. We have the ports. We have total cooperation and we can move in, we can move out, we can do what we need. Somalia should be handled in a different fashion and that was what Washington was saying." We got into a little tiff then. He told me not to interfere; he was going to try to work this out with Washington. I thought, well, if you can work it out with Washington, I'm not going to complain. So, he did with a little bit of slight of hand, did go in with one of the planes into Somalia, first and last time.

Q: While you were there had plans been made other than getting this relief supplies to Mombasa and plans for maybe what to do with it afterwards?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, there was a whole network established. We had a big operation with OFDA, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. There was a lot of food coming into Mombasa. We were already running into difficulties about that before the General and his planes arrived, moving things forward because there were logistics problems. There were capacity problems. There were cooperation problems with the Somalis. There's no question that that operation initially with this humanitarian focus was really needed. In retrospect I had to admit that it would have taken a long time for the relief effort to get running smoothly and adequately. I had had experience with this because of my experience in Niger and I knew what it took to get food moved in massive quantities, thousands and thousands of tons. You can't do that with a business as usual approach.

Q: Did we have places in Somalia? I mean were you getting stuff to places in Somalia?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. By that time I think some of the UN people were in. We did not initially have any Americans on the ground. I worked it out with my EU counterpart. We had two adventurous people, an American woman who spent many years in Somalia, spoke the language, knew the place like the back of her hand. She was willing on a volunteer basis, I was not twisting her arm, she was the first American who went back in there after the embassy had been evacuated and she had made several trips and sometimes with this EU counterpart. It was sort of a Bobbsey twins approach. It was basically scout out the situation and talk to local officials. People liked her. We gave her a lot of money. She went over there, hired technicals, Toyota pickups with guys with machine guns on them, and went to see what she could find out. She had made a couple of trips like that. I was always scared to death that she was going to come back in pieces. From a humanitarian relief point of view, my recollection was that we had a pretty good information on where the food was needed and how, once we could get airlift into places required.

Q: While you were there, how did it work, how did the situation work?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we basically operated out of Mombasa and that's where the Marine General installed himself. We had, I think, at its height, maybe about 1,000 Americans in uniform down there and then it suddenly dawned on the Kenyans that this was good for business. We had at that time a consulate in Mombasa. Our consular officer down there, it's just a one man post, sort of a classic 19th Century operation in a 19th Century town. It's right out of Sir Richard Burton.

Q: He had a pith helmet?

SOUTHWICK: He was a character. He was totally unlike a typical Foreign Service Officer, but if we ever had the right person in the right place, this was the guy. Right now the name is escaping me, but it will come to me any second now. You know there are two kinds of Foreign Service Officers. There's the inside of the office kind and sort of the outside guy and sometimes you get one person with both. This guy, forget about the office and forget about ever seeing reports unless you strapped him down and tied his hands to the keyboard. He knew everybody in town. We had reports from Washington, oh, there's Muslims down there and they hate us and oh, we don't know there might be radicals and they might try some funny stuff. This consular officer went around to all the Muslim leaders. They had barbecues together with the military. They were just thrilled to death to have all these people with lots of money out there. We owned that town and relationships between people in uniform and the local establishment were fantastic.

Q: When did this thing turn military other than the airlift portion?

SOUTHWICK: I'm going to have to check everything I say because memory can play tricks, but we gradually got people on the ground in there. I think we were just sort of drawn into it more and more and we were having trouble with Aidid in Somalia who was frustrating, the political reconciliation process was frustrating as well, some of the relief operations. He became a kind of a nemesis and somebody to deal with. Over time there were a lot of troops who got established in there. I think Bangladeshis, some of these who come in on peacekeeping operations and there were some clashes from time to time. We had people on the ground, not a whole lot, but we had people on the ground and ours naturally were far better equipped than others. We got into this situation where the idea was to capture Aidid. I knew some of the people in the other organizations who were involved in this and I knew them and I thought at the end of the day Mogadishu is not going to have one rock on top of another rock or we're going to have Aidid. I mean these were very tough, determined, skilled people, but despite many attempts we could never get the guy. This threat had gone I guess until October of '93 and you had the famous Black Hawk Down incident.

Q: What were you getting from your side, I mean how was this whole operation affecting our relations with Kenya?

SOUTHWICK: Once we got over that initial distress of lack of consultation and so forth, they got used to it. They felt it kind of in many senses worked to their advantage. It made them a little bit more important in the whole thing and gave Moi some scope to try as he often did to play the role of peacemaker. When Robert Oakley left Somalia, Moi had a meeting or two with Oakley. I think the Kenyans were trying to be helpful. Kenya has an uneasy relationship with Somalia. Kenya to a certain extent is a manufactured country like most African countries.

Q: It's got that one section that's part of the five pointed stars.

SOUTHWICK: Five stars. Yes. Whatever it is on the Somalia flag, but anyway, a third of Kenya geographically is ethnically Somali. There's not too many people who live up there, but the northeast corner of the country, a pretty good swab of it is ethnically Somali and the Somalia government would like to have that as it would a big chunk of Ethiopia and have Somalia's borders conform to its ethnic reach.

Q: Were the Kenyans putting troops in there at all or anything like that?

SOUTHWICK: I don't recall them putting troops in. I could be wrong on that, but I don't recall them putting in troops. They were involved in some other UN peacekeeping operations. I think they may have been stretched a little thin. They felt they were the platform there. They were the 51st state as it were in terms of the logistics or whatnot for U.S. operations and this gave them some scope so they got used to the idea. A little bit frustrated, they would have liked to have gotten the refugees back to Somalia. They didn't want this influx of refugees. Some of them were in the northeast corner of Kenya, but a lot of them were in the area between Mombasa and the Somalia border and that's where a lot of the tourist trade is. The people who like beaches and that kind of stuff as opposed to game parks.

Q: Did sort of the collapse of the situation and our pullout happen while you were there?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, it did.

Q: What did that do?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it was humiliating and it showed the limits of a number of things. Our staying power, we lost 13 soldiers when Black Hawk Down occurred. It was a very dramatic event. The imagery in the press on the cover of Newsweek magazine was really distressing. Naked or almost naked dead American soldiers being dragged through the streets. This is '93. I guess Clinton was president by then, yes. There was just no interest in perpetuating this anymore. I mean it started drying out and about six months later we were out. We just left it to the UN and kind of abandoned much of an effort to do anything there.

Q: Did you notice a cooling off or a certain disdain or anything like that on the part of the government of Kenya?

SOUTHWICK: Not so much, but they they're not as afflictive as some of the idealism that we have. We went in there for quite good notions and kind of lost our way. I'm not staying it's exactly like Vietnam, but there are some parallels with what we're going through right now in Iraq. You get in, things are more complicated than you think, they get worse, you start paying a cost as Hempstone put it in his famous cable about Mogadishu, somebody pays the butcher's bill. We had a butcher's bill there. It was only 13, it wasn't hundreds, wasn't thousands. We'd had some casualties in other respects, but nothing quite as dramatic as that Black Hawk Down incident.

Q: What about you say there was a civil war going on in Ethiopia in '91.

SOUTHWICK: Tigray.

Q: That's of course quite removed from the Kenyan border.

SOUTHWICK: Yes it is although they share a border. There's a border crossing point.

Q: They share a border, but I'm saying the fighting was.

SOUTHWICK: The fighting never got down there and that was going on in '91. Bob Houdek by then was our chargï¿½. He's a very capable guy and that thing was coming to an end. I had flown up to the border post. We needed to make contingency plans because we thought we might have a situation where a lot of the foreign community Americans would have to evacuate overland to the southwest of Ethiopia along the Kenya border. We'd have to go up there and meet and help them in Kenya. There's no good road up there, and bring them down to Nairobi. During the Gulf War we had evacuated our embassy in the Sudan and there was a C141, one or two had brought out everybody late one night because we didn't think the place was safe. I mean we were used to chaos in countries and evacuations and contingency planning and trying to make the best of bad things. Houdek and the rest of the staff up there did a masterful job of arranging things so that when the rebels came into Addis Ababa it was maybe not like Paris in 1944, but it was a relatively peaceful takeover. Mengistu fled and initially fled to Nairobi. When that plane landed he was in effect in Kenyan custody. The government got in touch with us. I was on the phone with people at the foreign ministry and the president's offices. They didn't know what to do with him. They said this guy's crazy. He still thinks he's president. He's crying. He's emotionally out of control and he is terribly upset. He was saying his country needed him and there were still things that he needed to accomplish. This was somebody who brought nothing but ruin to Ethiopia. Shows you what megalomania can do. Well, the Kenyans were inclined to ship him off somewhere else. I said I think the furthest you can get him from here the better. He ended up in Zimbabwe.

Q: How about the Rwanda situation when you were there?

SOUTHWICK: That had gone through several phases. There was a peace process that was producing results, there was a peace plan. Rwandans were very happy. I remember going to a Thanksgiving service at a church, an American Thanksgiving at a church with the Rwandan community in Nairobi to thank God for this agreement that was going to end this civil war in Rwanda. Then in April of '94 we heard over the radio that Habyarimana, the president of Rwanda, was in a plane that had been shot down. There was chaos in Kigali. I went to the embassy. We had a very good staff there. They were all geared up as they had been before to do what needed to be done. We just assumed that eventually the people in Kigali would be coming through Nairobi and that was the case. A few of them we got out by air, but most of them, there was a land convoy. Ambassador Rawson went down to Bujumbura. We brought people over by plane. We had quite a few people in Nairobi for about a week or two including Joyce Leader who was the DCM there and was a good friend of mine. I had watched Rwanda. I had served there. I had served in Burundi. I knew that if things started tipping they would get really bad, but even I didn't anticipate how bad it would get. I just didn't.

Q: Was there any sort of marshaling of Tutsi forces in Kenya or was that all Uganda?

SOUTHWICK: No, Kenya was completely out of it although there was a resident Rwandan exiled community in Kenya. One of the exiles was the former king of Rwanda, Kigeli the fifth, like that whom I came to know. He would visit the embassy from time to time and the marines were just sort of awestruck. This guy was nearly seven feet tall. He was a very nice person and didn't seem to have much money or anything. He was under some kind of UN support I guess. He wanted to go back to Rwanda, wanted to play a role, but was not pushing it. He was very careful about all of that.

Then this is a wonderful little Foreign Service left hand right hand story. He wanted to go to the States. I thought I don't know whether this is a good idea or not, it might mess things up. So, I got in touch with Washington and we worked this issue for a while and we didn't get a clear decision, but Kigeli had been invited by some group in the States to come there. Well, one day Kigeli came to see me, came up to my office and thanked me for the visa that our consular section had just issued him. I called down to the consular section as soon as Kigeli left and said, "What on earth did you do?" He said, "Well, he seemed to give the criteria in this organization which was sponsoring him and all the rest of it." I mean I could blame myself for this because I'm supposed to be running the embassy so to speak, but I thought that there had been sufficient discussion in country team meetings that this is somebody who is politically hot. If we do this we've got to it in a kind of a careful way. I wasn't necessarily opposed to it, but I didn't want it to be kind of sprung on me. Anyway, Kigeli went off to the States and stayed there for months and months. I don't know where he is now. There were no untoward repercussions from it. I think he was being sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventists, I'm not sure.

Q: What about, you've mentioned, a feeling when you talked to Houdek about the planes coming out. Did you ever find out what came, that sort of the idea of sending off planes without getting clearances and all that?

SOUTHWICK: No, I never got a formal apology. I never got a further explanation, but I just, frankly I still think that's a lousy way to do business.

Q: Oh, a terrible way to do business.

SOUTHWICK: I like to think that if they had talked to the Kenyan government at the embassy here in Washington, maybe they would have gotten a no. There was so much a head of steam behind this that they just said, well, this is heavy pressure from President Bush. He wanted to do this, so let's just close our eyes and hope for the best. Our embassy, despite the fact that I think we were regarded as an antithetical force to Moi, we had a pretty good relationship. I personally had and still have a very good relationship with Moi and we'd been able to pull some other things out of the hat. For a while we had a whole bunch of Libyan prisoners of war who had been captured in Chad. They were fighting in Chad. When it looked like the government holding these Libyan prisoners of war was going to fall we evacuated them, took them first, I don't know where, a couple of countries. They went to Zaire. When I got involved in this, I got a phone call one day saying do you think Kenya would lodge these Libyan prisoners of war for a few months while we process them as refugees? I said, why don't you take them to Panama?

Q: How did we end up with them?

SOUTHWICK: That's a good question. We were involved with them and I think we were trying, with the agency and others, to get some of these people, I suspect, I don't know this for sure, to go back to Libya.

Q: This is in the aftermath of the Toyota wars wasn't it?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, well there was always a kind of a civil war going on in Chad, one group takes over and then it's sort of South versus North kind of stuff. Libya was aiding the Northerners who were Muslim. Anyway, that was another incident which is described incorrectly in Hempstone's book. Hempstone said he went over to meet the president alone which was not the case. We went together and we went first down to the foreign ministry our best friend over there Bethwell Kipplegott and explained all of this. Kipplegott who was very astute said why don't we get in a car and go see the president? What Kipplegott was trying to do was to make sure that nobody else got involved in this so that we would be the ones to spring it on Moi before Moi had a chance to talk to some of his ministers who would be opposed to the idea. I'll never forget this. Sitting in Moi's office. Moi doesn't even want to look at Hempstone. Hempstone does the talking. I'm watching Hempstone. I'm watching Moi and then at the end of this presentation Moi looks at me and he says, "I always like to help the Americans." I was flabbergasted because I didn't think he would do it. I thought he would sort of laugh us out of court. So, Moi agreed to it. Once he agreed to it, there was no going back. He just called some of the ministers, some of the security people and we set up a little system to handle this. Within a week or so we had 500 Libyan prisoners of war in Kenya at some youth camp upcountry all being processed to become refugees to the United States. Some months later we rented a big plane, a Swiss Air 747, to carry the whole kit and caboodle, early one morning, still dark, we wanted to do it in darkness and moved those folks out. Somebody needs to write this story up sometime. It's a fascinating story.

Q: They went where?

SOUTHWICK: They went to the States. Somebody said, well they'll all wind up lined up in Detroit, which has a lot of Libyans and other Muslims there, too. Whether some of them drifted back or not. Some of them wanted to get out of the youth camp in Kenya and go back and that was allowed to happen. With Kenya we had a love hate relationship. I remember Moi was raised in part by American missionaries so I don't want to call them fundamentalist, but more austere Protestant sects. He had this kind of emotional feeling about Americans.

Q: You've mentioned, maybe you've already done this, but you had this one sort of big blowup with Smith Hempstone?

SOUTHWICK: Only one, yes. We got wind of a big group of people, hundred of them, marching through the streets and they were heading toward the embassy. We knew that they were basically a pro-Hempstone group. This was during the lead up to the election. So, Hempstone calls me and he calls in a public affairs officer and says he wants to get a loudspeaker system set up in front of the embassy with a podium so he can address the crowd. I said I don't think this is a good idea. The station chief and the security officer were there. I think this crowd will probably have some bad apples in it who might be, who knows what they might do, they might want to pick you off. Hempstone said, don't get in an uproar. I'm about to become a hero. I looked at the station chief and he looked at me. I said, well, I think we need to really think about this. I got some help from the station chief. I think he passed away a couple of years ago in retirement, but he finally told Hempstone it was too dangerous. We did close the gates to the embassy, these metal bar kind of things, but we allowed Hempstone to go there and talk to some of the citizenry which he did, but it was a relatively controlled environment. He was angry with me then because he thought that this was his big chance.

Q: What about I take it when Clinton came in Hempstone left?

SOUTHWICK: That's right. There was an effort. He wanted to stay on. He felt as a lot of ambassadors do, indispensable. He brought things along in the relationship that things in some respects were going well. There was this democratization process underway. He had been there through the election which had its ups and downs and tensions, but which led to a Moi victory, but it was still by anybody's account a step forward for the country. He wanted to stay on and I could understand that in a way, but I felt in another way it might be good to have some fresh people there. It certainly wasn't my decision to make and he made some entreaties. I just stayed out of it suspecting that Hempstone, a political appointee, conservative Republican, ties to Jesse Helms, would have to go and so he did have to go by March of '93. That left me in charge.

Q: Did you feel during Smith Hempstone's time that he was bringing considerable political attention to Kenya sort of from the political right in other words?

SOUTHWICK: It's just that he had a capacity to get headlines. His cable about if you like Beirut, you'll love Mogadishu. That was a classified cable, which was leaked. Hempstone was accused of leaking it. I don't think he did. It was leaked somewhere in Washington because it was too good to keep under covers. I got e-mails from all over the world. Boy that Hempstone's quite a guy. I'm glad somebody will tell it like it is. Darn right. Then he had done this refugee camp thing that had gotten in the press and then he had done the Ray Bonner article and there were others about him. There was even a Readers' Digest profile. Hempstone was not immune from the criticism. He's a great guy, but he's a little bit too much of an exhibitionist. I said, well, I still believe that he's got contacts with Kenya. He's still talked about in Kenya as somebody who was trying to do the right thing for the country to end all the corruption, make it more democratic, make it more humane. I told him when he was feeling down in the dumps, I said, to the extent that the American people know that there's an American ambassador in Africa, it's you. That was true. Nobody wrote profiles of our other ambassadors. They wrote profiles of Hempstone. He was known.

Q: Yes. When you arrived there and during the time you were DCM, I can recall at an earlier stage the problem with Nairobi was that everybody in the government, the American government wanted to put a representative there. You have to have a representative somewhere, let's put it in Nairobi rather than in a God forsaken, you can put it in Lagos or some place like that. I would imagine that the embassy was getting almost unmanageable.

SOUTHWICK: It wasn't. When I was there were there a little over 200 direct hire Americans and that had stayed pretty steady. Fifteen agencies. It was the largest single embassy in the African subcontinent. About half, maybe about a little more than half were people there who had regional responsibilities, even the State Department had a regional finance office there. We had a regional medical officer there. We had regional technical support groups on communications and so forth. Then we had a regional AID mission, which was responsible, for I can't remember 17 or 18 countries. The regional quality of that had been established for some years basically because Nairobi was an attractive place. When I was in personnel as I may have mentioned in a previous interview, I regarded Nairobi as essentially the one European like post in Africa that I didn't have to worry about, no matter what the job was I'd have plenty of bidders for it. I'd just pick somebody and that was true. The luster was beginning to fade, but.

Q: Who was your new ambassador?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it was interesting. We were into the Clinton administration and I thought for sure as many did that there would be a political appointee ambassador. There had been a fair number of political appointees there. That's also an attractive place. So, I expected to be chargï¿½ for a while. I was trying to get myself appointed ambassador somewhere. I was very happy to stay on in Kenya because I felt I could provide continuity and all that. My daughter was in school and it just seemed to be a good thing. My wife had finished her book. We were enjoying life and I really felt that I knew where all the skeletons were. I got a call one day that the State Department decided to put forward a career person and it was an African American officer in Brazil who I knew about a little bit, but I didn't know her well. She had never served in Africa, was basically an East Asia hand and at that time was our ambassador in the, not the Marshall Islands, but it's some other group of islands.

Q: Micronesia?

SOUTHWICK: Micronesia, yes. No one would admit it, but this was, the Foreign Service, an African American woman and it would be hard for the White House to say no to that. They were worried about getting another political appointee because they felt they had had too much trouble with Hempstone. I think it was Houdek who said, you know, this probably won't work, but it will at least make him think twice and they will try to get somebody good. I said, Bob, I think you're wrong. I think this will work like that. I had my strings with White House presidential systems and it did. She got the nod and she wanted the job. It was a big career move for her and another thing happened when she finally did get approved by the White House. Now, I give myself some credit. They called me up and said we want to get agrï¿½ment (agreement) from the Kenyans on this right away. You know agrï¿½ment sometime takes weeks or even months. They said they needed it right away since the administration wanted to show that they were moving ahead on appointments. I said, okay, I will do what I can. I went over to see the president's secretary and I said, can you do this like today or tomorrow? I said, why don't we go see the president and I'll explain who this person is. She said, oh, I guess we owe you a favor or something like that. She said, look I'll talk to the president and I'll see if we can get a decision. So, we got it in 24 hours. They said, we're not so sure we want an African American here. We're happy with a career person. Career people are better than political appointees. Oh yes, but African Americans, they'd had a former admiral and then they'd had an academic and they didn't have a high regard for either one of them. That was pretty clear to me. The poison to this thing which has been written about, not much, about African Americans and their presumptions about their dealings with Africans and East Africa which has no connection with American slavery, zero with the American slavery phenomenon. All this authenticity stuff was a bunch of crap. Americans learning Swahili, African Americans learning Swahili, which first of all is a made up language, which is indigenous and again is a part of Africa, which has nothing to do with American slaves. They didn't like this sort of presumption which so many African Americans brought to the picture. So, anyway we got agrï¿½ment in a day. Washington was happy about that. We had to prepare for her arrival.

Then I got word through the grapevine that she would like to bring her own DCM. By that time I had turned down an offer to be an ambassador which I decided I just didn't want. I wanted to wait it out another year. The family had made plans. I was sort of irritated at this because she didn't know me, but George Moose helped me out. George Moose wanted me to stay because we were bringing in somebody, an officer, but not somebody who knew Africa.

Q: So, how did it work out?

SOUTHWICK: Well, Rea Brazeal and I hadn't met before, but I felt we should give this our best shot and we met at the airport and the staff was very helpful. I was very helpful. We tried to do everything we could for her. We found frankly that she was a difficult person to deal with. She was very uneasy in the position. She was suspicious of the staff. She felt that we all supported Hempstone and didn't want her. She felt that Hempstone was too aggressive with the Africans. I think that some of us suspected that she felt that Hempstone was both a racist and a misogynist. Hempstone personally had been quoted as saying things negative, but by sending an African American woman who had no qualifications for the job that the administration was not paying attention. It was obviously just sort of sociology at large. That didn't help matters either. It took a while, a few months, but Rea I think became very negative and suspicious of the staff there. Some of this extended to me and it really had a damaging effect on the embassy. She was trying to make nice with the Kenyans. She said she had a mandate to do that. I said, there's nothing in the written record that we're supposed to make nice with the Kenyans just for the sake to make you nice. We always try to make nice with them, but we've got these problems with governance, corruption, democratization, human rights and those are the things that, we have a legacy here from Hempstone which whatever you think about Hempstone, that is how this embassy made its mark. She was quite willing to let all of that go. It was not a good situation.

Q: You left there I guess?

SOUTHWICK: I stayed on until about March or April of '94. It wasn't a whole year with her. It was more like seven or eight months. Our relationship, I think she recognized that it needed to be correct and I recognized that it needed to be correct and for the sake of the staff there, but it was very hard because basically for a lot of us over time we just lost our respect for her. We felt that she was not maintaining our policies. Her personal relationships with some of the staff were very negative, oddly because a lot of them were women including African American women and we thought this should be good. It became very sour. The inspectors came out there early on and gave the place a very bad report and gave her personally a bad report, which was probably expunged from her record. All the inspectors have told me that within a day or two you know when a place is in trouble and what the problems are because people just unload and they really unloaded with them.

Q: Well, how did this affect you?

SOUTHWICK: I felt bad on two counts. One, I felt that the policy legacy of the embassy and Hempstone and so forth was all being drained away, deliberately just dumped overboard. Then I felt that an embassy that had been one of very high morale, very energetic, with a sense of purpose, that it all was just getting deflated. She wanted reporting that more closely reflected the Kenyan government's view of everything. She was very distrustful of the opposition. She hadn't served much in Africa and she really felt that embassies couldn't do much. That all these things took time and were best left to indigenous efforts. We could mainly do nothing.

Q: But you spent a hell of a lot of time in Africa. Did you find, were you being pumped or used as a tutor in Africa?

SOUTHWICK: For her?

Q: For her.

SOUTHWICK: I think she was a little bit distrustful of me because I felt we should be some activists as we had been before and we should be skeptical of the government. We should be skeptical of the opposition. We knew some of them were low life, self-serving politicians, but we shouldn't pretend that the virtues are on one side rather than the other. I mean if Hempstone had made a mistake, he felt that there was more virtue than there really was on the part of the opposition. There were senior people who came through, people I knew, who talked to her about various kinds of things. She was a very insecure woman. I said, well, I have come to realize that, I did not understand it at first, but Rea was someone who sort of gained her power by being negative, by saying no and that was what she tried to do.

Q: What was her background?

SOUTHWICK: She was part of the Atlanta African American League. Both her father and mother had been administrators at Morehouse College and she had gotten into Harvard, but she didn't stay there. She was there for a short time and then went off to Spellman College. I don't know whether she did much in the way of graduate studies. I developed some grapevine on her. She had been economic minister counselor in Tokyo, which is a big job. I checked with somebody who had been assistant secretary in economic affairs during that period and I said how did she do? This person said, oh, she was a big flop. I said, how does somebody who is a big flop get an ambassadorship, admittedly to Micronesia, World War III is not going to start there, and then come out to Kenya. Then I kept checking with other people, this was a record, a very undistinguished record. So, the only explanation which is a sad one is gender and race trumping everything and that some people just get away with a lousy performance because of the other thing that is going for them and nobody is willing to take it on. People who knew her superficially like at parties and so forth, could not see this. It's not on exhibit. It's only when you were sort of working for her.

One time we'd had a tiff because in a staff meeting we'd had a slight different perspective. I can call it a disagreement, but she was very angry with that afterwards and I said, well, we've got to have open discussion or we're not going to get everybody to tell us what's on their minds and we can analyze and get the truth of things. She didn't want that. She says, she wanted the embassy to be like Mike Mansfield in Tokyo. I'll never forget this, I said, what in your view made Mansfield a great ambassador? She couldn't think of anything. She just knew he was a great ambassador because somebody told her he was a great ambassador because everybody said he was a great ambassador. What he did to make him a great ambassador she hadn't a clue. I think the Foreign Service; she's not the only example of this. We're not honest with ourselves.

Q: Oh, no, we all know the pressures and I mean at some times there were other people who came out of sort of the Groton-Harvard thing, white WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant), first distinction, you kept going up and you kind of wondered well.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, they dine out on this stuff forever.

Q: There are various currents running and one of the currents running is the old boys club and the other one is the new girls African American club. I mean some people just get hooked into this.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, they do and they benefited. As I mentioned in our previous interview about personnel, I was an advocate of affirmative action. I helped design the program the Department used and got more African American DCMs placed. One thing I had liked about the Foreign Service, even though it has these things that you mentioned, I really felt that in the end the credentials didn't matter, it was performance of the candidate. If somebody was running around riding on credentials, whether it was race, or it was gender, whether it was Groton, Yale, Harvard or whatever, you had to look closely. Who was it? He was, he has a forestry degree from the University of Idaho at Moscow.

Q: Oh yes.

SOUTHWICK: Philip Habib.

Q: Philip Habib.

SOUTHWICK: I thought okay, he went to the school of forestry in Idaho. He didn't go to those places.

Q: Not exactly a prep school.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. I really felt that what counted was ability and performance and I still believe in that and we should try to adhere as much as we can to a truly merit system.

Q: Did you get any feeling and we'll finish this off, but did you get any feeling about the Clinton administration, sort of when the new administration comes in sometimes you might say that almost uneasy or they don't know what they're doing?

SOUTHWICK: Yes and Clinton came in with more of a domestic agenda not being an expert on foreign affairs and he brought a lot of people back from the Carter administration. I thought Clinton then as now sort of a phenomenal individual and brilliant in engaging and presence. I found out when he came to Africa, though, he wanted to just use it as a kind of political payoff to the African American community. I honestly felt and I still feel that the Republicans are a little bit more realistic about this even though they don't pay a lot of attention to Africa either, but at least they're more honest about it whereas I think the Democrats were just playing domestic racial politics.

Q: Okay, well, Mike let's, I guess this is a good place to stop. Just to put at the end, where did you go in 1994?

SOUTHWICK: In 1994 I went to Uganda as ambassador.

Q: Okay, well, we'll pick it up then.

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Today is the 20th of July 2004, which is what the 60th anniversary of the officers' plot against Hitler? So soon they forget or something.

SOUTHWICK: And landed on the moon.

Q: And landed on the moon, but I always think of the officers' plot against Hitler. Okay, Mike, 1994. Is there anything else you want to talk about before we move to Uganda?

SOUTHWICK: Not really. I'm sure there are things about Kenya because it was such a rich experience and I'll probably want to add when I get the chance.

Q: Okay, how did the Uganda assignment come about?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I was hoping for an ambassadorial assignment. In '93 there was some talk about this with Washington because that was when my three year tour in Kenya was supposedly coming to an end. The best thing they could come up with at the time was the Comoros. These islands have a two or three person post, a little island out in the Indian Ocean. Just to show you how crazily things worked, I was called by Washington saying they had already put my name in at the White House for Comoros. I said no one talked to me about it and I said, I don't think I want to go there. But everybody wants to be ambassador I was told. I said, not everybody wants to be ambassador to the Comoros. I took a pouch run down there from Nairobi and thought unless I wanted to read all the works of Proust or Shakespeare or something like that, that was not the place for me, so I came back and told them to try elsewhere. I got a lot of advice from people saying they'll never ask you again, but they did. There was a transition for Kenya and Ambassador Hempstone left in early '93. The Democrats hadn't gotten organized to get a new ambassador. It was thought that this would take a while. They asked me to stay on as chargï¿½ and then to stay on for a full year as soon as they got an ambassador out there which I did.

Anyway, you get all of these forms and you have a sort of obstacle course of being an ambassador where they do background checks. You fill out elaborate forms about your financial viability and that kind of thing. It takes a while and it's kind of nerve wracking I think for most of us, at least that's what my colleagues say, but I was able to leave Kenya in June. The whole family was with me except for my older son and we spent a little bit of time in Italy, in Florence, and then we went back to the States. I began my preparations there.

Q: What was as you went, what were American interests, what was happening in Uganda just before you got out there?

SOUTHWICK: Uganda had been a case of some renown among Africanists at least. Also I think among the wider public, at least the public that pays any attention to the newspapers, because Idi Amin had been one of its first leaders. He had taken the country down to rack and ruin. He seized power in 1971 and quickly started turning the place into a nightmare. A lot of people were killed. A lot of interrogations late at night. The place was a shambles that led to a war with Tanzania, of all places, with Julius Nyerere the next-door neighbor. He sort of took upon himself to clean up Uganda. They had a war and Idi Amin lost and was deposed and fled eventually to Saudi Arabia. There was a troubled period for a year or two in which the country struggled to have an election. It had an election, but it was not a satisfactory election from the point of view of someone named Yoweri Museveni in the '70s, so he went to the bush. This was in 1980 and in 1986 his bush warfare landed him victory and he entered Kampala and took charge as president of Uganda by force. By the time I got there Museveni had gained a reputation as being astute, pragmatic, someone who was on the ball in terms of economic policy, and was trying to bring some of the Asians back that Idi Amin had kicked out. He was also glib, a good conversationalist, and he was a very likable guy in the eyes of Washington and more generally the international community. So, when I went there I didn't think I would have problems about management and policy with regard to the economy. I knew there was a political transition process underway, but it seemed like it was underway, it was moving towards a new constitution and elections and civilian government. In many ways it was quite a contrast to Kenya.

Q: Was there any problem with the senate getting confirmation?

SOUTHWICK: No. It went through without any difficulty. I was not personally a controversial person. Our policy toward Uganda was not controversial and fortunately there were no little, how should I call it, little things that somehow, sometimes, for no apparent reason tie up ambassadorial appointments.

Q: Yes, particularly with Senator Helms trying to make a point or something or not.

SOUTHWICK: The only thing that got somebody's attention, this was well before it was announced was I'd had a spate of security violations in Nairobi. They needed to get that resolved, what the circumstances were. I was very worried about that, thinking that the preoccupation of security, that had been carried to the extreme, that that might knock me out of the picture, but it didn't. So, the confirmation went well. I went up there with three other ambassadors, a new one who was going to Tanzania, the person who was going to Mauritania and there was one other, the Seychelles. It went smoothly. It seemed at the time to take a long time to get things scheduled, but frankly by the end of July I was ready to go.

Q: Had you taken the ambassadorial course?

SOUTHWICK: I was able to take the ambassadorial course.

Q: How did you find that?

SOUTHWICK: I thought it was pretty good. I found that it wasn't as, I wasn't as taken with it as I had been about the DCM course some years before. The DCM course was more elaborate and more intense. I think a function of the fact that being a DCM is in some ways a more difficult job than being an ambassador. There had been a lot of cases of DCMs in the Foreign Service not doing terribly well for one reason or another. The ambassadorial charm course or whatever you want to call it was, I thought it sort of hit high points and so forth and gave very general advice and had some good people coming in to talk to us.

Q: Did you have a DCM in mind?

SOUTHWICK: Well, this is interesting. Both the DCM and the ambassador were changing in Kampala at the same time.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SOUTHWICK: The ambassador before me was Johnny Carson. He's still in the Foreign Service. Johnny's DCM, Ellen Shippy was moving off so we had to get a DCM. I was not technically in a position to select a DCM, but being part of the Africa bureau old boy network, they consulted me on it, they gave me a list of names. The person we both wanted was someone who had been serving as the supervisory general services officer in Kampala. A very attractive officer, a bright officer named Wayne Bush. He and I went up there roughly the same time. He got there a couple of weeks before I did.

Q: You were in Uganda from when to when?

SOUTHWICK: From '94, I guess it was August '94 to August of '97, the usual three years.

Q: When you got there, how were you received?

SOUTHWICK: Quite well, even before I presented credentials the president wanted to see me about a problem.

Q: The president of Uganda?

SOUTHWICK: The president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni. He wanted to see me because at our request he had sent about 1,000 Ugandan troops to Liberia to help with a peacekeeping operation there. That operation wasn't going very well and he wanted to tell me that he wanted to take the troops home. That was one of the first issues that we had to deal with. I found Museveni as other people had found him a very good conversationalist. Somebody who you could talk to about issues in a very intelligent fashion. Someone who thought for himself. A very attractive figure. I came to learn as time went on that was both a good thing and a bad thing.

Q: What was his background?

SOUTHWICK: He was mostly a military person, but only really when he decided to go to the bush in 1980. He and I were the same age within a couple of months. We were both born in 1944, '45. He had been an undergraduate at the University of Dar es Salaam in the mid to late '60s. At that time the University of Dar es Salaam was very leftist, almost what some people would say communist in its orientation. Museveni had invibed a lot of this radicalism at the university and was a student leader and one of his heroes was an author named Walter Rodney. He's written a lot about the Third World, about revolution, how struggling peoples achieve dignity and so forth. He was very taken by that and somewhat by the Marxist vision I would say, not hook, line and sinker, but somewhat by that analytical way of looking at the universe. He had been in power for seven years by the time I saw him and on economic policy, thanks to some efforts by the U.S. and some other donors, he had become convinced that capitalism was okay and that was the right model. He wanted investment and the private sector to flourish in his country. He did it for social means. He said, we've got a lot to do to build this country up and I need wealth to do that and capitalism produces wealth and this communist stuff doesn't. That was basically how he viewed the situation. He did, I think, have and still has a view that violence is an appropriate means to solve certain kinds of problems. He used it when he didn't like the results of the election in 1980. He was responsible for backing a Rwandan force that invaded Rwanda from Uganda. These are people who had been serving in the Ugandan army in 1990. During the time I was in Uganda, he backed a force that went into what was Zaire, became the Congo again, to overthrow Mobutu. Then, over time, he got more heavily involved militarily in Southern Sudan. He was quite vain about his military abilities and strangely his bravado and claims never bore truth. His army was not very good. It couldn't quell an ongoing insurrection in the Northern part of the country. It performed very poorly in Congo. It was not a match for the Rwandans when they got into it sometimes and I think they were mediocre at best in the Sudan.

Q: Did you ever figure out why the army wasn't very good?

SOUTHWICK: I'm not sure. We did have a defense attachï¿½ there during all the time I was there. One of them was particularly good and spent a lot of time with some of these soldiers in the field. Had a small IMET training program with them and you got the impression that it was really a kind of a bush army, which had expanded and then contracted. Theoretically you would think the best people would stay in it, but one also suspects that they did not. Not very good leadership, not very good training, not very good funding. An army, which despite all of these adventures that I had mentioned, was basically there to keep Museveni in power.

Q: Had the British been training the troops?

SOUTHWICK: The British had had some programs there over time. In the colonial period they'd train the army. As usual with British colonial policies, however successful they are at the time, they leave legacies. One of them in Uganda is that they had concentrated their military training on one or two groups in the tribal structure. There were a number of tribes and depending on how you count them, it could be 40, it could be 13. There are really about five big ones and they had been arranged traditionally in kingdoms. That was a kind of a source of instability.

Q: How was security in Uganda because sometimes when an army is not very good they're out making roadblocks and basically going after the citizenry as sort of quasi-bandits?

SOUTHWICK: The accepted wisdom, not entirely true, was that Museveni had pacified the lower two-thirds of the country, but not the northern third where there was a strange insurrection going on under the leadership of someone named Joseph Kony. His group was called the Lord's Resistance Army. They had a messianic kind of message. They wanted to reestablish a government under the principles of the Ten Commandments. The original founder of this had been a woman, sort of a sorceress if you wish named Alice Auma who had wound up in a refugee camp in Kenya. Kony had taken over this movement and they kidnapped and terrorized essentially their own people. They were Acholi. They were terrorizing the Acholi. They would kidnap children, school children, women, make people do bestial acts to prove their loyalty, kill their friends, chop people up, atrocities of all kinds, burning huts with people in them. It's still going on and frankly it is still one of the most unexplainable guerrilla movements in the world.

Q: Every once in a while some Europeans and some Americans get caught and a few of them killed.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. Not so much today. They have tended to stay away from Europeans. There are a fair number of Italians in that part of the country with the missions and some aid workers and refugee camps and so forth. They were mainly predators against their own people, the Acholi. The Acholi had been one of these groups that had been favored by the British at least as far as military training was concerned and they had offered the most resistance to Museveni during the civil war. One of the explanations for this whole phenomenon is that Museveni really didn't want to have this thing come to an end because it was making these people who had never supported him suffer.

Q: When we got there, let's take the troop deployment to Liberia. What did you do, did we try to stop it?

SOUTHWICK: This effort had been underway in the State Department for some time trying to pay Africans to do some of these dirty jobs. So this was to get some African troops to go to Liberia which was a mess and assist in the pacification of the country and more specifically to help in arms collection. When Museveni had his first conversation with me he said he'd just been over there to Liberia and he said, that isn't a government, that's a gang of crooks. They're not serious people, there's no way to do business over there with people like that and it's just a folly for him to continue working there. Frankly he was right. He was right as events proved then and certainly subsequently. True, this was Charles Taylor and some of those goons. I was under heavy pressure to get them to stay at least a little bit longer. This is a Foreign Service problem. Hope springs eternal for most of us even in the most lousy situations. When our brains are really telling us one thing, our hopes and emotions are telling us something else. We think that somehow we'll be able to pull it off if we just stay in there perhaps putting good money after bad money. That was the idea, stay engaged, stay the course, make these programs work.

Q: What was your relationship with Museveni?

SOUTHWICK: For most of the time until the very end it was very good. We got along very well together. The Africans pay a lot of attention to what they call people who are born about the same time and you are age mates. So, we were age mates and he was conscious of that and I was conscious of it as being a factor. We had experienced history pretty much together and the fate of the events of the world and what had happened in the world more widely, what had happened in Africa, where Africa was coming from. Each of us had been through that. Both of us were kind of speculative and liked to talk philosophically and liked to talk about political theories and were fascinated with the whole problem of leadership. We could spend hours together and often did. I spent one whole day with him once from breakfast until after dinner conversation, just the two of us.

Q: Did you find, was he the man?

SOUTHWICK: He was the man. I can't say it was a Louis XIV system because I don't think Africa could run a Louis XIV system. France, Louis XIV, but it was akin to that. He made the decisions. He had a no party system. It was based on the movement. Museveni felt, as did many leaders in Africa in the '60s, that a multiparty democracy wouldn't work. It just fed on the divisions, on tribe origin and all the rest of it. He felt that that was the wrong way to go. So, when he came to power in '86 he kept this movement structure as kind of a loose thing, everybody's part of a movement, whether you want to be or not and this was how he hoped to govern the country. He didn't want to call it a party because then he'd be accused of having a one party state. He recognized that that was not going to go down well, but as long as he called it a movement and no party state, it was okay. This eventually became a source of friction between us and, leaving us personally, frankly between the United States and Uganda.

Q: One remembers the Idi Amin's expulsion of the Indian traders from Uganda which in a way cut out the whole source of supply because the people who took their place sort of sat in the store and once the canned goods and all were gone, I mean there was no way to resupply.

SOUTHWICK: Literally that's almost exactly right. There's an anecdote I had heard about Idi Amin when I was still in Rwanda. The local Mercedes dealer had been robbed of all of his vehicles. A few days afterwards one of the people in Idi Amin's staff came by and said, when is your stock going to be replenished because I want to pick up my car? Zero idea about how an economy worked. Zero sense of responsibility in terms of if you get something you pay for it. No concept. The economy actually nose-dived. I'm told, I've never checked this out with scholars, but Uganda is a tremendously fruitful place. It's got a lot of rainfall, pineapples, bananas, nobody ever starved even during the worst of it. It's 4,000 feet high, most of it, it's rainfall is very steady and there's practically no history in the southern part of the country, where most of the people are, of a drought.

Q: Well, when you were there, what was the economy like and how was it developing during the time you were there?

SOUTHWICK: I wouldn't call it a one crop, but it had been traditionally a major coffee producer. They had been a major tea producer. They had produced pyrethrum, to some extent. It's a white flower, it is a natural insecticide. They had some minerals over towards the West of the country. They were potentially a breadbasket and they also had possibilities with tourism. A lot of people think of Kenya as the place for tourism in East Africa, but if you go back towards the period before independence, Uganda was developing at about the same pace. It had two major game parks which were roughly equal I would say of anything in Kenya. Then the Ugandans discovered they had something that hardly anybody else had and that was mountain gorillas. They had a park that they shared with Rwanda and Congo where there was one group of gorillas, about 300 strong. Then about four years ago, in another forest about 40 miles away, a forest called the impenetrable forest aptly enough, they found that there were gorillas there, about 300 of them. These are the only places where mountain gorillas exist.

Q: What were we doing in Uganda encouraging to send our troops?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we had the troops there. We were putting a lot of money into Uganda by African standards, by aid standards. We had an aid program of about $50 to $60 million dollars which was high for an African country. The donors were in there in force. Uganda had become the darling of the donors basically because you had a leader who was enlightened, who was pursuing the right kinds of economic policies and was perceived to be managing a decent political transition. He also, by the time I got there, became known as one of the first leaders anywhere in the world to recognize and do something about the AIDS crisis. He learned about this from Fidel Castro. Uganda had sent some troops to Cuba to be trained and Fidel, I'm told by Museveni, got on the telephone and said, some of your troops have this terrible disease. Museveni said, oh no, we don't because homosexuality doesn't exist in Africa. Castro says, well, I won't go there, but your troops have AIDS. About that time in the '80s the AIDS epidemic was really spreading in the African Great Lakes area, Rwanda, Burundi, the Eastern Congo, into Uganda.

Q: It's becoming evident that this is not a homosexual.

SOUTHWICK: I don't think it ever was in that part of the world.

Q: It's sexually transmitted.

SOUTHWICK: Sexually transmitted, multiple partners, people who have illnesses anyway, people who have sores.

Q: Truck drivers.

SOUTHWICK: Truck drivers. A lot was written about this. Anyway, Museveni got right on it and he intuitively or rationally perceived since there is no cure for this thing, the only thing that can work is prevention, that's a matter of public education and sensitization. He went on a massive campaign to demystify this disease and to try to take away the social stigma of it. In Uganda there were all kind of support groups of people with AIDS. There were billboards in all the towns about AIDS. Everybody knew that there was an epidemic going on. It was inescapable. This was at a time when a lot of people in other countries refused to recognize it.

Q: Were we involved in this?

SOUTHWICK: Yes we were. Our National Institute of Health (NIH) flocked to Uganda and we had some programs there to do tests. One of them was frankly trying to keep ahead of the virus. The AIDS virus as you probably know mutates and as the '90s progressed we had gotten to the point where we had some drugs like AZT which was counteractive. There was a huge fear in the scientific community that the virus would mutate into a different form for which AZT would not be effective. That was one of the factors, but a lot of it was just telling people you don't have to get this disease and this is how you avoid getting it.

Q: What about running the embassy with Americans and AIDS because AIDS can be transmitted by blood, too.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, there was a little bit of fear about that and I think you know you can touch somebody with a sore. If you have a sore and you touch somebody with a sore you might get AIDS that way, but we basically felt we could live okay and live normally there. We tested our own staff, Americans. Well, the State Department is already testing its people for medical clearances. One of the things I should mention, our embassy at that time was the backroom of the British High Commission. The British High Commission was a modern building on Parliament Way, a relatively nice street leading to parliament. Like a lot of other countries, including the British with Idi Amin towards the end we all left, so we abandoned our embassy.

Q: We actually snuck out; Bob Keeley did..

SOUTHWICK: Yes, Keeley did.

Q: Sort of like The Sound of Music.

SOUTHWICK: The Trapp family pretty soon were gone. Until Amin our embassy had been two floors in an office building downtown. When we left we decided to turn it over to the French. The French were the protecting power. This is how we do this in diplomacy. We fully expected that when we went back in that we would get it back, but the French had since moved in and they felt that they should stay there. They were very happy with our quarters. They even showed me when I would go over there to see the French ambassador the safe with the great seal of the United States on it. We were left with anything we could find. So the British embassy essentially gave us a part of their building, not a huge building, a fairly large one and in the back of it there were some staff apartments and we converted it into a less than impressive, less consumptuous embassy.

Q: Were they planning to do something about it?

SOUTHWICK: Well, they were. This embassy was such a laughing stock and it was very inconvenient to run and AID of course had offices in a different part of town, USIA had offices in a different part of town, had a warehouse in another part of town. The whole thing was undignified to put it mildly, but there were plans. About the time I got there, through Johnny Carson's efforts, we had gotten a seven acre parcel in the Southern part of the town where we planned to construct a building and everything was well advanced. Kampala had gotten up to about number two or three in the priorities of the foreign buildings office, OBO I guess it's now called. My grapevine told me that even though Kampala had gotten up there, don't expect it to stay very long. We were looking around for alternatives. The new office building was being constructed, but nothing ever came of it. After my time we had the embassy bombings in East Africa and there was a plot to blow up our part of the British High Commission which never materialized. After that it was felt that we had to build something and something has been constructed since on that property.

Q: How big was your embassy?

SOUTHWICK: If you count the AID people and all the rest of it, there were about 60 or 65 direct hire. In the embassy itself in terms of the core staff you had myself, you had a DCM, you had a Political Econ officer, you had a refugee officer and you had a consular officer and an administrative officer and a budget and fiscal officer. In terms of reporting it was basically just three or four people if you count the USIA public affairs office. I'm sure typical.

Q: I'm sure you had other agencies at this location.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we had the usual other agency there and we had a defense attachï¿½ sort of on and off, but that later became permanent. I didn't feel bereft except Nairobi had spoiled me because we had a political section with about six people in it. We had an Econ section with three or four people in it. We had a USIA full contingent there, four or five people, so there were always plenty of people around to do the work. I felt that when I got to Kampala that there would be less work, fewer people, that it would all kind of even out. It didn't and people had to work like dogs.

Q: Looking at it, having gone from one extreme to the other, was there a justification for the sparse personnel in Uganda and for the generous ones in Kenya or was it just a matter of the popularity of the place?

SOUTHWICK: Popularity of the place, historical legacy, the fact that Kenya is on the coast. It's a more important country than Uganda. It has a seaport of some significance. It was a very popular post. When I'd been in personnel, as I think I mentioned, Kenya was not a place that posed any staffing difficulty whatsoever when every other post in Africa did. Every single one, except Nairobi. That's changed of course now. The long and short of it was that Kenya had too many people. Kampala didn't have enough. During the time I was there for three years we were quite busy. When I arrived we had a deployment ending with a whole lot of troops who were there because of the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. They were about ready to leave. I think it had gotten up to about 1,000 troops. That requires quite a bit of management even though the military comes and to a certain extent manages itself. Then we had this insurrection of the Lords Resistance Army, which had to be covered. Then we found out that the political transition was running into roadblocks or certainly potholes and it would have been nice to fill that out with some additional reporting capably. Towards the end we had this phenomenon of potential intervention by the Western countries in Eastern Congo to prevent further genocide. At the end of my time there we had this civil war in the Congo. There was a lot going on.

Q: Talk a bit about why it had troops, these were American troops. What had they been doing?

SOUTHWICK: The American troops after the genocide. There was a lot of migration of Hutus from Rwanda into Eastern Zaire which is very close to the Ugandan border. There are some ethnic ties for the Hutus and Tutsis with their analogues in Uganda. Uganda was helping with the logistics of this problem, refugees, water, all the things that happened when there were all these people. The nearest really good airport was at Entebbe which is right on Lake Victoria, about 30 miles south of Kampala. That became kind of a staging area. They also eventually used the airport at Goma, but at that time in '94 it was essentially kind of a relief operation more than anything else. We were worried about the refugee camps exploding and becoming a base for incursions into Rwanda. That's when the French and others were thinking about sending troops into these refugee camps in the Congo or moving them further away from the border. We didn't want to get involved very much in that. The Canadians did and the French did and the U.S. had more logistic capacity so we did some of that. Then as you may remember, one fine day the refugees decided that they would go back to Rwanda, not all of them, but tens of thousands of them did in a matter of days. This whole necessity for intervention in there kind of collapsed and I was glad of it.

Q: Well, looking at Uganda, its got interesting neighbors. To the North, you've got the Sudan.

SOUTHWICK: The civil war.

Q: Where did Uganda fit in the civil war because I always thought it was kind of black African and Christian against more or less Arab.

SOUTHWICK: That whole vast area of the Southern Sudan had not been touched by anybody forever including the British who had had nominal control. With the Anglo Egyptian Sudan, if you look at old maps, they kind of left it alone and didn't let anybody go in there except a few missionaries. Ethnically it is very different from the Arabized North of the country; linguistically, ethnically, any way you wanted to look at it. A civil war had been going on in its current phase since 1983 there. The leader of the peoples liberation army was somebody named John Garang who was U.S. educated at Iowa State, had a Ph.D. Somebody I had gotten to know actually quite well when I was in Nairobi.

Q: You were saying Museveni felt?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, Museveni felt that he could make the difference in all of this. If he got involved in this struggle in Southern Sudan, not working for Garang, but working alongside of him, he could liberate Southern Sudan or at least force Khartoum to the negotiating table. He sent troops in there from time to time to accomplish just that.

Q: Were they allied with the Southerners?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it's a strange thing and it took me a while to figure this out, but I came to the conclusion that Museveni and Garang were rivals and mistrusted each other. They both considered themselves intellectuals. They both considered themselves great bush fighters, guerrilla warfare specialists, but they cast aspersions on each other. They had a common enemy in Khartoum, but I think the cooperation was always a big effort, let's put it that way. Occasionally it would work pretty well, but it would never work successfully enough to bring Khartoum down.

Q: How about relations with Kenya?

SOUTHWICK: I'm sure I made an impact on that one because I knew the Kenya hierarchy from top to bottom and I had a very good personal relationship with President Moi. In the months after I got to Uganda it came increasingly clear that Museveni felt that Kenya was ripe for intervention, and that maybe he should infiltrate some people down there or at least suborn some politicians with money and so forth. In other words, sort of mix it up with Kenya because he had a low regard for Moi and he felt that the place was right for change. I went to see Museveni and I saw some of his top people in the security services. I said you can trust your own people on this, but if you really check with them, Kenya is not susceptible to manipulation from here and you should just lay off. Their army is much better than yours. It's bigger than yours, they control your access to the sea and if they get mad, you'll be toast. I arranged for the top security people of both countries to meet each other at Museveni's ranch. This was all arranged in a very clandestine way. We established a hot line for the security people and the key military people on both sides who could be in touch with each other all the time about any problems along the border. There were problems along the border, tribal problems having to do with cattle rustling stuff that went back from before the colonial period. So there were plenty of things to talk about. I really felt that I helped make a difference there in convincing Museveni that he had enough on his hands. He doesn't need anything more. Just let the transition in Kenya be dictated by internal dynamics.

Q: How about Tanzania?

SOUTHWICK: Tanzania, it was a decent relationship. There's not a whole lot going on between these two countries even though they share Lake Victoria. Tanzania has its own outlets to the sea.

Q: It has Dar es Salaam, doesn't it?

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: Mombasa to Kampala. The lions.

SOUTHWICK: The Lions of Tsavo, yes, there's a novel and a movie about this. But see when the British got into that part of the world, they thought they needed to build the railway to Uganda because that's the place they thought was rich. They didn't think Kenya was rich. If you see Out of Africa, you see the famous scene with Meryl Streep and so forth, presumably in Nairobi, but the train says Uganda Railway on it. It was the Uganda Railway.

Q: Did Nyerere strike a positive note with the Scandinavian donors because Nyerere really wooed them and had them eating out of his hand.

SOUTHWICK: Oh, yes, it was pathetic.

Q: Nyerere had kind of passed on hadn't he by this time?

SOUTHWICK: Well, his luster had faded because things had not worked there. There was a lot of corruption, a lot of these things didn't work. I feel on the basis of my Foreign Service experience in Third World countries that the hardest thing to do is to help another country. It is so difficult, so complex. Outsiders, no matter how well intentioned or how smart, still really don't know what we're doing. We don't know what we're doing. We've made a lot of mistakes and I fear in many cases made things worse, but the Scandinavians were in Tanzania in force except the Norwegians. The Norwegians came to see me shortly after I got there and they were thinking of coming into Uganda. I said you know since my grandmother is Norwegian I can speak frankly. I said, "Why don't you go find someplace else? There are too many people here. The place is getting spoiled. We're crawling all over each other, the donor community. Sure there's plenty to do, but is this where you really can make a big difference?"

Q: Well, did you, I mean looking at donors and all this, did you maybe differentiate between the non-governmental agencies or the semi-autonomist ones because the line gets a little bit hazy in some areas, but were these people coming into a place like Uganda and then the government. I mean were they making a difference and were these things that they were doing taking?

SOUTHWICK: Well, they come in and they rent villas, you know houses by our standards. They live in a Western style. They all make quite good money. Vast multiples of a per capita income of a country, earn a lot more than their Ugandan counterparts. This story is the same all over Africa. They have elaborate projects where a lot of the money it's like a boomerang. Ostensibly its going to Uganda, but its really paying for expatriate workers, their salaries and their support and travel, overhead expenses. Over my career I became very cynical and very negative about aid. I sometimes tell people half seriously and sometimes totally seriously, the World Bank should be closed down. I have never seen a good World Bank project ever. Yet all these poor countries are stuck with the bills for multibillion-dollar projects that have produced nothing which were undertaken by corrupt governments. Never brought to fruition, yet the bill is still there. The whole thing needs to be rethought. Museveni said something very telling once at some conference, a conference on aid. He said, "I like aid foreign assistance. I don't like aidism." I had heard many African leaders tell me that because hearing it sounded like Ronald Reagan. It was just a very debilitating thing to have people come in who want to do everything for you. He says, after a while, nobody has any initiative, nobody has any ideas. The only thing people think of is getting on the feeding at the trough. Here is a country with a GNP of about three or four billion dollars and about a billion of that is foreign assistance. It's the biggest industry. Bigger than coffee, bigger than tea, bigger than tourism.

Q: Was there, how was the economy doing, I'm talking about the shopkeepers and that type of thing, you know, getting out. After Idi Amin had sort of cleared out the whole entrepreneurial Indian class.

SOUTHWICK: It was slowly coming back because Museveni made it clear that after kind of a vetting process he was willing to take some of the Asians back or any of them who could get through this vetting process. There was a family there called the Madhvani family. They had come over to East Africa from India about 70 or 80 years ago and got involved in sugar. They got involved in other things, breweries, light industry and so forth. The Madhvani complex of industries was said to control about 7% or 8% of the GNP of the country. They had a huge estate east of Kampala in the middle of a big sugar plantation. Thousands and thousands of acres, but they were about 7% or 8%, maybe 10%, 11% no one knew for sure of the economy and Museveni got them to come back and get back in business. They did with some World Bank help and some other help. Museveni would sometimes say that I need five or six Madhvanis.

Q: When you were there how were you dealing with the press?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we tried to understand it. I knew a lot of the press corps in Nairobi and when business was slow in Nairobi some of them would come up to Uganda. This was Newsweek, Time and the New York Times and some of the others and that was the story in Uganda. They would go up there and they would come as perplexed as everybody else was, but they would write it up and there would be a story. Because of this connection with the press and because of my work with Hempstone I got pretty good about working with the press. I don't want to say using the press because I think we use each other in a situation like that, but there were a lot of articles about Uganda which simply would not have happened had I not been there. These people had a little bit of time to spare. This carried forward the notion that Uganda was this place in Africa that was doing well and was recovering and was overcoming the legacy of Idi Amin.

Q: Was there an Idi Amin movement, loyalists?

SOUTHWICK: No, they pretty much fizzled out and his family had either been bought off or were in exile. Idi Amin himself was in a kind of house arrest in Saudi Arabia. He died a year or two ago. There was some thought about bringing him back and putting him on trial. I once had a discussion about this with Museveni. I later learned a whole lot more about war crimes and human rights from a UN perspective and all the rest of it. I think that he thought this would be more trouble and would create more problems than it would solve. I feel that one of the things that he didn't want to happen was to have a full scale investigation about what everybody had done including Museveni and his forces during the civil war.

Q: Did anyone check the deep freezes?

SOUTHWICK: No. There are funny stories about Idi Amin. He hired this Swiss or Frenchman to do a documentary. It's a famous movie. It's still around. I think you can get it on DVD about Idi Amin. The French speaking Swiss who was doing it eventually decided he was dealing with a crazy man, but that he better just do it as if it isn't crazy. Yet the craziness of the whole situation emerges loud and clear. You'll have a picture of a cabinet meeting where Idi Amin is saying that the cabinet ministers are to ensure that the people love their government. Then there will be a voice over and say this minister was found floating in the Nile the next day. The Idi Amin legacy was still there.

Q: What about the Congo while you were there?

SOUTHWICK: The Congo was clearly slated for change. You could tell the Mobutu regime was nearing the end and the question was what would happen there. I think Museveni decided he wanted to back the winner, whoever emerged on top in the post-Mobutu period. Of course the United States and a lot of countries wanted to manage the process internally within the Congo and keep the neighboring states out of it, but Museveni got mixed up to some degree with this fellow Kabila and decided to back him with Rwanda in an effort to overthrow Mobutu and this worked. As soon as they started working together, Kabila and Museveni and Kagame in Rwanda this thing sort of really worked well. I remember calling Washington and saying have you seen the initial reports? I said I think these rebel troops can get to Kinshasa the capital, it's about 1500 miles away, about as fast as they can walk because there's nothing around to stop them except crocodiles. How are they going to get there? The whole place is crumbling and that's what happened. Museveni didn't know much about Kabila. He asked us what we knew. I asked him what he knew because we don't know much except some contacts in the late '60s and early '70s.

Q: He was involved in some kidnapping of Americans.

SOUTHWICK: He was and he was also involved with _____. _____ came out to that part of Africa and worked with Kabila. I found the articles by _____. _____ thought Kabila was a nut case. Of course Kabila thought about ____. I knew that kidnapping case because it was Stanford students. A little bit of a connection there. The big issue in Uganda was the political transformation of the country to a reasonably good democratic system. I was not starry eyed about this. I thought it was quite realistic having gone through all the problems that Kenya had gone through. But I was very assiduous in pursuing my belief that Uganda really had a wonderful opportunity in the case of Museveni, a really good, gifted leader to lead the country to this place where it could be self-sustaining as a democracy. In other words, to do what didn't happen at independence. As time went by during my time there, it became clear that Museveni did not want to continue that process. He wanted to stop it and put the brakes on democratization and put in place forever this one party state, this movement system. That's when I felt that we the United States needed to blow the whistle and with Washington's approval, that's exactly what we did.

Q: How does one blow the whistle because the inertia of a policy and an ambassador going out and saying this guy is not going anywhere. This often, we've got aid things going and we've got military alliances and all. It doesn't happen that way usually.

SOUTHWICK: No, it doesn't, but I had learned a few things from Hempstone, maybe enough where he had become very outspoken in his criticisms of the Moi government. I decided very reluctantly that we did have to go public. Then this all came to a head. We did issue a press release. This was in the constitutional process and what parliament was doing and about the provision of the new constitution, which would allow essentially the entrenchment of perpetuity of this whole party system. My instructions from George Moose, the assistant secretary when I came out to Uganda, was that as long as there was a political process unfolding and moving that we should be satisfied with that. I agreed because I don't think you should rush these things in too much of a headlong fashion. That had happened in Kenya and it hadn't worked out as well as we had hoped. It should be more organic, more systematic, more take some time with it, what have you, as long as there was movement. What I saw of this constitutional process, they were going to stop the clock. I knew George Moose and he knew me and I felt I had the confidence of Washington so we did go public and it caused an uproar. Museveni had not been used to being criticized at all by anybody except his, you know, cronies.

Q: When you say you went public, who went public how?

SOUTHWICK: The embassy with a press release. I knew how to do a lot of press releases from my time in Kenya. It was not a strident or nasty kind of press release. It said that we're concerned about what is happening here because if this provision of the constitution is put in place it will stop this process which had been going on very well and needs to continue. I don't want to say it was mild. We knew however it was done, it would have a shock value, but it tried to leave a lot of room open. Because of that I started getting in the papers. Certainly the local papers and then internationally.

Q: What about your discussion with Museveni?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we had a lot of discussions and here's where I had to do my homework and it's about the nature of democracy, the nature of human rights. What is in our constitution. I, like a lot of Americans, feel that you just know all of this stuff, you're born knowing it and is that a factor or not. Like one of the questions I had going out to Uganda and I asked all kinds of people this question, do you have to have a multiparty system to have democracy? Is it an essential for democracy? Some political scientists were saying, well, no, you have this, you have that. You can create some theoretical things, but I found that two basic rights, which are widely agreed upon, do say that you have to have a multiparty system and that is the right of assembly and the right of association. We have that in the United States, but that is what was being denied in Uganda, the right of association to have with the party, the right of assembly, being able to meet, being able to organize. Museveni and I had endless discussions on those things and his arguments back to me were that the people aren't ready. These divisions, that his opposition consisted of nefarious people and he just couldn't allow it to happen. During this period Museveni was getting more and more vain about himself. He was using his own press agency and this became a problem as well. He was getting all this adulatory press. I think some of it was what I had helped cook up with my journalist friends, it sort of backfired to that degree. I held my ground and Washington backed me up and George Moose backed me up and there were two elections there. They didn't move and they went into the movement system and it didn't look very good.

Q: What were, let's say particularly the British and maybe the French embassies, what were they doing? Were we out in front on this?

SOUTHWICK: Well, we were a little bit more because we're the United States of America and whether we want to be in the back, we can't be in the back. I have always felt that we worked very closely with our closest allies; certainly the British in places where the British were paramount, the French where they were paramount and then more broadly with the donor community: the Europeans and the Japanese and that had been successful in Kenya. With Edward Clay who was the British High Commissioner there, he and I were talking together all the time and I also found a good interlocutor in the form of the Italian ambassador who was one of Italy's foremost Africanists and he and I became good friends. They lived across the street from me and we spent a lot of time together just socially and sometimes on weekends, just two couples. Edward Clay is currently the British High Commissioner in Kenya and he's going public with some scathing criticisms of the government there, democratically elected government over corruption. He's doing some of this stuff that I learned from Hempstone and I think he learned a little bit from me. I can't say it was all successful and if I had to do it all over again, I'd have to think whether I'd want to do it all over again because you pay a cost.

Q: What about the academic world? I would think that you would get quite a few students because it's English speaking and that's probably the main thing and it's not a bad place to go to.

SOUTHWICK: Makerere had been the main university of Eastern Africa, and with the British Museveni was trying to rehabilitate it to some extent during the period that I was there and subsequently. Yes, academics. They were looking at Uganda as a place that could make it. I was trying to make sure that this country made it. I felt that if Uganda, which had been the first country in Africa to go down the toilet in a major way with Idi Amin, if it could recover and do well it would send a signal to the rest of Africa. Uganda is important to itself, but also for the signal it sent. I was very concerned and my confidence then was stronger frankly than it is now that Africa could do that.

Q: What did you feel that we were teaching students in the United States about Africa, was it realistic?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I think it's a complex subject and I'm going to know more about this. I'm doing a little bit of research for a presentation I have to give at the U.S. Institute of Peace to some secondary school teachers who teach in secondary school about Africa. What should be known and what should be said. You don't want what I call the "roots version" of Africa which is Africa is an Eden-like place where everybody was living in peace and harmony in a loving relationship with each other in nature and then foreigners came in and destroyed it all. Africa was never like that. There were elements of that at various times and various places. Africa isn't the Rwandan genocide either. So, somewhere in this vast middle you have to construct an image of Africa which is realistic, but also, I think allows some room for hope and allows some room for investment of time and resources. That's the problem. I think in my own career, and I still believe this, here we are 10 years later, we had the Somalia episode. Then we had the genocide in Rwanda and I think in terms of the Western image of Africa and certainly the U.S. image of Africa, after those two events, it was a big turnoff. I think it's pretty much stayed there.

Q: Well, we had another almost genocide in the Sudan in Darfur.

SOUTHWICK: That's right.

Q: You know, and this is a place where there are pictures of starving children and hopeless looking mothers.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I think on average, a sophisticated American or even a caring American looks at this as we've tried, we can't do it, let's hope that somehow they'll straighten themselves out over the next decade or two or three and then maybe we can do business with them.

Q: Did you get any moderately high level visits or delegations while you were there?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we did get a few. We didn't get the Secretary of State, but we did get Hillary Clinton for two nights, three days on the tail end of a visit she made to Africa. This was the springtime of the year I left and she was fantastic. I'm aware of all of these views of Hillary Clinton that are less than favorable, but based on my experience watching an American first lady do a visit with grace, with style, with content, working hard, being good with people, A+, A+, A+. She was a big hit with absolutely everybody. She had Chelsea with her.

Q: What about the women's movement because AIDS in a way has been devastating particularly to women because this men imposing the disease on women in a sense.

SOUTHWICK: That's right because men are more promiscuous, even in marriage.

Q: Yes. I mean I've heard reports of men demanding younger and younger brides on the assumption that the younger, if you get a 13 year old girl she's unlikely to have AIDS. Really pretty horrible things. What were we doing in that regard?

SOUTHWICK: Well, you know, this is another place where Museveni's radical leftist past I think served him well. He came in and he was very pro-woman in terms of their education, putting things in the constitution to make sure that they were represented in parliament, a very serious affirmative action program, far more draconian than anything we've seen here for either women or blacks or other disadvantaged people. The thing that I always found interesting about it, I could not discern in any way, shape or form as hard as I looked that there was any kind of backlash against this. The women were ready to take advantage of it. '95 was the year of the Beijing Women's Conference and I don't think it's appreciated in this country how much that meant worldwide to women in Third World countries.

Q: No, Hillary Clinton played a big role in that.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, she gave a fantastic speech.

Q: I've done an interview with Teresa Loar. This is a very big thing. Did women come back, I mean was there a group of women who were charged up by these?

SOUTHWICK: They were charged up before they went to Beijing and when they came back they were unstoppable. I think a lot of countries sent quite a few women, a lot of the aid organizations including ourselves helped fund this. I think it has worked out really well.

Q: Well, in this type of organization then you feel that that type of aid works.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I've always felt the education part of aid, to the extent that it works, that's the part that works best. You change peoples' views. You empower them with tools of education. Getting back to this whole question of sexuality in those societies, one of the things in Uganda is it is a heavily Christianized country and part of it is the more fundamental.

Q: 59 martyrs or how many martyrs were there in Uganda?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, there were, and the Pope had been to Uganda before my time. He had been there. One of the previous kings was homosexual and wanted to have sex with I don't know what it was, a dozen or so boys and they refused and they were put to death. Museveni's wife is very religious, very devout and probably more on the fundamentalist conservative side and she has bought into this abstinence approach.

Q: This is to prevent AIDS.

SOUTHWICK: To prevent AIDS and it certainly cuts down the cost. I mean abstinence obviously works. Somewhat surprisingly it has. I've been reading a little bit about this recently that abstinence has worked pretty well and it's obviously not going to work with everybody, but for those who are willing to at least think about that, its been good.

Q: Was Libya messing around in there at all?

SOUTHWICK: Well, Museveni had a soft spot for Qadhafi because Qadhafi had aided him during the Ugandan civil war. This is where the Burundi connection commanded some of these armies had come through Burundi. Museveni was sort of reluctant to openly criticize Qadhafi because I think Qadhafi still gave him money and Museveni was grateful for the help during the civil war. But I think Museveni as much as everybody else thought Qadhafi was a nut case out of touch with reality.

Q: Did the French play much of a role there?

SOUTHWICK: They did because they had this interest in Rwanda and they regarded Uganda as a country that thwarted their efforts there. The French had wanted to be more active in Rwanda. They had been supporting the Hutu, ____ a government before the genocide. They did launch an operation there to kind of stabilize the situation. During my time there as we were having all the trouble with the refugee camps where the Hutus were in Eastern Zaire, they wanted to come in. The French ambassador, a very intellectual, bright person, and I were good friends. I like the French and I like to kid them and they like to kid us obviously. Sometimes it isn't just kidding. They felt that Museveni was up to no good, not to be trusted, the whole intervention in Eastern Zaire proved that and that after democratization my French counterpart felt that the British and ourselves were kind of deluding ourselves that Museveni would pursue a democratic path. The only thing that would stop him was to take his money away. Obviously there was no one in a mood to do that. The French were active there. They didn't have much of an aid program. They did most of their things through the European Union. They have aided most of the African Francophone countries.

Q: When you arrived there in '94, where stood the because later we, the genocide in Rwanda was it?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, in '94.

Q: Had that happened while you were there?

SOUTHWICK: It had wound down by the time I had arrived in August of '94. It was mainly in April or May.

Q: While you were in Washington or there, did you get any reflections on the sort of the debate that went around and the agonizing afterwards should the Western world especially the United States intervene there to stop it?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I guess we've covered a little bit of this in the previous conversations, but in Somalia 18 Americans get killed one day and we start withdrawing and we're out of there six months later. Then the Rwanda business where clearly Clinton and his advisors did not want to get involved. Some of them are trying to backpedal now saying, oh, if they've only known or if they'd only done this. They knew exactly what was going on or close enough, let's put it that way. A country like ours, there has to be leadership, a political commitment and the country has to be for that kind of thing and I honestly don't think you can get that for Africa. It's hard enough doing what we're doing in Iraq. Vietnam, and I'm not traumatized by Vietnam even though it was an experience of my generation, its just that we have to be very careful. We have to recognize that any war you ever start fighting starts making a lot of things happen that you didn't expect.

Q: Yes, well, looking at various places where we have intervened, the Balkans so far at least have put a lid on things.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, we've got the lid on, I don't think we've.

Q: Yes, we're talking about 1358 or 1387 you know, things take a while.

SOUTHWICK: It will take a while. Take a lot of Prozac.

Q: But we have sort of dampened things down and there is particularly in Europe, you have a creeping modernization. It's like the French and the Germans. At a certain point, nobody gives a damn about these things.

SOUTHWICK: That's true.

Q: I can make a buck and get a job and that may be beginning to happen.

SOUTHWICK: There is some hope in the Balkans because of the things you mentioned. In Africa because of the poverty and because of the lack of education, this is more difficult. In recent years I have reluctantly come to the view that these things are going to take an enormous amount of time and that most of what happens for the good is going to be a function of good leadership in those countries and God knows how you get good leadership.

Q: I know it. Going back to the Balkans, much of what happened in the Balkans, if you hadn't had Milosevic and Tudjman as leaders, these were very bad people.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely.

Q: Another set of leaders, even weak leaders, might have kept things from getting out of hand.

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: Well, did you find yourself, you'd been around Africa a lot getting at odds with sort of aid people and people sort of starry eyed and were going to come in and change things? I mean in a way we were coming up with an Africanist to be rather disabused about Africa.

SOUTHWICK: Well, I think I see the trend of things that were increasingly apparent in the time I was in Nairobi and then in Uganda. Not that I'd want to close down the aid mission or something like that. I felt that a lot of the aid people were a bit delusional in some cases and willfully self-delusional in others. It was a job. It was well paying.

Q: Nice living.

SOUTHWICK: Admittedly you're out in the sticks in a lot of these countries, but still a noble purpose. Quite well educated people if you look at the average degree pattern of an aid officer and the FSO. The aid people have more degrees than FSOs do. There's a lot of pride there, but I also felt a fair amount of arrogance. I also felt that some of them, and I hesitate to say this, but I think it's true that they were living a con and they knew it was a con.

Q: Well, sometimes they have the feeling that one of the greatest things about aid programs has been the support of graduate student programs in the United States. You know, you move into a country and say Uganda, you want to do something about changing voting patterns, so you go to the University of Michigan and they send out a bunch of grad students. Did you find those types of things?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. Eisenhower spoke of a military industrial complex. There is this sort of educational social sciences or whatever you want to call it complex that is thriving along, in sort of a vast industry. Again, created for noble purpose. It's a serious business. Why on earth should we live on a planet when half the people live on less than $2.00 a day. It's an appalling situation. Changing it is another question.

Q: Well, did you feel that in a way that you were beginning to run out your string as it happened?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, I was looking for a change as it came time for me to leave Africa. I knew that I wanted to spend probably two more years in the State Department in Washington. I had a daughter at an expensive school and I felt I needed to work. I found from Africa that I really couldn't engineer a departure so easily into something else that may have been more remunerative than staying in the Foreign Service. My eye was on staying in the Foreign Service for three more years and then eventually my daughter would graduate from school. I felt I had lived through those seven years in Africa where a lot of the worst of Africa had been on display. This was captured in some books. There's a very good book written by Keith Richburg, a Washington Post correspondent. He is an African American and he wrote a book called Out of America and it's sort of an experience of an African American in Africa when all of this horrible stuff is going on in Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda. My experience was different and went back a much longer time frame, but I think some of the things he says in that book were true.

Q: Where did you go then in '97?

SOUTHWICK: In '97, there were two things that I had gotten a lot of good feedback about. One of them was to be the A-DAS or the principal deputy in the African bureau. The other job was to be the number two in the Bureau of Personnel next to the director general. Skip Gnehm was coming into that position as the Director General. I knew him a little bit, not well, but I was clearly a finalist for that. For a while it looked like I was a finalist for one of these top positions in the African bureau. Then it became apparent that Susan Rice was going to be the new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Even though I had thought that we had gotten along really quite well, I'd seen her a few times and all the rest of it, something happened. It became pretty clear that I wasn't going to get any decent job or any job at all in the African bureau. At about that time the situation for the DG job collapsed. I was in free fall. I looked around and I thought, well, I'll just get a job from which I can look around. There was an office director job in the IO bureau. I knew the assistant secretary there, Princeton Lyman, a terrific person. I got that job.

Q: You were there for three years?

SOUTHWICK: I got that job on paper. By the time I landed in Washington there was a DAS position that had opened up in IO. I had never worked the IO portfolio before, but I asked Princeton could I fill that job in an acting capacity. He said yes. He said he had had a candidate in mind for that job, but Madeleine Albright did not want that person in that job and she had an interest in who got that job. Well, I said, Madeleine Albright doesn't know me, but let me see how I do in it and how it works out. Maybe this would be a solution. That's what I did and I walked into a job. This is a great lesson. It was not something I sought, not something I wanted, not something that I was prepared for and frankly not something I thought I would do very well at. I really didn't. I thought I was going to be a fish out of water and after years and years of developing an expertise in Africa and knowing how to run an embassy blindfolded, I was suddenly in a place where I felt like the village idiot.

Q: Well, that's often what we do for the Foreign Service.

SOUTHWICK: One village idiot experience after another.

Q: Yes, sort of looking around and saying, why am I here? What am I supposed to do. So, what did you do for the last three years?

SOUTHWICK: Well, it's been longer than that because I landed in IO. I was going to do my high three. I was having a good time. I ended up liking it. I ended up doing well. I ended up where people liked me in it so I stayed five years there, ran out my TIC in the Foreign Service.

Q: Your time in class.

SOUTHWICK: Then the powers that be said, oh, we want you to stay on another year and be the Principal Deputy in the human rights bureau. All of this was very flattering in a way, but after five years in IO and putting on 500,000 or 600,000 miles traveling around the world to this meeting and that meeting and that conference I wasn't particularly eager to take that sixth year. I didn't know how it worked technically but I told the powers that be if you can make it work, I'll do it, but I'm not lifting a finger to make it happen. I told them this. The DG's office was very upset because here I was somebody who was sticking out who was going to be brought back and fill a position that could otherwise be filled by somebody who still was a Foreign Service Officer. I said, well, I can understand your feelings and if I was sitting where you were sitting, I would say the same thing.

Q: Today is the 30th of July, 2004. Mike, we're going to pick this up in 1997.

SOUTHWICK: In 1997 I returned from Africa after a seven year stint there and somewhat unexpectedly found myself in the Bureau of International Affairs where as the breaks came it was possible for me to become on an acting basis a deputy assistant secretary.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary?

SOUTHWICK: The Assistant Secretary then was Princeton Lyman and his principal deputy was Molly Williamson. My position there was presiding over three offices which had to do with basically the UN system, all of the organizations that are involved in the U.S. and for example, food and agricultural organization, international civil aviation organization, the World Health Organization, the Human Rights Commission, the United Nations Development Program. There are 47 of these agencies and the deputy assistant secretary oversaw our participation in those agencies. It's a perfect place for a renaissance man, or a jack of all trades, master of none. One minute you might be dealing with stem cell research and the next minute you might be dealing with whether private couriers like FedEx and UPS should be part of the universal postal union. There are a great variety there, but I had not had training in the international system of IO in the sense of doing multilateral negotiations, going to these conferences, sitting behind a microphone and trying to marshal support for U.S. positions overseas as we all have. We've been on this receiving end of demarche requests to get country X to support us in the UN on something that nobody understood like drift net fishing. But, after being an ambassador, I was an expert, I knew my trade, I knew my business, I knew how to do things, running an embassy, all of the skills connected with that. Still, I felt I was starting, not necessarily from scratch, but from a pretty low point. I wasn't quite sure that I would have the capacity to really bring this off.

Princeton Lyman is one of my favorite people in all of government and he gave encouragement and leadership. A very decent kind of person, told me that it was not a foregone conclusion that I could have the job permanently. A lot depended on the views of Madeleine Albright and in effect how I did during those initial weeks and months while I was in an acting capacity.

Q: I would imagine Madeleine Albright having just come from the UN was keeping a much closer on IO than most secretaries of State were.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. The reason that position was open was that Lyman's initial choice for it was someone who had not found favor with Madeleine Albright. I told Princeton, I said, "Madeleine Albright doesn't know who I am. I don't know whether I can help you there." Anyway, the summer of '97 had been a kind of traumatic period. With the move, my mother passed away in August at the age of 81 and just a whole lot of things going on in my life. One of my sons was having difficulty and here I was in this job where I felt somewhat inadequate to put it bluntly and ill at ease. I found out that there were a lot of interesting issues. I found out that the staff in Washington was largely very good, people I liked. I found that the people in our missions as I've always found in the Foreign Service were stocked with good professionals.

The other thing I found, and this is what got me the job, is I found out I had a kind of a talent for it. I was pretty good at building coalitions, doing negotiations in corridors, in men's' rooms, in aisles of these big meetings and getting support for our positions. The first time that this happened, a little bit flying blind was in Rome in November where we had a very difficult negotiation on budget levels. We were in arrears to the UN system by two and a half billion dollars. You keep going to these institutions and asking for yet more concessions and working the floor very hard.

Q: Can you kind of explain, what does one do when one works the floor very hard?

SOUTHWICK: Okay. This is reminded me a lot of the period where I had done congressional relations. It kind of dawned on me, it's obvious, but it took a while, it dawned on me that these international organizations are like parliaments. It isn't quite clear that they have political parties, but they have factions and it is the Third World faction which has different parts, subparts, Europeans, the old Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and so forth. Most of the votes are with Third World countries which have a kind of a love-hate relationship with the United States. You could figure out the dynamics of a particular organization, see where the issues fell, how they affected different groups, try to maneuver within your own position to the extent possible to draw in votes from other factions and then make as careful calculations you can in votes. Vote counting. Again, drawing on this experience much earlier in my career in congressional relations, I found I could do that pretty well. Isolate the people. If you get this person, 10 people are likely to follow. If you get that person 20 people are likely to follow.

Q: What did you have to offer because you know I mean we have our fixed position and in other words to get somebody to vote for something often you have to say, you know if you vote for this such and such will happen for you.

SOUTHWICK: For all of these organizations, the assessed organizations including agricultural organizations, for the UN at that time we were paying 25% of the budget. For the Food and Agriculture Organization, we were in arrears over $100 million. So what we fashioned was a package to pay that back in exchange for some reforms and for eventually lowering our assessment from 25 to 22 percent. This was what we had hoped to do for the UN generally in New York. For part of the UN system, which we call voluntary organizations, you put in what you like. It was kind of a historical record because UNICEF is one of them. United Nations Development Program is another one and these things can go up and down.

With the other ones you're assessed. It's a treaty obligation. The United States had this frankly very weak position of being in arrears of enormous amounts of money to all these organizations which in every case we had long been the major contributor and played a leadership role, in many cases the leadership role. It was worth it to these other countries to get us back in the ball game, get the money flowing again and get more robust participation.

Q: Did you pick up a couple of I mean was there a basic theme that you were particularly working on which was to make the United Nations a more leaner, a more efficient operation?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, part of what had happened, the reason we had landed ourself in arrears, because Jesse Helms sort of led this faction in congress which really felt that the UN was wasting money. It was fat, it was bloated. It needed to reform. It needed to trim down and frankly most of that criticism had basis in fact.

Q: I'm just trying to get the feeling, was your impression at the time looking at this yes, it needed this, but was this the real reason that Helms was doing this or was it a visceral dislike of the United Nations?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I think you've got a good assessment there. It was a combination of the two. There's some people in congress who frankly do not like internationalism and look for reasons to oppose internationalism in various phases. Don't like the UN's pretensions occasionally. Some of the member states pretension to form a kind of a pseudo world government, which some congress people thought would subvert the constitutional order in the United States. I always felt all those fears were very much exaggerated. You do find that in the UN system, over time at international conferences, the outcome documents to these conferences use language on hot button issues like abortion, the family, and so forth, AIDs and issues with that, how society treats homosexuals, that the right wing in the United States felt that the UN was going in the wrong direction. My pitch was that we want these organizations to work well. We want them to perform the purposes for which they were intended. Everybody could see that things had gotten rather bad and things needed to be cleaned up. There needed to be more accountability. These organizations needed to be more effective. They needed to have a system for assessing what they were doing. Very few of them did. They all needed to have their own inspector general system. Some of them did, but it was weak. All of that needed to be strengthened, so we had some support for this from the other major contributors, but we were the most strident about it.

Q: Well, you know, when you're doing this thing, we are alumni of our own bureaucracy. In a bureaucracy one of the tendencies is to protect one's own rice bowl and I mean you know, our thrust at this point was to break some rice bowls, rather substantial ones. A lot of these UN people had prestigious well-paid positions.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, absolutely. It had become its own bureaucracy, which is easy to criticize, which wasn't to say that it didn't continue in many of its elements to do good work. UNICEF for example, the children's organization has always had a very good reputation. The World Food Program is a fantastic organization. It moves food around to famine areas, war affected areas. The International Civil Aviation Organization, if it didn't exist, would have to be invented. As a matter of fact, most of these organizations, they're almost like the case for all of them, if they didn't exist, they'd have to be invented. The World Health Organization got rid of smallpox. It would not have happened without an organization like that.

Q: How long were you with IO?

SOUTHWICK: I was with IO for five years. I initially expected to be there two or three years and then I was going to retire, but a couple of things happened. One I found that I really enjoyed it. Two, when Princeton Lyman lost his position, primarily because we'd lost a vote on the Cuba resolution in the Human Rights Commission, it was thought that there would be a total cleaning of the house in IO.

Q: How did this vote come about?

SOUTHWICK: Well, in the Human Rights Commission for the past, for some years, there's been a vote on Cuba, the Cuba Resolution. The two things in the Human Rights Commission that have the most prominent political profile for the United States is a vote on Cuba and a vote if there is a resolution on China. That's what gets them in the papers, maybe not on page one, but it does get into the papers. For domestic political reasons in the United States it was absolutely critical to win the one on Cuba. In 1998 the Human Rights Commission met for six weeks in mid-March until the end of April. As usual we expected that the Cuba Resolution would have to be something we'd fight about and we'd have to lobby hard to get the votes we needed.

Q: Sort of like the old China recognition of China resolution.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, it's sort of like that. I was in the chain of command. The Human Rights Commission went from Princeton Lyman to me to Geneva. I felt responsible. If they wanted to cut me off at the knees because we lost that they could, but they decided on the seventh floor to make Princeton Lyman the scapegoat.

Q: What was the convergence of having made this?

SOUTHWICK: You have 53 members in the Human Rights Commission. They're all there because they want to be there. They're elected by the economic and social council, another body that meets in New York, with 54 members. They're all there for three year terms because they want to be there. Nobody is there because as the French say, par hazard. Over the years Cuba had gotten a lot of support from countries there which felt that their main purpose was to frustrate the organization and to make sure that there wasn't any criticism of these countries which had bad human rights records. In other words instead of the organization being composed of countries that were trying to promote human rights, defend human rights, it became more and more composed of countries that were there to make sure that nothing bad happened to them.

Q: They have somebody like Syria I think at the head of it now.

SOUTHWICK: I can't remember if Syria had; we had Libya last year.

Q: Libya, yes.

SOUTHWICK: So, it's easy to caricature some of these things. For that particular vote what happened was you would get assurances of support. This is with African countries mainly. But you would get some wobbliness that you could perceive on the part of these African country representatives in Geneva. Then you could see changes over time so that you had to keep going back to them over and over again to keep whatever commitment they had made to us nailed down. Well, Cuba lobbies very hard. Fidel Castro is a hero to many people in the Third World despite whatever people may think about him in the United States so it is a powerful lobbying apparatus against us. Some of these countries one day would be leaning in our direction. Again this was mainly in Africa, and the next day leaning in the other direction. A lot of this depends on which day the vote falls. I went over to Geneva about two weeks before that vote. We had a meeting at the embassy, talked to a number of people and felt that we were not totally comfortable. We were in a pretty good position, but there was this area of uncertainty. In the end, this area of uncertainty is what got us. Madeleine Albright was livid because the groundwork hadn't been laid to inform her about it. She was caught by surprise. She felt that had she known what we were facing, that she could have intervened personally with certain countries.

Q: I mean fair enough.

SOUTHWICK: It is.

Q: If you've got a real problem.

SOUTHWICK: The Secretary of State. But if you look at the numbers on that vote, you can do a simple regression analysis, it was pretty clear that at some point you were likely to lose it. It's the way the trend was going. For someone like myself who privately had huge doubts about the efficacy of our Cuba policy, I felt that if we were ever defeated there it might result in reappraisal of our policy. To just see whether we needed to recalibrate it to some extent. I mean I wasn't naï¿½ve about domestic politics by any means, but it was clear even within the Cuban American community there were some differences about how important this was and whether the approach that we were taking, the success of the U.S. administration in taking a hard line on Cuba.

Anyway, when the vote was lost there were task forces set up. George Moose, our ambassador in Geneva, was brought over. We talked about this a lot. Wendy Sherman who was Madeleine Albright's point person on Cuba stuff ran this. It was very clear that no change in Cuba policy was contemplated. The whole thing was to gear ourselves up so that this never happened again.

Q: While we're on this and then we'll move on to some other things, did you get any feel for the Madeleine Albright administration of the State Department as it reflected on you?

SOUTHWICK: I found her very good on human rights issues. She could give a very good speech for example. She attended one of the human rights commissions and I thought gave a superb speech. She was interested in international organization issues. She tended to be a bit myopic, I think is what some people say, more interested in Eastern Europe and the Cold War kinds of issues rather than kind of a global approach. The China specialist routine.

Q: Like Dean Rusk who was considered to be Asia and we being forced to deal with Europe.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, and how you can avoid this I don't know. I think it's very difficult for anybody to have a kind of a truly global perspective. At the same time she was perceived by many of us as not caring very much about the career Foreign Service. She had had a small coterie of people, mostly women, who were her advisors. There were just a few times that she ever had lunch down in the cafeteria and she was surrounded by those people. She seemed to some of us to be somewhat mercurial. Another criticism that was levied at her, and I share some of this, was that she was very conscious of the fact that she was the first woman Secretary of State. She had a lot of ego invested in this and I would say a little bit of exhibitionism, which I don't think served us very well. She was on the road an awful lot because she liked the attention and the ceremony.

Q: Yes. Well, one of the things that I've heard and I've been somewhat removed, but people I've talked to are saying, you know, Secretary Baker had a coterie, but everybody gives very high marks to the individuals in the coterie and their accomplishments. You didn't necessarily like them or the way it was done, but with Madeleine Albright I mean the names are practically, they've disappeared practically because this was not a very good coterie. I'm not trying to put words in your mouth.

SOUTHWICK: No. I've heard some of those same things. I did come to know Wendy Sherman and I have an enormous amount of respect for Wendy Sherman. She's sort of demonic about running a meeting and getting to the heart of issues and working through things in a very intelligent manner. She was a formidable person and I have a lot of admiration for her. She's the only one there that I worked with fairly closely.

Q: Well, then let's go back to, let's talk about some of the things you were dealing with. In the first place, how did you survive both in this what could be very easily a political job and often was a political job and survive into both the Clinton and Bush administrations?

SOUTHWICK: I had worked on a number of issues, which to me were somewhat obscure, but they had some appeal to both the Clinton administration and the Bush administration. One of the things I started working on was a child soldier treaty. There had been negotiations going on in Geneva for a number of years on an optional protocol to the convention on the rights of a child to ban these child soldiers under the age of 18. When you're running a complex operation like the U.S. relationship with 47 agencies, you can't immerse yourself in every single thing that they do. You have to pick and choose. Well, this child soldier treaty was one of those things. I felt it was important to us because at that particular time we'd had two major treaty negotiations where the United States was locked out. One of them was the ICC, the International Criminal Court. There was even a third one, which in some ways it was on the UN administration, it was called the Ottawa Process and that was on land mines. So, you had a section of three treaties where the United States were sort of outside. I felt very strongly that there was no reason for the United States to be outside a treaty to ban the use of child soldiers, that we had some severe problems with it. The question is whether we could surmount those difficulties perhaps with a slight change in the Pentagon's use of 17-year-olds. We recruited at 17 and the big issue here was the issue of 18. A child is defined in most UN documents as anyone under 18. To some of the purists the United States is recruiting 17-year-olds who are children and sending them into battle and you don't send children into battle. We were getting a black eye from a lot of folks on this.

Q: Was there any move we could make on this outside of changing our recruitment? I mean this is the 17-year-old sailor particularly is the traditional way a kid gets away from his family.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely and there is a long tradition of this and we have never at least in living memory drafted under 18. I don't think we even did in the Civil War, but we did have volunteers at 17 with parental consent. Basically what I felt is that our position was defensible. We have a volunteer army. The position of the Pentagon was that if we didn't actively recruit 17 year olds, people coming out of high school, if you don't get kids then, they're likely to drift onto something else. If we didn't recruit in that pool we would not meet our force level requirements and we would be forced back to a draft. I felt this just needed to be sold. I felt that the human rights community on this needed to focus on the fact that the problem wasn't the United States, or a few European armies which do this kind of thing. The British recruit at 16 for example. The real problem was out in the Third World, rebel groups and Third World armies and all of the abuses were out there.

Q: What was happening during your tenure?

SOUTHWICK: In January of 2000, during the last year of the Clinton administration was negotiation in Geneva at the request of the NSC that I'd worked with quite closely on this issue. They asked me to lead the negotiation. Frankly I didn't want to do it. Even though I'd worked a lot on it and I wanted to make sure that we made a good effort there, I didn't, but people thought that I was the one who could lead it. I'm not a lawyer. I've never been good at negotiating from a chair as I said. I do stuff in the corridors, in the aisles, in the men's room, lunches, dinner parties, that's how I do my business. Well, the White House insisted that I do it. I went over there with a very good team and frankly very determined again to give a good account of ourselves. I'd worked very hard in making and trying to engineer a change in our position. I orchestrated a meeting where Madeleine Albright raised this with her counterparts at the Pentagon. That led to about a week of negotiation into a shift in our position. The shift in our position being that yes, we would recruit 17-year-olds, we would train 17-year-olds, but we would take "all feasible measures" to avoid putting them into harm's way.

Q: Yes, it takes a year to train a soldier.

SOUTHWICK: We ran the numbers. We found that by the time we had taken 17-year-olds and trained them, we had very few left, less than 2,000 probably about 1,500. In some cases if you look at what we had in 17-year-olds overseas, we're talking about a few hundred people. The military in the United States especially during the period of the Clinton administration had this kind of fractious relationship. I felt that it was up to the NSC to orchestrate a change in the Pentagon position. It wasn't up to Michael Southwick. I had a friend who was working in the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office and one working in OSD the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I was getting intelligence from this person about the dynamics and the people there. I managed to figure out that we had a good chance of doing this if we got to the right people at the right time and we did. We found in Geneva that this position shifted, but then I found with our allies that that wasn't good enough. This is something that still makes me angry to this day; its not just in that negotiation. There are a lot of people who basically feel that the United States is too big for its britches and anything is good that diminishes or brings down the United States or frustrates the United States. France usually gets accused of this the most, but France isn't the only one. Anyway, we had a nip and tuck negotiation and I was working day and night doing everything that I could. I was even trying to engineer phone calls from the Pope to Fidel Castro. We had that almost set if it became necessary. I had a very good Swedish chair and much to the surprise of everybody we got it. We got it at the last minute, but we got it. Washington was surprised and pleased. They had to do some fancy footwork with the Congress and the Pentagon and then they came out for it. It was a long complicated story here afterwards about getting it through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and then we had the transition to the Bush administration. It was unclear to me whether the Bush administration would support it, but I thought there was a good chance that they would. A lot of people on Helms' staff were against it, but I felt at the end they would have a very great deal of difficulty politically voting against it. My calculation was right.

Q: Let's get a little bit into the complexities, your involvement in this. Did you find after getting with the treaty agreed upon that you were up against the domestic opponents both on the Hill and in the Pentagon?

SOUTHWICK: In the Pentagon, that's right. It turned out that even though the Joint Chiefs of Staff had gone along with this there was some reluctance on the part of the Marines for example. It wasn't done with a great deal of enthusiasm, but they could see that it kind of made sense. The people on Helms' staff were bitterly opposed to this and gave us a very rough time when we tried to brief them informally on negotiations in Geneva. Some were people who wound up over at the Pentagon in charge of these kinds of issues. We had the supreme irony as we eventually got around to having a Senate hearing on this with Senator Helms presiding. The person representing the Pentagon was a former Helms' staffer who bitterly opposed the treaty. By that time the White House machinery had started to work and they knew that they had to go along with it.

Q: Was it the logic that the situation was such that ideology was sort of brushed aside?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. The whole thrust of opposition to this I think collapsed when people started looking at the numbers and realizing that they were so few and this was a minor concession. There were a lot of people, especially in the right wing, like pro-military, styled themselves this way that any hindrance, even the most minor one, on the ability of our military to do its job is unacceptable. Then they don't like treaties anyway. Helms didn't like the convention on the rights of a child, which was the mother treaty to this. He didn't like the convention of the elimination of discrimination against women. He didn't like a whole host of treaties and he thought that there were far too many of them.

Q: Did you find, Senator Helms obviously comes up all the time in these interviews, but with his departure from the scene when he didn't, I mean was he sort of a coalition force or were there others who were going to be springing to fill in the gap?

SOUTHWICK: There was a symbiotic relationship between Helms and many of these elements that I described. There's no one quite like Helms. Frankly, I have a fair amount of respect for him because I think some of these tough questions do need to be asked. I didn't mind some of what he was saying at all. I got to know a couple of his staffers, some of whom were sympathetic to my position or our position and that made a huge difference. I cultivated those relationships and that made a big difference.

Q: Were there any other, well, obviously there were other issues. What were some of the other issues you were dealing with?

SOUTHWICK: Let me just cover one other thing on that treaty. When it was still the Clinton administration we made a big effort, I made a big effort, I frankly made the decision myself that President Clinton needed to sign that treaty rather than our representative in Geneva or New York or the Secretary of State. I just persuaded the White House that that was desirable and in fact President Clinton signed the treaty. I felt afterwards that that was a mistake because it looked too much like this was a Democratic political thing and maybe the Republicans just for that reason said no we don't want to do that, this is glorifying Clinton.

There were UN reform issues, getting better budget discipline, better control on the projects, inspectors general and so forth. The other one which had a lot of profile within its sphere, was opening up the universal postal union to participation by the couriers, FedEx and UPS and DHL. The universal postal union is a small organization. It's headquartered in Bern, Switzerland. It's the first international organization. It goes back to 1878. The United States had been instrumental in its founding. One of the major meeting rooms over there is named for Montgomery Blair as Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring or whatever it is. It's a very stodgy outfit and had not kept pace with the times and this whole area of the movement of mail and packages was changing enormously. It's a little bit akin to what was going on in the airline industry. Instead of having a system where everything was done in a kind of 19th Century way, with a state-owned and run postal services, you got other people into the act. This caused enormous resentment among people and some of this is ideological because the postal service is not necessarily out there just to make a profit. They're there to serve the public. FedEx, however, made a profit, with UPS, DHL, and some of these other couriers.

Q: DHL is?

SOUTHWICK: DHL is a German company. It's now closely allied with the German postal service. All of this world was changing. The FedEx lobbyists had gotten this written into the bill which Clinton signed saying that this was the policy of the U.S. government. They also took the responsibility for this area away from the postal service, which previously forever had the lead in the postal union, and gave it to the State Department. We had a fight there to see whether it would be in IO or EB, but IO prevailed on that. Again, the experience I had with congressional relations came into play. In the '70s I had covered hearings on the deregulation of the airline industry and I knew some of the people, some of them popped up again. There's a whole industry out there in academia and elsewhere who works on deregulated industries and this is what they hoped to do with the postal area sector.

Q: How did one, I mean did you have to do something with the postal union, or could be just discard it?

SOUTHWICK: The fact of the matter is it is still responsible for moving around an enormous amount of mail. If you look at the United States the postal service is an entity that employs 800,000 people and has an annual revenue of over $60 billion. This exceeds what FedEx and UPS do combined, but not by much. You can't just kind of dismantle that altogether. You could make a case, as we had done, for taking an old line government operated postal service that had been set up by Benjamin Franklin and spinning it off as was done in the late '70s into something that's run by a board.

Q: I was really wondering whether the postal union was something that in a way that the express agencies could just go beyond?

SOUTHWICK: They felt that it was a question of competition and openness. FedEx lobbyists in particular, the ones who had been most responsible for this, felt that the universal postal union was trying to rig the rules to make it harder for the private couriers to operate.

Q: And that would be the case.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, to a certain extent this was true. Who could compete and who couldn't compete and this took place behind closed doors. FedEx wanted it opened up, and from just a purely policy point of view it made sense to keep this organization in tune with the times. Most of the packages in the United States are not delivered by the postal service. 90% of them are delivered by UPS which employs nearly 400,000 people. It's an enormous organization in terms of delivering parcels.

Q: Had this type of thing spread say to Europe?

SOUTHWICK: It goes back to the old Dutch trader thing. The Netherlands had kind of tried to do this and had been shot down by it. I looked at what the Netherlands had done and I decided this is what we're going to do. I appropriated what there was. We altered it in some fashion and then set to work to try to make it happen. Every five years the universal postal union has a big worldwide congress. There was one in Beijing in 1999. We decided to make a big play there to do this. I was leading the delegation of 70 people, most of them postal people including the postmaster general of the United States who was a great guy by the way. We were loud and strident and nasty and frankly got voted down at every turn. I thought we had a setback there from which we wouldn't recover, but what had happened by being so noisy about it and being so strident it set people to thinking. In the ensuing months it became clear that more and more people were thinking, yes, the United States has a point, things should change. The Beijing congress set up this working group to look into these reform issues. It was sort of felt okay, like a lot of things, we're setting up a committee and that will take care of that. Well, I made about 11 trips to Zurich in the next two years and we gradually got a package that looked pretty good. Even the leadership of the postal union, the postal union was headed by somebody who had been a senior person at the postal service and was very resistant to this whole thing in the beginning. I had a master meeting with him in Beijing about this, but we had support from the Germans. We had support from the British. We had support from the Dutch, much less so from the French.

Q: I was going to say it sounds like the French.

SOUTHWICK: Well, the French were basically leading the fight against us. Then, in the months or year after the Beijing congress even the French came onboard.

Q: I would imagine that the, I mean Commerce has its own flow and Federal Express, United Parcel and all this makes good sense because it means you get fast service and you don't get involved with the huge, the unions and everything else that go along with government service. I would think that business would say, look I don't care about your regulations, I want to get X package to my office in a certain time.

SOUTHWICK: And who can do it better, right. It was just an idea frankly whose time had come. It had been delayed because of the stodginess and the clubiness and inertia of the universal postal union membership. Gradually the tide turned. One of the things I'd made a tactical decision on is I thought we had been our nasty-throwing-fit-self in Beijing. But from here on out we're going to be sweet, listen to everybody, be quiet when we can, let other people do the talking, spread this thing around so it doesn't look like it's just the United States. We're going to like some ideas that maybe we don't like a whole lot ourselves, but we did this and it kind of startled people because we were speaking softly to confuse people, but it worked.

Q: Also, you had the big stick that time was on your side.

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: I mean obviously.

SOUTHWICK: Once we felt that the tide was turning, we felt that there was no more need for us to be up there on the parapet waving the flag.

Q: Was e-mail and things like this, was this beginning to affect things, the bypassing of the mail system?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. People were worried about this. Technology was changing. I can't remember the exact figure. I think $6 or $7 billion dollars of the postal service income was about 10% of people paying bills, the bill going out and people posting a check back. E-mail over time I don't know what the latest statistics are, could capture quite a bit of that, not all of it, some people will never change, but the Internet could capture a lot of that. There goes a big chunk of revenue right there. Then you go into another vast area of the direct marketers which I learned a lot and these people have some of the most sophisticated computers in the world and that goes for NSA as well to track the buying habits of individuals by the millions around the United States. It's a very sophisticated marketing operation, and they have a huge stake. They want mail service to be cheap because their stuff is through the mail or through FedEx. If you look and get a Lands' End catalog or something like that, you'll see that there's probably a couple of different ways you can ship things.

Q: How did you, what happened when the Bush administration took over? I mean I'm talking about IO. Was this a hostile takeover?

SOUTHWICK: Well, at first it was not. Frankly I think it became so. The person who replaced Princeton Lyman was David Welch. He was a Middle East hand, basically an Iraq specialist his entire career. He came to IO as a protï¿½gï¿½ of Madeleine Albright who relied on him extensively for Iraq stuff. David wasn't interested too much in the broader aspects of the job. He continued to work a lot on Iraq because Iraq was a big part of what was going on in the United Nations. He also was there to get the arrears issue of our UN dues solved and, as he put it, if we can quit one organization while I'm here I'm going to be happy about that. So, he finally found one, which we could quit. A very obscure one.

David was kind of segmented running this. The principal deputy was Bill Wood who was an extraordinarily bright, talented guy, not easy to work with. He had come there, after Princeton Lyman left, to replace Molly Williamson. He and I ended up being like Tweedledee and Tweedledum. It was one of these oddball relationships. He was sort of a hard-ass, brilliant, put people on the spot, very different work style than I have. I'm very collaborative, interactive, let's all get along together, tell me what you've got to say. For some reason it was just one of these symbiotic relationships that worked perfectly between the two of us. We were basically taking care of everything except for the bits that Welch was doing. Now, when Colin Powell came in, we all liked Powell. I mean who wouldn't like Powell. We briefed him and he was very attentive. The point that I made was that despite what you may have heard we do pretty well in the UN system, but we don't get anything unless we work very hard for it. If we work very hard we can get these organizations for the most part to do what we want. Frankly, and to be egotistical, I'm living proof of that. Here are the examples. One of the things we told Powell was that there were going to be a big series of international conferences over the first two years of the administration, about 11 of them depending on how you count it. Some of them were going to be important to the United States. One of them was going to be on racism, which had a troubled history. One of them was going to be a children's summit that has a lot of resonance domestically, politically. We were going to have one on the environment, one on investment and trade. That one would group together the whole international system, not just the World Bank or the GATT or the WGO, but the whole international system, in Monterrey, Mexico. I made the pitch to try to get Powell or even the President to come to a couple of these meetings.

So, as we started working on these I had a crisis very early in the first two or three weeks of the administration. We had a delegation set to go up to New York for a preparatory meeting for children's issues. This stimulated the Christian right, which had very close ties to this Bush administration. This first meeting in January up in New York, I started getting phone calls from people on the Hill saying that they didn't like the composition of the organizations because two of them had given them a slightly critical statement about the Mexico City policy. This was an abortion policy which Bush reversed, I think the first day or two he was in office. I said these are mainstream organizations. They've already been approved and we're going to keep them. At this point it was not so much being ideological. I remember my time again, congressional relations working with the Carter administration. I didn't want the administration to be pushed around even if it were for the right reason, we're not going to be pushed around. It is the executive which is going to control this process. Well, we went back and forth. People on the Hill called Powell. So, we said, we'll just add some people. There was a lawyer at State, that I'd been negotiating with a lot and had a lot of ties and he put in some other people from the same Christian-run organizations. So, for the first time inside the tent these were people who had been shunned before. I went up to New York and I had these people. I had to give a speech on our positions on things and I made this a very open process. We had a draft. Everybody there was able to look at it and comment on it. I found that I couldn't go back. The only person who had been confirmed in the State Department was Powell and you couldn't go back to Powell on some of this stuff. I saw that one of the issues had concerned the family, at the Beijing Women's Conference in '95. The more traditional social conservatives disliked how the Clinton administration had handled that. I looked into it and frankly found that I didn't like it either. It sort of demonized the family, tended to downgrade the family in all of the research that I had read. This was something that interests me said that the family is very important, it needs to be supported. A Helms' staffer, who was on the thing, said you could make a lot of points if you put something in about the family. I said, well, that's what I plan to do, so we worked it out. I made this speech and it was absolutely electrifying in the NGO community. The White House switchboard lit up within seconds. We usually issue about 200 or 300 copies of our statement. We had so many requests; we issued 1,600 of them. I couldn't walk down the aisle without being a hero to these people all because I said, it was very simple, I can't remember the exact words, that family was important. I told all of the folks across the spectrum, including the left, that I don't want to get into any definition of the family. Anybody who tries to define family is, I'm going to shut up. Maybe that's what we should do here, and anyway, that made a big difference.

Q: All right, well, we'll pick this up the next time. You'd mentioned a series of things going on which resulted in your being kept on I take it. The fact that you survived this major shift in a politically sensitive organization dealing with the United Nations was remarkable, but would you continue with the family, I mean with the thing on children and family after your speech. What were some of the repercussions and then we'll go on to something else.

SOUTHWICK: Well, I became a hero for some of these folks who felt that they had been excluded by the Clinton administration. I frankly wanted to draw them in. I wanted to co-opt them. I said the UN isn't as bad as you think and we can accomplish some things here that are important to you and which to me were sort of mainstream things. They wanted the UN to be militantly opposed to abortion and I told them that we cannot get that kind of outcome. We could get an outcome where the UN is basically out of the picture, ideologically and that is left to individual countries and that is frankly what we did accomplish.

Q: Okay, I'm not sure, we're just adding some things on here to talk about. I had an interview not too long ago with Nancy Raphel and she was talking about being in, trafficking a human, what's the?

SOUTHWICK: Trafficking in persons.

Q: Trafficking in persons. She ran across, she just didn't realize it, but this is a political issue.

SOUTHWICK: Absolutely.

Q: She had no idea of this, but we'll talk about this and particularly as ideology gets involved both on the Clinton side, too. I mean one forgets that the Clintons had their own, I mean the Clinton people had their own ideology.

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Today is the 1st of August, 2004. Mike, in the first place, you were on this UN thing from when to when?

SOUTHWICK: From '97 to 2002 and then in effect a year at DRL I did the Human Rights Commission which is a UN body.

Q: All right. Well, then let's go back to talking. Do you want to talk about Clinton versus Bush ideology and just within sort of the UN apparatus not just what we were doing, the other people and other countries, did they have ideologies that we were up against?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, the UN is the world. It is 190 countries. Some are quite passive in terms of their participation, but some see it as an arena to accomplish an agenda either in general terms or in terms of influencing what happens back in their own country. They can accomplish something in the UN, and that will feed back into the political life of an individual country. Obviously our participation in the UN over a couple of decades, really since China was admitted in the early '70s, had been declining in terms of its attractiveness to mainstream political opinion in the United States. Part of this is that we started to get regularly outvoted. All of these countries had come independent in the '60s, Third World so-called G-77 and baiting the United States and deprecating the United States was sort of a UN sport. Some of our ambassadors like Moynihan and Jeane Kirkpatrick stood up to this very well and sort of tossed back at least as well as they got. It made the U.S. I think less enchanted with the UN, all this idealism that was in the post-war period when these organizations were created gradually waning; and, then, the UN, I think, during this Cold War was kind of deadlocked on key issues because of the Cold War conflict. The Soviet Union and Russia, the Soviet Union and China having the detail in the Security Council.

The other thing was Israel. Beginning with the '67 War there was a series of resolutions including some in the Security Council. I don't want to say they were anti-Israel. I don't think they started out that way, but in some quarters they would tend to be perceived that way because all of the burden over time of straightening out the situation in the Middle East, as far as these resolutions were concerned, seemed to be on the Israelis. The Israelis were the ones supposedly at fault. If only the Israelis were a little bit more enlightened in their approach to things and gave the Palestinians a better break, these problems would be resolved. While in IO I negotiated political language in some of these documents of conferences often having to do with the Israeli-Palestinian issue, sometimes having to do with the Cuba issue. This started in '98 at a big international meeting in Minneapolis where I had handled a very touchy problem with the Palestinians and I did pretty well at it, better than expected. After that I was always called upon to handle this issue at conferences. The culmination was the racism conference in Durban in 2002 which was one of my last big efforts for IO. At the UN as I explained to Powell, by and large we get what we want, but we have to work at it. You don't get anything because we're the United States and everybody loves us. As a matter of fact not everybody does love us. I would say up until recently with the Bush administration, we had a lot going for us in terms of our overall moral leadership in the world on a host of issues. Humanitarian, human rights, security and so forth. We piled up a lot of credits which unfortunately in the last couple of years I think have been substantially dissipated, thrown away even.

Q: Well, let's talk about your experiences on the Palestinian and Israeli thing. You said you got involved with something rather early on. Let's talk about what you were doing on this issue and in as much detail as you can.

SOUTHWICK: The first instance was in 1998, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was having one of its periodic meetings. Most of these UN organizations have a big meeting every four or five years where they bring everybody together. It's sort of like a parliament. They change the rules and it's a chance for everybody to get together. The Telecommunication sector is extremely important in the United States. In '98 the telecommunications sector was booming and we were host for this conference. What the Palestinians wanted out of this conference was recognition akin to that of being a state, something that had been accomplished to some degree in a UN general assembly resolution a few months earlier. The question here is how far you can go without actually calling it a state and giving it the rights of a state because the United States made it very clear that if that were ever to happen we would pull out. There was always an effort to craft language which would get the Palestinian representation closer and closer. There were some specific issues where this came into play. For example, should the Palestinian territories have an international telephone code. Like the United States is 01. Britain is what, 33? Every country has a code. Well, if you have a code that means you're a country. One of the things that Palestinians had in mind for this conference was to get that code so you could dial a number, which would be in Palestine. The Israelis opposed this. Of course, in the legal perspective, the mere fact of having this code doesn't give you statehood, but it is one of the attributes of statehood like in former days having your own steel mill, having your own radio station. I was brought in. I'm not an expert on telecommunications. I knew some general things about telecommunications issues there, but that was basically left to specialists. IO's role in a lot of these conferences was making sure that political issues somewhat extraneous to the main work of the organization were kept under control or even kept out if we could possibly manage that.

Well, I was working that issue. I brought in a couple of people who worked with me, well, one in particular from our mission in Geneva. We worked frankly night and day for four weeks on this. It was all spent either with the Palestinians or with the Israelis, late into the night, early in the morning, trying to get these issues straightened out. At that time the Wye conference was going on at Wye Plantation in Maryland.

Q: W-Y-E.

SOUTHWICK: W-Y-E, where Clinton was working with King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Netanyahu and so forth to advance the Middle East peace process. That was the main show on the Middle East. What was going on in Minneapolis was a sideshow, but they were interrelated and Minneapolis certainly could not be ignored. Well, I found working with this issue that the Palestinians tended to overstate their case and do it in strident terms thinking that the cause was so just, so moral, so attractive that they would command the vote. The rhetoric and the tactics were so overbearing that a kind of a backlash set in. This isn't anything that we planned. This is just something that we noticed and I started doing vote counts and I found that there was a lot of resentment about this on the part of the bulk of the membership who felt that these political matters were being allowed to intrude in essentially a technical body. They didn't like the tactics, they didn't like the rhetoric, they didn't want to be anti-Palestinian, but they didn't necessarily want to play into this. We worked hard lobbying all of the delegations and when it finally came time for a vote the Arabs got a plurality, but not a majority. They got enough to get what they wanted, but it was in some ways a huge defeat for them, something that had rarely happened. I was somewhat surprised at this. We knew we had some votes, but we didn't know we had so many. It was a stunning defeat for the Arabs. I think the best compliment was paid to me by the head of the Palestinian delegation with whom I developed a good rapport. He said, "Michael, I knew you had to do your job, but you didn't have to do it so well." I've thought about that because I personally did not want to do in the Palestinians. I didn't want to do in the Israelis. The other thing I found was that the Israelis had a big, extremely technically competent delegation. The Palestinians had two or three people. Their negotiating styles were fundamentally different. The Palestinians wanted to go in and say this is what we want. Then, once everybody agrees with what the aims are of the negotiation, then you sort out how you achieve that. The Israelis were more inductive. They wanted to settle all the details, move ahead on all of the details and then finally get to a point where they could say, yes, well, I guess we can do this big thing that we want to do. We didn't know that until we sorted through all of these details. Now some people since say that this is stalling tactics. I honestly think that this is a difference in negotiating tactics.

The other thing I found in this working with both sides and working with NEA is that our NEA bureau sometimes tended to be more Israeli than the Israelis and that was a discovery for me.

Q: This was at a particular time, wasn't it, under the Clinton administration when I've heard people say, you know, the Arabists or whatever you want to call it, Arab specialists have been completely excluded from dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian thing.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. I wasn't as tuned into NEA internal politics, but I sensed that there was a big effort there on the part of our professional colleagues in NEA to be above criticism on this issue.

Q: You mean criticism on the American, the American political.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, from the American Jewish community. I was working with the Israelis and frankly I was getting them to a point which was a little bit further than they expected to go. It was quite a bit further than we expected to go. I called Washington and I said, this is what the Israelis have to do. The Israelis. But NEA said, they didn't believe it. I said, well, all of this has been checked out. It has gone to the Jerusalem foreign ministry and higher. People in the delegation were telling me, the Israeli delegation were being checked off as far as Prime Minister Netanyahu who was a hard-liner. I said if the Israelis can accept this, this would be very good for everybody. It would be good for us, good for the organization and my concern in terms of my writ was to take care of the organization. I had to follow the overall foreign policy in terms of issues and positions. I got this concession from the Israelis but it was too late in the negotiations. It was too 11th hour. It was like 24 hours before a vote and frankly we did not have enough time to work it. There was still some suspicion on the part of the Palestinians as to whether it was real; that, frankly, needed more time to overcome. It was disappointing that this didn't work. It did make me understand that working with the Israelis as opposed to working with NEA you could get some nuance and some complexity and some give to some degree, not hugely, but some give in some of these positions which I thought was worth the effort to accomplish. I didn't feel that I was pushing the Israelis around. I really didn't. I took strict pains not to do that.

Q: Let's say just on the rather discreet issue of getting the right country code, I mean either you have it or you don't have it.

SOUTHWICK: That's right.

Q: I mean was there any, what if I want to dial Palestine, I want to dial Bethlehem now, what do I do?

SOUTHWICK: I'm not 100% certain now, but I think you have to go through the Israeli code. There was for a time a possibility of going I think it was through Egypt or Jordan if you knew what number you were calling, but it's not as if it were set up that way in the international system. There were other things there like radio call signs and controlling some of the frequencies used for handheld telephones, cellular telephones. This clearly had to be worked through. An issue, which in some ways was about politics, was whether government should do this or not. In Israel, as in the United States, there's a big move to privatize all of this. There was a feeling on the part of people who were in commercial terms all of them that I met on the Israeli side, but I sensed that it would probably adhere to the Palestinian counterpart to this, let's just keep governments out of this, let's just have companies that operate in this area and let it be a free for all and let the market make these decisions.

Anyway, I took away from that negotiation that it was very important to keep the credibility with both sides, keep faith with both sides. I tried to work very fairly, very thoroughly through the Israeli position to see what it really contained and what there was there to work for and to gain a degree of confidence. I sought the credibility with the Palestinians which sometimes meant asking them to do more homework because of their negotiating style than they ordinarily were willing to do.

When I first started dealing with them I frankly didn't know what to do. Somebody said, well, you should get them in the same room. I organized a meeting, against the reluctance of both sides, in the same room. It ended up being a shouting match that went on for about three or four hours as I recall. Completely out of control. Then kind of subsided. Up until it started subsiding, I thought I had made one of the bigger mistakes in my life arranging this meeting between the two of them. But it turned out that it was necessary for them to just kind of ventilate and get it all out of their system and it was sort of like, well, now we've done that. Now, what are we here to talk about? It was a lot of who struck John. All of these people knew each other and have known each other for years. Some of them were friends across the line, Palestinians and Israelis, but they had grievances against each other. Once we got that out of the way we really didn't have to go back there.

Q: What role were other countries playing? Did you find that okay we were trying to come up with a compromise that say with the Egyptians or somebody trying to make political points rather than get something settled?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. Frankly the Arab side was led by a U.S. educated Saudi, an extremely bright guy, very good rhetorically, very good at the microphone. The dynamics were the Arabs were pretty much united. They were trying to get the non-Arab Muslim states. If you do that in the UN system you have about 56 or 57 votes and, with 185 190 total countries, that's not a bad start. This consideration went into the analysis that it was Arab countries. Muslims in general overplay their hand and alienate the bulk of the UN membership. What was very complicated was the role of the Europeans. We did bring the Norwegians in. They sent one of their representatives from New York, very able and toward the last few days of this he was working very closely with us and very well. The European Union seemed to be totally of the view that the Palestinians should get everything that they wanted. Even the British. I had trouble with this. I had a lot of experience working with the British and I said, there's something wrong here. I called Washington and said there's something going on between the British foreign office and parts of the government involved in telecommunications. Washington would check on this with our embassy in London and come back, oh, no there isn't and don't worry the British will be helpful to us. I said, look, I'm hearing this from you, but it is not happening here. I said, I've met with the British and I said, frankly, I think they're either operating on their own or certainly operating in a manner inconsistent with what the foreign office wants. I can't put that together here; you've got to do it in London or somewhere in Washington. I relied at that point, because I was getting fed up with NEA, on some of my IO contacts who had worked some of these issues before. We finally got the foreign office to see what was happening and that brought about a subtle, but useful shift in the European position.

Q: You mentioned the European Union. Did you find it was kind of a body at this point I mean was it sitting there, was there a European Union?

SOUTHWICK: On telecommunications, they negotiated as the European Union as they do on all commercial things and the GATT and so forth. As near as I can tell it worked pretty well. Some of the big communication companies in the world are European. You've got Siemens, you've got Alcatel in France, the British are very big certainly on the military side and Italy. Italy is very big. So, some of the corporate interests to be served were quite similar. We had a huge delegation of people in the private sector there and there were people from AT&T in our delegation. We looked at the British delegation and there were people there from AT&T on the British delegation. You wondered where the loyalties were. They were certainly very mixed up.

Q: Well, in dealing with this, had the cell phone phenomenon hit because I mean this must screw everything up.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. It did somewhat and one of the things that AT&T did, they gave everybody a cell phone for their use during the conference. Huge amounts of money was spent on parties, AT&T or one of the companies hired the Minnesota Orchestra. We had a concert, food and wine and all the rest of it. I mean this was all lavish. This was the telecommunications boom and the moon or the stars were the limit.

Q: Well, what came out of this?

SOUTHWICK: There was some reform as we always want in these organizations, some streamlining of things. They elect new officers and so forth. The Palestinians got a little bit further down the pike from their point of view. They didn't get everything they wanted, but they got some. We were the host, so we didn't want a disaster for the conference. Aside from this issue, which was very boisterous, and it was all being voted, it was three hours of parliamentary hassling going back and forth and suspending the meeting and using those usual tricks. That was the first time that I had personally ever had to do this and I was worried about it so I had two lawyers sitting behind me with a rule book. We had hand signals set up with the Israeli delegation. It was quite something.

Q: You know, thinking about this, this was sort of beyond our conversation, but our relationship with this very small state of Israel has certainly been America's tar baby for years, for decades.

SOUTHWICK: Millstone, albatross.

Q: Whatever, I mean one can say that much of the problems in the Middle East stem from this and we've lost a lot of lives because of this.

SOUTHWICK: We have. I think this new book published by the CIA analyst, Anonymous, says the whole war on terrorism is being misconstrued and it isn't that the terrorists dislike us because of our love of freedom, democracy and so forth. They don't like us for what we do, not what we are, but what we do. Number one on this list was support for Israel. I was not a specialist on this and I did not have super strong views about it except a general feeling that Israel should survive and I didn't like some of the hard-line tactics. Over the years I worked in IO and frequently on the Human Rights Commission. I worked more and more on the Middle East peace issue and the Israeli lobby in the United States for example. I got to know a lot of the main actors there. I came to the view that the extremists on both sides were controlling the agenda, the hard-liners on both sides. Each side was controlling the agenda, but with regard to the Palestinians the fundamental issue of Israel's existence had really not been resolved. It really had not. The bigger part of the Palestinian leadership, not Arafat and company, but when you looked at Hamas and all the rest of it, they don't want Israel to exist. That doesn't mean we want to kill all the Israelis or drive them into the sea or some of the rhetoric that the Jewish groups get involved in. They want a state which is roughly the boundaries of historic Palestine in which everybody theoretically is equal and they know the demographics. It's happening very soon actually. The Arabs will have a majority there and they'll run the place. This aberration of a Jewish state will come to an end. I think that that lies behind a lot of what happened. If you're an Israeli and you buy into the view that I just explained, you know that just kind of being nice and accommodating to the Arabs is not going to get you what you want. I came to this conclusion very reluctantly, but the more I saw the more I felt that that was really the problem. It's too bad that the Israelis have made concessions from time to time. They went very far the closing weeks of the Clinton administration. In their point of view the Palestinians should have taken that. But by taking that they would not have gotten what they regard as the ultimate prize and they would have had a divided country, the Palestinian state. Bush would sit side by side with the Israeli state and ultimately that is not what they wanted. Especially one which is easy to reject because that state, even though they had in this negotiation 90 something percent of the territory, it was still kind of a crazy quilt affair. It was not, it was somewhat contiguous, but it was kind of also kind of chopped up with the security highways and that.

Q: Well, did you follow along with this theme, did you get into anymore negotiations from IO that dealt either peripherally or concentrated on the Arab situation?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, the next one was when I was heading the delegation to Beijing for the postal union. The same kind of issue came in. Not so much in area code for postal affairs, but not trying to liberalize the exchange of mail and so forth between the Arab side, the Palestinian side and the Israelis and the rest of the world and also the issue of representation. I'd learned a lot from Minneapolis. Even though it was a huge issue in Beijing, I handled it better because I worked very carefully with the Chinese. I knew that the Chinese, even though they were sympathetic to the Palestinians, didn't want a mess on their hands and were prepared to lean on the Palestinians, which they did.

Q: How did you find the postal negotiations in China, had we, in things that you were dealing with, had you found that the Chinese had reached you might say I don't mean to be condescending, but they've been out so long, were they a mature power in dealing with issues like this?

SOUTHWICK: I have a lot of respect for the Chinese in all kinds of ways. I'd been to Hong Kong before, but never been to Mainland China. The place is overwhelming. The dynamism there, the amount of building going on, the commerce, the energy in the city. They're tearing down whole swaths of old neighborhoods and putting up start of the art buildings. If you go to Shanghai it's just astonishing to see how many skyscrapers there are. Somebody said that a majority of the cranes to put up skyscrapers in the world were in China for a good part of the '90s vis-ï¿½-vis the rest of the world. Most of the building going on was going on in China and it was like building Chicago every few years. A lot of people in our congress have sort of anti-China attitudes. They need to be taken over there to see what is going on. It is astonishing. We were watching all of that. The Chinese are magnificent folks. They have worked very carefully with the United States. At a postal level, things between the U.S. and China were going along very well. China had kind of an old line postal service which was state run and operated and even though the private sector was beginning to operate there, FedEx, DHL, UPS, and so forth, they kind of did this with a bit of a wary eye. Not so much that they resented it in principle in terms of ideological grounds, they wanted a piece of the action and they were trying to figure out how they could get into the action.

Q: While we're on this, was the FedEx, UPS, in other words the private concerns that move an awful lot of stuff, was that an issue at this time?

SOUTHWICK: It was a huge issue. We wanted to have a congress where this issue was dealt with successfully in the sense that a mechanism would set up whereby the private couriers of the world would be represented in the UPU. Unfortunately, their trade organization was thrown out of the meeting. The European vote was split on this. The French were very much against us. They were trying to curry favor with the Third World, particularly Africa and they, in a sense, controlled all of those African votes which was a fair chunk of votes. We nevertheless got the issue aired, got discussed. We made a lot of speeches and lobbied very hard, had some kind of bitter words between myself and the French representative there on the floor. Frankly, I left that meeting because of those votes that were being taken. I said we're quite a ways away from getting our objectives fulfilled in this organization. The head of the organization was an American who had come from the U.S. Postal Service and had been elected in Seoul in 1994. He was against us. I had had extremely bitter words with him and it got very nasty. Basically, I said, you know, this place will either shape up or we'll ship out and we'll get a lot of countries with us. He said you can't do that and I said, I think we can and we will. It got pretty down and dirty. I wasn't trying to play the big hegemon United States. I honestly felt that it helped that organization. It did need to recognize what was going on in the postal sector.

What happened in Beijing was like a lot of things. They set up a committee to study the issue and to come up with a recommendation. We had a more ambitious proposal, but we had to settle for this committee thing. Much to the surprise of everybody, it took me 11 trips to Bern, but the meeting in Beijing did have an effect and it made people start thinking about it. In the ensuing year or two most of these countries came around to our way of thinking. When I say our way, it wasn't just the United States. Basically, when I got involved in this issue it was because Congress had mandated that we open up the UPU. What had happened was the Dutch had tried to do this before and it failed. We just sort of picked up where the Dutch had left off and I always credited the Dutch for providing intellectual underpinnings for this whole thing.

Q: On something like this, who sets the agenda? In other words how do you know what you're supposed to be doing?

SOUTHWICK: We had postal legislation passed in '98 which had given the State Department authority in the postal sector to represent the United States at the UPU, rather than the postal service. This was saying we can't have the postal service, which was a competitor with FedEx and UPS and some other Western run carriers, running the show. It had to be somebody who would be equal. This was a big fight in and of itself and I beefed up slightly our staff to handle this. I wanted IO to be in the driver's seat rather than EB. We had to prove to people in the Department including Al Larson that we could do the job. We set up an inner agency structure to handle all of these issues and I chaired those meetings. We got papers produced by the postal service, Department of Commerce, STR and we had an interagency process on postal policy for the first time in American history. It worked very well. It got a lot of notice in this sector all around town. I also got INR to host a conference in Washington here on the deregulation of the postal sector. We got the leading minds in this area from all over the world to come in and do it. So, it put the State Department on the map. We were chairing that meeting and the postal service for the first time in its life had to explain what it was doing.

Q: Did you say this was the fundamental reason why you had a problem with the head of the postal service, I mean with the UPU because the head was coming from our postal service and essentially was reflecting his organization

SOUTHWICK: Tom Levy, the head of the Universal Postal Union was slow to catch on to what was happening and he wanted to keep the status quo. He was comfortable with that. Some of this was personal. Some of it was ideological. The postal service fulfills a public need. The postal service people are always talking about Aunt Minnie the spinster aunt who lives in Iowa who uses the postal service and that's their client and that's the person they take care of. It is a public good service. It's above crass commercialization like FedEx and UPS and the others. So, some of it is ideological. To his credit, Levy, as he more and more considered this, took stock of what was happening in the world. From UPU's own studies he gradually came to the view that it needed to overlap and that made a big difference. The heads of these organizations, the UN organizations, are like monarchs. They have enormous amounts of power. As long as they are good politicians and responsive in a general way to the wishes of the organization. I've seen this over and over again. I used to tell people the only place where absolute monarchy still exists is Saudi Arabia and the UN system with these organizations.

Q: What was it UNESCO or was it, it was headed by somebody from Senegal or somebody?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, Dr. M'Bow and UNESCO was a case in point. He just got, all of this went to his head and frankly his excesses as a leader was what led us in the early '80s to leave the organization.

Q: Did the sort of the Palestinian-Israeli equation come up again?

SOUTHWICK: Yes, two notable times later. It was kind of a leitmotif here and there. It was coming up in the AIDS conference for whatever reason. It still is a little bit of a mystery to me and I think Kofi Annan had something to do with this on the AIDS conference. The Palestinian Arabs decided not to make a big fuss; the Cubans did. That's another story. The Cubans and all of these organizations are always looking for ways to take on Uncle Sam, pull his beard, and make life miserable for him and they're very good. Cubans field extremely skilled delegations, people who know the rules, who do this kind of work year in and year out. The State Department, U.S., is often left to somebody like me who might end up being pretty good, but certainly at the beginning is no good at all. The Cubans will take advantage of this. The Palestinian issue came up. It was finessed at the AIDS conference in 2002. Then it started coming up in the habitat conferences. This is a small organization, the UN organization for human settlements which is based in Nairobi. In 2002 they were having their big meeting in New York and the whole issue came up again because it was settlements of the Palestinian people. Settlements its not just houses, it's settlements like Israeli settlements on the West Bank. They had a field day with this. We knew it would be there, but we were kind of hopeful towards the end of the conference that it wouldn't erupt. Then finally the last day it did and this turned out to be holding things up. I can't remember what month this was. I think it was like June or July, June of 2002. I was there watching all of this. I was sympathetic to this little organization because I think if you look around the world one of the huge problems is urbanization, slums, security of tenure, these huge megacities where people live in miserable conditions and I honestly felt that this organization had a role to play. It wasn't playing it very well, but it had a role to play. It had had some leadership problems, but had overcome those in the previous year by getting a very able Tanzanian woman to run the organization, so for a variety of reasons I wanted this to be a successful meeting.

Anyway, about 4:00 in the afternoon on the last day we had to start dealing with the Palestinian issue. I had with me someone I'd worked with closely before, Mike Dennis, a very able negotiator from L (Bureau of Legal Affairs). We started negotiating and it was one of these typical negotiations. I was representing the United States. On the other side it was the Iranians because the Iranians were head of the G-77 so this became the U.S. G-77 negotiation with the Iranians as the head. Behind the Iranians are all the Arabs and the Palestinians. Behind them is Israel and NEA. So, we hauled in some of the Israelis, people from the mission and somebody fortunately from Jerusalem was there and was like their head of their IO division. Probably a little bit higher than I was in the Israel foreign ministry, but not quite an assistant secretary. Anyway, we started the negotiation and we ended up negotiating all night. It was getting out stuff from the fourth Geneva Convention on territories and this, that and the other thing and finding some language and what not. I just didn't want this to end in failure. I sensed that the Iranian was trying to have a successful negotiation, but like a good negotiator he's trying to get everything. We were trying to just haul it away, but by that time I had quite a bit of credibility with Palestinians. I was working with them in the background and I said, you know, you're not going to get everything you want, but we're trying to get something reasonable here and you should be open to something reasonable. About 3:00 AM I had sort of gone to the end. I frankly didn't know what next to do, but these negotiations are a little bit like hostage negotiations: do anything to just keep talking. I said, oh, let's suspend our discussions for about a half-hour. I've got to consult with Washington and then we'll come back. As a matter of fact I did call David Welch in the middle of the night at 3:00 AM and he said, Michael, I don't know what you're going to do, you just do it. I had consulted with Washington and I was consulting with the Israelis. A time factor worked in our favor because by about 3:00 AM or 4:00 AM Jerusalem was awake so we started having phone calls with Jerusalem. We got to a point where we could offer some language on the fourth Geneva convention but I needed to have some cover for it. I thought the best thing to do was to get some language on terrorism. I thought this would be good because it would split the G-77. The Iranians had problems with terrorism, a lot of the Arab countries had problems with terrorism. It just hit me at that point that there had just been some horrible terrorism incident mainly directed against the Israelis. So, I started to sell this thing as a package. We would have some language on the fourth Geneva convention, but we would also get something on terrorism. The President of the UN General Assembly, a Finn, was involved in it. We kept working the issue and about 6:00 in the morning we had it done. I decided I had consulted with Washington and I didn't want to start fighting with NEA. So I told them it was all right with the United States if it was all right with Israel. I thought it was a good deal and it was accepted. The whole meeting when I was going between the sides, the meeting was still suspended so there were 500 or 600 people in this meeting hall waiting all night for this whole thing to come to a conclusion. Finally about 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning it did. The meeting was reconvened about 7:30 or 8:00 and we wrapped it all up and it was finished. I called Washington and said we made an agreement and this is what it is. They were a little bit surprised that the Israelis had gone ahead with it, but we were in touch with the Israelis very well, including their chief warrior the foreign minister whom I'd come to know pretty well. I thought it was okay although it got some criticism afterwards. I'll come to that because a few months later when we had to go to Durban for the racism conference there was an Israeli-Palestinian issue at that conference.

Q: As Zionism is racism.

SOUTHWICK: Certainly the Israeli practices in the West Bank and so forth were racist in nature. Israel was a racist state. Anyway, in the lead up to that people said, well, you know the Israelis went too far on this language at the habitat conference and you can't do that. I knew in the UN system once you go a certain distance you don't go back. You can hold it, but you can't go back. I was irritated and I frankly never heard this from the Jewish community with which by then I had developed some very good ties. I knew pretty much exactly what the traffic would bear with them at any given time. I had very good intel on that, extremely good intel on that. Even though I was being told by some corners of the White House, and of course the State Department, that we couldn't do another habitat type of agreement in Durban, I thought we'll be lucky if we get a habitat type of agreement in Durban and in the end of it people would probably go along with it.

Then, I can talk about the Durban meeting. Durban was a big issue. There had been a number of these UN conferences, a number of preparatory meetings. By that time Lorne Craner, the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, was getting involved in it somewhat; he decided to go to the last preparatory meeting in Geneva, the last one before Durban. This was in July and I was still a DAS in IO. This was my first chance to work with Lorne Craner, and I had been in Geneva for a few days before Lorne arrived there. We started having meetings with the Europeans, with the Israelis, with the Palestinians, with the Arabs and frankly did not get very far. There were two big issues for that conference. One of them was Israel and its racist policies in the eyes of many. The other one was the issue of reparations for slavery and this was a domestic U.S. issue with some parts of the African American community. It was a big issue for the Africans and some of this brought out the worst in everybody, frankly. These UN conferences are often what I'd call shakedowns to get some money and shakedown the West and so the Africans started playing on the heritage of colonialism and racism and slavery and so forth and playing all of this back to us. They say they deserve something for all of that. I frankly thought that the race issue was something at the end of the day we could handle somewhat. The Israeli issue not, but I took part in the Geneva discussions and I came back and we started talking more and more at the White House about what we should do with Elliott Abrams over there and some others. I spent two weekends in the West Wing prior to going to Durban trying to sort out what we could do and what we couldn't do, and in the meantime my own links with the Jewish American community were pretty good.

Q: Well, Elliott Abrams, what was his job?

SOUTHWICK: He was in the part of the NSC that oversaw the humanitarian and human rights parts of U.S. foreign policy.

Q: I mean he has been identified very much with the established Jewish community.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, he has. He's written a book on this.

Q: How did you find, I mean where was he coming from?

SOUTHWICK: I had gotten to know Elliott because he came into the job, He was completely unconfirmable for any job needing U.S. Senate approval.

Q: Latin America.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, because of his role there and for lying to the Senate. I think he had to prove not guilty or I can't remember the outcome of that. When I first went over to meet him I was in touch with one of my friends, she's somewhat on the left. She's somebody who works for a UN organization and she said, you're going to have a meeting with Elliott Abrams. He's the remaining excuse for the death penalty. I said, well, I don't know what to expect, but he's the guy so I've got to know him. I went over and I found Elliott Abrams to be one of the most thoughtful, wise, moderate people that I'd known. He knew how foreign affairs issues really worked. He'd been kind of a boy wonder in Reagan and Bush I. He had been an assistant secretary three times, Latin America, Human Rights and one other.

Q: And IO.

SOUTHWICK: And IO, yes, that's right. He knew a lot about these issues. I think he probably stems from this neo conservative concept, but basically he's a former Democrat. He's basically an internationalist. I think somebody there, either Elliott or somebody in the Jewish community, had convinced the White House that this racism conference was just too much and the United States shouldn't go, or at least shouldn't be represented at a high level. The previous history here had been that there had been two racism conferences, neither one of which the United States attended. One of them was more about the apartheid issue in South Africa, but both of them had to do with the Israeli issue. A few days before Durban was supposed to start, the President was in Crawford, Texas, and the first question he gets at a news conference was whether the United States was going to attend this racism conference in Durban. The President says basically that we will not participate in a conference that picks on Israel. He had some additional words, but that was the gist of it. We will not participate. We had to decide, we had to start scrambling, what does this word participate mean? Now, all along it was very clear that Colin Powell wanted to go to this conference. I felt that I was representing his interests in those meetings at the White House. I had come to know him because he became effectively the desk officer for this conference. For the first time in my career I was working on a daily basis either in his office on the phone with the Secretary of State on something which I knew beforehand and certainly knew as this all unrolled was very near and dear to his heart. I think he wanted to go to that conference and make speeches about racism. I perceived it as my job to make that happen. I told the White House and I told people at the State Department that we the United States could probably keep the conference from adopting harsh anti-Israel language. I said that that could probably happen as it did in New York a few months earlier, at the habitat conference, as a result of intense negotiationprobably all night, several nights in a row, probably spilling into overtime like labor negotiations, but I said, I personally feel very confident. Although I'm not going to tell you I assure you, but since I've done it a few times I can hold the Arabs back because they will go too far. Then all we have to do is wait for the reaction to set in and then keep them from getting the harshest language.

So, we faced the question: well, who goes because it's pretty clear that Colin Powell could not go until this matter was cleared up. We decided we could go, we the United States. The White House decided we would send a delegation and it would be headed by me. I'm not somebody who is a household word, but at least somebody who had the title of ambassador. The press said this was a low level delegation on a professional level or something like that. This was all in the papers. I didn't mind a bit because I knew the odds were against us and I felt that in my own vanity I felt I was the best person in the U.S. government to bring this off. I knew I was. That didn't mean I could do it, but nobody else could do it. If I couldn't do it, then it couldn't be done. The Secretary told me to choose whomever I wanted and to go business class out there and go get the job done and go make an honest effort. He gave me carte blanche. I picked the best people I could. The idea was that we would go there, but we would not formally register as part of the conference until we got this resolved. That was how we finessed the word participate. We would do a lot. I, as head of delegation, would not sit behind the U.S. placard. We had a charge from Pretoria do that. I would do stuff in the background, which is my modus operandi anyway. In the course of four days out there I was in touch with the Secretary three or four times a day. I met with Kofi Annan. I met with the Belgian foreign minister who was representing the Europeans. I worked with the Norwegians who were engaged in this. I worked with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson. I met with several other foreign ministers and then towards the end I met with the Egyptian foreign minister. The idea I had some traction for the view that we needed to sort this out. We didn't get much help from Mary Robinson and that's to her everlasting discredit as far as I'm concerned. She was very sympathetic to the Palestinians. This was before September 11th, just a few days before September 11th, two weeks before. Attitudes about the United States in the Middle East were very negative. The Arabs were very disappointed in what the United States had done and very disappointed with what Powell personally had done, what the President had done and it's true that most of what the U.S. had done had been behind the scenes. We just weren't getting very far.

I had finally a meeting with the Egyptian foreign minister and it was one of the toughest meetings I had in my career. It lasted about 15 or 20 minutes. I thought it lasted an hour. It probably didn't help matters that I took two women with me. I wanted to meet in his suite at the hotel. He refused to do that and met with me down essentially in the bar which was not ideal, but I did not want them to have an excuse for not meeting with the United States. So, even if we had to meet in the men's room I was prepared to do that. It was very clear that he didn't want to negotiate then. He just wanted to carry it to the bitter end and then fight it out at the last minute. When that happened I got on the phone with the Secretary and I told him that in my professional judgment we had done everything possible to achieve success at this meeting. It broke my heart to tell him so, but in my professional judgment we have to withdraw. He did not argue with me. He had been kept abreast of everything that had happened. I was in touch with him several times a day. It would have been hard for the Secretary to say: no, keep going anyway. We withdrew. It was very sad. I had a big delegation out there. I had Congressman Tom Lantos. I had a big part of the black caucus. There are lots of side stories here; a lot of work that I did with the black caucus trying to keep us all functioning as one and not undermining each other. I tried to make sure that Lantos would not undermine what the black Americans were concerned with and the black Americans would not undermine what the American Jewish community was concerned with. Cynthia McKinney was there, certainly a fire brand, but by and large this little pitch that I made to everybody the night before, at a reception hosted by our consul, to the congressional delegation and so forth it worked. They were pretty good. They were pretty good.

Q: When you say accomplished on racism, what does that mean and what did that mean?

SOUTHWICK: Well, there was no likelihood that there would be some outcome saying, oh, the Africans and people of African descent deserve reparations. There was no likelihood of that, but there was the possibility of some language to the effect that there is a legacy of slavery which has tended to weaken, debilitate and make Africans and people of African descent, these are my words not theirs, less competitive. I think the evidence of this is fairly unmistakable historically. However, it doesn't take into account everything that's happened in the last forty years in the civil rights revolution in the United States, affirmation action and all of these other things which showed that we've been dealing with this. Although if anybody says that after the Civil War the African slaves did not get 40 acres and a mule, the fact is they did not get 40 acres and a mule. They were supposed to get 40 acres and a mule and they didn't get it. In fact what happened with the Ku Klux Klan and reconstruction going off course and everything else, the whole thing didn't get dealt with until the '50s and into the '60s with the civil rights legislation.

Q: Did anything come out, I mean I assume the meeting continued without us.

SOUTHWICK: The meeting continued without us and ironically the Arabs didn't get extreme language. They were defeated in a vote on extreme language. They got some language that we would have had a little bit of difficulty swallowing, but frankly we would have swallowed it. In other words, my prediction about the conference was accurate. At the last minute I have to credit the Europeans for this, for holding firm and France had a lot to do with this. France was very clear on the anti-Semitism issue that we could have been okay. It's too bad. We should have run the risk, frankly. Powell was satisfied that we had done everything possible. I had learned something in my career very late. I came back and I got phone calls from a lot of people on the seventh floor, people at the White House, people from around the country, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and others in Washington. All of them congratulatory to me, the magnificent job I had done and all the rest of it. I felt frankly like a failure, but I thought, well, maybe the thing to do in my career is to have a spectacular failure. Everybody appreciates it and it becomes a success. The best way to succeed is to fail. Too bad I didn't learn that 30 years ago.

Q: Well, taking another thing, what about during this time in IO the Cuban thing?

SOUTHWICK: Early in my IO career in I guess it was April of '98 when Princeton Lyman was Assistant Secretary, George Moose was out in Geneva and Nancy Rubin, a prominent Democrat with a lot of big bucks behind her was the head of the delegation in Geneva, we lost the vote on Cuba by a narrow margin and Madeleine Albright flipped. She was pissed off royally. She hadn't been warned that this was coming. She felt that had she known she would have been able to pull a rabbit out of a hat. If you look at the votes in the previous years you could tell our margin was getting narrower. I had made a trip to Geneva. I was new, I was green frankly in IO stuff, but I was trying to do the right thing. I had a meeting with George Moose. We had somebody over from WHA at that time; Western Hemisphere Bureau, helping our delegation on the Cuba vote and we thought that we had a good chance of winning. It wasn't in the bag, but the votes looked pretty good.

Q: What was the issue?

SOUTHWICK: We had a resolution against Cuba for its human rights policies, pretty straightforward resolution and we were running it. It was a U.S. resolution. A lot depends, on the margins, how the Africans vote and what we found was that you could get assurances in capitals. We'd find that the representatives in Geneva were not necessarily tuned in to what the capital wanted. Then you found some of them who would say one thing one day and one another. Some of the veterans in Geneva, we had some very good people in Geneva, said, you know a lot of this depends on what time of day the vote is called. These people are leaning one way at 10:00 and it might lead to a victory. If leaning the other way it could defeat you. You never know. Two hours later it could be different. It's essentially impossible. We knew this in a general sense. We didn't know how much it was true, but we lost. I can't remember what the numbers were. There were 52 members in the Human Rights Commission. Anyway this was a big debacle and you feared that heads would roll. I thought one of them would be mine. In the end it was Princeton Lyman who was edged out because of the loss on that vote. He was an extremely able, fine civil servant Foreign Service Officer, but he was edged out and with him his deputy. I thought that they would make a clean sweep. That's what I was told would happen. Madeleine Albright put in David Welch. He had a tough approach, a robust approach to all things, was mainly an Iraq specialist, Middle East specialist, not an IO kind of person. Some mechanisms were put in place to make sure that the whole Cuban issue received constant seventh floor attention so that this never happened again.

By that time I still needed a job, so I wasn't looking for another job. I felt that I was beginning to have fun in IO. This was '98. I'd been in the job about seven or eight months and beginning to like it. I asked David Welch whether I could stay on and the word came back that I could. So, I started working for David Welch.

Q: Did you get any feeling that you were being eyed as a Clintonite or something like that in IO at the beginning? You know when there's a change in administrations.

SOUTHWICK: Well, if somebody wanted to check my voter registration in California, I was a registered Democrat at the time. I am here now in Virginia. But all through my Foreign Service career I maintained the view that I was a Californian. I voted in California, had property in California and so forth. I expected all during that period to eventually go back to California, but I worked well with the Clintons. I didn't like Madeleine Albright so much because I don't think she cared about the Foreign Service. I thought she was mercurial and rather vain. I liked Wendy Sherman. A lot of people didn't like Wendy Sherman. I thought Wendy Sherman was terrific. She was sort of the point person on the Cuban business and on all the other issues with the White House at that time. Then there was Eric Schwartz in the White House handling these kinds of issues. The issues that I was mainly dealing with. He and I got along extremely well. We worked together on the child soldier issue. So, I worked well with the women. A women's conference was coming up. Over the course of my career and certainly in that time in IO, when I was really working with the political forces domestically as much as I was working with the State Department bureaucracy, I came to dislike the radicals on either side whether they were the Democrats or the Republicans. I think I'm basically a moderate and I certainly tried to maintain a non-partisan stance during this period. I was not necessarily trying to curry favor with the Clintonites. I didn't really know what to expect from Bush when he came in, but he was running as a moderate and somebody as a uniter not a divider and a compassionate conservative. I had a couple of friends who were conservative Republicans.

Q: How about the Cuban theme, did you come up against Cuba other times?

SOUTHWICK: Oh yes, it came up often at nearly every conference, and it all had to do with embargo language. A couple of years before we had gotten definitive embargo language which they could accept and we could accept. Every time everybody knew where the outcome would be. You had to fight over it, you know. So, mainly our position was to hold our ground on the language. In these conferences you don't want to have votes on things. You don't want to have votes. You want to have the conference outcome to be a consensus. The whole consensus thing is a powerful negotiating tool. We had trouble with Cuba at practically every conference. There was a women's conference, a social development conference, and anything that came up the Cubans would try to get this language in and they're very able. The worst time for it was the women's conference during the Clinton administration.

Q: Was this the one in Beijing?

SOUTHWICK: Well, there was the women's conference in '95 and then in the year 2000 they had a five year update. It wasn't as big a deal as Beijing. It was held in New York. It was partly a policy of the United States to avoid these big conferences held in capitals. It was better to do work in New York since it was cheaper. It didn't turn into this sexist circus, a great disdain for these conferences and for people like Helms and people who have more unilateralist tendencies. Well, the whole Cuban issue was threatening to break apart the women's conference and Dick Holbrooke was our ambassador in New York. He decided at the last minute to get involved in this. By that time I had negotiated the Cuban issue fairly well. I had good ties with Wendy Sherman and I knew what the traffic would bear. I'd been run over a few times by the Cubans and I vowed they weren't going to run over me anymore. I had what I called Bonnie and Clyde. Bonnie and Clyde was this fellow, Mike Dennis, who was a very good negotiator, and Mirta Alvarez who was a Cuban American. When I had these Cuban issues arising I would send in Bonnie and Clyde because the Cuban issue usually exceeded the capacity of the people on the ground in New York or in Geneva to handle on their own. I had to send in Bonnie and Clyde. I knew that Bonnie and Clyde might get killed in a machine gun attack, but the Cubans were not going to win. We had a horrible situation at one point when our New York mission was just completely falling apart and we were losing again and I sent Bonnie and Clyde up there and we ended up with a pretty good outcome.

Q: How do you mean, what would they do?

SOUTHWICK: Well, you know, our Cuban policy has almost zero support from anybody, from the Latin Americans, the Europeans, frankly because it's a situation that we don't practice what we preach. We don't practice engagement, we don't practice negations, we don't practice concessions and there's really no difference between the Democrats and Republicans on this. They're all seeking the vote of the Cuban American population in Florida. If language got into any kind of document that was detrimental to the United Sates on this it's a bad outcome. When the whole floor is against you, it's worse than the Israeli thing frankly. You just don't want that to happen. In the women's conference, if we did not get the sort of stock language or something akin to it, it could have led to our pulling out of the negotiations. We had a very late night negotiation there. Holbrooke got in the act. I had Bonnie and Clyde with me. Holbrooke decided to get involved. This was at 1:00 in the morning and Holbrooke went further than he should. I told Bonnie and Clyde, Mike and Mirta, I said, "Holbrooke is doing this. Holbrooke will do what he wants. We'll see where we are at the end and then we'll clean it up." I was on the phone with Wendy Sherman and Holbrooke made an agreement, which we had to disavow the next day. When Holbrooke was undercut he just left the whole thing. We had to put it back together again which we did. This is right during the middle of the Elian Gonzalez issue. What helped me was that a few weeks before there had been a big conference in Havana of the G-77. So, all of these people in New York that I was dealing with had been in Havana. I hadn't for obvious reasons, but they had. They had an up close and personal look at Cuba and they thought the place was a mess, that it stank. I had a Nigerian come up to me and he said, "Are you going to send this kid back?" I said, "Well, we probably will because Americans believe that kids should be with their parents and there is a surviving father." He said, "That would be a big mistake, that kid shouldn't grow up in a place like that." This was somebody from Nigeria who knows how bad things can get. This kind of helped us and as soon as I tuned in to this, boy, Cuba's a rotten place and you guys are being taken in by all of this rhetoric. We started getting serious support. They try to do funny things. Like there's a very important comma in this agreed up language and they tried to take it out and we put it back in, but we got what we needed. At 4:00 in the morning I might add.

Q: You better explain what the Elian Gonzalez thing was.

SOUTHWICK: Elian Gonzalez was a five-year-old Cuban child who was with his mother fleeing Cuba on a small boat. The boat sank and his mother died and he was rescued along with some other people. So, he lost his mother fleeing Cuba. He winds up in the United States and it becomes a cause-celebre about whether Elian Gonzalez goes back to Cuba to live with his father who has a kind of a mediocre service job.

Q: A waiter.

SOUTHWICK: A waiter, yes, or whether he had some relatives in the United States and whether they would raise him. This ended very dramatically with an operation at dawn directed by the attorney general, Janet Reno.

Janet Reno's crowd raided the house in the Miami suburbs, I can't remember where it was and rescued the boy. He became a ward of, got into federal custody. Some weeks went by and eventually he was returned to Cuba, much to the consternation of a lot of people, but I still think at the end of the day most Americans would probably side with the father.

Q: Yes. You were doing this when there was an attack on the World Trade Towers and they destroyed, it was called the 9/11 attack by Arab extremists. Did that have any effect on what you were doing?

SOUTHWICK: Yes. That was in September, just after the Durban racism conference. It changed the dynamic on all kinds of things as anyone who has lived through this period knows. First of all anyone who lived through it knows exactly what was happening. It's like Pearl Harbor from my parents' generation or I suppose Lindberg for their parents landing in Paris. So, the United States got a vast outpouring of good will, which I think was very touching. My daughter was traveling in Europe at the time and she left St. Petersburg about the time of the attack. The next stop was Berlin and she said there were flowers all over the place, there were all these signs around about America and a lot of sympathy. Certainly we could sense that, too. In the meantime, though, bad things had happened to us. In 2001 we had lost an election to be a member of the Human Rights Commission. This was a huge surprise to everybody and I thought I would be fired for this. Then I realized that some of the anti-multilateralist forces in the administration thought it was just dandy that we were out of the Human Rights Commission. Right then and there I decided that we better go back to the Human Rights Commission. So, for the next year or so I worked on that behind the scenes of the White House to get us back in.

Q: Well, did you, while you were there, including this Human Rights Commission and all this, did you sense say George W. Bush was elected to bring us together as a moderate. I mean this was his goal. Everybody knew his father who was essentially a moderate and all that. Did you sense a growing alienation of the administration from the rest of the world? I mean a gap, in other words, a feeling that we should do it on our own and all?

SOUTHWICK: The unilateralism was beginning to come out in response to 2001. I don't think it was so obvious before that, but if you look back and you see the reaction to the ICC treaty, International Criminal Court Treaty where we had to undo our signing of it and the _____ Treaty and the attitudes towards international treaties. Remember this was a period when I had negotiated in the Clinton administration the child soldier treaty and it was in the Senate. There was a question about what the Bush administration would do with it, what Senator Helms would do with it. This was going to come out and then from time to time I was acting assistant secretary and we had issues in New York to deal with. I sensed on some of these things an increasing Pentagon role. I would complain to Elliott Abrams. I remember one issue, I can't remember the exact issue, but it was an issue where I was having trouble with people in the Pentagon. I called up Elliott and I said you've got to tell these guys to butt out. I don't go over there and get in their foxhole, they don't need to get in the delegation in New York and call the shots. I said, they can fight wars and we'll do diplomacy, thank you. He said, well, who are you dealing with over there at the Pentagon? I gave him a couple of names. He said, well, that's the flat earth society. I said, yes, that's right, that's the flat earth society and it shouldn't be influencing American diplomacy, or frankly anything else as far as I'm concerned. I said, you know, the NSC when you've got a dispute between two agencies, the NSC is supposed to lean on these guys. Well, I found that even somebody in my view in a fairly well located position had a hard time leaning on the Pentagon. We were getting this more and more unilateral stuff. Where it was coming out from my point of view was two issues. It was all about the UN system and that was whether we should get back into UNESCO, something I'd been working on all the time I'd been in IO. I was increasingly convinced that we needed to get back in UNESCO. Then when we were bumped out of the Human Rights Commission, how do we get back in the Human Rights Commission. Do we join two highly politicized organizations? The conservatives, Heritage Foundation people and so forth, they were against this. They didn't have any use for either organization.

Q: Did you have the feeling because you went some distance here that Colin Powell did not have as much clout say as Donald Rumsfeld as the Secretary of Defense or losing it or were you seeing this battle?

SOUTHWICK: Well, I worked closely with the Secretary on the Durban issue. When I was in charge of IO, for example, I had no difficulty dealing with him, calling him late at night at his house and talking to him after the 8:30 staff meeting. He's a terrific person in all senses of the word. To the extent he had his flaws, and I noticed this during the Durban issue, I felt that he needed to put his foot down on some of that. He should not just play the good soldier. As many of his critics have noted increasingly, he's too willing to play the good soldier. He's been, in the eyes of many, used and abused by the administration to be their salesman and to be the reasonable cover for things that are not so reasonable. I must say I'm kind of perplexed by that. As I was watching this a couple of years in early, when I was still at the Department, Bill Wood and I used to compare notes and Bill said, well, the Secretary is dogged, he's an infantryman and he keeps going and it's not the battle, it's the war and on most of these things he wins more than he loses. You might even be able to say that now about Iraq.

Q: So much is there.

SOUTHWICK: But at the cost of what?

Q: This is one of the things, I mean sometimes I liken Colin Powell during the Civil War to George Brinton McClellan the love for whom never faded in the army of the Potomac. He essentially won most of his battles, but in the end he was, his reputation had suffered terribly because he didn't win the great battles. I mean he had other flaws, which is not the Powell one, but at the same time he doesn't come out well. The Foreign Service loves Colin Powell and he's done very good things for it, which is an important thing, but he's the captain of the ship during probably the most disastrous period of American foreign policy.

SOUTHWICK: That's true. I think some of this attitude among people like ourselves, Foreign Service professionals, retired or still in service, has changed somewhat towards him. A lot of anecdotal evidence now. There's this group that came out, diplomats and attorney generals and so forth. They never approached me, but somebody approached me afterwards and said, do you want to be part of this? I'm so reluctant to do that because I feel some loyalty to Powell. I feel that in his own mind he still is playing that soldier who is still marching forward to his goal despite some of the setbacks and taking some hits. I felt that at times when I had been in his office or privy to conversations and talking to him afterwards about certain things and tactics, where he was sort of running things up through the NSC to the President. I thought, having been a student of history and knowing how other Secretaries of State have had these personal relationships with the president, why doesn't he get on the phone with the President? He didn't seem to be able to do that with ease. With all respect to Condoleezza Rice, I don't think she's, and I don't think the history will show that she's been a very good NSC advisor.

Q: She doesn't have her fingerprints on anything as far as, she seems to be a good spokesman for the president.

SOUTHWICK: Sometimes when I was dealing on issues there: we need a presidential decision about getting back to the Human Rights Commission and also in UNESCO. I was dealing not directly with her, I was dealing through intermediaries, but I thought well is she representing the President? I guess she's representing the President or she is the most conservative black person on the planet or what's going on here because I frankly couldn't tell. Although on the vote on the UNESCO thing and on getting back in the Human Rights Commission, she played a constructive role.

Q: Well, let's talk about UNESCO while you were there.

SOUTHWICK: Okay, we got out of UNESCO in the early '80s because of mismanagement and because of a policy issue, the policy issue being freedom of the press. The director general at UNESCO at the time felt that there should be some kind of international code for journalists and to us this seemed to be an attack on freedom of the press. We feared that if it were legitimized with UNESCO it could be legitimized at a national level. The UN doesn't legislate for the world. We don't have a world government, but what happens in the UN feeds back through the system even into the United States system about what is good public policy. So, if the UN gives its seal of approval on something for, say. 120 or 130 countries in the world that means an enormous amount. There were mismanagement problems. This fellow M'Bow is a French educated intellectual, which we had problems with anyway and he was flamboyant and spending money on a big penthouse at the top of the UNESCO headquarters. He was definitely not a friend of the United States. We left along with the UK. I can't remember the exact year. I think it was '84. Then afterwards the question was how do we get back in? When I say we left UNESCO we still had an observer there through our delegation. We closed down our national commission. Every member of UNESCO is supposed to have a national commission of eminent people in culture, education and science. So, we disbanded that, but we still had an FSO-2 as an observer based in our embassy in Paris and then we still belonged to some of the treaty bodies for which UNESCO is responsible because they exist independent of UNESCO. The most notable one of these is the World Heritage Foundation which is this body that tries to ensure that sites which are important to mankind, the natural sites, are preserved.

Q: Like the Parthenon?

SOUTHWICK: Like the Parthenon and, what have you. Yellowstone Park. That they are recognized in the countries that have these sites and cooperate in their maintenance, preservation and so forth. That's something that we were a big part of creating. It happened during the Nixon administration. Nixon was all for it and frankly it has done great credit to the United States. Some of the best things that the UN has done. So, we maintain our membership there and we made a modest contribution, about two or three million dollars, to various UNESCO activities including the World Heritage Fund. When I came into IO this issue was simmering. It was questioned whether we'd get back into UNESCO and I looked into it. I talked to a person in IO who had been handling UNESCO for many years, Ray Warner, an expert and very much of the view that we should get back in UNESCO. I looked into this whole thing and decided we should. It was pretty clear that the Clinton White House was sympathetic to this, but at that time and all through the Clinton administration, we had this huge monetary arrears problem at the UN. Congress had withheld funds from the UN and we were about two and a half billion dollars in arrears to the UN system as a whole. Even though Princeton Lyman was sympathetic to getting back in, we didn't get any traction with OMB. They said that we need to take care of our existing obligations before we incur new expenses. The UNESCO participation would have cost us about $55 million a year which is not huge by federal government standards but is a big part of the IO budget. It was put on hold although toward the end of the Clinton administration.

Well, the night before he left office or thereabouts, we had worked on a statement for the White House to put in calling for the entry into UNESCO, sort of one of the last things that Clinton would do. It turned out that the NSC lost the draft that we sent them and so they tracked me down at a dinner party. Eric Schwartz and I redrafted the statement that the White House issued the next day calling for reentry. So, this was left hanging when the Bush administration came in. I decided, as I'd done for a number of other issues, that I would convene an interagency group to look at our participation in UNESCO and see what the advantages and disadvantages were and what our interests were and what interests could be served. I thought, well, I will at least do our homework, do the staff work so that the powers that be in the new administration will be able to see this, see what they are and in kind of a non-partisan way, what our interests are on culture, science and education. This was done. It wasn't done exhaustively, but it was done and I sensed that the Secretary didn't know much about UNESCO and Powell's deputy, Richard Armitage, knew a little bit more, but they had so many other fish to fry that this was low on the agenda.

What I decided was that this, like anything else politically, has to be driven by domestic politics. I told all the constituent groups for UNESCO, people around town, if you want to get us back in UNESCO you have to make the case for it. It has to be driven in the grass roots. I ultimately made a decision that I didn't want to personally involve the Secretary because it would play into the hands of his detractors. I would try to arrange things so that the Secretary would just have to say this is a good idea once it was all cooked up. We started working on that and I talked to Elliott Abrams about it. He said, well, you know there's opposition about that, but I sensed although he never said it, but he probably thought that we should get back in. I had this interagency study, ran the results to the White House and all the rest of it. In September 2001 the idea was that Bush would announce in his General Assembly speech that we were going back into UNESCO. This was all fine and dandy. This was what we were heading to and then we had September 11th so everything was just smashed to smithereens. The whole UNESCO thing was put on hold. This was dangerous because this gave the chance for the Heritage Foundation and John Bolton and some of these other people to try to get into the act to try to make this thing not happen. We kept refining our little study of what the interests were. We kept talking to people in other agencies. We kept talking to people on the Hill and quite independent of us the Hill had had a vote on this, the congress of the United States saying that we should go back into UNESCO. It was a very Republican dominated House of Representatives and so my position was that this was moving in the right direction and instead of sort of waiting to let it happen the president should do it. I kept working on that. Finally towards the end of my tenure in IO I was on an interagency conversation on this subject and I said it was time for the United States to shit or get off the pot, one of my mother's favorite expressions, by the way, before she got very religious. There was silence on the phone, this was with the White House. I don't know who else was on the phone, I really don't, silence. He says, well, I guess you're right. Because all the time along the way they had been saying, they were studying it. It's a new administration; we're studying it. I said, we can't delay this forever. This is two years.

Q: We did an awful lot of that.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. I said, you just can't do this. We've got to. The Japanese in the meantime had elected one of their own as head of the organization. He was charismatically challenged, but he ran a good shop and he was very sympathetic to the positions that the United States had on freedom of the press and a whole host of other issues. He was doing a good job. There's no real reason to stay out. My view is that we need to get in there because this is a place where you could do this dialogue with civilizations, which we need. I realize this is an Iranian idea, but we need it and we should pick this up. Then there were some other things like education for all. UNESCO's motto after a conference a few years ago was education for all. This fits in perfectly with no child left behind.

Q: Oh absolutely.

SOUTHWICK: So, what in the hell are we doing? We should get in there and get UNESCO to do some of our work for us. It was a few weeks after I left my IO position that lo and behold President Bush went up to the UN and gave a big speech on Iraq to the General Assembly. He opened the speech with an announcement that the U.S. would re-enter UNESCO. I felt very good about that. I had worked very hard at it. I had kept the Secretary out of it and these grass roots organizations had done their work pretty well, though not as well as I would have hoped. The more enlightened forces within the administration on this issue, certainly Elliott Abrams is one of them, carried the day. I heard anecdotally the president said when he saw the draft of the speech, he said, "Do I have to do this?" Condoleezza Rice said, "Yes, you have to do this" and he did.

Q: Human rights thing. In the first place, you were with IO when we lost?

SOUTHWICK: When we lost in '98 on the Cuba resolution.

Q: I would think this would be the sort of thing that there would be hell to pay.

SOUTHWICK: Yes, there was. We had a lot of interagency meetings and task forces and all the rest of it and Wendy Sherman who was one of the most demonic people I've ever run across, but very bright and very good and very able. I thought in my naivetï¿½ that this would lead to a Dulles style agonizing reappraisal of our policy with Cuba, which certainly makes no sense to a foreign affairs professional. It only makes sense on narrow U.S. domestic political grounds.

Q: Particularly after the 2000 election.

SOUTHWICK: It was crazy. The whole thing is nuts and is not after 40 years or whatever it is, accomplishing its objective. The other thing is working on our side is Father Time at this point.

Q: In many ways we've probably kept Castro in office and now we're waiting for him to die.

SOUTHWICK: The whole thing is nuts. All of us had to go along with this to some degree. No, it didn't lead to a reappraisal. I think the position of the Clinton administration at least as explained by Wendy Sherman is that we had to be tough on this so we can pursue some sort of softer initiatives on, well, one of them is like the mail. We don't have direct mail exchange with Cuba, so one of the things I was trying to do in the postal unit was work with the Cubans so that we'd have free interchange. Finally decided that flying in there was not possible to the Cubans. They were worried about this. Let's see, so Cuba and human rights was a big issue, but we lost that vote, but we have not lost any subsequent vote.

Q: But we're still in it?

SOUTHWICK: In 2001 there was a vote in the economic and social council. It was a 54 member body, which votes on members of the Human Rights Commission, and to everybody's surprise, I thought I'd get fired, but I wasn't, we were bounced out. You have to understand the peculiarities of the regional system in the UN. Every country is part of a regional group and ours is WEOG, Western European and Other Group. It's dominated by the Europeans. Then each group has a certain number of seats in all of these UN bodies. Now if you have a clean slate there are three openings for WEOG, five openings for the Africans, what have you. If you within your group you decide well, you have good Soviet style election and everything is fine and dandy, but we had trouble with the Europeans that year so we had more countries up for grabs than there were slots and that means the whole membership of ECOSOC (UN Economic and Security Council) votes on this thing.

This was the Bush administration. We had somewhat of a holdover from the Clinton administration in New York, an African American. She was our best vote getter in New York and everybody realized this. We did our usual thing, diplomatic campaign, count votes, all the rest of it. We thought we were in pretty good shape. There was a margin of doubt, but we lost. I was in Geneva at the time sitting in the office of the political counselor and we got the call from New York where the voting had taken place and this did get in the papers. Then it became the big conspiracy. The right wing would say it was the Europeans, it was this, that and the other thing. It was my job to go. There was never any hearing on this, but I had to go up on the Hill several times and talked to the foreign relations committee and the house international relations committee and even Jeane Kirkpatrick from the outside was talking about this being a conspiracy. It wasn't a conspiracy. It was a secret ballot. The U.S. had never been defeated before. Nobody thought that the U.S. would be defeated. Nobody came to me afterwards and said, we knew it all the time. Everybody knew it was a theoretical possibility. Nobody said that. The Chinese within ten minutes called us in Geneva and said we honored our P5 obligation, which is the Permanent Five Security Council always vote for each other. We said, you didn't lose because of us which is interesting because a year or so before I had told the Chinese who were coming up for the election of the Human Rights Commission that we would vote for the Chinese even though we were having lots of problems with the Chinese. I think that's when they were holding our aircraft crew. We were going to vote for them anyway because there was this convention, nothing written, but we honored that. The question is what to do. As I said before, a lot of the Heritage Foundation types and AEI types, they would have thought this was fine and dandy, who gives a damn. The United States has a long history with the Human Rights Commission. It exists partly through the work of Eleanor Roosevelt. It has done enormously important work. What happens there has an effect on what happens on the ground. If there's a good vote on some of these issues, the democratic pro-human rights forces on the ground in countries like Guatemala and other places where there are problems can get wind in their sails. There's no doubt in my mind it makes a difference. It doesn't make a whole lot of difference in the United States, but it makes a difference in these other countries.

One of the greatest documents of the 20th Century is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Eleanor Roosevelt helped negotiate. There's a marvelous book on this by a Harvard law professor named Mary Ann Glendon and I started buying multiple copies of this and handing it out to everybody under the sun. Even among professionals in the Department the Human Rights Commission was just sort of a bothersome institution that caused endless demarches late at night to get votes. Even some of my colleagues in the European Union just didn't get it. Anyway, I thought we needed to go back, but the word came down from the White House that we were not supposed to campaign for this. We felt that our allies, the Europeans better come to realize this and not do what they did before. In other words we had to have a clean slate, what I call a good Soviet style election, everybody knows what the outcome is. We weren't supposed to campaign. The Secretary decided we should go back in. He didn't campaign, but he basically said in several meetings, high profile meetings, that this was a problem for the Europeans to solve, for the EU to solve. He never did get the point that the EU does not act as EU when it comes to participation in these bodies. There's no way to do it because of all the rivalries and jealousies. I was out campaigning, this came up in several discussions over time and it became clear by the time the next election rolled around that we didn't have a clean slate. There were three countries possibly that would withdraw and we needed two. Italy, Spain and Ireland. Look back in history and I found out that Ireland had done that once before. Bill Wood was dealing with the Irish and I was dealing with the Italians and the Spanish. We started getting hints. I said, "Bill, your antenna is at least as good as mine. We've got a deal here. All we have to do is just go get it. I can put this together in half an hour." He says, "Oh, no you can't." I said, "A half an hour." He said we can't campaign, so we didn't, but we had these sort of low level contacts. I had a meeting with the Italian assistant secretary and he said they would be willing to do this and then I started getting a phone call from the Spanish. It turned out that the Spanish Chef du Cabinet for the foreign minister was a Stanford graduate, not a Stanford graduate, but anyway it turned out we'd both been to Stanford. Once we found out this, this is how these things work sometimes, it was home free with this guy. Very bright guy. I'd never met him except on the phone. I had this thing I thought well in hand from the Italians and then I worked it out and we had a visit by the Spanish foreign minister and so I worked it out with him. I marched up to the Secretary's office and I said, "We've got a deal." I explained what had happened with the Spanish and what had happened with the Italians and how in the background, if it came to it, we'd just have to talk to the Irish. I said, this is not campaigning, this is essentially just accepting the deal. When the Spanish foreign minister comes here next week you don't have to do this with anybody but him, with the Italians it's all worked out. We'll orchestrate this and we have the deal. Armitage was in the room, too, and he looked at me and said, what have you been doing? I said, we are not campaigning, they are offering this. We're accepting an offer. The White House would be satisfied with this and we should get back on the commission. Well, the meeting took place the next week and it was orchestrated in terms of what the French foreign minister would say and what Powell would say and we had our deal. I called up the NSC and said we have our deal. We're going to set word in motion. We'll have a clean slate and then a few weeks from now we'll announce that you're a candidate. Then we'll have the election and we'll be elected.

As it turned out the White House never ran this by the president. One morning, the day of the election in New York, I called the White House on something else and I just said, by the way, today we're going to be elected to the Human Rights Commission. What? I said, today, you know, we've talked about this; everybody understands what's happened. The usual papers have been running around. Oh, we don't think anybody has talked to the President about it. This is something the President was kind of pissed off about when we got thrown out and he wants to know. Obviously he wants to know. I said, well, it's 9:30, this vote is at 11:30, can somebody talk to the President in the next hour or so? Yes, I guess so. I guess we'll have to. I said, yes, I guess we'll have to. Anyway, the phone rang about 45 minutes later. Condoleezza Rice had talked to the President and the President said how am I going to handle this. He was a little bit reluctant, but said okay. I called New York and I said go ahead with it and we were re-elected to the Human Rights Commission.

Q: Great. Well, one last question on this thing while you were here, how did our war with Iraq, did that affect things that you were doing?

SOUTHWICK: This was the subsequent year. We were re-elected to the Human Rights Commission and then we became a part of it on January 1st, 2003. My term with the State Department, my time in class ended in 2002. I was ready to leave. I took the 60 day retirement course, which was marvelous.

Q: This is the readjustment to civilian life?

SOUTHWICK: Yes which basically is good technically and therapeutically. I was prepared to leave, but then when we got back in the Human Rights Commission, Bill Wood and Armitage thought, well, we need someone who can run this for us. Are we entering into the Human Rights Commission and are we sure that it is not a disaster. Because if it is a disaster then the president's decision will have been proved wrong. So, who can do this? Michael Southwick can help do this. They approached me and Lorne Craner, the Assistant Secretary, to come to work in the Human Rights Bureau and be responsible for the Human Rights Commission. That would be my main job. They said do you want it for the rest of the administration? I said, no, I don't. It took me weeks to decide to accept this. I said I would do it for a year and get us through that. I said I'm not guaranteeing success, but I'm quite sure we can avoid a disaster. This doesn't mean that I would be leading the delegation, it would mean that I would be working behind the scenes on this. So, I called central personnel. I said, I know you guys don't like this sort of thing, but I think they're going to try to find a way to keep me on for a year and I told the Seventh Floor and I told Lorne Craner I am not going to lift a finger for this. If you guys want it to happen, you make it happen because I'd maxed out on retirement and everything else. Frankly I was tired. I was looking forward to a new phase of my life, but when certain people ask me to do something I feel good about it and I was vain enough to think, yes they're right. I can make this happen with a reasonable chance of success.

They came up with the idea of not extending my Foreign Service career, but making me a senior executive service. It's a short term thing that can be rolled over year by year up to five years and the State Department has about five slots. I don't know to this day whether this makes me a political appointee. I really don't, but I came in under that and I didn't lift a finger to make it happen. They made it happen and I had this little coda as it were or afterthought or whatever you want to call it to my career, November of 2002 to August of 2003.

Q: So, what were you doing there?

SOUTHWICK: I became the key DAS in DRL, the "Democracy" of Human Rights and Labor under Lorne Craner with the sort of specific task to work on the Human Rights Commission. This was a little bit hard because I had been over in IO and IO is not necessarily the policy lead on a whole lot of issues, but it is the coordinator. It is the one that issues instructions. What was happening to IO in the meantime because the political appointee from the Heritage Foundation is assistant secretary. Normally a Foreign Service Officer is the principal deputy. Then it got two people, one career and one non-career who are right wing conservatives and essentially disciples of John Bolton. It's a full takeover of the international organization bureau with the bologna in the sandwich being the PDAS who right now I'm blanking on the name, but it will come to me. A very competent person who'd been a DAS in IO. It was uphill because Lorne Craner, even though he's a Republican political appointee, is a McCain Republican and Lorne Craner's father and McCain were prisoners of war in Hanoi. That's the connection there. Lorne Craner had campaigned for McCain obviously during the primaries and was clearly a moderate Republican. He's self-identified as a conservative, but he's really a moderate Republican and not trusted by the conservatives who predominant in the administration.

Q: This sounds like a very uncomfortable position.

SOUTHWICK: Yes. I mean I said to myself more than once that I was an idiot for doing this because essentially I was working for $35,000 a year.

Q: How did you feel, I mean were you able to accomplish what you wanted?

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: I mean you got us back into the commission.

SOUTHWICK: Got us back into the commission and it was my job to make sure that the administration, the President, was vindicated by the decision. I think in my heart of hearts if the whole thing went sour then the President might have said, well, I had my doubts about it all along and certainly the neocons and the unilateralists and all of them would be thrilled to death that we've gotten out of this stinking organization that has members like Cuba and China among other countries. I worked on the strategy which Lorne Craner was as much of an author of this as I was. We decided that we had to work with the Europeans. In IO this was not regarded very favorably. I had doubts about it because we had a lot of trouble with the Europeans because Europe was being Europe. Then in the wake of September 11th, even though we had this initial burst of affection for the United States, it dissipated over time. By the time in late 2002 that I started working on this all the unilateralist stuff was out there in heavy measure.

Q: Were there any issues, I mean was it more just getting ourselves reestablished or were there issues?

SOUTHWICK: A lot of it was sort of on social policy issues where the Europeans take a more liberal view than the United States tends to do. I decided that we had to work with the Europeans because by and large they were the core of our support and they were core of the Human Rights Commission in terms of upholding the standards and ideals. France had been a big part of the creation of the Human Rights Commission and Britain and other countries. We did an inventory with L and my staff at DRL of all the areas of disagreement we'd had on human rights issues with the Europeans. There were about 15 of these. We decided that for some of them there was nothing we could do. We just agreed to disagree. Other ones we would try to go through a round of negotiations with them and find ways to bridge the gaps. We would give a little, hopefully they would give a little, and when we got to Geneva for the Human Rights Commission in March of 2004 all of these issues would have been resolved. Then we weren't fighting because a lot of our fighting at the Human Rights Commission had been with the Europeans. I accumulated a lot of frequent flyer miles. I went all over Europe on several occasions. I went as far afield as Moscow because they had finally broken into this. I went on one trip with Lorne Craner to about five capitals; a subsequent trip on my own to about five or six capitals, two further trips. It was basically to show a good face of the United States, we're in this together, despite our differences on the host of other things, this is where we have to work together or we're going to go down with the ship. This institution which we'd all struggled so much to create and maintain is going to go down the tubes. And it worked.

Now, I didn't know how well it worked until we got to Geneva. In the meantime there was a question of who was going to head our delegation. I had my eye on somebody who had worked with the Republicans, a former gubernatorial candidate in Maryland. She was very good. She knew how to be a minority in a parliament which is very good training for the UN system. I kept lobbying behind the scenes and I didn't get very far. But the name of Jeane Kirkpatrick emerged and I groaned frankly. Oh, Jeane Kirkpatrick. She carries so much baggage, blah, blah. Anyway, she became the one. I had known her somewhat, a little bit. A little bit is better than somewhat, but she knew who I was and I certainly knew who she was. We had lunch at the State Department in the eighth floor dining room. It was people from IO, people from DRL and Jeane Kirkpatrick was there and we talked about all of this and most of what she said was absolute music to my ears. It suddenly dawned on me that all my fears were wrong. Jeane Kirkpatrick is a Republican internationalist. She thinks we should work in the UN and give it our best shot. Furthermore, as she said at lunch, she's a Francophile. She lived in France part of the year at least up until that time. I think she has since sold her place. She spoke French pretty well. Read French and felt it was important to work with the French as I do. I thought this is just dandy. So, I left that lunch sky high and I could tell the IO people were terribly upset because some of them I frankly think really wanted to have a failure. They really wanted to have a failure and asked to withdraw from this. I thought with Jeane Kirkpatrick you can't, we're not going to have a failure and then we had all this work with the Europeans so at least we're not going to be fighting with the Europeans.

The Human Rights Commission was six weeks mid-March to the end of April and I went over there initially. Then I had a break for a week and then I went back and Jeane Kirkpatrick and I bonded. I think that she's great. We had a big fight on Cuba, but on the other stuff she was just tremendous. She worked well there and she can still give a pretty damn good speech. Everyday I would read a couple of French newspapers and I would give them to her and we would talk about what the French were doing and we would coordinate on tactics and so forth and it was pretty good. Not great. We lost a couple of bad votes, one on Zimbabwe, one on Sudan. We won on Cuba big. We did not do anything on China, so that was not an issue and then some lesser resolutions like Belarus which is one that we put forward, we did well. Iraq we thought was going to be a huge problem. We had 100% cooperation from the Europeans on Iraq. We stood together on that even though there were some misgivings about a few things. I can't say it was an easy negotiation, but we managed to finesse the whole Iraq thing. When Jeane Kirkpatrick got back I was still worried what would be said. We had some public members of the delegation who were very upset. They didn't like it and were quite ready to piss on it when we got back. Jeane Kirkpatrick came back and Lorne Craner had a conversation with her. I think this had a lot to do with how she played the whole thing, her take on the mission when she came back. She said that we had done reasonably well. The other thing she said, the cooperation with the Europeans was the best she had ever experienced in her career and that had been the key to this success we had. Once Jeane Kirkpatrick spoke, a sort of an icon among the Republicans, nobody is going to second guess her. That whole thing was over and we won. I mean what I call we people who feel that the United States has a role to play in these organizations.

Q: Yes, and we were firmly back in the saddle.

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: Well, so that's a very positive note for you to end on isn't it?

SOUTHWICK: Yes.

Q: Well, Mike, I think we'll end here.

SOUTHWICK: Okay.

End of interview