

NORWAY

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ELLA DESCHAUB
Personal Assistant to Ambassador and Mrs. Biddle
Oslo (1935-1937)

Ella DeSchaub describes her life as personal assistant to Ambassador and Mrs. Anthony Biddle in Poland, France and Norway. She describes vividly wartime life in those countries with Ambassador and Mrs. Biddle. A biographical sketch is included as addendum. The interview was conducted in 1991 by Randolph W. Baxter

Q: Yes [agreeing]. Did you know, in Oslo, that you were -- that Ambassador Biddle was going to be posted in Poland?

DeSCHAUB: Yes, we did, after a while. We were there for two and a half years in Oslo. And such a contrast, you can't imagine! Oslo is a very rural place -- they like sports [unintelligible] and skiing and [ski-] jumping and all. They are quite rough when you don't know them, and they don't make any ceremony about being nice or pleasant. No, not at all. Except we had a few that were nice. I knew the Swiss Ambassador there, who was a very nice, unmarried man. From time to time, he invited me with another Swiss -- who was a convert to Catholicism -- and he played the accordion very well. We would sing little Swiss songs, and that was very nice. I went there quite often. But he had converted and become a monk -- he was in a Catholic and very nice order.

Q: Franciscan?

DeSCHAUB: No, no, not so strict -- they're more learned.

Q: Jesuit?

DeSCHAUB: No. I don't know what he was. He didn't speak about religion, so that was all right, and we got along very well. I went several times and saw him, and I went to church where

he was. But of course, it was very rare, the monks, especially in Norway! Norway used to be a very Protestant country.

Yes, we knew quite a few months in advance, of course, that we would have to go to Poland. And then Poland was such a complete change! Everything -- the way people thought, the way they treated each other, you know. It was really, I would say, three of four hundred years back, in Poland - life had stopped at that time.

Q: Was there much -- was there an overall sympathy for the Nazis at all?

DeSCHAUB: No, no, no -- first of all, [they were] Catholic, very strong Catholics. So strong, that we were told -- I had this friend who was there in Oslo with me, and who left because she was [unintelligible], she got very sick; she had to be operated [on] and so, I finally was the one that [unintelligible]; she said -- she tried to find a Protestant church. They said, "Church, no. There's a home where you can go, somewhere you can go where there is a priest," or whatever you call him -- Father. So I went once, and it was such a small congregation -- there were maybe 40 people, maybe not. Did you know they [the Polish Government] didn't allow the Salvation Army? Didn't allow any thing that wasn't Catholic! There was this altar at Czestochowa -- this old, famous Black Madonna that they had to worship. For them, this was the highest thing on the earth! Maybe that was why they were resigned to so much, that they could stand so much misery. Because they were miserable.

There was still a horrible difference between master and servant. [exclamation of wonder] I mean, not only would he [the guard] would sleep at the foot of my staircase! But otherwise, when we went to the country -- to the Potocki country place which Mr. Biddle had rented -- we went there, the servants were all waiting for us, and they would kiss the hem of your skirt! Not your hand, but the hem of your skirt! They would kneel down -- it was embarrassing, but what could you do? They thought that was the right thing to do. And the master did whip his servants, and whip them good and strong! One time, the head man of all the servants couldn't function -- he wasn't there. We asked what happened to him and were told, "Oh, the master had a 'discussion' with him." He was in bed, [because] he had been whipped!

Q: That was a "discussion"?!

DeSCHAUB: And that, after Norway where they are so rude, it was a tremendous difference.

Q: So there weren't many Polish Communists either?

DeSCHAUB: At the time, no. At that time, I don't think they could have lived! And there were no black people, none at all. I don't think there are many in Sweden or Norway [either].

Q: Were there any other American women in Warsaw?

DeSCHAUB: Why, yes, the ones belonging to embassies and so on -- quite a few. Quite a few, [though] I don't know if they were happy. In Norway, there was a [pause] -- we had Burke Elbrick in Norway -- he was there. That's where I first met him.

Q: And he moved at the same time as Ambassador Biddle to Warsaw?

DeSCHAUB: Yes, we were in Oslo quite a while, and he was -- I don't know -- Secretary of the Embassy -- he didn't have a very big title there. His wife expected a baby at that time, and -- I think -- she went back to Washington to have the child. Then they came to Warsaw, and there I had to find a house for them. That was a very nice little house, what they would call a manor, you know, [with] it was more than the house [attached to it]. But it was in bad shape. Those people had a daughter -- she thought she'd do everything. So she installed electric lights, and [pause] -- Burke and Elfie always complained that it was terrible: the lights went out all the time, or something burned up -- but that was the daughter of the house. It was a very nice place. They had some sheep -- I was there in spring, once, and the little lambs were jumping. At the end of the garden was a little place where you could look off and see them, and it was so nice and peaceful!

Q: So you mostly worked outside of the Embassy itself? You didn't work in the Embassy?

DeSCHAUB: I didn't work in the Embassy at all -- that was not my territoire. I was mostly at the house, later. It always ended that way. I would have a little place [unintelligible] -- I had this friend from Paris, and we had a little apartment. It was nothing to speak about, but at least it was ours. I remember, I had some birds -- bought some birds, to have something alive -- and that was when my friend had to go to the hospital, when Mrs. Biddle sent her to Vienna. Then Mrs. Biddle said to me, "You're not going to be alone -- you're coming to the Embassy." [laughs]

So I had to move to the Embassy. I wasn't there very long, when I had some [kind of] rash -- something I had never had before. Mrs. Biddle said, "Oh, get the doctor!" and she went and got the doctor. He said, "This is -- 'red dogs'," they call it in Norwegian, 'red dog' -- which is a particular form of -- what do you call it when you get red spots all over you? [after Baxter's prompt] Measles. [mocking a scared voice] "Measles -oh, oh! You must be isolated, so that nobody can come and see you." But Mr. Wright said he'd go anyway and see how I was. And I was there, covered with powder -- I don't know why that powder. I had a nurse come, and my door was locked to anybody -- and he came and saw me covered with this powder and looking [unintelligible] -- He said, "I've never seen you look so --" [laughs] But anyway, that was the way it was done.

Q: That was in Oslo?

DeSCHAUB: In Oslo, yes. I can't say I liked the way we lived in Oslo, because it was really kind of dull -- very, very dull. There were concerts -- one in a long time. And then, they had a theatre, but of course, it was Norwegian, so I didn't like to go. But it was very lonesome, so I was very glad to have that old Englishman to go out with, or sometimes go to a -- not even a movie, but some type of -- concert, or whatever.

Q: That was Charles Wright?

DeSCHAUB: Yes, oh yes. He was our savior in many things.

Q: He was attached officially to the Biddle family, or was he part of the -- did he work for the Embassy?

DeSCHAU: No -- he was Mr. Biddle's - the Ambassador's --

Q: Personal attaché?

DeSCHAU: Yes. Very efficient. He arranged everything, excursions and -- [long pause]

WALTER GALENSON
Labor Attaché
Oslo (1945-1946)

Prior to World War II, Galenson was a professor at Hunter College in New York. Galenson served as a Labor Officer in Norway and Denmark. After leaving the Foreign Service, Galenson became a professor at Cornell University. He was interviewed by Morris Wiesz in 1992.

Q: How did you prepare for it?

GALENSON: I didn't do any preparation.

Q: Now this would have been when?

GALENSON: This would have been in the spring of 1945.

Q: Well, this was the period when your neighbor here in Florida, Haakon Lie, was going back and forth to Europe? Or was he already ensconced back in Norway?

GALENSON: No, I never met him in this country. He didn't come back to Norway until August of 1945.

Q: After the war was over?

GALENSON: That was the first time I met him.

Q: Well, that's the first time that he came back safely in 1945, because until then he was going back and forth.

GALENSON: Not to Norway, to England, yes.

Q: So you prepared yourself like you did for the Soviet Union. Reading? Language?

GALENSON: No, the language I did when I was there. I spent most of the summer of 1945 studying Dano-Norwegian. I had a tutor and I worked every day. It's a very simple language. After a couple of months I could get along pretty well.

Q: Yes, but there is also the fact--at least in my experience in Norway--that you can get along so well there with English.

GALENSON: Yes, that's right. You really didn't need the language particularly, but on the other hand I wanted to read the newspapers.

Q: And you wanted to get down deeper than the leadership which knew English.

GALENSON: Yes, that's right. Also it's very important to read newspapers.

Q: I was shocked one time when Haakon Lie, the Labor Party head for many years, invited me to some executive meeting of the Labor Party. I walked in, was introduced to a number of people I didn't know, and they proceeded to talk English for the benefit of their visitor!

GALENSON: Yes, it's the second language in Scandinavia. German used to be the language but now it's [English].

Q: Now it's English. So you began your career just months before the end of the war?

GALENSON: I went over on a Norwegian boat to England and as we were going over there they were broadcasting that the Germans were beginning to surrender.

Q: So it was after VJ Day?

GALENSON: No, not VJ, VE. It was in May of 1945

Q: Oh, yes. Europe was first. You're right.

GALENSON: In fact, I got to England and I remember walking around London with Sam Berger in a complete blackout. We could hardly see anything but he took me over to the City to see all the damage that had been done there. Then I went up to one of the air fields and I got on a plane to Stockholm. There were American Air Force planes flying to Stockholm then. What they were doing was they were taking pilots over there. A number of pilots who had been on bombing missions had managed to land in Sweden. They couldn't fly back to England, so they got into Sweden and their planes were interned, but they were permitted to leave, but now they were going back to fly their planes out. (Tape interruption)

So I got a ride on one of those planes and then I took a train. I think I took the first train from Stockholm to Oslo. I got there even before the King got there.

Q: That's interesting. And you proceeded then to make contacts with trade unions, government people, etc.?

GALENSON: Yes, it was slow. I introduced myself to the trade union people, but they were awfully busy then. A number had come out of concentration camps and were not in good health and the rest of them were busy trying to figure out what they were going to do after four years of German occupation. So I would say I spent most of the summer, two months really, working on the language.

Q: *Oh, was your wife with you?*

GALENSON: No, she didn't come over until the end of August and then she left in December. She wasn't there very long at all. So that was my introduction to Norway.

Q: *How did your work begin? There weren't many people with your experience like starting right after the war with people who were so busy doing other things, reconstituting a labor movement, etc.*

GALENSON: Well, I was required to make two reports a week. Two brief reports. Practically nothing.

Q: *Who was the Ambassador there at that time?*

GALENSON: A very nice guy, Lithgow Osborne. He was a friend of Roosevelt's. He had been Commissioner of Conservation in the State of New York under Roosevelt. He was a lovely man. He was not a career officer.

I met a young Norwegian Air Force Officer there...--I had a car. I brought my car over. At that time that was a jewel.--...and he suggested that we drive around and see a bit of Norway. I said, "Great." So I went to the Ambassador and I said, "What about it?" and he said, "Go ahead. Sure. fine." So we got into the car and we drove around Norway and I saw a bit of the country. When I got to Oslo, by the way, the Germans were still patrolling the city, only they had black armbands on. The British had occupied Norway, not we, but there were very few British troops in there. Many of the Germans were still there.

Q: *The German military?*

GALENSON: Yes, they were still policing with cars and the motorcycles. They still had their armbands. This was a very peculiar business. I remember I was in a small town in the south of Norway. I woke up about two in the morning. The sun was out already. This was after all June. I heard this tramp, tramp, tramp. I couldn't figure out what the hell's going on. There was the German Army marching right past my balcony carrying knapsacks and all their stuff, everything but guns, and they were marching down to the port to reembark for Germany. The Germans were still in there.

One other funny thing too. The Ambassador was an ardent golfer and I played a little golf. So he said, "Let's go play golf." Well, it turned out that the golf course had been mainly converted to producing potatoes, just a small fairway. In addition to that the German Army was interned all around the golf course. So I would tee up and hit and I would run out ahead to make sure that the

Ambassador didn't lose his ball. He had very few golf balls. All the Germans were cheering him, you know. It was bazaar.

Q: Well, how did you begin making your labor contacts. Did you concentrate on the party or on the trade unions, or on both, or on individuals who were willing to talk to you amidst all those problems they had?

GALENSON: Well, I was "taken over". When Haakon got into Oslo, he got in touch with me and from then on I didn't have to do any seeking.

Q: We are talking about Haakon Lie.

GALENSON: They were having the first post-war election in September. Before Haakon got there the Labor Party had entered into an electoral agreement with the Communists. Joint lists. When Haakon got there, he torpedoed that one real fast, because that would have been very dangerous.

Q: Well, this was on the theory that they were our allies during the war and let's go forward [together].

GALENSON: Yes, they had met in concentration camps and made friendships and so on. Anyway one of the ways I saw a lot of the little towns in Norway was that I went electioneering with him [Haakon Lie]. He was very interested at that time in showing TVA films about how we had harnessed the water falls, because they were pushing that water fall business there. So I got a hold of some of the TVA films. We would go to small town and he would give an election speech, then I would run the machine and he would lecture. So I was... Probably illegally... When the Ambassador heard about it, he was a little bit worried, but he didn't complain. So I did see a lot of Norway. But through Haakon, I met everybody in the labor movement, Labor Party, everybody.

Q: Did it hurt your effectiveness at all, to be so closely tied to Haakon? Later on, of course, there was all that worry in the State Department that if a labor attaché became too close to one particular element within the labor movement, it might affect adversely his relationships to the others, but knowing Haakon and knowing the history of the time, that was not the case, I take it?

GALENSON: No, you see, one of the things that the Department was mostly interested in was the Communists. After all, Norway had a border contiguous to the Soviet Union. The Russians had taken over that [northern] portion of Finland.

Q: And Norway had a history of joining the Comintern until 1925.

GALENSON: Oh, yes. In fact I met Haakon's mentor, Martin Tranmael. I had long conversations with him about his experiences in the Comintern, but the Department was mainly interested in despatches about Communism, what they were doing, and, of course, Haakon was a mine of information. I could write in detail about the Communists in the country.

Q: He had no compunction about sharing his information with you?

GALENSON: None at all. He gave it all to me.

Q: But it did benefit him also to have that information getting out?

GALENSON: He [Haakon Lie] was the number one anti-Communist in Norway. He was regarded by the Soviet Union as its bitterest enemy in Norway.

Q: Did that enmity carry back at all to the 1920s?

GALENSON: He had been in Moscow briefly in the 1930s. He had also been in Spain and his Spanish experience, I think, really embittered him against Communists when he saw what they did, particularly to the anarchists in Barcelona, because the Norwegian Labor Party had kind of a strong syndicalist background and they felt close to those people. When he saw what the Communists did to them, he became very strongly anti-Communist.

Q: I forgot that he had been in Spain. But it was also not only the Communists but that left wing group that...

GALENSON: At that time there was no left wing. The main opposition was the Communists. The left wing group came when the Communists diminished. The left wing group took some time to form. The Labor Party won a big victory in September of 1945 and for several elections thereafter.

Q: You talk about the Labor Party's victory in Norway. I'm talking about Spain. There were the anarchists and that other group accused of being Trotskyites. In any event that's where his bitterness...

GALENSON: Also Tranmael had become very strongly anti-Communist and he was Haakon's main mentor. Haakon has always remained strongly anti-Communist.

Q: Oh, yes, creating some difficulties for him in recent years. Well then, he was your mentor and helped you get around.

GALENSON: He was the guy who really opened everything to me. That's correct. Now, you know, for example, I was critical of some of the things they were doing. They wanted to put up a big steel mill, which they did. It was a mistake. I argued against it, but they were convinced this was the thing to do. But there wasn't any conflict. I mean what I was doing was essentially what the Department wanted me to do.

Q: Reporting on...

GALENSON: Reporting, right. I could report on the status of the trade unions, which I did, and the status of the Party, which I did.

Q: *Let's get into this...*

GALENSON: And incidentally, one other thing. I recall one day Haakon--this was in I guess the winter of 1945--Haakon called me up and said, "How about coming out to my cabin. I've got something to discuss with you." I said, "Okay." So we went up to his cabin, which was cold as hell up in the mountains. No running water or anything. The Ambassador had gotten a cable from the State Department asking for a run down on Trygve Lie, who was being considered for Secretary General of the U. N.

Q: *No relation to Haakon Lie?*

GALENSON: No, no relation to Haakon Lie. Trygve Lie was at that time the Foreign Minister of Norway. So I called Haakon. He said, "Let's go up to my cabin and we'll discuss it." So we went up there and he gave me the whole history of Trygve Lie, which was, he broke with the Labor Party when they joined the Comintern. There was a Social Democratic minority which stayed out of the Comintern. So he was never in the Comintern, never a Communist. His record was clear; so we could document all of that. So I wrote a long dispatch on the history of Trygve Lie. Haakon's information came in as extremely useful [providing] in detail what Trygve Lie had been doing before the war and during the war. He was a lawyer. He had been a lawyer for the trade unions.

Q: *And turned out to be a good Secretary General.*

GALENSON: Yes, he wasn't too bad.

Q: *Certainly not siding with the Communists.*

GALENSON: No, no.

Q: *Nor with the neutralists the way some of his successors did?*

GALENSON: No, he was okay, but you see it was mainly because of my knowing people in the movement that I could do this. Otherwise I would have had to go to the library and even then it would have been not so easy to know exactly what Trygve Lie had been doing in the early 1920s.

Q: *Where was he located then? At the UN in another capacity?*

GALENSON: Who? Trygve Lie?

Q: Trygve Lie?

GALENSON: No, he was the Foreign Minister of Norway.

Q: *You didn't interview him though?*

GALENSON: I did. I interviewed him. He had me up to dinner at his home. We got talking. He told me a little bit about himself.

Q: Let me go back for a minute on this question of the steel mill and tell you that in the last few days I interviewed one of the Labor Department retirees, Jim Silberman, who was very active in the industrial productivity program of the Marshall Plan, and he told me about this business of foreign countries having to decide what the orientation, what the objective would be to their industrial development during the Marshall Plan period; he, too, noted that there were political decisions on where the development was to take place and we discussed briefly some of my experiences in India, much later, including when Haakon Lie visited me there. While it was logical to understand the Indians' desire to have steel capacity needed for their industrial development, it was uneconomic from my point of view, and I argued against the idea of their accepting Soviet help for the creation of a heavy machinery corporation which would produce the heavy machinery necessary to build their steel mills on the theory that they just couldn't use that amount of [steel]. Sure enough for political reasons the Russians helped them and then the plant was 70 percent under-utilized. Now the answer that was given to me always when I pointed to the economic stupidity of producing beyond their [domestic] needs was that politically they had to have this show-piece--like the small African country which has to have an airline. You know the typical thing. Now, how much of that decision, that minor disagreement you had with respect to Haakon's wanting to have steel mills and your suggesting that it might not be economically advisable, how much of that was due to Norway's feeling a need to establish itself politically as self-sufficient or self-reliable?

GALENSON: No, I don't think that was it. They set the mill up in a place on the west coast of Norway, where there was a lot of unemployment, especially among fishermen, and they wanted to provide employment. I guess they wanted self-sufficiency too, I don't know, but it was an economic decision. They thought it was going to pay. It turned out to be a white elephant.

Q: Whereas in India there were political decisions, from my point of view, which turned out to be white elephants or red elephants because the Soviets used it politically very effectively.

So you were doing the normal work of a Labor Attaché there?

GALENSON: Yes.

Q: You were working under circumstances which made it easier for you because of the common interests of the United States and Norway and because of your personal friendship with Haakon?

GALENSON: Yes, he also helped me in Denmark. He introduced me to the...

Q: Oh, you were reporting on Denmark also?

GALENSON: Both. I spent two weeks in each country. I went back and forth.

Q: Two weeks a month?

GALENSON: Yes. I got to know the people in the Social Democratic Party there and in the unions pretty well and so I had the same entree there as I did in Norway.

Q: *So you had your home in Oslo and...*

GALENSON: I had a small apartment in Copenhagen.

Q: *Oh, really. Those are pleasant experiences, although the economic conditions at the time were rather difficult.*

GALENSON: Well, I didn't suffer. I can tell you that.

Q: *Not for Embassy people. Any special comment about Denmark, Danish labor, and the differences [between Norway and Denmark]?*

GALENSON: Yes, the Danes were much less... They didn't have a revolutionary background like the Norwegians. They were never in the Comintern. They were a moderate Social Democratic Party from the start.

Q: *Had they [the Social Democratic Party] been in power anytime before the war?*

GALENSON: Yes, I think so.

Q: *And the Norwegians?*

GALENSON: Yes. There was a Labor Government in fact [in power] in Norway when the Germans came in. But they [the Danes] were much more moderate. Now, for example, the Norwegian labor movement was sort of puritanical; because of Tranmael, in a way, they didn't drink. When I first met him, Haakon wouldn't drink anything, whereas if the Danes hadn't been able to drink beer or snaps, they wouldn't have had any Danes, you know. A completely different atmosphere.

Q: *In that respect Sweden is closer to the Danes. God, they drink.*

GALENSON: Yes, they do. The Danes ate a lot, drank a lot, very gemütlich. So it was a great contrast...

Q: *They were more continental literally and figuratively.*

GALENSON: Yeah, that's right. They were more continental. The Norwegians were just a different kind of people. After all the Norwegian Labor Party had its roots in forestry workers and fishermen and construction workers, whereas in Denmark they were factory workers and craftsmen.

Q: *Yes and that association with the forests, etc., led to some sort of an affectionate feeling toward the I.W.W. in the United States.*

GALENSON: That's right. They were really syndicalist to begin with and Tranmael--Haakon has written two volumes on Tranmael--and Tranmael was certainly influenced by the I.W.W. In fact he was at the founding convention of the I.W.W.

Q: *In America?*

GALENSON: Yes.

Q: *By the way, Haakon's books are not appearing in English, are they?*

GALENSON: No, unfortunately not.

Q: *What about his current effort on the biography of Furuseth. [Lie is currently writing a biography of the late Norwegian-American President of the AFL Sailors Union of the Pacific.]*

GALENSON: No, he's writing [all of his books] in Norwegian.

Q: *That's a shame, because I think his perspective on these issues would be fascinating.*

GALENSON: Yes, I think it would be interesting.

Q: *Any chance of getting Minnie [Mrs. Haakon Lie] to translate them?*

GALENSON: He [Lie] refuses to have it done. I proposed that we boil down...--He wrote these five volumes of [his own] memoirs.--I thought that we should boil them down to a volume, but he says he won't do it.

Q: *They are selling very well in Norway, I understand.*

GALENSON: He's made a lot of money. Books are very expensive there. I think he has sold 80,000 or 90,000 copies of his first and most controversial volume, which was on the post-war period when there was a conflict in the Labor Party. 80,000 in a country of three and a half or four million people. That's a good sale. And they continue to sell, and he continues to get royalties.

Q: *He also continues to get criticism from some of those revisionist thinkers.*

GALENSON: Oh, yes. He obviously is one of the most prominent political people in Norway. They still call him almost every day [here in Florida] to get his views on things.

Q: *I know, he's interviewed over the telephone. Well, I have been spending a little time on Haakon in this conversation partly because I want to encourage any people who do some work in this [area] to get hold of those books and see whether they can summarize them.*

GALENSON: They are available.

Q: You couldn't consider translating them?

GALENSON: No, what we wanted to do was that I would go through them and take out stuff which was only of parochial interest. He had a lot of international experience which was... He knew all of the post-war Socialists. He knew Bevin. He knew the guy who became the Minister of Defense in Britain, Denis Healey. Willy Brandt he knew very well. But a lot of the internal Labor Party material would not be of general interest. So I thought we would sort of boil it down. Minnie would do a rough translation, then I would finish it up, but he said, "No." He refuses absolutely, so what can you do?

Q: When he visited us in India, he had so many contacts there too, and God knows, they weren't very active in the Socialist International.

GALENSON: It was because of the Socialist International, sure. I went to Israel once. He had called up the Secretary of the Histadrut and the Labor Party and they treated me very well, because he is very well liked in Israel, as you probably know.

Q: He certainly is and I guess I would have forgotten to put it in the tapes that are going to be done for me, but I should mention that I was once involved in trying to get Portugal to do some work in connection with the ILO and they had a luncheon of labor, management and government people at the ILO. I was trying to encourage management people to use some influence with the management people in Portugal, who had all been old fascist types. We wanted to create a new management outlook. I was sitting next to this Swedish employer representative and he told me he had a very great affection for Norway. I asked, "Why?" and he said, "Bar none the most wonderful person I know in the world is the leader of the Labor Party, a man named Haakon Lie." And I told him I knew Haakon. He mentioned--this guy wasn't Jewish--some committee to aid Israel in Sweden and described the work that Haakon was doing with the Labor people in Israel. I don't know how he knew about that. It was just a matter of admiration for the work Haakon was doing.

GALENSON: The way Haakon got started on this was interesting. Shortly after the end of the war, they were sending a lot of Jewish kids over to Sweden and Norway because they were tubercular. A plane load of Jewish kids crashed in Norway and only one kid remained alive out of about 100. A terrible tragedy. Anyway, Haakon mounted a big campaign around the name of that boy. They raised a lot of money. They bought prefab houses. He took a couple of guys down to Israel and they built a kibbutz.

Q: Oh, my Lord! But it's typical of him. He seizes a target of opportunity. You can just see him.

GALENSON: Kibbutz Norway. I met Golda Meir at his house in Oslo a number of times. They were very close friends.

HENRY S. VILLARD
Deputy Chief of Mission

Oslo (1946-1948)

Henry S. Villard was born in New York City in 1900. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Harvard University he did post graduate work at Magdalen College at Oxford University. His career includes positions in Tehran, Washington D.C., Rio de Janeiro, Venezuela, Norway, Libya, and ambassadorship to Senegal and Mauritania. Ambassador Villard was interviewed by Dmitri Villard in July 1991.

Q: Your next assignment was in 1948 as deputy chief of mission in Oslo, Norway. How did you get that assignment?

VILLARD: Although I had not requested the assignment to Norway, I had requested an assignment away from the Arab world. In 1948 I had been offered the post of ambassador to Baghdad, but I had been deputy director to Loy Henderson in the Near Eastern Division at the time the Palestine problem came to the fore with the recognition of Israel to follow. I had been very much involved with the Arab world and I did not agree with my government as to its policy with respect to the Arab-Israeli controversy. At my request the Department decided to transfer me from the area and send me to Norway. There was an unexpected change, but a very welcome one. The ambassador, Charles Ulrick Bay, was a political appointee, on the basis of his cash contribution to the party in power, with no qualifications whatever for diplomacy. He spent by far the larger part of his time in the United States in Palm Beach or in New York and was known in Oslo as the 'ambassador ad interim'. This suited me very well because I was chargé d'affaires for most of the time I was in Norway.

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

VILLARD: It was a very interesting moment to be in Norway because it was at a time when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was being formed. Norway, we hoped, would join the West in forming the treaty whereas Sweden was trying to form a Scandinavian pact consisting of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The Swedes exerted extreme pressure on Norway to stay out of the North Atlantic alliance and join them in a neutralist type organization. So our job was to convince Norway where its best interests lay. I was very happy to find that the Norwegians came over to us. The strength of the Norwegians was illustrated by the Foreign Minister, Halvard Lange, who went to Washington to sign the NATO treaty. He had gone to the airport and his foot was literally on the plane when a secretary of the Soviet embassy rushed up with a note from the Soviet ambassador. In effect the note said that if you sign this NATO agreement it will be your responsibility as to what might happen in the future--a veiled, outright threat. Lange folded the note and handed it back to the secretary and told him to say to his ambassador that he had just left for Washington.

The Norwegians were certainly stalwart members of the North Atlantic alliance and it was a great pleasure and privilege to work with them. They were more than an anchor to a long line of defense which ended in Turkey. Their sincerity and honesty and general cooperative attitude made it a easy to work with them.

DAVID D. NEWSOM
Consular Officer
Oslo (1950-1951)

Ambassador David D. Newsom was born in California in 1918. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of California in 1938 and a master's degree from the Columbia University in 1940. He served overseas in the U.S. Navy from 1942-1946 and entered the Foreign Service in 1947. Ambassador Newsom's career included positions in Pakistan, Iraq, the United Kingdom, Libya, Indonesia, and the Philippines. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 17, 1991.

Q: You left Karachi in 1950 for a delightful interlude of a little more than a year in Oslo. How did that come about?

NEWSOM: Like everyone at the time, we had some health problems. We had contracted amoebic dysentery. We had had about every fever known to mankind. So I think the Department showed some compassion and sent us to Oslo. Also at the time, and rightly so, there was a feeling in the Department that younger officers should get experience not only in other geographical areas, but in other functions as well. So I went to Oslo as a consular officer. I spent fifteen months there after which I went to Baghdad as public affairs officer. Although Oslo was a delightful place to live and I found consular work interesting, you would wake up every morning knowing who the Prime Minister was. That was somewhat less exciting than the more uncertain parts of the world.

Q: Your Ambassador was man by the name of Charles Ulrick Bay, a non-career officer. What was he like?

NEWSOM: Charles Ulrick Bay was the CEO of the American Export Line. His grandfather had been born in Norway. I guess he had been a contributor to Democratic coffers. He wanted to be Ambassador to Norway. He was also a sailor of twelve meter boats. About the only time he was seen in Norway was during the summer when he spent a good deal of time at Honkers, which is a port south of Oslo. He used to sail against the then Crown Prince Olaf and other of that social class. He was very sensitive to the fact that he knew very little about the Embassy. In January, 1951 he returned to Oslo suddenly which puzzled everyone. Finally a story appeared in the *New York Journal American* which said that when Eisenhower, then the SHAPE Commander, had completed a tour of NATO countries, he had reported to Truman on the posts he had visited. He allegedly had told the President that Bay was not in Oslo and had not been there for sometime. Truman according to the story called Bay in Florida and told him to return to Oslo quickly. So Bay reappeared. It was a little embarrassing because he wanted to demonstrate that he had never been away although he didn't recognize many people in the Embassy. There was an economic officer who encountered the Ambassador in the hallway one day. The Ambassador asked him whether he was back for another year as a Fulbright student or some other entirely erroneous assumption.

The Embassy was effectively run by Bill Snow who was the DCM. It was an interesting assignment in two ways. For example, we were administering Section 3(c) of the Displaced Persons Act. The applicants were primarily young Poles and from other Eastern European countries who had been rounded up by the Germans and taken as forced labor to the mines in North Norway and Finland. Under Section 3(c), someone like that who could prove that he had a relative in the United States, could be granted an immigration visa. This was a heart rendering experience because we knew that in light of the conditions in East Europe at that time the only hope they had was to get to the US So we were confronted with fraudulent documents, health problems -- tuberculosis primarily, and were forced to turn many away.

I also worked with the Norwegian police for about six months on the disappearance of an American radio correspondent -- Lyford Moore -- who had come to Oslo in the winter of 1950 on an annual tour sponsored by the US Army to observe the record the cutting and shipping of Christmas trees for the US forces in Germany. He was some relation to Mrs. Eisenhower. When he suddenly disappeared one winter night without a trace there was a lot of high level interest. An FBI agent was sent to help the Embassy. That was a fascinating glimpse of a slice of Norway life, working with the police while they interviewed all possible witnesses in bars and other places on the Norwegian waterfront. His body finally showed up during the spring thaw. We believe that he had been tossed out of a night club on the waterfront. He had come from Germany and had a few drinks and had fallen asleep at the bar. A Norwegian bouncer came along and awoke him. He got up and flung his arms and said, according to witnesses: "No goddam Hun is going to tell me what I can do". That didn't go over very well in Norway in 1950. So Moore must have wandered down to the water and fallen in. That episode occupied a lot of my time.

There was another case of a man who arrived in Norway with a fraudulent passport. He had to be returned in the custody of the ship's captain. I found consular work very interesting and I found the experience very valuable particularly in later years when I was in charge of a Mission.

DONOR M. LION
Marshall Plan
Oslo (1952-1954)

Donor M. Lion was born in Manhattan and raised in Brooklyn. He attended Erasmus Hall for secondary school. He received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University. He then earned a master's degree in Buffalo before returning to Harvard to obtain his Ph.D. All of his degrees were in the field of economics. His first overseas assignment was working with the Marshall Plan in Norway. He has also served abroad in Brazil, Jamaica, Guyana, Peru, and Thailand. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on June 25, 1997.

Q: You went to Oslo in 1952?

LION: Yes. I think it was July 12. It was the first day of summer, and the last day of summer. It was the hottest day of the year. It was like 88, or something, Fahrenheit.

Q: What was your position?

LION: I was what was called a Trade and Payments Officer. My main responsibility was to estimate what the balance of payments deficit was. That would serve primarily as the basis for determining the size of the aid package. That continued for some time, two years actually.

Q: You wrote a note about your experience? Of course this was supposedly after the Marshall Plan was over, but basically the situation had not changed at that point?

LION: The meeting in Washington, a reunion of Marshall Plan participants, the 50th anniversary, emphasized that it was over in December '51 and that it cost only 13 billion dollars. Both of those assertions strike me as misleading because, after 1951, the goals of the Marshall Plan were important in calculating what assistance to offer, and what kind of assistance to offer. For many, if not most of the countries which were recipients of Marshall Plan aid, the goals were still there, because their economies were still in trouble, the balance of payments was still in disequilibrium for many of these countries, France was the sick man of Europe in the early '50s. England and Germany made remarkable balance of payments recoveries but that may have been mostly because of the devaluation of the pound. I can't explain the German experience but infrastructures were still in dire trouble in many of these countries.

The popular thing to do, apparently, was to compare industrial production in 1951 with what it was before the war. Well, we know that comparisons can yield very peculiar results if you pick a bad year and pre-war Europe was not in good shape. So that by December '51, some six years after the war was over, the recovery of industrial production was impressive. So it looked like the Marshall Plan was most successful.

The Marshall Plan was a wonderful thing for many reasons. And maybe, perhaps, the least important was the actual economic assistance that was transferred. The consequences of the Marshall Plan on European attitudes towards each other working together, the European Union, the European payments union, and the current situation. All of that can be traced, in part, to the Marshall Plan. That, it seems to me, should be more significant than the 13 billion.

Another thing that bothered me about the "4 years, 13 billion," it tended to give people the idea that you could do these remarkable things in a short period of time, and for not very much money. There are two reasons why the "not very much money" is a little bit odd. If you put it in today's prices it looks more like 90 billion dollars. But beyond that, assistance continued to support Marshall Plan objectives in several countries for some years after '51.

So you really shouldn't talk about 13 billion. You should talk about, I don't know how much, perhaps as much as 17, 18, 19 billion which would then take the total, in current prices, to over 100 billion dollars.

So this jazzing up, unnecessarily, in my opinion, the results and the accomplishments of the Marshall Plan tended to promote the idea that you could accomplish marvelous economic change to improve growth and development in a short period of time. We all know that's not true and that has hurt the support of foreign assistance over the years.

A second result of what I would call Marshall Plan hype is that you can do it on the cheap. Which is not true.

Q: What was the situation in Norway when you were there?

LION: When I got to Norway there was still rationing. The fleet, the merchant fleet, which played a fantastic role during the war, had been virtually decimated by the end of the war. It was recovering but was still in bad shape. When the Germans were retreating before the allies toward the end of the war, retreating into Norway, going up North, they burned everything in sight including telephone poles. So naturally Norway was still devastated. So, here I was, helping a Marshall Plan recipient in the Marshall Plan after the Marshall Plan was supposedly over.

The Norwegians had a bunch of economists in the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Commerce, and in the Central Bank who were simply outstanding. The young folks who went to serve abroad, particularly for me in Norway, learned more from our counterparts than they from us. It was really a wonderful experience for me. In fact, I'm still somewhat in touch with these people. I just got a note from Eivind Erichsen, who was in the Ministry of Finance, and one of our chief counterparts, now 80 years old. They're also celebrating the Marshall Plan anniversary in Norway.

Q: What was the total resources that we provided to Norway?

LION: The last year that I can remember, 1954, the figure was 10 million dollars. We would go down, the Mission people, the Mission director who was Warren Wiggins, and I would go down to Paris to defend our proposed 10 million dollar figure. It was a little bit odd because with a balance of payments totaling millions and millions and millions of dollars, and with forecasts of the balance of payments depending so much on freight rates, short term and long term, and because freight rates are so variable, nobody could make a prediction that is precise to the nearest 10 million dollars. But we came up with that figure and defended it.

So, that suggests that we're talking of, for the Norwegians, less than a 100 million dollars over the whole period of assistance - not counting counterpart.

Q: And it involved, just generally, commodity assistance?

LION: Some commodity assistance. Commodity assistance didn't start during the first years of the Marshall Plan, as I recall. PL 480 came in the '50s. That was primarily food but there was other commodity assistance, you're right.

Most of it, however, was financial assistance. Deposits in US banks that they could draw on for imports.

Q: Was there any technical assistance in connection with the productivity angle?

LION: Yes. The Productivity Institute was started up in Norway in the late '40s or early 1950s, I believe. Emmett Wallace was our industry officer when I arrived. He's still in contact with people in Norway. The Productivity Institute still exists and still is valuable.

In terms of economic policy, in terms of what to do with the budget, how much and how to allocate budget funds--they didn't need any technical assistance. They could have given the US government technical assistance. They were outstanding, as I mentioned.

Funds for imports, funds to help replace the fleet, some shortages in some commodities and so on. The technical assistance was confined essentially to the Productivity Institute.

Q: What were some of the projects that they were focusing on, do you remember?

LION: That's about the only project I can think of, setting up the Productivity Institute.

Q: What I mean is in terms of what they were focusing on.

LION: I think they were working on small business but I'm not really sure, I wasn't close to that program.

Q: When did the Norwegian program come to an end?

LION: My successor was Herman Myers in my job as Trade and Payments officer, and then involved in everything else as the mission got smaller (For example, I was the Small Business officer, I was the PL 480 officer). Herman was there until 1956. He worked mostly with counterpart. So, I don't know whether anyone wants to consider that as an indication of the continuity of the program or the plan itself. It certainly involved US staff, it involved programming, collaborative programming with the Norwegians, it involved money, and it involved pursuing Marshall Plan goals for some years after 1951.

Q: Well was the counterpart mainly used for general budget support?

LION: As I recall, Herman mentioned that he worked a lot with small business, trying to help small businesses around the country. He would travel around with some Norwegian colleagues and they would examine micro-enterprises and decide how to help.

Q: So we ended in 1956, that was longer than many other programs, wasn't it?

LION: Yes.

Q: Why did we stay on so long, compared to other countries?

LION: I would suspect that the dollar-funding ceased before 1956. But dollar assistance continued well after 1951. And that the counterpart was what had been generated by previous commodity transfers. But there were other countries where assistance, economic assistance, no longer called Marshall Plan assistance, continued even after that. I think Greece is an example of this, Turkey is an example. Spain might have been, I'm not sure. Yugoslavia, I believe, was. So there are several Marshall Plan countries that received economic assistance long after the Marshall Plan ended. We called it foreign assistance, which is an unfortunate term--Haven, it's been bothering me for 35 years.

Q: Same way.

LION: This is one of the most unfortunate misnomers in American foreign policy. This is an example of enlightened self-help. But we call it foreign assistance.

BRUCE H. MILLEN
Labor Attaché
Oslo (1954-1958)

Bruce H. Millen was born in Wisconsin and attended Northwestern University. Millen served in the military during World War II and joined the Foreign Service in 1950. Millen served as Labor Attaché in Rome, Oslo, New Delhi, and Ankara. Millen was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle in 1993.

Kienzle: Where did you go from there?

MILLEN: Then I went to Norway. It was such a contrast!

Kienzle: How would you characterize the differences?

MILLEN: Well, one of my old friends who worked with me in Rome, but was [actually] stationed in Paris, was the Mutual Security Administration's chief guy in Norway. This was a small operation with about five people involved at that time. We were talking and I wanted to get something done, and he said, "Bruce, you are not in Italy. You can go from point A to point B with no problem at all. You don't have to go through points C and D to get to point B."

Kienzle: So you were able to free-wheel a good deal more?

MILLEN: Well, first of all, 90 percent of the anti-Communist stuff we could leave to the Norwegian Labor Party. I did a few little things that they asked me to do, or I thought might be worthwhile in that direction, but it was a pretty straight-forward kind of thing. They wanted some special information, or if they wanted something taken care of that I could do, we would do it. They once asked me to visit one of the Communist strong points up in northern Norway.

Kienzle: "They" being the Labor Party?

MILLEN: Yes, the Labor Party and Haakon [Lie]. He asked me to go up there. He said, "You know, those idiots are up there blaming Americans for everything, and they have never ever seen one. Would you go up there and show them what an American is?" So I went up there, and they had a seminar or some sort of a training session going on. So I spent two or three days with them and I found it very enjoyable. They would come up to my room later and argue politics and drink my scotch.

Kienzle: The Communists?

MILLEN: Well, the whole group. They weren't all Communists. They would fight over issues in my hotel room. Other than showing the flag, my role was just to be a kind of an interlocutor so to speak.

It was interesting. One of the things [I found]-and this was true in Italy as well as in Norway and in fact all the countries I was in-was that one of your chief sources of information and one of the areas where you could introduce ideas and so forth was through academic circles. And in Norway, in contrast to Italy, the employers invited my participation in their events and listened to me and talked frankly about issues and so forth. In Italy that never took place. Some of the individual staff economists in Italy were interesting and useful, but the officers would never deign to sit down and talk to somebody in my position, while in Norway everything was reduced in scale because it is a small country. But it was also a highly democratic country. I used Bob Flemming as my entry point to the Norsk Arbeidsgiver Forening (Norwegian Employers Federation) or NAF. [To Jim Shea] Remember Bob Flemming?

Shea: Oh, yes

MILLEN: Anyway he was later President of the University of Michigan, but at that time he was at [the University of] Illinois. He was a lawyer and arbitrator and mediator. I used his visit as a point of entre with the employers, and they were delighted to see me and maintain contact with me. I put out a little bulletin in Norway called "Labor News in America." We did it by offset press. I was talking with the Director of the Employers Association once, and he said, "Bruce, I am not trying to impose censorship, but you know that right now the issue of the forty hour week is before Parliament. Could you stay away from that subject?" He said, "You don't know what that paper does? You put something in that paper and we've got a demand within twenty days from some place in this country for contract conditions you have in the United States." He said this with absolute good humor. "You must know that the 40 hour week in the United States was, in part, a job creation effort; here we have less than two percent unemployment. The 40 hour week will come. Give us some time."

The difference between Italy and Norway is illustrated by the relationship I had with the Norwegian Employers' Federation. It was marked by almost complete openness as the prior exchange illustrated. The Deputy Director once told me that one of the proudest moments in his life took place when he was a regional director in Stravanger. It seems that his union counterparts and his group had worked several days on negotiating a series of amendments to a contract and the pressures had been intense. When the issues had finally been resolved, the chief

union negotiator said, "I must make this next train. Would you put this series of agreements in final form and see that they are distributed to my members and yours so there are no further delays." The director told me, "I was humbled and honored at such trust being placed in my hands."

Finally, I should say, based on my Italian experience, I was somewhat wary about approaching the NAF (Norwegian Employers Federation). Finally, my reservations were overcome by the chief economist for the trade union federation, who told me I must avail myself of the opportunity. He said, "They have excellent people and far more resources than we. You would be doing yourself a disservice by neglecting the group." How right he was!

Kienzle: What kind of work week did they have in Norway at that point?

MILLEN: I think they had a forty-four hour work week. They started right after World War II with a forty-eight hour week, and they had gotten it down to a forty-four and the unions wanted to go to forty. The employers knew that eventually they would go to forty. It was simply a question of when, one year or three.

Kienzle: Eliminating Saturday morning work?

MILLEN: Yes.

Shea: Who was our ambassador [to Norway] then?

MILLEN: Coren Strong, who was a great socialite and had quite a bit of money. He was a very decent guy. Once he got accustomed to the fact that I didn't wear horns, we got along very well. In fact he used to boast to some people that he had personally selected me.

Kienzle: What kind of professional background did he have?

MILLEN: Really it was hard to tell. The thing that gave him most satisfaction was his Army time. I have forgotten what kind of a unit he worked with. He inherited his money. He was an orphan, and he was brought into the Eastman Kodak clan, I think, and that was the source of his money. His wife was a martinet but smart. Oh, gosh, she was smart, and she cracked the whip. She told the ladies, "The Ambassador wants a tight ship here." But he was a sweet fellow and it was always fun to be around him.

Shea: How did he regard the Socialists?

MILLEN: He seemed to be above that. The Socialists didn't bother him. I remember once I convinced him to give a party on Labor Day for the Executive Council of the Norwegian Trade Union Confederation, which had about 55 or 60 members. They met quarterly, and were to meet prior to Labor Day. I convinced him to throw a party. We got the invitations up, and we invited the wives although we knew that not many of them would be there. We sent out the invitations three weeks in advance, so they would get the invitations at their homes, because that gilt-edged invitation is good coffee time talk in these small towns up above the Arctic Circle. So then the only issue was that there was still one Communist member of the Executive Council. What were

we going to do with him? And I said, "Let's invite him. We'll get brownie points from the Norwegians and he won't come." And he didn't. It was a good party, and the Ambassador was quite happy about it.

It is the members of the Foreign Service who sometimes give you problems. The last day I was at the Embassy-The next day I was to pack up and the day after that sail-I was sitting behind a screen in an empty office and filling out some papers, and the personnel officer came in to interview a prospective Norwegian for a job. The whole thrust of the interview was to try to elicit whether that [applicant] was a member of the Labor Party, and it was quite clear that he wouldn't be hired [if he was]. You would think that by some process of osmosis people would become civilized. This [personnel officer] was displaying all the God-damned prejudices and nuttiness of big organizations. They left [the room] before I did, and they never knew that I was there. Later I said to the [personnel officer], "You know, if that guy were to repeat the questions from the interview you were giving him, we would be in real trouble around here. Our friendly relations with the Labor Party could break down on the issue of our trying to keep Labor Party people off our [Embassy] payroll."

Kienzle: What kind of position was he being recruited for?

MILLEN: Oh, I don't know. Just a routine job.

Kienzle: Was he to work for the Political Section?

MILLEN: No, no, no.

Shea: Was the ambassador aware of this?

MILLEN: No, these were individual employees responding to the unstated objectives of their bosses, which just goes to show you the pervasive atmosphere in institutional life.

Shea: How was the Political Counselor?

MILLEN: We had two while I was there. Stratton Anderson was in charge of the two person Political Section. By way of comparison the Political Research Office-the Agency-had four people. The Deputy Chief of Mission was Hayden Raynor for most of the period. Hayden Raynor was a nice fellow. He was not a world-breaker or anything like that but competent and truly cooperative after he took my measure.

Shea: Did he clear off on your dispatches?

MILLEN: I was in the Economic Section which was a friendlier place, where, for the most part, my supervisors were most helpful. The first thing I wrote at Embassy Oslo was slapped back at me. It was a report on the first strike in 25 years held by the Norwegian Labor Movement.

Kienzle: 25 years!

MILLEN: Well, at least since the prewar [period]. This was 1955, and I had not been in the country two months before the Transport Workers Union struck Esso. [Earlier] I spent two years of my life trying to organize an Esso refinery. [The Norwegian Transport Workers Union] had Esso organized to the point where Esso apologized to the union because it kept white collar workers on the payroll who were not striking.

Kienzle: Esso in general was anti-union.

MILLEN: Well, in the United States Esso had company unions. Legally you can't say that they were company unions, but for all intents and purposes when I was working with them they were just that. So I wrote the report, and I had among other things a report written by the Employers Association that I was working from, but I didn't include it in my report. I just extracted parts. I couldn't read even "beginning" Norwegian at that time, so anything I got had to be translated. I took a few hundred words out of that report and included them here and there in the report that I wrote, and it came back to me. The Political Counselor had given it to the Deputy Chief of Mission saying, "He is biased." There upon I had the whole fucking report translated, and I just said, "In regard to the report to which somebody took exception, I submit this internal report from the Employers Association." That was the last I ever heard of it. My report went to wherever it was supposed to go, and nobody ever raised the question of biased reporting again.

Kienzle: In what sense did they think you were biased?

MILLEN: Well, I guess they thought that I was too pro-union and anti-Esso.

Shea: Was the Norwegian labor movement highly organized?

MILLEN: Oh, yes. It was not as high as Sweden, but it was over 50 percent.

Shea: Do you recall the Secretary General of the Norwegian [Trade Union Federation].

MILLEN: Konrad Nordahl. He was a very interesting personality. He was a former member, I think, of the Communist Party, and the Norwegian Party had been a member of the Second and One-Half International for a short period. He couldn't get a passport for the United States, because of that connection. In any event the only way he could come to the United States was on diplomatic credentials as a delegate to the United Nations and so forth. [After] I had been there a couple of years, I went to him and said, "Konrad, would you like to go to the United States legally sometime." He said, "I'd love it." He didn't say it [quite] that way because his mode of expression was more formal. So I started the process of getting an exception to the Attorney General's list or whatever it was called.

Shea: The Attorney General's waiver list.

MILLEN: Of course about half way through this [waiver process for Nordahl] I got request after request for more information about him from different [people] and I thought to myself, "Boy, if this doesn't go through, I'm in real trouble." Anyway it took about three months and finally [the waiver was granted]. I went over that afternoon and said to Konrad, "You are as pure as driven

snow, Konrad." He grinned. He was a tough guy. I think he was one of the strongest men I have ever met. His demeanor frightened people.

Kienzle: Physically or emotionally?

MILLEN: In his capacity to control events. He ruled that place with an iron hand. Some of his assistant officers, or assistant "foreman" as they are called, used to come to me to take messages to him, because they would say, "He gets along with you, and you are a foreigner, and he won't get mad, so would you sound him out about this? And if he doesn't react too badly, I'll take it back on my own."

Kienzle: What were his policy priorities that they felt so hesitant to deal with him on directly?

MILLEN: First of all, he was a tightwad; he didn't want any money spent; secondly, on matters of collective bargaining and legislative strategy. I don't know what it is like now, but [at that time] they had an extremely centralized bargaining process. [The leaders] had to approve every contract, and they could end a strike or they could start a strike. They could call the whole movement out if they wanted to. If the metal workers had a strike, after two weeks strike support funds automatically came from Denmark and Sweden, as part of any agreement [made back] in the 1910's. So it was very highly centralized.

Shea: Were there many figures from the resistance movement in the trade movement?

MILLEN: Yes, I knew quite a few of them. There was an amusing story. I don't know whether you want it on tape or not

Kienzle: Go right ahead.

MILLEN: It has nothing to do with what we are taking about, but one of my friends at 31 [years of age] was Assistant Director of the Bank of Norway-a former German prisoner. The problem was that he tried to run the country from that position. He tried to tell the Finance Minister [what to do] and so forth, so he finally got bounced out but later became what they called a junior cabinet minister. He was minister for prices and wages. He was an entertaining fellow. His brother was my closest friend, but I knew Gunnar pretty well.

After I had been overseas someplace, I went back [to Norway] for a visit. I used to try to take two or three days vacation in Norway on the way home. This was one of those occasions and a friend of mine set up a dinner for me at his house. His wife was part Indonesian [and served] good Indonesian food. Gunnar was among the guests and along about 10 o'clock, he said he had a cabinet meeting in the morning and he should be alert and so forth. I knew that Gunnar was not going to his hotel room, so we made a date for lunch the next day at one o'clock. Well, Gunnar was late; Norwegians are never late. So he came in about 15 minutes late and apologized. He said, "I had to return to my room and change my linen." That's the way he talked. So he said, "You know I sat in the back of the room with my dark beard and so forth."

I said, "Gunnar, I didn't know that the Norwegian Cabinet gave any concern about the sinful activities of its members." He said, "Normally they don't, but the entire quota for the entire cabinet is being used up by the Minister of Agriculture at this time." So then I said, "Oh, that explains the hurried visit of the Minister of Agriculture a couple months ago to the United States over for a weekend." He came because his girlfriend was a U.N. delegate. Gunnar didn't know that, so we traded [information].

Kienzle: Did you have much contact with the government ministers for labor or other related subjects?

MILLEN: Interestingly enough, the Labor Minister in Norway doesn't have a great deal to do with labor. [The ministry] used to be the Ministry for Communal Affairs and Labor. They ran a job placement [service] and things like that, but the ministry does not have much to do with labor policy. The Ministry of Commerce had more to do with labor, because so much of the Norwegian economy was based on exports, and it was always interested in getting wage settlements. And the trade unions were too. This is the interesting thing. When they went into negotiations this was one thing that they can do with the centralized bargaining. They could get a reading from the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Commerce, and set their demands in such a way that they would have the least impact on wage costs and so forth. But every once in a while they would find themselves in a position where they would have to say, "Look, we've had too long a stand still. We can't claim to be representative of our members if we don't get something out of these negotiations."

I was once asked to sit in on the meeting between the Labor Party and the trade unions on hammering out wage policy, and I turned it down. I said, "I don't think that I want to be seen there. I don't think you want me to be seen there." Then whoever asked me said, "Yes, maybe you're right."

Kienzle: Did they have a purpose in inviting you?

MILLEN: No, they just said, "Well, we want you to know what goes on around here."

Kienzle: It would be interesting to be a mouse in such a meeting.

MILLEN: Yes. Well, Murray Weisz once visited Norway at the time of the Labor Party convention. And there was a surprise. [Usually] these things are so well organized in Norway that you don't get surprises, but some guy proposed a resolution from the floor [restricting] the use of nuclear weapons, which was [quickly] passed. I couldn't believe my ears. I thought, "Well, my Norwegian isn't that good. I missed it. No, nothing of that significance could go through that quickly without any discussion." Murray and I immediately went over to the Labor Party office after that meeting and listened as top party and government officials discussed [the resolution]. "How the hell are we going to handle this thing." It was for real. One person suggested, "Well, why don't we just leave it out of the minutes?"

Kienzle: Was this a "nuclear free zone" type of proposal?

MILLEN: Yes. And of course that idea was batted down right away. "You can't do that. First of all, we would get caught. . . ." For a minute almost a hysteria took over. It was a bizarre moment.

But on another occasion, a trade union convention, I helped to write the resolution on [use of] nuclear power. I sat with the party guy who was responsible for preparing it, and we worked it out. It was more his than mine, but I contributed to it.

Kienzle: Was it for the use of nuclear power?

MILLEN: Well, yes. It was [really for] the status quo. There was opposition from the floor on it, but Konrad Nordahl was tough in the way he handled this issue. At that very moment when he was on the floor making it clear that there was going to be no deviation from the established policy, my chair broke and I collapsed. I was so embarrassed, and of course I had in the back of my mind, "Jesus Christ, I helped to write this thing." [Laughter]

Shea: What about foreign visitors? Especially for the AFL-CIO?

MILLEN: We had our fair share. Irving [Brown from the AFL-CIO office in Paris] came there. I was fairly helpful to him on that occasion. I think he began to realize for the first time that I was a human being.

Kienzle: Did he work at all through you on this visit?

MILLEN: No, except at the edges.

Kienzle: Or did he arrange everything privately or through the trade unions?

MILLEN: Yes. He would set it up and I would find out through the papers when he was coming. He wasn't very active up in Norway. After all, there wasn't much for him to do. The Norwegian Labor Party had reduced the Communist vote from ten percent to less than three percent. The Labor Party [controlled] all of the presses for the Communist Party press and so forth through loans. They provided it unpaid for years because they thought it would be bad public relations if they yanked the presses away from the Communist Party. People might think that the Labor Party was undemocratic. So there was not a great deal for Irving to do about Norway itself. He had his own contacts built up over the years.

Now, I remember once the cooperative movement people came to me and said that they were in a bind because a delegate from the Soviet Union and a delegate from China were coming to their convention, and they had no indication that anybody was coming from the United States. So I wired, and we got somebody there. I had hardly sent the wire sent and I received an answer that a guy out of Minnesota would be there.

Kienzle: Did you advise Washington that they might be Communist delegations there?

MILLEN: I told them. I said that the cooperative movement [had invited the Soviet and Chinese delegates] and I assume that the [Central Intelligence] Agency sent this guy [from Minnesota].

He was an outstanding fellow. That was kind of a harmless little thing; in fact it was handy at that time.

You know, we talk about the [Central Intelligence] Agency. Sometimes they do a lot of things that we are grateful for.

Shea: The Norwegians were always very active in the international trade secretariats.

MILLEN: Oh, yes. Historically this was a longstanding thing. Before the Second World War they did it too. Once I stopped in Belgium just before an ICFTU [International Confederation of Free Trade Unions] convention, and of course I went to see the American delegation at the Metropol [Hotel] and a couple of other snazzy hotels. I went to visit the Norwegian delegation, and there was Konrad Nordahl and his boys in hotel which at best was second class.

Kienzle: I don't think Irving [Brown] went second class anywhere!

MILLEN: Oh, no, not Irving. But I'm talking about all the officers and top staff of the Norwegian labor movement. Nordahl really was parsimonious.

Kienzle: How long were you in Norway?

MILLEN: I was there just about three and a half years. I left in June 1958 because I was selected that year to go to university [training]. Incidentally after Ambassador Strong left, we had Frances. . ., who was the first woman ambassador that we ever had. She went to Switzerland. A very fine person. It bothers me not to remember her last name. She was excellent and most supportive of my efforts.

Shea: She went to Oslo?

MILLEN: Yes, she went to Oslo after Ambassador Strong, and was there a couple of years. She was very supportive of me personally. In fact, she called me in when she arrived and said, "I did something that I very seldom do, but I have to let you know that I did it." She said, "When Hayden, the Deputy Chief of Mission, was in Paris, as I was preparing to go home and come back here, he told me that he thought you were being moved out, and he thought that you should stay. So I asked the Department to retain you here. I did it without asking you and I apologize for that." She was always very helpful to me.

Kienzle: So she extended you from a two year to a three year tour?

MILLEN: Well, as it turned out, she didn't want me to go when I left at the end of three years or three and a half years. I saw this opportunity [for university study]. She said, "But I'll request that it be picked up when you do leave here." I said, "You know this bureaucracy. You can never count on them to come through, and I now have the opportunity." She was a little pissed off but she got over it. Well, I used to drop in and see her at the United Nations occasionally, and she would take me to lunch. She was a first class woman. I later saw her in Ceylon when I was doing

research for the Brookings [Institution]. Did you know that I spent a year or so at Bookings? But first, a final note on Norway.

Before dropping the subject of Norway, it seems appropriate to mention the covert side. This is particularly true in view of what I said about the Italian situation. In Norway many covert operations were started as a result of war time activities. The stories told me by the head of the maritime union and his activities in American ports were fascinating. Others had ties to the OSS. In 1956 or 1957 one friend told me Foreign Minister Lange warned people to be careful in their dealings with American friends-that times were changing. By the mid-1950s the situation was contained and the Communists have been driven out of most spots of importance. They had one member on the L.O. [Norwegian Trade Union Federation] National Council (Reprentskap) and a few members in the Parliament, the Storting, and some influence in specific local unions. The Labor Party occasionally found their votes on domestic issues in the Parliament useful and on foreign policy matters made use of non-Labor Party support. My main role was acting as a sounding board on issues, foreign and domestic.

I was responsive within the Embassy to a fairly large number of requests for specific information directed to me through the DCM which obviously originated from the Agency. I had a social relationship with one couple which was open and above board. He pumped me for information as I did him, e.g. his fake association with the Newspaper Guild provided by the union. But there was nothing untoward, except on one occasion, when he used as an explanation for breaking security on a matter most embarrassing to me by the use of the standard ploy, "We were working for a higher goal." On another occasion he jarred me with his threat to the future career of one of our political officers, because, as he so delicately phrased it, ". . . we keep the books." Stories of this nature were rife throughout the Department of State, but I had reason to recall it ten years later when somewhat the same language was directed at me via a third party close to the Agency.

From the above, it is clear that the situation in Norway was a far cry from that of Italy. A cadre of strong, disciplined leaders from the unions and the Norwegian Labor Party did most of the job on their own. Many had had a dalliance with the Communists and rejected it as being a variance with the Norwegian "will for democracy," which suffused most of the Norwegian political left. This made for an ideal situation for me as Labor Attaché. I had immediate access wherever I went. The General Secretary of the Labor Party once, when asked if he wanted to talk to our Ambassador on some subject, replied, "When I want to speak to your ambassador, you will represent me. The Russian Ambassador once complained to the General Secretary about the attention I received and a lesser level embassy type spoke to reporters about how frequently my name and picture appeared in the Labor Party and trade union press. One can understand why I found this assignment so rewarding.

MICHAEL NEWLIN
Junior Officer Rotation
Oslo (1954-1958)

Ambassador Michael Newlin was born in North Carolina in 1929. He received both his bachelor's degree and master's degree from Harvard University in 1949 and 1951, respectively. His career has included positions in Frankfurt, Oslo, Paris, Brussels, Leopoldville/Kinshasa, Jerusalem, Vienna, and an ambassadorship to Algeria. Ambassador Newlin was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1997.

Q: After two years in Frankfurt, you moved to Oslo, Norway.

NEWLIN: Yes. That was normal in those days. They would send you out for two years to your initial post, and then after two years you were transferred. So then out of the blue in December of '54, I got orders saying I was posted to Norway.

Q: What were your duties at the Embassy in Oslo?

NEWLIN: As a Junior Officer, I was initially assigned to the Consular Section. For the first period I was there I did non-immigrant work. Then I was rotated to the Administrative Section. Then, finally, I did political work which was what I wanted to do all along.

Q: What were the duties of a political officer in Oslo in the mid-1950s?

NEWLIN: You did political reporting. My job was editing the WEEKA [e.g., the weekly political summary]. We had to go through newspapers, we met with people in Parliament. There was quite a bit of activity going on. Norway was a NATO member and its neighbor, Sweden, was not. Norway had a common border with the Soviet Union, which made it quite interesting.

Q: Did we have any bilateral problems which you could call problems with Norway?

NEWLIN: Fortunately, during the time I was there, we did not. Right after I left, we had the U-2 incident, where in Francis Gary Powers' baggage was found a map showing that he had planned to land in Norway. This caused quite a flap. Of course, at Bodö, in north Norway, there was a long airstrip at the end of which was the entrance to an underground hanger. One of the intriguing what ifs, is what would have happened if Eisenhower had made the trip to Moscow that was canceled because of the U-2 incident.

Q: Did you find the Norwegian political parties were open with you; willing to talk?

NEWLIN: Yes. The problem we had to deal with was in Norway's history. The Labor Party was in power--it seemed like forever at that time--and there was an undercurrent of pacificism, of neutralism there. If it weren't for Halvard Lange, the Foreign Minister, we would have had more difficulty than we did. There was a realization of a genuine threat from the Soviet Union.

Q: Were you there at the time the King died?

NEWLIN: Yes. We were there. There was a great international gathering. At the luncheon at the palace afterwards, our Ambassador, Corrin Strong, was very upset because he was seated next to

the Chinese Ambassador [from Taiwan]. He later protested but royal protocol insisted that the seating was dictated by precedence.

Q: What was the effect of the Hungarian crisis in 1956?

NEWLIN: There was a very, very strong reaction. There were demonstrations. And that was unheard of because Norwegians, normally, at that time, did not involve themselves in demonstrations. There was a big, big demonstration in the center of town. They marched down a street and then demonstrated at night, vociferously, in front of the Russian embassy.

Q: And what about the tripartite attack on Egypt in '56? Did that cause strains with the British, French and Israelis?

NEWLIN: Norway condemned the attack on Egypt. I think it was a matter of principle. They admired what we did in the Security Council.

Q: In spite of their historic closeness with the British?

NEWLIN: Yes. In spite of that. They felt that the attack was unjustified and it was unprovoked.

Q: I gather you left with a warm feeling for the Norwegians then--the people?

NEWLIN: Yes. They're wonderful. They're wonderful people. I got married during that time in the States that last year. I was there three years. That last year Milena and I had a wonderful time.

Ambassador Newlin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: How would you describe Norway when you got there in '55?

NEWLIN: Well like most places Stu, Norway in '55 was entirely different from the Norway of today. They had not discovered oil then. Of course, they had been occupied by the Germans during the war. The cost of living was very high. You felt that you were in sort of a Nordic backwater. Certainly Oslo in those days couldn't in any sense compare with either Stockholm or Copenhagen.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you got there?

NEWLIN: When I got there it was L. Corrin Strong. His fortune came from the Eastman Kodak Company. He was a contributor to the Eisenhower campaigns, so he was a political appointee. A nicer, more congenial person you never met. His wife, Alice Strong, was also very nice. Mrs. Strong was very nice to my wife and told her, "Never change."

Q: Was there much flow back and forth between non-immigrant visas and immigrant visas to the United States, between Norway and the States?

NEWLIN: Yes I would say that we had a fairly brisk business.

Q: When you were there, were there still issues dealing with I guess you would call it the Quislings in Norway anyway, the collaborators and all that. Was that much of an issue when you were there?

NEWLIN: That was not. You are entirely right. There were Quislings. There were Nazi sympathizers, people that worked with the Germans during the occupation But that had apparently been pretty well dealt with. The chief, Quisling himself I think was hanged right after the war. We never had any problems of that kind.

Q: What about were there any issues when you were the political officer or even before, between the United States and Norway?

NEWLIN: No, I can't say that there were. Norway has a socialist government. I think there was an undercurrent of sort of pacifism. The Norwegians are the ones that decide the Nobel Peace Prize while the Swedes decide the others. I was the protocol officer among other things. So one of my duties was towards the end of the Eisenhower administration to take a nomination, I think it was from the Secretary of Agriculture over to the Nobel office proposing Eisenhower for the Nobel Peace Prize. Of course he didn't get it. I remember that was my introduction to one thing. They were glad to be out from under Nazi occupation but I don't that there was much of a sense that they were threatened by the cold war. But then before I got there, apparently the CIA or the State Department informed the Norwegians that they had information that the Soviet Union intended to invade the northern part where the common border is near the north cape. That then caused the Norwegians, their foreign minister Halvard Lange got them to join NATO. So they had joined NATO by the time I was there. But I remember while I was there, at an annual meeting of the labor party, all of a sudden without any warning, a group tabled a motion that nuclear weapons would not be allowed in Norway. This took the leadership completely by surprise, but they didn't want to have a floor fight on the thing even though they didn't agree with it. So the thing passed. You will recall that Gary Powers, whenever his documents were seized.

Q: We are talking about the U-2 incident.

NEWLIN: We are talking about the U-2 incident now. Gary Powers was shot down during the Eisenhower administration over Siberia and we put out a series of official statements saying this was a weather plane that got lost from Peshawar, Pakistan. Khrushchev went on TV and said it was an American spy plane, and we have the pilot Gary Powers, alive and kicking. I had to go up north while I was there to deal with some shipwrecked American seamen. One of the places where the plane stopped was Bodö. It is right on the Arctic Circle. I noticed that it was a very mountainous area. There was an airfield with an extraordinarily long runway. A fighter jet, it wasn't a U-2, but a fighter jet landed. Then the mountain opened and it went into an underground hangar. I thought well, that is very sophisticated. So I was not surprised whenever it came out

that Gary Powers when captured had on his map that he was supposed to land in Bodö. Going forward a little bit, by then our Ambassador was Frances Willis, one of the first female ambassadors in the foreign service. So she was called to the foreign ministry to receive an official protest. Frances Willis said Oslo was the last place where she expected to be called on the carpet. The protest, of course, was for public consumption – the government and the military knew all about U-2 missions.

Q: Was there ever the feeling that you were picking up of the Norwegians that they felt under any particular threat because of their small size but they did have a border with the Soviet Union?

NEWLIN: They do have a border with the Soviet Union. It doesn't amount, Kirkenes in the north, there is this short border in Lapland. Norwegians were the object of Soviet Propaganda, because I remember every now and then it struck me, the Soviets must have supplied some of the newspapers with maps of Oslo showing circles what a nuclear strike on Oslo would do. The idea being to make the people frightened to be in NATO. On the other hand when it was 1956, when the Soviets invaded Hungary, there was a genuine reaction on the part of the citizens of Oslo against the Russians for this. There was actually a big demonstration down town. They marched to the Hungarian embassy and demonstrated in front of it. This was unheard of, anything like this happening in Norway.

Funnily enough, on the political side, the Chinese presented us with certain protocol problems. Strong had been there long enough that he became dean of the diplomatic corps. One of the things the dean had to do was occasionally to invite all of the heads of diplomatic missions to his residence, and they would discuss any problems. Well the Chinese communists were recognized and had an ambassador there. So we approached the State Department and said he has got to have this meeting. We see no option other than to invite the Chinese to come to the American ambassador's residence, because this is the way it is done here.. So the state department agonized over this and came back and said, "Well your role is to promote good relations with the Norwegians. Therefore for protocol reasons, you should invite them. So one of my duties, among the duties of a young foreign service officer, was to stand at the door, and when the Chinese ambassador and his entourage, I did not shake hands with them. I simply said welcome and then ushered them in. While I was there, King Haakon died. He was their first modern king. They were in the process of trying to create a Norwegian identity. He was born, I think in Windsor Castle. His name had originally been Charles, but he changed it to a Norwegian Haakon. During the war he and his family took refuge in the UK. When he died, the new king had to have a great big state funeral. After the funeral, the palace of course gave a luncheon for all of the dignitaries that were there. It turned out that Corrin Strong was seated next to the Chinese ambassador, and he took this very badly. He protested to the foreign ministry. "You know very well we don't have relations etc., etc." The Norwegians said, "According to protocol, Corrin was the dean, the Chinese was next and so on." That was royal protocol.

Q: They had a socialist government there, the Eisenhower administration which was moderately right wing Republican. Was there a certain disconnect? Were we comfortable with what was happening there?

NEWLIN: I mean during the cold war, where ever you were, the cold war was dominating. I think we were comfortable with the socialist government, and the socialist government was glad to have the United States and the protection NATO provided.

Q: Did you have any feel, granted your topic should come from Germany, with the German-Norwegian connection? This wasn't that long after the war.

NEWLIN: I must say this sounds incredible, but the Germans who had been there as soldiers would come back to Norway on vacation. They would go to the houses that they had occupied. The owners had been kicked out. They would knock on the door and say, "I was a German soldier and I lived here during the war." Well this was not received very well.

Q: By any chance, I don't know if he was the mayor of Berlin. Did Willy Brandt go back there at all? Because I think during World War I wasn't he raised, didn't he go over to Norway?

NEWLIN: I think he had a Norwegian background of some kind, but he did not come there while I was there.

Q: Did the Soviet embassy play much of a role as far as you were concerned?

NEWLIN: No, I don't remember that the Soviets did play very much of a role. They kept sort of low key as far as I could tell.

Q: The Soviets at that time, were they sending submarines up the fjords, and was this a problem?

NEWLIN: Not that I am aware of. I don't remember any problems of that kind.

Q: How about did you get any feel for the relationship between Norway and Sweden either through the embassy...

NEWLIN: Oh well as usual you know, they had been under the Swedes for a long time. At one time they were under the Swedes or they were under the Danes. The problems were in the summertime, the Swedes would all drive over to see the fjords and the Norwegians resented the fact that they would bring all of their food and beverages with them. They called them the cheap Swedish tourists. There was not any love lost there.

Q: What was the political situation. I mean you were the political officer. What kind of stuff were you doing?

NEWLIN: Well we were reporting on their various activities. There was sort of a peace movement. Oh who was the famous man that was an organist he was in Africa?

Q: Albert Schweitzer.

NEWLIN: Albert Schweitzer had sort of a peace movement that came along. People were supposed to sign up for his program. It was sort of a peace at any price kind of thing. One thing

we had to do was report as to how many Norwegians were supporting Schweitzer and his peace program. Linus Pauling, the famous American Nobel prize winner and also a pacifist came to Norway. One thing I had to do was go listen to his lecture. He was a very congenial person. He wasn't sort of a raging person at all. These were the two pacifist movements which did have a certain amount of public support.

Q: How was life in Norway? How did you and your wife enjoy it?

NEWLIN: We enjoyed it mainly because of the Norwegians, because they were so friendly. I can say that it was a very nice post.

Q: Did you get to travel around much?

NEWLIN: We did. We took a boat and went all the way up to the north cape, all the way up to Kirkiness and saw the whole thing. We would then go up to the fjord country. We tried to learn to ski. I was not a very good skier. We had good Norwegian friends. We really enjoyed the spectacular country.

FISHER HOWE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Oslo (1957-1962)

Mr. Howe was born and raised in Illinois, graduated from Harvard University, and after several years in private business, joined the Office of Strategic Services in London, England. He served with the OSS throughout World War II, after which he joined the State Department serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in The Hague and Oslo. His several assignments in Washington included service as Executive Secretary of the Department of State. Mr. Howe was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: Today is the 13th of October 1999, after a long hiatus. Fisher, you were in Norway from when to when?

HOWE: I was in Norway, I believe, from '56 for five years... Well '57 to '62, I believe.

Q: All right. Well let's talk about Norway. In the first place, how did you get the job?

HOWE: As executive secretary I was... I had taken the Foreign Service exams before the war. The Foreign Service had said I had to go over to a junior position in Guayaquil while I was already over in London doing a first class job in the embassy. I couldn't do it so I had to bail out of the Foreign Service. When I came back and the war ended I went into the State Department as a special assistant to Clayton. I went from there to other jobs. By that time I was executive secretary of State Department and was Wristonized. That meant we came in laterally, to class

two level. Loy Henderson was the deputy secretary for administration. He wanted me to go to be DCM in Norway. Frances Willis...

Q: *Oh. yes.*

HOWE: ...was the ambassador. Frances was the senior female career Foreign Service officer. She was, I think, the first ambassador from the career service.

Q: *I think she was. Let's talk about a number of things here on Norway. First place, could you describe Frances Willis, how she operated, your impressions of her?*

HOWE: Frances, bless her memory, was a very competent, intelligent lady who was however a detailist if I ever saw one. She knew where every bit of dust was in the embassy and went through every detail of every communication. I suppose it was very good for me to come under that as my first post in the Foreign Service. She delegated very little although she was hauled back to the general assembly to be a liaison with other countries and so I had long periods of being chargé. Frances delegated to my wife all of the uxorial responsibilities, calling on other ambassador's wives, calling on all the Foreign Service people. They had some magnificent house that goes with the DCM, a very modern house, on the outskirts of Norway.

Well Frances, it's worth an anecdotal.

Q: *Yes.*

HOWE: We had a new embassy constructed while we were there and it was done by Saarinen. He came over for the dedication. There was a debate between him and the ambassador as to where the seal was going to be put. He had designed a Viking traditional building and he wanted a Viking shield to be placed in stone out in front of the building.

Frances said, "The regulations say the shield of the United States will be affixed to the U.S. embassy." She wanted it slapped on the wall.

Saarinen said that was aesthetically outrageous. The ambassador won, as she would. Saarinen's conception of where the seal would be put aesthetically had to go by the board. Actually, he was boasting. When he came over, I talked to him at great lengths. He was boasting then that he had done the Dulles Airport design and he was boasting that he had redesigned the whole way you move people in an airport. I have since then cursed him with those busses at Dulles whereas other modern embassies have good underground trains. But John explained in detail how he was going to get people bussed around. That's something apart from the embassy, however.

Q: *What were relations like, when you arrived in '57, with Norway?*

HOWE: Extremely good. They were a very loyal NATO member. Harvard Longor was the foreign minister and he was very much relied on by the United States, because of his sense of... He was a very sensible guy and very stalwart. The major problem we had between us was our maritime policy. Our subsidy of U.S. shipping and the disallowance of all ships and indeed

foreign airlines to travel between two cities in the U.S. That for a ship owning, ship...the largest fleet of commercial ships, especially tankers, in the world, I think Liberia may have more tonnage registered...

Q: But the Norwegian one was the real fleet as opposed to flagging convenience.

HOWE: Absolutely. So I was constantly talking to the groups about that aspect. I ran into, while I was chargé one time, there was a serious problem. My recollection was it dealt with Berlin and I wanted to encourage the Norwegians to come out a little more forcefully on behalf of their NATO position.

Q: That's the time of the Berlin Wall towards the end then?

HOWE: I suspect it was. If the Berlin Wall was in '50 before...

Q: Well it was during the Kennedy time. That would be '61, 62.

HOWE: No. This must have been before. It must have been some other issue. I got permission from the State Department to go into Harvard Longer and press the Norwegians. He was very upset that we had done it, that I had done it. Who needs enemies when we have friends like this, pressing him? He felt that we should have understood that from a political standpoint he was not able to go further out on a limb than they were. That was the only difficulty I ever had. We always had the friendliest relations with them.

Q: How did one at that time deal with the Norwegian government? Was it going to...They had a parliamentary government.

HOWE: Very definitely and very labor strong government. The conservatives, which were in a minority there, and the farm party, but the labor party was indeed very strong. The prime minister was frequently in the embassy as a friend. We saw people in the government and all the other state's government and they were always extremely friendly and were very proud and pleased of their close relationship with the U.S. government. It was not a difficult time from that standpoint.

Q: Were you able to get any high level visits to Norway?

HOWE: Oh. Very frequently. There was a NATO meeting that went on while we were there. Dean Rusk. Would he have been...?

Q: Yes. Sure in '61 he became secretary of state.

HOWE: All right. He came over. There was a NATO meeting there. Justice Goldberg, Arthur Goldberg came over. We had lots and lots of visitors. I was trying to think of anybody else of particular governmental power. The NATO meeting was certainly on. We also were very close to the Nobel Committee so the Nobel Peace award is given in Norway. The other awards are given in Sweden. I remember particularly Albert John Lutuli, from a little enclave in South Africa, got

it and he was very dependent on the U.S. so we shepherded him around. I don't think there was a South African ambassador. We traveled a great deal with the embassy plane and all over Norway. We up to the top of Norway, up to Lapland, for an Easter holiday and we were told that we could have got to the Mediterranean in shorter distance than going to the top of the ice cold...

Q: Yes. You really could.

HOWE: I was the first American diplomat, I think, that had ever been to Spitzbergen and Svalbard and I went up there for a visit. I did it, among other things, to get hibernated with only Norwegians to learn the language better. It turned out that everybody there spoke wonderful English and were just delighted to see an American so I didn't speak any Norwegian at all. What else?

Q: Any problems with the Soviets at that time?

HOWE: Well, there was a U-2 plane that was shot down and it was headed for a Norwegian Base, Bodo. I heard about it - again I think I was chargé - by a newspaper correspondent who called me and asked me what I knew about the plane that had been shot down that was headed for Norway. I had to quickly find out what it all was. The Norwegians did not, I think, suffer from having been a host for the receiving end of the plane, which didn't arrive. But I'm sure there had been others before it that had. There is a Soviet border. We went up into Lapland and you could look across and see Soviet sentries walking up and down. But it was always peaceful. There was never trouble. Soviet ships would come along the Norwegian coast and the Norwegians didn't like that and complained and did what they could to stop them.

Q: What about Sweden? How were relations with Sweden from your perspective?

HOWE: They were very good. We visited there - the embassy there - and we kept in close touch. The Norwegians and the Swedes have mutual disdain but if anybody outside cracks down on one or the other, they immediately band together in Nordic brotherhood. Same with the Danes. The Swedes were of course more formal than the Norwegians. The Norwegians were very simple in a non-derogatory sense and very family oriented.

Q: What sort of reflections were you getting in NATO with Germany now part of NATO? Were the Norwegians still unhappy about Germany or...?

HOWE: We went from Norway to the Netherlands and we found a great deal more dislike of Germans and hate than in the Netherlands than we did in Norway. But the whole German occupation of Norway was a lingering distasteful episode in their background and they were ashamed of Quisling. I'm trying to think of his name - the first UN secretary general. Trygve Lie. He came back to Norway and was there as a province governor.

We used to see a great deal of him. He was a very, very fine and distinguished fellow but he was out. He had been prime minister. He had been foreign minister. He had been secretary general. But he went under the title of Mr. Lie. He was a very, very straightforward guy. I can't think that there were any official dealings that we had with him.

Another official dealing we had, which was a secret one, the now generally known international navigational device known as LORAN (LONg RANge Navigation). A key and then secret spot was on the island of Mann in the middle of the Atlantic or Northern Atlantic. We negotiated with the Norwegians for having a LORAN station put up there. That was one of the major kinds of events that went on in the first year or two that I was there.

Q: Were there any fishing problems?

HOWE: I don't think there were any fishing problems that arose on the fishing, either with us or the Russians. The Russians have since I think caused trouble in disturbing or exploiting the codfish along the coast. I don't remember there being any kind of difficulty at the time we were there.

Q: When Frances Willis left, another ambassador came in?

HOWE: Yes. An absolutely wonderful fellow. Cliff Wharton, who was the senior African American in the Foreign Service. He and his wife Lanni became fast friends and we were able to help him. Cliff had poor eyes. He was very loyal to his staff and particularly I felt to me and our family. He consulted with me on absolutely everything he did. Even though he was himself a senior Foreign Service officer. I felt I had a much more compatible relationship with him than with Frances Willis, although Frances and I always got on very well.

Q: How did the Kennedy administration go over, when it first came in, in Norway?

HOWE: I can remember one thing. The Nixon-Kennedy debates were put on to tape and sent around to all the embassies. We had receptions in the basement auditorium of the embassy to which we invited senior officials. I can remember the prime minister of labor came and he was very friendly, a very good man but he listened to those debates and he said, "We have just witnessed here the total change of politics the world over." He recognized that when you have the debate on TV and be able to tape them and distribute them worldwide, that it was going to change the nature of who was going to be successful and how they were going to run their campaign.

Rusk, Kennedy's secretary of state, came once on the NATO meeting. I don't think of anything other than the friendly sort of support. We were in the Netherlands at the time of the Kennedy assassination.

Q: What about Norwegian Americans in Minnesota and other places?

HOWE: Very close. The Norwegian American society in Norway and the many Norwegian societies in the U.S. were a signal part of the whole government's attitude towards the U.S. They would send people over to talk in the big centers in the northwest and in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Brooklyn and some in... No Michigan is more Dutch. Nordics in Minnesota and Wisconsin and the state of Washington and Oregon and Seattle.

Public relations in the USIA had a lot of interest in promoting the close relations of that sort.

Q: *In '62 you transferred to the Netherlands?*

HOWE: In '62 we went directly.

HARRY A. CAHILL
Vice Consul
Oslo (1959-1961)

Harry A. Cahill was born in New York, New York and raised in New England. He received a bachelor's degree in English from Manhattan College and served in the U.S. Army. His Foreign Service career included positions in India, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia, Uruguay, Colombia, and Bombay. Mr. Cahill was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 29, 1993.

Q: *And then?*

CAHILL: Orders to Oslo, Norway as vice consul. Eastern Europe still ranked tops on my wish list, but Norway was very attractive in its own right and it was on the Soviet border. In January, 1959, we set forth. There were four in the family now: Nicky, now my wife, and our little sons, Alan of 16 months and Daniel of 6 weeks. It was a memorable trip. On an icy, snowswept day we arrived at Idlewild Airport, later to be called Kennedy. Nicky went to the nursery to change Dan's diapers and found four policemen in the room. Police and stern-faced men emerged everywhere. We soon found out why. Mikoyan, the durable Soviet power-broker, was to be our fellow passenger on the SAS flight. He had just completed a goodwill tour, the first post-war mission of its kind.

The plane was a DC-7G, the last of the big prop-driven aircraft, a model so revved up and complicated to get the last ounce of mileage from its engines. It was small in comparison to today's intercontinental planes. The airline was SAS. We four Cahills sat in the forward seats, two on each side of the aisle. Little Alan sat with me. We flew far out over the Atlantic with January snow squalls beating on the plane in the very dark night. I recall Nicky saying "Look at the lovely colors brightening the sky." Then we realized it was an engine on fire. Then another engine failed. We four were calmly led back into the sealed-off compartment where Mikoyan and six assistants sat. Supposedly we had a better chance of survival in the rear. Mikoyan made a fuss over the children, wanting to hold them and help in any way he could. Otherwise he was quiet, reflective. The others kept talking about the political ramifications of the flight. We were told that the plane would land in Argentina, Newfoundland, a US Navy base in Canada. The Soviets argued among themselves as to who had jurisdiction there. Mikoyan ignored the others, but when we landed between solid rows of white-hatted American sailors on the snow-covered landing strip he said with authority: "Amerikanski shlapke". American hats. This settled the long debate. I saw how unwise is babble and how wise is one who speaks after learning the facts. Mikoyan was a genuine leader-survivor. He was also fast on his feet. The commander of the base

paced up in his limousine, and Mikoyan, Nicky and baby Danny went off arm-in-arm into the Arctic night. The rest of us passengers stumbled into buses. Our family was reunited at the base's BOQ-hotel. I think the commander thought Nicky was Mikoyan's daughter and Danny his grandson. Each of us was assigned a spacious room, but we of course huddled in one, glad to be alive and together. Baby Danny slept in a chest drawer. The next morning brought rare sunshine. We saw how badly burned the plane was. A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation team interviewed us and Mikoyan. Another SAS plane flew in to take us on to Copenhagen, and there we and the Soviets said goodbye. The news media was waiting for us at Oslo Airport. Already the local press carried headlines about us. One displayed a large photo of Alan captioned "Mikoyan's little friend". Thus began our first posting early in 1959.

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

CAHILL: Frances Willis, our first woman career ambassador. I served as her protocol officer in addition to my regular consular duties. Protocol is challenging when the chief of mission is a single woman, when there is a monarchy with a widower king, when the government is socialist-labor, and when there is abundant aquavit and cold weather.

Q: How did Ambassador Willis operate? This is a question I ask about our ambassadors just to get the impressions of those who work with them.

CAHILL: She moved with strength. I think she liked to see herself as fair and tough. She slipped on the ice on the way to a speaking event in western Norway and broke her leg, refused to go for medical treatment until the speech was done. She bravely stood at the podium and went through the whole program without flinching. She was slightly crippled from this for the rest of her life. In all her work she was firm and decisive, showing to the world that being a woman was not a disadvantage in any way.

Q: I assume it was a pretty small embassy, wasn't it?

CAHILL: In those days embassies were far larger than now. The sections had generous staffing, perhaps too generous.

Q: Did you get any feel for what were our major concerns with Norway at that time?

CAHILL: Norway was the northern flank of NATO bordering on the USSR. There was a strong labor and neutralist peace movement. We wanted to keep this a strong bulwark against all that Communism represented. There were economic concerns such as fishing rights and expanded trade. We cared about how Norway would align itself in Europe's emerging regional blocs. My own consular work was very varied. I also did protocol and helped out in the economic section. The visa load was high as each seaman was issued two visas, C and D. Being a sailor in Norway was a rite of passage. Most young men went to sea for awhile and then took up other careers. We had many visiting American tourists. One of my first tasks was to assist the survivors of a terrible mountain hotel fire. Many fine Norwegians ranging from UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie to Miss Universe runner-up patiently underwent my visa interviews. There were political refugees from the Soviet bloc and a varied assortment of characters in jail who falsely claimed to

be Americans. My favorite was an Indonesian who had memorized dialogues from American cowboy movies to prove he was a native son.

Q: What was the feeling that you got from within the embassy about how they felt about the Socialist government? Were they making noises about neutrality, etc.?

CAHILL: Some journalists argued fervently for neutrality and not being vassals of America. The Ambassador sometimes showed irritation. On a reception line she would deliberately turn her back on a particularly offensive pundit. As protocol officer standing first in line, I would be left dangling with unwanted guests. The Norwegians were an upright, noble people. They were reserved. In my years there I never heard someone singing or whistling a song outside the confines of a home or theater. I regretted that. They still hated the Germans for being Teutonic betrayers. This strong feeling flared when cars with German license plates were pelted with rocks on country roads. One American opera singer told me sadly how she rented a car in Hamburg and then traveled to Norway to the home of her beloved Grieg. All through the western fjord country her car was stoned. The commercial-econ side of my work revealed how arrogant and ineffective was the usual American business approach in those days. I can still see the moneyed American sales exec renting a hotel ballroom, slapping guests on the back, and then leaving town the next morn. He did not make sales, not discuss his products, not gain for his company. In contrast, the European businessmen, especially the Germans, were serious, humble and knowledgeable, carefully expanding contacts and convincingly presenting their wares.

Q: I saw the same thing as economic-commercial officer in the Persian Gulf. Americans would come in to overnight on Friday, which in a Muslim country is not the best time. And then they would take off. Their home office would be some place like Zurich and they would come back every six months or so and achieve nothing, whereas the English and the Germans would come and spend some time. Well, Harry, you left Norway when, in 1961 or so?

CAHILL: Yes, in April, 1961. I might mention that I would interrupt the time in Norway by doing annual reserve duty as an Army officer in Heidelberg. A welcome break. NATO would stage exciting exercises. Alarms would sound and commanders would yell: "The whole Soviet army is coming down the road!" So we would retreat from Germany to France. On paper we always won. When not in field exercises the Army's higher staff echelons seemed frustrated in not having enough to do. Writing first paragraphs of think papers over and over again to kill a day.

Spring came in mid-April in Norway. Our driveway was frozen during eight months of the year. No car could climb and we pulled up a sled with our supplies on it. April thaws brought a true thrill. In April, 1961, my orders said political officer in Ottawa. Heartbreak. I wanted Eastern Europe, not Canada.

ROBERT B. MORLEY
Rotation Officer
Oslo (1963-1965)

Robert B. Morley was born in Massachusetts in 1935. He received his BA from Central College, Iowa. After joining the State Department in 1962, he served in Norway, Barbados, Warsaw, Caracas, and Quito. Mr. Morley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: You were in Oslo from when to when?

MORLEY: I was in Oslo as a junior officer from March of 1963 to the spring of '65.

Q: What was the situation in Norway when you got there in '63?

MORLEY: Norway was a poor country, especially by Western European standards. North Sea oil had not yet been discovered. They were the poorest of the four major Scandinavian countries. Norway and Norwegians made their living; earned their foreign exchange for the most part from shipping, whaling and fisheries. Although Norway was a member of NATO, the government would not permit foreign troops to be stationed permanently on their soil. They allowed foreign troops to participate in exercises in Norway, and NATO's Northern Command Headquarters was located just outside Oslo.

The Labor government was dominant. It had a socialist outlook. It had been dominant in Norwegian politics since about 1945 when Norway was liberated. Toward the end of my tour there, a conservative coalition came to power, but I was not there long enough to be able to see the results of that. This development shocked many Norwegians.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you were there?

MORLEY: Clifford Wharton was the ambassador when I arrived. After about one year, he left and was replaced by Margaret Joy Tibbetts.

Q: How did Ambassador Tibbetts operate from your perspective?

MORLEY: I liked her. I remember some of the old timers, people who had been in the Foreign Service for some time, expressing concern about the appointment of a woman ambassador. I recall long discussions among section heads and so on about how to deal with this phenomenon. They didn't know what to call her: "Madame Ambassador," "Miss Ambassador," or perhaps something else. I remember suggesting in a staff meeting that they asked her for her preference when she arrived.

The staff was also concerned about how she would be received by the Norwegian authorities. But there was no problem on that score.

She was, I think, a good influence on me. She encouraged me to do creative work. She encouraged me to pursue a career in the economic area, which I did. I spent a good deal of my career doing that. I liked her and she did a good job.

Q: How about Clifford Wharton?

MORLEY: Clifford Wharton was a different kind of person altogether. He was one of a very few black ambassadors in our service. From my perspective, he was aloof and distant. I rarely had any contact with him. I remember one time when Carolyn and I were making the required formal call on the Ambassador at his residence. I was surprised to find he wasn't even there when we arrived. We were warned that that might happen, and that if it did we should leave our cards and go home. We did that.

He was a man who, I thought, jumped to conclusions fairly quickly and didn't consult much with his staff. He tended to make up his mind and tell people how to play things instead of getting input before he made his decision.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

MORLEY: I was in what they called the rotational program. In theory, I was supposed to spend six months in each of the major Embassy sections: Administrative, Political, Economic and Consular. In reality, I spent every summer doing visa work. During my two years in Oslo, I spent about six weeks in political work, about six weeks in administrative work, and about a year in economic work. I spent most of my time in the economic sector working for John Mellor and Douglas Ballantine, the two economic counselors.

One of the high points of my Norwegian experience was the birth of my second son, David, in June of 1964.

Q: What was your impression of the Norwegian government?

MORLEY: In terms of my personal relations with them?

Q: Also their competence.

MORLEY: I thought that they were reasonably competent, but inwardly oriented. For the most part, the Norwegian government delivered the services to its people that it should and was obligated to. It was efficient. It was relatively honest. It was in need of a change when I was there. The Labor Party had run Norwegian politics almost continuously since World War II except for a brief period when there was a coalition. They were getting complacent. At the end of my tour there, a conservative coalition replaced Labor.

In terms of foreign affairs, the GON was friendly with the United States and most European countries. The major exception was Germany. Norway had been occupied by the German Army during World War II, and many Norwegians had served time in detention camps. This was bound to affect relations with Germany. Norwegian relations with the Soviet Union were cool but correct. Norway was the only NATO country that had a common border with the USSR. The government had two conflicting objectives, both of which served the national interest. The first was membership in NATO, the second was to avoid offending Moscow.

In terms of my personal access, as a junior officer, I didn't have a lot. When I did make a call, someone more senior than I usually accompanied me. But the Norwegians I dealt with were reasonably forthcoming and helpful. I did some pieces on Norwegian foreign trade and the shipping industry and make contacts on an ad hoc basis to do that. But my work in the Economic Section focused on special projects like a shipping report or a survey of the whaling industry, rather than something that needed continuing attention, like Norway's economic ties to the Common Market. In the Political Section, I worked on bio files. In the Consular Section, I did NIVs. While in Admin, I was a gofer in the General Services Office.

Q: Returning to an earlier comment you made, what was your impression of how the Norwegians viewed the Soviets at that time?

MORLEY: The Norwegians did not want to irritate the Soviets. They were very nervous about official Americans going up to North Cape where the Norwegians had a common border with the then Soviet Union. In fact, we had to get special permission to go into that area, and casual visits were discouraged. Norway was a member of NATO, but did not permit any foreign troops stationed permanently on their soil, as I said earlier. Although they did permit exercises with foreign troops on Norwegian soil, they were reluctant to allow such exercises in the border area. So, their relations with the then Soviet Union would probably be best characterized as a very cautious approach. They wanted to be a part of NATO. They felt it would be in their national interests to be a part of NATO. At the same time, they did not want to do anything to irritate or alienate the Soviets.

In that sense, all four of the Scandinavian countries had a very different approach to NATO and to the Soviet Union. Finland, of course, was very heavily influenced by Moscow. Sweden was determinedly neutral. Norway and Denmark were NATO members.

Q: From your perspective, what was the Norwegian relationship with Sweden?

MORLEY: Officially, the relationship was a very good one. But many Norwegians seemed to dislike Sweden. Sweden at that time was a richer country than Norway, so envy may have been a factor in popular attitudes toward Sweden. There were also historical reasons underlying Norwegian attitudes. At various times, engaged in military conflict. At one time, Norway had been a part of Sweden.

Many Norwegians generally did not like Swedes and said so plainly. Newspapers often displayed anti-Sweden prejudices in their reporting. But officially, the relations were good. Officially, they cooperated. For example, if Sweden had an embassy in Kuala Lumpur, they would handle Norwegian consular affairs and make representations on behalf of Norwegian commercial enterprises and so on. The Norwegians would do that in some other country.

Q: How were Americans received?

MORLEY: Very well. The Norwegians liked the United States and Americans. Historically, we've had no major disputes with the Norwegians. Almost every Norwegian family at the time had relatives who were resident in the United States. Norwegians used to tell me that there were

more Norwegians living in the United States than in Norway. So, there were a lot of historical and cultural ties to the United States and there was very little on the downside.

On an official level, Norway was a member of NATO. They cooperated in the Marshall Plan. They were generally supportive of U.S. policy, with one major exception. The major irritant in our relationship while I was there was Vietnam. By late 1964, early 1965, Vietnam was heating up and it became a political issue in Norway.

Q: And there were demonstrations in front of the U.S. embassy and critical articles in the press about our policy in Vietnam?

MORLEY: Yes. I recall having to pass through lines of demonstrators to enter the Embassy. The Norwegians would politely move aside to allow me to pass, and then close ranks again to resume their activities. But Vietnam was an irritant that didn't really affect our overall relationship - not while I was there.

Q: You touched on Germany earlier. What was the feeling towards Germany that you got? Norway had been occupied by German forces during the war.

MORLEY: Many Norwegians made plain their hostility toward Germany. This affected bilateral relations between the two countries. I recall hearing that most senior members of the Norwegian government had spent time in German detention camps during the war. And since the war had ended less than twenty years earlier, memories were fresh. I had a friend who was stationed in Bonn. He was in my A100 class, and came up to visit us. He was driving a German car with German license plates. They were diplomatic plates, but they were German license plates. He had a lot of trouble. People would make snide remarks at him. He was refused accommodations in hotels because he was living in Bonn and traveling in a car with German license plates. So, there was a lot of resentment, primarily growing out of the war experience.

Having said that, I recall Norway's strongest commercial ties were with what was then the Federal Republic of Germany. They imported consumer goods, machinery and a wide range of raw and semi-finished goods from Germany. They had a major trade deficit with Germany. Their second trading partner was the UK and the third was the United States. Major exports included ships, shipping services, and fish. At the time, they claimed they had the second largest merchant fleet in the world. Norwegians would often tell me that one in every three Norwegian youths went to sea sometime during their lives.

Q: What was the social life there?

MORLEY: Not very good. The Norwegians officially were very accommodating, very polite. We would be invited to official events. But I never got to know the people in our neighborhood, for example. Many Norwegians living in Oslo came from small towns in the interior. Their attitude was similar to that of maybe a small New England town. If you had just arrived, you weren't part of the neighborhood.

I recall one incident where a neighbor woman locked herself out of her house. She asked me to use a ladder to enter the house via a second story window and unlock the door for her. I did so. Subsequently, when I saw her on the street, she barely acknowledged me. We were certainly never invited to her home or that of any other family in the neighborhood.

I had good official contacts and friendly contacts within the Norwegian government to the extent that I needed them. They were forthcoming. But most of our social contacts were in other embassies and with Americans. There was a large NATO element outside of town at Kolsas, which was staffed mostly by military staff people from various NATO countries (no combat troops). We got to know some people out there as well.

GEORGE A. ANDERSON
Labor Officer
Oslo (1963-1968)

Mr. Anderson was born in Nebraska and raised in Iowa. He was educated at the University of Missouri and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He also pursued studies in Brussels, Belgium. Entering the Foreign Service in 1957 Mr. Anderson had several assignments at the State Department in Washington, DC. His foreign posts include Copenhagen, Oslo, Saigon, Brussels and Vienna. During his career, Mr. Anderson became an expert in labor affairs, serving as Labor Officer and Labor Attaché at a number of these posts. He was interviewed by Don Kienzle in 1996.

Q: This was in 1964, roughly?

ANDERSON: That would have been - when was it that de Gaulle pulled the rug from under the British, I don't remember? So, anyway, I went there after I finished that program. Which was rather interesting. We met a lot of interesting people in the labor movement in the U.S. Did a lot of study of labor economics, traveled a bit around the U.S. I was assigned first to Wellington, as Labor Officer, and then suddenly they decided they would close out the labor slot there, and there was one available in Oslo, so I went back to Scandinavia, to Oslo, where I was Labor Officer.

Q: In the training period, who were the people involved at that point?

ANDERSON: Murray Weisz was one of the big ones, Ester Peterson was in the Labor Department then, and her husband was in charge of the program.

Q: Oscar, Oscar Peterson?

ANDERSON: Right. They were the two people who really directed the whole thing.

Q: Was Phillip Kaiser involved at that point? Ben Stephansky?

ANDERSON: Yes, they were there. Both of those were there, I believe, at that time. I thought it was a very good program.

Q: Did you write your thesis under one particular person?

ANDERSON: I don't remember who... I'm pretty sure it was Murray. The title of it was, "No Europe tomorrow: the prospects for and the probable political consequences of free movement of workers across Western Europe." It's in the archives some place.

Q: Sounds intriguing. Shall we turn to your assignment in Oslo? So tell us what happened?

ANDERSON: Everybody said, "You are going back to a country where nothing ever happens." I got on a boat with my five children, at that time family was rounded out. Two days out of New York the Labor government fell. So it was a very exciting period to be in Norway.

Q: Big change. And this would have been 1964 roughly?

ANDERSON: 1963, it would have been the fall of 1963. I went over in August or something like that. John Piercy had been the Labor Attaché before, and he was still there a day or two after I got there which was a little unusual. He took me around to meet some people and took off, and then I was Labor Attaché there for the full four years. First two years I was in the Political section, I believe, and then I moved to the Economic section because they were having an internal hassle between the Economic Counselor and the Political Counselor, as to what the proper role of the Labor Attaché was. By the time I arrived there, they had already moved the position from the Political section to the Economic section. This is an old game in the Foreign Service for labor attachés, as to which one you belong to. But, John Piercy apparently had given a pretty hard time to Niels Olsen, who was the Political Counselor, and Niels was out to clear the decks, and get the labor attaché out of his ear.

Q: Where these personal issues or where these substantive issues?

ANDERSON: I think it was personal, because John Piercy was, maybe labor attachés in general, are not necessarily the most diplomatic types of people, not the most tactful. I was always rather forthright and direct, especially if talking to American colleagues. He knew so much more about what was going on in the country, because he was very close to all the labor people and the Norwegian labor leaders were kind of very Americanofiles and a lot of the top ones spoke English. Nordall, he escaped during the war, he was the head of the Labor Office, had spent war years in England and he spoke English fluently. Haakon Lie was Secretary General of the Labor Party, had worked with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during the war and was married to a fellow Iowan of mine, Minnie Lie. She had been born and raised in Tama, Iowa. Gerhardsen, of course, was the Prime Minister, and they were the triumvirate that ran Norway at that time. And they had run it since the war. I think that what had already happened, I was told when I walked into the door, that it had been decided that I would have no contact with Labor Party people.

Q: With Labor Party people? Like Haakon Lie..?

ANDERSON: Like Haakon Lie, or the ministers and people like that. That was the Political section's job, and I told the Ambassador, who was Wharton at that time, that I would not stay under those circumstances, I would ask for a transfer. Because there was no way that I could be a Labor Attaché in a country like Norway where I would be attending all rows of congresses and labor unions and Party things, and not see Party people. That I had to have complete access to the entire Labor Party structure or, otherwise, I wouldn't stay.

Q: The Party and labor movement are so closely tied, how do you separate them out, people had hats in both camps?

ANDERSON: Yes. You can't separate them out. But Niels had this idea that, boy, I was going to be really cut out, and they were going to take that over. Well, the first thing was that I could speak Danish fluently, Norwegian is not that far off. And John Piercy had developed a program, and had just really started it, of what they called Labor Seminars, going to the boonies of Norway, with a United States Information Service (USIS) person, Arnie Christiansen, who was his local staff assistant and himself, and maybe somebody else from the embassy. The trade unions and Labor Party would put on these seminars on American labor organization and trade union movement and social welfare legislation politics, and so on. One of those was scheduled shortly after I arrived. First thing that happened, of course, that dear old Lyndon Johnson came as Vice-President and since I had handled two of his other visits, I was put on that project for my first "hooray", and Sam Gammon was his Foreign Affairs Assistant, and Sam told me that he was recommending me to become the Foreign Affairs Assistant to the Vice-President. But I'd handled the Vice-President's two other trips to Europe, and I told him I did not want it. Two months later, or three, he was the President of the U.S.

Q: You want to give us reasons why you didn't want it - were they personal or the work style of the Vice-President?

ANDERSON: One of the most despicable human beings that was ever my fortune or misfortune to work with and around, he was a terrible man to work with. I had extremely little respect for him as a human being. He was an excellent politician, and could really do things, and got a lot of things done, not necessarily all for the good in my estimation. But to deal with him on a trip was a real trying experience. The very first one that he went to, which was to Hammarskjöld's funeral, Dean Rusk had to call the President on the white phone and go over and see him, in order to get the Vice-President to do what he was expected to do.

I was trying to put together the trip. That was a state funeral, and there were banquets and calls on the king and on family, and there was a lot of protocol requirements. I kept calling Colonel Jackson, I think was his military aid, telling him all those things that I needed to do, and I couldn't get a decision out of him, and then at the 11th hour I got a call from him, and he said, "Look, the Vice-President has decided what he will do. He is going to land at the airport there, and he wants a hotel room to freshen up, and he will go to the service in the cathedral, and then he wishes to leave immediately for London, where he will spend six days." I went and told Luke this, and Luke Battle, who was the Executive Secretary, he took me into the Secretary's office

and said, "Tell the Secretary what you just learned from Colonel Jackson." And he said, "Well, I'll take care of that", and while we stood there he called Kennedy and asked for an appointment immediately, and he went over. Half an hour later I had a call from Jackson, saying, "OK, tell us what you want us to do."

That gives you a kind of a flavor of what you got into. He was very testy and difficult to work with, overbearing, crude from a social point of view, did not listen to advice, and was just very, very difficult to work with. And he embarrassed a lot of people, both in the Berlin visit, where he embarrassed his host and the embassies and the missions, and he did the same in Norway.

Q: Did you accompany him on both?

ANDERSON: I did not have to accompany him, but I had to arrange it, somebody else went with him, it was a good thing.

Q: He must have liked your work to have offered you that job?

ANDERSON: It was one of those things. My view was that whether I liked personally the president or not, they were always my president, and I always tried to do the very best job that I could for any one of them, because I have very strong views about the professionalism of the Foreign Service. Policy is laid out for us, and we give advice, but once the policy is made you carry it out. I did my darndest even when I disagreed with the policy, as I disagreed with the multi-lateral force. We were sitting at the embassy and my very first embassy discussion, after he became President. He was pushing this multi-lateral force thing, "Yes we were going to be on it," and just from my experience at the Executive Secretariat, I smelled an equivocation, and the ambassador asked me what I thought, and I said - well this must have been some time later, because I'm sure it was Margaret Joy Tibbetts - so it was about a year later or so that this happened, and I said, "In spite of the president's statement which he'd just made and said we were going to be in it, my view is very shortly it will be off the table." And indeed within two or three months it was gone.

Q: This was the one with the surface fleet without any submarine capability?

ANDERSON: Yes. And I felt that was not going to work. You get that kind of a feeling when you work in the Secretariat, for pronouncements, when they are kind of a cover for some other kind of thinking, or there is some equivocation in there. You get a kind of an ear, nose for it. I know the ambassador was rather surprised. She said, "I remember that three months ago you said that this was the death of it when in fact it wasn't, it was the opposite of what it had looked like." But meanwhile we had gone out laying down the law to our Norwegian counterparts, telling that this multi-lateral force was everything, but in spite of the push and everything, and then he just washed it out. It was that kind of a situation.

When I found myself arriving in Oslo, I spent a lot of the time on this vice-presidential visit. Then Piercy had started these and laid on program of Labor Seminars and I took those up. The very first one was at Kárášjohka. I went up there and stopped at Karasjok, went over to Vadsø which, I think, is the capital in Finnmark, they were having the Finnish County Parliament

meeting and I went there and met all those people, and I was sitting there one night and had dinner with them. They had two communist councilmen on the County Council, and I was sitting there when Kennedy was killed, and the word came over, the communists made a great to do about, "It was in Dallas, you see, and all those right-wingers down there had killed the President." And the next morning it came out that, indeed, it had been someone who had been in the Soviet Union. It kind of changed the tone of things.

Up there you just didn't travel easily. The ships traveled up and down the coast irregularly, and everybody had been gathered and then they canceled all the fares. We were locked up together in a hotel for two or three days anyway, waiting for transportation, so we just had informal talks, instead of a formal labor seminar. But that started it, and I held labor seminars in every country in Norway and finally moved on, and I held a series in my home, of abbreviated ones, which we held in my dining room where I could seat 22 people, at tables of four. The ambassador participated in those, and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) participated in some, but those were individual ones for leadership of each trade union. But of course I could speak Norwegian.

Q: And the Political Counselor?

ANDERSON: The Political Counselor participated in a couple later on, but usually it was Gopland who was a USIS type, who spoke Norwegian fluently, he was from North Dakota from a Norwegian family. I spoke Norwegian, and my assistant, of course, was Norwegian, so we were the ones who carried the ball. And then we would fit in one other person who sometimes, usually, who did speak the language or Swedish or Danish, you could use those two and make them understood, or otherwise Arnie would translate for them. They were, I think, a very, very useful tool for getting across to the Norwegian trade union people what was really going on in the U.S. Because they were full of the misinformation that the communists put out at that time, that the old people were more or less put out on ice-flows over here like the Eskimos to die, and they had no idea of the kind of legislation that had come in in the '30s and had changed the social situation in the U.S. a great deal. But the biggest thing that this thing had provided was we never had enough money for representation, and this was a way in which I could tap USIS funds, because these cost thousands and thousands of dollars. The labor union paid the transportation and living costs, but just to get our group around, the transportation and so forth was a lot of money. I was able to spend several thousand dollars a year in representation to these people, that I would never have been able to otherwise.

Another thing I learned very quickly: I took the same house that Piercy had, which was a very, very large house and it was in a deplorable state. I made a deal with the landlord that I would redo the inside of it, I'd do the labor and he bought the material (except for a couple of things that I knew I couldn't do), and as I have always done when I went abroad and I always rent a place and make a deal with somebody, because I had a big family and not too much money to deal with, I would redecorate it myself. And because I redecorated everybody knew that I did this, which put me in a good stead with people in the labor movement, even though I lived in a rather ostentatious house, because I had five kids and you had to have a lot of room for that. I had one gentleman come to inspect the post, who told me that, kind of a play on that, that he certainly thought that hot dogs and beer was good enough for the labor movement. You know, "How do you entertain somebody in this house?"

So, fortunately, Conrad Nordall was retiring at that time. I had a dinner for him and leader of the Employers Federation, the ambassador was there, my wife was there, the inspector and his wife were there, and I had the big table pulled out, all the white linen, candles and the whole stuff, and the inspector was on my left and Mrs. Nordall was on my right, and she did not speak English, but her husband spoke English, and, of course, my wife was on the other end with him on the right, and I sat there and translated for him all night. Of course, very formal, the Norwegians. You had to welcome everyone to the table, no one touches their wine before you give the welcome to the table, and I gave the welcome to the table, both in Norwegian and English, mostly in English and then I translated partly for Mrs. Nordall and said some warm remarks so that she would be included, then he got up and gave me the thank you, and then I got up and presented him with a gift which was a pewter cup, with all the names of five labor attachés who had been in Norway with him, as a gift and remembering. It is in a museum over there now, I believe, but it listed the five attachés from the war and it ended with me.

The inspector admitted that he was rather impressed with the way all these labor people used all the forks and knives. European labor people live very well. Their congresses are held in the very best hotels and the food is fabulous, they are used to having the best of everything. So hot dogs and beer did not quite match up to the needs of these people. One of the interesting things that I found was, after I got the house fixed up, I held a reception and I invited about 180 labor people to this reception. I had the usual kind of spread with turkey and ham and roast beef, but in the corner, as I was dealing with Scandinavians, I had cheeses and fish, and herring, all the kinds of things they really like, and the people started coming to this thing. Eighty percent of them arrived without their wives, but they never told me they were arriving without them, they just accepted the invitation. My wife had lived with me in Denmark too, when I was a Fulbright student, and she spoke Danish; she could make it well enough that she could understand Norwegian too. So after the first meeting, of course, she greeted these people in Danish, they talked Norwegian, and she talked Danish, and they understood each other well enough to get along, and after that all of the women always came to all of the functions at the house. Because the word went out that she could speak the language too, and that was extremely useful. Whenever we went out to trade union congresses she went on her own, and she could always be with the ladies on their own and tell them about family affairs and all the things that they were interested in.

Q: Did she enjoy that function?

ANDERSON: Yes, she did. I ordered 2,500 invitations, printed cards when we went to Norway. And I used them only for foreigners, not ever for Americans; they always got just a slip of paper because that was cheaper, or a phone call. I used all of those before I left Norway four years later. I always made special ones for receptions. Those were just for dinners. I had a dinner at least every week that I was in Norway, for these people, and sometimes two times. That did not include the 22 Labor Attaché labor seminars that I conducted in the house either, for all of the trade unions and for the party, I ran a lot of people and got a lot of mileage out of that house. They were very comfortable in it because Pierce had been there. They were little embarrassed when I first invited them, because when they walked first through the door and they couldn't believe it, as it was in rather a dilapidated condition, and Pierce had six kids, and I arrived with my five. But it was a very, very exciting time because, although the labor government was

reconstituted in the next election and the Labor Party lost, so we had the change of government. And Vietnam was really heating up. And Pauling came there to receive his Nobel Prize. Norwegian Stortinget always has a kind of penchant for getting himself involved in other people's affairs. And Linus Pauling came for his Peace Prize because he had already won his Prize for Chemistry. He was there. I was there also when Martin Luther King, Jr. came to get his Peace Prize sometime later. From a political point of view, everything in Europe was transitioning a bit. The Labor Party, of course, in Norway led Norway into the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but they could not convince them. Then they went of course with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA.) Gerhardsen could not speak English, the Prime Minister, and he was always a communist at heart, died-in-the-woods socialist, whereas Nordall and Haakon Lie were very much social democrats and this split between Nordall and Lie came to a head. I attended the congress in which Gerhardsen was bowing out finally as leader of the party, and he really tied into Haakon Lie in a very bitter exchange. Of course, I was also there for the retirement for Nordall as L.O. Chief and Aspenmen came into that, and we had a lot of student demonstrations, but we never had big demonstrations in Norway like we had in other European countries or in Denmark.

Q: Were you there for Haakon Lie's retirement as well, when he hit the mandatory?

ANDERSON: No, he was still at the Secretariatship of the Party when I left there. I left there in 1967, went to Vietnam, came back when the Labor Party came back into power. There were 18 ministers, and 13 of them I had sent to the U.S. on the Very Important Person (VIP) grants.

Q: What year did they come back then?

ANDERSON: They must have come back - it must have been in the middle '70s.

Q: And during your entire stay it was a non-labor government?

ANDERSON: No, it was a labor government and two years of non-labor government. So it was a very exciting time to be there from a political point of view. And the old guard from World War II period, that were shaped by their World War II experiences was leaving, and the new guard was coming. We had a lot of hassle in the embassy, because the Labor Party usually got 50% of the vote and the opposition was divided. On the VIP grants I always insisted that Labor should get more than 50%, because, in the first place, they don't have many opportunities to go as others, for money and other reasons. And they represent 50% of the body politic. So it is very important that we get these young people to the U.S. I went very openly to Nordall and said, "You know we have these VIP grants. I don't know this country, I don't know who the comers are like you do. Obviously we'd been great friends, and we worked together all these years, who do you think will benefit most from this." I did the same with Lie. I said, "Let me know, I can't guarantee which ones will be chosen, but at least I want to know that I have good people." He put me on the people nobody had ever heard of. And I was fighting for these people and getting them sent to the U.S., and fortunately Margaret Joy Tibbetts was the Ambassador and we worked very well together.

Q: You have met her earlier?

ANDERSON: No, I have never met her, but she was the best ambassador that I ever worked for from a professional point of view. She was an outstanding ambassador. She agreed with this idea that we should send these people, and she let me pick these people. I mean, some guy from Lans Organisation showing up from Finnmark, no one knew who he was, well, later on he became a had of the Education Department, then he became oil minister, all of these other positions. I got all these people sent to the U.S. Like I said, out of 18, 13 of them I had sent to the U.S. It was just the right time that I had up there. I think that was probably the high point in terms of effectiveness of a labor attaché.

Q: Were there labor issues there that come to mind?

ANDERSON: Well, it's very difficult to translate from European experiences to American experiences as far as labor is concerned. We are structured so totally differently, I think the extent to which they had their ... labor market system was what they called comprehensive negotiations involving all of the trade unions and the government and the employers.

Q: The umbrella agreement they had reached?

ANDERSON: Yes, the umbrella agreements that they have reached. These were unusual. I don't know of any other countries that we're having that kind of umbrella agreement, and what they called... It's a comprehensive look in terms of price movements in terms of what the governments were trying to accomplish and what the employers were trying to accomplish and what labor wanted. These came together in a unified umbrella agreement at the top, and then everything else flowed from that. This was of great interest to the Labor Department in the U.S. and to the trade unions here. It depended a lot, though, on the personalities of the people at the top. It involved less substance than appeared on the surface. I mean it looked like something, but it was basically a way for labor as government and trade unions vis-a-vis the employers to reach a settlement because Norway depended so heavily on foreign trade. At that time its foreign exchange was entirely dependent on its Merchant Marine, the full amount of their foreign exchange practically. A disruptive labor market situation, fights for better labor unions would have been deleterious to general economics situation in the country, and they knew it. I mean, they were still rationing automobiles in 1963, and it was the poorest of all of the Scandinavian countries in those days, no oil having been yet discovered. Now they are sitting in the lap of luxury and wondering what they were going to do with all of their money, but in those days it was an extremely poor country. Only four percent of the land was tillable area, something like 20-30% of it was forest, and the rest of it is rock. Except for their ability to, and cleverness in working in the shipping industry, they would have been a third-world nation.

Q: They have a fairly small population?

ANDERSON: Yes, I think they had 4.7 or 4.8 million, or something like that, am I right, or am I wrong? I think they are 3.9, and Denmark was about 4.9, somewhere around there. If you can imagine, though, in those days, in Denmark I distributed, I think, over 3,000 social security checks a month, and there were more than that in Norway on a smaller population base. I think there were 4,500 when I arrived there.

Q: These were people who had emigrated to the U.S.?

ANDERSON: These were people who had emigrated to the U.S., worked in the U.S., retired, and then moved back to Norway. A fellow from my mother's school in Nebraska married a Norwegian girl in the U.S. and they emigrated back over there, good friends of mine, lived down in Telemark. The links between Norway and the U.S. were very close and hospitable. You never had this kind of tension you did with the Swedes. Danes were by far too sophisticated people to let their armor proper be pricked by what went on in Vietnam or a place like that. Whereas Swedes were kind of always, ever since Gunnar Myrdal they have known what's good for the U.S. better than anyone in the U.S. ever knew.

Norway was quite a different breed of people. You don't realize that until -- I grew up in a Norwegian town, of Swedish family, I knew a lot of Danes, next town was Danish, we never really thought there was that much difference. But we always had separate churches, Swedish Lutheran, Norwegian Lutheran, Danish Lutheran. Except if you were Norwegian, you had three Norwegian Lutheran churches. That was because the Swedes and Danes, we always said if you get two Norwegians together you get three opinions. And you don't realize the basis for that. But if you read "The Bets Invitation" by Isak Dinesen, Karen Blixen, it revolves around this fragmentation of the churches in Norway. It's not unusual even in the U.S., and I've lived in these towns, the town I was born in, we had three Norwegian Lutheran churches, they don't get along with each other. But you realize this because a Norwegian when he goes on vacation, he straps on his skis and his backpack and he takes off into woods by himself. They live an isolated existence, or they did in the past, on the farms or out in the woods. They are very individualistic. And each one goes their own way. The Danes are the other way around. Their idea of having fun is to get all together on a bus or plane and fly off to Mallorca with all their friends. And the Swedes do that to a certain extent too. You understand once you've lived amongst them, that these subtle differences are what draws the line between them today, and keeps them three countries. Because they are psychologically quite different people to deal with.

Q: In terms of the labor market negotiations, didn't they all sort of accept the legitimacy and the social partners in a way that in the U.S. would be impossible?

ANDERSON: Yes, they did. The harmony within the labor markets there was unbelievable. They had a certain number of strikes and so forth, but they would never amount to anything. In a sense they were a little bit like Japanese, that sense of solidarity with the country and the country's interests. My own experience in the U.S., my father's labor union was that the people came out from Chicago and that trade union compared to the UAW (International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America) which was big in Ford, Dodge, where there were a number of factories, they really went completely independent of each other, and without much consideration of what the impact of their wage raises and negotiations were on other people. I mean, "Fine, we get three dollars, you get 20 cents, too bad." You didn't get that in Scandinavia at all. The solidarity of the trade union movement and of the employers and of the people as a nation was so strong that this made that kind of a thing possible. They are all Norwegians after all.

Ethnicity plays a role in American trade union politics. Especially the way my dad's trade union was. If you went to New Jersey, for example, where they put out their literature in 14 languages. You don't have to do that in Denmark or Norway, they are all Norwegians or they are all Swedes or they are all Danes, they have a kind of agreed world-view and country-view, and I've watched ethnic politics in American trade unions, that still plays a role. That played a role in European-wide situation because they still don't see eye to eye, especially when you get down in the south, where they had old communist unions in France and Italy, and so forth. But in Scandinavia there was always that unity of purpose. The kind of the welfare states and everything that developed; I came to the conclusion very quickly that when you norm population of one of the Scandinavian countries, 90% of the people are on the norm. If you try to norm the U.S. population, 85% are off the norm, and you have to shoe-horn everybody in, so if you put in a program at the federal level in the U.S. you are going to have to worry about all these divergences that exist within the U.S. in terms of our economy, the way we look at things, price levels, wage levels, all of these things play a role. Whereas in Denmark it's homogeneous.

Q: Or in Norway. If the head of the LO and head of the employers' federation sat down for dinner, had a handshake at the end, it's as good as an agreement?

ANDERSON: I don't think it was ever appreciated, even at the top of the labor movement in the U.S., when they went to Scandinavia to look at things. I used to see pretty regularly Victor Reuther, and Walter Reuther came to Scandinavia, and I used to laughingly tell them they came to do their dance around the black stone of Mecca, which was the Scandinavian welfare state. But the hard-nosed attitudes with which they administrated in those days their welfare programs were in stark contrast to what was done in the U.S. For example, if you were unemployed, and your unemployment funds were all run by the individual unions in Norway, in the winter time, if you were unemployed and you went down, you had to take any job that you were physically capable of handling, at the going wage for that job.

Q: Not a job of your skill level only?

ANDERSON: No. So practically the only people to go down... You didn't find the metal workers going down and getting laid off, because they might end up scooping snow for the city because that was available at that time, and they wouldn't do that. Of course, the white collar went on the dole at all, they just wouldn't do it. It was just not done. Their social attitudes are quite different. Scandinavia was very interesting, but they got into trouble with it. Although they administered their programs with a rather hard-nosed administration, they gradually loosened up their policy, such as we have uncertain welfare programs in the U.S. until the extent that they got themselves in a hole and they could no longer do it any more. Well, Norway now of course has the money and they don't know what to do with it, budget deficits, now they got all that oil money. But Denmark and Sweden never had that, and Sweden has been in very serious difficulties. I know I visited my relatives there. I have a 42nd cousin living in southern Sweden; they were really on their uppers for the last five or six years. Most of them worked for Volvo, Volvo closed their plants here and there. They were the only employers in towns of 10 or 20,000 people, there was nowhere else to go, nothing else to do. Very serious economic straits.

But it was always interesting, and I first saw it in Denmark when I was there. Muller who was head of Maersk Line, who is the richest Dane of them all, he negotiated with the Danish government on what he would pay them in taxes, as an individual. For his company. Why not? He owned shipping, and they could all be under Liberian flag, so if they wanted to keep him under the Danish flag, so he went down and literally cut a deal. The Swedes have a system that Americans on the left and certainly the trade unions would really bridle at. They don't care who owns the business if they lived not too ostentatiously in the country, and they all have places abroad and most of them are in Florida in the winter, and places like that; I mean even Haakon Lie had a place in Florida, which I understand he has given up now. But it was alright, as long as they did that.

But all of the money that is made by those companies in Europe is taken in the trading operation outside the country. If you ship Volvos to the U.S., and you had set up a company here and you make all the money you want outside of Sweden, you bring it all back to Sweden without paying any taxes on it at all. Not like in the U.S. You can repatriate your earnings and you are not taxed on them. They have a corporate state almost, in terms of their large firms. Ericsson and those are like a world into themselves. And they make all their money in the trading situation. They make only enough to make them kind of look fairly good in Sweden, and they take all the rest of it outside of the country. That means that those companies prosper very much and Swedes in the past have done very, very well.

When you get into a world-wide free market situation a lot of this changes, and I think it's one of the big things we are going to face in the U.S. now. The idea that you will be able to tax General Motors differentially from what a Japanese firm, automobile manufacturer, a Swedish, a German manufacturer is taxed, is out of the question. Because all of the costs of those taxes are going to be reflected in the price someplace. The Swedes realized this a long time ago. They are much more sophisticated in terms of the world economic situation than we are.

Q: Repatriation of funds, etc.?

ANDERSON: Yes. Unfortunately, and all of those countries, even the socialist ones which was rather surprising and people could not understand it at the time, were all going over to value-added taxes. Because they recognized you really aren't taxing companies. And gave them the advantage that you can build the Ford in Europe and ship it to the U.S., and all the social costs that are represented in the 25% value-added tax are refunded. And so it arrives in the U.S. in effect literally shorn of the social costs of the production. Whereas we put most of our taxes direct in other taxes on companies and therefore when that cargoes abroad it has to carry all that with it, and the insurance and shipping are tagged on to it, and then they have to pay 25% on the whole thing. That makes a very uncompetitive situation for American industry. I don't know how well our politicians and our labor leaders understand that.

Q: There are number of economists that had advocated value-added tax, but it doesn't seem to have any popular support at this stage.

ANDERSON: There are a lot of problems with value-added tax. Every European country noticed, and when I was there, this is strange; they were always figuring out what the take was

going to be. And they always fell at least 20% short of what they anticipated. That is because so much goes over into the black economy. And in some states it went up to as high as... over 30% in Italy. That means that if you want to have a car painted, if you pay them cash, you pay 200 dollars equivalent; if you want a receipt, you pay 400 dollars. In all European countries.

Q: There is a sort of a black economy in action there.

ANDERSON: Yes, there is a black economy, and in service-industries in particular, in all of services. And then they exchange service. And how much of European economies aren't reflected in the data, you really don't know. That's a very sad situation. And in the U.S. we still have the naive view that you are taxing General Motors. You don't tax General Motors. Every cost of General Motors must be reflected in this product, or they won't produce it. And they can not sell it. But at some point, you can take it out when it goes out to the owner of capital in the dividend, or you can take it out of the worker as a consumer in his salary. But to think that you are going to get it from General Motors is ridiculous. You don't get it from General Motors. Very quickly the European social democratic parties and the trade unions came around to accepting the idea of value-added taxes. And they've all got them, and they have them all over the world. And we are the odd man out. But what that is doing, it is pushing a lot of American manufacturing out of this country.

Q: One question on Norway before we go to your next assignment. In terms of the welfare system, did you find that the work ethic was solid with the older generation but with the younger generation perhaps not as solid?

ANDERSON: No, there was not a great deal of difference, I don't think. Like I said, they can blame a bad personal economic situation on some external circumstance because they are all Norwegians together, and therefore they really look to themselves as being responsible to get the education. They didn't blame somebody else for their poor economic circumstance, if they had such an individual circumstance. Obviously, people were becoming more and more wealthy at the time when I lived there. When I was a student, I knew a lot of people in trade unions because my wife taught English for trade unions in Denmark; that was another "in" I had with the trade unions when I arrived there... I've lost my train of thought.

Q: Question of work ethic, whether it was eroded by the monetary incentives of the welfare system?

ANDERSON: No. Their whole system is administered close to the people. Most of the welfare is administered, in terms of unemployment, by the trade unions, so it was never a combination of the state, or just the state, as it is here. Everything here flows through the government. Even your unemployment insurance. Your unemployment insurance is run by the trade unions in Europe. They know whether you are a malingerer or not. And in Denmark, they had a law there; it is illegal to live off the proceeds of vice, so everybody must have a useful job, at some rate of pay. And none of these countries, incidentally, have minimum wages. And all of them have highly developed apprenticeship programs, even for things that we wouldn't think about. Four years to be a waiter. When you used to be waited on... This is gone by the boards, of course, because now all the waiters are from Portugal or Spain, or some place like that, because the other people don't

want to be waiters any more. But in those days you never had those kind of ethnic divisions in jobs, when you got waited on in restaurant in Denmark, it was first class. Any restaurant that you went into was first class. There wasn't any fast-food thing in those days. And people had a pride in their work. Much like we did in the small town that I lived in. I mean, I went to school and lived in a small town. We all worked dirty, stinking jobs. It didn't make any difference whether your father was a doctor, a lawyer; mine was the trade union leader in the plant. We all worked side by side, shoveling manure, gutting chickens, the filthiest, dirtiest jobs in the world. And nobody denigrated hard labor. And this is generally true in all of Europe, where it's much more a matter of your individual responsibility. It's never a group ethic. The group ethic is to work, and you got to do this. If you don't do it the way we want you to, you just don't get the goodies. And they all have Identification (ID) cards. So you don't line up. Even in 1962 when I was in the Labor Department here, this was when Moynihan was Assistant Secretary of Labor, and he did that famous monograph on the Negro family in America. But they did a study then to find out how much fraud there was in certain labor programs, and they estimated it was 20% at that time.

Q: That's here in the U.S.?

ANDERSON: That's here. This kind of thing cannot happen in Europe. You cannot have a situation like my sister did in Washington, D.C. She had an employee come in, he was Hispanic from Latin America, he was an electrical worker, helper, he slipped and hurt his back. Months later he was still putting in for his workman's compensation, she sees him driving on the street in Washington, D.C., in a brand new Ford Thunderbird. So she put the investigators on him; he had five cards, five social security cards and was collecting workman's comp on all five. This kind of thing cannot happen in a country with population control. And all of the Scandinavian countries have population control. You have an ID card and, therefore, you have positive identification of everybody.

Q: By "control" you mean identification card?

ANDERSON: Identification, in other words it's just a matter of identification. Years later I worked for the state of Arizona, and we audited our social systems. I found out that in some states, e.g. in Nevada, the social welfare system they did a probability study of the entire population of welfare recipients and they found that 57% were fraudulent. Tommy Thompson has had one run in Wisconsin and found 26%, in some cities over 50%. Giuliani had one run in New York for three months and found over 60% fraudulent. I don't know what the final thing was because I left the government down there, and my job, just before they finished up the study.

Q: This is in Arizona?

ANDERSON: In Arizona. But that kind of fraud which we know exists in the U.S. - I mean, I live in the richest agricultural part of the U.S. today, in a rural area, with top soil feet deep. Over 50% of our children there are on free lunches. When my father was a trade union leader and was flat on his back for eight months and couldn't walk, my Mother took in sewing, I got a paper route and another paper route and another paper route, and a job downtown working in a restaurant, my sister got a couple of jobs. We paid all of our own bills. We don't do that any more. We now go to a welfare office in the U.S. In Europe, by and large, for a lot of things they

still go to their trade unions. And even if they do go to the state, they are only going to be paying once. They are not going to be paying like that guy and my sister, five times. We have this kind of open society, and none of those societies in Europe... England is, because they don't have an ID card, that's the only place in Europe that I know of that doesn't have an ID card; they may have one now, but I don't think so though. Because that's Anglo-Saxon. But that's not continental. We all had to carry ID cards. Usually from the age of 12 or 14 on, whenever you came into the labor force. Certainly the work ethic was still alive when I was in Norway and Denmark. And it was less so, though, in Belgium. And even less so in Austria.

MARGARET JOY TIBBETTS
Ambassador
Norway (1964-1969)

Ambassador Margaret Joy Tibbetts was born in Maine on August 26, 1919. She received a bachelor's degree from Wheaton College and a master's degree and Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr College. Ambassador Tibbetts' career included positions in London, Leopoldville, Brussels, and an ambassadorship to Norway. She was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin on May 28, 1985.

Q: Could you tell me who recommended you to be an ambassador?

TIBBETTS: I think there was a group of people. I was in the right place at the right time, to use the cliché. And when I went in to see Mr. Rusk--I was traveling with the Senior Seminar in California when they made the announcement. The president had his own reasons, vis-à-vis the women's groups, for making it. And Mr. Rusk, whom I had not met before, said, "Well, Miss Tibbetts, you seem to have been the choice of the establishment." I was--you're always slightly cynical about these things. I was pleased. I had a fairly good knowledge of my own position in my class, and I knew that if all went well and I stayed out of trouble, someday I'd be an ambassador. But I've always said and believed that the Women's Movement pressure and President Johnson's initiative of naming all these people at that point moved it up by six or seven years.

Why was I the choice of the establishment? I think that I had more experience in political work than most people. I had more political experience than most women. That's always an accident, but it had happened. And I have also, in one of my earlier posts not too long ago at that point, about eight or nine years previously--when I was in the Congo, I had been in charge quite a lot by one of those quirks of fate; the man who was the consul general had a tendency to be restless, and he traveled, perhaps, more than he knew. Anyway, when the inspectors came, they discovered that I'd been in charge approximately three of four of the preceding eight months. And that's the sort of thing with inspectors; they must write something, you know; they made a big deal of it. So there was, perhaps, the feeling, "Well, she can, if necessary, operate a post," because I'd gotten along.

Also, I think the last ambassador for whom I'd served, Douglas MacArthur II, than whom there is no one tougher, had given a grudging seal of approval. But particularly the political experience. So I think that's why I was the choice. There weren't too many of us who'd had political experience.

Q: No, and especially not at that time.

TIBBETTS: That's right.

Q: How did you learn of your nomination?

TIBBETTS: I was in San Francisco with the group, with the senior seminar, and I think someone heard it over the radio. It's one of these things. Well, there was no way of tracking me down; we were all out visiting some agricultural establishment, or something like that.

Q: Could you tell me how you prepared yourself for the Senate hearings? Who was on the committee, the atmosphere of it?

TIBBETTS: Well, the atmosphere was extremely friendly. The only people whom I remember were Senator Fulbright and Senator Aiken. I prepared myself carefully for the Senate hearings. By that time, I'd had two or three months. And I'd been taking Norwegian, and I had worked a great deal on NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] matters. In fact, I'd been to Norway on NATO questions some four or five years earlier. And I'd also--I'd been in the heart of European affairs for years. So I went through the usual things one does, and the atmosphere couldn't have been more friendly. Senator Aiken, of course, was pleased that someone from northern New England--and Senator Fulbright was pleased that I had a good academic background.

Q: Yes, yes. He didn't ask you any "zingers"?

TIBBETTS: No, no. They asked me only the mildest of questions.

Q: Did they?

TIBBETTS: They asked me why I'd studied Norwegian. And I said, "Because the people in Norway spoke Norwegian." [Laughter] They seemed to think that was very satisfactory.

Q: It was a good reason. I know you were received by the president. Were you received by the secretary of state?

TIBBETTS: Yes, I was received by the secretary of state. I was when I first came back, and I think I spoke with him before I went. Again, to harp back, I was an EUR hand. I came and went on the seventh floor fairly often in the line of business.

Q: So you knew all those people. Could you briefly describe your swearing-in ceremony?

TIBBETTS: Yes. It was in what is now--I guess it was then--the Adams Room, with all the Adams memorabilia, and very impressive, with portraits and things, too. There was a very large crowd. Mr. Rusk himself swore me in. And they made quite a deal of it, which pleased me, of course, because the only people who matter, whose opinion you care at all about, are your peers.

Q: Are your peers, precisely.

TIBBETTS: You couldn't care less about anybody else.

Q: When you left for your post, did anybody from your host government--any Norwegians--come to see you off? Or did you leave privately?

TIBBETTS: I left from New York. I had been up to, on the way--the Department of Commerce, I guess, wanted me to stop and look at the Norwegian exhibit. There was some kind of a world's exposition going on in 1964; I don't remember what--New York World's Fair of some kind. And the Norway-American Chamber of Commerce--so I went to a dinner party there. And I knew all the Norwegians. The Norwegian ambassador had given me a dinner; and they gave me the great treatment again. EUR is EUR, you know.

Q: Sure, exactly. You had been at the heart of everything.

TIBBETTS: I'd been right there.

Q: Yes. Did you stop over anywhere en route?

TIBBETTS: No. I went by ship, simply because it was a Norwegian-American line and I wanted to see what it was like, because the Oslofjord, it took about ten days and it was very pleasant;-- yes, I stopped in Copenhagen and talked with Katherine White; that's right. She was there, and she'd been there about three weeks. She was a woman from New Jersey who'd been in the Democratic Women's end, and an excellent ambassador, excellent, smart woman. We had a lot to do with each other.

Q: Yes, yes. I can see that. How many months did you have at FSI [Foreign Service Institute] with Norwegian? I know you didn't like the way--

TIBBETTS: I took about four weeks there and studied it. They didn't know what else to do with me. I'd been in the senior seminar, and they had very foolishly said that they didn't want to let me take my trip because of the confirmation hearings--I should say foolishly from my point of view, because it was a waste, but I suppose they couldn't run the risk that I'd be away if they wanted a confirmation hearing. So I knocked around, and they had found a tutor, finally, and I had about four or five weeks with her, which was fairly intensive. But I'd done a certain amount before.

Q: You had done it before? And then how long did you continue at the post?

TIBBETTS: I continued at the post for about two years. I worked very hard on it, and I finally got it. I'm not a good linguist, but my Norwegian is good enough so that I can get by.

Q: I heard that you were very good in Norwegian.

TIBBETTS: Depends on whom you're talking to. [Laughter]

Q: How soon after you arrived did you present your credentials?

TIBBETTS: About three days, I think it took, or something like that.

Q: Can you remember the ceremony?

TIBBETTS: It was very simple. It's a delight. I became very fond of the king of Norway, because he was very relaxed. But his system was quite simple. You went on up in and handed a document to him, and I think he said, "I'm supposed to listen to a speech and to make one. But let's forget about it."

So I said, "Thank you very much, Sir."

I handed him--the president had given me a letter and that sort of business, and I handed it to him, and he put it on the desk, which was very large and very cluttered. I wonder if they ever found it. But he's an intense reader, I discovered. It's one of the things that--we got along well. He's a great, as I say, reader.

Q: You didn't have to wear any special clothes?

TIBBETTS: No. I wore a black dress, I think, and a hat and gloves. That was what you wore.

Q: Very different from when Mrs. Harriman was--

TIBBETTS: Yes. They all had to go through this business. But--

Q: So much better.

TIBBETTS: He was wearing sort of a second--not his most elaborate uniform, but sort of a semi-uniform. The hat and gloves and so forth were my tribute to decorum, as well as the black dress, the basic black dress; and his uniform, as I say, was his.

Q: Did you take part of your staff with you?

TIBBETTS: No. You went by yourself. That was another good thing about it, because he'd worked--you see, he'd been in the business for some time. And he'd found that this went more easily from his point of view. I don't blame him.

Q: I don't either. Did you inherit any problems?

TIBBETTS: No. Well, there's always longstanding shipping problems. The great problem I had, I don't think I inherited as much but it just developed, was the Vietnam War and the impact on Norwegian opinion. And that was a continuing issue, but not a problem. There are always personnel problems around the post, but that's par for the course. And they're not necessarily ones you inherit.

The problem--and I think this is something which would happen in every post, whether or not you're ambassador--what happens is that when you replace someone, you're going to find you want to do things your way. You have to change the pattern of the way people work--you have to do it tactfully enough so that you don't seem to be critical, because you're going to arouse resentment and dislike; you have to do it firmly enough so that they know you mean it; and you have to do it slowly enough so that you know what you're doing, but quickly enough so that it begins to take effect. And that's, perhaps, a little bit more with an ambassador than with anyone else. Mr. Wharton had been a very good man, but it was his last post before retirement. And, inevitably, I think I wanted to speed things up a little bit.

Q: What about your DCM [deputy chief of mission]? Did you inherit him or did you select him?

TIBBETTS: I inherited him and he went on--

Q: And this was Bovey?

TIBBETTS: No, no. I didn't inherit John. John Bovey was my choice. I inherited the then-DCM, who went on home leave at the end of November. And during the course of the home leave, the department decided--which pleased me, although I didn't have anything to do with the decision--that they were to change, and then I was able to pick my choice. Again, it was an older man that they were thinking of replacing. But they--the department--offered me a list of names. I wrote them a note and said, "Don't kid me. I've been in the business. These are the longstanding, well-known dogs. [Laughter] Why not give me someone from the list of good ones?" And they wrote and sent me a list from which I picked John Bovey--the second list.

Q: You knew him before?

TIBBETTS: I knew John. When I was in NATO matters, John was working in French North African affairs.

Q: I see. Well now, when you got him, did you spell out his role, or did it evolve? You know, usually one is the "heavy"--

TIBBETTS: Both. Because whatever you say to him about the way in which I work isn't going--he's going to learn how I work. We knew each other quite well. We talked back and forth with considerable candor, of course. That's the beauty of having an old friend, is that you really--you know, you can shut the door and you speak as friends. And that's very important, because there's always so many people running around who do everything you tell them to, whether it's right or not. But I think the role works out with special--evolves--there's certain things I--the ambassador has to do certain things, some of which are deadly dull.

Q: Right, right. But did one of you become the "comforter" and one of you become the "heavy," so to speak?

TIBBETTS: No. I don't think we ran it in quite that way, because I can be quite sharp, and I've never had any problem anywhere in making my writ run, and John is the same way, too.

Q: I see.

TIBBETTS: And I don't think we disagreed much on things. If he--if I were going to speak sharply to someone on something and I told John in advance, we'd work it out in advance. But he certainly would never comfort anyone against my--

Q: Oh, no. No, no.

TIBBETTS: --criticism. No, no. That's right, no.

Q: But I often notice that they do.

TIBBETTS: Yes, that sometimes happens.

Q: Did you encounter any problems of morale--alcoholism, incompetence, this sort of thing?

TIBBETTS: I think there was a case in the code room, a young man who had had problems getting on. And then there were tangential problems of alcoholism, if you can call it that. Some of the younger Marines--the Marine House--they used to have a party every Friday night. There were about six of them; that's partly the problem; there weren't enough of them.

Q: Yes.

TIBBETTS: Many Scandinavians, of course, even the purest of the Norwegians, can have a great susceptibility to strong drink. And as the parties--one or two incidents took place, and so we just shut off the parties and said "Nothing doing." And I don't know whether they took it badly or not. They seemed to take it all right.

Q: Yes. You didn't have these problems of family split-ups and all that which seem to be so rampant?

TIBBETTS: There were some, but that was none of my business. You know, there was nothing that I was going to do. If a family wasn't getting along, there wasn't anything I was going to say to either one of them that could make the slightest amount of difference.

Q: No. And you didn't have to evacuate anybody?

TIBBETTS: Not that I remember. One or two people chose--the wife went away and didn't come back in one case, but that's, as I say, not the type of thing I could affect.

Q: I see. Because that seems to be a growing problem now, especially in--not so much in Europe. How often did you have staff meetings?

TIBBETTS: I had heads-of-section meetings every single morning for about fifteen to twenty minutes, and a regular staff meeting once a week.

Q: That's the country team?

TIBBETTS: Yes. The country--no. No, I don't call it the country team. I guess the heads of section would be country team, but I didn't include the chief MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] most of the time because he was different. But I had the full officers' staff--well, not all the consuls or administrative officers, but some chosen representatives from each section--once a week.

But I have always found, though--and I learned this, of course, when I was working as a subordinate--that the small, early staff meeting, when you go over it with the section chiefs and so forth like that, saves a great deal of time. For them and for you. And the essence of being a superior, I think first of all, apart from knowing your business, is that the superior must move quickly enough so that he or she is never blocking the people below.

A lot of people have the problem that they can't do anything because Mr. X hasn't approved their paper yet, so they're just spinning their wheels. Well, if you're in the position of being Mr. or Ms. X, get that out of the way and put them to work, and then go on to do what you want to do. And that works very well.

Q: Yes. What was the style of these meetings? Collegial, or was it more authoritarian?

TIBBETTS: It's a mixture. I led the meeting and I asked the questions, and I'm authoritarian in a sense I have a certain respect for my own opinions and judgment. On the other hand, I was not so far away from the business that I couldn't remember how it worked. And I think the section chiefs, almost without exception, dealt with me very easily and frankly. I knew the business, and I'm not so difficult a personality that they couldn't work with it.

Q: That they couldn't do it, yes.

TIBBETTS: I never felt the need to throw my weight around, though. I've always been relatively self-confident and assured in authority.

Q: How long did it take you before you felt at home? Right away, two months, one month?

TIBBETTS: You go in stages in any post. You feel at home in certain respects within two weeks. At the end of six months, you realize how little you knew. At the end of a year, you should know everything.

Q: Were you able to develop a close relationship with the Norwegian head of state?

TIBBETTS: Well, the head of state, the king, developed as close as you need to. But the king's role is not very much involved in government. I had a close enough relationship--I had a very close relationship with the two foreign ministers with whom I worked. But that's--an American ambassador who doesn't have a good relationship with Norwegians is out of his mind. I mean--because they're eager to--the American ambassador in a country like that is so important because the United States is important. I had a good enough relationship with the prime minister, but neither one of them spoke English at that point--the two with whom I worked--so that was less productive, until I got so I could get along in Norwegian.

Q: Yes. What about the other members of the Cabinet?

TIBBETTS: I got along very well with the defense minister--I got to know very well indeed both defense ministers. See, I worked first [with] a Labor government, then Conservative, and I got to know both of them very well indeed. I got to know most of the cabinet members. I inevitably had less to do with the minister of women's welfare, or something like that, but I got to know them all well enough. And I tried to entertain those that were receptive to it and that sort of thing.

But again, there's never any problem if you know what you're doing and if you are prepared to--well, Norwegians--in small, small countries, you always have to make certain adjustments, you know.

Q: Yes, of course. How well did you know the businessmen over there and the educators?

TIBBETTS: I knew the educators very well. I knew the businessmen quite well. I knew quite a lot of them depending, again, on the chamber of commerce work and what they did. It's always--for me personally, that's rather dull, the business people, because politically they're going to be very solidly behind you, and almost misleadingly so.

At the height of the Vietnam crisis, one of the businessmen said to me, "Now, don't worry, Ambassador. It's only the working people and the young people who feel this way." Well, the "working people and the young people," I mean, how do you feel--because the business community--so you have to go through the motions. But speaking to the Rotary Club and that sort of thing, you're speaking to the converted, which is what the problem was not at that time. But I went very faithfully. And a lot of them, as I say, have very good businesses and a lot of them are already very solidly in, and you're going through the motions.

Q: Yes. But did any of the chamber of commerce people actually come to you for advice?

TIBBETTS: Well, they came to the embassy. But they didn't need much advice. The average Norwegian who's doing business with this country--first of all, he probably--if he's in a big business, he spent ten or fifteen years' apprenticeship working in New York at something like shipping. He sent his son to Harvard Business School, and his son is now working in the office in New York.

Or the people who are doing things like exporting crystal or that sort of thing, they have had their lines into every big department store, boutique, Dansk place, or something, so there's no conceivable way I could advise them, really. And they already had the contacts, so--

Q: Sure. There wasn't any reason.

TIBBETTS: No reason for it.

Q: I remember the little anecdote about the Chinese ambassador and you. What about the Soviet Union?

TIBBETTS: Yes. They had an ambassador, a Mr. Lounkov; I think he's now the Russian ambassador to London. He was learning English when I was there, and he was always very eager to practice. He wasn't a bad fellow; he was sort of a mechanical little person. You have no idea what these people are really like, because in the official line--he told me one day when he was practicing his English at the diplomatic lunch on me that he had a son at Moscow University, and he was very worried because the boy wouldn't obey his grandmother, and I said, "Well, you know, you don't sound a bit like somebody from another world to me."

He said, "Well, you know, I think we all have the same problems."

And his wife didn't like Norway and so forth. We came and we went on official--but it depended on the state of relations as to--

Q: I see.

TIBBETTS: But personally, there was no problem. We danced very gaily together at one of the diplomatic parties--he's an excellent dancer. Russians, of course, have great sense of rhythm. And, as I say, you could be very--it could be very pleasant, actually.

Q: Do the Cubans have an ambassador there?

TIBBETTS: No, the Cubans didn't. They had someone in Stockholm, who came skulking over from time to time, but he never called on me, of course.

Q: Could you tell me how you divided your official contacts with your officers?

TIBBETTS: You mean, how we split up the things for them to do and for me to do?

Q: Yes. Well, how did you decide who would go to the foreign office? Or did you just assign certain people to it?

TIBBETTS: You see, it depended on the topics. Yes. And certain topics, sometimes I would say in the morning--I have a tendency to push on a little bit. But then I'd say, "Go and see him before the end of the week if this hasn't come through." Because people sometimes say, "Well, I spoke

to Mr. X last week, and he's going to get back to me." Well, if you don't push them, they may take longer to get back. I push just to keep things moving.

But on certain questions, John would come in and he'd say, "This is getting difficult." and "Do you want me to do this or should you?" And I'd say, well, sometimes yes and sometimes no.

Q: Sure. There weren't any you reserved just for yourself? Some ambassadors do that.

TIBBETTS: Yes, some of that. Sometimes you have to do that. We had a--I guess it's still classified--but there was a Norwegian contact for a long time that went on and attempted contact with a government with which we wished to talk through a Norwegian diplomat. [The government in question was Vietnam.]

When the foreign minister sent for me, he said that had to be just me. Well, of course, I told John, because that had to be. But I had to do the Norwegian translations, because they would give me things that this man sent in Norwegian, and if I'd waited for them to translate into English, it would take forever. Also, I speak English better than they do.

So that sort of thing. And I did that myself. Eventually, after it had gone on, and at one point after about eight or nine months, it looked as though it might develop into something good. With the department's permission, I got Roz Ridgway, who was then a second secretary in the political section, and we brought her in to do this, simply because it's never wise to have something which is important in just one person's hands. [Rozanne Ridgway, then a junior officer became ambassador to Finland, August 1977 - February 1980; ambassador to East Germany, January 1983 - July 1985 and assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, July 1985 - January 1988.]

Q: That's true.

TIBBETTS: You know, you could--something can go amiss or you can be in a hurry or you're not available. And particularly, an ambassador is always out on some miserable thing. You know, the USIS [United States Information Service] might send me out to western Norway to speak to something, and I might be gone for eight hours, and something which I have to do, which could hold it up, comes in.

Q: Yes, sure. What steps did you take to ensure that your young officers received the proper training?

TIBBETTS: Well, I watched that closely, because I am a nut on training officers. And I was good at training them myself. Some of them are a very mixed bag, of course. Some of them, like Roz Ridgway, you didn't have to train. You know, it was her first political job, but you had no problem. Just give her a subject, and she'd watch me and watch John and then she'd do it. Some of the others, if I didn't like a despatch he'd written, I'd get him in myself; or I'd sometimes, after I'd talked with his section chief or something like that, we'd go through it.

I must admit, I didn't pay much attention to the young people in the consular section, because that's the one area of Foreign Service work in which I never did anything. The administrative work I know quite a lot about, unfortunately. I'm a good executive, but not an administrator--the paperwork. I think we talked--John and I worked on it, and we would decide privately which officer is good and which one less so. But we tried--I tried to have them at the house at parties, at dinner parties and not just cocktail parties, which are a nuisance, but dinner parties, and particularly those who had some language capability. And that, again, is great training for them if they're any good at all.

Q: Did you have any sort of setup, such as Phil Habib, for example, did, where he used to bring them in on Saturdays and sit them down and go over things with them? [Philip Habib, ambassador to South Korea at the time.]

TIBBETTS: No. I came in on Saturdays, and I saw them around. But--

Q: You didn't formalize it?

TIBBETTS: No. I soon had a good enough idea of the people in the political and the economic sections; we had a very good economic officer, and I read the work they did.

Q: Absolutely. About being an ambassador, what's the best part of the job?

TIBBETTS: Well, I started as a working officer, and I liked the working part of the job. I like the political work; I enjoyed the fact there was enough substantive work in Norway to keep me interested and seeing people. At the same time, I must admit that I sometimes felt envious when I looked at my younger colleagues and I was sitting there next to the Lord Mayor or someone like that, absolutely trapped, and they were out circulating and talking with the interesting people. That's the part of the job which I liked.

Q: And the worst part?

TIBBETTS: Oh, there's a great deal of the social life that is terribly dull. You have Latin-American parties, for example. Not that there's anything wrong with the Latin-Americans, but in Oslo, they're not terribly important, to come right down to it, and you're just putting in a great deal of time there simply because they'd be hurt if you didn't. And there's a great deal of that sort of thing.

Q: Do you feel it's sort of a wasting of your time?

TIBBETTS: No, because it's important to the people. That's what I'm paid for. But I personally was not as interested in some of the social life. I wasn't as interested in the Norwegian-American Women's Club as I might have been--that type of thing. I wasn't as interested in the chamber of commerce luncheons or all of these things, but you have to do it, and I have to be interested. Perhaps the hardest thing is that you have to be turned on all the time, whether or not the function is worth it.

Q: And you're on display all the time.

TIBBETTS: You're on display. And, as I say, you're constantly turned on, so you have to be just as enthusiastic about going through the sixteenth kindergarten school as you do about the first. And you have to watch that; if you're not enthusiastic. I know enough to do that.

The other thing, when you're out traveling around, which is very valuable, you must do it--the display angle. You must make things move along; otherwise, you can spend days and days and days going through. But you must do it in such a way that they don't think you're hurrying.

Q: It's quite an art.

TIBBETTS: Yes. It's something you have to learn to do. And you have to learn that your own staff will sometimes over schedule you or under schedule you, that type of thing. But you work it out.

Q: An ambassador needs diplomatic, managerial, and leadership skills. How would you rate yourself on these three qualities?

TIBBETTS: I think I was quite good in all of them. I had a considerable amount of diplomatic and political experience, and I had been extraordinarily well trained in the Foreign Service techniques, and I hope I didn't lose them along the way.

Managerial, yes. I'm a good manager. As I say, I'm not an administrator in the sense that you would want me to take the index numbers off the mechanical equipment, but I can tell you exactly how to get the people working. Leadership, yes. I'm quite good in the sense you have to make the staff interested in what they're doing. That doesn't mean I'm any better than anyone else at coping with the weak sister or the unenthusiastic person, but sometimes you have to learn to compensate; you have to take two people to do the job which one could do in the sense that one person may be outgoing and like to meet people, and the other person less so; you have to combine them.

Q: Right.

TIBBETTS: But I'm pretty good at handling the question of getting the staff interested and enthusiastic. I think morale at the embassy was good; at least all the inspectors said it was.

Q: Absolutely. Now, you had the threat from people who were against the Vietnam War in front of your embassy, but you didn't have any of this terrorism at that time, of course.

TIBBETTS: No, we didn't have any terrorism. Terrorism in Norway is if anybody throws a rock through the window, it's headlines for months. No, we didn't have terrorism, and I can't imagine that Scandinavia will ever become a very fertile field for it. What you had was constant agitation and editorializing and people buttonholing you at parties and a great many people whom you respect very much telling you, sadly, that they thought the United States was on the wrong track,

and students and so forth. But the only thing to do is to grit our teeth and ride it out and keep cool.

Q: I thought the way you handled it was very, very good.

TIBBETTS: Well, I thank you very much. I always insisted, as you know, don't make too much about it. If somebody breaks a window, as they did from time to time, get the glaziers right in and repair it, and don't talk about it.

Q: And offer them coffee.

TIBBETTS: Yes. That's right. Keep it interesting.

Q: And photograph it. I liked that.

TIBBETTS: That's right, yes.

Q: How was your embassy protected? Just your six marines?

TIBBETTS: Just the six marines. And we didn't need anything more. It would be terrible if we ever get to the stage where everything is an armed-camp type of thing. It's one of the depressing things about the Soviet embassy. I went to call--I've forgotten what for; it was something in the diplomatic corps--and to get into the Soviet embassy was practically like invading Hitler's bunker, and it makes a frightful impression.

Q: Of course it does. It must be terrible to live that way, terrible. Getting back to your working in the embassy, where did you place the greatest emphasis yourself?

TIBBETTS: On the work.

Q: Political work?

TIBBETTS: Political, economic. You have to weigh them. We didn't have administrative problems any more than anything else. The consular work--you have to watch consular work always, because some of the stuff that goes on can be so deadly dull. If you don't pay attention to it, it's going to come up and hit you. Some jackass in the visa section will turn someone down who turns out to be head of the political science department at the university. You have to watch this sort of thing. You have to watch it very carefully. So that's why you get the consular section in on your staff meetings. You see him [the consul] enough so that you find out what's happening.

Q: What about your consulate? Consulate general, was it, at Bergen?

TIBBETTS: No, we didn't have any post outside. We had a man at Tromso, but he didn't do consular work; he was an information officer. There wasn't any at Bergen.

Q: I see. Well, of the three areas--representation, reporting, and negotiating--which are the duties of an ambassador, how did you divide that up?

TIBBETTS: I think reporting and negotiation I did more. Representation I did as a *pro forma* thing. I did what I had to do and what I thought was wise, but I certainly didn't do any more than I had to do, and I always left promptly. That's one good thing about me; you could count upon the fact that at 11:00 I was up like a shot and out. Reporting and negotiation--reporting, you go along; you have to watch it. I entertained enough to try to meet all of my obligations. I split up the money. Of course, I had the bulk of the money. You certainly don't get as much as you spend. There's always a certain amount that you can't collect for, but you have to do it anyway, like American Field Service students or that sort of thing. I'm not saying that they don't deserve it, and they're sometimes more interesting than the others, but it gets to be quite a lot of it. It gets to be a terrible nuisance.

Q: And you were out of pocket on these things?

TIBBETTS: Yes, to a certain extent. You just have to do it, because there's no way--I mean, I don't have the sort of conscience where I could say that you have, say, forty American Fields Service students and three Norwegians. That's not the sort of party I'm going to be able to charge off, as far as I'm concerned. So you just take that sort of thing.

Q: I see what you mean. How much of your time was spent actually running the mission, Ambassador?

TIBBETTS: Running the mission?

Q: Or did you have a good admin officer who could keep things ticking over?

TIBBETTS: I had a good admin officer. You know, the tendency is always, if anything goes wrong, the ambassador is always taken care of. So if everybody else's car breaks down, I still have a car. Well, I'm experienced enough that I can watch to make sure that isn't happening. But I could always count on John [Bovey] and others to tell me if something was breaking down for someone else, because, as I say, I knew them well enough. And John would come right in and say that the system's gone to hell on this and that. But the admin officers were basically very good.

Q: How about the budget? Did they do that, or did you work with them on that?

TIBBETTS: They prepared the budget and I went over it. There's where my Congo experience, where I was a budget and fiscal officer, was very good. It's very tedious work. But on the other hand, let me tell you right now, there's no satisfaction that can equal really knowing what goes on. And I could do it. I mean, I could say, "This is too much on that or too much on that."

Q: So that was very useful. What about the quality of your State personnel?

TIBBETTS: My State personnel were excellent. Almost all of them. Some were weeded out. The Department had a tendency to say that I have only Scandinavian speakers. That isn't necessarily-- you want good officers, and let them learn the language. But basically I didn't have any problems. They were good people.

Q: What about your other agencies?

TIBBETTS: I think the quality of the CIA, basically, some were more bright than others but all acceptable. I had a number of the younger officers I got along with very well. They all were excellent linguists; I'll say this for the agency.

Q: Were they?

TIBBETTS: Yes. Excellent linguists. And they handled well certain things; we had a defector case that they handled very well. They were smart enough to keep always in very close touch with the Norwegians and with us. I don't mean a defector from the Norwegians; I mean a defector from one of the satellite embassies. The USIS personnel were some good, some less so; some excellent ones, and some less good.

Q: Mixed bag. There was no AID at that time, was there?

TIBBETTS: No, there was no AID, and we didn't need it. We had a lot of military aid; the MAAG was very big, because, you see, Norway, being in NATO, was qualified. I got along well enough with the MAAG.

Q: Did Washington give you a free hand?

TIBBETTS: They gave me quite a free hand. Anything. But on the other hand, I--again, all these years of experience--if I didn't know when to check in and check out, I would have been very foolish indeed.

Q: Of course. Do you feel you got adequate policy guidance from the department?

TIBBETTS: Yes. Oh, yes. No question about it. Anything I wanted to know, I could pinpoint the sort of question and put it in to them. But you have to know how to write your messages. No, I had no problem; no question at all.

Q: You had a lot--you had visiting VIPs.

TIBBETTS: Yes, we had visiting--

Q: Codels [congressional delegations].

TIBBETTS: Yes. We had codels; we had a fair number of codels. Some are an asset and some aren't.

Q: You were in London at the time the McCarthy boys came through? [Roy Cohn and David Schine were investigators for Sen. McCarthy who checked American embassies in Europe looking for Communists.]

TIBBETTS: Yes, I was. I didn't see them. They hit very hard at others. They really hit in the political section. The people who worked in Far Eastern affairs--I was a good friend of Arthur Ringwalt's, and he, I think, spent thirteen years in London simply because the department didn't dare transfer him somewhere else. He was the one most affected. But I think Julius Holmes, our minister, dealt with them fairly sharply, to the extent that he could. Julius did a great deal to protect the people in the embassy. He was very, very good at that.

I learned a lot from watching Julius. You're not conscious of learning it, because as a second secretary, it would have been presumptuous. But he certainly protected the people in the embassy to a great extent. I don't mean shielding us from being asked questions or anything like that, but his attitude was that if your conscience is clear, you can go anywhere in the world. This group has a clear conscience. And that gives you a great deal of morale booster.

Q: Of course. He didn't knuckle under the way so many did. Getting back to Norway, what was your relationship with the local press? Did they follow you around?

TIBBETTS: Yes, and I got along very well with almost all of them as individuals. Even the papers that--you know, you get to know which papers are and are not troublesome. But the individual reporter, that doesn't necessarily mean that he reflects his paper's attitude. Or if he does reflect his paper's attitude, you still deal with him openly, as you do with anyone else. Just be careful what you say. But you should be careful anyway. Sometimes the papers that can do you the most harm are the ones that want to be too friendly, you know. But I got along pretty well with the working press.

Q: And they didn't patronize you--ask stupid questions?

TIBBETTS: No.

Q: Ask you for your favorite menu?

TIBBETTS: The women's pages do, but I got out of that fairly early in the routine. The press attaché, when I first came, had scheduled tons and tons of interviews, and "What's your favorite menu?" and that sort of thing with the women's pages, and after about two of them, I said, "Nothing doing."

He said, "You know, we can get unlimited coverage."

And I said, "No. It bores me stiff, and that's not the way I want to play it." And I got out of that.

Q: Of course, you were there at the time of Vietnam. Did you find the press hostile?

TIBBETTS: Parts of the press, of course, if it's the paper's policy. They weren't hostile to me as an individual, but they were certainly hostile to U.S. policy.

Q: And they twisted what you said? Or were they fair? How did you feel about that?

TIBBETTS: I think they were basically fair. You had to make sure that you stated it in very simple terms, particularly if you're stating it to people with whom English is not the natural language. But I never had any feeling that they twisted anything. They could writhe with rage and jump over what the president said at some things.

Q: What about the U.S. press? Did many of them come through?

TIBBETTS: No. They paid very little attention. The only people who ever came through to speak of were the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. Oh, and then there was--well, I used to see quite a lot of the man from the *Economist*, who came through from Brussels when the Scandinavians were having a discussion of the Nordic Council. Anthony Lewis used to come through from the *New York Times* about twice a year. He was then stationed in Paris. The *Wall Street Journal* came up about once a year to check on things.

Q: Would they check in with the embassy?

TIBBETTS: Yes. They always came and saw me. I'd have about an hour with them.

Q: How about consular matters? Were they a large part of the problems at the post?

TIBBETTS: They were a large part of the work, because a great many Norwegians reside in the United States and are back and forth, and social security and that sort of thing. Visas aren't required, basically, anymore, but there's shipping. Yes, you have a good deal of work. I think we had about five or six American officers and, oh, I guess eight or nine locals, something like that.

Q: What about intra-mission rivalries? Did you have much problem with that?

TIBBETTS: Well, you have to watch the people. Some of the people in the economic section thought the political section was getting too much attention, etc., etc. But you watch that. No, nothing serious, nothing serious at all.

Q: What health facilities did you have at your mission?

TIBBETTS: Oh, Norway's superb. No problem. There was a U.S. Air Force--I won't say hospital, but a medical officer. You see, there's a group of U.S. personnel stationed at the NATO headquarters outside, so there was a school and everything like that. They were all out there. They weren't under me, but we had, in effect, relations. They were responsible to me. I mean, they weren't part of the embassy staff, but if something happened, I had to respond. We had that, and we had access to the facilities in Germany, all the hospitals, and the Norwegian facilities were very good. There was no question.

Q: Did you yourself have any serious health problems while you were there?

TIBBETTS: No.

Q: Did your people use the U.S. army facilities or local facilities?

TIBBETTS: Most people went out to the [U.S.] Air Force. We had to go through this routine of being checked by the Air Force. If there was any question, they sent them down to Frankfurt or something like that.

Q: I see. Now, getting back to women's issues, what about the wives at the post? What sort of thing did they do to keep themselves busy?

TIBBETTS: Well, they were pretty good. And I liked the wives very, very well; basically got along with them. Some of them I liked better than others, of course.

Q: Sure.

TIBBETTS: The young ones all had families. It's a great place for families. Scandinavians are very good, and close. There was a great deal of skiing and that sort of thing, which is all, I think, excellent. And there was a school, the American School at the Kolsås Base, where there were, I guess, 3,000 Americans all in all stationed there. A lot of them went in on the school. The kids went up through what I used to call junior high--whatever it is now; they call it middle school or something like that. The women were always doing things out there, which is good. I thought we had a very good situation. There wasn't any alcoholism problem to speak of.

What you have to watch in a post like that is women who get bored. Actually, if you are lucky, you're going to get people who are so delighted to be sent there. We had people come in from Africa or something. I mean, a post where everything's clean and nice and they get along well with their neighbors and the kids were taken care of. They were ecstatic. The older women weren't so hot on skiing, but there was a certain amount of--again, they liked it because you had social activity, but you didn't have too much. And I was relatively easy in the sense I didn't expect anything of them.

Now, I think that some of them would have liked a bit more direction or participation, or fashion shows or that sort of thing. But they can go somewhere else. On the other hand, it's awfully nice to have an ambassador's wife who does not ride you or expect you to do various things. The only thing I ever laid down--and I meant it--was to be on time. I tried to scatter it around by inviting them to the parties. The political section people inevitably got the most attention.

Q: Yes. Did they act as assistant hostesses to you?

TIBBETTS: Yes, in a sense. I would say, "Get in and mingle. I don't want you over in the corner talking to one of the American men. Get out there and work." But there was no problem about it.

Q: Did many of them work as teachers?

TIBBETTS: No, none of them worked. I don't think it was allowed at that point in a post like Oslo. But they all were very active in a lot of the school and family activities.

Q: Sure, sure. Could you tell me what sort of things you did for July Fourth?

TIBBETTS: Well, that's always a nuisance. I always had to make a speech. There was a monument in the park, I guess it was to Washington and Lincoln, the Norwegian-American Society had. Anyway, I had to make a speech there of about five minutes, and there was always a gathering present. I always had to write my own speeches because the USIS people did such a lousy job, so I wrote my own. Then I always had a reception, but it was an invitation reception, and I had as many of the American--people from the Norwegian-American Club, Norwegian-American Society. Norwegian-American Women were American women who'd married Norwegians. You mix it in with enough of the Norwegian foreign office. But it wasn't an all-out great bang affair. It was usually about 150 people, or something like that.

Q: Did you have the diplomatic corps?

TIBBETTS: Not if I could help it. I had them at so many other things. The diplomatic corps doesn't get neglected. And they're a real waste of time, you know. Of what conceivable use is it to the American ambassador to entertain a Latin?

Q: Quite. You mention the Norwegian-American Club. Did the American embassy wives have a club that they invited these women to?

TIBBETTS: No. They went quite often to the Norwegian-American Women. Some of them who were interested did, and some of them who weren't interested didn't.

Q: But there wasn't an embassy wives' club?

TIBBETTS: No, there wasn't an embassy wives' club. Not that I know of, no.

Q: Did you include your local employees at any of your functions?

TIBBETTS: Yes, I did. It was always easier to include some than others. But we had--oh, in the economic section, there were two or three very good ones who were agricultural researchers and economic researchers. And I had some of the ranking ones in the consular section; certain functions they always came to.

Q: Did you have your American communicators to any of your--

TIBBETTS: Code people?

Q: Code people.

TIBBETTS: No, I don't think I did. I don't remember ever having them. But your local employees, you know, somebody who may be just a local to you, may be quite a big wheel in the community. He's a graduate of the university and it's a well-known family, etc., etc. This is something people should be aware of. I don't think our code room personnel ever would have been even remotely interested. I always had a Christmas party for everybody in the embassy.

Q: Oh, you did?

TIBBETTS: Oh, yes. Everybody showed up then, drunk or sober, although we didn't have any serious problems.

Q: But they didn't come to the July Fourth thing?

TIBBETTS: Oh, yes, they came to the July Fourth thing.

Q: I see, everybody came to that. I see you spent a good part of your career overseas. Did you find you had to switch gears when you came back to the department?

TIBBETTS: I started in the department, so I knew what I was getting back into. But, yes, you do have to switch a little bit. But it wasn't such a shock to me as it was to some people. The problem of clearances and all this sort of thing almost killed some senior officers, you know, who came back after years overseas. And let's face it, overseas your pace of life is more at your own reckoning.

Q: Yes. Well, did you find it a strain to always be on display? Did you have any private life?

TIBBETTS: Yes, I had a private life. It's not a strain so much as it's a bore. It's a strain sometimes. What you have to watch if you're an ambassador is if you have personal friends. For example, I liked the air attaché and his wife very much, but I had to be careful not to see more of them than I did of the army attaché and his wife, because the military get terribly childish about this sort of thing. Incredibly so. But I did have a private life, and I had Norwegian friends. I had a very close friendship with the commander of the Norwegian Air Force and his wife. But I'm by nature a loner. I like to do things by myself, and I'm an intense reader. If I had an evening at home alone, all I wanted to do was sit, just sit.

Q: It's like a gift, isn't it, having an evening at home?

TIBBETTS: It's a gift. I'm a bird watcher and a skier. All these things I like to do by myself. Sometimes you did things with other people, too, but I always--I have to get out and restore my tissues.

Q: Sure, sure.

TIBBETTS: And that was what I did. So I didn't have any problem that way. Sometimes with maids--I had an Italian couple taking care of me, and they were very gregarious, like most

Italians, and they said, "Don't you get lonely?" Well, the answer is, "No." This is to say it was necessary that way.

Q: Did you bring this Italian couple with you?

TIBBETTS: No. I inherited them from Frances Willis. She had been there as an ambassador, you see, and they liked her very much as a single woman. The great advantage to servants of the single woman, of course, is that she gets up in the morning and she leaves the house, and so there was no housewife underfoot all the time, which they liked very much. That worked very well with both of us.

ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY
Political Officer
Oslo (1967-1969)

Ambassador Rozanne L. Ridgway was born in Minnesota on August 22, 1935. She received a bachelor's degree from Hamline College in 1957 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. Ambassador Ridgway's career included positions in the Philippines, Norway, Bahamas, Finland, and Germany. This interview was conducted by Willis Armstrong on June 4, 1991.

Q: You went to Norway, as second secretary?

RIDGWAY: As second secretary. I was supposed to have gone to Norway (in 19 . . . again) in 1964 (when I had just gone to . . .) when George Vest took me into RPM. In about November 1964, Margaret Joy Tibbetts, who was going out as ambassador, called me to say that she . . . it had been recommended to her that I go as her special assistant and she wanted me to know that she had turned it down. I suppose the other thing I've always had, Ann, is people who are honest with me. No games played. People call up and say, this is the way it is. She called me up and said, "It's been recommended that you go as my special assistant. Number one, I'm a career officer, I don't need a special assistant and I don't like the system suggesting. I am going to need help, I know what I want to do I don't need staff around me. Second, I don't want an embassy full of women. And so I've said I just wanted you to know why I said no. But in a few years as you come out of RPM, if there is an opening in Norway, I would be pleased to have you serve."

Well, 1967, there is an opening in the political section in Norway and I just went. Was it wired? Well, I suppose it was, it had been wired for something like three years. It was a strange sort of a job, but again, if fisheries is my first major field of specialization in the functional sense, then Scandinavia is where I've spent the largest chunk of my career. That has become important . . .

Q: So you have an area.

RIDGWAY: I have an area, and I have now where I am. The recently deceased Foreign Minister, is an old and dear friend of mine from those days in Norway, he was younger, the party was out

of office, and I was asked to take care of the Labor Foreign Minister, who was the deceased Foreign Minister's closest political friend, is also a very dear friend of mine. and so that helps, you see.

Q: And that counts for an awful lot.

RIDGWAY: You see, it does. If you stay in a region long enough, you eventually get to know the players and they get to know you. But I went off, it's the probably worst assignment of my time, and I would hope that, it was not easy. Norwegians don't make friends easily, they make friends for a lifetime when they do. It's dark in November, it's depressing.

Q: I know . . .

RIDGWAY: I said, I will not learn to make rugs, I don't want to cross-country ski and I hate bridge. Well, in the end of three years I packed the rugs I had made, and I brought home the skis I had, and I still don't like bridge, but I was helping people by being a fourth at bridge. And you have to adjust.

Q: Oh, sure, those winters are long and as you say, depressing.

RIDGWAY: They were long. They're a different winter than a Minnesota winter. And anyhow as I say, you're alone, and housing wasn't easy to come by because of tax policy in northern Europe, there is not a lot of investment in apartments and homes. And the job didn't really keep me occupied. There wasn't that much of a job there. Yet, they were difficult times for Vietnam. They were challenging with respect to the Greek Junta which caused problems in NATO and the Scandinavians were particularly incensed by that. Yes, then Norway in 1968 had a political plebiscite on whether Norway should stay in NATO, and then I had Margaret Tibbetts as my boss, who just said, 'Travel. Travel money for everybody, get out, move, look around, meet people.' I was the science officer.

Q: You were in the political section but also science?

RIDGWAY: Yes, but they needed a science officer, so I'm a science officer and I could meet the astronauts, you know, just little things that added to it. So it was pleasant enough.

Q: Well, if I may say parenthetically, one of the reasons that Margaret Tibbetts' didn't want you there at that time, under the first arrangement, was she thought it wouldn't be good for you, as well as for her self.

RIDGWAY: Sure.

Q: She told me that . . .

RIDGWAY: Oh, did she?

Q: She thought it was very patronizing and she thought it might be a dead end for you . . . and you were better than that. But she is definitely of the same cut of cloth, the good old professionals . . .

RIDGWAY: Oh, yeah, and I have said in public, on many occasions that this job when it finally came to me, it was ten years too late. It should have been Margaret Tibbetts' job in 1971. She was entitled to it by intellect, by achievement, by reputation, and instead they just restructured this bureau. They took all of the meaningful assignments away from her when she came back as Deputy Assistant Secretary. She sat in there, with nothing to do. Who needs it? She left at fifty-one, what a . . . what a waste. That's when she should have had it, they didn't have to wait for me or there may well have been others in the meantime who would have been encouraged if they had seen her in 1971 getting that job.

Q: But there is a generational gap here, and her generation just . . . it's a wonder she even got to be a Deputy Assistant.

RIDGWAY: Oh yes, yeah, in this bureau, for sure.

Q: Because it was so rugged, well, . . .

RIDGWAY: Well, anyway I was glad to get out. I did my three years. I arrived in June of '67 and I left in June of 1970. And it's a lovely place and I enjoyed working with her and getting to know her, and getting to know Norwegians and I'm still very fond of the place and I go back. I have close ties there, excellent . . . I learned that you could . . . it was my first overseas political assignment . . . that you could be candid even when you disagreed and that there was among colleagues of different foreign offices a comfortable . . . if each side thought the other knew what it was doing, a comfortable relationship, even when you were arguing over Vietnam.

Q: And did you have a great number of Norwegian acquaintances?

RIDGWAY: Not a whole lot, I had members of the Parliament, members of the Labor Party, members of the Conservative Party, a lot of correspondents. They are very difficult to get to know, I did not leave Norway with . . . leaving behind close Norwegian friends. They didn't make friends that way. They are probably closer now, over the years as we have stayed in touch, then they were at the time.

Q: Yes, isn't that curious how everything interweaves? How was Tibby [Margaret Tibbetts, ambassador to Norway 1964-69] as an ambassador?

RIDGWAY: She was terrific, she was terrific, but at a great personal cost for herself in that she wrote most elegantly, she could perform all of this analysis just in an instant.

Q: Very brilliant, isn't she?

RIDGWAY: Brilliant woman. She had a delightful sense of humor which many people didn't see, but occasionally it showed that essentially it was irrepressible and it would pop out-- some

funny remark at a staff meeting. I didn't get to go to many, but occasionally enough people would be gone that I would be able to go to staff meeting. She didn't do it all. She had John Bovey as a DCM, wonderful fellow, again, broad, well read, could find culture always, and would read and interest himself and was engaging then for the rest of us. He also was willing to say to section chiefs, "Here it is."

So you never had the sense that she was re-writing, was criticizing, was bringing her super-intellect to something. She would let the process finish. And it was open in that sense and she had to sit back, and I think have many unchallenging hours in order to allow for the development of the people there. I've thought about it since and I've tried to model myself as a manager in the same way. And she's right, and sometimes, not on this job where there is so much to go around, but in a place like East Berlin, maybe to an outsider it would look as if you're being lazy, but in fact you are letting the people do the jobs that have been assigned to do the jobs and you don't whoosh it all up on your desk and write and edit and have all of the contacts and always be the one that goes to the ministry. Very impressive.

Q: Well, one of the things that always motivated her, she told me, was that she always kept paramount in her mind what was best for the Service.

RIDGWAY: It was very clear.

Q: A selfless thing to do. In that sense, did you mean it was very difficult on her . . . or did you also mean in her private life it was difficult for her?

RIDGWAY: No, I wasn't thinking of it in her private life sense, just in this way. She didn't need any of us, she could have done every bit of political analysis at this post, hands tied behind her back, and I'm sure all of the economic analysis. She didn't do it, she let us do it. She let us take the risks, and she let her section chief do it and she didn't intervene in all of those funny little squabbles, even though the post was so small she knew about every one of them. But she let people grow, make their own mistakes, and have their own accomplishments, and no doubt it, as you say, was for the good of the Service. And the price was she had a lot of hours in her office and she must have been asking, "Am I going to die of rust on the brain?" But she paid that price. She would go walking in these wonderful rubber boots that had daisies on the side. That was the joke. I would say, "There goes the ambassador". These short yellow rubber boots with the white daisy, because she had nothing to do with her time; it was not a challenging post for someone with that set of skills.

Q: That was '67.

RIDGWAY: No, that was '67 to '70. Tibby was, again, just a wonderful leader. Her skills were so much larger than the challenge in Norway. She could have done everything at that embassy by herself. John Bovey was the DCM, a wonderful man. And the two of them saw to it that appropriate amounts of work reached all the way down.

Q: Who was the DCM?

RIDGWAY: John Bovey. He's a WE hand and was in Paris. When I got there the long-time labor government was out of office for the first time in 30 years. There was a conservative coalition in, and my assignment was to keep track of the labor government--the labor party. The result--obviously you take these things in your career, they happen to everybody--but the result is at the end of my career, when labor governments have once again come back, these are all people now of my own age who were junior labor party people at the time. They were the group that I entertained. She saw to it that you got a share of the representation. Again, you hear horror stories coming from other posts where there's not enough to do, you couldn't get any representation, you never got to meet anybody, but in Oslo we all got a piece of the action.

Q: *Tibby was always fair, wasn't she?*

RIDGWAY: Very fair. It may have driven her nuts. She used to go out and walk up and down the street because she didn't have enough to do so she'd go for long walks or something. The rest of us had things to do and learned.

Q: *You must know Mrs. Brundtland then?*

RIDGWAY: Very well.

Q: *I knew her father.*

RIDGWAY: Did you really?

Q: *He was Minister of Defense. And when I had Scandinavia they didn't like the mix of airplanes they were getting from us in NATO and he came over and I helped him, in effect, negotiate with McNamara for a different mix of airplanes, which worked out very nicely. He was a delightful man, absolutely delightful.*

RIDGWAY: He was Defense Minister then, wasn't he?

Q: *He was Defense Minister, yes. He's a medical doctor.*

RIDGWAY: I also knew her husband because Arne Brundtland was at the Institute for Foreign Affairs and again, junior officers get those institutions that are on the fringe of government relations. But it was very good.

Ambassador Ridgway was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: *In 1967 you went to Oslo as a political officer. What were the state of relations at the time?*

RIDGWAY: They were very good. Norway was facing a couple of issues. In 1968, Norway had to hold a plebiscite on whether to continue its membership in NATO. The outcome, of course, was of concern to the government and our embassy. The Vietnam War led down all sorts of

strange paths. There was one school of thought that kept pushing something called “participatory democracy,” something akin to what we might see today in California. While in California, the push comes largely from the right; in Norway it came from the far left from the People’s Socialist Party and particularly from a couple of its more strident members. While the younger Norway generation was certainly anti-Vietnam War, Vietnam troubled all Norwegians. These groups kept urging: “NATO out of Norway and Norway out of NATO.” The judgment we had to reach was an estimate of the impact this political drive would have on the plebiscite.

We had a stake in Norway, beyond just an alliance and the desire for close relations. We had major NATO headquarters in Norway, and it was an important military member of NATO. When I reached Oslo, the government was a coalition – an unusual circumstance given that for most of the post-war era the government had been run by Social Democrats or Labor. However, over time the Norwegians did what they could as good NATO partners to provide advice on economic assistance issues.

Another issue arose at about this time, which was just as important to the alliance and to the Scandinavians, which was the coup in Greece in 1967, when the “Colonels” took over the government, tossing out the King and becoming “rulers” themselves. The U.S. recognized the new government and dealt with it much to the displeasure of the Scandinavians. They wanted to bring the “Colonels” up before the European Human Rights Tribunal and other international bodies, which might expose this most undemocratic approach to governmental change. Our position, and that of the Greeks, became quite “dicey” in Scandinavia. When added to our position in Vietnam, it made us very unpopular in that part of the world.

In Sweden, we had a series of political ambassadors. In 1967, it was William Heath, who was followed in 1969 by Jerome Holland, a very distinguished African American who was something like Paul Robeson – athlete, intellectual, scholar, and accomplished business man. Young Swedish people would chase Holland all over Stockholm berating and hassling him, until he left in 1972. Today, we might have closed the embassy, viewing the protests as close to terrorism. From our Oslo perch, we could see the smug Swedish society chasing a prominent African American all over their country; it was just awful.

Norway was never that bad. We took a very low key approach on Vietnam. We didn’t do a lot of public speaking. In time, the Norwegians, through their ambassador in Beijing, tried to bring the U.S. and North Vietnam together in dialogues, which were an adjunct to the Paris negotiations that were being conducted at the time. We had a part of the American delegation come from Paris to meet with several Norwegians who were meeting with some North Vietnamese. The Norwegians were playing the role of intermediary; that is the role they thought they could best play to resolve the Vietnam issue.

It was a difficult time for a Foreign Service officer. I can remember walking to the Foreign Ministry in the winter in early 1968 to give out material trumpeting that the Tet offensive had been a great victory for the United States. My Norwegian interlocutor, who went on to have a very distinguished career in his foreign service as ambassador to Washington and later ambassador to the UN, agreed that I could just put these handouts on the corner of his desk and report back to the embassy that I had delivered the message to the foreign office. Whatever

happened to all the handouts, I don't have the slightest idea; but, it showed how desperate our propaganda efforts had become. We and our hosts could not miss the impact of Vietnam on our society; we were being torn up by this issue.

I traveled a lot in Norway as it was preparing for the fall 1968 plebiscite. There was also the beginning inkling of a potential referendum on whether Norway would join the European Community. This was a bipartisan debate; the affirmative was supported by the conservative coalition government as well as by the Norwegian Labor party. Knut Frydenlund was sort of a shadow foreign minister, and he and I worked closely putting together material supporting Norway's participation in the Community. He also worked closely with Ambassador Tibbetts as well. We met often with Labor people, because they were the largest party and had the best chance of attracting the broader spectrum of Norwegians. In the center and on the right of the political spectrum, you had a lot religious parties, which were not really interested in the issue.

I traveled frequently; the ambassador was very generous allotting travel money for the junior staff. If I wanted to entertain, I had access to some representation money; that also provided me with more senior role models who taught me many valuable lessons. I met with newspaper editors. I spoke in schools and on military bases. My topic was usually NATO. In 1967 the Norwegians voted to remain in NATO, and in 1970, they voted against joining the European Community (later Union), a position they still hold today.

Along the way, I established my credentials with the Norwegian Labor party and the likes of Gro Harlem Brundtland, Knut Frydenlund and Thorvald Stoltenberg, people who in the later years took over the Norwegian government and with whom I stayed in touch with them, even through my later assignments.

In 1968, we had to suffer through what was a unique experience for Foreign Service officers. Here we were overseas representing our country, while the local and the American media ran continuous shots of Washington burning. First, we had the Martin Luther King assassination, which was followed by the riots in the streets of our nation's capital. Then, I flew home in May 1968 to attend my older brother's funeral. As I was embarking on my flight back to Oslo, I learned that Bobby Kennedy had won the California primary; when I landed in Oslo, I was greeted with the news that Bobby Kennedy had been killed. Then came Kent State with pictures of young students lying dead, shot by National guardsmen.

When in May 1969 I was asked whether I wanted to return to Oslo for another two-year tour, after home leave, or to extend my current assignment for an extra year to June 1970, I chose the latter. I really had done all I could in Norway. I was the third of three political officers; it was not that busy a post, nor could I have learned much more. Three years was just about right for that kind of an assignment. Also Ambassador Tibbetts had left after Nixon's election and was replaced by a political ambassador, who had a different view of how an embassy should be run.

I returned to Washington in June, 1970. At that point, I got a call from Joan Clark. She told me that there were no positions available at my grade level in EUR. I think Joan was the deputy executive director of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (ARA) at the time. On the basis of Ambassador Tibbetts' recommendation, she said she was prepared to offer me an assignment as

the Ecuador desk officer. I was over-grade for it. ARA was certainly not my “home,” as I had mostly been in EUR thus far in my career. Joan thought I would find it interesting, so I decided to accept it. In September of that year, I became the Ecuador desk officer.

Q: Before we pursue that new assignment, let me ask you how the embassy in Oslo viewed the Soviet Union.

RIDGWAY: I did not get involved in any discussions on that issue. I didn't see much reporting about Norway and the USSR. Norway had no affection for the Soviet Union. Even if the younger generation was pushing for Norway's withdrawal from NATO, there was no support for a closer relationship with the USSR. I don't think the Norway-USSR relationship was much of an issue.

There was a lot of close military cooperation between NATO and Norway such as military exercises, a large MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group) complement in Oslo, headed by a two-star Air Force general, Gus Taute. One of the issues that we had to deal with was President Kennedy's letter putting to bed any questions about who was in charge of American representation in Norway. CINCEUR (Commander in Chief, European Command), who was in charge of American troops in Europe, considered the MAAG to be part of his command. We kept telling General Taute, and other military officers, that MAAG was not an operational military command and therefore its activities came under the jurisdiction of the American ambassador. Kennedy's letter helped straighten that problem out.

But it was not beyond the MAAG to try to avoid the embassy's supervision, sometimes going off on their own tangent, probably with the blessing of CINCEUR. For example, in September 1969, the Norwegians were going to hold an election a couple of months later. Unbeknownst to the embassy, General Taute and his staff had given approval to a U.S. military exercise, which involved U.S. paratroopers jumping into Norway at about this time. After it happened, there were pictures on the front pages of Norwegian newspapers of U.S. troopers floating down onto Norway. Then came the hunt for who had authorized this ill-timed exercise, and it turned out to be the MAAG. The general's view that this was strictly a military operational issue just didn't wash and he was told that. The tug of war between the MAAGs and the embassies raged across many countries in Europe and created a lot of tension before it was finally settled.

While I was in Norway, I don't remember seeing any analyses by our political section on what the Soviets were up to in the country or what the Norwegian views were on Soviet foreign policy. I think the Soviet threat was primarily seen as an issue for NATO. NATO had listening posts on the North Sea that were run by the Norwegians.

In any case, any effort by the Soviets to establish closer relations with Norway, if indeed that was their goal, was certainly derailed by the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. When Soviet troops invaded Prague, there was a much stronger reaction from the Norwegians than they had displayed when they faced the issue of NATO membership. The Norwegian population was furious at the Soviets. The USSR embassy was just down the street from where I lived, and I watched thousands of Norwegians streaming down the street to the Soviet chancery to protest the Prague invasion.

If there was a Norwegian communist party, it was minuscule. The far left was represented by the Socialist People's Party, which some may well have considered communist. It could have been, in light of much of the fuzzy thinking that was so prevalent in the late 1960's. However, I am sure that there was intensive cooperation between us and the Norwegians, through NATO and the military commands. But I was not privy to that information.

Q: What was the Norwegian attitude toward the West Germans in light of their experiences with the Nazis before and during WWII?

RIDGWAY: What I noticed the most was the West Germans' acquisition of sea-front property in Norway, just as they had done in Spain. These were second homes for the Germans. Soon, the Norwegians passed a law that prevented further sales of coastal property to Germans. For example, the Germans had bought up a lot of property around Trondheim, which, incidentally, they had burned to the ground during WWII. That did not make them very popular with the Norwegians. So there was some tension.

Q: Was there a societal split between generations in Norway, as there was in France and in the U.S.?

RIDGWAY: No, they didn't have anything like that in Norway, the society remained fairly traditional. There were first-time voters, who voted either far right or far left. By the time they voted the second time, they tended to move toward the center. The young conservatives were conservative, not reactionary, and the Labor Party supporters became young social-democrats. One did not find many extremes in Norway, except perhaps among college kids, who, after graduation, joined the mainstream.

Q: Why did Norwegians object to membership in the European community?

RIDGWAY: You must remember that there were only about four million Norwegians. They had their own oil supply. They didn't need the Common Market for their economic well-being as they were doing very well on their own. Europe was probably too sophisticated for the Norwegian religious community which was a "Bible belt." Prime ministers were members of the Christian Democratic Party – until just a few months ago, anyway. Until recently, Kjell Magne Bondevik was the prime minister; he was a vigorous political leader of the Cristina Democrats when I was in Oslo. That party is particularly strong in the south of Norway.

There really was no great need for Norway to join the European Community. It is difficult to explain Norway to people who do not live there. For example, it took 18 months after my arrival before a Norwegian invited me to his home to repay a hospitality that I had extended earlier. I did invite Norwegians to my home – people of equivalent age and rank in the Labor and Christian Democratic parties or in the media or academia or in the foreign ministry. I just tried to become acquainted with a broad spectrum of Norwegians of my age. As I said, 18 months passed before anyone reciprocated my efforts. I think, because of this Norwegian attitude, Oslo was a difficult assignment for a lot of Americans – single or married.

You have to accept that the Norwegians are geographically quite isolated. Many live in fjords remote from contact with the larger world, even people living in the next fjord. That makes them somewhat suspicious of strangers. It therefore takes time for Norwegians to take your measure, and to come to trust you, a stranger. But, once a Norwegian reaches a decision that he would like to become friendly with you, he or she becomes fast friends and they truly become a wonderful friend. They are unassuming, plain people – well cultured and educated. In light of their personal approach, they tend to see people from the European continent as opposites to themselves: as arrogant people, who are full of themselves and hardly plain. Norway knew that it didn't need Europe for economic or even political support; there was no compelling reason for them to join the Community and put up with all those people in Europe who were so unlike themselves.

Q: Was Sweden a factor while you were in Norway?

RIDGWAY: No. The Norwegian view of Sweden at the time had been forged by WWII. The Swedes had supported Nazi Germany, even while officially keeping a “neutral” stance and the Norwegians had been cut off by the Swedes. There were still some tensions between the two countries. When the Norwegians bought some armored vehicles from Volvo, I think, they also ordered three years of spare parts. This was to guard against any possibility of the Swedes stopping supplying these parts. The Norwegians were suspicious. On the other hand, both countries were monarchies, I would not say that the relations between the two were close. They get along, but I would not categorize the relationship as warm or even friendly.

THEODORE SELLIN
Labor/Political Attaché
Oslo (1967-1971)

Theodore Sellin was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and attended the University of Pennsylvania. He entered the Foreign Service in 1952. His posts include Denmark, Washington, DC, Finland, Norway, the Naval War College, OES, and Sweden. Sellin was interviewed by Tom Dunnigan in 2003.

Q: Well, it doesn't matter. At the end of those several years, in 1967 you were assigned to Oslo.

SELLIN: Correct. This was part of a design to get out of what I felt was a fairly humdrum job. My orders originally read Four-Year Tour in Washington, two in this job and then two in some other job if I wanted it. So, at the end of the two years, this is where I thought I'd finally get a crack at a Washington Nordic assignment and I had virtually everything lined up. I had the ambassador to Sweden, who was a good friend of my father's; I had my former DCM in Helsinki, who was a good friend, in BNA as office director; a former ambassador in Oslo who was a very nice lady, Margaret Joy Tibbetts...

Q: Oh, yes.

SELLIN: She was a senior DAS in EUR, and so on. I had all these things all lined up to get into the BNA office, for two years. And this very nice guy, who was my boss, called me into his the office, and said, "Ted, I understand you are looking for another job." I said, "Yes, it's two years and two years, that's what it said on the orders." He said, "You know, Ted, I really..." And basically, I had it lined up. He said, "You know, I hate to do this, but I'm not going to release you from this job." I said, "Why?" He said, "We have had such turnover, that you're the only guy who can provide any continuity in this office." So, I said, very deeply disappointed, "Okay, fine, So, whatever." I didn't put up a fuss. But I began looking around for other escapes...
[laughter]

Q: Sure...[laughter]

SELLIN: And six months to a year later, I was approached by the European Labor advisor in EUR, to see if I was interested in going to Oslo as Labor Attaché, which was becoming vacant, and I said, "Sure! Love to." So that evolved. I went over... At one point... I'd never really gone out as an attaché. I'd previously been a labor reporting officer, so I was just going my merry way, preparing to go, and the labor advisor said to me, Dan Goott, at the time, he said, "Well, have you been over to the AFL-CIO yet?" I said, "No." He said, "You'd better get your ass over there." So I made an appointment to see Jay Lovestone.

Q: Oh, yes.

SELLIN: The infamous Jay Lovestone.

Q: Yes.

SELLIN: Who, as you know, in his youth was a Communist, and was a very influential labor advisor to George Meany. So, I went over to see him, and had an appointment, and spent half an hour chatting with him. Since I didn't know that much about the Norwegian labor situation, we talked about the Finnish labor situation. So, I worked my way back to the office, and there was a note on my desk to call Dan Goott, the labor advisor. So I called him, and he said, "Ted, what in the devil did you say to Jay Lovestone?" I said, "We just discussed the Finnish labor movement." He says, "I just got a curious call from him saying 'who the hell is this radical left-winger you are sending out to Oslo?'"

Q: [laughter]

SELLIN: He thought I was a Communist. I went anyhow...

Q: [laughter] That was probably a mark of approbation for you, in most people's view.

SELLIN: Could be. Anyhow, so I went out there and did the labor work. But it wasn't full time. Because I could easily fracture my Swedish into Norwegian, I did a lot of coverage of the Parliament stuff and all the political reporting, essentially. Because the other half of the office in Oslo was really the Pol/Mil half, staffed by Rozanne Ridgway, later ambassador to Finland and East Germany and assistant secretary for European Affairs.

Q: Assistant secretary... a very fine woman.

SELLIN: Yes indeed. She was doing the Pol/Mil work. I was senior to her in rank, as a matter of fact, at that time. But never again. Our boss was Bob Hennemeyer, a long-time German hand with whom I later, in 1975, bought a sailboat which we still own today!

Q: But you were in the political section as such.

SELLIN: Yes, and as I mentioned I did all the political reporting, plus the labor work. She and the boss did the NATO multilateral things, I was there for three and a half years, had a child born there, a son, and we enjoyed it. The Norwegians are very sociable, once you get to know them. They are a little hard to crack when on their home turf, but once you get to know them, and they get to know you, they form fast friendships that continue for many, many years afterwards.

Q: You were there in some of the worst days of the Vietnam War.

SELLIN: Yes.

Q: What effect did that have?

SELLIN: That had a considerable effect. The counter Vietnam movement was not as rabid as it was in Stockholm. I think in Sweden they got the brunt of it. Some in Oslo, but in Sweden it was considerable. It was fairly well organized in Norway, but rather small. It really never caught on to the extent that it did in Sweden. In a specific way, our embassy was quite exposed on a main street, and it was a triangular building and there were guards at each corner. But King's Park was right across the way and from time to time students and anti-Vietnam rallies would come charging out of the park carrying a stone or something and smash windows. We were getting windows smashed with some regularity. Margaret Joy Tibbetts was the ambassador at the time and she had the standing rule that the Norwegians would have those windows fixed by rush hour in the morning, since the attacks usually occurred at night. We'd stocked the special Belgium glass for this particular building, which was an Eero Saarinen design, a Finnish-American architect. The Norwegians would have to call up a glazier in the middle of the night and get him out and get those windows up at their expense, not our expense.

But there was a radical student movement in Norway as well as everywhere else, and they were agitating. Papandreou, the Greek who had spent quite a bit of time there and eventually settled in Stockholm, had his headquarters there. There was also at the same time a lot of unhappiness about US and the Greek junta, so it wasn't all anti-Vietnam, it was also anti-Greek junta as well. And also the Black Panthers came from time to time.

Q: Bobby Searle and boys...

SELLIN: I don't think Huey Newton came, but Bobby Seale came a couple of times. And the Norwegian Student Association would sponsor these speakers and things like that. So, yes, it was there, but it wasn't anywhere near as vocal or as strong as it was in other parts of the world. I

think basically, dig deep down, most Norwegians knew that NATO was a shield, and they might not like some of the things that we were doing, but what's the alternative?

Q: They liked the shield, yes. What was the Soviet influence in the labor movement, if any?

SELLIN: That's an interesting question. That's a hard one to answer basically, because they were certainly entertaining some of the left wing, the splinter group that I mentioned in Finland was mirrored by a Socialist left splinter group. There had been a bad fire in the Norwegian coal mine in Svalbard (Spitzbergen) in the Barents Sea. As a result of that, there was a lot of anti-government, pro-safety agitation, and this radical left in the labor party in Norway seized on this to withdraw and create a left wing splinter group. It was small but vigorous ginger element in Norwegian left wing politics throughout the time...

Q: A burr in your saddle, eh?

SELLIN: Also, I'm not answering your question specifically, yet, but it was interesting to be there at the time I was in the labor slot because the labor party, shortly after I got there, had been voted out. A center coalition, I forget whether it was the liberals or the conservatives at the time, but the center party held the premiership and did for a number of years while I was there, and was eventually replaced by a conservative prime minister. (End of tape)

So the Labor Party was out of power, and was for the bulk of the time I was there. This had the consequence of my being not only the principal contact with all of the labor organizations, but also major echelons of the labor party, because the ambassadors and the political section in principle dealt mainly with the government. So I had unusual access to the former prime minister, and the coming prime minister, and a former foreign minister, the coming foreign minister, several of the people who later, when the Socialist labor party came back into power after I'd left, were in the highest levels of government.

Q: Is that like Mr. Bratteli and people like that?

SELLIN: Trygve Bratteli - I got to know him quite well, and Nordli. Some of my contacts had been professional diplomats who were later seconded to the labor movement, especially around the time of the 20th anniversary of NATO when there was concern that if a plebiscite were demanded that the Norwegians might vote against continuing membership. I said earlier that they recognized what NATO meant to Norway, but there was always that left wing opposition, and we and many Norwegians were a little concerned about how that referendum would play out. So, anyway, a diplomat who was later foreign minister, Knut Frydenlund, was working in the labor movement central organization (LO) at that time to make sure that a groundswell of opinion would not force a plebiscite and he succeeded. The decision was made by a successful parliamentary vote that Norway would not withdraw from NATO. Another younger Foreign Service officer who was also detailed to the LO, was Torvald Stoltenberg, who later on became the defense minister and foreign minister and his 40-year-old son was until recently the Labor prime minister of Norway.

So it did give me an opportunity to tap into sources that other officers didn't, and it made the work quite interesting as a result. That NATO plebiscite, as I say, didn't occur. Later on, just as I was leaving Norway, there was referendum that was called that was to decide whether they should join the EC. That one they lost, it did go to a plebiscite, and the Norwegians opted to refrain from joining the European Union.

Q: Talk a little bit about NORDEC, whatever that was.

SELLIN: [laughter]

Q: That was the supposed union of the Scandinavian countries, visa, as opposed to the EEC, I would guess.

SELLIN: I guess so, I'm trying to remember. I wasn't doing much economic reporting, but it was an effort to try and create a Nordic economic cooperation structure. And it didn't work, and I frankly can't recall why it didn't work, but I think that some of the Nordic countries, including Norway, weren't that interested in it. Basically, however, the Norwegians were... well I don't quite know how to put this... the Norwegians were pro-Western, certainly. They were quite, you know, I won't say egotistical, but they were quite self-assured. And, one of the things that happened on my watch there was the discovery of oil in the North Sea, with its ramifications for a robust future economy.

Q: I wanted to ask you, had they discovered oil?

SELLIN: They were drilling for it when I got there, and by the second year or so, they had found the first oil field. Of course, that changed the Norwegian situation considerably.

Q: Yes.

SELLIN: Unfortunately, I must say... I can't say fortunately, but as a matter of fact, the discovery of oil did not make Norway perhaps one of the richest countries in the world. For some reason, not being an economist I'm not exactly sure why, this discovery of oil had an adverse effect on the cost of living and costs rose spectacularly in subsequent years. on top of which the government imposed, as all the Nordic countries do now, a VAT, value added tax, so the cost of living in Norway is sky high. Oslo is one of the most expensive cities in the world to live in, partly in relation to this oil. One thing that they are doing with this oil, however, is directing a certain percentage of the revenues to an escrow account to essentially allow the welfare state to continue after the oil dries up.

Q: Yes.

SELLIN: I know that there are economists who claim that this is not the smartest thing to do, but in any case that's what they're doing. I don't know what the outcome of that will be in due course, because they keep discovering oil there.

Q: Is all the oil offshore, or is some of it onshore?

SELLIN: All of it is offshore, and they're beginning to drill further and further North, even exploring in the Barents Sea area. Environmentalists everywhere, as in Norway, are not too pleased with some of the drilling. In fact, when they discovered oil at the Ekofisk Field, as I think it was called, it was declared that no permits would be given for drilling above a parallel that was halfway up the coast of Norway. Because of the fisheries up there, there were possibilities of damage to the stocks. Recently new permits have been given opening new "blocs" further north and the expansion of drilling seems inexorable.

Q: Are the Russians up there?

SELLIN: Yes, the Russians are up there too. The Barents Sea boundaries are in dispute. Russians claim a historical line going due North. The Norwegians claim a straight line drawn at 90% from a shore baseline, which creates a pie shaped segment of the sea, the "Grey area", which has, I believe, prevented exploitation so far.

Q: And it's not a Florida climate up there either.

SELLIN: No it isn't. But someone is certainly going to get up there and drill someday. Norway has already become one of the major exporters of oil in the world today.

Q: Now you were in Norway during the Six-Day War in the Middle East. Did that have any effect in Norway?

SELLIN: No. I was going to Norway. I didn't get to Norway until November. That was in June.

SAMUEL E. FRY, JR.
Economic Officer
Oslo (1968-1971)

Samuel E. Fry, Jr. was born in December 1934 and raised in Illinois, New York, and Massachusetts. He received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 1956 and then attended the University of Edinburgh on a Dartmouth fellowship. While attending Edinburgh, Mr. Fry was drafted into the U.S. military. Upon completion of his military service, he received a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961. Mr. Fry's career included positions in Moscow, Oslo, Helsinki, and Bucharest. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 26, 1993.

Q: Today is the 24th of October, 1995 so we just finished a two year gap in this. Let's move to Oslo where you were from 1968 to 1971. What was your job there?

FRY: My job was the second American in the economic section. There was also a commercial counselor and three or four local employees because America had a surprising then - and I guess

still now - amount of trade. At the time I arrived in 1968, the ferment on the economic scene in Norway was the oil picture. The test well drilling in the North Sea had been going on for several years. In 1969 a field being tested by Phillips Petroleum called Echo Fisk, way out in the North Sea in the Norwegian sector, brought in oil that was so pure that we could bring it into the embassy as part of a demonstration and put a match to it and it would burn like whale oil. The scientists told us that in certain kinds of cars that were not too fancy you could put this oil in directly.

So it was a very, very high quality oil. And that really set the tone for the work that I was doing there from 1969 to 1971. My specific jobs were, I guess, the usual thing for a mid-career officer in economic work. I was given certain sectors of the economy which were actually the important sectors: shipping and timber. Shipping was for Norway a very important sector of the economy, with Norway having one of the largest merchant fleets in the world. And a very closed shop: most of those companies were owned individually or had a few shares and were very tightly held in Scandinavia, and Norway. It was awhile before this young Foreign Service officer was able to gain their confidence. I was the control officer several times for Helen Bentley, who was at that time the head of the Maritime Commission, and who used to come over to Norway to compare notes on legislation that was pending in the United States, and meet with all Norwegians in the shipping field. My memoranda of conversation took days to collate and prepare. Bentley later became a congresswoman.

Over time I think I got the ability to call a major shipowner and simply say I have a question which has been posed to me, or our Department of Commerce has a question and could I come in and talk to someone. Surprisingly enough it was usually the owner. It wasn't a matter of being foisted off.

There were interesting sidelights. For example, we had a Vice-Presidential visit by lame duck Vice-President Hubert Humphrey in 1969. Hubert Humphrey's mother was from Norway and he had wanted to come over for a long time. He may have been there privately but he came to the funeral of Trygve Lie who was the first Secretary General of the United Nations. It was quite a funeral to say the least. That was the first time that I had the opportunity to be a control officer for a delegation which included President Truman's daughter, Margaret Truman, and other dignitaries. But since it was not politically oriented, it was more or less - to the extent a funeral can be - a fun opportunity, it taught me a lot about dealing with people who traveled on official visits for the United States Government at that rank. There were many, many official visitors to Norway. In the area of NATO, for example, they usually wanted an economic briefing and I usually did those. So I got to know a lot of the people who were dealing in NATO political-military affairs, which I must say later on, when I was stationed in the Operations Center, helped me quite a bit in knowing important players.

There was another sidelight which was fascinating. Most people associate the Nobel Prize with Sweden and rightly so since all but the Peace Prize are decided by a committee of the Swedish Parliament, and the awards are made by the King of Sweden in Stockholm. The Peace Prize is decided by a Norwegian parliamentary committee and the presentation is made in Oslo by a member of parliament. It's a prerogative that they esteem very highly and the Nobel Peace Prize, as you can imagine, is one of the heavy weight awards of all time.

In 1970, the award was given to Norman Borlaug, who was then - is now, the father of the green revolution. Working through the Rockefeller Institute, particularly in Mexico and other places in the world, he was able to create yields of rice and corn and other crops which, given the same area of space and climatic conditions, would be able to yield three or four or times as much as the previous crops had been yielding. He brought with him not only his family and friends, and the President of the University of Minnesota - because he was a Minnesotan - but he brought from Mexico the field hands: that is the Spanish-speaking men who had labored for years with him - to the wonderful white tie formal dinner where the workers were rather simply dressed. It was very moving to see his loyalty to them as he pointed out at the dinner that it would have been very difficult for him to achieve success without the dedication over many, many years of the people who actually labored in the fields.

So that was a very nice touch. I was interested to see recently that the Peace Prize is now in the range of a million dollars. I think Doctor Borlaug, if my memory serves me, got \$185,000 which will give you an idea of inflation between 1970 and the 1990s. There were other Americans who came on the Peace Prize. The previous one I think I had been Martin Luther King. The International Labor Organization won the Peace Prize and at that time the director was an American so he represented the ILO at that meeting. Also, Ralph Bunche, who was at that time retired, or was at least Emeritus at the UN and a very distinguished American in his own right who had himself won the Peace Prize for his work in the 1940s in Palestine, was a visitor. We were able to entertain him and work with him on some of the things that he wanted to do there. So all in all it was a busy place. Governor Hickel of Alaska was then head of the Interior Department and he came to Norway. He was very interested in the northern countries because of their relationship with Alaska.

Q: Your ambassador during that time was...

FRY: The ambassador when I went to Norway was Margaret Joy Tibbetts, who was one of the first career women Foreign Service officers to be appointed chief of mission. She was a superb manager, and I often reflect on the fact that my colleague Rozanne Ridgway, who was then the number two in the political section, must have learned a lot from her because next to Ambassador Tibbetts I would say Ambassador Ridgway was without doubt the best manager and the best leader that I ever worked with in the Foreign Service. I think of them in the same breath because they were of the same mold.

Tibbetts left about six or eight months after I got there and the next ambassador we waited for with some trepidation, I guess. He was a political appointee named Phillip Kingsland Crowe. He was 100 percent political and very proud of it. He had been Ambassador to South Africa, and Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. He was a good friend of Secretary Dulles and so on. His wife was the heir to US Shoe, a vast manufacturer of many products and headquartered in Saint Louis. He used to laugh that every time there was an election, or Senator Fulbright was running, or however the land lay in the election period, his wife who was a democrat, and he used to split their donations. So he used to joke that when he went into the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his ambassadorial hearings it used to be, "Hi Phil. When are you leaving?"

As a matter of fact he turned out to be a fascinating person, a very decent human being. His main interest was in world wildlife. He was a founder of the World Wildlife Fund with Prince Phillip and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. He had been a big game hunter and the whole nine yards when it came to killing animals and then he realized worldwide what was happening and wrote a book called The Empty Ark and got very much involved in wildlife rehabilitation and rescue.

I sometimes wonder if my own interest in wildlife and work which I have done since leaving the Foreign Service was not at least spurred by Crowe.

I was the only guy in the embassy at that time who had a boat. I had a 28' inboard diesel fishing boat and he loved to go out and take photographs. The first day he was there he asked, "who has a boat" and they said, "Well, Fry has a boat" and they said take the ambassador out on the weekend. So my wife and I did so and became quite good friends with him. I was concerned that people would wonder why he did so on the first day when he didn't know anybody else in the embassy. At the first staff meeting, he was calling me Sam. I traveled with him a great deal. One of the great experiences of my life was in 1970, not too long after his arrival; about a year.

We decided to show the flag in the Norwegian Island of Svalbard, sometimes called Spitsbergen, which since 1925 was under international treaty but under Norwegian sovereignty. A number of nations are equal signatories to the Svalbard Treaty, which mainly concerned demilitarization of the first and only area in the northern hemisphere, and which remained so all during the Cold War. During World War II there was a breach with a small German party that tried to set up, as they tried to do in Greenland, a weather station. They didn't send troops or try to occupy it, but it did lead to a British commando raid with loss of life. But with that exception all during the Cold War, which I'll mention a bit more later, it was a demilitarized zone. Norway turned it into a peaceable kingdom. Hunting was restricted and only once did they get into the business of allowing some test well to be drilled for oil. Oil turned out to be nonexistent and it remains as it was, although more modernized than when we went there.

Svalbard has been of interest to the United States because the capital city, if you want to call it that, is called Longyear City. John Longyear was an American venture capitalist who bought out a coal claim in the beginning of the 1900s. During the First World War, Longyear left that venture and America had no more economic interests there, but we did have an interest in the settlement of the issue of Svalbard which was the only territory by the 1920's which was technically called in international law a "no man's" land. We were very concerned along with other Europeans that something would develop up there that would not be favorable for the world community, which led to the Svalbard Treaty. With equal right to go up there, no American ambassador - if my memory is correct - had been there since at least the 1950's. The Russians had gone in quite strongly with equal rights. They had then two coal cities with a population of 1500 or 2000.

So Ambassador Crowe decided to go up and show the flag and that we did. We went up on a ship that makes a one-day stop there. But we stayed for ten or twelve days with the governor general. He took us on his boat all the way up as far as you could go to the pack ice, up to a little island called Moffen, where we saw for example - no one had been up there for many years - the

first walrus pup seem in decades. Which meant that the walrus were beginning to come back. Until the treaty was signed and well into the 1930's, all wildlife had been virtually exterminated up there by unregulated hunting. Muskoxen were reintroduced later on, and now it has more of a normal appearance with wildlife.

We scoured the islands. We visited all of the sights. We did not visit the Russian encampments because the Norwegians felt that it would be a bit complicated. Originally we had asked the Russian Ambassador to come with us. Right up to the last moment he was going to do so, so that he could visit his Russian sites while we would take him to the Norwegian sites. But at the last moment, of course, he bailed out. It seemed a bit much for us to push our rights too far. In any case we took the Governor General's boat into the Russian harbor and through the "graphics program" for which another agency allowed us to use a very fine camera and all the film we wanted, I took dozens and dozens of telephoto shots of the whole area as we cruised up and down from about 75 yards off shore on the Governor's boat with no Russian able to say anything. I think during my stay in Svalbard I took about 400 shots. They were the first on the ground, detailed, top-to-bottom ones of every inhabited location that had been done other than what would have been done by U-2 or something like that. So we really brought everybody up to date in Washington on what was being done there.

I had the pleasure of doing a very long airgram about the trip, with the Ambassador contributing a great deal. It turned out to be some 30 or 40 pages. Subsequently in the mid-'70s, there was a great to do when the Norwegians wanted to build an airport in Svalbard and the Russians said, "Oh, if you have an airport then we'll build a helicopter pad." It went bouncing around NATO. The airport was built and of course it was not military. It was built so that supplies could be brought in during the winter time when the ice pack surrounded the island. I was told by the Norwegian Desk Officer later that when the word went out for an NSC task force on Svalbard they said give us everything you have. All they had was my airgram.

NATO had acquiesced to Norway's and Denmark's firm commitment to not having any nuclear weapons on Norwegian soil except in time of war. However, the northern wing of the NATO Air Command was in a bunker right outside of Oslo. I had an opportunity to go in there a number of times. And that was real Cold War stuff with star wars. Everything was underground. I don't know what would happen as time went on with a direct hit, but it was pretty impressive. It showed that Norway, for all its occasional Labor party desires to pull back or reduce its contribution to NATO, believe me was a full participant. Also, both under the economic hat and just kind of wandering around as an embassy officer I got permission to go into the Norwegian naval installations on the west coast in which tunnels could swallow up a very large frigate, what we would call a small destroyer, in about five minutes into a mountain.

No wonder the Germans coveted those fjords during the war. I visited all of their steel plants, their aluminum sites that were very important to us because of world competition and aluminum prices. On fisheries I visited Norwegian fishing ports of every size; Christiansand, Trondheim, Bergen, and up to Tromso, the northern most city in the world. In general, I would say I had the real fun and pleasure of visiting everything you could think of in Norway that was in any way of economic interest to the United States. It was a very, very satisfying assignment.

Q: How did we view the "Soviet threat" at that time? We're talking about 1968 to 1971.

FRY: Very seriously. For those who were invited to Munich to play war games, which I never was, I know that one of the major games was the penetration of the north of Norway by a Soviet task force. The scenario started out with, "all we want is a little more buffer between Murmansk and the Kola peninsula and NATO, and all we want is 1000 square miles. We don't want to go to war with this." How would NATO take the bait or would NATO stand by its commitment that one inch of NATO soil was the same as the United States? There was a great deal of concern. It led to the establishment at that time - but not to the degree that it later became - a so-called prepositioning in which large quantities of equipment and supplies: food, winter clothing, and weapons; were prepositioned in Norway for a US Marine brigade. When the first Marines were there it led to a political crisis in the Norwegian Parliament about having foreign troops actually exercising on Norwegian territory. It wasn't anywhere near the Russian border; it was down near the middle of Norway where the ports were. But of course, the Russians went bananas and communist parties all over Scandinavia had a joy-ride with this since Sweden and Finland were neutral. So here was a country which curled up into the Arctic Ocean and bordered the Soviet Union and it was having NATO maneuvers. You see, it was the only NATO country that could do that except for Turkey and we weren't up in the mountains of Turkey.

So yes, the Soviet threat was taken very seriously and the work that our political section did on the NATO issue was clearly the major political issue that we had. The major economic issue, interestingly enough, was whether Norway would, at some point, join the European Community. Shortly after I left it decided not to do. There was an alternate form in the European Free Trade Association, EFTA, that the Finns were negotiating with the other Nordic countries. Those negotiations took forever and we in the economic section did all the reporting on that. That was of interest to us because the relationship that Norway would have with Finland - and Finland with the rest of Scandinavia - was a bit dicier than it later became. You figure in the '60s and the '70s the Cold War was really at its height and people were settling in for the long haul. Where Finland stood and what might be the scenario for Sweden was, if not crucial, of great interest to our planners. Any relationship that brought Finland closer to the west was viewed with great interest by us, and I might say with some concern by the Soviet Union. So that linkage between the economic and the NATO military was always present in any Norwegian equation that you wanted to talk about.

Q: How did you find the Norwegian political scene as far as NATO, United States, Soviet Union, communists and all that?

FRY: The NATO connection was strong and when pressed, even the leftist Labor Party, which in fact was in power a substantial part of the time when I was there went short of wanting to leave NATO. There were members on the left of the ruling coalition headed by the Social Democratic or Labor Party, who did want to pull out of NATO. And then there was a small Communist Party. But all of the other parties and a majority of the Labor Party definitely wanted to remain. They couldn't see a role for Norway which was the equivalent of the role that Sweden or Finland were taking. So the answer was in reality, the NATO connection was never in doubt but everybody loved to play with it.

Q: How about Sweden? I mean, what was the outlook of the Sweden you saw?

FRY: Sweden and Norway have had this wonderful love-hate relationship partly because Norway did not become an independent country until 1905 when it split from Sweden. That's why I mention the Nobel Peace Prize being there. Gustav Nobel built a beautiful home in Oslo because he had a lot of factories over there. It wasn't his primary residence but you'd think it was. His daughter married a Norwegian and lived there. The street around his house was later named Nobel's Gate. His residence became the residence of the American ambassador. So we had a connection to Nobel other than the prizes.

There was the usual banter, for example, about the dumbest Norwegian that moved to Sweden and raised the IQ of both countries. All kinds of Norwegian jokes like that. The reality was that the relationship was very close. If there was residual slight bitterness about the Swedish role during the Second World War, you would never really notice it. Sweden also played a great role in WW II taking people in from Finland and Norway. So it was just an historical kind of banter back and forth, but the economic relationship was very strong because as it developed in the '60s and '70s, there was a free market in labor in Scandinavia where many thousands of Norwegians were working in Swedish factories and also Finns working in Sweden. So they are all a band of brothers; they are all Nordics, and they all stick together. They had SAS, the unified airline between Sweden Denmark and Norway. They cooperated totally in the UN. They cooperated on all issues dealing with shipping and seamen and many other issues.

Q: You were there when the Nixon administration came in. We were still heavily engaged in Vietnam, the Swedes - particularly Olaf Palme - was vehemently against us. We saw Sweden basically as the enemy almost. How about Norway... from your perspective, how did you see the Norwegians?

FRY: The anti-US in Vietnam demonstrations and feelings in Norway ran high. At the university it was, you might say, universal. There were conservatives in the younger set in the political parties that stood by - if you want to use that term - the commitment that we had made in Vietnam. But in general it was looked at with outright disgust and horror, replete with many marches past the embassy, I might add. There was great concern about what the United States was doing, the image it was creating. In the mildest from, as I suppose in many other countries, the Conservative Party was kind of a shaking its head - what was our goal there; where were we going to go? So I would say we tried to make the sale. We had the usual people coming through: Douglas Pike and company from USIA trying to make the sale on why it was important to be in Vietnam. Certainly the Norwegians never criticized us officially or at the government level, but it was very, very unpopular.

One example was when Vice President Hubert Humphrey came to the funeral of the first UN Secretary General, Trygve Lie. There was a large park across the street from the embassy which was an extension of the park that was the king's palace. It was a park you could just walk through and it wasn't particularly patrolled. There were policemen in front of our embassy; they were worried about demonstrators. But just about two hours before Humphrey arrived, persons - I think eventually identified - got giant slingshots and fired ball bearings from across the street into the embassy front. They went through triple pane glass. Since the embassy, which had been

built by the Finnish architect Sarrinen, was a unique building; everything had been made just for that building and there were no spare parts. We could not replace the windows. There was glass everywhere and it could have been serious; the bearings came through almost like bullets and there were a number of windows broken.

The Vice President handled it beautifully. In fact when he came to the embassy, it was to say hello to the folks but it was not a visit for the embassy, it was a visit for a funeral so he was not out gallivanting around. That was the kind of thing you got. After that we had a heavy police patrol. This was the first, and I believe we were the only embassy that had to have that kind of heavy coverage. It made us all a little uncomfortable.

Incidentally, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry used this attack in a way that showed Norwegians being so sensible and so practical about money and about their affairs. They turned it on the left by simply pointing out in the paper in several long articles exactly what it cost the Norwegian people to replace the windows and other damage to the American Embassy. They said every Norwegian had to pay so much money and wasn't that a silly way to spend your tax money. They tried to put the shame to all sides; "that's not the way real Norwegians behave." Signs and things were pasted on the side of the embassy wall when the policeman wasn't looking. But to sum it up, Vietnam, as in many posts, was a time of, if not of outright hostility, then of great questioning by an ally that wanted nothing more than a close friendship.

HERBERT G. HAGERTY
Political Officer
Oslo (1970-1973)

Herbert G. Hagerty was born in New Jersey in 1932. He graduated from Columbia University in 1954 and from the University of Pennsylvania with a MA in 1956 before joining the US Navy. After joining the Foreign Service, Hagerty served overseas in India, Norway, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In Washington DC, he served as the Director of the Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh Affairs and as the Director of the Office of Intelligence Liaison. Hagerty was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001

Q: Okay, so you were in Oslo from '70 to when?

HAGERTY: '73.

Q: What was it like in Norway?

HAGERTY: Well, it seemed to be exactly what I wanted. It was the kind of change that I thought would be stimulating for me because it also required me to think more broadly about foreign relations issues rather than being limited to domestic politics. But I learned quickly that unlike some of the political swings in the Third World, elections in Norway that involve a shift in percentage of national vote of a half of one percent can produce a government change. During

my time, there was a Labor Party government, then a non-Labor Government. But a major issue affecting both parties was a referendum in which the Norwegians voted to remain outside the EC -- also by a slim margin. Norwegians, it seemed, saw the EC as controlled by nations that did not share their interests, by far-away Catholic countries with too many people who weren't as fair skinned as they. They also felt that the French intrude into their fishing waters up in the north if they went in the EC, so they stayed out.

Q: Had oil been found yet?

HAGERTY: Yes, North Sea oil had been found just off Norway's coast, and Norwegians seemed overwhelmed by the momentous economic and environmental decisions they were forced to make about what to do with their new wealth. They knew the oil was not going to be there forever and wanted to make sure that they did the right thing with this new wealth. In Norway, hydroelectric generation fueled much of Norway's prosperity, but the number of environmentally suitable new hydroelectric sites had dwindled to a few. So this oil, and its accompanying natural gas, came along at the right time for them. The gas they could either burn cleanly in the north and generate electricity from it or be piped down to the south for that purpose. Either way, it was environmentally and economically sound.

Q: Who were the ambassadors when you were there?

HAGERTY: Philip Crowe was Ambassador when I arrived and virtually through my stay.

Q: How do you spell his last name?

HAGERTY: C-R-O-W-E. He was a political appointee, had been an Eisenhower appointee to Sri Lanka, and had spent the war in OSS in China. His father was the first publisher and owner of "Life" magazine, later selling it profitably to Henry Luce. The Ambassador was married a woman who, herself, was also wealthy, so Phil had lots of money. He enjoyed the official residence in Oslo, which was the former Nobel residence, where he entertained in grand style, mostly in "black tie." I don't think anybody in Norway paid much attention to him, actually. He seemed interested mainly in hunting and fishing, everywhere in Norway, and those subjects dominated much of his conversation.

As for me, NATO was getting involved in environmental issues, via its Committee on Challenges to Modern Society (CCMS) -- a Nixon initiative. So, I got similarly involved with environmental things at the same time that Norway was in the process of creating an environmental ministry. I got an award for some of the things I did on the environmental side there as an extension of my NATO "beat." I took Crowe to meet the new minister heading the environmental ministry once that had been set up. The minister was a taciturn man, uninterested in hunting and fishing. Before long, he and Crowe were engaged in a strained conversation since Crowe really wasn't interested in environmental things.

At one point, the minister mentioned that there had been a polar bear attack on a man in the north, and since Crowe had once hunted polar bears, he picked up on that. The minister stopped him short, however, by saying, "Mr. Ambassador, I have to tell you that when I hear a story of an

attack of a polar bear on a man, I always reserve judgment until I've heard the bear's side of it." At that point, Crowe decided the conversation was at an end, and we quickly left the ministry.

Q: How did the embassy operate? Was it basically the DCM?

HAGERTY: John Ausland, the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), ran the embassy; he was a first generation Norwegian-American.

Q: Yes, he just died not too long ago.

HAGERTY: Yes, that's right. He retired in Norway when he left the Foreign Service.

Q: He's written on Norway. So, I take it he was quite.

HAGERTY: He ran it very well, from an easy chair in his office; he never sat at his desk. Next to his chair, on a table, he had an out-basket but no in-basket. He handled paper just once and sent it to a burn bag or to someone else's in-basket for action. That was his style. He was respected by the Norwegians, and he handled Crowe quite well, especially when Crowe was acting the part of a "Prima Dona."

Q: Was there a Mrs. Crowe?

HAGERTY: Yes, but she was never at post. They eventually divorced, and after Oslo, Crowe went on to be ambassador in Denmark where he remarried, a much younger woman from Scandinavia, I believe. He died in Copenhagen.

Q: You didn't have any... I mean one of our ambassadors, I think, was there or in another of the Scandinavian countries around this time was certainly renowned for chasing young ladies around the desk and all that.

HAGERTY: No, that was not, to my knowledge, Crowe's game. He wanted to fish every stream and to hunt in every forest in Norway. When the U.S. Army in Germany announced a pheasant hunt, they could know that Phil Crowe would accept any invitation to visit Germany to shoot game. Crowe took me along once because I was the Embassy Politico-Military officer and could be his note-taker on any calls that occurred. When I told him for openers, "I don't kill birds," he said, "I don't care if you kill birds, as long as you eat them with me in the evening." So a USAF colonel, who headed our Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) joined me and the Ambassador for a full week in Bavaria Germany in which the Colonel and I were mostly on our own -- except for dinner.

Q: When Norway opted out of the European Community, how did they feel about NATO at that time? We're talking about '77?

HAGERTY: NATO was very important to them. The previous Nazi occupation, even 25 years later, was something that still cast a dark shadow. Norway's commitment to NATO, an uncharacteristic decision for them because it defied the sense of Scandinavian neutralism and

isolation, was their bet against not having to live through another such hostile occupation. Our problem in our bilateral relationship with Norway was that when the United States looked out at Norway, we saw NATO, while when the Norwegians looked out at NATO, they saw mainly the United States. Their bilateral link with the United States was of significantly greater value to them than membership *per se* in NATO. And while we tended to see Norway in the alliance context, it was also true that Norway possess strategic of great importance in military and security terms also, largely because of its proximity to the USSR.

Q: The Kola Peninsula?

HAGERTY: Yes. We had a close partnership with the Norwegians on a number of sensitive matters, especially keeping track of the Soviet Northern Fleet. For instance, in order to get into the Atlantic, Soviet submarines had to transit the Norwegian Sea, that is, within range of Norway-based aircraft. Under NATO terms, you know, the Norwegian Air Force and the German Army were the only two national military forces that were full-time under NATO operational control. The NATO Northern Command located under a mountain near Oslo was involved, and the senior air deputy there was a USAF two star general. So Norway played its NATO role fully, if carefully, and saw this part of their ultimate security link to the United States.

Q: Well, did you have to be careful in talking that you always mentioned the magic word of NATO?

HAGERTY: Not necessarily; Norwegians wanted to hear about the United States more than NATO. The reason why they were in NATO wasn't because they liked the French, or the Italians, or the Greeks, or the Turks. As for the Brits, that's another story.

Q: What about the Germans?

HAGERTY: The Germans had overcome some of their opprobrium but not all of it. The naval deputy at the NATO command outside Oslo was a German two-star admiral who had been a U-boat commander in World War II. The only requirement imposed by the Norwegians on such assignments to Norway was that the individual could not have served on Norwegian soil during World War II. As this U-boat commander would be frank to say, and the Norwegians privately acknowledged, that he had "never served on Norwegian soil." But, he would smile, "We mention Norwegian waters."

Q: Speaking of U-boats and waters, you know, certainly in the waters near Sweden, the Soviets doing kind of a very peculiar game of underwater probing and all that in. What about Norway?

HAGERTY: Yes, in the Baltic, near Sweden. That created unease in Norway, but no more than it did among the Swedes. However, sometime in 1972, the Soviets worried the Norwegians even more by running an amphibious exercise which they staged from the Baltic all the way around through to the Norwegian Sea to land Soviet troops on the Kola Peninsula -- seeming thus to "envelop" Norway. The Norwegians saw this as a Soviet assertion that, "Hey, we could just sweep you in." Norwegians needed lots of reassurance that year, which we provided in a number

of ways with evidence of our military presence in the form of exercises, etc. to bolster their confidence restoring. But their concern was still that they could be cut off and isolated from us and from NATO.

Q: What about their relations with Sweden?

HAGERTY: Well, you know, the foreign ministries in Scandinavia, at every level, talked daily by phone with counterparts. But, there was also animosity that carried over from the Swedish-German relationship during the war, even 25 years later. And in addition, the Swedes and the Norwegians have their own history, some of it typified in their languages. Swedish is a richer, more subtle language than Norwegian, with a vocabulary five times the size of Norwegian. Thus, a Swede often has several words to describe something for which a Norwegian has only one, often the same as one of the Swedish words but the least subtle or the superlative. So, when a Norwegian says that he's hungry to a Swede, his word suggests to Swedes that he is "famished" or "starving," rather than peckish or mildly hungry. This vocabulary problem often fed into their unflattering images of each other -- a Swede appearing to be a "city slicker" to Norwegians, and a Norwegian appearing to be a country bumpkin to Swedes. Now, of course, they watch each other's television, and I don't know how that affects this. The 1970's was a long time ago.

Q: How are the Danish? Were they considered serious or what did the Norwegians think that about the Danish?

HAGERTY: Well, you know, the Danes were Norway's their last rulers prior to 1905, so the Norwegians also have a history with the Danes. But I think that they overcame some of that, at least, because they were fought the Germans and thereafter joined NATO together, cooperating closely on military matters. A Danish brigadier rotated regularly with a Norwegian as the NATO Northern Europe ground force commander at the Oslo NATO headquarters, for instance. I don't ever remember hearing very much about the Danes of the sort that I heard often from older Norwegians about the Swedes. And, of course, we had little reason to like the Swedes either. We were taking so much flack from the Swedes about Vietnam that our Charge in Stockholm once referred to Stockholm as the "Holy See of Moral Imperialism." We knew also that when we'd have some sort of demonstration in front of the embassy in Oslo, the police would break it up, while in Stockholm, the police would stand by and watch windows being broken. They were different atmospheres.

Q: What about the parliament of Norway? Did you find, how were your contacts there?

HAGERTY: I didn't have any. My Norwegian language colleague did all of it; he was the labor officer and the Norwegian language officer. I had come away from the Indian parliament thinking that the parliamentary system was one I was happy I didn't live under, because of the way in which it so stiffly controlled events by the will of the majority. The government had to keep winning, and if it didn't win, then it was out of power. You can get impatient with our system, but ours is a constant coalition, and I think that broader interests get served on that basis. I had the feeling that the Norwegian parliament was a stiff organization too. I once asked Norwegian friends if there was an earth-shaking crisis taking place, what five Norwegians would the prime minister feel he needed to consult. They would reply that one would be the king, one

would be the president of the labor federation, one would be the head of the opposition in parliament, and one would be the head of the church. But in the two years I had been there, I hadn't ever heard anything about the head of the church! And opinions about the fifth one would vary widely. Politics was not a very lively art there.

Q: You know, they had all this money coming in from oil. How did you feel the Norwegians were investing it?

HAGERTY: My impression was that they were giving as much thought as they could to putting it to use in infrastructural ways that would produce long term gain for the economy. But I left in '73 before the real big money started to come in.

Q: The October war.

HAGERTY: That's right. They were still sorting out their priorities in this. They obviously had some infrastructural questions that they used with some additional power generations, some additional road building and nation building activities that they felt were needed. They hadn't really come down hard on where they were going to come out on that, so I don't know.

Q: Were the Norwegians pretty responsible citizens? You begin to get some wealth and all in some places, people just sort of sit back and say, "Well, we'll get some Pakistanis to do the work for us" or something?

HAGERTY: Many Norwegians were racist, in my view. They did not like dark-skinned Italian soldiers as part of a NATO force exercising on Norwegian soil. One of the things they didn't like about the Common Market and the whole European Union idea was that they wouldn't have control of people – like dark-skinned Gypsies -- entering Norway from other places in Europe. They were a curious mixture, because they could become very agitated about poor, dark-skinned people being slaughtered in the Sudan, particularly if they were Christians. They could be absolutely open-minded on racial matters far from Norwegian soil, but under their own noses, they tended to be different. At the same time, I must say, they were wonderfully straightforward, honest people people. It was almost routine in Norway to learn that a lost wallet was returned to its owner – often a tourist -- with all of its credit cards and money intact. As I told my parents, Norway reminded me of the United States my grandfather used to talk to me about. It was a wonderful place for me to be with two young boys.

Q: Where did they go to school?

HAGERTY: They went to the DOD-sponsored Oslo American School. I lived right on the public transit lines that took them to school. And the house I rented had a basement with a separate apartment, so I had an *au pair* living there to look after the boys when they came home from school. *Au pairs* were not hard to find, often Danes, Germans, and Dutch who wanted an opportunity to live in an English speaking household. I married a Foreign Service Officer in the embassy consular section while in Norway, and we kept the *au pair*. It was also a very healthy place for my sons. In the Foreign Service, as you know, you take a physical as you're getting ready to transfer, and it was at that time that I realized that I didn't know a pediatrician in Norway

because my sons had been healthy for my entire three-year tour. In India, my pediatrician and my physician were people I had come to know very well because there were so many bugs for us to catch.

Q: Was it one of these places where every weekend everybody headed up to the mountains to ski or hike or something like that?

HAGERTY: Yes. In his farewell remarks as he was leaving the country, DCM Ausland said he would always remember Norway because it taught him “what to do with the rest of his day.” Norwegians place a great premium on the ‘rest of the day,’ with offices closing down at 3:30 to permit Norwegians to go home for dinner, leaving them lots of time in the rest of the day until retiring, usually after a light supper called “*aftens*.” During long summer daylights, they spent lots of time outside. My kids skied and skated and built snow forts and traveled up into the country. And they both learned Norwegian, which they sadly forgot after we returned to the U.S.

HAROLD W. GEISEL
Budget and Fiscal Officer
Oslo (1972-1973)

Ambassador Harold W. Geisel was born in Illinois in 1947. He received his BA from Johns Hopkins and his MBA from the University of Virginia. After entering the Foreign service in 1971, he was posted in Brussels, Oslo, Bern, Bamako, Durban, Rome, Bonn and Moscow and served as Ambassador to Mauritius. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 30, 2006

Q: Well then you were in Norway from when to when?

GEISEL: Norway from '72 to '73.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

GEISEL: Philip Kingsland Crowe. He was an old time political appointee. We didn't see much of him either. Nice enough guy but totally out of it. A good DCM named John Ausland. Some nice people there but again, from my point of view, far too many people doing far too little that really mattered. I had more time for Norway than I did for Belgium in terms of our relationship. At least they had some Russians way up on the northern border. And they were nice people and I had a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful social life. I made a lot of friends with a lot of Norwegians and I was very unhappy to leave Norway when my job was abolished.

Q: Well did you get any feel, I mean your Norwegian friends, were they talking about the Soviets up in the, was it the peninsula, what do you call it, the?

GEISEL: Yes. Wasn't it the Kolopp Peninsula?

Q: Kolopp, yes.

GEISEL: Yes. Not very much. Of course, they had mandatory military service. Most of my friends were, by Norwegian standards, conservative. They certainly were not conservative by our standards. I certainly did not pick them on the basis of their having any political interests but I guess they were conservative by Norwegian standards. But we didn't talk much; they all thought we were idiots for being in Vietnam. And there were lots of marches. But you know, the Norwegians are very civilized, the marches by the embassy were always peaceful and never a problem.

Q: Working in the embassy, were there any problems or issues?

GEISEL: We were overstaffed and, you know, idle hands are the devil's workshop. I don't think there were any- oh, there was an issue. Interestingly enough, virtually all the male officers had Norwegian girlfriends. I'm talking about married American officers. That was a big issue, we had some very unhappy wives. I mean, really unhappy.

Q: Was there any effort to deal with this?

GEISEL: Oh no. It would have been hard to deal with it. The admin officer, my boss, was screwing his eyeballs out. He was divorced and he wasn't very interested, no. The DCM was very much of a live and let live kind of a guy.

Q: He was very much of a Scandinavian.

GEISEL: Very much so, yes.

Q: He ended up going to Finland I believe.

GEISEL: Something, yes. Well you know, if I'm not mistaken didn't we used to see for quite a few years didn't he write pieces for the Herald Tribune?

Q: Yes, I think so, yes. He died not too long ago but he was very prolific on Scandinavian matters.

GEISEL: Yes, yes. He was a thoughtful, very nice guy. But what do you do in a place like Norway in those days?

Q: Had North Sea oil come in at that point?

GEISEL: Not really. It had been found but remember it wasn't a big deal in those days. We hadn't had the first oil boycott yet and we knew, if you will, that it was going to be something but of course nothing like what we expected although my experience in Norway served me well because many years later I bought shares in a Norwegian oil company and they've been wonderful. I think the \$3,000 I put in, no \$6,000 I put in to it at the height was worth over \$200,000.

Q: Good heavens.

GEISEL: Yes.

RONALD J. NEITZKE
Consular Officer/ Staff Aide
Oslo (1972-1974)

Ronald Neitzke was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Sts Thomas College, the University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). Entering the Foreign Service in 1971 he served in Oslo before studying Serbo-Croatian, the beginning of his career as specialist in East European Affairs. In Washington, Mr. Neitzke served on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department and was Country Director for Czech and Albanian Affairs. In London he was Deputy Political Counselor, and in Zagreb he served as Deputy Chief of Mission during the conflicts of the split-up of Yugoslavia. He also had several assignments in Washington in the personnel field. Mr. Neitzke was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: So you went to Oslo when?

NEITZKE: I arrived in July or August of '72, following Norwegian language training.

Q: How did you find the Norwegians?

NEITZKE: I'd grown up among Scandinavian-Americans, honest, direct people, generally unpretentious and reserved. Although it's difficult to generalize, that's pretty much how I found the people of Norway, at least older Norwegians. Friendly enough, but quite formal. Younger Norwegians seemed like young people everywhere. And the entire nation seemed remarkably fit. Regarding Norwegian reserve, before we move on, let me tell you about one of my neighbors in Norway. The first place I lived there was way too nice for a first-tour officer, pretty far removed from CORDS. It was a vine covered cottage about 10 miles outside Oslo on a small lake with mountains in the distance and swans that swam by on cue, more or less. It was at the end of a dead-end lane with only one neighboring house. And as I neared the end of my year in that cottage, I had not, for some reason, met my neighbors, or even seen much of them. They were never out and about. Then one day, as I was preparing to leave actually, the father of the neighboring family came out and walked over to me and I thought, well, this is nice; he's finally going to say hello, sorry we didn't get to meet one another earlier, or some such. So I introduced myself and tried to make light conversation. He didn't respond. Instead, he pointed to my flag pole -- nearly every house flew the Norwegian flag all year round but I'd never paid any attention to the flag atop the pole next to my house -- and he said, in Norwegian, unsmiling, your flag, it's not all the way up, and turned and walked back to his house. That's it. An extreme example, perhaps, maybe a fluke, but it contains at least a kernel of insight into the Norwegian soul, and

into what some average Norwegians thought about American officials during the Vietnam era. But generally, Norwegians were warmer than that, and welcoming.

1972 wasn't the best time to be an official American in Norway. While working in the Consular Section, I went out on a political reporting assignment, to cover a mass rally in central Oslo called to denounce our involvement in Vietnam, an event that united all Norwegian political parties, from extreme left to extreme right, people who strongly disagreed with one another on most issues but were united in hating our Vietnam policy. There was a sanctimoniousness, a moral self-righteousness, in many Norwegians toward, if not all Americans, at least our government and those of us representing it.

Q: Who was your ambassador while you were there?

NEITZKE: I had two. The first was Phil Crowe. He'd previously been ambassador in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. He was a political appointee, connected to John Olin of Olin Chemical as I recall, a staunch Republican, a big game hunter-adventurer type, larger than life, unabashedly old school, very formal. He clearly enjoyed the title, comforts, and prestige of the job, including the grand mansion of a Residence in Oslo. His DCM was John Ausland, a man I came to respect a great deal. Ausland's background was in arms control. In my second year, Tom Byrne replaced Crowe. His background was in labor affairs, I think.

Q: Ausland later went to Finland and he has written quite a bit about-

NEITZKE: I thought he went off to do arms control talks. In retirement he lived in Oslo and wrote opinion pieces for the International Herald Tribune on East-West issues.

Q: Did the ambassador intrude on your life at all or was he just beyond the beyond?

NEITZKE: After I'd spent a few months in the consular section, Ausland yanked me out and made me Crowe's staff aide. So I moved to the front office. A great opportunity to see how an embassy runs, to get to know more of the key officers, attend staff meetings, read all the cable traffic, learn about the other agencies and so on. It gave me a perspective that it might otherwise have taken several tours to get, if then. And I did spend a fair amount of time around Crowe. He was an interesting guy, an overblown embodiment of wealth and privilege. He affected the bearing of junior royalty almost. He was not unintelligent, and when a serious issue came up he would deal with it, and he could be immensely charming, but you sensed that the title, the deference, and creature comforts were paramount. And that Ausland ran the show on a day in day out basis.

Q: I have talked to a number of people who served in Oslo and one of the problems that you have with our Scandinavian embassies, which go to political appointees, is that a disturbing percentage of the ambassadors are, ah, attracted to the young ladies.

NEITZKE: I'm sorry, did you say Peyton Place? Oslo was my only Scandinavian post and a lot of people did, as you say, notice the young ladies. I'm not sure I'd focus only on the ambassadors.

Q: Well let us go back to the consular side. We are still involved in Vietnam. Did you have deserters and all of that?

NEITZKE: Not that I recall. In Scandinavia, Sweden was the destination of choice for U.S. Army deserters. Despite its opposition to our involvement in Vietnam, Norway wouldn't have been all that hospitable to deserters, certainly not Norwegian officialdom. Just outside Oslo, after all, were the NATO headquarters of Allied Forces Northern Europe. And bordering the Soviet Union in the far north, and with Soviet submarines a constant danger off the coast and near the fjords, the Norwegian Government and we had plenty of cause for cooperation. Apart from Vietnam, the relationship was essentially sound, as far as I could tell. I recall, as an aside, that while I was there the Norwegians hosted a NATO Nuclear Planning Group meeting. Defense Secretary Schlesinger came with a large party, and I was given a coordinating role on the security side. My first ride in a C-130. But getting back to your question, no, I don't think Norway was much of a haven for U.S. deserters.

Q: What about the consular work? What sort of things were you involved in?

NEITZKE: What I most vividly recall is the Welfare and Whereabouts work. Shortly after I arrived, there was a nasty incident involving a U.S. Navy ship visit to Oslo, and allegations American sailors had brutally raped a young Norwegian mother. All the defendants were black and one was underage, and they were all jailed pending trial. They needed a legal guardian for the underage defendant, and I was it. At the beginning of the trial, I actually sat next to him in the defendants' box. The trial ended just before Christmas 1972, either with acquittal or dismissal of all charges due to technical flaws in the police work. Enough evidence had been presented, however, physical evidence and testimony by the victim, to make pretty clear that at least some of these guys did it. The kid for whom I was guardian was one very scared young man. The Embassy MAAG, Military Assistance Advisory Group, had hired one of Norway's top defense attorneys, and he got them off, and they were hustled out of the country. I was struck by the extent to which the trial had been less about establishing truth than about winning at all costs. The police were no match for our high-paid attorney, and the victim was made to suffer a new round of indignities. The whole thing left you feeling sick to your stomach.

I remember another situation, a mental case, an American stowaway aboard a plane from Spain that landed in Norway. It was my job to help nurse him through his recovery. And he did recover after months in a mental institution. He told me a harrowing story of his wife's infidelity that had led to his temporary insanity. That was a gratifying case. I remember having to deal with kids who'd gone over there to travel around and had run out of funds or gotten in trouble. I remember visiting Americans in prison. One in particular, serving a lengthy sentence, later sent a long letter to my supervisor, saying he'd been expecting just another stuffed shirt from the Embassy, his words, but that he'd been pleasantly surprised. I didn't think I'd done anything that unusual.

Q: What about visa work?

NEITZKE: I did that as well. After about a year as staff aide, and sometime after Crowe and Ausland had departed, I returned to the Consular Section. The visa work was of an interesting

sort. I'm embarrassed to say this to someone who's done consular work in terribly difficult places, and, for the record, I did go on to Belgrade and do a year of consular work that was much more challenging. But our main task in Oslo, in non-immigrant visa work, was to try to keep beautiful, young, blue-eyed blondes out of the U.S. who wanted to go over to take care of someone's kids for a year without a work permit. Those cases often required exhaustive interviews.

Q: I am sure. They sit there and the tears sort of well up in their eyes.

NEITZKE: That probably helped resolve a case or two. So there was that. And with the welfare and whereabouts cases, work in general was interesting enough. This was all new for me. I was living overseas for the first time, and I didn't know in a concrete sense what else there was. I was not in Southeast Asia. I was not in the Soviet bloc. I was not on the visa lines in Mexico. In my performance evaluations, however, and in counseling sessions, my supervisors kept saying that this was all well and good but wasn't really challenging Neitzke. He needed to go some place more stimulating.

Q: While you were the ambassador's aide, did you get any feel for the Norwegian political situation and the political personalities there?

NEITZKE: Crowe had already written a couple books, one on wildlife, I believe. He was planning to write a book about the people he'd met and the issues he'd dealt with in Norway. He asked me to write biographies of the prime ministers, foreign ministers, defense ministers, party leaders, and others he'd encountered. So I plowed through the bio and other files, books, and papers, researching these people and, in many instances, trying my damndest to make them sound interesting, which was not often easy. Norway had plenty of strong, sensible leaders, but didn't typically give rise to wildly interesting political personalities. What I didn't appreciate at the time, however, is the extent to which this small nation on the margins of Europe produces superb negotiators, accepted as honest brokers in far-flung conflicts, the Middle East and the Balkans, for example.

Norway was fairly placid politically while I was there, with one big exception, apart from their agitation over Vietnam, and that was the issue of whether to join the European Community. Norwegian voters rejected membership, and that came as a surprise to many. There were various reasons, but part of it, I'm convinced, was an expression of national identity, sort of a self-satisfied pride in their separateness, in going it alone, even though they weren't alone. They were a significant member of NATO, for example, and active in the UN, to which they'd contributed one of the first Secretary Generals. This was also the time when the offshore Norwegian oil fields were under development, and keeping those options open may also have played a role. .

Q: Well how did you find being a young single officer there, socially?

NEITZKE: As the Ambassador's aide, I was included in many events, dinners and other things that I otherwise might not have been. They were often interesting. Away from the Embassy, however, while I enjoyed myself, I clearly didn't take adequate advantage of the situation. For

some of my colleagues who were single or separated, however, it was more like Christmas every morning. It wasn't completely out of control, but...

Q: There are other posts, Rio de Janeiro is the same.

NEITZKE: I'd never seen anything like it, even in college.

Q: Well, was there much of a Norwegian community in the United States? Were they active, or were they more like in Lake Wobegon?

NEITZKE: As I think I said, I grew up just 60 miles from Lake Wobegon. And we were all way above average.

Q: Norwegian bachelor farmers.

NEITZKE: The Scandinavian community was pronounced where I grew up. The Swedes told Norwegian jokes and the Norwegians told Swedish jokes, and they both told Finnish jokes, and so on, you know, the kind of national or ethnic put-down jokes you hear in most countries. But I don't recall the Norwegian-American community being a significant player in anything when I was in Oslo. Later in my career, working on Eastern European issues, I found their expats and hyphenated Americans more involved and occasionally difficult to deal with, but not the Norwegian-Americans.

Q: Well, is there anything else we should cover before you left there?

NEITZKE: Perhaps just to note that even back then many young officers didn't psychologically sign on up front to a lifetime career in the Foreign Service. Rather, you may have decided to give the Service a look for a tour or two before making a more lasting commitment. Then gradually the interesting tours accumulated and you found yourself drawn in. Near the end of my time in Oslo, I again thought seriously about law school and about a job feeler I'd gotten from an international youth exchange organization. But I'd also traveled to the Soviet Union with a Norwegian group in the spring of 1974 and spoken with FSOs in Embassy Moscow, so I had a more tangible sense of how different, and more challenging, life could be elsewhere in the Service. While weighing my non-Service alternatives, I was also looking to see what a second tour might offer. I had a bit of negotiating room, and among the jobs I bid on were a number in Eastern Europe. I had my eye on Budapest but was assigned instead to Serbo-Croatian language training, for Belgrade. That sounded interesting, so I put the other options on hold. And after Belgrade, I never really looked back.

LESLIE M. ALEXANDER
Consular/Economic Officer
Oslo (1973-1975)

Ambassador Leslie Alexander was born in Germany of American parents and grew up primarily in Europe. He was educated at the Munich campus of American University, after which he came to the United States and, in 1970, entered the Foreign Service. Speaking several foreign languages, including German, French, Spanish and Portuguese and some Polish, he served in Guyana, Norway, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Haiti, where he twice served, first as Chargé, and later as Special Envoy.. From 1993 to 1996 he served as Ambassador to Mauritius and from 1996 to 1999 as Ambassador to Ecuador. Ambassador Alexander was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Well then in '73 whither?

ALEXANDER: Norway. Oslo.

Q: Oh boy. What a change.

ALEXANDER: Quite a change, yes.

Q: Was this just an assignment or had you asked for it?

ALEXANDER: Well, I wanted to go to Europe and I said listen, I'm coming out of a 25 percent hardship post, been down here with the snakes and the bugs and no TV and I want to go to Europe. But again, since I didn't know anybody and didn't know anything, I very naively thought I was going to get to go to Paris or, I don't know, Rome or someplace; I wound up going to Oslo. I think pretty much because they had to give me something after Guyana and so they gave me Oslo, which was no prize. But you know, I'd asked for Europe, so what could I say?

Q: So you were in Oslo from '73 to?

ALEXANDER: To '75.

Q: '75. Again, no chance really to use your French or your German.

ALEXANDER: No. But because of German I was able to pick up Norwegian. In fact, after my two years there, I didn't go through language training, I tested and managed to get a 3/3 in Norwegian which was, for me, a pleasant surprise.

Q: What was the state of affairs in Norway when you were there?

ALEXANDER: Probably pretty much what they are now. Small country, there were a little under 4 million people at the time. They had discovered oil.

Q: Oil was, the North Sea, oil was there?

ALEXANDER: Yes, it was beginning to come online then. They still hadn't, they were getting rich, but hadn't got there yet since they were just starting that, but they had the oil rigs out there

and that was pretty much it. The Norwegians skied and pumped oil out of the North Sea there and that was about it. I found them in the main to be boring, harmless, healthy, and physically healthy, food was horrible, it was cold.

Q: Doesn't sound like one almost thinks of, well, it was pretty dark there too, wasn't it?

ALEXANDER: Yes, it was dark six months of the year. And six months of the year, of course, we had a lot of sunshine.

Q: Yes. Who was the ambassador when you were there?

ALEXANDER: My first ambassador was Phillip Crowe, a political appointee, who died shortly after leaving there in '74. He was replaced by Tom Byrne. He was married, I believe, to George Meany's daughter.

Q: Labor leader.

ALEXANDER: Labor leader. A big fellow who subsequently went off to be ambassador of Czechoslovakia and was compromised by the Czech security service— sexual entrapment of all things.

Q: Well, tell me, from Guyana, how did you find the work? I mean, what were you doing?

ALEXANDER: I spent half my tour as consular officer and half my tour as an economic officer.

Q: How did you find, I wouldn't imagine there would be any challenges in consular work, would I?

ALEXANDER: No, but what was fun about consular work there was I got to issue passports to a lot of famous Americans. I met Kirk Douglas, who was there filming a movie. His real name was Issur Danielovitch.

Q: Probably The Long Ships or something.

ALEXANDER: Yes, I can't remember what the film was, but something.

Q: The Vikings or something.

ALEXANDER: Yes, something like that. He was born in Siberia of all places.

Q: Yes. He came from a-

ALEXANDER: A Russian Jewish family.

Q: He wrote a book called The Rag Man's Son, I think, an autobiography.

ALEXANDER: But I didn't know this until I got his application. He was a very kind man. I remember he told me about his life and everything, quite fascinating. I met Sean Connery, who was at the height of his James Bond fame; he didn't apply for a passport, obviously because he was a British citizen. Liv Ullmann, the famous Norwegian actress and a few other people. So I liked consular work there. I never met anyone like that in Guyana. But I liked the economic work as well because we had the oil and the oil was important, not only economically but strategically and politically because that's when we had the first of the oil shocks, the long gas lines and everything else. Norway being a part of NATO, we were looking to countries like Norway to help offset the influence of the Arabs.

Q: Well what was your estimation, and obviously of the embassy, of what the oil was doing to these Norwegians?

ALEXANDER: My sense at the time was it was doing little, if anything. Taxes were very, very high. The welfare state was very, very deep. The Norwegians themselves seemed to be quite content being the same. Let me be more clear. Having a lot of money, being very bourgeoisie, was not something that the average Norwegian seemed to aspire to. In fact, it was almost in bad taste to have a lot of material things. They seemed to be quite content to be able to cross country ski, to heat their homes, raise their families. But I have to say, to their credit, they were not particularly impressed with flash or money. They seemed to take great pride in being hopelessly middle class. So my sense was that whatever money was coming in as a result of being an oil producer was going to the state and was being used for the greater good, to strengthen, to deepen the welfare state.

Q: Well, were many Norwegian young people going to the United States for higher education or this wasn't a pattern?

ALEXANDER: No, the ones that I knew, very few of them. Those who did go abroad to study went to the UK and for some reason, I seem to recall those who did go to the UK they went actually for high school rather than university. But for the most part, no, they stayed home.

Q: To the north Norway abuts onto the Soviet Union up on a very strategic peninsula. Did that have any repercussions? I mean, was that a factor?

ALEXANDER: We had a listening post in Tromsø, way up north. In fact, it was, I understand it was our northernmost Foreign Service post. I never got up that far; most of us didn't, we were not encouraged to go up there. We had a Foreign Service officer up there. We were, of course, conscious of our living in a country that actually shared a border with the Soviet Union and we knew that there were activities that took place in the waters in that area but again, I wasn't privy to any of that, absolutely not.

Q: As an economic officer, how did you find the Norwegian bureaucracy? Was it responsive to getting figures and that sort of thing?

ALEXANDER: Yes. I found it was a small country, transparent country, people were very direct. Getting information was not difficult. Again, the only thing that Washington really was

interested in was the oil. And since American companies were very much involved in their oil industry, we had access to the information through the American companies as well. So I don't think much was hidden from us.

Q: Our Vietnam problem was coming to an end while you were there. How did that play in Norway?

ALEXANDER: The Norwegians were never as vocal in their opposition to the war as their cousins, the Swedes. When we closed the embassy, we took the people off the roof and hauled down the flag and all that. I remember sitting in my living room and also watching all that. The Norwegians I think were quietly pleased because, again, they were a NATO ally, they were a tiny country, they did feel threatened by the Soviets, they did like Americans, they spoke. Almost everyone in Norway seemed to have a relative in Minnesota, Wisconsin, someplace. I think the Norwegians were happy and I think they were as much happy for us as anything else, that we no longer were going to have Vietnam hanging around our necks like a stinky, horrible albatross. I think there was just a sigh of relief, finally the nightmare is over. Maybe the Americans can go back to being Americans, whatever that meant to Norwegians. They awarded Henry Kissinger the Nobel Peace Prize, him and his Vietnamese counterpart, for helping to bring the conflict to an end. I was disappointed; I went to the ceremony, the one and only time in my career that I wore tails for an official function. And Kissinger, as you may recall, didn't show in person to collect his prize, neither did his Vietnamese counterpart, I can't remember his name now, Tran or something like that. And I think, again, that was a reflection of how the Norwegians and the Nobel Peace committee felt, just happy it was over.

Q: Yes. Did you get any feel for Norwegian diplomacy? Because later they became much more an agent in world diplomacy— as a small honest country, good honest broker, a good place to do business. But did you have any feel for that at the time?

ALEXANDER: No, no I didn't. And in fact the sense I had was that Norway still very much considered itself a non-player. It was very much a minor, minor partner of the U.S. and its primary concern was Soviet activity in Norwegian waters and on its border. No, I think in those days Norwegians still pretty much looked to the Swedes to carry water and those great issues of the day and to carry their water on great issues.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Swedish-Norwegian relationship that often prompts a lot of jokes on both sides?

ALEXANDER: Yes. The Norwegians, I think, sort of resented the Swedes. They felt like the country cousins of the Swedes. The Norwegians are certainly much more conservative than the Swedes. The Swedes were known for, among other things, pornography, their porn industry, and that's something that the Norwegians just would not have permitted. They were much more Lutheran. And I think they had generally an inferiority complex when it came to the Swedes. I mean, the Norwegians didn't produce cars; the Swedes produced two, Saab and Volvo, and they had other world class industries that the Norwegians didn't have. So I think the Norwegians were generally intimidated by the Swedes. They admired them and resented them at the same time.

Q: How about relations with the Germans?

ALEXANDER: The Norwegians did not speak much of the Germans. In fact, I used to bring up the Germans periodically and it was like throwing ice water on a party. I think it was probably because of Quisling and they just wanted to forget anything to do with the war and anything that might raise the specter of the ghost of Quisling. So it just wasn't a topic of discussion.

Q: Because of oil and other relations, were the Norwegians pretty close to the British do you think?

ALEXANDER: They liked and admired the British. Norwegians spoke, the only country I ever lived in, as a matter of fact, where a majority of people spoke English comfortably. There seemed to be a correlation between how well educated you were and how British you sounded when you spoke English. I met Norwegians who I thought they were British, absolutely. I also met Norwegians, for that matter, who spoke American-accented English with no trace of Norwegian accent who'd never been to the U.S. Rather phenomenal. They were very impressive in that regard, but it was a reflection of how they felt about the British. They really liked the British, they admired the British, they dressed like them. I think they looked to the British for a lot of their social cues rather than to the Swedes or to the Danes.

Q: This is tape two, side one with Leslie Alexander. Yes.

ALEXANDER: I was saying the Norwegians, I think, looked to the British for fashion, for cultural cues, things of that sort rather than to the Swedes.

Q: You were saying you found it essentially a very boring place, was it?

ALEXANDER: Yes, I don't think the Norwegians were the type of folks who were going to light up the world, but again, it was intended more as a critique than a criticism. They were honest people, they were serious people, they were people of their word. They had a wry sense of humor. They drank too damned much. And when they drank a lot they were funny. I don't think I ever saw Norwegians fight, even at their worse. I mean, they would exchange angry words. They were unpretentious people, but again, they were provincial. They could never be sophisticated and they didn't claim to be terribly cosmopolitan.

Q: Well then, you left there and what? We're talking about?

ALEXANDER: 1975.

THOMPSON R. BUCHANAN
Deputy Chief of Mission
Oslo (1973-1975)

Thompson R. Buchanan was born in California in 1924. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in international relations in 1947 and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Mr. Buchanan entered the Foreign Service in 1948. His career included positions in Paris, Frankfurt, Moscow, Bujumbura, Libreville, and Leningrad. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 15, 1996.

Q: You left Moscow in 1973 and you went where?

BUCHANAN: Well, I got a phone call from an old Moscow hand and friend, Bob German, who was political officer in Norway. I had hoped, of course, and it would have been logical, to go to a DCM position at a post in Eastern Europe. Bob was calling because Walt Stoessel had given Ambassador Philip Crowe in Norway my dossier along with others, and Phil Crowe wanted me to come out for an interview for the DCM job. As it turned out I was given the job without going to meet him. So on June 10, 1973, Nancy and I landed in Norway, on one of those early spring days when the sun was out and Norwegians everywhere were sitting with their faces up to the sun, after their long winter. Since there had not been a DCM in Norway for six months (John Aslant had retired earlier in Oslo with his wife-to-be), I was charged with putting the Embassy into shape for the new Ambassador, Tom Byrne, who was the AFL-CIO representative in the Foreign Service. By the time that I returned from the DCM course, Phil Crowe had already been named as Ambassador to Denmark. He still considered, himself, however, as Ambassador to Norway, when he returned briefly to visit old friends. He insisted accordingly on signing off on cables that I planned to send to the department. A confrontation was avoided when Joan Clark, the Executive Director in EUR, phoned me early in the morning to tell me to let Crowe sign the cables, if he insisted. She had been adamantly opposed the previous evening.

I was very happy that did not have to serve under Crowe, because our political views were far apart. But on a personal level, I found him very congenial. He had an engaging, adventurous spirit. I truly believe that he considered his time in the OSS during the war as the high point of his life. He was particularly proud of a picture he hung in his office of himself with the toughest bunch of Southeast Asian ruffians you would ever want to meet, all stripped down to the waist. Discussing Crowe with staff members, who had served with him, we could not agree whether he was more suited to the 18th or 19th century, leading a charge of some light brigade.

Q: What was his background?

BUCHANAN: Oh, business. He claimed he had given \$5,000 to the Republican Party and had personal means. Like my Nancy, he was a fox hunter from Philadelphia. He promptly tried to persuade me that the only people worth dealing with in Norway were the shipowner, magnates, who had fishing and hunting rights, and that I should join this particular Conservative club in Oslo. He had no use for the Labor Party which, of course, was in power and had brought Norway into NATO and was the political force of any significance in Norway. When I was in Washington for the DCM course, Nancy stood in the receiving line with Crowe for the Embassy's July 4 party, which Crowe insisted on holding in late June, while he was still accredited to Norway. Nancy was shocked to see that Crowe did not recognize Prime Minister Bratteli, when he walked down the line.

Upon my return from Washington, I took advantage of my position of Chargé and traveled much as I could, not knowing whether I would have much opportunity under a new Ambassador. I went up to northern Norway and looked at Russia from across the border near Coercions. It was a strange feeling, standing on Norwegian soil watching the Soviet border guard in the distance. The Norwegian Colonel, who accompanied me, said that they had distant but relatively cooperative relations with the Soviet border guards, to a point of occasionally fishing together in the river that runs along the border. A young Foreign Service Officer and his wife, stationed in our USIA post in Tromsø, north of the Arctic Circle accompanied me on this first visit to North Norway. My wife told me that I was rather patronizing toward the very pretty blond wife, and she must have felt it, for upon their departure from Trumsø, she presented me with the computer analysis of the Aurora Borealis, which she had prepared working at a local institute. I did not understand a word!

The Norwegians felt very militarily exposed in Finnmark, across from the Soviets on the Kola Peninsula. They were accordingly concerned lest the big money to be made in the oil business in southern Norway act as a magnet, attracting the farmers and fishermen away from the North, denuding the area still further. I accordingly made a point of visiting Stavanger, the oil capitol of Norway. As a gesture of hospitality, the local mayor invited Nancy and me to spend a day sailing on what was a replica of the tiny boat that brought the first Norwegian emigrants to the United States in 1834. (When they reached New York, the first emigrants were arrested for crowding 50 people on a boat built to handle 29). What a day we had! By the time we left port, everyone had drunk so much beer and aquavit, to accompany the traditional herring and potatoes, that the crew was besotted. We had to recover the sailing charts, lost overboard, with the help of rakes. It was a great introduction to Norwegian hospitality.

Oil had become a burning issue in Norwegian politics. I met with Prime Minister Bratteli and he explained that he had come from a little town in Norway that had lived off of whale oil, and that when the whales were basically extinct, the town just shriveled on the vine and everybody suffered terribly from unemployment. Basically he was saying that he would not let this happen to Norway with the oil. He was explaining why Norway was resisting pressure from the West to increase its oil production to offset the oil boycott in the Middle East. We thought of Norway as an ally that would help us fill the gap. But the Norwegians were very reluctant to increase their production of oil beyond a certain point.

On the managerial side of the Embassy, I was very concerned with staff morale, and such issues as defense of the Embassy against such a possible terrorist attack. The Red Army had struck in neighboring Sweden and there was concern that it might choose an American target in Norway. Our interesting chancery building, designed by the Finnish architect Saarinen, remained extremely vulnerable. The lattice-work in the central hall provided a natural ladder to the upper floors for any athletic terrorist. We brought in the regional security officer from Copenhagen to advise us, but quickly discounted his expertise when he suggested using a fire alarm to alert the staff in the case of attack, bringing them out of their offices when they should have been locking their doors and isolating themselves, depriving the terrorists of any easy target. I must admit that issues like the Embassy budget, did not fascinate me, and I focused more than a DCM probably should on the territory of the Political Counselor.

In fact, I did much of the reporting on Soviet-Norwegian relations. In that connection my first meeting with the recent Norwegian Ambassador to Washington, Schell Vibe, at the time the main policy officer in the Foreign Ministry, was traumatic. Used to uncommunicative Soviet officials, I was amazed when Vibe proceeded to describe in detail the major points of friction between Norway and the USSR, but also the differences in view on these issues within his Ministry. He was much franker than most American diplomats. He is a brilliant man, and he and his lovely wife are much missed by their Washington friends.

Soviet-Norwegian relations in the Bering Sea and Spitsbergen, or Svalbard as the Norwegians call the archipelago, which lies about 600 miles from the North Pole, became my special interest. The Norwegians administer Svalbard on behalf of the international community under the Treaty of Paris of 1920. Since before the war the Soviets had a coal mining concession on Svalbard, and even though the mines are largely exhausted, they have retained a mining staff at Barentsberg and Pyramiden, large enough to take over the islands in the event of war. They do not want a repetition of WWII when the Germans used the islands as a weather station and base from which to attack allied convoys supplying Murmansk.

I was invited to visit Svalbard by the enterprise that basically runs the place, the Store Norsk coal company. Talk about a company town: it even used to print the Svalbard currency. I met with the Susselman, or Norwegian governor of Svalbard, and flew over the island in a home-made plane built by its Austrian pilot. To take off, we had to shake the plane loose from the icy runway. The Soviets chose not to answer any request to visit Barentsberg until the day of my departure, too late, of course.

My major achievement in a sense was to persuade Washington, indirectly as I will explain below, that we should organize regular bilateral consultations with the Norwegians regarding Svalbard, and their various problems with the Soviets, everything from oil drilling in the Bering Sea to Soviet refusal to obey Norwegian procedures on Svalbard. Henry basically ignored our many messages on the subject, until a German diplomat, whom I had briefed in detail, met Henry in Bonn and repeated what we had told him. In typical fashion, Henry did not believe his own staff. But, at that point, he said, "Oh, really", and agreed to the idea of consultations.

Henry's behavior on the issue of Norwegian production was also typical. We were bombarded with messages requiring demarches to the Norwegians, urging that they increase their production from their North Sea wells. But, for the occasion I discussed earlier, Ambassador Byrne made little head way with Foreign Minister Fridenlund. Accordingly, when Fridenlund was scheduled to meet with Kissinger in New York, we urged Henry to use his great persuasive powers with the Minister, who had been one of his students at Harvard. When Fridenlund returned, he chided his good friend Byrne for making such an issue of oil, which Henry had dismissed as essentially a bureaucratic fetish. Byrne had greater success in his efforts to encourage the Norwegians' fetish. Byrne had greater success in his efforts to encourage the Norwegians to produce the F-16 fighter under license, and to preposition military supplies in Norway for possible emergency. In contrast to Washington, that leaks like a sieve, only a very few Norwegian officials were informed about the more sensitive areas of our cooperation. In many ways, Norway was our most enjoyable post. The DCM residence, a former ship magnate's house, was very comfortable, and good for

representation. Contrary to what we had been told, we found the Norwegians extremely hospitable, inviting us to their homes and hyttes by the sea. By the time of our departure, I had become moderately fluent in Norwegian, a necessity when traveling outside Oslo. We took full advantage of the skiing and the sightseeing in this most beautiful country. We became foster parents to a tiny Golden Retriever, that we were supposed to prepare for a life as a seeing-eye dog, but ended up purchasing and taking home to Washington.

I was looking forward to our consultations with the Norwegians on their relations with Moscow, and to our last six months in Norway, when I was called by an old friend, Bill Schaufele, who was Assistant Secretary for Sub-African Affairs. He asked me to come back to head the directorate for Central Africa, which, at the time, included Angola. I told the head of Personnel that I thought that I had served my time in Africa, and asked that I be granted consultation orders to allow me to return and discuss this next important phase in my professional career. He finally told me: "well, you can come back if you like", Tom, but you were paneled last week". I was indignant. At a time when we were bending over backward to respond to the wishes of junior officers, a fairly senior officer was to be given no choice.

JON GUNDERSEN
Consular Officer
Oslo (1973-1975)

Mr. Gundersen was born and raised in New York and educated at George Washington University, the University of Oslo International School, Stanford University and the National War College. Entering the State Department in 1973, he served abroad in Moscow, Stockholm and Frankfurt. At Reykjavik and Tallinn he was Chargé d'affaires, in Oslo, Deputy Chief of Mission, and in Kiev, Consul General. In assignments at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Gundersen dealt with a variety of matters, including arms control, anti-terrorism and Balkan issues. Mr. Gundersen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2012.

Q: Well, then, you came back to the State Department and eventually Norway?

GUNDERSEN: I went to the embassy in Oslo. I went there as vice consul.

Q: You were there for how long?

GUNDERSEN: Two years, a little over two years.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

GUNDERSEN: First it was Tom Byrne, who was a labor leader and good friend of Hubert Humphrey. Then William Anders came, who was a Ford appointee and a former astronaut.

I served one year as vice consul, one year rotating between the economic and political section.

Q: Let's talk about the consular side. By that time, was there much immigration?

GUNDERSEN: No, we had some immigration, but that wasn't a major part of our workload. The one issue that came up relatively frequently was membership in the Communist Party.

After the war, northern Norway was occupied for a while by the Russians, by Cold War standards a relatively benign occupation. So a lot of local people joined the Party because that was the way you get a job.

So now they're in their sixties; they've saved a little money and want to visit relatives in the States. When they came for an interview and I was supposed to ask them if they had ever been members of the Communist or Fascist Party. Being honest folk, they would answer directly: "Oh, ja, sure, I was a member of the party there for six months. Oh, ja, we all did it."

Then you have to send their visa application back to Washington for review and get a waiver and all that stuff. And probably doing things illegally, I just said, "I don't want to know about your Party affiliations, I just want to know that you're not an active Communist or fascist now and that you're not intending to emigrate to the United States." I sort of prepped them on what not to say, these old fishermen.

Q: Was there a feeling that there might be a Soviet invasion, or not?

GUNDERSEN: I don't think by that time there was in the general population a feeling there'd be an invasion. However, there was a sense that "We need to keep our defense up." They always talked about April of 1940, when the Germans sailed right up the Oslo fjord and they couldn't do anything about it alone.

The Norwegians fought a reasonable resistance, in comparison with Denmark and other victims of the Nazis, but they realized that they couldn't provide for their own defense, so the majority of Norwegians strongly support Norway's membership in NATO. You also have to remember that a small country like Norway now realizes that they can only protect their sovereignty through multi-lateral institutions like NATO. Large countries like the US, Russia and China sometime believe the opposite – that is, multilateral institutions limit their ability to protect their sovereignty.

Regarding the Soviet Union, they didn't think invasion was imminent, although some of the military people worried, but I don't think it was a major issue for the general populace.

Q: Well, were Soviet submarines playing games in the fjords?

GUNDERSEN: They were, it was known by the military, but they didn't publicize it.

Q: What was it, "Whiskey on the rocks?"

GUNDERSEN: That was in Sweden, and that was a little later in the early Eighties.

Q: A Soviet submarine, which we called the Whiskey class, got stuck on the rocks in the Stockholm archipelago.

GUNDERSEN: That's right, when the tide came out and there's this Russian sub just sitting there. It's pretty hard to deny that. I don't think that captain had a very nice homecoming in Moscow when that happened.

Q: What about Sweden? One hears these jokes sort of second hand about one Norwegian chasing twenty Swedes, or vice versa, there are a lot of these Swedish-Norwegian jokes. How was it, in your time, as far as relations?

GUNDERSEN: Well, as you know, I Chair Nordic area studies here at the Foreign Service Institute, so I still have to follow Scandinavian affairs. The ditty I heard as a child was "ten thousand Swedes went through the weeds, chased by one Norwegian." So I just got one side of the story.

A lot of the Swedish-American rivalry and jokes came from Swedish and Norwegian immigrants, who settled in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. They settled in their own communities, so those differences were sort of frozen in time from the late 19th and early 20th Century.

Q: This is one of the things that, it permeates American politics, that when immigrants come over, they have sort of their set ways and the things they hang onto. The Armenian issue with Turkey gets played out in Glendale, California, it gets virulent.

GUNDERSEN: That's right. The attitude when you came over gets frozen and it goes on from generation to generation. The Norwegian and Swedish rivalry has largely disappeared, although a friendly rivalry remains witness the Sven and Ole jokes.

Back in Scandinavia there was some animosity - although nothing compared with conflicts among some other European ethnic groups - because of Norway's junior status from 1814 to full independence in 1905 and especially because of Swedish neutrality in World War II. For example, the Swedes benefited from trade with Hitler during the War. Again, that animosity has largely disappeared.

Q: What about Germans? When you were there, how were Germans viewed?

GUNDERSEN: Some in the older generation view the Germans skeptically, because the Germans had invaded, had occupied the country with hundreds of thousands of troops.

So there was some anti-German feeling, but it wasn't as strong as it would be in Poland or places like that. And my father grew up, as that generation did, learning German as a first foreign language, so there wasn't an anti-ethnic German, but anti-Nazi feeling. And, of course, my father, who fought the Nazis, readily welcomed my wife Eike, who is German, into the family.

Q: If I recall correctly, there was a lot of resentment, during World War One Norway had been quite helpful to a lot of Germans who suffered, taking them in and then all of a sudden they had this aggression against them.

GUNDERSEN: Yes, for example, Fridtjof Nansen, who was a Norwegian politician and philanthropist, organized relief efforts for Germans and other refugees and won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Q: And there was a Nansen passport {a document he designed which was the first internationally recognized refugee travel document.

GUNDERSEN: Right, exactly, so Nansen was a hero to many. Norway took in a lot of German Boy Scouts, too, because they had nice outdoor camps. It turned out some of those Boy Scouts, this was in the Thirties, were actually members of the *Hitler Jugend*, and were told to spy on the Norwegians; how deep are the harbors and where do the boats come, for example? And during and immediately after the war that led to understandable anti-German feeling.

Q: Well, how did you find life in Oslo?

GUNDERSEN: Oh, it was great. I had relatives there, I socialized a lot. Of course I really got into cross country skiing. And so it was a good time.

Q: How about when you were doing political-economic work? What were the politics of Norway at the time?

GUNDERSEN: Well, the Labor Party had been the dominant party in Norway since the Thirties, but it was a moderate Labor Party, pro-NATO. But there was a strong sentiment in the left and among some of the youth to get out of NATO. One of my jobs was to report on that, that attitude of the left. In my work, I got to know many of the youth leaders, who would later become major forces in Norwegian politics. And I worked economic issues. Their aid program, they had a big aid program, those are some of the reports I remember doing.

Because I spoke Norwegian, I got to know the FSNs well and worked intra-Embassy issues between the American and Norwegian staff.

Q: What sort of prompted the labor movement to be anti-American?

GUNDERSEN: Well, the labor movement did not have monolithic ideas. The older labor movement supported the Labor Party and the Labor Party controlled the government, which was a solid NATO member. So I don't think you could say that the labor movement was anti-American.

And a lot of them had been in either the government in exile in London or in Washington during the war. One of reasons I think that Norwegian politics is not quite as vituperative as here is that they all worked together in a coalition government in World War Two.

Q: During this period, Sweden was sort of socialist left and rather doctrinaire in its portrayal of the United States.

GUNDERSEN: Yes, I think it was different in Sweden at the time. Olaf Palme, who was prime minister, had, in fact, demonstrated, while serving as prime minister, in front of the American Embassy against the Vietnam War.

He was not personally anti-American and he also was not pro-Soviet, because he also protested the invasion of Czechoslovakia in front of the Soviet Embassy. He had also studied in and had fond memories of the States. But I think you could say that he thought of himself and Swedes as morally superior to both superpowers.

Q: Well, the Swedes have a lot of at least not very nice television coverage of the United States. Were the Norwegians doing the same thing, dwelling on our racial problems, our poverty problems, all this?

GUNDERSEN: I don't think as much as in Sweden, but there was an element of anti-Americanism. It may also be because people who went into journalism tended to be more on the political left. One of USIA's responsibilities at the embassy was to try and counteract that by getting an American perspective on TV and in the press in order to present a more balanced view of the America. I worked with USIA on that front.

In the final analysis, because so many Norwegians have relatives and had been to the States, that prejudice was balanced by the knowledge that this country's not as bad as it had sometimes portrayed.

Q: Did you feel the hand of the Norwegian immigrant community in Minnesota and Wisconsin and all in your work?

GUNDERSEN: Well, you would see them there as tourists, but they tended to be more conservative than their ancestors. Many of the first and second generations, like Walter Mondale, for example, became members of the Democratic Farmer Labor Party in Minnesota. They were from the working class and worked as farmers, miners and loggers. But by the next generation many became Republicans.

Q: Yeah, well, actually, when one thinks about it, Norway and Sweden were really not very nice places back a century ago or so and people were getting out from a very class ridden areas.

GUNDERSEN: Sweden was relatively prosperous compared with Norway, because they had better farmland and more resources and they stayed out of wars. But Norway was one of the poorest countries in Europe.

After the war, Norway's per capita income was comparable to Bulgaria. When my father grew up it really hardscrabble and the emigration rates, especially at the turn of the 20th century, was the highest, except for Ireland, in Europe.

If you weren't the oldest son, you didn't inherit the farm or much of anything,, so the rest of the family often left.

Q: You were there two years?

GUNDERSEN: Yeah.

Q: And what then?

GUNDERSEN: Then I went back to the Department and worked in the Operations Center, 'cause I figured that was where the action was.

Q: Did you gather a bride up while you were in Norway, or not?

GUNDERSEN: No, I didn't. I married later in life.

Q: Norway's known for these attractive young ladies.

GUNDERSEN: Well, I somehow either escaped or they didn't want me. I came back single. I married a German girl, Eike Raudzus years after and we're still happily married.

I wanted to work in the nub of the State Department. The DCM in Norway was Jerry Bremer. He recommended that I work in the State Department's Operation Center – the hub of 7th floor activities.

Q: I've interviewed Jerry.

GUNDERSEN: I still keep in touch with him. Actually, I taught him how to cross country ski. He was very driven. He was a young DCM and he said, "I want to learn to ski," so I went out with him. He worked long hours, but we'd go out and practice after work. Our goal, which we accomplished, was to ski the famous 50 K race - the Holmenkollen Cross Country race - together.

So he recommended I work in the Department's Secretariat, which includes the Operations Center and put in a good word. I worked as a watch officer.

HAVEN N. WEBB
Officer in Charge
Tromso (1978-1981)

Mr. Webb was born and raised in Tennessee. A Naval Academy graduate, Mr. Webb served with the US Navy overseas before joining the Foreign Service in 1961. A Political and Consular Officer, he served abroad in Guadalajara, Hamburg, Helsinki, Panama City and Tromso, Norway, where he was Officer in

Charge. His Washington assignments concerned Political/Military Affairs, as well as International Organizations. Mr. Webb was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: Let's go back to Norway.

WEBB: In Norway, very friendly memories, and the Soviets sent a lot of people up there. I don't think they had established any sort of a permanent mission, but we did. We had an information office there at some point which was locally run, and according to my secretary who was in her early 30's by then. When they were in high school they would go by the information office and look into American records. I don't know that it solved all of our political problems, but it was popular. At some point as I understand, one fellow at the embassy was very close to, I don't remember her name, one of the first female ambassadors

Q: Was it, I am thinking of Walton, but that is not right.

WEBB: I don't know, Margaret something maybe.

Q: Margaret Tibbetts, Margaret Joy Tibbetts.

WEBB: It may have been, yeah. He convinced her that he should have a permanent presence up here which of course, he thought, would be a real coup for him. We went up there, and apparently we had a three man operation, a local Norwegian man who was knowledgeable, did a lot of traveling, an American officer who nominally supervised things, and Mallat who was hired to be a receptionist and answer the telephone. She loved the job. After, I don't know how long, somebody decided they could save money by eliminating the Norwegian man, have the American do everything, and letting Mallat do all of the secretarial work, which she was not suited for at all. That is what I inherited. In many ways it was as I said in my last annual report not very diplomatically, it is about the only job that I could ever think of overseas that I might want to take. It just so happened that a fellow named Davis, I think, was my assignments officer at the time. He was also in my original orientation class, and by God he swung it for me which always rather surprised me, because I felt by then I was so persona non grata in the Department that to put me up there on my own was the last thing anybody would have allowed.

Q: Well I mean you were also isolated.

WEBB: Well, I was but the other side of it, as I told, who was it, the Secretary of State under Carter I guess it was, the best thing about my old briefing job in INR was that you got the right to decide what was appropriate in the morning, and there was nobody to revise it. There was nobody to say, "Oh you can't say that." That is not politically correct. Certainly I was very free to talk to anybody I wanted to basically. At one point we had a visiting journalist who had been up there a few years earlier, Cook from the LA Times. He got me to set him up in the summer which is very difficult, with the top people in town, the rector of the university, the editors of the biggest newspapers, which for a town of 50,000 is amazing that they had more than one newspaper. That's Norway for you. Afterwards he wanted to interview me which I didn't think too much about at the time. So as it turned out the only use that I know of from all of my work

was this one interview, which really focused on me and my family and not Tromsø and the people and a little bit about the people in town. It was a very informal interview and he pretty well quoted me verbatim, the best I could remember. Some of what I said wasn't too politic from the standpoint I suppose of the embassy namely, I was pretty well free to do the job that I thought best. Nobody was apparently interested in what I was doing down south. I went around and visited every town in the north, gave impromptu lectures at all the high schools and junior colleges. Frankly I thought it was a great asset. It is the only job outside of the consular work I did that I thought the U.S. government really got their money's worth. Because in many ways, this just perfectly fit my background. I mean I had studied Swedish. I was in Finland. I learned Finnish up to about a 3-3 level. I eventually came out of Norway with a 4-4 level. I had German at a 3-3 and had even studied Russian on my own. I was certainly well versed in the area since I had been reading and studying about northern Europe and WWII and all the rest for a very long time. I felt very comfortable with the area. My impression was people appreciated having somebody who was not just a junior officer. It was easier I suspect than to deal with major generals. Since I wasn't that far from their age group, and of course I had been to the Naval Academy, I was about the same age group that they were representing.

In many ways it was a very fine job. I certainly enjoyed much of it. They kept adding to the job description and adding things that had never been part of the job description before. In some cases these were things that my secretary was supposed to do which she never could, so I always ended up doing them. But the first year was extremely pleasant. I was told by the administrative people that the ambassador and myself were the only two people at the embassy that had an unlimited travel budget. But when the new regime came in the second year, that all changed. From then on I was not able to do anything like the traveling the job really called for. The idea originally had been that everybody should make a sweep north and to the east up to the Soviet border and then west and to the south all the way down to the Stavanger district which was out of my jurisdiction, and do that both in the spring and the fall. You can't travel in the summer in Norway because nobody is in their offices. You supposedly do this in the fall and the spring, and in the winter time. I think it was very well worth the effort. I used to always over schedule myself in the sense that I worked out a pattern which as far as I know was basically or uniquely mine. We would send out letters in Norwegian that I would pretty much draft, but leave her to translate them. I would make sure that they seemed to be appropriate. We would write to the mayor, director of gymnasiums, junior high schools, editors of newspapers, businessmen. Apparently my predecessor would spend two or three hours visiting people and then she would abscond to the next town. I always over scheduled. Originally I was scheduled for half hour meetings. People always wanted to drink coffee, and always had more to say. I would always be dashing to, eventually I would go on an hour schedule, and even that was insufficient. Whenever I would get to the little town, I would just simply call them up because I had not made appointments, I just simply told people I was coming, and I would sit there in my hotel room eating a cold breakfast on the phone when people would open their offices and make a schedule for that day. Invariably I got canceled out. People weren't available or out of town, I would usually fill in with visits to the high school and lectures there, and invariably, I would go right to 4:30 and 5:00 when everybody was quitting and then drive in the dark to the next town. I would go a week, ten days sometimes all without speaking hardly a word of English, which was certainly something I had never experienced before in my career.

Q: Well, now who were the Kola Peninsula watchers? Was somebody sitting up there with binoculars or was that part of what you did?

WEBB: If there were CIA agents in north Norway, I certainly never knew of them. If we had people up there in Norway proper, nobody ever told me about it, and certainly that would have been best. Of course the locals were inclined to believe that I was a CIA officer, and at least one novel had been written from that standpoint. I always believed we never acknowledged if a warship were carrying nuclear weapons, you don't have to say you are not a CIA officer, I would simply point out, why would the State Department send a CIA officer to sit in Tromso with everybody and his brother knowing exactly what he was doing. I mean this made no sense. I certainly didn't argue the point, but undoubtedly there were people that thought that.

Q: Was there a military dimension to what you were doing?

WEBB: Well, the invasion route from the Soviet Union goes through northern Finland, through the arm of Finland that sticks almost to the nearest Norwegian fjord. That is where you have most of the military installations in north Norway. And of course, I visited these installations. Eventually I was asked to lecture in Norwegian, the only time I deliberately lectured in Norwegian at a girls school in Lapland. I lectured in Norwegian because the girls didn't speak anything but Samisk or Lapp and a little Norwegian. That is the only language we had in common, but I didn't know I was going to do that until I arrived, whereas at some of these military installations I would of course, know ahead of time I was giving the lecture. It was a lot of fun because I would write down ideas, and as much as I could I would jot down notes to myself and sort of an outline, mostly in Norwegian, but in no sense trying to memorize anything. Occasionally if I wasn't sure of a vocabulary word I would ask the audience. How do you say that in Norwegian. It always seemed to work out well. It worked out well enough that when we really ran out of money, and I couldn't do any traveling legally, or at least officially, I even worked out itineraries in the general area of Tromso where I would lecture at the nearest army base, and they would put me up overnight, and the mayor of the little community, we had gotten very close, and he would set me up at his house. My family one time had gone cod fish fishing with him and his family. We did things like that where I was just paid for my gas and myself and stayed with people, mostly Norwegians including a Finnish couple, she was German actually, he was Finnish, but we had met in Tromso. They put me up on this tour, so I was getting mileage out of my job although it was a shame that I couldn't do as much the last two years as I had done the first two. As I said, I added things when I was there. Expanded travel, I think, was the one of them. We put out a weekly digest of the Norwegian media, which my secretary was supposed to be able to do, but that really just never worked out. I always did it basically. I thought that was pretty useful. There was also a weekly letter in which I would pretty much write up everything I could possibly get in as unclassified and send that off as a letter to my boss, the DCM back in Oslo. Then I would also cut it up, and anything that pertained to the economic section I would send them a copy of the part that might be of interest to them. It was not a reporting job, and had not been to my predecessor. She has pointed this out in a letter that is part of the record, which was fine with me because frankly I had not done much reporting in Panama which was the only official posting I had overseas where I was to do reporting. I had done some in my first job in Guadalajara, but the state of Caleen only which was not very adequate because I had no means of getting down there once a year at the most in a two year assignment. Frankly, my opinion of

State Department reporting was not very high to begin with. I had read everything that came out of western Europe for almost a year, and I never read anything that would ever get anybody nominated for the Pulitzer Prize except what George Kennan had written in Prague back in '48 and some of his reporting out of Moscow in '48-'52. It always seemed to me sort of strange that you are under so much pressure to just fill up pages and report and report and report, whether it was needed or not. At the same time Washington was always saying that we get too much reporting and 90% of it is of no use and goes into a file and is never looked at. Everything that I saw, either I reported verbally if it was classified. I was able to do so on what was supposed to have been quarterly visits back to Oslo. When the money ran out it became less than quarterly. What I could sneak into these mailed letters, we had no diplomatic pouch of course. It was not a heck of a lot of very formal reporting. When the new regime came in with the new DCM, this was apparently a man who believed very strongly in reporting. I think he ended up the ambassador to East Germany. He was fine in his rights, but he certainly took off after me for the lack of reporting which rather surprised me, at first initially because I had been told in writing and formally that they didn't want dispatches or whatever they used in those days, airgrams. Then he decided we want this for the future, to which I had no reason to object. Frankly it bored me completely. I ended up selling him on the idea of making it a three year assignment, a year extension for myself and my family. It was predicated on the basis of, well, give us a report. So I did, I don't remember the terminology, an airgram dispatch on the fishing industry. My God, I spent a whole month on that idiot thing. I thought it was a little masterpiece of sorts, but was it really worth the time and all - I doubt it very much. It was six, eight, ten pages with a one page summary which he announced as exactly what he wanted, and I got my extension. Then a year later, when he was out to get me, he said it was terrible. It was too long and so forth and so on, which I always thought you don't have to read any more than the one page summary if you don't want to. By that point we were at a parting-of-ways. I never did any other formal reporting. I thought about it. I wanted to.

I was going to do the oil industry which operated in the north out of Harstad which was a good day's journey for us, four or five hours drive. Unfortunately it only operated in the summer. Every time I would get over there, all I would find would be people telling me, "Well you better talk to the Norwegian state conglomerate" that was in charge of drilling up north, which was the big thing while I was there. They were just beginning drilling. But everybody said you have to go down to Oslo to find out about it. I never did come through.

When the admin report came out I think he thought I deliberately sabotaged, that I deliberately thought I could get away with that without doing any formal reporting. I mean I was doing personal bios and things. Again he got me once. It was a very proper thing. I was doing a bio on a personal friend. He was a radical leader of the intellectual Saami uprising, that is the Lapp minority first nation movement in Norway. Of course like all of these things in Canada and Alaska, these were people that purported to be outraged at how they had been treated. Frankly I think the Lapps in the northern country had been treated very well. Certainly their relatives on the Soviet side of the border would attest to that. But what was never said was that my friend was actually a very integrated Norwegian who was married to a Norwegian and had Norwegian children. None of them spoke Lappish, but that is what he taught at the university. But they did have their Saami uniform, their native costume. I had to pass through Kautokeino, Norwegian Lapland. I had run into an American at the hotel who was married to a Lapland lady, and by God

he had his Lapland costume, he and his wife. He insisted on going home and coming back with his wife. They were all decked up in their costumes, very colorful people. Anyway, I did a bio, and at the end of it, I had pointed out that this fellow had sent his daughter to the United States on one of these exchange programs. She had been very upset by her treatment. I don't even know much about it now, but I had included this in remarks, and I got slapped for that a year later in my annual report as trivia and unnecessary. But again, I thought you could say anything you thought was relevant in a report as long as you had a summary that allowed people to read a page or half a page and not having to go beyond that.

I definitely had a handicap. I didn't enjoy reporting. The reporting I did was the type I got no credit for. We had visiting family in Tromso. We had Rhodes scholars at the university coming through. I attended their lectures. I found they were new left barbarians almost to a T. They were preaching about the evils of American imperialism. They couldn't substantiate what they were saying. I reported one of them talked about the '50s when I was a young man, and frankly the last honest decent period in American history when we had a decent society in the early 60's. He wrote it off which is exactly the story you get at the university level today and high schools, I assume, as a decadent period of conformity and mistrust and McCarthyism. Then came the glorious 60's, and people like Jane Fonda led us to a brilliant period of openness. I know they wouldn't believe anything I said, so I literally gave in three or four or five pages a brief summary of what this man said. And I reported all this and labeled it. I don't know what I had labeled it, LOU or whatever we were allowed to use, and sent it to the Embassy. On one occasion the worst of these, this particular one, I saw a month or so later that our cultural attaché had sent a communication to USIA about this man's lectures at the University of Oslo and Bergen. He had not attended any of these lectures himself, but he had asked his Norwegian colleagues how they were. "Oh it was great." Well this of course is exactly what Norwegians believe. This is what they want to believe. We were there for three years. You get very hungry for your own language in three years. We stole everything in English, everything about the United States whether it was in English, Norwegian, German or Russian. I kid you not; we never saw in three years a program about the United States, culture, politics, presidents, that wasn't hostile, uniformly hostile. It seemed so ridiculous. Norway has always been one of the most loyal NATO members, loyal to the alliance. Of course the deal supposedly with Stalin with Denmark and Norway coming in to NATO would be there would never be any NATO bases per se, permanent NATO bases in these countries. Of course, we stuck to that, but in every other way they had been loyal members. Every poll I ever saw indicated that 85% of the Norwegian people were very happy to be members of NATO, had a very positive opinion about the United States, but just as in the United States, they took it for granted apparently, that their media would always be hostile, would always be critical of the United States, just as our media is, ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, with the possible exception of Fox, the only exception that I have ever known, although I have never watched cable. I have never had cable. But it got to the point that I really got fed up with the situation, and, knowing that the embassy would never back me up, I did something on my own that I suppose would have gotten me into trouble. My last year I wrote a letter to the director for Naraco, television and radio in north Norway. This was a man who had been a guest in our home. He was an older man, a middle aged man, seemed to be sensible. I wrote him a letter and I said, "You know this seems to be so strange that a country we have such good relations with and a country in which the people have good positive feelings as best I could ever determine and certainly according to all the polls I ever saw. Yet the media, which to some degree was run by

the government, was uniformly negative on the United States and NATO for that matter.” I went on to list absurd things, one of which was a program about Puerto Rico that was advertised in every Norwegian newspaper, that the truth about Puerto Rico, and in one case it said everybody in Puerto Rico is divided into two factions, those that demand statehood, and those that demand independence. That was a complete lie. The commonwealth position was first voted on in 1952 or so. I think it was commonwealth won 52-48 over the independistas. Ever since after that, the independistas lost to the point where they don’t even get five percent of the ballot. The ballot has always been divided between those in favor of commonwealth, American citizenship, and those that want statehood and elimination of all the special privileges that Puerto Rico gets. Yet you would never know that by seeing these advertisements. I watched the program. It was just absurd. It was a Spanish language program with Norwegian subtitles in which there was a lot of singing which seemed to be authentic as best I could tell, a Puerto Rican song, followed by a lot of hate America, independista commentary that would make me think if you watched the program that everybody in Puerto Rico hates the United States and is living as slaves to American imperialism. I pointed this out. I pointed out the facts, mentioned the polling specific, and some other things of this nature. I sent them a copy. I did not send the Embassy a copy. I didn’t tell them; I didn’t ask their permission. I knew I wouldn’t get it. I sent copies to people I thought, political people here and there just FYI copies with a covering letter saying you may be interested in reading my views. I never heard from anybody else, but the director did call me up and said, “I have a feeling that this is not officially approved by the Embassy.” I said, “No, it is not.” I suspect I would get in a lot of trouble if they knew I had sent it out. Though why anybody should I will never know. It was certainly factually absolutely true. I certainly said nothing but the obvious other than it just seemed to be very strange that a friendly government would allow or set up its television and radio programming as to always be very hostile to its closest ally. It seems to me to this day to be an absurdity. He didn’t deny anything. All he said, “Well the young Turks coming out of journalism school just as in the United States, they believe that their purpose is to fault, criticize, and to always be hostile to the status quo.” I also pointed out this is not true with the Soviets, and that at least in one case we saw the Soviet propaganda films telling the world that rural life in the Soviet Union was just about paradise. Anybody that knows anything about rural life in the Soviet Union knows that it was just about absolute hell. There was no commentary, no attempt to correct the record. I said a lot of things on my own initiative of this nature, which not only did I not get any credit, I am sure I was criticized. As in my last job at State, I did in fact get rid in Norway of our local secretary who was a very pleasant person, but absolutely incompetent. At one point, the admin officer came up to see what the hell was going on there. I was raising so much fuss with the ladies. I gave him the entire story. I put it all down, I didn’t think it was fair to ask her to type up something that was very critical of herself, so I wrote it up in longhand and wasn’t about to spend any more time typing it, and took it all down to the Embassy explaining exactly why this woman was simply incapable of doing her job, which she herself was first to admit. But up until then like everything else in the Foreign Service she had apparently never received anything but glowing reviews. That was because she was lovely and pretty, but she was very incompetent to do the job. The last two years I was there, we had a younger woman, a married woman who got dumped by her husband while she was there, which is typical of Norway. Infidelity is the rule; it certainly is not the exception. She was very competent. She could take dictation. Her English was impeccable. I think she even did the newspaper review on occasion, though I still liked to put it in the final form I thought was acceptable for the Embassy. But she was far superior although I think she resigned shortly after I

left. But at least they had somebody there that was competent and presumably had a chance to bring in more people. I can not understand why no one in the United States government, the State Department, the Foreign Service ever gets criticized for writing glowing reports about people that their superiors know are incompetent or telling ball faced lies about the achievements of people that anybody with any local knowledge knows is untrue. But if you are critical and try to tell the truth about people, you are never praised for doing it. Back in the State Department, I had not one but two succeeding bosses, Julius Walker followed by Walker Diamante who backed me up completely. In fact it was their idea that we not lie about this black middle aged woman who had not done a lick of work in six or eight or ten years and that we tell exactly what the truth is. The fact that she had nothing but apparently glowing reports up until then wasn't going to come into it. We would simply tell the truth. I am sure nobody got a promotion for telling the truth.

Q: Well then you were there, when did you leave?

WEBB: I left in '81. That was the end of the three year assignment. I suppose by then if I ever had a career it was long gone. Before I got the assignment, from my first assignment on, I was always on the verge even when they were trying to keep me, on the verge of resigning. There were all these bribes and these irresistible assignments and language training and northern Europe. Only when I finally decided with only five years to go, it was just not worth throwing away who knows how many hundreds of thousands of thousands of dollars in retirement. I finally gave up and decided to stick it out. The moment I made that decision, not that I told anybody, they stuck it to me. From then on I could no longer blackmail anybody into giving me any sort of assignment that I liked.

RICHARD C. BARKLEY
Deputy Chief of Mission
Oslo (1979-1981)

Ambassador Richard C. Barkley was born on December 23, 1932 in Illinois. He attended Michigan State College, where he received his BA in 1954, and Wayne State University, where he received his MA in 1958. He served in the US Army overseas from 1955-1957 as a 1st lieutenant. His career has included positions in Finland, the Dominican Republic, Norway, South Africa, Turkey, and Germany. Ambassador Barkley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 12, 2003.

Q: You were there form '79 to when?

BARCKLEY: I was there until December

Q: This is tape four, side one with Dick Barkley. Yeah.

BARCKLEY: Ambassador Lerner was from Chicago. He ran a number of suburban newspapers, the Lerner chain. Apparently, what I found out subsequently his political relationship was with Fritz Mondale in Minnesota. Now how he made that relationship I don't know. I think he of course, put some money into the campaign. Lou had also been an AFS student in Denmark, so he had some understanding of Scandinavia.

Q: That is American Field Service.

BARCKLEY: Yes, the Field Service. And he was quite competent in the language, maybe not totally fluent but better by far than most Americans who are learning a Scandinavian language. So when President Carter became president, he was appointed to be ambassador to Oslo. He had completed 2 ½ years of that assignment when I was out there and only had another six months to go. As a matter of fact as soon as I arrived there, he went on a rather extended leave, so I was Chargé almost immediately.

Q: What was the government like in Norway at that time?

BARCKLEY: Well the government was as it had been for many years a labor government. In Norway they call their Social Democratic Party the Labor Party, the Arbeiterpartie. There had been a number of prime ministers, but at that time Odvar Nordli was prime minister, an absolutely remarkable wonderful fellow, but Knut Frey Denkunk was his foreign minister. Although they were loyal members of NATO, from the very inception of their relationship with NATO, they opted out of any nuclear options, so they were very sensitive about any ships carrying nuclear weapons or anything that might visit their ports. They looked upon themselves as basically a non nuclear member of NATO. Of course that put some burdens on us because quite clearly that large geographical area of Norway bellies up to the North Sea where there is an awful lot of Soviet and allied naval activity. So whenever there was a naval ship visit, there was a certain amount of sensitivity and of course we had the policy that we would never confirm nor deny what weapon systems were on board. And that gave them some heartburn. But other than that, they tried to be quite loyal. Like all Labor Parties at that time or Social Democratic Parties throughout western Europe, there were two basic wings. There was the very liberal traditional wing, and there was also the trade union or conservative wing. The liberal wings also were intellectually driven and often had some sympathy for the socialist experiments going on to the east. Now of course Norway also shares a common border with Russia. Although they have sovereignty over the island of Spitzbergen, or Svalbard, there was a huge Russian base up there at Barentsburg, which they have worked out some sort of a mutual toleration using the treaty of Svalbard of 1922. So there are enough burdens on our relationship. But going back to our previous discussion, one of our constant burdens at that time is what they call the NATO double track decisions to counter the SS-20 by emplacing in central and southern Europe cruise missiles and Pershing missiles. That was opposed very actively by certain left wing types in the Labor Party.

Q: Well the SS-20 and the gathering in of the straying left of social democrats was sort of a last great sort of communist offensive wasn't it, you know I mean of a peaceful offensive.

BARCKLEY: I would have to think about that a long time Stuart, but it certainly was a last gasp Soviet effort to steal a march on us tactically and strategically. Of course as we now know, the Soviet Union was not in very good shape, actually all of Eastern Europe was not in very good shape. But at that time we didn't know that. The permanence of the bipolar world seemed to be something that we could take for granted. Of course we are all much wiser now after the fact. But there was a lot of particular pressure on that front and if we were negotiating, sometimes the Norwegians would move away from U.S. positions. We had another problem at that time, and that problem went to the heart of the U.S.-Norwegian relationship. It was a question on what we call Prepositioning. A member of the Labor Party who was extraordinarily conservative by the name of Johann Jurgen Holst was at that time the Deputy Foreign Minister and later on was both Foreign Minister and Defense Minister. Together with his counterpart in the Pentagon, in order to show American determination to protect Norway, they planned to preposition equipment for a U.S. marine battalion. The prepositioning would take place in northern Norway, and of course if anything happened, and Norway was threatened in one way or another, the U.S. marines would land, the equipment would be there, and they would be combat ready. This all to our chagrin in the embassy was taking place behind closed doors. We said you just can't pull a program like that off in a democratic society, particularly in a society like Norway. Sure enough sooner or later, the word came out, and there was a major spat in Norway, with great opposition to the plan from parts of the ruling government, although the ruling government was quite obviously the architects behind the whole program. As a result of these objections from the left wing of the Party, the Norwegian government turned to move the prepositioning from northern Norway down to central Norway because northern Norway looked to be too provocative to the Russians. That caused a lot of agony. It was one of those things where the embassy was rather heavily engaged, although I think the rest of the world probably gave it a big yawn. If it was even a byline in the New York Times, I would have been surprised.

Q: How did it come out?

BARCKLEY: Well finally they were able to move it out of the area in farther northern Norway, down to the Trondelag which is around Trondheim. That is a prepositioning of about 300 miles further south than it was intended. Of course the Russians found it irresistible. They couldn't help but fish in that pond, and they were doing it rather effectively. So we were able to finally get through that and it didn't turn out to be as big a thing as I thought. Subsequently I have been told that we were interested in removing the prepositioning and now the Norwegians are very concerned in the other direction that if we do it, it will be a sign of American lack of interest. Of course the scenery has changed a lot, but at that time it was highly sensitive.

Q: Well the Kola Peninsula was a key point for the whole Soviet navy in the Atlantic.

BARCKLEY: The Kola Peninsula was a strategic asset. The constant problem for the Soviets was the lack of warm weather ports, and that wasn't exactly one. But they could break through to it most of the time. There was a large submarine arsenal up there. They would slip their sub out north of Svalbard and came down through to the North Atlantic. The Iceland Greenland corridor is one of the key areas for concern for the American navy. So there was a lot of concern about that. The Norwegian navy was extremely cooperative in helping monitor Soviet ship movements with us. It was a very professional outfit.

Q: Well while you were there, were there incidents of Soviet submarines penetrating up the fjords and...

BARCKLEY: There was of course, the Soviet submarine that got caught on the rocks in Sweden. It was a Whiskey Class sub, and they used to sort of drolly consider whiskey on the rocks. Of course that caught everybody's attention because of Scandinavia sensitivities. When they saw clearly Soviet ships going in and out of the fjords, they knew how vulnerable they were.

Q: Well while you were there, were we looking at the Soviets as an eminent threat? This is still Carter administration. Were you seeing them as, were we really thinking the Soviets might try to do something?

BARCKLEY: Well obviously I can't speak for the president. The administration fairly quickly folded behind the dual track decision of NATO because we were the architects of it, most of its terms, which we coordinated through NATO to reassure our western allies that the Soviets were not going to divide us with this kind of effort. It was an extraordinarily difficult negotiation. You had to negotiate of course with the countries that were going to receive the western missiles. There were large peace movements in Germany, not so many in Italy, so it wasn't an easy thing. Then the negotiation also included a number of things that got us into a little bit of trouble in Norway. There was a thing called forward base systems. Now forward base systems were basically American fighter aircraft which could strike at a whole variety of targets. It had always been part of the Soviet effort to get foreign base systems engaged in any kind of disarmament effort. We would never acknowledge that they were in the same category as ballistic missiles or cruise missiles. The Oslo Labor Party, right in the middle of these negotiations came out for including forward base systems in the negotiations. I remember meeting with one of the more liberal member of their cabinet, Einar Forde who was really quite an intellectually gifted chap, although left wing clearly. I went to him and I said, "You know on one hand we are delighted that your party has agreed that these negotiations should go forward. ON the other hand, we are somewhat distressed that certain members of your party believe that you should be sitting on the Russian side of the table." He laughed at me a little bit and said, "Well I don't think it is quite like that." I said, "You know these are very subtle issues. These are the kinds of things that experts get involved with. Why is the Oslo wing of the Labor Party, which is notoriously leftist, getting involved in this? Who are these people?" He gave me a number of names. One of them he talked about was a fellow by the name of Arne Treholt, who at that time was in the United Nations, and was a key advisor to a powerful member of the foreign office by the name of Jens Evensen. Evensen surprisingly came out against the NATO double track decision. It turns out later that Treholt was a Soviet spy. That became more interesting later on because one of the things I was involved in was the negotiation of trades between U.S. assets and East German and European and Russian assets, spy trading. Treholt's name came up rather repeatedly as someone worth trading.

Q: Well how about where does North Sea oil in those days?

BARCKLEY: Well North Sea oil by the time I had been there, there had been a long negotiation with the British that centered delineating what part of the sea belongs to Norway had been

completed; what part of it belongs to the British continental shelf or whatever. That's where this fellow Jens Evensen earned his high regard for he was the key negotiator for the Norwegians. The line that they finally agreed to, it turned out that on the Norwegian side of the line was where the major resources were, so Evensen came out looking quite like a hero. I don't know whether at that time he had the geological background to really know it was there, but it turned out that way. And of course, the Norwegians at that time did not have all of the expertise to tap into that oil, so Phillips petroleum and other Americans got actively engaged in extracting those resources which later were taken over by a Norwegian consortium.

Q: What about relations at that time I mean form your observation between Norway and Sweden?

BARCKLEY: Well you know, the Norwegians and the Swedes have this ongoing competition. It is somewhat humorous. In sporting events, for example, they do get engaged in grit your teeth kinds of competitions. But you know, Norway was part of Sweden since the Treaty of Tilsit in 1814 when Norway was taken from Denmark that had been loyal to Napoleon and given to Sweden who had been part of the allied coalition against Napoleon. The king of Sweden was considered to be the joint king of Norway, although both countries had an independent parliament. The only joint decisions on the parts of the Swedes were in the questions of foreign and defense policy. In 1905 Norway finally declared its total independence from Sweden and got their own king. From that time on, and there was some disagreement about two border provinces. The Norwegians still claim the Swedes stole them from them. It is particularly aggravating because in one of those provinces produced one of the greatest skiers of all time Jan Stenmark. The Swedes had him and the Norwegians wanted him. But it was not really ever a serious problem. It is a very peaceful border. There are jokes about either side that go on. And of course for the longest period of time, and this has been true throughout Scandinavia, the Swedes were the wealthy members of the Scandinavian community, and they tended to lord it over their weaker and poorer cousins. But now, of course, per capita income in Norway is considerably higher than in Sweden because of North Sea oil. So you know, the tables have turned somewhat.

Q: Well while you were there, did you feel you were sort of out in the provinces of Europe?

BARCKLEY: Absolutely not. Oslo was really quite sophisticated. A tiny little town, but it is really rather sophisticated. The lines of communication are excellent. Of course the lingua franca of Scandinavia is English, so we had constant access to publications, a lot of television was in English. I never had the feeling of isolation. Of course during the passing of time, all of the instruments like the airports improved and the links to Europe improved. Of course the American embassies have in the past and I think still do, have a remarkable communications system. You know, if you are a NATO member you are fully aware of 99% of the things that are going on there, so you are able to do your job. Really rather a remarkable development and I give plaudits to the State Department for being able to put that together.

Q: Well when I think of Sweden, maybe a little earlier on in the 60's but on into the 70's, there certainly was not the greatest relationship, the Vietnam War and just different outlooks between the Swedes and the United States. Swedish television was full of crews that would come over and

look at the dirt in the United States, portraying everything in a negative sense. At least that is how I had the feeling. Did you get any?

BARCKLEY: Well there was a certain amount of that. I think you are referring to the period of time with Olaf Palme who was the Prime Minister, he was clearly critical of the United States. He had been a student here I guess and was somewhat shocked by our civil rights problems. He obviously had no sympathy for our policy on Vietnam. At that time, there were a number of soldiers, usually from Germany but from other areas too, that for whatever reason defected to these countries during the Vietnam war and were given asylum. That certainly was true in Norway as well as in Sweden. Even to this day the problem continues to fester a little bit because a lot of these want to be given immunity so they can return to the United States. I don't know what the status is now, but I can tell you 20 years ago there was no sympathy in Washington for this kind of thing. Then there was the general feeling that the United States had gone about things in the international community in a very negative way. We used to say at that time, and I think it is still marginally true, that Scandinavian indignation grows in direct proportion of the distance of the injustice, from their own shores. Therefore they can get all exercised about what is going on in Alabama and South Africa, but they don't say much about Russia or Poland or any of these other areas where there are some pretty brutalizing things going on.

Q: Well in Norway were we going to get the Norwegians to say nasty things about the Soviet Union?

BARCKLEY: No it was never an effort that I was aware of to do that. We did on occasion, you know, try to starch their backbone when the Soviets got into something that was clearly bad. I mean a Soviet plane landed up in Bear Island, which is a Norwegian possession, and the Soviets demanded that they turn it back right away. We told them that your sovereign right is at least to see what that plane is up to. I think they sort of later did it but they didn't feel comfortable about it. The other thing that disturbed the Norwegians was the Vietnam War. It was over in 1975, although it was still stuck in the craw of the left wing and others during the time I was in Norway. But there were other issues that bothered the Norwegians. One of them was that under international law, the nations which pick up boat people that were coming out of Cambodia or Laos or Vietnam were responsible for them. Well of course Norway has a huge merchant marine, one of the largest in the world. They picked up a large number of them, and they had three or four thousand boat people that they had to relocate to Norway. I remember Knut Frydenlund coming to me and saying, "Well you know this is a cold climate. These people aren't going to be happy here. Wouldn't it be better for them to be in Texas or some place like that." Of course, I said, "Well you know, the international rules are quite clear." He said, "Would you ask your government?" I did, and of course Washington wasn't interested. At the same time he said, "How about some of these poor fellows in the anti Vietnam groups that want to go home. Could you take them?" I was also told to instruct him that it would depend of course on their actual status and whether or not they had indeed engaged in something considered criminal in the U.S. So we never resolved those problems. It was interesting to me that they actually approached me on it. But you know, it is extraordinarily easy when you have a very homogenous country like Norway, to be critical on racial and other issues. Their own tolerance for differing communities was not very high. So it was one of those things that we simply could not resolve.

Q: How about the fact we had a Vice President Fritz Mondale of Norwegian ancestry? Was that playing well?

BARCKLEY: Oh yes they liked that very much of course. Before I arrived actually, he arrived for a personal visit to Norway, and he went up to his ancestral home which is the town of Mondale of course. I think he was somewhat shaken by the differences that had grown up between the Norwegian community in the United States and the Norwegian community back there. But you know, if you are from Minnesota, Norway is more than a foreign policy issue, it is a domestic issue. Every year, for example, the Sons of Norway, which at that time was the largest ethnic group in the United States, would make a pilgrimage to Oslo, and they would be received by the King. They had a gala dinner which of course, the embassy was expected to attend. It was a fascinating kind of interaction between the two because quite clearly, although these people were proud of their Norwegian heritage, they had come a long way. That meant that most of them spoke very little Norwegian, or whatever Norwegian they spoke was obviously from some little province they might have come from and was not necessarily intelligible to the king or other Norwegians. It was always a very touching kind of ceremony. So the American Norwegian community, which had always been very proud of its background, is something that the Norwegians looked to as an asset in their relations with the United States.

Q: Well did this come up as far as get my cousin a visa or that sort of thing, or was this not much of a...

BARCKLEY: It is really not a problem with the Scandinavians. As a matter of fact most of them don't require a visa to go to the United States any more, I am sure there are those occasions when something like that appears, it was never a major issue.

Q: What about whaling?

BARCKLEY: Oh yes. Well, you know, Norwegians have been whaling I guess almost as long as there have been Norwegians. I don't know. It is a question of livelihood for a small but influential number of people in Norway. It is the kind of an issue that is particularly painful for the Norwegians because they do like to strike moral stances. I think it is an issue that they would wish would go away, but basically you can still buy whale meat at the fish markets. So far they have resisted, you know, the international controls, and they have argued, the minke whale, which they hunt is not actually endangered. That is their contention. But it has been a source of some pain.

Q: Have we made any demarches or anything like that?

BARCKLEY: I never did. I am sure they might have been made at certain times. I think those go through the international whaling commission.

Q: I was thinking somebody I interviewed a long time ago was ambassador to Chad, and was told to make a demarche about whales. The foreign minister said, "Oh we will be right with you, excuse me. What is a whale? But of course in Norway this was not a joking matter. What about

life in Norway? I somehow have the feeling on weekends everybody goes up skis or up in the mountains or to a fjord or something.

BARCKLEY: Well the fact is of course, it is quite a prosperous country now.

Q: When you were there...

BARCKLEY: When I was there it was very prosperous. To have a home at the seashore for the summer and to have a little hut up in the mountains for the winter was not unusual. Certainly it was not unusual for the upper middle classes of Bergen or Oslo. My wife is Norwegian, and her family has both. There is a place in the mountains and a place at the seashore. In the summer they go to the seashore and in the winter they go to the mountains, skiing. It is an interesting thing because by our standards, the climate is not particularly wonderful up there. But the people are so used to it that they don't allow themselves to be deterred. They are very much an outdoor people. The best rain gear I ever found was in Norway because you are out in the rain a lot, or in the snow. The spring and the autumn you go berry picking or whatever and of course you could ski up until the Easter holidays. Right outside of Oslo there is a place called Normacka which is really quite a lovely cross country skiing area. They are basically outdoor people. They still seem to treasure their roots, most of them have country kinds of roots, although they have been heavily urbanized recently. Life is quite congenial. The only thing when I was there, was to go to a restaurant was extraordinarily difficult because they were so expensive. They were heavily taxed, and there weren't very many of them, so the idea of coming from a place like Germany or let's say France where the restaurant life might be actually a very doable thing, in Norway it was almost prohibitively expensive.

Q: What about the cultural life? One always thinks of a lot of the movies that came out of Sweden or other things and all this and books out of Sweden, but you don't hear much about the Norwegian side of things.

BARCKLEY: Well the Norwegians are a bit like the Germans. They look at us with some contempt and say where is your Schiller or Goethe. The Norwegians say where is your Ibsen, your Hamsen. There are a couple of other great authors from a couple of hundred years ago. I mean quite obviously Henrik Ibsen is a national treasure. Fortunately the Danes claim him too because he wrote in what was Danish at that time. There are modern writers. They are not particularly well known. I certainly wouldn't want to offend anybody by forgetting which ones they might be. But, of course these are small countries.

Q: No.

BARCKLEY: That is also true in television. They simply cannot finance much independent television, so they import an enormous amount of comedies and things from the United States. They have their version of Wheel of Fortune and their version of Jeopardy and all of these things. There has not been an awful lot of cultural creativity recently that I am aware of.

Q: Did Denmark play much of a role? How did the Norwegians look upon Denmark?

BARCKLEY: Well the Norwegians like Denmark. They always felt that they had a certain kinship with Denmark, particularly vis a vis the Swedes. Both of them harbor certain attitudes towards Sweden. Of course they were part of Denmark for 300 years until they were taken away and added to Sweden. During that period of time I think there was resentment. The Danes were more urbane and more cosmopolitan, and the Norwegians were rather rough hewn. But when they became independent, their first king was a Dane, Haakon V. So historically I am not aware of any animosity. They like the Danes quite a bit.

Q: What about the king or the royal family? What sort of role do they play when you were there?

BARCKLEY: Strictly a figurehead. He was head of state, not head of government. From the time of actually 1905 when they asked the king to come back, it was clear that he would have nothing to do with the actual governance of the country, but he is an important symbol. Just like in Great Britain, he is not only the king, he is the head of the Norwegian Lutheran Church and all of these other things. And of course there have been some changes in kingship everywhere. Haakon survived as king until right after the war. He went into exile in the war. He was a very popular king. His son Olaf who replaced him was extraordinarily popular for many years, and now Olaf's son Harald is king. Harald has married a commoner, as sign that things are changing. At one time that was considered to be quite dramatic.

Q: Particularly when she has a child born out of wedlock.

BARCKLEY: No, this is the present son, Haakon Magnus. Magnus also married a commoner, a woman who had a child out of wedlock. That was quite a thing. Not only that, before he married her, he lived with her. For the traditionalist I am sure this was somewhat hard, but I think the vast majority of the Norwegians understand that whether you are a king or not, you are still human, and these things go on.

Q: Well, how about the relationship between Norway and West Germany, particularly there is a lot of history there. It goes back to 1940.

BARCKLEY: Well, you are getting into a lot of history here, and it happens to be an area that I am interested in. Before the Second World War, large segments of Norway looked to England as sort of a leader of their futures, and others looked to the Germans. England had always been the draw for the economic and trading classes of Norway for obvious reasons. Germany was always the haven for cultural activities. Almost every Norwegian writer or painter studied in Germany, and so there was obviously some sentiment. But it wasn't the kind of sentiment that there was any sympathy for the German of course, invasion or occupation of Norway. And of course, nowadays if there is a swear word I guess you would have to say it is Vikdun Quisling who as Norwegian Prime Minister during the war was a Nazi sympathizer.

Q: His name became a word for collaborator.

BARCKLEY: It is, but I don't think you can find many Americans who can find the origin of the word Quisling any more. It was particularly painful because Quisling in some respects was a

quintessential Norwegian military officer. He got the highest marks ever out of the war college. But he took a wrong turn. His ambition obviously got him into some real terrible problems.

Q: Did you find everywhere, how were Germans received in Norway when you were there?

BARKLEY: Well on the one hand of course, they are very wealthy tourists and very intrepid, so they appeared in large numbers. However there is often a German tendency for people to knock on someone's door and say my father was stationed here during World War Two, and I would like to see where he lived. Maybe the levels of sensitivity were not always the highest in that regard. There is a certain ambivalence, but I don't think there is any hatred anymore. The elder generation does not really continue to fight that war.

Q: Well then how did you find having a Norwegian wife?

BARKLEY: Well I met her there. Before we married I was already at a new posting in Bonn. So she wasn't my wife while I was there as DCM.

DAVID G. BROWN
Political Counselor
Oslo (1983-1986)

David G. Brown was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1940. He graduated from Princeton University in 1964 entered the Foreign Service. His assignments include Taipei, Saigon, Yokohama, Tokyo, Vienna, Beijing, Oslo, and Hong Kong. Before retirement in 1996, he served as Director of the Office of Korean Affairs. Mr. Brown was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 28, 2003.

Q: So, you were there from '83 to '86. What were relations with Norway when you went there?

BROWN: Relations with Norway are normally quite trouble free. It's one of the easiest relationships we have in the world not because our countries are identical by any stretch of the imagination. It's hard to see too many parallels between Norway and its view of the world and the U.S. view of the world, but it's just a very harmonious relationship. The big issue while I was there was intermediate nuclear forces, INF. This was taking place against the backdrop in Norway of a period when the country was ruled by a center-right coalition government led by the Conservative Party. So, we had in office people who were relatively well disposed towards the United States and towards cooperation with the U.S. Nevertheless, the INF issue was a challenge. If you remember the INF debate for several years really dominated U.S. European relations.

Q: Just in context the Soviets have introduced an intermediate missile the SS20 and the idea of that, that put Europe under the gun, but not the United States under the gun and we were going to respond with intermediate missiles and cruise missiles.

BROWN: Right and deploy those INF missiles in Europe and do so in a way that many in Europe thought was going to increase East-West tensions rather than reduce them. The challenge was both to persuade people that the Soviet missiles were a real additional threat and that the deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe was the way to deal with that threat. So, that I would say was the biggest political issue in the three years I was there, and it split the Norwegians. The issue became linked with Reagan's strategic defense initiative, SDI. Both of the issues were acceptable to conservatives in Norway and but appalled those on the center and left side of the political spectrum. As I said, for most of my tenure, there was a center-right government in Norway and relations with them were quite cooperative and collaborative. What we had to do was try and sell U.S. views on INF and then subsequently on SDI in as sophisticated to the Norwegian public to make it easier for the government to maintain political support for supporting U.S. policy.

Q: Were you there, were the conservatives in control the whole time you were there?

BROWN: No. Labor came back in. I can't remember exactly when, but I think for the last year I was there a Labor government was in office.

Q: Now, did that make a difference?

BROWN: It made a difference because the Labor people were much more skeptical about both of these programs, which they saw as moving Europe in the wrong direction. They believe that Europe was changing, or at least had the potential to move in a different direction. This was before the Berlin Wall collapsed, three or four years before that, but there was a sense with the Helsinki process, that Europe East and West was changing and that there were opportunities here to build bridges. Also both SDI and INF were seen as efforts by a conservative American government, not to build bridges with the Soviet Union, but to confront and overpower the Soviet Union. So, it was a very hard sell with the Labor Party side that either one of these programs were really in Europe's interests.

Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there?

BROWN: Well, this a tale of two ambassadors. One appalling and one very good. The appalling one was Mark Evans Austad and the very good one was Robert Stuart. Mark Evans Austad as the name implies was a man of Norwegian descent, a Mormon who had done his Mormon mission work as a youth in Norway in the '30s in a period when Hitler was rising in Germany. He was a profoundly conservative man who was convinced that the Labor Party and the left of the Norwegian political spectrum were the equivalent of Chamberlain in the '30s. That these were naive idealists who had no comprehension of the real danger of the Soviet Union. He'd been through this before because he'd been in Norway at the time of appeasement of Nazism in Europe and so he just had it in for the left in Norway. This was eventually his undoing or part of his undoing. He attacked them so vigorously. Even Conservatives in Norway thought that he was being obsessive and acting in a way that was inappropriate for an American ambassador.

His problems were compounded by his personal weaknesses. One weakness was alcohol, which was particularly hard for a Mormon to admit. He had one absolutely horrendous incident when

he went up to Northern Norway for an embassy arranged trip. The officer who was stationed in Northern Norway at the time took him around for the day and then to dinner and eventually to a bar. At about 11:00, the officer decided that he had had enough and Ambassador Austad in the bar.

Well, the next day or later that night, Ambassador Austad went to visit an old friend. This was at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. He was drunk and by mistake he went to the house next door to his friend's house and pounded on the door yelling and screaming and woke up the people in the house. The neighbors eventually called the police who came to arrest him for disorderly conduct. The Ambassador then threatened the police that he was the American ambassador and that if they arrested him he was going to bring the wrath of America down on little Norway. This was a very unpleasant incident for the embassy. Ambassador Austad tried to insist that the embassy go up and threaten the local police to expunge all of this from the records, the police reports. He convinced himself that this was all a leftist plot against him. He tried to write articles to be published in conservative media in the States blaming this incident on leftists in Norway.

I think a large part of it was that as a Mormon he just couldn't admit that he had a drinking problem. This incident combined with his more considered attacks on the labor politicians eventually led to a two hour debate in the Norwegian Storting about his performance as American ambassador and whether it was appropriate for any ambassador to be saying the kinds of things that he was saying. This brought the issue to a head in Washington, and Reagan decided to recall him.

Q: Where was his power, why was he a political appointee?

BROWN: He was a political appointee who had been ambassador to Finland and had apparently done a reasonably good job there during the first Reagan administration. He was appointed in the second Reagan administration as ambassador to Norway. His tenure was very painful for people in the embassy.

Q: How did you handle this I mean, you know, you realize you've got a problem here, but with a political appointee it's not let's call the inspectors in and all. I mean, but were the inspectors called?

BROWN: No. It went on at two levels. One was informally between the DCM; a real gentleman named Ron Woods, who lives up in Seattle now. Woods Did a lot of back channel over the telephone description to what was going on to people in Washington. The other level was formal reporting, that we had to handle carefully. We report what was in the Norwegian press and we made sure that everything was translated by our locals and then cabled or faxed back to Washington so that they would have the record. In particular, I remember reporting thoroughly on the Storting debate and the press commentary that followed. I had been tipped off that the debate was planned. So, as political counselor I went down and took copious notes for reporting. Then subsequently I actually got the transcript from the Norwegian Storting and had the whole thing translated into English and sent back to Washington.

Q: Did he approve this?

BROWN: Well, some of the things he knew we were doing, but with Woods blessing I signed the reports out. Other things he was unaware of, such as the transcript of the Storting debate. We were trying to build a case in Washington for his recall, to do it by letting the Ambassador hang himself and to do this without Ron Woods actually being thrown out. Fortunately it all worked out.

Then the irony of this was that he was replaced by Robert Stuart who had been the chairman of Quaker Oats. A fine man but one who had no connection to Norway before his nomination. I can remember taking his biography and the agreement request to the Foreign Ministry. The chief of protocol to whom I was giving this and who was a very good friend, said, "What are you Americans doing sending us another one of these people who know nothing about Norway?" I said, "Well, we just had one that claimed to know a lot. Why don't you give this guy a chance and see how he works out?" Actually Robert Stuart worked out extraordinarily well.

Q: Did they know that his background is a student at Yale he helped follow the American First Committee? As a student he got the America First going.

BROWN: That part of his life I had not been aware of. He was a conservative man. He encouraged all of us in the embassy to read the Wall Street Journal, which I do, but he was a great proponent of the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal. Yet, he was a very sophisticated man who listened to his staff. He was there during the transfer of government from the Conservatives to the Labor Party. He had worked with us after he arrived to build bridges to the Labor Party. So he knew them and had developed personal relationships with Gro Harlem Brundtland before she returned to office as Prime Minister. Stuart was a marvelous ambassador who has kept up his ties with Norway after retiring. He has sponsored scholarships for students to be exchanged between the two countries and ended up marrying a Norwegian, as you know after his first wife passed away. He started from ground zero with no real credentials or qualifications. While most American ambassadors to Oslo have something in their background that links them to Scandinavia, and Stuart had no ties and proved to be one of the most effective ambassadors we had.

Q: How did the while you were there the intermediate force issue play out or did it play out?

BROWN: Well, first of all, none of these missiles were being deployed in Norway. So, while Norway was thus on the periphery of the issue, they were a member of NATO and had to be part of the decision making process. They had to go along with deployments and the government had to be able to explain what it was doing to its public. In the end we got through all these issues.

Q: How did we view the Norwegian relations with Sweden because Sweden for a long time was playing the usual card and relations weren't great with the United States for a considerable period? I don't know how they were at that time.

BROWN: I don't recall any serious issues like the ones under Palme during the Vietnam War. My recollection is that we saw these relationships as a constructive element in Nordic cooperation that did not directly affect U.S. relations with either country.

Q: Were there any concerns about the Soviet presence in the Kola Peninsula I mean that's obviously a very big, was a very big area for the Soviet nuclear submarines.

BROWN: We had a very important and cooperative intelligence relationship with the Norwegian military that was very much focused on keeping track of the comings and goings of the Soviet fleet. So, that was one aspect of it. Another aspect had to do with Soviet interest in this very northern part of Europe, particularly in Svalbard which is an island north of the Nordic Peninsula which is Norwegian territory but covered by an international agreement that date way back to the '20s under which the Soviets have coal mining rights on the eastern half of that island. There was a fair amount of attention to how the Soviets were putting pressure on the Norwegians in Svalbard. What were they doing up there and were the Norwegians vigorously asserting their sovereignty in trying to keep an eye on what the Soviets were doing.

Then while I was there, there was a major spy case. A man named Arne Treholt who was a legal expert in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry was found to have been on the Soviet payroll. It shocked Norway that one of their bright well-connected young officials was working for the Soviets for so long. He had had a public image as an earnest person trying to find ways to build bridges with the Soviet Union and to deal with issues in a way that was cooperative rather than confrontational. This fit right into the leftist view of what Norway ought to be doing. Low and behold one of their best and brightest was found to be on the Soviet payroll.

Q: Was this something that you just observed or stay out of?

BROWN: The Norwegians handled the investigation, arrest and trial.

Q: How about Norwegian oil? Did that give Norway the ability to sort of distance themselves or go its own way if it wanted to?

BROWN: Yes, with respect to Europe. North Sea oil was booming while we were there. This was an important element in U.S.-Norwegian economic relations. American companies were involved in developing some fields. Yes, you're right, it had a big impact on Norway's perception of its role in the world. Before our arrival, Norway had held its first referendum on joining the European Union and voted against joining. The second referendum, also against joining, was in the 1990s after we had left. I think that a major part factor that made Norwegians comfortable in staying out of the EU was its oil. While we were there we were watching the beginning of the debate in Norway about whether there should be a second referendum.

Q: Did we have a feeling about this?

BROWN: Naturally, this was an issue for Norway to decide. Nevertheless, we thought it would be sensible for Norway to be part of Europe. This could help consolidate its relationship with NATO, which was important to the U.S. It might help with opening the Norwegian market in certain areas where they were quite protectionist. But the discussion was very preliminary and the second referendum didn't come until about a decade later.

Q: Did we look to Norway as an ally in dealing in the United Nations on issues?

BROWN: We would consult with them a lot and generally felt that they were supportive.

Q: How about whaling?

BROWN: I shouldn't be flippant in my next comment. Whales and apples and turkeys were examples of the kinds of issues the embassy had to manage. With the exception of INF and SDI, which were important political issues, there were not many other significant issues. Whaling was one of them.

Q: Could you explain what the issue was?

BROWN: Well, environmental groups in the United States were convinced that the global moratorium on whaling ought to be maintained. Norway had a traditional whaling fishery that was quite important to the people along the coast. It involved a relatively small whale, the minke whale, not one of the behemoths that are in the public mind. Norwegians were convinced that the minke whale was not in danger. There were tens of thousands of these whales, and the Norwegian whaling effort would not imperil this particular whale's existence. The issue recurred each year. It had to be managed, because it couldn't be solved to everyone's satisfaction. The Norwegians did start a limited "research" program on how the stock was doing. They would of course then sell the meat domestically, but not export it. At least that's my recollection of what they were doing at that time.

Q: Turkeys and apples?

BROWN: Apples were a product, which we thought we could sell into the Norwegian market. This was a market where Norway had a small number of apple growers who received protection in part to protect small rural communities. The Norwegian government was concerned about maintaining employment in rural areas and that was the basis of a lot of Norwegian protectionism. Apples happened to be a commodity that we thought we could export to Norway if they weren't so protectionist.

The turkeys came up at Thanksgiving because there was a blanket ban on the importation of American turkeys into Norway. So, what do you do at Thanksgiving and Christmas? We were always trying to work deals to bring in a limited number of turkeys for Americans at the NATO base and at the embassy. If we could do that, couldn't we also bring in enough for others in the American community?

Q: Well, what was the problem with the turkeys?

BROWN: The ban on the importation of turkeys, if I recall it correctly, was designed to protect chicken producers. Anyway, it was a delightful time. It was one of the best assignments that my family and I had and in '86 it had to come to an end.

ROBERT DOUGLAS STUART, JR.
Ambassador
Norway (1984-1989)

Robert Douglas Stuart, Jr. was born in Illinois and attended Princeton. Stuart served as an artillery officer during World War II. Ambassador Stuart was appointed Ambassador to Norway in 1984. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: This was 1984. What sort of training did you get before you went out, or preparation?

STUART: Well, the FSI, Foreign Service Institute, runs an ambassadorial course. And, of all people, Ambassador Shirley Temple Black was sort of the honcho and led that. A number of others sort of went in and out of the program. And I think it's a helpful first step.

But I've often thought of, afterwards, if they could have, either after one year or six months, a second chapter to that experience. Because at that time you would know better what to ask about, of experienced people, and you'd have a better idea than just learning in academic process.

But anyway, it was helpful and it at least gave you a sense of what your assignment was.

On the other hand, I never had any particularly complicated worries about being able to handle the job. Because it's a management job, and if you can work with people, which I'm lucky enough to be able to do, I figured you could.

I was worried about my ability to speak Norwegian, which was nonexistent to start with, but the Norwegians really a second language they have English. Only a few of the cabinet ministers do not speak English, and toward the end I got so I could talk to them in Norwegian, because I took lessons. But we were never brilliant in it, because conversation with the senior members of any government over there was in English because they all speak it so well.

Q: When you went out there, did you have any guidelines from Washington, things that you felt that you had to look for? Did they sort of say: When you get out there, we need to do this or that, or watch out for this or that?

STUART: Well, without impugning, there was a kind of a mission to kind of restore credibility and to just demonstrate that you could be an objective representative of the United States. I think my instinct was to maintain a relatively low profile and win the confidence of the key government there.

[TAPE ENDED]

Q: ...with Mark Austad, who had been ambassador at one time to Finland. He had been a Mormon missionary, I think. I'm not sure of all the details, but he was one of these people that we in the Foreign Service kind of watch with horror, because there were newspaper accounts of his overdoing his missionaryness, and there were some other aspects. He had what can only be

termed a very high profile, and it wasn't a good one. It was a rather staid society, and it did not reflect well on the United States. And these were, you might say, personal traits of his.

STUART: Right, you are saying the things that obviously concerned me and concerned the State Department. And just common sense suggested that one maintain a low profile, relatively, and reestablish confidence.

Q: How did you find the embassy? What was both the morale of the embassy and the confidence of the embassy, after having gone through what obviously was a rather difficult time for them?

STUART: Well, I think one of the breaks is that, I guess, in comparison with that, a reasonably kind of uncomplicated business manager, they were willing to listen and to work with him. And one of the messages that you can tell anybody studying this business: If you demonstrate that you are willing to work as hard or harder than any of them and understand the issues. You might not have years and years of study of a specific issue, but you understand the issues well and you run the agency as a manager, you win their confidence very quickly.

My pattern has always been to get up at six in the morning, in business, and work till midnight. And on the point you were making a little bit earlier, I kept the same schedule there, because there is a volume of material that you have to read to be aware of the issues, and there are ceremonial things that take time during the day or dinners. So you really have to put in many hours.

Q: How was the morale of the staff when you arrived?

STUART: I kept the DCM that had been sort of holding things together.

Q: Who was that?

STUART: Ron Woods. He's a very able guy. He'd been holding the show together and had the confidence of the people in the embassy. We quickly established a good working relationship, and I had a high regard for him. And even though his term would have been normally another year, when he had an opportunity to go down to Brussels, I said that's a bigger post. In Brussels, as you know, the DCM is responsible for those three legations down there. And then I think I was helpful in getting him his assignment as DCM over in London now. So we quickly developed a comfortable rapport.

Q: Well, this is terribly important. Did you find yourself tripping over the DCM? Because normally an ambassador does one thing and the DCM kind of manages the embassy. And here you were, you'd come with a management experience. Was this a problem or were you able to divvy up the work?

STUART: It worked very well and Ron was great in bringing me into all these things. After all, I mean, it's 150 people, it wasn't a very large organization. I did the more outside things, I guess as an ambassador is meant to do.

The thing I also am very convinced of is the importance of the public diplomacy role, the USIS function. The USIS, which is USIA back here. And it was my good fortune to have really a stemwinder USIS public affairs officer.

Q: *Who was that?*

STUART: Ron Carlson, and he was damned good. So I tried focus on those things.

Q: *From the American perspective, what was this situation in Norway when you arrived? Sort of political-economic.*

STUART: Well, background. Since NATO and the security mission is the principal task in Norway, or certainly was at that time, I put my priority efforts on kind of developing relationships with the military and with the government. The Allied Forces North headquarters (AFNORTH) is there at Kolsås, outside of Oslo, and so I worked hard on developing that.

Norway was increasing their military defense budget a little better than three percent over the inflation rate, and one of our jobs was to make sure that they were continuing to do that, and encourage that.

Norway had learned from the experience of World War II that a small neutral nation in a strategic location just can't afford to be alone, because the Germans had come in and occupied it very forcefully. The Norwegians had demonstrated great guts and their resistance had been fantastic, and it really held down three to four hundred thousand soldiers that otherwise might have been along the Normandy coast or other areas. It made Operation Overlord, the launch of the offensive in France, much more difficult. [DIDN'T NORWAY'S RESISTANCE MAKE IT EASIER FOR US?]

So they were committed to NATO and loyal to it--insofar as it affects their area. Norway is not enthusiastic about out-of-area NATO commitments. So I worked hard on support of that.

The intelligence gathering cooperation is superb. We were watching the really continuing... One of the things we can talk about later is the build-up of intercontinental missilery and capabilities of their navy up the Kola Peninsula.

Q: *This is the Soviet navy. Their main Atlantic base, really, is on the Kola Peninsula.*

STUART: Absolutely. And I think sixty percent of their intercontinental... it's the short route over missilieries up there. So that information, the development of those was where we had wonderful cooperation with the Norwegians.

Q: *There's quite a difference between the Norwegian and the Dane, isn't there?*

STUART: Very much. Very much.

Q: I'm talking about on the military side. Because the Danes have always been very, I mean, there's sort of a pacifist element there. Of course, they're in an even more difficult situation. I mean, no ground to defend. But the Norwegians were very much on board in NATO in the military sense.

STUART: They were. Absolutely. Although there were past developments that would raise issues about ship visits. They were generally leftist, and Norway is very emotionally anti-nuclear. They can afford to be, in the sense that they've got all kinds of hydroelectric power and then the great good fortune of oil and gas, which were discovered about '69 and have really made Norway a very well-to-do nation. So you can be very anti-nuclear when you don't really need it for power.

But there was a very anti-nuclear and vocal group. And one of the flaps we had during my tour was when the Labor government came in, they started to change the procedures involved when you got ship clearances. And, as you know...

Q: You're talking about military ships.

STUART: Military, naval ships. Because we have a lot of presence up there, particularly reminding the Soviets that we have the capability of maybe causing them some pain in the Kola Peninsula. So we have exercises up in the northern part of Norway quite frequently.

Q: Marine brigades landing, and things of this sort.

STUART: Absolutely. And the naval exercise where we bring one or two carriers in each year to operate up there, sheltered by the mountains from Soviet missiles that depend on line-of-sight characteristics. Now a lot of people think it's kind of risky, but anyway there is that reminder of our capability.

Q: Also, for the record, this was during the time when the secretary of the navy was John Lehman, who was pushing very heavily for a forward strategy which was to go right up and meet the Soviets head on, right on the Kola Peninsula.

STUART: Absolutely. I think he very correctly recognized that if you didn't hit quickly up there, they could do what the Germans had done once before: maraud our lines of supply going over to the continent.

Q: Norway, particularly during the Reagan administration, was much more of a key, I think, at least in the press, than at other times because of this forward strategy that Lehman was pushing. But obviously this was part of the overall strategy. The Norwegians, the official Norwegians and the non-official--how was this taken? I mean, all of a sudden Norway was more publicly in the front lines.

STUART: Well, the Norwegians, I think, had been generally supportive of NATO. I can't remember, the public opinion polls showed around seventy percent. It would go up and down a little bit.

The peace activists, using the nuclear concern, wanted to, from time to time, get ordinances passed in local ports like Bergen or Tromsø, etc., even Oslo, to ban the entry of any U.S. naval vessel. Because our policy is: Neither confirm nor deny, and we've got to have the capability in case of trouble of having the appropriate weaponry if that's there. And, of course, the NATO strategy of deterrence depends on the potential of a nuclear threat.

But anyway, the Labor government, under Gro Harlem Brundtland, was really very skillful in putting out those local fires. And I've got to give her (she's prime minister once again) great credit. She handled that ship-visit issue very well and in effect told her Labor Party people to cool it, and was successful.

Whereas, in Denmark, that did not apply, and that became a major issue, where we were at the point of having to consider stopping all kind of support, a naval presence, to Denmark until the prime minister finally won on that point. There was even a referendum down there. I think the Danes are of a different temperament. They love the good life. They think that they're going to be protected by Germany. That they don't need to worry about these things very much.

Whereas, Norway is very conscious of their strategic geographic position. And the experience of their occupation by Germany was a much more memorable and traumatic experience for the Norwegians than it was for the Danes.

Q: Well, the Danes, of course their country is such that there was no real resistance that they could put up. But there was considerable fighting, and had the Germans not really caught them by surprise, they probably may have really been able to have held out longer.

STUART: Well, and then, you know, those British, French, and Polish forces that came up into Narvik and that area, they were winning. But at that point, on the continent, the battle was launched and the blitzkrieg hit, and so they had to pull back. But it might have been a very different ball game.

Q: Well, how did you see the Soviet threat to Norway itself at that point?

STUART: We perceived it, and the Norwegians also perceived it, as an aggressive posture, and if any trouble broke out, they logically would roll into Norway very early in the game to command those sea lanes. So it was a very crucial strategy to at least remind the Soviets that they'd pay dearly for moving into Norway. And the Norwegians were very supportive of that concern.

Q: Did you have the problems that the Swedes did of these Soviet submarines popping in and out of fjords and that sort of thing?

STUART: Every summer, every year, there'd be sightings, but quite honestly I never saw evidence of a real live submarine. On the other hand, we had several episodes, you remember in the press, where a Soviet submarine, returning to the Kola base, there was a fire and explosion on a nuclear ship. And the Soviets at that point were so hard at it (well, I think they still probably

would be) that they wouldn't accept Norwegian rescue efforts because of the fact that they were part of NATO, and they allowed that crew, except for a relatively few people that got off, to go down there. So there were submarine problems along the coast, but the actual sightings in the fiord were not what had occurred over in Sweden.

And in Sweden the theory was, and I think all our military people felt, that they were probing, they were mining the Swedes, that if trouble came, they better be careful. And the Swedes took a very pacifist response.

Q: Just to get a feel for the time and period, what was the Norwegian feeling towards Sweden, for example, that you were able to gather?

STUART: Oh, it's combination. The World War II generation never really in their hearts forgave the Swedes for allowing the German forces to go through Sweden, particularly the northern areas. And yet, as the war went along and the Swedes began to see that the Allied forces were going to win, later they became very cooperative with the Norwegians and allowed them to operate, for resistance purposes, out of there. So, many of the resistance people were able to move back and forth. So the Swedish attitude changed. But, you know, from the quests, the story that's told all the time about 100 Swedes running through the weeds, chased by one Norwegian, there's a sense of we're being tougher and stronger than the Swedes.

Q: Well, they're mountain folk.

STUART: Absolutely. On the other hand, there's an admiration for the Swedes' business ability and great respect for that. And there is...hate is too strong a word, but there's an affection, too, for the Swedes on the part of the Norwegians. But it's more respect for, because they've been very skillful in their business, their economics and so on, up until recently, and perhaps welfare Socialism is catching up with them at this point.

Q: How'd you deal with the Norwegian government? I mean, who were some of the major people and what were their attitudes towards America that you dealt with?

STUART: Well, starting with his majesty, the king, who just died, generally was very fortunate. Because, you know, at one time, I guess, almost a third of the Norwegian population migrated to the United States, so there are all kinds of relationships. Norway's coast is a long, long piece of northern Europe and it faces west, and their orientation has been much more toward America in those relationships. And the king's family had lived in Washington during the war. I think the king's wife (he was then crown prince), but FDR and Mrs. Roosevelt were very kind to. So he was oriented toward the United States.

Kåre Willoch, who was prime minister when I got over there, was head of a conservative government, very pro-NATO, pro-market economics, the whole spectrum over there. It is considerably left of ours, in the sense that even the conservatives accept the fact that it's a welfare state. But Kåre Willoch was a conservative within that spectrum, and I became very fond of him. A fine mind, an able guy. And his minister of defense, we had good relationships, and his foreign minister, Sverre Strøm, became close personal friends of ours.

Then, when the conservatives lost power, Gro Harlem Brundtland came in. Gosh, shows the importance of these educational experiences--she studied public health at Harvard, knows the United States quite well, speaks excellent English, a very able woman. But she was positive to the United States. All of them, particularly the Labor people, loved to kind of needle us just a little bit. They, with their missionary sense, supported the Nicaraguan Sandinistas rather generously, and that was always a point of irritation.

Q: *This must have been your major concern, in a way, wasn't it? A major concern.*

STUART: It was a major concern; it was a point of irritation. And they would sort of criticize us for not being sufficiently supportive of boycotts in South Africa. But yet it was always interesting that Norwegian tankers could serve South Africa, and chromium from South Africa was essential for urgent Norwegian industry. So there were sort of gaps in their idealism on a practical level.

Q: *How was Reagan viewed? I mean, here was a president, very conservative, at least perceived as being very conservative, and in a way the target of the intelligentsia, or whatever you want to call it, in Europe, which is much more of a category than we could call it in the United States. In the first place, was there sort of an intelligentsia in Norway and what kind of a role did it play? Also, how was the Reagan administration seen, and you as a spokesman for them?*

STUART: Well, I think the intelligentsia were skeptical of President Reagan. One of the things that's very interesting that you're probably keenly aware, you know, so many Europeans learn about America, the intellectual, thoughtful people, by reading the *Herald Tribune*.

Q: *This is the New York Herald Tribune, which is published in Paris now.*

STUART: Well, it may be actually in Rotterdam, edited in Paris, and is owned by *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. So it generally reflects *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* point of view.

Q: *East Coast establishment, you might say.*

STUART: East Coast intellectual liberal establishment, which is not necessarily the heartland of America point of view. And the more conservative point of view of *The Wall Street Journal* is rarely read, although *The Journal* has a European edition and is attempting to get up there. So that point of view, you know, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, were always against President Reagan; they were against the election of President Bush; they were basically Democratic liberal papers, and so that has influenced the thought process of the intelligentsia. And so President Reagan was just, to some extent, not taken seriously.

Now things started to change, as the whole process of change, with his summit meetings...

Q: *You're talking about the relationship with the Soviet Union and Gorbachev on the other side.*

STUART: Yes, exactly, I should have clarified that. And his stature grew--I just watched it over the five years we were over there. There was a very definite new respect for President Reagan.

Q: Well, was there a certain disappointment when Walter Mondale, who was of Norwegian origin, lost? I mean, was there a sort of bitterness about... I mean, it would have been fun to have had a...

STUART: They would have wanted him to win. They were enthusiastic. One of the sort of more amusing... He's a very attractive, nice guy. And, of course, when he came over, they were dedicating a new tunnel through the mountains from Mandal (Mondale is a translation of Mandal), where all his family came from. And literally thousands of people came up to that lovely valley to cheer him when he cut the ribbon for this little tunnel. And he got off a great line. He said, "Gosh, it's wonderful to have this enthusiasm and all of you rooting for me, but where were you when I needed you in the election?" They all appreciated that.

Q: You didn't have, I take it, a real stronghold, say, as it would be in France or something, of very important opinion-molders of the intelligentsia who were sort of avid American-haters, and particularly avid Reagan-haters, and all this. I mean, this was not a major factor in Norway?

STUART: Well, probably the most influential publication was basically conservative, in the sense of being more supportive of NATO and more willing to be supportive of the Reagan policies. It's the stronger intellectual... There were a number of other... The Labor paper was not very positive about the president. And Norway has an extraordinary number of newspapers--I think there are some 2,700 in this small country--because they're subsidized by the government so as to get different points of view expressed for different parties. But there was no kind of just instinctively automatic anti-American feeling, as in pockets of France or in Paris that you'd have, or that you'd have maybe in Sweden. There was a difference there.

Q: You mentioned Nicaragua. I might, just for the record, say that there was the Sandinista movement in Nicaragua, which we were countering very strongly and there was a lot of support for the Contras and all. And particularly the Socialist side in Europe was very unhappy about this. How did this present problems for your work as ambassador?

STUART: Well, it was an issue that we had to continually work, and not necessarily successfully. Because, in a way, a small country like Norway, even though they're friendly in principle, has some enjoyment of asserting their independence by taking a different posture than the United States on an issue a long way away. And they have that missionary sense, particularly about things, out there, a long way away. And they have been big and very generous in terms of their aid policy. The percentage of their GNP that they give to foreign aid is probably higher than almost any country in the world.

Q: That's what I think, yes. I mean, it's very impressive.

STUART: But I, as an American ambassador, would say that sometimes that aid isn't given very thoughtfully. Because, in effect, this money and newsprint and things like that was given through the Sandinista government, and so, in a sense, was aiding the force that our government felt (and

I happened to feel it very strongly) was really anti-democratic. And this was true, they give a lot of aid to Tanzania and Kenya and some of those countries (less now to Kenya), but it's given through those governments and it doesn't necessarily get down to the people. But there's an emotional feeling about we should give aid. And there's a little tweaking the tail feathers of Uncle Sam's eagle.

Q: You come from Chicago. I mean, the mayor of Chicago said he'd punch King George in the nose.

STUART: That was Bill Thompson.

Q: And we used to twist the lion's tail when we weren't number one.

STUART: Exactly. There was some of that. And we did work out those issues.

Q: How about something far away but also which must have been reflected in Norway, because their tanker fleet's a very important one. During the Gulf War (the other Gulf War, the Iran-Iraq War), in which tankers, particularly by Iran, were being attacked, and we got involved in that. Did that become an issue for you at all?

STUART: Oh, it became an issue. There's a normal ambivalence. The ship owners were just enthusiastic as could be about our support and our protection and our patrolling of the Gulf. We didn't get much actual help, though I think a couple of perhaps, oh, Coast Guard cruisers were sent down. Perhaps the Norwegians sent a couple of mine sweepers down there.

Q: I think the Europeans sent mine sweepers. We didn't have many mine sweepers...

STUART: No, we hadn't built any for years. Exactly. So I think they sent some of those down. But, in general, I would say, Norway's self-interest in helping their shipping fleet made them supportive of that policy down there in patrolling the Gulf.

Q: What did you find were the major problems that you had to deal with vis-à-vis the Norwegian government?

STUART: Well, they ranged from these security issues on ship visits, which we talked about, to seemingly simple problems (but which became very emotional) of whales and whaling. Because there's a country where the livelihood of many of those villages depends on whaling these little whales. I mean, a whale is always big, but these are the smaller, minke whales. They had been a source of revenue for these small villages in the north, and the International Whaling Commission had decreed that the killing of whales would cease and desist. Our government was generally supportive and tried to get Japan and the Soviet Union and the other whalers, and I think Norway was one of those, to cut down. They cut down significantly, but still, politically, it was infuriating to them because they considered this a perfectly natural harvest. I can remember Kåre Willoch, who was normally on our side, (he was the prime minister when I first got there), saying, "Why are you making such an issue out of this? I've been through the slaughter houses in Chicago and Omaha and you kill all those darling baby lambs. They have a lot more charm and

appeal than a darned old whale, but yet you have a sort of a lopsided emotional view of this issue." And so we would try to work these things out and get them to agree to cutting back and pointing toward discontinuance of whaling, although I don't think that issue has really ever been solved.

Q: Just sort of for the record, the environmentalists have concentrated very heavily on the plight of whales, and it's become a very emotional issue in many countries, including the United States.

STUART: Absolutely. And, for Norway, the teeth in this is that if there is certification... the secretary of commerce, that they found that whaling is continuing, in violation of the edicts of the International Whaling Commission, then there can be a ban on the importation of fish from the country that is offending. And for Norway's fish to be banned would be, both in terms of the new farmed salmon, in terms of cod and others, it would be a very significant and painful experience. So it's emotional.

Q: There is no way to really resolve this, is there?

STUART: No. And then we had the Konigsberg-Toshiba issue, which was one on the security side. Norway's method of controlling the shipment of technology was certainly not up to snuff.

One of the great strengths of the NATO and American navies has been their ability to proceed quietly and detect Soviet submarines underwater by the amount of vibration caused by their propellers. And part of the technique of the American Navy has been the design of a quiet propeller on the submarine, which is done by huge milling machinery that is programmed through computers to get just the right pitches and angles.

What happened is that an organization that the government defense industry called Konigsberg Bopaner, in cooperation with Toshiba, who made great big milling machines, had the programs (I think some of that access had been provided by us), so that these huge submarine propellers could be ground efficiently with the big machinery that Toshiba, the Japanese company, could provide. And it was changing the ball game as far as our being able to track these big, fast Soviet submarines (which, incidentally, are still being launched).

One of the incredible aspects of this whole economic problem in the Soviet Union is the fact the military still seem to be able to get appropriations to modernize their navy and some of their weaponry.

But the Konigsberg issue was a dicey problem.

Q: What had happened with this? Was it a transfer of technology?

STUART: Yes. Yes, without proper clearance. It violated the rules of the international group which is monitoring this. I've lost the acronym for it, but it was an allied commission in Paris that reviewed the sale of technology.

In general, we got support from the Norwegian government on this issue, and then they were horrified when this was brought out. So that was a sort of traumatic thing, but they were embarrassed by that.

Oh, there are all kinds of modest issues of apples and pears. You know, the Norwegians are great at recommending free trade for the rest of the world, but when it comes to products that compete with their agriculture, they're quite protectionist. The Washington apple growers traditionally have been able to ship our beautiful Washington apples in there, at least in the fall, for Christmas time. But the Norwegian apple growers (who really don't grow a very good apple) had been able to shorten that period up constantly. And there was a violation really of the GATT understandings that we took them to court on. So that's in the area of agriculture; the fish thing we talked about a little bit.

I'm trying to think of other issues we had to work. The support of the Nicaraguan government, the Sandinistas, was an issue that was constantly troubling.

Q: OPEC, did that become an issue on oil prices or not?

STUART: Yes, it did, and we would try to persuade them not to cooperate with OPEC. We had also had issues to make sure that there's a fair treatment of international and U.S. oil companies in the allocation of blocks as they developed the extraordinary resources in the North Sea and in the Arctic Ocean. And we would always be working those issues.

After Phillips discovered oil in the Ekofisk, in the North Sea, sort of more southwesterly, two hundred miles off Stavanger, Norway's arrangements with international oil companies and American companies was that automatically a company called Statoil, the state oil company, would get fifty percent of the action, with the opportunity to go higher. And some of those procedures were pretty onerous in comparison to what the local Norwegian companies would have to cope with. And our effort was constantly to make sure that there was balancing allocation of the various new blocks that reduced the discriminatory kind of arrangements that were approved. So we worked on that issue.

Q: But you're really talking about sort of really two friends and your working on issues that can be talked about.

STUART: Absolutely. Absolutely. It was not a hostile land, by any means.

Q: Were you getting any pressure from the National Security Council--Oliver North, at one point he was riding fairly high--trying to use Norway to get pressure for things? I mean, were you getting problems from Washington?

STUART: No, no, but, gosh, you've been around long enough to know... Do people call you Stuart?

Q: Stu, yes.

STUART: I'm Bob. But, Stu, you know the reality of relationships, that sometimes you don't get people's attention unless you have some leverage. On the Konigsberg thing, to get their attention on this issue, which was serious, we had to postpone a purchase of some Penguin missiles. The Penguin was a very effective small missile that could be mounted on airplanes or ships, and it would have been a very nice contract for them in helping their defense industry. Well, until the right steps had been taken, that contract was held back. There were a number of other instances where Richard Perle in the Defense Department, who was very influential in these, would take a tough line. And I have to admit, although Richard doesn't always get good notices from the State Department, that kind of pressure got attention.

Q: He was assistant secretary of state for the ISA, international security affairs.

STUART: And so he had the control of... There's a tremendous amount, in our system of defense, in NATO and elsewhere around the world. That is a very key element which provides resources for other nations' military services. And there were just a number of illustrations of where we got their attention. The ship visit policy was where the funding of new aircraft was slowed down until things were straightened out. So it reminds you: good will and good words, each country looks out for their own interests, and sometimes you have to use the leverage of economic and resource power to make sure there is cooperation on announced strategies of cooperation.

Q: Well, Norway, being way up to the north, when one thinks of European affairs, NATO affairs and all, Norway almost falls over the horizon sometimes when people are looking at the big picture, particularly in Washington. Did you ever find yourself having trouble with the European Bureau or anywhere else when pronouncements would come about Europe, and have to say, "Hey, how about Norway?" I mean, did you feel that you were being considered as a big boy in the European interests of the United States or not? Or was there a problem on that?

STUART: Oh, I don't think we had a feeling of being second class. Roz Ridgway, who was assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, had served in Norway on her way up the ladder. I don't think she was political counselor, although she might have been. She was either political counselor or assistant, but she spent time in Norway, so this was always kind of a positive. Roz understood our problems and was very supportive, and I think she's a very able woman. And so we had a good friend in court there. And, as you know, maybe for the record, she was ambassador to Finland briefly.

Q: East Germany.

STUART: And then moved from there to be, oh, really the right hand of George Shultz, the secretary of state, particularly in these summit meetings and negotiations with the Soviets. So we got copies of practically every cable affecting NATO issues, and so we felt we were kind of in the stream from that point of view.

Q: That's good. Well, Shultz came there in 1988 on a visit. Did you get many high-level visits and did these work well?

STUART: Well, I, of course, personally always hoped that President Reagan could come over. But George Shultz came on his 67th birthday, and we had the chiefs of missions of Europe all gathered there, and we had a two- or three-day conference with him. And it was a very successful meeting. George has a Norwegian son in law, so he was able to play on that and identify, and it was a very gracious and cordial time. And Cap Weinberger, the secretary of defense, came over several times.

One of the fun sides of this, Stu, because we have so much military commitment involvement, you got the opportunity to, gosh, go out in carriers and helicopters, and participate. And, as an old G.I., this was wonderful. And you just had to be so impressed with the quality of our military, which has more recently been demonstrated in the Gulf. They were topnotch people: the admirals, the generals, the military that we had in the embassy, because it was a very important station from the point of view of the defense attaché in their office. We had the Office of Defense Cooperation, and they were well-staffed and just topnotch people. All that was very impressive and rewarding. They were fine people to work with, but they had ability. The military have done a pretty good job in continuing to educate people along the line.

And saying this, at the same time I also want to say that I've been impressed with the Foreign Service people as being under-rewarded financially and under-appreciated, because the State Department, unfortunately, doesn't have any constituency with our American Congress. And one of the things some of us who are non-career ambassadors are endeavoring to do is to be more supportive of State Department budgets. But the State Department doesn't reach out to us very much.

JON GUNDERSEN
Deputy Chief of Mission/Chargé d'Affaires
Oslo (1999-2001)

Mr. Gundersen was born and raised in New York and educated at George Washington University, the University of Oslo International School, Stanford University and the National War College. Entering the State Department in 1973, he served abroad in Moscow, Stockholm and Frankfurt. At Reykjavik and Tallinn he was Chargé d'affaires, in Oslo, Deputy Chief of Mission, and in Kiev, Consul General. In assignments at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Gundersen dealt with a variety of matters, including arms control, anti-terrorism and Balkan issues. Mr. Gundersen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2012.

GUNDERSEN: I did that for two years. That was my wife's favorite assignment. We had our third son, Finn Markus. We lived in Florida. I biked to work. It was a nice place to live. We still have many friends in the area and we visit periodically.

And when we'd travel, unlike in the State Department, where you'd leave Saturday and come back next Sunday (no weekends off), we'd usually leave on a Monday morning and come back

Friday. For SOCOM weekends were sacred, unless we were in a war zone. Of course, then you were on duty 24/7.

From there, I was offered a job either as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in PM, handling special operations and low intensity conflicts, or DCM in Norway. Obviously, a DAS job is more prestigious, but because of my background and family circumstances, I took the job in Norway.

Q: How long did you do that?

GUNDERSEN: I did that a little over three years.

Q: Until when?

GUNDERSEN: To 2001. And, of course, my father left Norway as a merchant seaman with little money. To return as a senior American diplomat was a really nice thing. I only regret that my father did not live to see his son return to the Old Country. I'd like to think he would have been proud. And I was Chargé for over two years in Norway.

Q: Why? I would have thought Norway would have been a hot spot for political appointees.

GUNDERSEN: Yes, it almost always is. I initially was assigned as the DCM to a guy named David Hermelin, who was a political appointee. He was a major fund raiser for Bill Clinton, but was a very nice guy. He contracted brain cancer and he was sent back to the States. The Clinton Administration, rather than appoint a political Ambassador – and many people wanted it – was nice enough to leave me in charge while David was in treatment back in the States.

Sadly, he eventually died and, for a short period, before Bush was elected they appointed another political Ambassador, Robin Chandler Duke. But for most of the three year period I was in charge.

Q: Well, what was the situation in Norway, from your perspective?

GUNDERSEN: Well, there were two governments, one socialist and one conservative, in my time, although in Norway those terms do not mean the same as they do here. The socialist Labor Party was pro-NATO, and the conservatives favored more social democratic policies than conservatives here.

We had very good relations. The Norwegians very much wanted to work with us on NATO expansion, integrating Eastern Europe into Western institutions. And we liked working with the Norwegians, because they had developed a considerable reputation as mediators and facilitator for international peace efforts we supported.

They did the Oslo peace accords in the Middle East. They were active in ending the civil war in Sudan and Sri Lanka and Colombia. So part of my job was working with the Norwegians to help them out, give them support and intelligence for their peace mediation efforts.

For example, on the anniversary of the Rabin assassination, the Norwegians planned a memorial and invited the Palestinian Yasser Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to commemorate the Oslo Peace Process.

So the Norwegian government invited Arafat and Barak to come to Norway. That was towards the end of the Clinton Administration and we – the Embassy – suggested to the White House that this would be a good time for Clinton to come to Norway to help resurrect the Oslo Peace Process..

We eventually persuaded Clinton to come to Norway as part the continuation of the Oslo Peace Process and it became a major event. This was in November '99. Ahtisaari, then head of the EU, came, and Putin, who had just become prime minister of Russia, followed.

This became a major international event. I was Chargé at the time, but David Hermelin also came back for the occasion, because he was a personal friend of Clinton. So that was a big deal. It was good to have him back even though he was clearly very sick.

You know how it is to take care of a presidential party. Because Clinton decided to attend at the last second, we had only eight or nine days to organize the visit.

That event restarted the Oslo Peace Process. Over the next six months the parties got very close to an accord on Middle East peace: 98 or 99 per cent of the West Bank was to be part of a Palestinian state, Jerusalem would be split.

I was largely a spectator, but still on the sidelines on these historic discussions that unfortunately didn't come to fruition.

Q: What role was the Norwegian government playing?

GUNDERSEN: Their role was to get all the parties together. All the parties found Oslo to be a hospitable and convenient venue. The Norwegians were trusted by both the Arabs and the Israelis. So they were basically the facilitators; they weren't part of the actual negotiations.

Q: How'd you find the embassy there?

GUNDERSEN: It's sort of ironic that in places where it's easiest to live often times morale is not as high as places that are tough, like Moscow or the Third World, where the Embassy staff has to bond out necessity. Morale wasn't low in Oslo, but Embassy personnel largely went their own way outside of work hours.

And that's understandable, because it was a Western country, everyone has their own individual interests and they had Norwegian friends.

Like everywhere in Europe, the Department was also reducing staff, so we lost a few positions while I was there.

Q: What was happening up around the Kola Peninsula?

GUNDERSEN: A lot of this is classified, but we have a lot of close cooperation with the Norwegians on intelligence and in the north of the country. Norway is one of the few countries that is really an intelligence provider and not just a passive recipient of information from us.

So that's something we worked on very closely with the Norwegians. I visited certain sites up north. Remember the Russians are still firing rockets and conducting missile tests in the vicinity.

One of the problems for the Russians, after the Soviet Union collapsed, was that there was no rationale to have hundreds of thousands of people living in Murmansk. It's a cold, forbidding place that has no economic value but as a naval base and other military facilities. Many of these facilities were moved or shut down after the Cold War.

So we began to realize that the new problem we had to confront was not Russian strength but its weakness. For example, you had Russians coming over the border to Norway because of the better living standard and they brought with them prostitution, drugs, etc.

Q: What did you do after that?

GUNDERSEN: I came back here. That's when 9/11 occurred and I worked with the Counter-Terrorism Bureau. And then I came out to FSI.

Q: Today is the 12th of June, 2012, with Jon Gundersen. Remind me where we were.

GUNDERSEN: We were discussing my time in Norway. I mentioned when President Clinton visited to restart the Oslo Peace Process. We only had about eight days' notice that Clinton would come.

Q: Which is almost just as well, isn't it?

GUNDERSEN: Exactly. If we had three months, we would have worked full time for three months.

Q: And nothing would have been better or worse.

GUNDERSEN: That's right. So we worked hard under a time deadline to set up meetings and it worked out well.

Q: How did you find the advance teams? If you have a president come, it's equivalent to an earthquake, really.

GUNDERSEN: We called it the Invasion of Attila the Hun. Like every Foreign Service Officer, I've done it a number of times, but not as Chargé or chief of mission.

The Norwegians were very forthcoming, because a sitting American president had never visited Norway. It was the only NATO country not to have received a visit from a sitting American President. US Presidents have visited Norway before or after their tenures. For example, both Clinton and Carter visited Norway after their Presidential term. In fact, I was able to spend a good amount of time with both without having to worry about their entourage and handlers.

Q: It must be more apparent to the Norwegians.

GUNDERSEN: Yes. Norway was often taken for granted. Norway's, a good ally, never a problem. It's not a major actor, so it wasn't always a top priority. You know how it goes in White House thinking - the squeaky wheel gets attention.

So the fact the President was coming there was a very big deal. The real reason, of course, was to reinvigorate the Oslo Peace Process, but Oslo was very happy and set up meetings with the Prime Minister and King in addition to the meetings with Middle East leaders.

We booked every room in the biggest hotel in Norway for the advance team, plus press, plus hangers on, almost a thousand people. So the Norwegians just kicked people out and booked the entire hotel.

Of course our guys were very security minded and Norwegians were not used to that. But it worked fine and the advance team was more sensitive to local concerns than they often tended to be.

Q: What was the problem with the Oslo Peace Accords?

GUNDERSEN: Towards the end of the Clinton Administration, you had a relatively moderate Israeli government, with Barak in power, and Arafat began making noises that he was willing to compromise.

So Clinton thought this could be a crowning foreign policy achievement for his administration. It took a while to get Clinton to agree to come (the Embassy used the argument that he should seize the opportunity to make a lasting contribution to Middle East peace, to get Clinton to commit to coming to Oslo. That, and not the opportunity to exchange pleasantries with the King, was the real carrot that got the president to come to Norway.

That occurred in November '99. The discussions were fruitful – all players seemed to get along on a personal level. They later continued discussions in Taba, in Egypt. The parties came within a whisker of reaching agreement: 97 per cent of the West Bank returned to the Palestinians, Jerusalem would be split, there'd be some Israeli settlements remaining on the West Bank, in exchange for land that would be given to Palestinians, and recognition of both states.

We now forget how close they came to an agreement. Whether it could have been implemented was another story. Clinton blames Arafat for blinking and backing out at the last moment. I should mention, Clinton returned to Norway after the Bush election as a private citizen. Eike and I and some Norwegian friends had dinner with him and he opened up on his frustration about

being unable to close the deal. We stayed up late, in fact, closing up a local bar. Clinton genuinely likes talking to people, at any level at any time. The next day, *Aftenposten*, the largest Norwegian paper, had a picture of us in a local restaurant with Eike giving Clinton that Nancy Reagan adoring look. I tease her that I never get that look.

I wasn't part of the actual negotiations *per se*. We set up the meetings. David Hermelin, who was being treated for brain cancer in the States, came back for a few days. He had a boat, a nice yacht he had bought in Norway. We had some of the talks on the yacht, which was very private.

I wanted to mention, another of the initiatives I worked was to get the Norwegian Navy to buy American equipment for frigates for the Norwegian Navy. There was a European consortium that bid on it as well. That was the largest military purchase in Norwegian history.

We told Washington that the only way for an American firm to be able to get this contract was to work with a Spanish firm, Bazan. Because the Norwegians had bought American F-16s, and other American equipment, the EU was pressuring them to buy the equipment from a joint German-French firm, so some Norwegian politicians felt they needed to give this contract to Europeans.

So we quietly worked with the Spanish, an EU member, on a joint bid. The Spanish firm Bazan would build the hulls and we'd supply everything else. The deal was basically put together by the Embassy. And it was successful one billion dollar deal, which subsequently employed thousands of US shipyard workers. People don't realize Embassies do a lot of commercial facilitation that benefit American companies and workers.

So in the summer of 2001, I was offered an assignment as the State representative of the Helsinki Commission on the Hill, the organization that monitors implementation of the Helsinki Accords..

I came back in late August and September 11th occurred ten days after I started my job on the Hill. Because I had some counter-terrorism experience, they immediately pulled me back to the Department to work 9/11 issues.

End of reader