

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

BRUCE GREGORY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 5th of January 2006. This is interview with Bruce Gregory, and this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

I take it you go by Bruce?

GREGORY: Yes.

Q: Let's start at the beginning. Where were you born?

GREGORY: Providence, Rhode Island in November 1941.

Q: Let's take your father's side first. Where did the Gregorys come from way back and how did they get to Rhode Island?

GREGORY: My father, Carlton Gregory, hailed from Rockland, Maine. After high school, he attended Providence Bible Institute in Rhode Island and Gordon Divinity

School in Massachusetts. He began his career as an ordained Protestant minister, but after a few years he decided teaching philosophy was his calling. He went to Brown University for his BA degree. He received his MA from Harvard, and eventually earned his PhD in philosophy at Brown. He then taught philosophy for the rest of his life at Barrington College, a small liberal arts college in Rhode Island.

Q: OK, let's talk about grandfather Gregory and beyond. Do you know anything about the older side of the family?

GREGORY: One of the things I hope to do in life is to pursue this further. There are a lot of Gregorys of Scottish descent in the U.S. and many are on the coast of Maine. My grandfather raised chickens and also sold grain to other poultry farmers in the area. The only thing I know beyond that is we are descendents of Captain Hanson Gregory, a 19th century sea captain from Rockland who sailed ships in the China trade. We are also descendents of the MacGregor clan in Scotland. My mother has done some research but my encounter with all this is yet to come.

Q: Did you ever get from your father how he went from being the son of a chicken farmer to a PhD?

GREGORY: I can only tell you it was his inclination as he began to think about theology and the role of religion in society. He did go into the Ministry at first and...

Q: What ministry was that?

GREGORY: He was an ordained Baptist minister. He had small pastorates in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut for a few years in the 1940s, but he began his career as a philosopher and teacher in the 1950s. He was an excellent teacher, and he found the academic life more suitable to his talents and interests. He also evolved politically from a fairly conservative Maine coast tradition to holding centrist and left of center political and social views as an adult. He left Maine a Republican, but he became a Democrat at some point while I was growing up. He was not active in partisan politics, but he enjoyed weaving political and social issues into his courses – and also into family dinner conversations.

Q: Was there any particular philosophical cast or not?

GREGORY: My father's primary interest was in philosophy of religion. He wrote his PhD dissertation on Paul Tillich's use of language. He taught courses on philosophy of religion, introduction to philosophy, history of philosophy, a seminar course on Karl Marx and Lenin, and a course on the German philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Q: What college was he teaching at?

GREGORY: He chaired the philosophy department at Barrington College, a small college that no longer exists. It was where I went to college. My sister, brother and I all

attended with free tuition because he was on the faculty. He taught there for a little over thirty years. He retired in 1984 and died the following year. The college had recently merged with Gordon College, which is a little north of Boston. They were both liberal arts colleges that had a similar non-denominational religious perspective.

Q: Well how about on your mother's side?

GREGORY: My mother's family was originally from New Hampshire. They moved to Rockland, Maine, where my mother and father went to the same high school. They married shortly after they graduated. My grandfather on her side had various jobs in retail sales. Most of his life he was the district supervisor for a chain of First National grocery stores on the coast of Maine.

Q: Did your mother go on to college or not?

GREGORY: No, she did not. She should have, and in a later generation I'm confident she would have. After my siblings and I left home, she trained to be a licensed practical nurse and worked for a few years in medical care facilities in Rhode Island.

Q: Absolutely, I mean this is very much the pattern – the fact that your father went on to college. Many of the people I interview still, we are talking about a generation where often the fathers of people who are now involved in foreign affairs did not have a college degree nor did the mothers. I suspect today a junior Foreign Service officer; junior government worker in the executive branch would come from two college graduates possibly both with master's degrees or more. It is different...

GREGORY: It's very different.

Q: What was it like growing up as a kid in Rhode Island?

GREGORY: We lived in Barrington, Rhode Island, which is a small, reasonably affluent suburban town south of Providence on Narragansett Bay. It is where Barrington College was located. There was nothing remarkable about growing up in Barrington. It was a great place to grow up. I have good memories of the town and in recent years have attended several high school reunions.

Q: In school, let's take sort of elementary school first. How did you take to school and were there some subjects you liked and other you didn't like as much?

GREGORY: I enjoyed history and civics courses as they called them in those days. I had less interest and not much aptitude for math and the natural sciences.

Q: Was the school at that point pretty much white Protestant or ethnically mixed or what?

GREGORY: It was mixed. Rhode Island has a heavy Italian and Portuguese ethnic base. A sizable percentage of the high school students in Barrington were Italian Catholics. The rest were white Protestants. One memory was that our high school did not have valedictorians. Instead, they selected two students to write short essays on topics of their choosing, which they would read at graduation. The English teacher would look them over and approve them for delivery at the graduation ceremonies. I was fortunate to be selected as one of the essayists. I had recently read one of my father's books, *The Loyalty of Free Men* by Alan Barth, a journalist with an interest in civil liberties. It was a strong critique of Senator Joseph McCarthy. I was struck by the logic of Barth's argument and drew from it extensively in my essay. I recall the English teacher calling me in after reading it. He said something like, "Bruce, this is a good essay, you should be proud of it. But we think you ought to write on another subject." He offered no explanation that I can recall. I said, "OK" and wrote an essay on the value of reading. I don't think either essay was very good. It was only years later that I reflected on why teachers in a small suburban town were concerned about a student essay on the McCarthy era?" This would have been 1959 and...

Q: I mean he was dead and ...

GREGORY: Yes, he was. Nevertheless my first essay was not permitted for the graduation ceremony.

Q: How about life at home? Did you peel the philosophical onion at home? Did you have brothers and sisters?

GREGORY: I have a brother who is six years younger and a sister who is a year and a half younger. So there is a bit of a gap there, but the dinner table was frequently about political, philosophical, religious, and social issues. Yes, it was a good dinner table.

Q: What about reading? Were you much of a reader?

GREGORY: Yes.

Q: Do you recall any particular books that as a kid or a high school kid that particularly struck you?

GREGORY: Apart from the book by Alan Barth, I have few recollections from high school. I recall struggling with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. I recall several very good teachers more the books we read. College was much more of an influence on me than high school.

Q: Well Barrington College would you talk a little bit about this. What was it like?

GREGORY: It came out of a conservative Evangelical tradition. It was originally a three-year unaccredited institute. But in the 1950s my father and a few other people who taught there worked very hard to build it into a small liberal arts college with a non-

denominational religious perspective. It was eventually accredited by the New England States Accrediting Association, which I understand is one of the tougher regional accrediting associations.

Q: I'm sure considering New England. I mean its whole history.

GREGORY: They were very proud of that accreditation. My father had an Ivy League education. My son went to Harvard, to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and then earned his PhD at Yale. My daughter earned degrees at the University of Maryland and Penn State. I have no regrets about going to a small college like the one I've just described. I think I got a good education.

Q: How big was it?

GREGORY: It was about 500 or 600 students. Small colleges usually don't provide lifelong networking opportunities on the scale that my son has had with an Ivy League education. But they can compete in providing a good education.

Q: At my college they used to talk about an education with Mark Hopkins on one end of the log and you on the other. Mark Hopkins was a great educator in New England.

GREGORY: I assumed you mean a teacher.

Q: Yes, we had good teachers but it wasn't a grad school. It this was out in Williamstown in Western Massachusetts. It was a relatively small college, about eleven hundred. Did you major in any particular subject?

GREGORY: I majored in history.

Q: Any particular history?

GREGORY: American history primarily, although I took courses in Asian history. We had a professor who taught Chinese history. I also took twelve credits of course work with my father, 3 credits on Introduction to Philosophy, 6 credits on Philosophy of Religion and his 3 credit course on Marx and Lenin.

Q: Considering your later career did foreign affairs cross your path much?

GREGORY: Not really until my senior year. Another student and I arranged to spend the first semester of my senior year studying in Washington at American University (AU). We arranged to have the course credits transferred back to Barrington.

Q: Was this the Washington semester?

GREGORY: No it wasn't. We contacted AU and asked if we could supplement Barrington's education with a semester in Washington. Both colleges agreed. I took all international relations courses at AU that senior year.

Q: Senior year would have been when?

GREGORY: My senior year at Barrington College was 1962-63.

Q: Were you pointed towards anything when you were coming to Washington?

GREGORY: That semester at AU and was decisive. I took courses in foreign policy, international relations, and international law. My family and I had visited Washington on a short vacation trip when I was in high school. My mother would say I wound up in DC and never looked back.

Q: In '63 you came down here. Was the draft a problem or was there a draft on?

GREGORY: It was not a problem for me. I married my first wife a few weeks after graduating from college. We came to Washington that summer, and I began graduate studies at American University's School of International Service. We had children fairly soon. I had both a student deferment and a family deferment. Consequently I was not drafted to serve in the military.

Q: What about you went to American U. and got a degree in field? What were you taking?

GREGORY: From 1963-1967, I studied full time at AU. I completed my Masters in International Relations in 1967. By then I had also completed all of the course work and examinations for the PhD in International Relations, but I had not written the dissertation. ABD.

Q: A...

GREGORY: ABD (all but dissertation).

Q: Did you get caught up in the 1960 campaign between Kennedy and Nixon because this engaged many people of your generation?

GREGORY: Not really. I did not come to Washington to live until 1963, the year Kennedy was assassinated. I recall some conversations in the Evangelical community that my father grew up in about whether John Kennedy would be good for the country given his Catholic religion.

Q: Well we've never had a Catholic president and he's been the only one I guess. But it ceased to be an issue.

GREGORY: It did very soon.

Q: Were you looking at anything in Washington as you were going on for your further education?

GREGORY: At first I wanted to pursue a teaching career in international relations. This was the reason I studied for the PhD. But in 1967 with a wife and two children, I was also looking for part time employment to supplement my teaching assistantship while I wrote the dissertation. Fortunately, Murray Lawson, the U.S. Information Agency's first and only historian had posted a help wanted 3x5 card on the bulletin board at AU's School of International Service. Murray hired me as his part-time research assistant, and I worked for him from 1967-1970. I spent much of my time in the National Archives doing research in diplomatic records, because his task was to write an official history of USIA. I can discuss this if you like, but the point I'm making is that after three years I went to work full time for USIA, and the dissertation remains unwritten.

Q: What was the dissertation going to be?

GREGORY: I wanted to write on President Franklin Roosevelt's conflicted approach to creating a US government international broadcasting station in the 1930s. FDR, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and Deputy Secretary of State Sumner Welles were interested in the possibility of using government broadcasts to counter Axis inroads in Latin America through broadcasting and other means. As early as 1934, the State Department in cooperation with the US Department of the Navy drafted a bill to create a US shortwave radio broadcasting station. Secretary Hull sent it to the White House for FDR's approval before sending it to Congress.

State was not seeking to launch a large-scale international broadcasting effort. It wanted to broadcast a small number of programs with educational and cultural value to promote better understanding between the US and the nations of Latin America. The Navy's interest was to support the active use of the large number of shortwave frequencies it had reserved for military purposes in the late 1920s and early 1930s. International Telecommunication Union regulations did not permit countries to keep frequencies unless they were used. The Navy had reserved many more frequencies than it needed at the time, but it wanted to keep them for possible future use. State's Sumner Welles and US Navy Captain S. C. Hooper collaborated on the draft bill. By this time the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) was already well launched. Other countries and the Vatican also had government broadcasting services.

However, Roosevelt did not approve sending the State Department's draft bill to Congress. The National Association of Broadcasters was strongly opposed, because it feared government competition would adversely affect the commercial interests of private broadcasters. Roosevelt understood the foreign affairs potential of government broadcasting, and he encouraged the Department and interested lawmakers. At the same time, ever the political pragmatist, he took no steps that would antagonize US commercial broadcasters and their powerful trade association.

Beginning in 1936, several members of Congress, including Representative Emanuel Celler and Senator Dennis Chavez, introduced bills to create a government broadcasting station. They sought a vigorous US response to the growing influence of Spanish language broadcasting in the Hemisphere by Europe's Axis powers. Roosevelt did not oppose the efforts of Celler and other lawmakers, but he declined to give them the Administration's support. As a result, the Voice of America did not go on the air until February 1942, a few months after Pearl Harbor and after the US had declared war on Germany and Japan.

Murray Lawson had generously given this young graduate student the title of Assistant Agency Historian, and he asked me to write an official history of these broadcasting issues for USIA. I wrote "The Broadcasting Service: An Administrative History," United States Information Agency Special Monograph Series No. 1, Washington, D.C., 1970. It was an approximately 300-page typewritten manuscript. It was archived in the historical collection in USIA's Library with other monographs and the research files that our office produced during those years. The manuscript was never published, and it is unclear what became of this collection after USIA's merger with the State Department in 1999. In recent years, several diplomatic historians have asked for copies of the broadcasting monograph, which I have provided.

I wanted to use this research for my dissertation. I planned was to use the origins of US international broadcasting as a case study in the political and foreign policy decision-making processes of the Roosevelt administration.

Q: I realize that you were spending a lot of time at the National Archives, but what were you picking up about the U.S. Information Agency at the time?

GREGORY: USIA was created in 1953. Murray Lawson and I discovered, however, that almost all of USIA's programs have a seamless connection to America's response to Axis penetration in Latin America in the mid-1930s. In 1935, the Department of State began to send Presidential speeches and other information to selected overseas missions in a "Radio Bulletin" transmitted by radio-teletype. It was the beginning of what USIA called "The Wireless File." The Buenos Aires Conventions of 1936 led to government-funded exchanges of scholars, books, and documents. The Department of State's Bureau of Cultural affairs was created in 1938. The Department also began to assign press and cultural officers to key overseas missions during the 1930s. There was strong resistance in the State Department to these activities in the years prior to Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, there was greater support for these programs at least for the duration of the World War II.

Q: From whence came this resistance? And why? Do you know?

GREGORY: There were various reasons; it was new.

Q: I think you probably said it all.

GREGORY: Primarily, the resistance reflected a deep-rooted belief that diplomacy was an instrument for communicating and building relationships with governments in other countries, not with the people who lived in those countries. It reflected a fundamental commitment to traditional government-to-government diplomacy. Communicating with publics – through what later became known as “public diplomacy” – was not the work of career diplomats. Some in the Department, including some at senior levels such as Sumner Welles and Laurence Duggan, disagreed. They understood that diplomacy needed to change in response to external threats, and they were keen to take advantage of new methods and information technologies. But this was very much a minority view. Some in the Department eventually came to see a need for communicating with publics, but they argued that the US should hire journalists to do the job. It was not work for Foreign Service officers. Others resisted in the belief that propaganda was a tool used by communist and fascist ideologues in Europe and not an appropriate instrument for democracies. So there were various arguments.

Q: And, of course, at that period I think it's easy to forget they were terribly concentrated on Latin America. This was Sumner Welles' bailiwick you might say. In European Affairs we were pretty small potatoes. I mean nobody was paying much attention to us.

GREGORY: In the years before World War II, the US did not have a strong desire to engage with the world through traditional or public diplomacy. President Woodrow Wilson created the first US government funded information and cultural programs during World War I. They were carried out by the Committee on Public Information (CPI) headed by George Creel. CPI was shut down immediately after the war ended, and there were no US government information or cultural programs during the 1920s.

It was only when Germany began making inroads in Latin America in the 1930s that Americans adopted an instrument of statecraft that would endure without interruption and become known as public diplomacy. Early initiatives began in the State Department. The Office of War Information and the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs carried out large-scale information and cultural programs during World War II. These organizations were shut down at the end of the war. Their programs were transferred with substantially reduced budgets to the State Department. In 1953, with the Cold War well underway, they were transferred to the newly created USIA. When USIA was abolished in 1999, its information and cultural programs were distributed throughout the State Department. US broadcasting services, which had been placed under the largely autonomous Broadcasting Board of Governors in 1994, achieved full independence in 1999.

USIA was created for many reasons. Its programs were not a good fit in the State Department of the mid-20th century. Most Foreign Service Officers were resistant to change and to acquiring the skills and technologies needed to communicate with the media and with publics in other countries. Real diplomats, it was understood at the time, negotiated with other diplomats and their governments under rules and norms that were well established by treaties and custom. They did not do public affairs.

For their part, Americans and their leaders, although quite happy to display or promote their ideals and values in the world, had no appetite for doing so through government information and cultural organizations. Europeans engaged in propaganda. And Europeans were comfortable with state-sponsored ministries of information and culture. It was only when forced to do so by the 20th century's hot and cold wars that Americans created international information, cultural, and broadcasting organizations. Episodic commitment correlated with war, public anxiety, and surges of zeal have been enduring characteristics of US public diplomacy.

Q: Did you find when you came on board with USIA that the Agency was well established and happily moving ahead?

GREGORY: When I joined USIA full time in 1970, it had existed for nearly two decades. It was well established in the sense that it was institutionalized. The Agency had had several strong directors, among them George Allen, Edward R. Murrow, and Leonard Marks. Its career officers had a deep commitment to the work of the Agency. But there were powerful members of Congress, such as Senator J. William Fulbright and Representatives Wayne Hays and John Rooney, who were deeply hostile to USIA. Fulbright regarded the Agency as a propaganda ministry. Hays and Rooney viewed many of the Agency's programs as a waste of public funds.

Q: Rooney, a Democratic Congressman from Brooklyn, was head of the Appropriations Committee Subcommittee for the State Department and USIA. He was very, very powerful and a very opinionated character.

GREGORY: He sure was. I recall hearing he told one witness who was defending USIA's budget, "I thought I put you out of business last year."

Q: Congress had also placed very strict constraints on what USIA could do and not do in the United States.

GREGORY: Yes. The primary purpose of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 was to provide legal authority for the government's overseas information and educational exchange activities. But the Act as amended also prohibited domestic dissemination of the Agency's broadcasts and program materials within the geographic confines of the United States. Congress was deeply concerned that USIA and the Voice of America not compete with commercial media or seek to influence public opinion in the US for policy or partisan purposes.

Over the years this so-called "domestic dissemination ban" led to litigation and much debate. Its enforcement often turned on partisan perceptions of political and policy interests. Technologies such as satellites and the Internet soon made bright line geographic boundaries porous. Nevertheless, Congress stoutly resisted numerous efforts to amend or repeal this restriction for more than 60 years.

Q: Well then you sort of edged into USIA?

GREGORY: I had three great years working with Murray Lawson. It was educational. We were looking at diplomatic records that as far as we knew no one else had researched. We were quite struck with how so many of USIA's operational issues, information and cultural programs, and debates about how to conduct them preceded the creation of the Agency. Forty years later, there are issues I understand more fully, and there are ways our observations could have been better. But the monographs we wrote contain useful insights and remain relevant. In 1970, with a third child on the way, Murray urged me to seek a full-time appointment with USIA. His support was helpful in bringing it about.

Q: What was your impression of our exchange program at the time you came on board?

GREGORY: I was young and knew very little about USIA. I had much to learn. What's the Fulbright-Hays Act? What does it mean and why are we doing this? I had many more questions than answers. I was far less knowledgeable than when I joined the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy ten years later.

Q: You mentioned Senator Fulbright, who was adamant about keeping the Department of State from getting too involved in propaganda.

GREGORY: He was keenly interested in the exchange of scholars, and he deserves all the credit he gets for launching the Fulbright scholarship program. He was also quite concerned that academic exchanges not be tarnished by association with USIA, which he viewed as a "propaganda ministry." He believed strongly that educational and cultural exchanges should be headquartered in the State Department's Bureau of Cultural Affairs rather than in USIA. That this would locate exchanges in a government department committed to formulating and implementing foreign policy did not seem to concern him.

Q: Things reversed, but I remember a lot of people I've interviewed as junior officers ended up in the Exchanges Bureau.

GREGORY: There have been many arguments about this over the years. Some cultural diplomacy enthusiasts believed USIA did not give exchanges and cultural programs sufficient priority. They preferred locating them in a separate organization or in the State Department. Others disagreed and supported their co-location with information programs in USIA. By most accounts international educational and cultural exchanges were a fairly low priority in the Department of State. Moreover, although State's Bureau of Cultural Affairs managed exchanges for many years in Washington, USIA's field officers always managed them in US missions overseas.

Q: But looking at it in the long run. it's probably one of the most successful and long lasting programs we've had. We've developed a tremendous amount of good will and a cadre of people exposed to the United States, which in general works to our advantage.

GREGORY: Absolutely. Although not always. Some exchange participants do not like what they see in American society. Some selectively confirm their pre-existing beliefs

and cognitive frames. Understanding the US more, or misunderstanding it less, through an exchange experience can be helpful in future relationships, but this does not necessarily affect outcomes in highly contested issues and when fundamentally different interests are at stake. Exchanges have great value, but they have limitations as well as strengths.

Q: Not always, but almost to the reverse of the people who went to the Soviet Union from other places. I've found many Africans particularly who went there were just completely turned off.

GREGORY: Part of it had to do with the way they were treated.

Q: Yes, many were treated badly. When you moved into USIA full-time what job did you have?

GREGORY: My first job was in the book programs division in USIA's Information Center Service (ICS). This division supported a variety of programs that included book donations, translations, adaptations, and support for the commercial sale of selected books by American publishers through the International Media Guarantee program. These programs were managed by Louis Fanget and Donald McNeil, two savvy Civil Service officers. Lou defended the book program's annual budgets with great skill, both within USIA and through his connections with influential US publishers.

I worked for Florette Henri, an accomplished book editor from New York. Her husband Ray Henri had been appointed to head the Marine Corps' combat art program. They came to Washington, and she had been hired by the Agency to manage book adaptations. USIA published two kinds of adaptations. "Ladder Books" were adaptations of general audience books into graduated high frequency vocabularies of 1,000 words and higher. They were sold for a nominal price rather than given to overseas readers of English as a second language. The idea was that a small price gave the book added value for the reader.

The "Current Thought Series" consisted of adaptations of books by leading American scholars in the social sciences into a 5,000 high-frequency English words. Contractors did the adaptations. They abridged the originals, eliminated idioms and anecdotal material, and explained jargon and technical terms. The authors provided the rights and approved the adaptations. My job was to edit the adaptations for publication. We adapted about a half dozen books in the social sciences per year. I recall editing adaptations of such books as Seymour Martin Lipset's *Political Man* and Simon Kuznets' *Modern Economic Growth*. I enjoyed the work and learned a great deal from the authors and from Florette Henri.

Q: Where were they being produced? Here in Washington or farmed out to one of our printing presses outside of the country?

GREGORY: Many of USIA's magazines, pamphlets, and other publications were indeed printed in the Agency's regional printing centers in Manila, Mexico City, and Beirut. Labor and printing costs were cheaper than in the United States.

However, Ladder Books and the Current Thought Series were published in Bombay, India. The US had a large supply of excess rupees from USAID's P.L. 480 Food for Peace program. These funds were available for expenditure only in India. USIA used the rupees for book publishing and many of its other programs in India. Current Thought Series books were sold internationally for 50 cents each by Feffer and Simons, Inc., a New York based firm.

Q: Did you get involved in the America centers like America Houses in Germany and centers in other countries?

GREGORY: I did later when I was with the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. From 1970-1972, however, I worked only on adaptations for the Current Thought Series. USIA's book translation and distribution programs continued throughout the life of the Agency. Book adaptations, however, were discontinued in the mid-1970s shortly after I left to take a program development position in another part of the Information Center Service.

USIA was going through fundamental changes in its career services. When it was created in 1953, many USIA professionals had worked for the Office of War Information and other World War II agencies. Many had been recruited from journalism, higher education, publishing, the media, labor, the arts, and other fields relevant to the work of the Agency. In the 1970s there was a move within USIA to recruit and train a professional cadre of career officers to do the Agency's work overseas. They were called Foreign Service Information Officers (FSIOs) in part because many in the Department of State wanted to maintain a distinction between the government-to-government diplomacy done by State's Foreign Service Officers FSOs and the information and cultural programs carried out by USIA's FSIOs.

There was a robust debate in USIA at the time about the Agency's norms, methods, and priorities – and whether officers recruited through the Foreign Service Act were best suited to doing the work. FSIOs such as Stan Burnett, Alan Carter, Bill Haratunian, Mike Pistor, Jodie Lewinsohn, Lyle Copman, Terry Catherman, McKinney Russell, Walter Roberts, Juliet Antunes, Tom Tuch, Alec Klieforth, Lois Roth, and Richard Arndt were leading voices in a generation of USIA officers doing foundational work in creating a profession. Some increasingly were using the umbrella term “public diplomacy” for information, culture, and broadcasting. Some preferred cultural diplomacy.

Q: Did you get involved in the debate/discussion?

GREGORY: I became a member of a small self-selected group of Foreign and Civil Service Officers called the Young Officers Policy Panel (YOPP). Those “young officers” are now retired with as much gray hair as we have. I joined the founding group, which

included Mike Schneider, Mike Canning, Sally Grooms, Sig Cohen, Barbara Shelby and a handful of others. This was in the early 1970s. President Richard Nixon had appointed Frank Shakespeare, a conservative Republican, as the Agency's director. Viet Nam was a contested issue in American society, and it was a contested issue in the U.S. Information Agency. I think Shakespeare saw YOPP as a way for young officers to let off steam and a way to keep an eye on them. He gave us a mandate to draft a new USIA mission statement. We met over brown bag lunches for days. We toiled over multiple drafts of a one-page statement seeking to get the words just right. We finally asked to present our "masterpiece" to the Director. Shakespeare, however, was not interested in meeting with us. Instead we were directed to give it to his executive assistant, Jack O'Brien. Nothing more came of it. But we had a lot of fun, and we learned a lot through our discussions on USIA's mission and methods.

Q: You were around but probably doing research during our involvement in Viet Nam. How did you come out on Viet Nam?

GREGORY: I have memories of driving my car on several occasions to USIA's parking lot in 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, which I think I needed my USIA badge to access. I would leave my car and head down to the mall or over to the White House for anti-war demonstrations. My views on the war were negative. Nevertheless I was becoming increasingly enthusiastic about USIA's work and developing a career with the Agency.

Q: I wonder whether you were getting any feedback from USIA's many officers out in the field in Viet Nam and whether you were getting a different view from them?

GREGORY: No, in those days I don't recall that I did. I know Barry Zorthian very well now. He was USIA's director of the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) in Saigon. JUSPAO had been involved in tactical psychological operations, such as leaflet drops, as well as media relations and public affairs. Barry and I had many conversations about his recollections thirty years later. He kept a position at *Time Magazine* after he retired, and he was active in creating the Public Diplomacy Council. At the time, however, I was not at a level where I would have had long conversations with people like Barry Zorthian.

Q: I was wondering about the junior level of people coming back.

GREGORY: I don't recall having in-depth conversations with field officers who had served in Vietnam. My memory is they were a community that would occasionally discuss shared experiences. But for the most part they were moving on to the next assignment and to the issues that were animating USIA in Washington and in other parts of Asia and the world.

Q: What did you do when you left the book program?

GREGORY: I became a program officer in the Information Center Service's newly established Program Development Division. ICS was led by Hal Schneidman, a senior FSIO, and his deputy Parker May, an experienced Civil Service Officer. Ed Shulick, a

very capable FSIO, led the Division. The Division was divided into thematic areas. These included foreign policy, economics, US political and social processes, and arts and culture. I was in the foreign policy section led first by Robert T. Gray and then by Richard Moore. Bob Gray was a State Department FSO assigned to USIA, and Dick Moore was an experienced FSIO. Both were talented officers with a keen interest in public diplomacy. Bob had served previously as executive assistant to Eugene Rostow, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and Disarmament. Gray's assignment reflected the thinking that a State officer was needed to manage the foreign policy section. After he left, however, Dick Moore and a series of Washington assigned FSIOs ably led the section.

My job was to recruit speakers who were knowledgeable on foreign policy issues and manage their travel to USIA's posts overseas. There they would speak to audiences selected by the PAOs and their locally employed staffs. I would also locate relevant articles, books, and media materials that the posts could use to supplement the speaker's programs. My role, and that of other program development officers, was to connect USIA and experts in American society who would engage with people overseas who had been identified as important to US interests and influential in their countries.

Q: When did you start this?

GREGORY: In 1973. I worked in the foreign policy section until 1978. Then I was fortunate to be assigned by USIA for a year in the American Political Science Association's Congressional Fellowship program where I worked for Congressman Mo Udall and Senator Carl Levin. When I returned to USIA, I was invited to join the staff of the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

Q: When you were developing programs, did you feel this was still a difficult time? We were rapidly disengaging in Viet Nam? The academic world was pretty well turned off by our involvement. I would have thought you would have had a difficult sell.

GREGORY: Yes and no. Sure, many scholars were not interested in doing public speaking on foreign affairs issues under USIA's auspices overseas, but there also were many who were eager to do it. Many were well known American scholars, and some did it repeatedly. I don't recall it being difficult to find people to do it.

Q: During this time there wasn't anything similar to the speaker blacklist that developed later on?

GREGORY: No. The blacklist was an issue that gained considerable media attention during the Reagan administration in the 1980s. That was unfortunate. It brought a very successful program into disrepute. There was no speaker blacklist in the 1970s. That said, in diplomacy there are always delicate decisions about who's invited to dinner.

Q: If you're paying for somebody you're not going to send your nastiest critic.

GREGORY: At the same time if you program people and there is no daylight between official policy and what they are saying you lose the value of credible voices from outside government.

Q: Do you recall any particular speakers that stuck in your mind for one reason or another?

GREGORY: William Griffith, a well-known professor of international relations at MIT, loved to do it. He visited USIA's posts annually for a number of years. He could be high maintenance at times, and there was occasional good-natured bargaining on the staff as to who's going to handle him this year. But he was an excellent speaker and consistently gave the Agency good value. Another outstanding speaker was Richard Ned Lebow, now a distinguished professor at Dartmouth. We also recruited experts from think tanks such as Jessica Tuchman Mathews and Seyom Brown. I recall it being relatively easy to recruit speakers despite the modest \$100 per day honorarium they received in addition to their expenses.

During my first year in the program in 1973, Bob Gray asked me to work with him in coordinating a conference on arms control issues for US and European policy experts, political figures, and journalists in Amsterdam. It was my first overseas trip. The US team included Under Secretary of State Eugene Rostow, Republican presidential hopeful Nelson Rockefeller, and Jay Lovestone, the AFL-CIO's director of international affairs. Participants included Dutch journalists who were also members of the Dutch Socialist party. Lovestone, whose legendary anti-Communism was that of a former Communist true believer, became very upset and voiced loud objections to the presence of Socialists at the conference. It took both Rostow and Rockefeller to talk him down.

Q: Did we have any particular target countries during this time? Were we aiming more for Africa or Latin America or Europe or the Middle East?

GREGORY: It was always a debate. Speaker program priorities tended to reflect US foreign policy priorities. Europe and Asia usually commanded the most resources, and these were regions for which it was also easier to recruit speakers. USIA's regional directors defended their geographic areas, and priorities often turned on the strength and bureaucratic skills of the personalities in the regional offices. We followed the current administration's priorities, and issues varied. For example, when President Jimmy Carter was elected, programming on human rights became more important.

Q: Was USIA from your perspective a relatively happy ship or not?

GREGORY: USIA was a relatively new agency and much smaller than the State Department. Its Foreign Service and Civil Service employees overall were talented professionals caught up in developing the norms, tools, and methods of an instrument of foreign affairs that was coming to be known as public diplomacy. As in any organization, there was grousing about people and policies. There were many conversations about 'people at the top who just don't get it,' or 'if they only listened to us,' or 'morale has

never been worse.’ But these were the complaints of the deeply committed. Looking back, it’s the positive aspects of the organizational culture that stand out.

USIA’s officers were more flexible and more willing to engage with overseas publics than career diplomats in the State Department. For this reason USIA’s officers also typically had better foreign language skills. Scarce resources were always a problem. USIA’s employees understood that additional resources were needed to do public diplomacy well, and they resented the lack of support for the Agency in the State Department, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and Congress.

There were vigorous debates about norms and methods. Officers who specialized in educational and cultural exchanges wanted a strong peer review process in the selection of scholars and artists. They valued educational norms and artistic quality. Peer review was a way to maintain the integrity and non-political character of these programs. Many also liked the British Council model of cultural diplomacy and argued accordingly for a similar organizational separation of exchanges from USIA’s information programs.

Officers who specialized in media relations and advocacy programs, on the other hand, usually perceived advantages in their co-location with cultural diplomacy, and in any case found it difficult to separate them operationally overseas. Many of the Agency’s information officers valued a reasonable degree of distance between public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy as carried out by the State Department. Their debates often turned on communication methods, audience segmentation and priorities, influence environment analysis, and related issues.

The Voice of America’s broadcasters were caught up in protecting journalism norms in gathering and reporting news. In 1976 they succeeded in getting the VOA Charter passed into law. Its purpose was to provide enact journalism standards for VOA’s news broadcasts and create a “firewall” to protect them from pre-broadcast influence by diplomats and policymakers including USIA’s senior managers. Two VOA employees, Alan Heil and Bernie Kamenske, deserve particular credit. They worked closely with Congressional staff including especially Scott Cohen, a senior aide to Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Charles Percy, to put the Charter into law.

These issues were argued in any number of water cooler conversations and lunches with colleagues. The debates were spirited. The mode of discourse was direct and often blunt. Field telegrams from State Department diplomats usually were nuanced, and you really had to look closely to see what was between the lines. But if a USIS PAO had a problem with Washington you knew it in the first sentence. It hit you right between the eyes. It was a different kind of communication. In an agency the size of USIA, people knew each other, often very well. Differences could become personal. Field inspections were occasionally led by officers seeking to settle scores. But overall, this was a dynamic and productive organizational culture. It had not become bureaucratically rigid. It was capable of adapting to change.

Q: My first experience with USIA overseas was in Belgrade with Walter Roberts. I found him an excellent officer.

GREGORY: He was indeed. We were on opposite sides of a contentious organizational issue in the 1970s when he left USIA to become executive director of an advisory panel led by former CBS President Frank Stanton. Later Walter and I became close friends. He became the only career Foreign Service Officer to serve on the Presidentially-appointed US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, and we collaborated on a number of public diplomacy projects after he retired. He was deeply knowledgeable, a talented field officer, a marvelous raconteur, and politically adroit. He had few equals in the politics of public diplomacy in Washington.

Q: I've always been very impressed by the overseas efforts of USIA and its people who were more skilled in getting things done. I was a consular officer, and I think there was a natural affinity because I was geared toward getting things done. I thought that USIA was action oriented.

GREGORY: Sure and they had management experience. They managed information programs, large-scale exchanges, and American centers. This plays out today. Former USIA officers often compete successfully for State's Deputy Chief of Mission positions.

Q: Then you went to the Hill. I must say with Mo Udall and Carl Levin you took two bright and shining stars didn't you. You were very fortunate.

GREGORY: I was lucky. Mo Udall, a Democratic Congressman from Arizona, was a good friend of the Congressional Fellowship program, and his office was known to be a great assignment. I served in his office for six months in 1978. This was two years after he made an unsuccessful run for President. He had "gone national," and the voters in his Tucson-based district remembered. Despite being a senior Democrat with many years in the House, he had a close race coming up in 1978. His policy was to let Congressional Fellows could sit in on all of his meetings had, bar none. He reserved the right to say no, but he never did while I was there. I got to be a fly on the wall during many interesting conversations and in part of his campaign for reelection. It was quite an education.

My experience with Michigan Democratic Senator Carl Levin was very different. It was his first year in the Senate, and he was the lowest ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. Now he is the Committee's ranking Democrat and its Chairman when Democrats control the Senate. At the time, Senator John Stennis was Committee Chairman, and a key issue was the implementing legislation for the Panama Canal Treaty. The Senate had ratified the Treaty. But Senator Helms and others who had fought ratification were still opposed to "giving away the Canal."

Q: This is Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

GREGORY: Exactly. Senator Stennis had asked Senator Levin to manage the Treaty's implementation bill in Committee and on the Senate floor. I had had some limited

experience with Civil Service regulations during my association with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), a union representing USIA's Civil Service employees. This gave me more familiarity with federal employee regulations and the role of what was then called the Civil Service Commission than others on his staff. There were a large number of Defense Department employees in the Canal Zone, which was one reason the Armed Services Committee had jurisdiction. Many of the bill's provisions related to the federal regulations that governed their conditions of employment. It was real work. He needed staff support on these issues. This made the assignment different from the experience from with Congressman Udall. Here I had a job to do every day, and he appreciated the help.

Q: Well go back to Udall; he was renowned for his sense of humor wasn't he?

GREGORY: Very much so, yes. He had it all in his head, but his press aide and speechwriter also had a little card file full of jokes. Udall used humor as well as anybody as a political tool. He was very good at it.

Q: What did you pick up about Arizona politics?

GREGORY: I was struck with the bipartisanship. Udall was a liberal Democrat, but he was a good friend of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, a conservative Republican. Arizona came first for both of them, and they knew and liked each other. Udall did not have any problems with guns, at least none that he stated publicly. You could not succeed in Arizona politics if you did. One day I accompanied him and his campaign manager on a drive south to Douglas, a little town on the border with Mexico. We were up at six in the morning and drove all day. The first stop, just outside of Tucson, was Tombstone, Arizona. It was only a little off the road, and he said, "Every Congressional Fellow should see Tombstone." Then with an ironic smile, he said something like "You will only take this Colt out of my cold dead hand."

Q: Yeah.

GREGORY: But there was something in the way he said it that suggested if he lived in New York he would gladly have a different perspective. We stopped at Grange halls and small radio stations. We dropped in on a board meeting of the Anaconda Copper Company. We had lunch with the Hispanic mayor in Douglas, Arizona. Coming back we met with farmers who had experienced some flooding. Udall had arranged for officials from federal agencies to talk with them about flood relief. His Washington credentials mattered when he could do something for his constituents. We arrived in Tucson at about 10:30 p.m. after a long hard day. The final stop was a PTA meeting. We sat and waited until nearly midnight. When the meeting finished, he was invited to speak. Seemingly as fresh as when the day started he used his wit and stories to captivate another audience. I concluded boundless energy and a capacity for sitting for long periods of time on hard folding chairs were two of many things that set good politicians apart.

Mo Udall was a senior Democrat in the House. He was a powerful lawmaker in Washington. He had run for president. And now he was in a close race for reelection in Arizona. He clearly enjoyed and was very good at both worlds.

Q: You mentioned the Civil Service employees' union AFGE.

GREGORY: Right:

Q: Did you get involved with that?

GREGORY: I did.

Q: What were you doing?

GREGORY: Bernie Wiseman was the long-time president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 1812, which represented Civil Service employees at USIA. He had had a distinguished career in the American labor movement and had come into USIA as a labor information officer. This was a program created during the Kennedy administration in which the Agency recruited labor leaders for assignments principally in Latin America. Bernie was a close friend of senior officials in the AFL/CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) including Meany and ...

Q: It's George Meany.

GREGORY: AFL-CIO President George Meany and also Clyde Webber who was then the National Vice President of the American Federation of Government Employees. I was active with the Young Officers Policy Panel. I also was looking for other ways to get involved in professional issues. Maybe I was looking for a hobby. I had joined AFGE 1812 in the fall of 1970 soon after beginning my full-time employment with USIA. Soon thereafter, Bernie, who was thinking about retirement, said why don't you take an active role in the union. I reflected a bit and said, "No." I wasn't sure I was cut out for union activities. But later he asked me to accompany him to a meeting with Clyde Webber in AFGE's national headquarters. He added, "I want you to meet two State Department Foreign Service Officers." One was Gene Preston. The other was Harrison Sherwood. Gene was a political officer, and Harrison later joined the Foreign Commercial Service. Gene, who was also an ordained minister, had been active in the Civil Rights movement. They were young 1960s activists who now found themselves in the Foreign Service.

Q: It was a time of change in the Foreign Service...

GREGORY: It was...

Q: They had some thing called JFSOC (Junior Foreign Service Officers Club); it was a reflection of the sixties.

GREGORY: Sure.

Q: Anyone over thirty was suspect.

GREGORY: The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) was going through internal changes.

Q: Oh, major changes.

GREGORY: Lannon Walker and Charlie Bray led the “Young Turks” reform movement and had taken control of AFSA in 1967 and ...

Q: And then you had others who...

GREGORY: Tom Boyatt, Bill Harrop, and Tex Harris.

Q: Yes.

GREGORY: They were changing AFSA’s role as a professional association. In 1969, President Nixon had issued Executive Order 11491 creating a labor-management system for federal employees. The State Department wanted to prevent its application to the Foreign Service, and AFSA was debating whether and how it should represent Foreign Service employees as a union.

Gene Preston, Harrison Sherwood, Alison Palmer, and a small group of FSOs in State did not think AFSA was dealing effectively with employee concerns. They were particularly interested in developing a Foreign Service labor management system, a statutory grievance procedure, overcoming discrimination against women in the Foreign Service, and due process rules in the Foreign Service system of selection out. AFGE had gained exclusive recognition to represent some 4,000 Civil Service employees in USIA, USAID, State, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. In 1970, Preston and his colleagues viewed AFGE as a strong national union that was successfully organizing foreign affairs agency employees. In their thinking, it had more potential than AFSA to achieve significant reforms. They had joined USAID/State Department AFGE Local 1534 and had filed petitions to represent Foreign Service employees in the State Department’s Africa Bureau and in the Africa Office of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Q: What was State’s response?

GREGORY: The Department intervened in hearings before the Federal Labor Relations Council. Deputy Secretary of State for Administration William B. Macomber successfully invoked the “unique relationship of the Foreign Service to the President,” the Foreign Service “rank-in-person” personnel system, and national security requirements as grounds for denying the representation elections. AFSA joined with State in stalling the elections and also sought to intervene in AFGE’s representation petitions as a professional association. The result: In 1971, President Nixon issued a “Memorandum” that excluded the Foreign Service from the Civil Service labor-

management system. State and AFSA collaborated in support of Executive Order 11636, which established a Foreign Service “employee-management” system. It granted representation rights to professional associations and provided for “consultations” rather than negotiated collective bargaining agreements. AFGE vigorously objected to the Foreign Service system, arguing it was weaker and less protective of employee interests. It also viewed AFSA as a “company union.” In 1972, representation elections were held under E.O. 11636. AFSA defeated AFGE and won representation rights for some 7,000 Foreign Service employees in State, USIA, and USAID.

Q: What was the purpose and outcome of the meeting with Clyde Webber?

With collective bargaining no longer an option, AFGE Locals 1812 in USIA and 1534 in State/USAID created a Foreign Affairs Employees Council. The Council in turn created a legal defense fund; its board of directors also served as the board of the fund. The fund was named the Charles William Thomas Memorial Legal Defense Fund in memory of Charles Thomas, a Foreign Service Officer who had committed suicide after his selection out. His file had been mistaken for another FSO with the name Charles Thomas. In the absence of appeals procedures he had been unable to challenge the decision.

The Fund’s goal at the outset was to finance two lawsuits: one against the lack of due process in Foreign Service selection out; the other against implementation of the Foreign Affairs Specialist (FAS) program. The FAS program sought to bring Civil Service employees in USIA and State into a “rank-in-person” Foreign Service Reserve personnel system. It would give them Foreign Service retirement benefits, but it also would deny them Civil Service protections and subject them to selection out. Bernie Wiesman had arranged the meeting with Webber to gain his support in forming an advisory committee to support the Fund.

Webber, who soon thereafter became AFGE’s National President, supported the effort and joined with former Assistant Secretary of Labor Leo Werts and retired Ambassador Fulton Freeman, who had been a close friend of Charles Thomas, in forming the Fund’s advisory committee. At their invitation, a distinguished group of Americans agreed to serve on the committee and support the Fund. They included E. Clinton Bamberger, Dean of the Catholic University Law School; Senator Birch Bayh; retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Tom C. Clark; Washington DC’s House of Representatives Delegate Walter Fauntroy; Monsignor George C. Higgins of the US Catholic Conference; Brother Cornelius Justin, Professor Emeritus of Labor Relations at Manhattan College; and former Assistant Postmaster General Richard J. Murphy. Their involvement in the Fund was one of the keys to its success.

Q. Why did Webber, AFGE, and the AFL-CIO get involved in these Foreign Service issues?

GREGORY: There were a number of reasons. Organized labor had affiliations with unions in other countries. The State Department’s labor attaches and USIA’s labor information officers had close connections with leaders of US trade unions and the AFL-

CIO. Bernie Wiesman in particular was instrumental in persuading AFL-CIO President George Meany and Webber to become involved.

It was also a time when professionals in other fields were organizing. The American Federation of Teachers and American Association of University Professors were organizing college faculties. Some lawyers and doctors were organizing as well. There was cachet for the AFL-CIO in organizing Foreign Service Officers. This led to their providing financial as well as moral support. When I was on the Thomas Fund's board, I would deposit contributions from unions representing communication workers, steel workers, masons, carpenters, machinists, bricklayers, longshoremen, and garment workers. The Fund's advisory committee went a long way toward making this possible.

Not least, the Foreign Service and Civil Service employees who were leaders in AFGE at the time were intelligent, talented, persuasive, committed, and good at networking with organized labor. Gene Preston was a superb organizer and fundraiser. Xavier "Mike" Vela, President of AFGE's Local 1534 in State was well connected with Washington DC's Labor Relations Council. Mike and Bernie Wiesman came from opposite ends of the labor spectrum, and their politics were very different, but they collaborated well on the Fund and foreign affairs organizing issues. Stephen Koczak, a retired FSO, was a brilliant strategist and legal analyst. Alison Palmer, who brought an anti-discrimination class action lawsuit on behalf of women in the Foreign Service, supported the effort. Other activists and supporters included Mel Blum, who had been a leader in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; Frank Chiancone, who had worked with Catholic organizations associated with Latin American labor and anti-poverty projects; Tom Martin, who had been active with the AFL-CIO; Joe Glazer, labor's internationally famous song writer and guitar playing troubadour; and USIA FSIOs Charlie Medd and Bob Coonrod, who were officers in Local 1812.

Q: What was the outcome of the two lawsuits?

GREGORY: For the selection out due process lawsuit, the Fund retained the prominent Washington law firm Hogan and Hartson. Bill Bittman, famous as the Justice Department lawyer who prosecuted Teamster's President Jimmy Hoffa, and George Miller were the attorneys who handled the case. In November 1971, Bittman and Miller met the Director General of the Foreign Service and offered not to file suit if State would declare a moratorium on selection out and agree to bargain on due process procedures. State declared a moratorium but declined to bargain. The Fund filed suit. In 1973, US District Court Judge Gerhard Gesell rendered a decision in *Lindsey v. Kissinger* declaring the lack of procedural safeguards in State's selection out system unconstitutional. A Foreign Service Grievance Board with public members was established in 1976, and procedural safeguards were created through consultations with AFSA.

For the FAS program, AFGE and the Fund retained Larry Speiser, a prominent ACLU attorney. Two lawsuits were filed. *AFGE v. Rogers*, filed in 1971, led to a preliminary injunction against all conversions from the Civil Service to the Foreign Service Reserve in the foreign affairs agencies. The injunction held for two years until US District Court

Judge Howard Corcoran issued a decision in 1973 granting authority for the program in limited circumstances. State and USIA then proceeded with the FAS program. Together with many other Civil Service employees, I converted from Civil Service to the Foreign Service Reserve. Speiser filed a second lawsuit, *AFGE v. Keogh*, in 1975. I was a named plaintiff in this case. Eventually, Judge Gerhard Gesell who coincidentally also had handled the selection out case, decided the FAS matter had already been adjudicated and ruled the case *res judicata*.

Pressures to terminate the FAS program nevertheless continued. AFGE and several members of Congress remained vigorously opposed. AFSA too opposed the program, primarily because the Civil Service employees in the Foreign Service Reserve were eligible to vote in Foreign Service representation elections. In 1976, State and USIA changed their policy. Those who had converted to the FAS program were given the option to return to the Civil Service and keep their Foreign Service retirement. With all legal remedies exhausted, I took this option.

Q: Did AFGE and the Thomas Fund become involved in other legal cases?

GREGORY: Yes. The Fund supported a number of cases. In most cases it helped with pre-litigation research. In some cases it also provided partial funding. In others it filed *amicus curiae* briefs. *Correia v. Kissinger* challenged the State Department's alien spouse regulations. *Bradley v. Kissinger* sought to overturn mandatory Foreign Service retirement at age 60. *Palmer v. Rogers* and *Palmer v. Kissinger* challenged the Department's discrimination against women in the Foreign Service. *Taylor v. Hampton* sought retirement credits for USIA's former Bi-national Center employees. And *Hitchcock v. Commissioner* challenged the Internal Revenue Service's denial of the deductibility of Foreign Service home leave expenses. Bruce Terris and Zona Hostetler, two outstanding attorneys with the public interest law firm Terris and Associates, did much of the Fund's legal work in these cases, a lot of it *pro bono*.

Q: What was your role in these activities?

GREGORY: When introduced to FSOs Gene Preston and Harrison Sherwood at the meeting with Clyde Webber, I explained that I was Civil Service. Harrison looked me up and down and said to Gene with a smile, "He looks normal to me." I decided before the meeting was over that the issues were fascinating and these guys would be good company. It led to seven years of activity with AFGE and the Fund from 1971-1978. These also were the years when I worked in USIA's book and foreign policy support programs.

I was elected General Vice President for AFGE 1812 in 1971, and when the Thomas Fund was established in June of that year I also became one of its two trustees. The other trustee, Burt Bostwick, represented AFGE 1534. Gene Preston was the Fund's President. Most of my work on the Fund's board during those early months involved preparing the Fund's request to the IRS for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable institution status. After much back and forth, and with good advice from the Terris law firm, IRS granted the

exemption in November 1972. It made a big difference in our fund raising. The ruling led to a November 5 story in *The New York Times*, which was written without a byline by Benjamin Welles, one of its foreign affairs reporters and the son of former State Department Deputy Secretary Sumner Welles. In my conversation with him about the IRS ruling, I also discussed his father's role in developing State's international information, cultural, and broadcasting initiatives in the 1930s. He was keenly interested in learning about the research of USIA's historical office.

In the fall of 1972, Gene was assigned to a political officer post in Nigeria, and I was elected President of the Fund. This meant that I had the good fortune to work closely with Hogan and Hartson's Bill Bittman and George Miller when the Fund's lawsuit on selection out was filed. It was also heady wine for this young Civil Service employee to be the Fund's President in 1973 when Judge Gerhard Gesell rendered his influential ruling declaring the lack of due process in Foreign Service selection out procedures unconstitutional.

In November 1973, Bernie Wiesman stepped down as President of AFGE Local 1812, and I was elected to succeed him. I served as President until June 1978 when I took the assignment as a Congressional Fellow.

Q: Apart from supporting the legal defense fund, what was AFGE's role in USIA when you were President? What were some of its activities?

GREGORY: USIA's employees were professionals. They were Foreign Service and Civil Service officers. They were skilled at handling press conferences and media relations. They managed academic exchanges and international visitor programs. They were radio broadcasters. They imagined and produced traveling exhibits. They were teachers of English. They did public opinion research. They edited magazines. They produced and distributed films. They sponsored the global travel of artists, dancers, musicians, and writers. They managed American cultural and bi-national centers. These were creative and talented people. They were highly educated. Many had advanced degrees. And many spoke foreign languages very well.

This was a workforce that differed not only from the Department of State, but also from most departments and agencies in the federal government. AFGE's strength nationally was in the Defense Department and its military bases throughout the United States. In USIA, AFGE's activists focused not only on conditions of employment common to federal workers generally, but also on the unique professional and public diplomacy issues its Foreign and Civil Service employees cared deeply about. This meant AFGE 1812 defended the mission of public diplomacy and the Agency's budget in Congress, took positions on a steady stream of policy and reorganization proposals, and worked to improve the personnel systems that shaped the lives of its employees.

During these years, I was able to win membership support for a dues increase that enabled USIA's Local 1812 to hire its first full time attorney, the dedicated and competent Mary Jacksteit, to handle grievance cases and other union issues. She was

succeeded by the equally talented Beth Slavet, who went on to Chair the US Merit Systems Protection Board and head the Department of Labor's Office of Whistleblower Protection Programs.

On budget and reorganization issues, it helped to have the support of the AFL-CIO and AFGE's national office. Both fought for USIA's annual budgets, because they wanted to protect its labor information programs and because much of the Agency's work overseas dovetailed with organized labor's international efforts more broadly. The AFL-CIO's support was also critical when AFGE 1812 joined forces with the US Advisory Commission on Information in opposition to efforts by the so-called Stanton Panel, Murphy Commission, and others to reorganize USIA and end its existence as an independent agency.

The Agency's leadership welcomed the union's support on budget and reorganization issues, even as it vigorously opposed AFGE on many employee and collective bargaining issues. USIA often was sympathetic to the needs and concerns of its employees. That said, when AFGE and USIA were on opposite sides of an issue, the Agency's managers and lawyers would relentlessly exhaust all administrative and legal procedures until some outcome was reached. In contrast, the State Department, which often was seen as less sympathetic to employee concerns, could often be counted on to find some ad hoc way of dealing with an issue.

AFGE was generally seen as more committed to USIA's mission and organizational independence than AFSA. This gave AFGE 1812 an edge in a second Foreign Service representation election, which we won in 1976. Many FSIOs, including many who were not union members and who self-identified more readily with AFSA, welcomed AFGE's strong support for USIA's budget and public diplomacy programs.

Q: I recall at the time one of the concerns on the part of the State Department Foreign Service was that so much of the Civil Service was based in the United States. We had a completely different system of transfer. We carried our rank with us. We felt we'd be just a little pimple on the labor process and be overlooked .

GREGORY: These issues were important for sure. The Foreign Service rank-in-person personnel system was very different from the Civil Service rank-in-position system. There were cultural differences too. Many in the Foreign Service saw themselves as professionals who did not want to be represented by a domestic labor union with large Civil Service and blue-collar constituencies.

Nevertheless, in a hard fought election AFGE 1812 won recognition as the exclusive representative of all of USIA's Foreign Service employees in April 1976. Professional issues played a big part in the outcome. But there were other reasons. Charlie Medd, Bob Coonrod, Frank Chiancone, and other Foreign Service members of AFGE 1812 were skilled campaigners. *News and Views*, AFGE 1812's monthly newsletter, which was circulated worldwide, provided information and helped to shape perceptions. Under its Civil Service contract with USIA, AFGE had negotiated access to USIA's printing

facilities and the diplomatic pouch. This cut costs. AFSA brought unfair labor practice charges, and there were numerous hearings before Administrative Law Judges and the Employee-Management Relations Commission. AFGE's national office lawyers were much more skilled than AFSA at handling these proceedings. When the votes were counted, we prevailed by a substantial majority.

Q: Well I came in in 1955, and the outlook still was 'gentlemen don't do this sort of thing.' I didn't believe that, because I couldn't go home and clip coupons. I was dependent on my salary. I also think there was a new generation coming up with a different outlook than the old Foreign Service.

GREGORY: This is true. Tom Boyatt, Bill Harrop, Tex Harris, Lars Hydle, and other AFSA leaders in the State Department at the time campaigned well and hard. But they were not typical of AFSA's membership. Barry Fulton, Juliet Antunes, and Stan Zuckerman, AFSA's representatives in USIA, also were formidable opponents. They were in the vanguard of an AFSA that was changing. AFSA today doesn't mind calling itself a union, and it certainly acts like one. AFGE's representation of USIA's Foreign Service lasted until 1992, when a very different AFSA regained the right to represent USIA's Foreign Service Employees. Tom Boyatt and I now are members of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs. We enjoy exchanging contrasting perspectives on those days,

Q: How did you find this experience translated in your work with Senator Levin?

GREGORY: Only to the extent that in 1978-79, having recently been President of the AFGE Local 1812 in USIA, I had some experience with federal personnel regulations. It was a knowledge base he and his permanent staff could use with respect to what the legislation might mean for US government employees in the Panama Canal Zone.

Q: I would have thought that dealing with this problem of the Canal Zonians as they were called, was almost a poisonous relationship. I mean it was almost like dealing with a foreign power. I gathered these people felt very strongly. Panama was there and they were going to stick to it and the hell with anybody else.

GREGORY: Well my recollection is it had a lot to do with how the Defense Department managed the US side of it. One issue was whether the Panamanians would be able to pilot the ships through the Canal. This was a highly skilled occupation, and some opponents of the Treaty argued they would not be able to do it. Of course they eventually did and did so very successfully. Most of the Civil Service issues related to the relocation of US employees and protection of their career rights.

Q: Yeah, one can't help but think back to the arguments over the Suez Canal in 1956. Would the Egyptians be able to run the Canal? And of course they did. After you left Levin's office...

GREGORY: Let me circle back to one issue in the mid-1970s.

Q: Sure.

GREGORY: USIA was constantly facing the prospect of being reorganized. It was still a relatively new agency. Public diplomacy did not have a thick organizational context in American history. The War Department, the Navy Department, and the State Department all go back to the beginning of the Republic. This was not true for government information, and cultural activities. USIA had existed only for two decades. In the mid-1974, Walter Roberts left USIA to become the executive director of the Panel on International Information, Education, and Cultural Relations chaired by former CBS Broadcasting President Frank Stanton. This Panel, which came to be known as the Stanton Commission, was set up under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which was led by David Abshire, a former US ambassador to NATO and Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Affairs. Stanton also had recently been Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information.

There was concern within USIA about what this might mean for the Agency's organizational integrity. One long-standing proposal favored by cultural diplomacy enthusiasts was that educational and cultural exchanges, which were managed in Washington by the State Department's Bureau of Cultural Affairs, should be transferred to the Library of Congress or the Smithsonian Institution or an endowment similar to the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. Advocates favored independence from State and USIA. Broadcasters also wanted independence from USIA. Both groups argued there were fundamental differences between cultural diplomacy, broadcasting, and policy advocacy.

Two advisory commissions – the US Advisory Commission on Information and the US Advisory Commission on Educational and Cultural Affairs – had urged creation of the Stanton Panel to take a fresh look at these issues and make recommendations as to how they should be organized. The Stanton Panel concluded that what had come to be called public diplomacy was an uneasy amalgam of three fundamentally different activities: policy information, cultural communication, and shortwave broadcasting. It recommended that these functions should be organized in three separate entities that would be similar to the British model. Policy information would be given to the State Department. Cultural communication and broadcasting would be put in independent organizations.

USIA Director James Keogh, most of the Agency's senior officers, and many of its employees disagreed. They opposed the Stanton Panel's recommendations, arguing the reasons for creating an independent USIA remained valid and that information, culture, and broadcasting could not be neatly compartmented in separate organizations. A lot of this was about turf and typical Washington bureaucratic haggling. A lot was about personalities. But the debate also turned on different understandings of how public diplomacy should be conceived and organized. USIA had allies in and out of government. They rallied under the leadership of Dante Fascell, who was a staunch

supporter of USIA and a hero in the Agency at the time. In the end, the Panel's recommendations were not adopted.

Q: You might explain who Dante Fascell was.

GREGORY: Dante Fascell was a Democratic Congressman from Florida who eventually became Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He served on the Committee during most of his career and is probably the only lawmaker in American history who made overseas information, educational and cultural exchanges, and broadcasting his highest political priority apart from his Congressional district. He was a true champion of public diplomacy. He was also a hell of a politician and a good lawmaker. He held multiple oversight hearings on USIA's budget, policies, and programs. These included a series of hearings on overseas communication in the 1960s. In 1968, Fascell had held hearings and produced a report on "The Future of United States Public Diplomacy." In June 1977, he chaired nine days of hearings on the Stanton Panel's recommendations.

Fascell's Stanton Panel hearings were published in a large volume called "Public Diplomacy and the Future." The term public diplomacy was coming into routine use in the communities that paid attention to USIA. Many believe the term was coined in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, a retired Ambassador and former USIA officer who had become Director of the Edward R. Murrow Center at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Fascell's hearings in 1968 and 1977 gave it traction in Washington.

Opposition to the Stanton Panel's views at the hearings came from a coalition that included Elmer Staats, the Comptroller General of the United States and senior analysts in the General Accounting Office (GAO); Hobart Lewis, who had succeeded Stanton as Chairman of the US Advisory Commission on Information; George Gallup and Arthur Nielson, two nationally known members of the Advisory Commission; Louis T. Olom, the Commission's politically astute and well connected Staff Director; former USIA Director Leonard Marks, who had resigned from the Stanton Panel in protest; Henry Loomis, then President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; USIA Director Keogh and a number of former USIA Directors; and a long list of former government officials and civil society experts.

Organized labor was represented. A letter from AFL-CIO President George Meany opposing the Stanton recommendations had considerable impact. I was invited to testify on behalf of AFGE 1812. In our testimony, my Vice President Charlie Medd and I summarized AFGE's view that reforms within USIA were needed but that the Agency's structure was conceptually sound and fully adequate to the effective conduct of public diplomacy. We also expressed support for the views of the GAO and the US Advisory Commission on Information.

A separate group of USIA's professionals led by Rob Nevitt, Sandy Rosenblum, Juliet Antunes, and Hal Morton also testified against the Stanton Panel's proposals. AFSA's views were not entirely clear. Its then President Patricia Woodring in her testimony addressed definitional and conceptual issues in public diplomacy that seemed to endorse

the Panel's views. AFSA's USIA representative Peter Wolcott, however, voiced disagreement with the Panel.

The coalition assembled by Congressman Fascell prevailed. USIA remained organizationally intact until the 1990s. For me it was another excellent career learning experience. I had also gotten to know the Advisory Commission's Lou Olom, and Lou was getting ready to retire.

Q. What did you do next?

I resigned as President of AFGE 1812 in 1978 to accept the Congressional Fellowship. I returned to USIA in the summer of 1979 and was sent to India for a three-month temporary assignment in the program development office in USIS New Delhi. It was another use of the excess rupees in India. The Agency sent Civil Service Officers to India for short-term assignments. We provided staff support during the summer reassignment season, and it gave us first-hand exposure to field operations. My work in New Delhi and visits to USIS branch posts in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Lahore, Pakistan were enjoyable and instructive. In those days, there were ten American USIS officers in each of India's branch posts. They were supported by extraordinarily talented locally hired Indian staffs. I came away thinking even the drivers in the motor pool had PhDs.

When I came back from India, Lou Olom asked if I would like to work for the Advisory Commission on Information. I was delighted. USIA at first resisted, because they weren't happy with me leaving in program development. But it worked out early in 1980, and I spent the next eighteen years with what soon became known as the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the Advisory Commission. What was the history of the Commission? How did it get started?

GREGORY: In addition to authorizing overseas information activities, the US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (Smith-Mundt) provided for two advisory commissions: one on information, one on educational exchange. The latter, eventually named the US Advisory Commission on International Educational and Cultural Affairs, did not become active until Congress passed the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (the Fulbright-Hays Act) in 1961. The US Advisory Commission on Information, however, began meeting in 1948 and issuing reports immediately. In 1977, the two panels were merged and in subsequent legislation drafted by Congressman Fascell in 1981 renamed the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The Commission is a seven-member, bipartisan panel of Americans drawn from a cross-section of professions. Its members are Presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed. The Chairperson is appointed by the President. Its legislation requires the Commission to appraise the government's public diplomacy activities and recommend policies and programs to the President, Secretary of State, Congress, and previously the USIA Director. Since 1948, the Commission and its predecessors have submitted annual reports

and occasional reports on special topics. The Commission was and is expected to assess and advise, to represent the public interest, and to develop a better understanding of and support for public diplomacy by “the American people.” The Commission’s influence has varied over the decades, but Americans since the 1940s have wanted a private sector group to evaluate, advise, and report on the US government’s public diplomacy activities.

Q: When you started, how was the Commission viewed in USIA? Was it seen as the enemy or...?

GREGORY: I wasn’t there at the beginning of course, but I read minutes of its early meetings. There is no doubt that some in the State Department valued its activities. One in particular was former Assistant Secretary of State George Allen, who became USIA’s first Director in 1953. Many of those appointed to the Commission during the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s were well known Americans. They were at the top in their professions; they were not still climbing. They wanted to give something back. They included the pollster George Gallup, novelist James Michener, the prominent conservative William F. Buckley, Jr., *Readers Digest* editor Hobart Lewis, media researcher Art Nielson, the historian John Hope Franklin (who was on the Commission when I joined), and of course CBS President Frank Stanton. I learned much about their work in talking with Lou Olom.

During the 1980s and 1990s when I was the Commission’s executive director, its members for the most part were not household names. They also were not at the end of their careers. But they were well-connected movers and shakers in Washington. Commission Republicans included Edwin J. Feulner, the founding President of The Heritage Foundation, Tom Korologos who for many years was the head of Timmons and Company and one of the most powerful lobbyists in Washington, and William J. Hybl head of the El Pomar Foundation and former head of the US Olympic Committee. Commission Democrats included Lew Manilow, a founder of the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, an active member of the National Democratic Institute, and a close political associate of Vice President Al Gore; Herb Schmertz, a Vice President for Public Relations at Mobile Oil; and Harold Pachios, a law partner of Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. These Commissioners could open doors for USIA in Washington and with US ambassadors overseas.

The Commission’s work and its members changed over time as public diplomacy’s environment changed. But several of its characteristics were enduring. It has been genuinely bi-partisan. Lou Olom and I never worked with Commissioners who brought partisan politics to the work of USIA. Their views ranged across the political spectrum, and often were they very active in national politics. But this was not reflected in their approach to public diplomacy. They typically knew very little about public diplomacy when they were appointed. But invariably they became strong supporters. This usually occurred after a few monthly meetings and a first visit to US embassies and USIS posts abroad. They developed a kind of ‘aha’ reaction. They would say, “So this is what it’s all about.” Also USIA’s Directors and career officers could be very persuasive in making a case for the Agency’s mission and programs.

USIA's Directors valued the Commission as a sounding board. They saw the Commission as an entity that could say things they might not be able to say to lawmakers and other government officials. Members of Congress, White House officials, and others valued the Commission's outside opinions. Much depended on the personal relationships between the Commission's Chairmen with USIA Directors, Secretaries of State, and National Security Advisors. Often the Commission could solve problems for the Agency's Directors on issues that did not appear in the public reports.

The Commission's reports addressed a wide variety of issues, but several themes were constant from the beginning. USIA's mission and work was important and under-valued in and out of government. USIA lacked sufficient resources. USIA needed to give much higher priority to opinion research and program evaluation. And USIA needed a seat at the table when policy was being made. How, they would often ask, could USIA be expected to communicate policies effectively if it was not in the room when policies were being made? They did not believe public opinion should determine policies, but it is an important consideration in policy formulation.

USIA and State often did not agree with the Commission's recommendations. Government agencies do not always welcome outside advice. But overall USIA, and most of its career employees, viewed the Commission as useful and supportive. Americans knew very little about USIA, and the Commission was a voice that supported the Agency's mission at home and abroad. So this is a long-winded answer to your question.

Q: But I wanted a long-winded answer. When did you come in to the Commission, and how long were you there?

GREGORY: Chairman Olin Robison hired me in 1980. He was the President of Middlebury College and a Democrat who had been appointed by President Jimmy Carter. I worked as an assistant to Lou Olom. Lou retired in 1981. Leonard Silverstein, a serving Commission Republican, became Chairman for a year after the election of President Reagan. He appointed Dick Mosen, an experienced USIA Foreign Service Officer to be the Commission's executive director. Dick retired from USIA in 1982. By then, President Reagan had appointed Ed Feulner to be the Chairman, and Tom Korologos was his Vice Chairman. They invited me to become the executive director. When President George H. W. Bush was elected, he appointed Tom Korologos to succeed Feulner as Chairman. He asked me to continue in the position. In 1992, President Clinton appointed Lew Manilow as Chairman, a Democrat who had served previously on the Commission in the Carter Administration. He knew me and asked me to stay on. When another Democrat, Harold Pachios succeeded him, I stayed until 1998 when I left the Commission to join the faculty at the National War College.

Commission staffs serve at the pleasure of the Commission's Chairmen. It is a job that involves building relationships between the Commission's political appointees, elected and appointed officials in government of both parties, and career professionals. I worked very happily for Reagan and Bush Republicans, and for Carter and Clinton Democrats.

My friends say “flexible” and my enemies “no principles.” I came to think of it as the best job in public diplomacy.

Q: When you started what were the issues you particularly were concerned with?

GREGORY: The information and exchange commissions had merged under the Reorganization Plan of 1977 to become the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. This Plan also merged the State Department’s Bureau of Cultural Affairs with USIA and changed its name during the Carter Administration to the International Communication Agency. It also led to a gap in the Commission’s leadership until Olin Robison became Chairman. Issues relating to this reorganization were still in play when I joined the staff in 1980.

During the 1980s, the Commission addressed perennial issues: enhanced resources for USIA’s field programs and international broadcasting, a higher priority for opinion research, the importance of understanding cultures and influence environments, strengthening the USIA Director’s advisory role in the National Security Council, modernization of Smith-Mundt Act domestic dissemination restrictions, and more training for USIA’s field officers.

The Commission paid attention in its annual reports to such specific issues as Worldnet Television, broadcasting consolidation, and support for the newly created National Endowment for Democracy. It also issued special reports in the 1980s on public diplomacy and summit diplomacy, public diplomacy in the Soviet Union, public diplomacy in China, and a report on risk management and terrorism after the Beirut embassy and Marine barracks bombings in 1983. The Commission dealt with these issues conceptually and in the context of how they were being addressed by USIA, other executive branch agencies, and Congress.

Much of the Commission’s learning, advisory, and reporting work occurred during its monthly meetings and overseas visits. The Commission hosted private monthly dinners with lawmakers, senior government officials, and experts in American society. The next day its public meetings were built around panels of expert witnesses that always included overseas and Washington based public diplomacy professionals. Commissioners enjoyed overseas travel. These were working trips. Ambassadors and USIA’s PAOs welcomed the visits, because they saw the Commission’s work as supportive of the public diplomacy mission. Until the 1990s, the Commission would typically meet once or twice with the President. During the 1980s, we met twice with President Reagan and with every one of his many National Security Advisors.

All of this was demanding work for a small Commission staff of four or five. I had valuable assistance over the years from a series of talented Foreign Service Officers who served usually for a two-year assignment when they were in Washington. They gave the Commission and me a field perspective that greatly enhanced our work. We also had an excellent support staff with little turnover.

Q: How did you find one of the really powerful directors, Charlie Wick? Was he an oddball? He was very close to the President, and he was getting funding for USIA. Did you find this a good time?

GREGORY: Without doubt he was successful in getting funding for USIA, and he was a powerful Director. He did have a close association with President Reagan. However, his wife Mary Jane Wick's friendship with Nancy Reagan was stronger and the real key to their relationship. They reportedly had car pooled together when their children were young. I don't know anyone who thinks Wick was a natural manager, but many USIA employees look back with positive memories of the good funding levels in those days. I also don't know anyone who worked directly for him in his office who recalls that it was an easy experience.

Q: Dealing with him was very difficult. He was very volatile, but he was full of ideas and he got money.

GREGORY: Yes, and to some extent his access strengthened USIA's hand in policymaking circles. But not always. His power could open doors; it also could create problems.

Q: One issue during this time that was very controversial, and I guess it remains an extremely political issue, was TV Marti. Did you get into that?

GREGORY: We sure did.

Q: You might explain what it is.

GREGORY: TV Marti was the name given to the Voice of America's television broadcasts to Cuba. The station was established in 1988. Its signals were transmitted from a Defense Department aerostat tethered to the Florida Keys – a balloon commonly referred to in USIA as "Fat Albert." Previously, VOA had initiated Radio Marti, a surrogate broadcasting service analogous to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Unlike radio, television requires line of sight transmission, and it was easy for Cuba to block the signals through co-channel interference. This meant there were only trace audiences for TV Marti's programs. The Commission in numerous reports argued that TV Marti was not cost-effective and its multi-million dollar annual appropriations should be re-directed to more productive activities.

There wasn't much support for TV Marti nationally. But it had strong support in Florida and New Jersey, where there are large concentrations of Cuban-Americans. Jorge Mas Canosa, now deceased, was the head of the powerful Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) and the driving force behind Radio and TV Marti.

Q: A very powerful political group.

GREGORY: Very powerful. Mas Canosa had modeled CANF on AIPAC (American-Israel Public Affairs Committee), and it had considerable influence in Congress and on

the Electoral College votes of Florida and New Jersey in Presidential elections. CANF argued TV Marti had symbolic as well as actual value, and it was an investment in a post Castro future. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) opposed TV Marti, because it feared retaliatory Cuban interference with the signals of US commercial radio stations. But this was one of many issues for the NAB, and it was a top priority for the CANF. It became a highly charged political issue in national politics and public diplomacy. The Commission voiced its opposition to TV Marti clearly and repeatedly.

Q: Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina for some reason didn't like USIA I take it. Did you get into that?

GREGORY: Senator Helms, a conservative Republican, had a much bigger problem with USAID and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) than he did with USIA. During my years with the Commission, we met with him several times. The Commission's Republican Chairmen Ed Feulner and Tom Korologos had a good working relationship with him. Helms was a strong supporter of USIA's information programs and international broadcasting. He was an outspoken advocate of the Voice of America's policy editorials, which were not popular with VOA's news broadcasters. Just as newspapers have their editorial pages, Helms argued, the US government should have its editorials. He was much less enthusiastic about educational and cultural exchanges.

When the Cold War was over, Helms as the powerful Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led a campaign to eliminate the three foreign affairs agencies – USAID, ACDA, and USIA – arguing it was necessary to cut costs and reduce the size of government. His primary targets were USAID and ACDA. He was not opposed to an independent USIA, but the Agency got swept up in his larger argument about the need to eliminate government agencies.

When these issues were debated in the first Clinton Administration, Vice President Al Gore and Elaine Kamarck, one of his senior staff advisors, led a vigorous campaign to maintain the independence of the three agencies. In letters to Congress, they argued their merger with State was unwise organizationally and would not save money. The Advisory Commission was deeply involved in this discourse and supported USIA's independence.

In 1996, however, the politics changed. Incoming Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wanted to have a good working relationship with Senator Helms as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee more than preservation of the three agencies. As President Clinton confirmed in his recent memoir, *My Life*, the administration needed the Committee's support for its Chemical Weapons treaty. The reorganization of USAID, ACDA, and USIA was part of the deal.

In 1997, Commission Chairman Lewis Manilow, Commissioner Walter Roberts, and I met with then Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering, the Secretary's senior career advisor on the reorganization. He had proposed as a governing principle that all of State's existing Under Secretaries and new Under Secretaries for the incoming agencies would act as a "Corporate Board" for the Department. He explained

they would make strategic planning recommendations, but decision-making authority and resource management would be “pushed down” to the Assistant Secretaries. The Under Secretaries would have a “tie-breaking” role in major disputes, but real budget and personnel power would rest with the nearly autonomous Assistant Secretaries, especially those responsible for the Department’s regional bureaus. State adopted Pickering’s “Corporate Board” model.

When the dust settled in 1999, USAID had effectively fought to remain semi-autonomous. ACDA preserved its organizational coherence within State. USIA’s activities were decentralized throughout the Department. Most authority and funding for the Agency’s field programs went to the regional Assistant Secretaries who reported to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. USIA’s educational and cultural exchanges had their own Bureau and Assistant Secretary. This Bureau together with a Bureau of Public Affairs and an Office of Information Programs reported to a newly created Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. USIA’s foreign opinion and media research activities went to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, which reported directly to the Secretary. USIA’s broadcasting services, which had been placed in the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) in 1994, became fully independent. Senator Helms, who had always been a champion of broadcasting, saw no inconsistency in working to place US broadcasting services in the BBG. USAID and the broadcasters were more effective than USIA in protecting their interests in these contested reorganizations. Many observers concluded that Helms had gone after USAID and hit USIA instead.

These organizational issues in the 1990s were part of a larger debate over the future of public diplomacy after the Cold War. How should USIA deal with the break-up of the Soviet Union? How should it deal with regional and functional programs in the context of rapid globalization and devolution of power to non-governmental organizations? And what would the Internet and the World Wide Web mean for public diplomacy? Reorganization made its demands, but diplomacy’s new context drove debates on concepts and professional practice. A new generation of able career officers helped to shape these debates led by Donna Oglesby, Barry Fulton, Kenton Keith, Bill Rugh, Rick Ruth, and others. The Advisory Commission’s reports during the decade were informed by and contributed to these debates.

Q: What about broadcasting to China at the end of the Cold War? Were US broadcasts important in the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989? What was the example of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, when allegations were made that some of our Radio Free Europe broadcasts helped inspire a revolt that was put down. Was that very much in the Commission’s mind?

GREGORY: The Commission strongly supported the Voice of America’s broadcasting to China, but it opposed efforts in the early 1990s to create Radio Free Asia (RFA) – a separate surrogate broadcasting service analogous to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. In 1992, the Commission testified against creating RFA before an ad hoc Commission on Broadcasting to the People’s Republic of China. We argued that China was not the Soviet

Union of the 1950s, that VOA had a large audience in China, that the US did not need duplicative broadcasting services, and that shortwave was not the technology of the future. These arguments did not prevail, and RFA was created as part of the International Broadcasting Act of 1994 that created the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

In its reports, the Commission also made similar arguments with respect to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. We argued that a changing post-Cold War context, duplication in US broadcasting, and changing technologies called for a fresh look at these services and that they should be phased out as European countries developed free and independent media. We also urged a major shift in resources from radio to television. Republicans and Democrats on the Commission shared these views. Radio Free Europe eventually ended its broadcasting in central Europe, but as the US increasingly focused on the Middle East and after the attacks of 9/11, RFE/RL changed its Cold War focus and gave high priority to its broadcasts in Iran and Afghanistan.

Q: Is there any issue about the Commission that we haven't talked about?

GREGORY: There no doubt are many. There was a fracas in the 1980s when Peter Galbraith, a staff aide to Senator Claiborne Pell, the Democratic Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wanted to close the Commission. He succeeded in getting support for legislation to do this in the Senate, but Commission members, both Democrats and Republicans, especially Tom Korologos, worked hard to prevent it. The Commission eventually prevailed with help particularly from the Democratic Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Dante Fascell.

Q: What was inspiring them?

GREGORY: Peter was concerned that some of the Democrats on the Commission were not "real Democrats." He viewed them as "Reagan Democrats," and Peter who ...

Q: Whom I have interviewed.

GREGORY: Have you? He is a friend and former colleague. We served together on the faculty at the National War College in the late 1990s. We had very different views on the Commission, but it was one of those Washington battles that come and go. And the Commission won.

Q: What about in 1998 when you left the Commission, what did you do?

GREGORY: I had served with the Commission for 18 years. I had traveled to 34 US missions overseas on Commission oversight visits. I had drafted numerous Commission speeches, Congressional statements and reports. I had worked with extraordinary people on the Commission, in USIA, in Washington, and overseas. It was a catbird seat in public diplomacy. I learned a great deal in those years and enjoyed it thoroughly. But it was time for a change.

I was fortunate to be assigned to the National War College (NWC) as a member of the faculty. USIA had a long history of sending Foreign Service Officers for two-year assignments to teach courses on the media and public diplomacy at NWC. Ever since graduate school I had had a yen for teaching. With the full backing of the Commission and support from USIA Director Joseph Duffey, I went to NWC in the summer of 1998. I believe I was the first Civil Service Officer from USIA to do so. Some in the American Foreign Service Association were not happy with a Civil Service Officer getting the assignment, but they got over it.

For the first six weeks or so it seemed like a huge mistake. I thought it was not going to work. Then something clicked. I came quickly to enjoy my association with military and civilian students and faculty colleagues. I also enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on public diplomacy in an academic context, and I liked NWC's approach to professional education. I managed to stretch a two-year teaching assignment into a third year and left with great reluctance in the summer of 2001.

Q: How did you find the military and their approach to public diplomacy?

GREGORY: They were very receptive. US military officers value the information element of power and diplomacy as an instrument of statecraft. After all, the National War College was where George Kennan had taught and developed its core curriculum in the 1940s. They also understood the importance of public diplomacy if not always its tools and methods. I was often asked, "Why doesn't the State Department do more with public diplomacy?" USIA had a long history of assigning Foreign Service Officers to work with the psychological operations group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the US Pacific Command, which made military-to-military exchanges in Asia a high priority.

Military officers know that the press and good media relations are essential to what they do, albeit there is a long and uneven history between these "wary partners." I don't think there is any part of the US government that does a better job of dealing with NGOs than the military particularly in humanitarian and counterinsurgency operations. The uniformed services send their best officers to NWC. It is usually required for promotion to flag rank. The classrooms were full of some of the most intelligent and talented people I met anywhere in and out of government. The curriculum combined study of all military and civilian instruments of power, strategic planning, interagency relationships, history and politics, global issues, and more. Unlike the State Department, the military has a deep commitment to professional military education. It also has the resources to devote to it. Three of the best years in my career were devoted to teaching at the National War College.

Q: When you left the War College whither?

GREGORY: I came back to the State Department in the summer of 2001. USIA had merged with State in 1999. I was assigned to the Bureau of International Information Programs. I had no intention of returning to the Commission, but it had no executive director at the time. Chairman Harold Pachios asked if I would fill in until they hired

someone. I agreed to do this, but after 34 years in government, I was thinking about retirement. I was also interested in adjunct teaching. Then 9/11 occurred, and my last assignment turned out to be a surprise and hugely interesting.

For the first and only time that I know of the State Department established a 24/7 task force on public diplomacy in the Department's Executive Secretariat. I got a call at home on Columbus Day weekend asking if I would be the day shift coordinator for a team of public diplomacy officers in the Department's Seventh Floor Operations Center. At first we were part of a larger State Department Task Force responding to 9/11. Then we set up as a separate 24/7 public diplomacy task force under the leadership of David Arnett, a talented senior diplomat who had had a distinguished career in USIA.

I sometimes tell my students that it's the one time in my career when I thought senior policymakers and diplomats in the State Department really thought public diplomacy was absolutely vital to their success on a foreign policy issue. Secretary of State Colin Powell and his Undersecretary for Political Affairs Mark Grossman viewed the public diplomacy task force as a central part of how the Department was responding to 9/11, especially in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our job was to provide talking points and media reaction information to US missions in the field, collate and circulate best practices in field operations, and coordinate with counterpart teams in the White House and Department of Defense. We established Coalition Information Centers in London and Islamabad. Ambassador Kenton Keith, another distinguished USIA veteran went out to lead the Islamabad section of the Coalition Information Center.

We produced a written report twice a day, once in the early morning and once in the late afternoon. It was limited to no more than two pages. What was Al-Jazeera saying? Which Cabinet Secretaries and other senior officials were lining up to appear on Al-Jazeera and other global media? We provided US missions and the Information Centers in London and Islamabad with information and policy-related talking points. We worked on the assumption that news follows the sun. A 24/7 operation meant Washington could provide support when field officers were awake, not just during normal business hours on the East Coast. We encouraged and used reports on creative initiatives in the field. If US Embassy Madrid was doing something imaginative, maybe US Embassy Manila could profit from knowing about it.

We operated with a flattened hierarchy that was highly unusual in the State Department. I needed only one clearance for our daily worldwide telegram, and then it was sent. Public diplomacy units throughout the Department sent their best people to the team. Support for the effort was strong throughout the building. Eventually, however, such an effort could not be sustained. The bureaus needed their A teams and began sending their B teams. A 24/7 task force in the Department's Operations Center was always meant to be temporary. The public diplomacy task force was shut down at the end of 2001, and many of its functions were transferred to State's Bureau of International Programs. It was a fascinating experiment in what could be done when traditional practices are challenged by an extraordinary exogenous event.

It was time to retire, which I did during the first week of January 2002.

Q: Were you concerned about our reach or lack thereof within the Islamic world?

GREGORY: Oh yes. We all were at the time.

Q: Do we have any solutions?

GREGORY: No easy solutions. Ours was a tactical response, and there was little time for reflection. We were trying to get inside news cycles. We were coming to terms with the impact of Al Jazeera. We were using senior officials in mediated platforms on a routine basis. But we were operating for the most part with legacy mindsets and legacy tools. We didn't have time to think strategically. Since then there have been many reports written about what needs to be done. I've been associated with a several of these work with a Council on Foreign Relations task force on public diplomacy in and three Defense Science Board task force studies on strategic communication. In hindsight, there are things we should have done differently.

Q: Well then you retired in 2002, and you've been here at George Washington University (GWU) ever since? What are you doing here?

GREGORY: I teach courses and I'm director of the Public Diplomacy Institute. It's one of two university-based institutes in the US dedicated to public diplomacy. The other is the Center for Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. We develop and teach courses and encourage research on public diplomacy. I teach two courses. Barry Fulton, another public diplomacy veteran, also teaches a course on public diplomacy. The Institute has collaborated with the State Department to create a Public Diplomacy Fellow assignment for a serving Foreign Service Officer. Bob Callahan became the first Fellow this September. He is a talented senior Foreign Service Officer whose last assignment was press attaché in Baghdad. GWU is a major research university located across the street from the State Department. We hope it will become a leading center for the academic study of public diplomacy with courses that have a practitioner orientation. At the moment we are long on vision and short on resources.

Q: OK, well I want to thank you very much.

GREGORY: Thank you.

End of interview