

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

MICHAEL J. HURLEY

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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Q: Today is 30 October 2015. This is an interview with Michael J. Hurley. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Mike is it?

HURLEY: That is fine.

Q: Now Mike, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

HURLEY: I was born in Seattle, Washington, April 20, 1950.

Q: OK, let's get a feel for where you come from. Where on your father's side? What do you know about the Hurleys?

HURLEY: I retired from the Foreign Service in April 2015 and one of the projects I have always wanted to do is a Hurley family history. My mother's side are Germans who went to what is now southern Russia, Ukraine, Moldova. They are called Bessarabian Germans and they came for farmland when the Russian Tsar Alexander I put out a call on 29 November, 1813 for Germans to farm in the southern part of the Russia. (The manifesto was carried to Wuertzburg, Mecklenburg and the Duchy of Warsaw). In 1816 my mother's ancestors established the village of Paris (several villages were named for victorious battles against Napoleon). In 1903 my mother's relatives migrated to the United States to the state of Washington.

My father's ancestry is Irish. We have done very little Hurley family research, but in 2015 I did start. I was able to re-connect with a "long lost" second cousin Pam Johnson who still lives in the town of La Conner in NW Washington state where my father and his parents lived, and also with a cousin from Seattle, John Herrold. I knew them both only when we were children decades ago. My sister Jan also might have some things that our mother Alma (d. August 4, 2006) had -- hope to find out this year. I have had some small success in this research with the living relatives, although I am the oldest with the surname Hurley in our branch, and my father died when I was 13. So there is not a lot of documentation, and Hurley, of course, is a fairly common Irish name. I have run into some false leads.

Q: Well as we go on we might have more on this and we can add it in. What was he up to in Seattle?

HURLEY: My father, John M. Hurley Jr. (b. 1919 and d. 1963), went to the University of Washington, where he studied marine biology. After he got a job in this field (he was the supervisor of the division of stream improvement for 17 years, designing fish ladders so that fish could get over dams to spawn upstream) , he had a falling out with his boss in the state fisheries department and then became a lobbyist for the Washington State Railroad Association. That is primarily how I remember him. He spent a lot of time in Olympia, the state capital, and then here in Washington D.C. I made my first visit to D.C. in 1961 with my father. Kids did not travel so much in those days and this travel by train across the country marked me among my peers, even made me something of an oddball.

Jackie, as his parents called him, was a lobbyist. He was very much hooked into the Washington state political world. We knew Senators Jackson and Magnuson from the state and they were family friends. Not infrequently at the house when they were in Seattle.

Q: How about your mother's side? You mentioned they were German Bessarabians. Do you know anything about that group?

HURLEY: Interestingly, my mother's oldest sister, my aunt Mary Salo, who was sort of the matriarch of that side of the family, did quite a bit of research in 1979 and 1980. She traced her family back to German settlement villages in Bessarabia. The villages still exist, but they all have Russian or Ukrainian names (that village, Paris, is now Vesolyiy Kut). They came from Germany (probably the Mecklenburg area). The piece that we don't have is why they moved from Germany (they moved because the Tsar's call to farm attracted them, but did something drive them away from the German lands?). There are several possible reasons. It could be they were promised farmland that was better than what they had where they came from. I don't know exactly where they came from in Germany in the 19th century. It could have been religious persecution, I just don't know why they left.

Q: There was a revolution too. That is why my family on my mother's side was German and they got out in 1848 during the revolution of '48.

HURLEY: Well this would have been before that (1812-14). I am still looking. In fact I have just joined the German Russian Historical Society that is at the University of North Dakota. One rather interesting footnote on my mother's family is that maybe ten years ago my cousin (Gale Salo) on my mother's side of the family got an email from someone with his same last name (Oleg) Salo, who was living in Russia. He was looking for other Salos, not a very common name in the United States. He found a connection to my cousin Gale via the internet. Gale, however, does not speak Russian or German, Oleg's languages. I was serving in the Embassy in Moscow at the time. Gale said, "I don't know what to do with this. His name is Oleg Salo and I don't know whether he is looking for a visa or what. I don't speak Russian or German so why don't you have a crack at it." Oleg was living in the city of Chelyabinsk, which was a closed city until the end of Soviet era. I eventually went to Chelyabinsk, met him and it still gives me shivers to remember that he had part of the family portrait of the two Salos who stayed in Russia in 1903 when the others emigrated to the U.S., and I had a copy of the portrait of those three who left. Although I am not directly descended from the Salo family (Mary Lenz, my mother's oldest sister, married Ed Salo, both of whom were born in the U.S.), the Salo and Lenz families lived in

the same village of Paris in Bessarabia. The communication with those who stayed behind in what became the Soviet Union stopped in 1935 in Stalin's time, and then WWII saw quite a bit of physical displacement. Oleg said some of the Salos went south to Armenia and others went to the rear where it was thought to be safe from the German invasion. We never heard from them again until Oleg popped up from nowhere. He is a dead ringer for Gale Salo, my cousin.

Q: What do you know about your mother's life, schooling and what not?

HURLEY: Her parents came over from the old country in 1903. Friedrich Lenz married Lydia Frieske in 1909. They landed in Odessa, Washington and there joined a group of like-minded co-religionists -- they were mostly Lutherans. They were wheat farmers. My mother, Alma Lenz, was the fifth of six children and left Odessa, Washington for Seattle. All of the rest of them stayed in the little town of Odessa, until later as military duty or other things pulled them away (the men moved away -- Ted, Jake and David, while the women, Martha and Mary, stayed in the area).

Q: I take it there must be some sort of German root there.

HURLEY: Odessa is still there, a town of about 1,200 people. Every year they have a Deutsches Fest that I went to religiously when I lived in Seattle. They maintain the food part of the tradition and even though all of them have German origin names I don't think many of them speak German now. My mother as one of the later children, did not speak much German. My wife Marlana is Austrian, a German native speaker of course, so when she spoke to my Aunt Mary in 1990, toward the end of Mary's (d. 1997) life, Marlana said that Mary was easy to understand (like native German with a regional accent). Mary remembered the language of her parents, and I do not believe that she kept up with contemporary German. To Marlana it sounded like the language of Sudetenland (previous Czech lands) refugees expelled from their homeland after 1945 that she encountered in her native southern Austria. So anyway my mother left that behind. She didn't study German and therefore transferred none of the language to me. (Footnote: I was surprised to learn from my mother that she did study Russian after high school when she came to Seattle, and that her teacher, Vadim Pahn, was one of my professors in the 1970s at the University of Washington.) On the other hand, my two children with Marlana grew up in the Foreign Service and we had them go through the German school system from beginning to the end. Now they are both in fact in universities (update -- Julia graduated from UVA in May 2016 -- I raced home from an OIG inspection of Embassy Rangoon to attend the rainy event). Now they have two native languages and this is a gift from their mother who spoke German to them from birth. I have very little German, though I did self-study German for seven weeks before I was to start studying Hungarian to be PAO Budapest. I did take the FSI test and got a 2+/2 in German, which I was very happy with. So my mother went away to the big city in Seattle where she became a legal secretary and married my father in October of 1948. I was born in April, 1950, my parents' first child. There were two children, my sister Jan is in Seattle, where we also grew up.

Q: All right, as a kid what sort of neighborhood did you live in, and what sort of things were kids doing there?

HURLEY: Well when you are a child everything seems normal. No great bastion of diversity, in northern Seattle, to us being ethnic meant finding a Swede to talk to -- and bring your own lutefisk. I played soccer with several Brits and Germans, someone from Finland, and possibly a Greek. I went to a huge high school. I think we had 3200 students, 650 or so in my graduating class. One black woman. So it was fascinating later in life to see people from different countries, different origins, different religions, different racial backgrounds, of which I was just unaware.

Q: Where did you live in Seattle?

HURLEY: North Seattle, the community is called Richmond Beach, right on Puget Sound, near a town where my mother worked, called Edmonds. It was the Seattle public school system. The high school was called Shoreline, which later became a seniors' residence. I imagine some of the graduates are there now, or should be.

Q: What sort of neighborhood was it?

HURLEY: It was mostly middle class with a smattering of upper middle class (mom called them "rich bitches"). Kids played outside in those days and we rode the tires off bicycles, as opposed to kids these days who seem to be primarily inside. Son Alexander has played soccer throughout his life. Daughter Julia loved public transportation in Budapest and Moscow and could go just about anywhere.

Jack, my father, was a great gardener -- he had rose gardens at the Richmond Beach house (where we moved to in 1957), some in the shape of candy canes. I hated this work with him -- he used a liquid "fish fertilizer" that I think you could smell in Portland -- "a little more of the fish," he would say. As a 12 year old I could hardly be expected to appreciate what he was able to do. I was too busy riding bikes with Beard (Gary Burback) -- my best friend at the time. It was from Beard's older brother Larry that I learned the expression "have your ears lowered" for getting a haircut. It was only later, about 40 years later, when I had my own house and I realized that I remembered something of what I had learned from my father about gardening -- hey, I can do this. Now I love gardening -- but as a FS colleague cautioned me -- just don't make it your full time weekend job -- work a couple of hours and then seek the comfort of liquid refreshment. Good advice.

Q: One of the things in my day was when the parents said, "All right, go out and play and come back at 6:30 when we eat. I don't want to have to call you." I have grandchildren who have no other kids in the neighborhood because they are all off having lessons or doing things. They have wonderful woods in their backyard and the kids don't go out there. Anyway were you much of a reader as a small kid?

HURLEY: I wasn't a huge reader, but because of my father, I did develop a pretty good sense of history. My father was a great book reader. He was fascinated by native Americans (his home town is just across the Swinomish Slough/Channel from the Swinomish Indian reservation). The little town that he grew up in 60 miles north of Seattle is called La Conner. He was fascinated by their history and just generally the history of native Americans (e.g., Crazy Horse).

Q: Let's take grammar, elementary school. What subjects did you like or didn't like?

HURLEY: I went to the Richmond Beach elementary school, established 1928. It is no longer a school. Every place that I went to is no longer a school or no longer the school that I went to. Richmond Beach closed down and has become a community center. Butler is the junior high -- it became a high school and was the place I remember being when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and Shoreline High School, as I mentioned, became a senior person's home. In elementary school my biggest failure, where I got an "L," was the music class. We sang all the old "Red River" favorites and I just couldn't take it -- I was discovering rock music and had jazz at my back -- for what did I need "the skies are not cloudy all day...?" This is very funny because I love music. I got jazz from my father. In college I developed a taste for classical music, and I love all kinds of music, but I hated it in grade school, probably because the teacher was an old crone. I mean they were just all Hopalong Cassidy ditties and these songs are so schmaltzy. It wasn't the modern 50s/60s music. I suppose I was beginning my rebellious teenage years then. There were other subjects that I disliked, but I really hated the music class. I failed music. Probably hard to do, but I did it. Like being on Nixon's black list or something.

Q: How about what were your favorite subjects?

HURLEY: I suppose something like history and social studies. I was probably just above average in math and sciences.

Q: By the time you got to high school did you have an area of concentration?

HURLEY: Things I wanted to do? Not really. I still don't know. We had a great history teacher in tenth grade who was very strict. It was one of those things you appreciate only later -- she was right. She was the history teacher and history is a lot of reading and memorization and dates. She was very good and demanding and I think everyone disliked her and also feared her. She was very severe. There was a guy who studied hours a day and wrote in a very fine hand -- reams of pages. Gary Reeves -- I hope he has written books.

Q: What was her name?

HURLEY: Mrs. Sherrick. I haven't had any contact with her since high school. I never went back.

Q: What about sports or other activities?

HURLEY: I was very active in what then was a non-traditional sport. It is hard to believe now, but I was probably a little too skinny for football. Basketball I wasn't quite tall enough (though I'm 6'3" -- my youngest son is 6'6"). Baseball I just didn't like. As a result at the junior high I turned to soccer. Seattle is an immigrant city, so there were soccer teams. As kids we used to play baseball soccer on a baseball diamond -- they would roll the rubber ball at you and you would kick it instead of hitting it with a bat. So that led to soccer. I have played my whole life. I gave it up four or five years ago (or 15). I was very happy to see my youngest son play soccer

really well almost from birth. He is a smart player -- always anticipated well where the ball would be in a way that kids don't usually do until later.

Q: What about dating patterns in your high school?

HURLEY: Dating patterns you usually exchanged a tie tack, a pin. "Are you pinned yet?" they would say. Girlfriends, I had girlfriends from second grade on. I married twice. My first wife Kathleen went to my high school. It was such a big high school we didn't know each other well. When we met later in the second year of college I remember we had a math class together and we sat next to each other, and we introduced ourselves. We married in 1974. We had two children, John Michael Hurley, named for my father and grandfather, and Erin Eileen Hurley -- Eileen was her grandmother's first name. Kathleen and I bought a house in Alexandria, beyond old town in an area where all the streets have university names. We lived on Vanderbilt Drive. She played the harp. I worked seven years at Meridian House International 1977-85 and passed the Foreign Service test. Kathleen did not go overseas -- we divorced in 1987.

Q: As a kid did you go to movies?

HURLEY: Yeah. I got in trouble for going to see West Side Story. My father thought it was too much for a 12 year old. But I loved going to the movies. I am a huge fan of movies to this day and have around 1,200 DVDs.

Q: I am too. Thank God for something like Netflix.

HURLEY: Yeah if they only had better quality stuff. They have a lot of crap. Bring back video stores.

Q: I agree with you. Well then did you have much of an interest in world events and all?

HURLEY: I think I did. When I was 11 I took my first trip to Washington DC from Seattle. When I was 16, I worked as an intern for Washington state's Senator Jackson two summers, and then I worked for two summers in Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks in California. That led to my first foreign trip -- at the age of 22, I went to the Soviet Union. It was the CIEE summer program. The University of Washington where I went to school was one of the core schools so there were always advertisements. The interest there developed from let's do something different. I thought about China studies and Russia studies. Chinese just seemed too far out for me. But Russian with the rich literature and all that sort of thing -- the Russian seemed somehow more attainable, more accessible, so I went that way.

Q: Where did your family fall politically?

HURLEY: Democrats. Never quite got around to looking at the other side still to this day.

Q: What about religion?

HURLEY: When my father died I was agnostic -- we were never very religious as a family. On my mother's side they were Protestant, mostly Lutherans. Then when my father was dying in 1963, it was my mother's family who came over from the eastern part of the State of Washington to be with him. He joined a church with a charismatic pastor right at the end (Reverend Campbell at Maplewood Presbyterian Church in Edmonds, Washington). So they helped him through. I have never been able to understand how Irish from Cork, southern Ireland, could be not Catholic -- the topic just never came up. (Update -- second cousin Pam Johnson in LaConner believes that her mother, Helen Hurley, my grandfather's sister, whom we knew as Nellie Tillinghast, was Catholic, but that her husband was a strong Baptist -- and that is what held sway in their household -- I now have the family bible and it is a Catholic bible -- the Douay Rheims Bible with Haydock's notes). We did not go to church. We weren't Catholics, we weren't Protestants. My mother, who never remarried, was influenced by her sister Mary, and read religious pamphlets -- New Times, or something like that. We just didn't talk about it. It wasn't taboo, but...

Q: But it was unusual, because most people of your generation and my generation identify with a church.

HURLEY: Well because of my father's death and my mother's family coming over I was then baptized and confirmed in a Congregational Church at 16 -- 1966. I haven't kept up the relationship.

Q: Well you graduated from high school when?

HURLEY: June of 1968.

Q: You were somewhat young, but did the rebellion of the 60's hit you all in high school?

HURLEY: Not too much in high school. I mean I remember of course the Vietnam protest years, and I can remember participating in a few of those, but it was never very important to me. I played soccer. As far as the draft -- I got a college deferment my first year and then the second year there was a lottery, and my number was 345. My father served in WWII and also disliked the military -- he never clarified why. My mother was dead set against my serving -- as her only son. I regret not having served in the military, but that is the past so...I wasn't anti-military -- it is just how it worked out. Did serve 30 years in the Foreign Service.

Q: What about the University of Washington. How did that work?

HURLEY: The consensus in the family was that I should go to a small liberal arts school, so I went to Seattle University, a Jesuit school. It was a fantastic experience, more in self discovery than any kind of religious thing. They didn't insist on my taking religion classes (perhaps because I was a heathen). You could take classes on philosophy. I had classes from Jesuit teachers, in e.g., ancient Greek philosophy, Zeno paradoxes, talking about the river, etc., and St. Thomas Aquinas. It was a revelation to me at that tender age that people think these thoughts and write books. I suppose I wasn't very serious in high school. But in college I have to say probably primarily because of this first year experience the world started to look a little different. Then I

went to Western Washington State College in Bellingham, not far from Vancouver where the beer was better—(thank you Uncle Ben, Labatt's and Old Style) in Canada. I stayed for two years, a teacher's college. Great soccer. Had a good time. I started Russian there. For some reason the three soccer guys I was living with decided to dabble in Russian language -- so I joined them. I had a Serbian teacher who was a linguist by training -- Vladimir Milicic. He was a fascinating man. So I started Russian there and never looked back. My primary foreign language now and I did three Foreign Service tours in Russia. On the other hand, wife Marlana and I now look back and sometimes wonder why we spent 13 winters in Russia -- at separate times including before we were married, but that's what it adds up to.

Q: What was your second college like -- Western Washington State College? What were the interests you had?

HURLEY: Well it was probably 10 or 12 or 15 thousand students. It was a teachers college. So a lot of my friends became teachers. That was not interesting to me. I have always been interested in teaching but not as a career. The Russian thing just sort of grew because I took Soviet foreign policy and history of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, at the University of Washington in Seattle they had native speakers of Russian and well known scholars like Donald Treadgold (20th Century Russia) and John Reshetar (The Soviet Polity) and Lyman Legters (History of East Germany).

Q: Well then were you reading about the Soviet Union and developments there and all of that while you were at school?

HURLEY: Yeah. It started with the language and I think with the history from my father -- this kind of morphed into an interest in current events. There was a lot of discussion of disarmament and detente. That was another thing that made it interesting to me. Leaders were talking to each other, unlike now.

Q: You were probably trained in duck and cover against nuclear rockets. Yet you know you are interested in the culture.

HURLEY: We did a little bit of that. I see these films from the 50's where they do duck and cover. I can remember that, but it isn't a huge memory. One thing I do remember was the Seattle earthquake of I think 1965. I was in junior high. I was in one of those self contained desks, one piece where the table was part of the desk. But it was an individual unit. I remember riding around the floor. It would have been a great amusement ride. But it was frightening because it was an earthquake.

Q: Well then you are off to the University of Washington. What year?

HURLEY: It took me altogether five years with all of this moving around to different universities. One year at Seattle U. Two years at Western Washington State College and then two years at the University of Washington. So UW would have been '71 to '73.

Q: Was there much of a difference there as far as what you were experiencing?

HURLEY: From the University of Washington I went to Russia for the first time. That changed everything. I studied Marxism and Leninism. I had a professor Lyman Legters (I still have the "Stalin was not a Complete Bastard" paper if you'd like to read it). Legters was pretty much a lefty. He was a specialist on East Germany, so I learned a lot from him. So it was everything, Russia, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union. My major was Soviet studies.

Q: Well did you have a problem sort of separating the politics from the society and the culture?

HURLEY: It was a revelation to go there and see it firsthand. I can remember in the summer of 1972 I went to study the language as an undergrad. I had arguments with the language teachers who were not much older than I was. All women in their mid to late 20's, early 30's. I asked them, "How can you be atheists if you can't get the Bible?" "Well Lenin says..." I said, "Yeah but Lenin didn't write the Bible. Lenin wrote his own bible." It was fascinating to see the difficulties of life and living even in the number two city in the Soviet Union and the contradictions. If you can't get things, if you have no access to information, how can you have this unshakable faith that you are right? As a college student I wanted to be able to put everything on the table and say this plus this equals this and therefore it is logical. The Soviets lived in a different universe.

We experienced that different universe at the "Lastochka" resort near Yerevan (1972). The Soviets invited us to a basketball match on a hot summer day. Tony the Devil Allison (one of my Leningrad roommates from UW) was the basketball player, so we said yes. After the game, they invited us for a couple of beers at a nearby kiosk and then said they would like to "have a little talk." The little talk turned out to be a rather formal presentation of USA vs. the world. In an outdoor auditorium at the resort they had assembled a group of Swedish, East German and Soviet graduate students to debate the merits of the Vietnam war (1972). The language was Russian, and so the Americans, with our second year Russian, were to debate native speakers and those who had studied Russian in country for years. Needless to say it was a searing experience I will never forget -- nothing like a little public humiliation by smug Swedes to raise the blood pressure.

Q: Did you have a problem seeing people that would accept an ideology that, well maybe I am speaking as an American, but is basically flawed? Communism might sound like the Christian brotherhood or something like that. But Americans are practical people. I remember being in Yugoslavia. They weren't great believers there but at the same time the system just doesn't make sense because of human frailties.

HURLEY: This trip was an eye opener in many ways, but one of the things it impressed on me was the importance of seeing with your own eyes. This is something that I still believe, and carried this throughout my Foreign Service career. The International Visitor program, by which our embassies invite contacts to visit the U.S. for a professional tour, is something I thoroughly believe in. Bringing people whom the embassy selects to the United States and letting them see with their own eyes. To me it is the most vital arrow in our public diplomacy quiver. So anyway going to the Soviet Union was very important for me to see with my own eyes that basically

communism was a crock. Until you see it with your own eyes, how can you make that judgment? So I went there.

Q: Did you get a chance to get out into the countryside? I have never been there, but I assume you are back in the 13th century or something.

HURLEY: Well on the 1972 student trip we started in Leningrad. We went to Moscow. We were in Yerevan, which is of course in a different country now, Armenia. And we finished in Kiev. But as students they didn't let us out much.

Q: Well going back to your student times you mentioned you served as an intern for Scoop Jackson and Senator Magnuson.

HURLEY: Well both times for Jackson, but the two were a powerful pair.

Q: He was a very important man in American politics. I would like to get your impression of him and what were you doing and what were you picking up?

HURLEY: I was impressed by the man. The first thing is he was a complete teetotaler. My father said never trust anyone who doesn't drink. But Jackson was kind of an exception. He was I think of Norwegian background and a strict guy. He was a regular gym enthusiast. But I got to know him and his family a little bit. My father cooked salmon for people in a way he learned from the Indians in La Conner. They built a special rack. It is a meter square and it opens up. It is just a flat thing with wire mesh. You filet the fish and put it meat side down first, fasten the rack all together and then place it on two metal stakes over a fire pit. We used alder logs. Then when it was turned over and finished up it was the best fish you have ever eaten. We always added melted butter and chopped garlic when the fish was turned over. He did this for them and then when I was back there and I was 16 I did it for some of their dinner parties as well. I have photographs from that time. So Jackson was a good guy. I was amazed how hard he worked. He was always at the office and very long days and always going at it. A very serious guy.

Q: What were you doing ?

HURLEY: I did two things. I took Washington state constituents on tours of the Capitol. I went on one of these the other day. My sister-in-law came to town from Austria. I thought well let's go see the Capitol. They do a very good job these days of running people through it, but you see a lot less -- we used to get people in the gallery and see some of the old chambers. I would take them into the chambers and see Senator Humphrey on the way and stop and say "Oh, Senator Humphrey these are constituents from the State of Washington. I work for Senator Jackson." He signed autographs. We could do that type of thing then. It was great fun. So the other thing was in those days Congressmen and Senators would write letters to constituents. It was something of an art form, because the secretaries had typed the letters -- long before the computer age. Then they would give a stack of them to me to sign with the auto franking machine with a mechanical arm. It is just a desk like this. You have probably seen this thing. It is a fountain pen that writes a signature. The worst horror was to make a mistake in the signing. You had to do as many as you could, but if you screwed one up and the edge of the paper caught the pen, it would just write all

over the individually typed letter. You had to go hat in hand back to the secretary and say, "Sorry." I hadn't learned to type so I couldn't re-do the letter. I did this three or four times. It was always the worst thing. So that is what I did for two summers in Washington DC.

Q: Did you get any feel for the politics of the day?

HURLEY: Yeah, I suppose. I didn't become a political junkie at that time. It was more the fascination of being in Washington and museums and the atmosphere. Of course politics was interesting too. I did hear President Johnson speak once at the base of the Washington Monument at the amphitheater that is still there. The topic was something about the Vietnam war.

Q: Well back to the Russian studies. Were you sort of concentrating on the cultural side or the political side?

HURLEY: Well it was Russian Studies at UW. You could do virtually anything. I took a little bit of everything. A little bit of Russian literature, Soviet foreign policy. A lot of the language. It took four years of language plus the 1972 trip to Russia to get a fix on speaking the language, and once again, nothing like going to the country.

Q: I suppose you went to the winter palace and all of that.

HURLEY: Yeah, we went everywhere you could go. All the museums. One of the most fascinating things was to go to the cemeteries in Moscow and Leningrad and see the gravesites of the great writers, composers and political figures: in Moscow at Novodevichy Chekhov's grave and Khrushchev's; in Leningrad at Aleksandr Nevsky: Dostoyevsky, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glinka, Borodin. Pushkin of course is buried elsewhere (Mikhailovskoye), but it was Russian history. The Peter Paul palace in what is now Petersburg is where all the Czars are buried, all but one or two of them. You just stand in this building and hundreds of years of Russian history are right there.

I was very happy to visit the same cemeteries years later with my older son Johnny. We almost froze there one winter.

Q: Did you find that your teachers were pretty well indoctrinated so you got the Leninist line, or as an American you are trying to wonder how does this thing work or does that make sense?

HURLEY: They weren't North Korean about it. Russians are a lot like us. They are big hearted. They love to laugh and joke. They love music. Bad drivers as is increasingly the case in this country. Of course they love poetry more than we do. So communism was something in the 70s that seemed formidable and was a big challenge to try to grasp. Which of my stereotypes would prove false and which require just a large grain of salt? I was a USIA exhibit guide for three different U.S. Government exhibits that went to the Soviet Union (Outdoor Recreation, the Bicentennial exhibit and two halves of Photo USA). I did three tours in the Moscow Embassy, with Ambassadors Jack Matlock, Jim Collins, Sandy Vershbow and Mike McFaul. The contrast between the 70s when I was there with the exhibits and the mid to late 80s with the Embassy was huge.

Q: Well you graduated from college when?

HURLEY: 1973.

Q: And then what?

HURLEY: In the summer following UW graduation I worked on the wheat farm with my mother's family (cousin Gale Salo, wife Peg) and then I went on my first USIA exhibit, Outdoor Recreation, reporting for duty in Washington on October 29, 1973.

I went to George Washington University, starting in 1975. For a break in my studies, in 1976, I accepted a job offer with a North Carolina (near Raleigh) company that builds the geodesic domes -- Chartersphere. I left there to be a guide on the Bicentennial exhibit, which was in Moscow only. That was a big show. Immediately after the Bicentennial exhibit I continued in the Soviet Union with the Photo exhibit (Tbilisi, Ufa, Novosibirsk and Moscow). Then I finished grad school.

Q: Let's talk about this first trip to Russia as a guide. What was the exhibit?

HURLEY: The exhibit was called Outdoor Recreation. We were in Kishinev (now Chisinau) -- I remember that was the time they expelled Solzhenitsyn. We were also in Odessa and Yerevan.

Q: What sort of things were you displaying?

HURLEY: Well it was outdoor recreation so it was a lot of camping stuff. We had a ski machine that was a carpet stretched over two 15 foot wide drums and tilted at an angle -- stood about 12 feet high. Tough to build, but our Austrian technicians could build anything -- Georg Koman and others. USIA hired 20 of us to staff the exhibit and to engage Russians in conversation and to try to give them some kind of more or less realistic picture of what life was like in the United States. We didn't make things up. We tried to present things pretty much as we knew them.

Q: Did you have a script on how you answered?

HURLEY: We had to practice before we went out -- but this was mostly on the technical terms like fly fishing. There was no script as such. We were not coached during the exhibit -- we answered the questions from our own point of view.

Q: What about racial relations. I imagine this is high up on the questions you were asked?

HURLEY: We had a couple of African American exhibit guides. We also had Gene Adams who was one of the technical guys. He was a carpenter who helped put the exhibit together. A very large black man. I can remember during one November 7 revolution day celebration in Odessa when it was a day off for us. So the day of the parade they marched by the hotel because the hotel was near the main square. So we watched the parade from my balcony. We had beer and sandwiches and watched the parade. The parade almost stopped when they saw him. This black

man. They just couldn't believe it. On the exhibit floor, it wasn't his job to speak with the Russians, but we would do interpretation for him. They would say "Well where are you from?" He would say "I am from Boston," or something like that. They would say "Yeah but where are you from?" They couldn't accept that an African American was born in the United States. They thought that one must be African because that is the only experience they had. They had African students. They were mostly at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. Russians were huge racists.

Q: From what I gather the Russians are both xenophobic and not very tolerant racially.

HURLEY: They always looked down on people from the Caucasus. They call them "our blacks," and meant to degrade. A lot of the sellers at the farmers markets, which were really quite wonderful in Moscow, were run by the people from the south because that is where the food is grown. The families brought it north. There was terrible discrimination against these people. They would round them up and roust them out and send them back and force them to pay bribes. It still goes on I am sure. It was not a pretty picture and hugely hypocritical.

Q: Well did you feel that any of this harassment was trying to compromise you?

HURLEY: The general rule of thumb for travel to the Soviet Union was use common sense, and usually they won't bother you. The official harassment on the exhibit floor, yes, that was a part of the work day. And there was harassment that tended to be worse in cities near borders that were less traveled by tourists. I really never felt followed in Moscow or Leningrad. But I did feel directly harassed in places in Soviet Central Asia where people were less accustomed to seeing foreigners. I was in my 20's and single and we were trying to date Russian girls. So they had these "druzhiniki," volunteers who wore red arm bands. They were enforcers. They would round up drunks and they would watch foreigners to see they weren't selling bibles or jeans or something. They followed us around and threatened to have parents of girls I was dating fired and things like that. So that was a little more serious.

Q: Could you date Russian girls?

HURLEY: We did.

Q: What would you do? I am just wondering about the general thing because the restaurants aren't very much.

HURLEY: In the exhibit days it was risky. Generations of Russians still lived together, so there wasn't any privacy. So when you would go visit there would be granny in there and the uncles and the sister and brother. There weren't a lot of places to go in the long winters in the Soviet Union. Summer of course you primarily walked along the embankment along the river. There were ice cream parlors and places like that to go. The restaurants were terrible and the service was worse unless you were in the south, Georgia and Armenia and Azerbaijan where the foods were better. But you are right it was a risky bet to take a girl back to the hotel because on every floor there was a "dezhurnaya," which usually meant a little old woman who would sit at a desk right where you get off the elevators so she could see down both sides of the hall who was

coming and who was going. A lot of the doors had electric strip -- wires that went back to her desk and she could monitor who is in the room and who was not. Of course the KGB had wired the hotel for sound so they knew what was going on. They never broke the door down. There were curfews as well. I was also pretty careful. Some of the exhibit guides married Russians. The ones who really got in trouble from the exhibit were guides with the local languages of the non-Russian republics where we were. In Soviet Moldavia, the Moldavian Republic, now the country of Moldova, we had two Romanian speakers. So they would harass them even more. Most non-Russian Soviets have Russian as a second language. One of the Georgian guides had to go home because they went after his relatives who had remained behind. They didn't throw him out, but he was pressured to leave. So there was that sort of thing. Some people were foolish. Some people were there to provoke. One brought a suitcase of bibles to sell. Or they brought a suitcase of Playboys or jeans to sell to make money. Distribution of those things is against the law and if you break the law they are going to catch you and then it's not harassment. That is why if you used common sense it was not really a problem. You couldn't travel outside a radius of 25 kilometers, and you need not try to test the limits because there were guards on the highways, and they checked. I got outside a couple of cities. In the exhibit people invited the guides to their homes. This was the best part of being in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, and you could go. The technology allowed the security forces to bounce a beam off the window and pick up what people were saying inside. That was the 70s. I had lots of these home encounters. The first time I did this was during '73-'74 exhibit. So I was 23 and 24 years old. We were in the country for six months at a time, but just had to stop after three or four months of weeknight eating and drinking and then get up the next day and go to work. Even at that age every single night with the vodka and the wine and the big food. You just couldn't do this for long. Their hospitality and the desire for contact with foreigners was tremendous. So we in the end did this for a couple of months and then just stayed in the hotel and played cards with each other in the evening.

Q: It reminds me of the days when we would throw open our embassy in Peking. We had these trade delegations. We used to talk about death by duck. You would go with a trade delegation and they always had Peking Duck. Now Peking Duck for the third time in a week is a bit much.

HURLEY: Yeah, rich.

Q: Well then you are back in Washington. In the first place how did you like wheat farming?

HURLEY: Wheat farming was a great experience for me. It was summer 1973. I went to work on cousin Gale Salo's farm. It was a wheat farm -- there were no animals. People lived in town and drove out to the farm. They had traditionally lived on the farm and there was a barn and everything, but those days were past. So I drove the truck that collected the grain from the combine/harvester. The truck driver waited for the combine to fill with grain -- my job was to try to anticipate (I was not very good at this -- being a city boy) when the combine would be full and drive to that area -- picture an area about the size of 20 football fields. The wheat would be in this big bin on the combine. During the harvest everything had to be done quickly for fear of rain or strong winds when the wheat was ready to be harvested. The farmer driving the combine didn't want to stop to wait for the truck. They worked as long as they could all possible daylight hours. They got up early in the morning and then went home in the evening. And you would cut all day long. So anyway my job was two things. One was to judge where he was going to be full,

and then to drive the truck alongside this massive, moving threshing machine -- in a field that of course was not always even and had unanticipated ruts. The combine tires were as tall as I am. I had to drive up next to it and the bed of the truck had to be underneath the spout where the wheat came out. And the wheat would fill it up. You have to be careful that the truck doesn't rock over and knock the crap out of his \$300,000 (then) wheat harvester, because that would put the farmer out of business. So I did that. It was hard, dusty work and great fun (maybe in retrospect). It was pretty much my first real job. If I dumped the wheat out or drove the truck into the combine it would just be the end of the world. Fortunately it was fine. I never did break anything. It was really a good learning experience, because that is how the family made their livelihood. They were wheat farmers from Germany who moved to Russia. Some of them are now out of that business. My cousin Gale is now retired and lives in Idaho. Other cousins have their own farms and are still at it.

Q: Well from wheat farmer off to Washington. Was that when you got a graduate degree?

HURLEY: No I did the guide experience (Outdoor recreation) first. Graduate school started in fall 1975. A graduate degree in Russian studies and that was from George Washington.

Q: Could you explain what Meridian House is, and what did you do for it.

HURLEY: Well Meridian House is a non-profit organization that has many programs. They are in D.C. at Meridian Hill off of 16th St. They do a number of things with visitors from other countries who are invited by our embassies to make professional visits to the U.S. I started in the International Visitor program in 1977. But at the time the visitor division, Visitor Program Service, was at DuPont Circle at Mass Ave, right across from the Brookings Institution. They hired me to deal with Soviet visitors. However, a few months after they hired me, the Soviets went into Afghanistan and so we stopped getting Soviet visitors. There were other things I did. I did a lot of work with young film directors.

Q: Could you describe reactions or questions of Soviet visitors that you saw?

HURLEY: Well, it was just in the first few months that I had Soviet visitors, but I remember a delegation came and one of the visitors I got to know was in the Ministry of Education, responsible for the physics textbooks for the whole country. Everything in the USSR was done top down. The Ministry of Education rep came to town with a suitcase that I will never forget. It looked a little bit flimsy, and when I picked it up the handle broke off and out spilled cans of fish. He had come to the United States on per diem -- fully funded by the USG. But to save money on per diem he brought cans of fish with him. The stuff just spilled out there right at the airport. I said, "Oh that is pretty interesting," and we just picked it up and away we went. International Visitor trips end in New York. The Soviets wanted to go to one of the big department stores. They would buy racks of clothes and 16 sweaters and take them all back. All different sizes. Same color but all different sizes. And undoubtedly they would sell them or give as gifts when they got back. They would rarely buy anything other than right at the end when they could buy stuff that they couldn't get it at home and it was very instructive for me.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

HURLEY: Meridian House? 1977 to 1985. 1985 is when I joined the Foreign Service. On August 9 1980 my first child was born – John Michael – he goes by Johnny.

Q: Well then were there any changes in the people you were getting, at the end of your time there you must have been getting people from the Soviet Union?

HURLEY: I don't think they had started up again. I would have to look that up.

Q: Well what prompted you to go for the Foreign Service?

HURLEY: I had had a taste of travel because I was an exhibit guide in the Soviet Union. I had been back here and traveled around, so travel was in my blood. Being at Meridian House I was always dealing with people who were traveling, but I was not going anywhere because I was managing their trips in the United States. So I would receive them and then send them off. I mean they were coming to visit the United States and they would go to different cities. I rarely went with them. My job was to be in Washington to receive the visitor, plan the visit and then move on to the next one. So it was a direct result of that. There I was in Washington not going anywhere.

Q: So how was the Foreign Service exam?

HURLEY: It was more breadth of knowledge than depth. People said, “Oh read the New Yorker or the New York Times.” There were articles on architecture and early gay rights, things I just hadn't paid much attention to. So I understood that I needed to read a little more broadly, because I was really focused on Russia and the Soviet Union.

Q: What sort of questions were you getting for the oral exam?

HURLEY: In the oral exam I can remember questions on disarmament and Pershing missiles that we are trying to place in Europe, and how do you think the Russians will react. There were a couple questions about the arts I remember. Pretty serious stuff. Are we doing the right thing in terms of policy? I managed to get through that one. I remember one part of the exam was a group exercise where you are thrown in with three strangers and you are given a problem. The group has to come up with a solution. The idea is not to win but to make sure there is a solution and there was some sort of give and take and demonstrating your ability to deal with other people. That was part of the oral exam at the time.

And my daughter Erin Eileen was born May 14, 1984.

Q: When did you come in to the Foreign Service?

HURLEY: June of 1985. I was in the 85th USIA class.

Q: So you were going for USIA then.

HURLEY: Right.

Q: This was more or less predicated on your time with the exhibits and all of that.

HURLEY: Yeah. I mean they didn't consider the specific exhibit experience, but they did offer me a place in public diplomacy. I said, "Sure, let's do that."

Q: So when was your introductory course?

HURLEY: It would have been right after that. I started working in June of 1985.

Q: What was the group that you came in with like?

HURLEY: There were 25 of us as I recall. Most are retired from the Foreign Service by now. Two became ambassadors from that group and probably 70% quit within 10 years, so there was a group of seven or eight of us who made careers out of it.

Q: Do you know why some of them quit because that is a fairly substantial number?

HURLEY: I don't know. I didn't keep up with them as a group, but I think that those who opted out early just found different paths in life for personal or professional reasons. One of the difficulties of Foreign Service life is that you often have to make choices, some of which involve sacrifice.

Q: Well I think this is one of the downsides of the Foreign Service. The fact is that the non-FS spouse often has a very hard time having a significant career.

HURLEY: We can maybe talk about this in a different session, but my wife Marlena who I met in Moscow, has been pretty lucky that way. She has very successfully telecommuted. She has been employed almost all the way through our 25 years traveling around the world.

Q: There have been remarkable changes in business and families and everything else. Well then how did you find the A-100 course?

HURLEY: Training to me has very little value in the end. I am much better at learning by doing. So there were a lot of theoretical things. I am sure it had some use but I don't remember much about it.

Q: I assume you wanted to go to the Soviet Union.

HURLEY: Yes, but in Soviet times they didn't send new officers to the Soviet Union for a first tour. They sent me to Malaysia. It worked out very well, because I was single. It was a great place to be single. It was a different part of the world, and the purpose of sending me there was quite clear. They wanted to send you someplace where you knew nothing. You had no prior knowledge of the language, the culture, the people, anything, to see how you would do. I did

fine. I really liked it and wished I could have stayed there longer. The USIA junior officer tours were less than a year for the first tour.

Q: How did you find Kuala Lumpur?

HURLEY: I turned right at Singapore. It was great fun. Malaysia is predominantly Muslim, but there is a huge interesting mixture of native Malays, Chinese, and people from India and Sri Lanka. It is a fascinating mixture of foods, peoples, cultures. A great place. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Q: Did you get out and around?

HURLEY: Yes I did. There were no travel restrictions. I went off for a vacation by myself, up the east coast of the peninsula, and had a grand beach vacation. There were no restrictions other than common sense. Best to be on the conservative side in dress and in behavior. It was not a good idea to offend people because they didn't really like cavorting tourists on the beach. I had a wonderful time, perfectly safe. Malaysia is a great food country, you get all kinds of different foods from the various communities. One of my favorite eating establishments in Kuala Lumpur was an outdoor place, as many of them are, where they would cook chicken underground, heat it underground on coals and bring it to you in a wheelbarrow to your table. You couldn't buy alcohol at the restaurant, but we were allowed to bring one of these containers filled with beer. It wasn't just foreigners. It was a mixture of people, Embassy, friends from other embassies. Everyone had a good time.

Q: On the USIA side were we having problems convincing the Malays to regard the United States objectively?

HURLEY: Politics in Malaysia was extraordinarily complex because of inter-racial and inter-religious tensions. They wanted to be perceived as peace loving, but the history only as long ago as the late 60s belies that. The Chinese owned most of the businesses and the Malays were more oriented around agriculture. The Malays had most of the land and the Chinese always complained that the Malays were given too many things by the government, so there was that kind of tension. It was an interesting culture in that way as well and as a young Foreign Service officer it was quite the place to be.

Q: Well then after what, a year, you were off to Moscow?

HURLEY: Yes.

Q: What was your job there?

HURLEY: 1987 to 1990 I worked in the Embassy as an assistant information officer, so I was the deputy press attaché as they call it now. It was a great time to be there, the Gorbachev years.

Q: When you arrived there what was the feeling? What were people saying about Gorbachev in the Embassy?

HURLEY: Well at the Embassy he was a figure of some fascination and people were trying to keep up with him. My little footnote to history at that time was a newspaper article. We were testing the limits of glasnost, the new openness. So my boss, the press attaché Jerry Verner, gave me an editorial and asked me to try to get it published in Izvestiya, which is the government newspaper. The result (I showed the interviewer the item from Izvestiya) is on the front page of Izvestiya 26 August 1987. I took the item to Izvestiya and shopped it to the chief deputy editor, Nikolai Yefimov. He was extremely skeptical at the outset. I argued that they should publish it, as Soviet arms control experts had published in the NY Times, e.g., Yuliy Vorontsov. Yefimov countered that Izvestiya's circulation is ten times that of NYT. I resisted the temptation to say that NYT is probably found on the bottom of fewer bird cages before being read. The editorial I brought was written by Max Kampelman, head of the U.S. delegation to negotiations with the Soviet Union on nuclear and space arms in Geneva 1985-89. So this went back and forth as they had I'm sure to wrestle with this new thinking of publishing something that did not target the U.S., but rather gave the Americans the opportunity to state our point of view on arms control issues. They eventually agreed to publish it. My favorite bit was the layout -- they published both Kampelman's piece and a Soviet perspective by Vikentiy Matveyev on the same page. Wedged between the two articles was a "hedging your bets" (mixed with a little sour grapes) paragraph. It said that Izvestiya did not order such an article, that it was "brought over from the Embassy," and that they would not always consider such things to be reciprocal -- and the sour grapes -- they did not resist stating once again that the circulation of Izvestiya is more than 10 times that of the NYT. This is something that had not been done before. The American point of view by Max Kampelman.

Q: I have interviewed him. But you actually put in the machinations behind the thing. Very unusual. But obviously they got word from above.

HURLEY: Yeah they were told to do it, and it was made at a much higher level than the deputy editor of Izvestiya, I am sure.

Q: Were you getting any feedback later on about this or not? It is probably not something that would grab most people.

HURLEY: This was the beginning, but then the floodgates were just opening. They never looked back. All sorts of things happened. One of the most fascinating things was to see, to go to museums and see pictures of Lenin, where Lenin had been by himself speaking on let's say Red Square in 1917 and there would be no one else on the staircase. But then in Gorbachev times, they would put the photo up again and there would be people who were killed in the various Stalin show trials, like Trotsky and Bukharin and all these people who were eliminated by the purges. We never knew they were there because we never saw them in the photographs. Then various people started reappearing in the photographs.

Q: In your job you must have been out talking to many officials and the press and all weren't you?

HURLEY: Yes.

Q: Were you getting a fresh look?

HURLEY: I did a lot of that kind of observation and wrote cables. In May of 1989 I wrote one on what was happening in the theater and how it reflected what was happening politically: “Theater in Moscow, Bolder but not yet Better.” It was changing. All of a sudden we were seeing things we hadn't seen, plays that had been censored. Bulgakov plays, like "Heart of a Dog" and things like that. These were political statements that marked the move into a new era.

I learned to write in State Department speak from my boss at that time, the Information Officer Richard Gilbert. He was like Mozart—wrote fluidly with no changes afterward – and rapidly. He patiently taught me to do this correctly.

Q: How about people you talked to? Were they sort of still testing the waters?

HURLEY: By this time it was hard to find communists. I mean true believing communists. I met people from all walks of life who said it is such a crock of s. that we never believed it, but we didn't want you to know that.

Q: I have heard somebody say that in Poland about this time “We figured there were probably three or maybe four dedicated communists in the country.”

HURLEY: In 1988 we had a middle-aged member of the central committee (Leonid Dobrokhoto) apply for a visa to the U.S., one of whose responsibilities was the United States, and who was a true believer. I heard him speak a few times. He would make hard arguments and rely on sayings of Lenin. He was to go to a conference in the United States. He was having difficulty because he wanted to take a young woman friend with him. We were concerned because we wanted him to go. We thought: here is somebody who is way up at the top of the party and he is going to the United States to a conference. He will have a chance to see some things. So I talked to the consular official who approved Dobrokhoto, but who turned down the girlfriend and he said, “Oh if you had seen the girlfriend you would have turned her down too.” She was apparently a striking Russian blond wearing tight leather pants at the interview. The guy was married, but not to her. I believe he ended up going by himself.

Q: Did you find at this time Russians who wanted to sit down and ask real questions about the U.S.?

HURLEY: Yeah Russians are wonderful talkers. I can't tell you how many times we had late night conversations around the kitchen table.

Q: It was always the kitchen table.

HURLEY: Which I hated because I have lower back issues. I can't sit in a hard backed chair at the dinner table. Many of the conversations were more interesting because people really wanted to know. What is it really like in the U.S.? We know the poor people and the race relations but what is it really like? And from the 1970s to the 1980s, it just flipped over. 1970s: things must be

really terrible in the United States because that is what our leaders tell us; and 1980s: things must be really wonderful in the United States because our leaders are telling us it is really crappy. They just stopped believing across the board. That was what we could perceive as Russian speaking foreigners who were privileged to witness conversations among Russians.

Q: You were there during the breakdown of the Berlin Wall weren't you? November 1989.

HURLEY: I remember I came with my mother in 1988 by train from Moscow to Berlin. The Wall was still very much there. The train pulled into the East Berlin train station at Friedrichstrasse. We had to take an Embassy vehicle across the line, and because we did not recognize that line as an international border, were told to show our passports through the window, but not to give them to the East German officials.

I came to Berlin later with Marlina and there was no wall. It was the strangest thing to drive over where the wall was, because you could see the pavement was newer. This is where the wall was, look. If I had stood in that spot five years ago, I would be dead now.

Q: Did you feel sort of a new life in Moscow in the late 80s when this was coming or had it been leading up?

HURLEY: New life, but what it meant was a lot of people wanted to leave and did. A lot of the friends I had in Soviet times left in the late 1980s. They just said I am out of here. It is too difficult. It is great that we have this freedom stuff but you can't put it on your plate. So let's pursue the freedom to travel to get out of here. Of course the migrations from Russia have come in waves. It is still happening.

Q: Were you there during the period of real economic problems?

HURLEY: I was there from '87 to '90. I returned in 1998. That early 90s I missed when people were selling old plates and their junk on the streets.

Q: They were selling used light bulbs. You could turn in a used light bulb to get a new light bulb.

HURLEY: No, I didn't see the worst of modern times in that regard. I was in Indonesia then.

Q: When you were there particularly during this time (1989-90) did you get a feel for the Soviet Union really as an empire of various ethnic places which had been called, given status like states or something, but really was much more a conglomeration of peoples rather than everybody was equal?

HURLEY: There was a lot of great Russian chauvinism because that is exactly what it was. The dominant group of Russians. I think people (Russians) just realized they had to be let go because there was no means to hold them (non-Russians) back. Fairly early they gave up using coercion to hold them. There was the Georgian declaration and a couple of incidents in the Baltics, but then they said they are going to go anyway. So they did. Then there was this confused period

with Gorbachev and Yeltsin dancing around. Then Gorbachev and the Soviet Union just disappeared.

Q: You weren't there when the Soviet Union...

HURLEY: It was fast collapsing when I was there, but I left in July of 1990.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HURLEY: At that time it was Jack Matlock.

Q: He was a real Soviet hand.

HURLEY: He is still chugging away. In the republics when we had the USIA Photo exhibit, in the non-Russian republics, Moldova, Georgia and all the rest -- he would do the first paragraph of his opening speech in the native language. So in Georgia he did it in Georgian. In Moldavia he did it in Romanian or Moldovan and then do the rest in Russian. People liked it. He wrote everything out and transliterated it.

He has written some books in the time afterwards (Superpower Illusions, Reagan and Gorbachev, Autopsy on an Empire). He and I interacted primarily with the press -- he used to do weekly briefings with the media inside the Embassy. We would bring the American journalists into the Embassy, to the multi-purpose room. Then he would bring the Russians to the Ambassador's residence. He would record all of these things. I can remember being in his office and seeing his stacks of tapes. I'm sure he used some of this oral history to help write his books. That was his job, and on this date he said this and on this date he said that.

Q: Did the Russian journalists respond to the Ambassador's openness?

HURLEY: You mean did they at that time? They did. Generally I mean in the Gorbachev period it got better. In the Soviet times they all worked for the state and were all propagandists for the government. But in later times people began to change. It was easier for journalists to get sources for a story. If we did an interview they would more often print it the way we gave it to them in the Gorbachev time.

Q: Did you see a difference in the journalists? Others remarking about it or not or were they having trouble adjusting?

HURLEY: These were still pretty tightly controlled publications, but they were beginning to have separate voices. They were beginning to question in publications like "Argumenty i Fakty."

Q: Well you married a second time?

HURLEY: In 1988 in Moscow I met a young Austrian maiden who was with their Embassy, sort of chamber of commerce part of the Embassy. She was an interpreter, so she had fabulous Russian. It irritated me no end when people would ask her, "Are you Russian?" And me with my

really good Russian. But she has excellent Russian and virtually unaccented English, although I love to kid her about the accent. The first time we met was at the U.S. Embassy when Marlena asked to see our selection of university catalogues for MBA programs. I gave her the "tour" of our materials. We next met at a party where she showed slides of her recent trip to Malaysia. We had some differences over what Malaysia was really like. We remembered this when we went back to Malaysia for a week with our children in 2011.

Q: Really there is nothing like spiking a romance.

HURLEY: Yes, that is right. So anyway we met up later via the Moscow Hash House Harriers, because in Moscow in those days even though it was the late 80s and glasnost and all that, the foreigners kind of stuck together. The Hash it is a British run in the jungle followed by lots of beer. It started in Malaysia in 1938. Now it is all around the world. There are Washington chapters as well. Anyway we met on the Hash and later became friends and things led to things and we were married April 7, 1990 in Moscow. So that has been more than 25 years In fact it was the 25th anniversary in 2015.

Q: What is her family background?

HURLEY: Her father, who died this year, was a small businessman in the lumber industry. He had a lumber processing operation. He was also an environmentalist, as well as a hunter and somebody who tried very hard to preserve the natural environment. He was a master at establishing the appropriate balance in the community between wild animals in the forest and the population so that both could live "together" -- and hunting was permitted and helped to keep the herd from upsetting the delicate balance. He was huge on considering how the hunting affected the animals and the environs near their town, and a great human being, and though I don't speak much German, when we found ourselves in a room alone together I often said "Noch ein beer," and that broke the ice. The beer was good too.

Q: He must not have been a proponent of the Archduke Ferdinand, who reportedly slaughtered unknown numbers of animals.

HURLEY: That would not be his style. He died at age 85 this year and was always a very nice man. They were always very nice and curious about my life. It didn't start out that way. They assumed that I was a spy, because this was the time when this guy Ernst Bloch or somebody was discovered as a spy in Austria. We all got over it.

Q: Felix Bloch.

HURLEY: Felix Bloch, yes, not the tax people. He was caught and they assumed that I was part of that ilk. I just didn't touch the question. I said I would never do that. So yeah we got married in 1990. We have two children of our own. Alexander just started at UCLA and is liking it. Getting used to working in the hard reality of the quarter system at a big university. We brought our kids up through the German school system. They were always in small schools. His high school graduating class had maybe 25 kids. So now he is thrown into this university where there are tens of thousands of students. But he is doing fine. Our daughter Julia, the one with the

middle name no one can spell (Madelaine), is a bit older, in her fourth year at UVA (graduated May 2016). She is going to take over the theater world. And as I mentioned I have two older children, Johnny in Denver and Erin in Portland. And Leila the dog died last year. So that is our family.

Q: What is Marlana's background?

HURLEY: Marlana participated in the American Field Service program in the U.S. in Tracy, Minnesota. Marlana earned a degree in Austria in interpretation from (and to) Russian. Always the student, Marlana did finish her MBA at GW and got out of the interpreter's business. She has recently taken a job with OPIC and has developed something of a new specialty of alternative energy.

Q: That is great. This is probably a good place to stop. We will pick it up after you left Moscow the first time (July 1990). Maybe there is something more you would like to add about that particular time, because it was a major time in world history.

Second session

*Q: OK, Michael Hurley on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy and today is **9 November 2015**. Let's talk about your time as a guide. Where and what were you doing.*

MH: I was an exhibit guide four times. The first time was in 1973 and the exhibit was called Outdoor Recreation.

Q: We are talking about in the Soviet Union.

HURLEY: In the Soviet Union, yes. The exhibit at that time ran in 2 segments, for six months each. Three cities, two months in each city, because we had to build the exhibit, run it and then tear it down. So it was about a month of running and two or three weeks to build it and then a week and a half to tear it down and put it in containers that would be shipped to the next city. My three cities with the Outdoor Recreation exhibit were Yerevan, Kishinev and Odessa. In Odessa we built a geodesic dome to house the exhibit. Odessa is a very windy city right on the Black Sea. One anecdote concerns building the geodesic dome -- we laid out the blacktop pad first and then built the metal frame. Then with a forklift we moved this huge box (maybe 4 feet by 6 feet, and about 5 feet high) to the center of the blacktop pad. In that box is the tent that was then pulled up and attached. We used block and tackle attached to the top of the metal frame above to pull up the tent from the box. So we hauled this thing up to the ceiling and attached it at the first six points or hubs. On the day we did this, unfortunately the wind came up. The vinyl surface with nylon netting was caught in the wind and it opened up like a sail. There were three guys on the scaffolding attaching the tent to the frame, 45 feet in the air with nothing below them but the blacktop surface. The tent billowed out and hit the scaffolding where the three workers were perched. One of them was inside the scaffolding, so he was OK. The scaffolding tipped until it

struck the metal frame of the structure. I don't know what the angle was, but it was precarious. One guy, Gene Adams, who was one of the technical people on the exhibit, flew out of the scaffolding As he fell he reached out. He was one of the strongest people you will ever meet (and a great dancer). He grabbed one of the bars of the scaffolding and just hung there with one hand until he could sort of sway back and forth and get back on the scaffolding. He would not have survived the fall if he had hit the ground. We were very lucky. I was there -- I saw this from the ground. I thought he is just a goner, but he reached out at the last second and grabbed that bar and saved himself. It was amazing. This incident proved useful to me in a later exhibit in which I prevented a fall -- if I hadn't had this experience it might have turned out differently.

(Ambassador to be) John Beyrle and I were on top of a scaffold in Novosibirsk. We were preparing to lift the tent up to the top of the frame, and had attached the block and tackle hooks to the scaffold before anchoring them to the steel skeleton of the frame. Someone below started to pull the ropes and the scaffold began to tilt at a dangerous angle. We were able to get them to stop pulling and found ourselves at the back of the scaffold platform 45 feet in the air grateful not to have been made a part of the pavement below.

Q: Did you notice sort of the ethnic diversity of the places you went?

HURLEY: There was great ethnic diversity in all of those places -- Yerevan, Kishinev, and Odessa, not Russian places. In Odessa there were of course Ukrainians and many others. Yerevan is the capital of Armenia and Kishinev has been back and forth between Romania, Turkey and Russia.

I did drive with a colleague from Kishinev to Odessa because the exhibit was winding down in Kishinev and we had to get to Odessa to do the initial site survey. So I drove through the area where my family in their Bessarabiendeutsche village had been located, but could not drive off the main road due to Soviet security restrictions.

Q: Many of those villages just disappeared. A lot of farming communities.

HURLEY: I love doing the family research these days. The town where my mother's family lived is still there, but the history is all changed. The people were moved out when the Germans in WWII came through the first time, and the Russians eventually came back. The ethnic Germans found themselves in various states of internal exile.

Q: What was the most prevalent type of question you were getting?

HURLEY: The most often they wanted to know is how much you make and how many square feet does your living space have -- how big is your house, your dwelling.

Q: I have no idea how many square feet I have.

HURLEY: No, to this day I couldn't tell you how many square feet I have. I did have surgery on a toe recently, however.

Q: We don't think in those terms.

HURLEY: No we think about how many bedrooms. I would say "this is a 3 bedroom apartment." They would say, "What does that mean? Who are the other families who live in those bedrooms?" I would say, "They don't -- they are my family, my daughter lives in one, and my son in another, and I and my wife in a third." Russians always asked how much money we made (they tried to fit this in their universe, but the model didn't work). I could tell them the dollar amount that I was making as a temporary Foreign Service Officer, which is what we were as guides. I said, "To tell you the dollar amount is not really relevant because we have different types of expenses. They just wanted to know how much. The propaganda line in the Soviet Union was everything was always better in the Soviet Union. Everything we Soviets have is better because we have free health insurance (but quality medical service was only available through bribes to the doctors) and free schooling (similarly bribes to teachers). The thing is you ultimately pay for all of that. No matter whether it is socialized or not there is a cost to society for those things. They said we don't have taxes in the Soviet Union. Well, you don't have taxes, but you don't have adequate salaries either. First of all there is nothing to buy. But you can't really rub that in their faces too much. Only when pressed. So that and another issue for them was why do you treat black people so poorly (and surely not out of any great regard for black people)? That was a harder question to answer because of the history of racism in the U.S. So those were the most common questions. We would also get crazy questions, like in the Bicentennial exhibit for some reason they had a stuffed Texas longhorn steer with its horns spread at least as long as this table (10 feet), probably more. You'd get the question: how much does the average Texas longhorn steer weigh? I don't know. Let's pick this one up. It was stuffed. They just wanted to say something so they could have interaction with you. So the only thing they could think was this big longhorn steer right there behind me. How much does it weigh. I don't know. More than I do.

Q: Well let's move on. We have probably finished this period. What happened after you finished the tour?

HURLEY: In 1975 I got a scholarship to go to GW to graduate school. I did that for a few semesters and then I went to work for the Chartersphere dome company in North Carolina that manufactures the geodesic domes for a year.

Q: There was a man an inventor or something, what was his name?

HURLEY: You are trying to think of Buckminster Fuller.

Q: Buckminster Fuller. Was this part of his...

HURLEY: I mean it is an offshoot. I think he created the concept, but others were able to use it. The Chartersphere folks had different sized domes. The smallest one I think was 25 feet in diameter, and the one that we built in Odessa and Moscow I believe was 120 feet in diameter and 45 feet high at the highest point. So I worked there for almost a year. It was a bit of an experiment. I left North Carolina to go on the Bicentennial exhibit, which was two months in Moscow only. I stayed on after Bicentennial to go on the Photo USA exhibit which had already

been in two cities. I picked it up in Tbilisi. The 2nd half was three more cities, Ufa, Novosibirsk, and Moscow.

Q: Ufa?

HURLEY: Ufa, yes.

Q: Where is that?

HURLEY: Ufa is to the west of the southern Urals, about 1,000 miles east of Moscow. The capital of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

Q: Looks like it is sort of in the industrial forbidden area or something.

HURLEY: Ufa had a great one ring circus with animals and acrobats and all sorts of things. I also met an artist there. Never did get a painting from him. In Ufa we stayed at a hotel that had the words "agitation and propaganda" where you would normally expect to see the title of the hotel. I mean it was a communist party hotel. One of the difficulties of being a foreigner in the Soviet Union at that time was service at restaurants was horrendous and indifferent -- and as there were no markets near the hotel, we were pretty much forced to eat in the hotel restaurant. Always a struggle to eat because you had to argue with the waiter. They would give you the menu, which might be 20 pages long. You would say, "OK I will have the trout." "We don't have trout." "Then I will have the pelmeni." "We don't have it." Then you would have to say, "What do you have?" "Well we have the pork cutlets." They always had pork cutlets. You get a little tired of the heavy meat all the time. Our secret weapon was John Aldridge, the information officer on the exhibit. He has great Russian and when pressed by a rude waiter he would call for the "kniga otzyvov," the official comment book in all such establishments. He would excoriate them for their sub-standard Soviet service while the rest of us looked on with anticipation.

Eventually we would venture out to a distant grocery store. We had hot plates in our rooms. I don't think it was legal, but they didn't take them away from us, so we cooked soups and stews and things from whatever you could find in the market place on weekends. In the summer there were farmers markets. So the outlook improved greatly. Some of the best tomatoes I have ever had are from the Soviet Union, because they were all natural. They taste like tomatoes should. But in winter you were stuck with cabbage or whatever you could find. In the grocery stores there would be the bread aisle, and the pickles aisle and the canned fish aisle, and that was about it. That is about all they had in these massive grocery stores. So this was communism. A major industrial power rivaling the power of the United States. The people ate a rather boring diet of pickles and bread and cabbage and what they might grow in their gardens.

Q: Following graduate school did the Foreign Service come into your orbit?

HURLEY: Yes, I graduated from George Washington University in 1978 in Soviet studies. This was Soviet foreign policy and history and a little bit of literature. You could do what you wanted with it. It was a year and a half program. Professors Charles Elliott was the head of the program, and Vladimir Petrov who suffered in Soviet era prison camps, Carl Linden, Ambassador Bill

Luers. That was it and then I went to work for Meridian House. I had a scholarship to GW from the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, thanks to Charles Shepherd, my mother's boss in Edmonds, Washington.

In 1977 I started working for Meridian House. They are one of the program agencies that administers the Department's International Visitor program. I worked there for seven years and then started looking at the Foreign Service. In June 1985 I joined the 85th junior officer training class at U.S. Information Agency.

Q: Well you entered the 85th basic officer's course. What was your group like?

HURLEY: Well it was 1985. It was split evenly; I mean half women and half men. A good group of people. There are very few of us from that class left who are still in the Foreign Service. From the class we had two ambassadors and other people retired at various times. The first wave was gone in the first five years because the Foreign Service just didn't work out for them. They had other things they wanted to do; they didn't like the bureaucracy, whatever it was. We had 25 in my junior officer training or the JOT class.

Q: Well did you find you had a pretty good feel for Foreign Service work from your guide times?

HURLEY: I probably knew a little about it because we had some interaction with the Embassy. The Embassy people weren't very interested. What surprised me was people in the embassy were not eager to meet with us. Political officers read newspapers. Public affairs officers have programs. But there was not an eagerness to talk to us Russian speaking guides who had been out in the hinterlands for months observing things. I guess they were just too busy.

Q: Unfortunately I think that is typical.

HURLEY: They had their jobs and defined tasks. Why should we talk to these unwashed non-Foreign Service Officers? What could they possibly tell us? The Ambassador at the time, Walter Stoessel, invited us for Thanksgiving when we were in Moscow. So I had a little bit of a sense of what they do, but I didn't interact with them. I didn't see them work or see their offices.

Q: Well what was your first job? I mean after you finished the A-100 course?

HURLEY: In the Foreign Service. I went first to Malaysia to Kuala Lumpur. The Embassy was a brand new facility. The USIA junior officers did a rotation within the Embassy, so I went to the economic section, the political section, but I never got around to consular, because I was only there for nine months. That was 1986-87 and then in 1987 to Moscow for the first time.

Q: Well then your assignment to Moscow was sort of sudden?

HURLEY: Moscow was next. They usually did not send first tour officers to the Soviet Union. That changed in my time. When I was PAO in Moscow (2009-12) we had a first tour officer who spoke the language. For me, Moscow was my second tour. I was an assistant information officer in Moscow. Because I had studied Russian and because I was a guide I had good Russian, and

this was useful. I could get out in society. I observed a lot of things. I interviewed a lot of people and wrote cables. I have a whole stack of cables to this day in fact I think I showed you one I did on the theater. So I did a lot of reporting because I had been in that society earlier. So I put it to use.

Q: Did you see a difference in the society from your experiences before?

HURLEY: My first Foreign Service tour in Moscow was 1987-90. I was responsible for advancing the exhibit -- to map out which cities to visit and then to make an advance visit to each city to see if we should go ahead or go somewhere else.

A difference from the guide time do you mean? Those were the Gorbachev years, so yes things began to change politically. The years of this openness (glasnost) and rebuilding (perestroika) that Gorbachev promoted to reform communism and give it a more human face. Of course in the end it failed and communism collapsed. But to answer your question there was a huge change in the attitude of people, for instance who came through the exhibit. Because when I was in the Embassy from 1987 to 1990 I was responsible for advancing the exhibits. I was the Embassy's liaison with the guides. The difference in the questions we observed was enormous. In the 1970s they would try to trap us with questions and in the late 80s it was completely reversed where they were asking leading questions. "Isn't it true that you can buy fifty different types of blue jeans?" I agreed with them, but tell them also that I don't need 50 different types of blue jeans (in the 1970s possessing a pair of blue jeans for young Soviet males was the ultimate status symbol -- there was a huge black market -- one could make a tidy profit, but also attract the attention of the KGB). You had to try to play down their enthusiasm. They had an exaggerated view that everything is so poor and so bad in the Soviet Union that it must be heaven on earth in the United States. Of course it wasn't and it isn't.

On the other hand, we used to get all kinds of agitation and propaganda thrown at us in the 70s. "Why do you hate black people? Why are so many people poor in the U.S.? How much money do you make?" These are questions that were legitimate from their point of view, but of course don't tell the whole picture about the U.S. One difficulty was to try to give some perspective on race in the U.S. and why there is poverty and crime. It was a great experience for me as a young person to debate with people whose questions were political and aimed to embarrass, whereas we argued only from the point of view of seeing things the way we actually saw them. Arguing with those who don't care about facts, only winning, as we do in our current Presidential sweepstakes, certainly improved my Russian. OK, that was the 70s.

Q: You mentioned blue jeans. Almost everybody who talks about the Soviet Union and Russia talks about blue jeans. It is just a pair of pants.

HURLEY: Yeah, for us it is a practical thing. The old blue jeans when I go out and rake leaves or my newer blue jeans when I go over to my neighbor's to have a drink. But I don't have a closet full of them. It was one of those commodities they couldn't get -- they weren't in the five year plan. It was fashionable and it caught on, and it was a very valuable commodity at the time. The other thing was Playboy magazines. They just didn't have anything like that, the sort of soft porn of Playboy magazine. So if you had Playboy magazines and some bibles and blue jeans you were

in big business. They even had a word for the trader who had these goods. They called them fartsovshchik. But woe unto that person whether foreigner or not who got caught. It was not a wise thing to be out trading and trying to profit from these things they didn't have. Some people did and some people got caught.

Q: Well you were there before the Soviet Union stopped being the Soviet Union weren't you?

HURLEY: Yeah a couple of times. Well I was a guide on USIA exhibits, and a tourist once too before the Foreign Service.

Q: Were you picking up, it wasn't your job I guess, but hearing from American business people who were coming over and trying to open up things?

HURLEY: At that time I was focused on the media and what other people were doing. Later lots of foreign companies got in. One of the original sponsors of the 1959 exhibit was Pepsi Cola. The first USG exhibit in the Soviet Union featured the Nixon/Khrushchev kitchen debate. Pepsi was one of the big sponsors of that. They were kind of first in the door among the soft drink manufacturers. Coca Cola eventually came along. But Pepsi got in fairly early, and that is where it started.

Q: What about newspaper people? Were we doing much in the way of aiding people, getting them over to see how we operate?

HURLEY: Do you mean American journalists going there?

Q: I am thinking of Russian journalists and media people going and looking at NBC.

HURLEY: We did more of that in the 1990s in the post-Soviet time. USIA's visitor program invited professionals from all over the world to come to the U.S. to see with their own eyes, but what happened quite often in Soviet times was that the Embassy would choose a mid-level journalist or government official, and then his boss, a Soviet division chief, would counter with a "more deserving" senior employee. The senior employee was deemed more reliable and less subject to change of world outlook, so we often just dropped the idea. Among those who did go on visits, I am sure they saw things that just really surprised them, but they were for the most part dyed in the wool communists. There wasn't any changing. It was probably a bit early. When the wall came down, we had foreign assistance funds and we established schools of journalism in Moscow and in Eastern Europe.

Q: What did you pick up around the kitchen table? I was thinking about Russians. They sit around, did you sort of see the depth of communism in the people?

HURLEY: Yes, I saw this in my time in the Embassy. By the late 1980s people were just most weary of the whole communist shtick. It was by then hard to find a true believer, because people realized that what they talked about and the application of Leninist theory brought them nothing, and they were tired of it. Information began to travel faster and faster in those times and people could see on their televisions, they could see western movies, that people lived pretty well

elsewhere. So the material differences bothered them because Russians are huge materialists. They like things, fancy things.

Q: Had the computer or the internet age hit Russia? I mean this is pretty early in the 80s.

HURLEY: In the late 1980s for instance, they still locked up the copiers in offices. You couldn't make copies without official approval. You couldn't walk into a place and say, well I need copies of this article. They would say no you don't. There was no public access to copy machines. In 1980s we were in the Wang era. But I don't think they were widely distributed in the Soviet Union. It was quite rare to see a computer on an editor's desk into the 90s. If people had computers they could talk to each other without the government. This is not something the government necessarily encouraged. Even in the Gorbachev era.

Q: Well you left there in 1990.

HURLEY: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of where Russia, then the Soviet Union was going?

HURLEY: Yeltsin was on the march and big unpredictable changes were coming. We didn't know which way it would go. We didn't know that it would all come down. People began to be surprised by how flimsy the foundation was. They always thought that communism, space travel and all of this stuff equaled power. Being there and seeing it up close, I sometimes thought: what is this based on? People are drunk all the time, and they have nothing to buy. They are a jolly people -- they love to sing and dance and read poetry, but also so dour. Why are we afraid of these people? I don't think there were more than two or three U.S. analysts who imagined it would all collapse. If anybody says they did anticipate the collapse, they are probably full of it. Just this massive whoosh, and practically everything disappears. And then it wasn't violent. There was a little bit of violence but it wasn't massive head beating revolutions. I saw some of the first demonstrations in 1990 with 100,000 people in the streets of Moscow. What is going on here? Big changes were coming.

Q: Did you ever get to the Baltic countries?

HURLEY: I did as a guide in the 1970s.

Q: Well then in 1990 where did you go?

HURLEY: In 1991 we went to Indonesia (1991-94). So I came back and had some Indonesian language training (very similar to the Malaysian I had learned) at FSI and then went off to Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia. The same island as Jakarta. I was a branch public affairs officer.

Q: How long were you there?

HURLEY: Three years, '91 to '94.

Q: What was your impression of Indonesia when you first got there?

HURLEY: I had been in Malaysia, so the language is quite similar. I was familiar with living in a Muslim country. I was familiar with living in Southeast Asia, so some of the foods and the cultural reserve with westerners I was already familiar with. Indonesians and Malaysians are different. In Indonesia, it's all about Javanese culture, the island of Java, which was a very exotic thing. It is a separate language, Javanese, and all kinds of levels of how you speak to royalty, how you speak to common people. We weren't speaking Javanese; we were speaking Indonesian, which is an artificial language with a Malay base created so that the peoples of Indonesia could speak to each other. Every island had its own languages and cultures.

Q: You were branch PAO, what was the media situation where you were?

HURLEY: The level of professionalism of the Indonesian journalists was sometimes not very high. I did some interviews when I got there. They reported that I had red hair. Little funny things like that. You had to be very careful and explicit speaking in Indonesian and make sure they got all the facts right, because they were a little bit loose with the facts. Not like being in the Soviet Union where there was a purpose to it. They weren't very skilled in getting the facts right and getting a second source. But I did get on television and was interviewed several times. If we wanted to be in the media we could be. I had some good friends who were journalists. Particularly a television journalist we got to know very well, Sirikit Syah.

Q: Was there much interest in the United States?

HURLEY: There was a lot. There was more of a fascination. Marlana, is blond and 5'7". The two of us would walk around and people stared a lot in the big city of Surabaya, not out in a village or something. We would go to a shopping mall. In the beginning it was kind of charming, but we hadn't seen that before. It always seemed odd to me because it had been a Dutch colony for quite a long time. So they must have seen tall foreigners.

One of the most interesting things for me as a youngish Foreign Service Officer was the outer islands. I was based in Surabaya and responsible for half of Java where many of the universities are, and then everything to the east, except East Timor and Irian Jaya (now Papua). So I got to a lot of places that I had never even heard of before like Lombok, Sulawesi and places where they had never seen an American. Some of them had not seen white people before. I could speak Indonesian well enough to talk about policy and give presentations.

Before I got there, Americans who had been there advised, "Well what will happen is you will have an event at your house. At 9:00 p.m. they will be stacking their plates by your front door and out the door they will go off into the night. After I got there, lo and behold at 9:00 the plates were stacked and away they went. I was there for three years and this went on for 2 1/2 years. I thought I had failed as a public diplomacy officer. I can't reach these people. I can't seem to get them to relax. They don't want to stick around and watch a movie or something. Then something happened. I think people became aware that I was leaving in six months. I began to get invitations to speak at graduation ceremonies, which hadn't happened at all. So I would give a

speech at a graduation ceremony to 3000 parents of the big Muhammadiyah University in Malang. This was really good, but didn't happen until the end of the three year tour. So the Javanese are reticent with foreigners. I read a publication once by an Indonesian who became a friend (Budi Darma) that said that Eastern Javanese are more easygoing than people in the west. I was so glad I was in the east where I had some difficulty engaging people, because I guess no one would have talked to me in the west. I did make a lot of progress with public speaking which is what I was sent out there to do, but only in the last six months. It was the strangest thing. I had interactions and had been interviewed in the media, but it was always a kind of distant, formal relationship. Then all of a sudden everything opened up in the last six months. It was wonderful, a great time to be there.

Q: How did you find the universities? Often universities are a hot bed for one movement or another.

HURLEY: In Indonesia there were two main types of Islam. One of them, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), established in Surabaya in 1926, represents traditionalist orthodox Sunni Islam. The other is Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, a reformist movement that (also Sunni based) promotes religious tolerance and advocates use of modern applied science. Most universities are one or the other. There is a Muhammadiyah university in the city of Malang, a 90 mile drive from Surabaya up in the hills, where it was cooler. One of the tools of public diplomacy is American films. I wanted to do a series on how Hollywood regards religion in the United States. I thought surely the Muhammadiyah scholars would reject the offer. I expected the NU universities to be looser, but it was the exactly the opposite. The more conservative NU Islam universities weren't interested in having us speak. The Muhammadiyah in Malang said, "Yeah, let's do it. Can you be here next week?" So I would give an introductory presentation on how Hollywood has treated religion in movies over the years. The Muhammadiyahs thought it was interesting and we would have a discussion about religious tolerance and how people distort religion for political purposes. A much more open discussion, I was just flabbergasted.

Q: You had some movies to show?

HURLEY: I did.

Q: What movies did you use?

HURLEY: "Elmer Gantry" was a hit. Also "Inherit the Wind" with Spencer Tracy.

Q: Elmer Gantry.

HURLEY: Elmer Gantry, with Burt Lancaster and Jean Simmons, which showed how religion is used by con men and politicians. The purpose of what we do in these countries is to establish the means of having a dialog. This is what USIA did particularly well and what we are still able to do in the State Department. If our host audience sees that we are willing to have a dialog, to listen and not just preach, then they are less likely to develop stereotypes about us and instead see us the way we are and not just about military ventures and guns. If people understand that

you respect their culture and want to talk about culture they will be more likely to have a conversation with you than if you just say well here it is, get in line, be the poodle.

Q: We are having lots of problems with militant Islam, and the United States is the number one enemy. Was that a factor while you were there?

HURLEY: No, it was not. Indonesians pride themselves on their lack of extremism -- part of the national slogan is go along, get along. So there would be some burnings of Christian churches while we were there, but it was something that was denounced by officials. The government said this shouldn't be happening and we must fight against it. Of course this was then (1991-94) but I suspect it is not too much different now. Of course when there is war in countries where Islam exists and people get killed, it does color the way the world views us. But in Indonesia I never had the sense that America was the enemy.

Q: You had Bali in your district. What was your impression of how that worked within that society?

HURLEY: Bali was the least interesting place for public diplomacy. I always had the lowest attendance, the least amount of interest in what I had to say. Minimal interest in the speakers that I would bring, poets and people talking about various things in Bali. There were so many foreigners there they were just indifferent. What is another foreigner? Why should we listen to this guy? Whereas the next island over, Lombok, they were just fascinated. Here was something that was new and different from the outside and we were speaking directly to them and interacting. So it was much more interesting to go to the other parts of Java and beyond Bali, always a tough audience.

Q: Timor, what was happening there?

HURLEY: Well there was West Timor and East Timor. East Timor, which has now become a separate country, was off limits. You couldn't go there. But I did go to West Timor. It was just sort of a sun baked place. It was tropical, but there wasn't much there. It was a pretty barren land.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you were there?

HURLEY: John Monjo and then Robert Barry. Bob Barry was kind of an interesting Ambassador because he had a lot of European and Russian experience.

Q: Yeah, Bob was in Zagreb when I was in Belgrade I remember.

HURLEY: Yeah Bob had traditionally been in Eastern Europe and in Russia. He came down to visit us in Surabaya once, you know an ambassador visiting the consulate cities. He didn't like my Stalin poster (a good friend Russian artist gave me a poster of Stalin looking over the fields with the caption "Ultra mashie rodiniy" or "Morning of our fatherland" -- I thought it was great kitsch art, but some didn't get the joke). He also thought it important to let me know that he had gone to Dartmouth.

Q: Were the Australians or British or Dutch doing things where you were or were they pretty much gone?

HURLEY: Well the Australians had a provincial rep there from West Australia doing commercial business. We became good friends. They were very active in business and making things there. There was a Danish furniture company making teak furniture (Seppo and Margot Oleson), some of which I bought. There were lots of foreigners there making things. The French had the best Consulate for cultural events -- they even did a fashion show once with Indonesians as models -- very creative and very fun.

Q: Suharto was president at the time?

HURLEY: Right.

Q: How were they perceived both by you and what you gathered from Indonesians?

HURLEY: Suharto was in power for a long time (1967-98). He was not quite ready to go when I was there. His sons had a reputation for abuse, and they were corrupt, owning many of the assets in the Indonesian economy. But Suharto sr. was the dominant male in the family and the country put up with a lot from Suharto. Kind of a mythical figure at the end until he wasn't. Finally, things became a little bit more realistic at his end. But it took a long time. He was there for decades.

Daughter Julia Madelaine, whose name is never spelled the same way twice, was born while we were in Indonesia. Marlena wanted to be at home for the first one, so we went to Steiermark in southern Austria, to the town of Deutschlandsberg (near Marlena's hometown of Gross St. Florian), to have the baby. It was a teaching hospital that in a way reminded me of the Woody Allen movie (Take the Money and Run -- 1969—see the farmhouse scene) where they do a prison breakout and all the prisoners are chained together and have to move as a group -- hilarious. The doctor who delivered Julia was a rather swell neighbor lady from Gross St. Florian.

My older son Johnny came out to live with us in Surabaya for six months.

Q: Was there any reference back to the time when there was the slaughter of both Chinese and communists?

HURLEY: People didn't talk about it. It was such an unpleasant time everyone lost relatives. I can't remember having a thorough conversation about it even with people with whom I became friends.

Q: Certainly in the academic world in the United States we are kind of blamed for it. I am not sure why.

HURLEY: No it just wasn't a topic of discussion. It was in the past, an unpleasant time when a lot of people died. It just never came up.

Q: Were you able to sponsor Indonesian International Visitors to the United States?

HURLEY: Before the Foreign Service, when I worked at Meridian House, I had the best and worst International Visitors. This would be 1977-85. I had a visitor from Indonesia from Surabaya who I met later when I was posted there. He was the editor of the Surabaya Post. He came on the Visitor Program, invited by the Embassy, and I did his visit from Washington. He ended up buying, this would be around 1980, about \$15 million worth of printing presses from the United States as a result of his visit. I thought it was a pretty big success story. Not only that, but he came away with a very favorable opinion of what he saw here in the United States, so that was a good one. The worst one was from Germany. I did the visit of Oskar Lafontaine, who at the time was the mayor of Saarbrücken. He was rather a lefty politically, in Germany. He was a bad choice for a visitor. He hated America, and I guess they thought this would somehow change his mind, or soften his views. But he was rude to people. He missed meetings that I had set up for him. When he went back to Saarbrücken he took out a full page ad in the newspaper and said, "I have been to the United States. They are the great Satan. I met a lot of jerks there and they are all jerks." So this was my worst visitor.

Q: Well you left Surabaya when?

HURLEY: I left in summer of 1994. Sounds like "North to Alaska."

Q: Then where?

HURLEY: Then back to Washington. I started for a few months in the Eastern Europe office. Ann Sigmund was the head of it and she recommended me to Ralph Johnson, the director of the Office of East European Assistance. Of course USIA is still separate from the State Department at this point. So I was transferred to the office of East European assistance. I thought this would be pretty interesting, and Ann Sigmund thought it would be a good idea if I did this, so they offered me the job and I took it.

Q: OK, you did this from when to when?

HURLEY: That would be from 1995 to 1998.

Q: What were you doing?

HURLEY: I was the head of democracy programs. I replaced John Menzies, who went on to be Ambassador to Bosnia. It was democracy projects throughout Eastern Europe. We did a lot of schools of journalism in Warsaw and other places, training of journalists. The job within a year or so became quite focused on Bosnia because this was a time when this vicious war was winding down. So it was a great job. We did a lot of things in Bosnia, including building a television network across the various ethnic areas that was done by satellite. So it was a donor group of I think 13 countries, plus Soros. Interestingly the Soros people contributed as much to Eastern Europe as the United States did. It was about \$320 million a year. So we decided it would be a good idea to get everybody to put money and equipment into building a television

network that would broadcast simultaneously from Sarajevo and Banja Luka. It took a lot of work, but in the end the Open Broadcast Network (OBN) did come to pass. Toward the end of my time in this job, I worked with Elizabeth Bagley, a political appointee and democratic party fundraiser, who was brought in to get television programming for OBN. She convinced companies in Hollywood who had the rights to American shows to contribute 1500 hours of old U.S. TV shows like Mary Tyler Moore and Lucy, and all kinds of entertainment, plus a season of NBA basketball. So that is what we put on this television network. There was a lot of criticism. The Soros people dropped out because they didn't like the bureaucracy. The Japanese would only contribute through the UN. We did get them to contribute \$1 million to purchase the antenna that went up on the highest hill in Sarajevo. We had great difficulty getting it up the hill because it was delivered in the winter. Of course it had to go up this mountain. There was a road, but it was snowy. We hooked it to the back of a tank and dragged it up the hill. The donors put \$20 million into the network. It was subsequently privatized in 2000 and exists to this day -- despite all of the official skepticism. I was very pleasantly surprised to learn this from the current PAO in Sarajevo.

Q: I know that during the height of the nastiness there was sort of a mutual sharing of atrocities. The same pictures that showed Serbian atrocities on Croats taking the same thing except they were Croatian atrocities on Serbs and Bosnia. The war was terrible.

HURLEY: Yeah, very nasty. So of course this network was meant to be peace through journalism. The East European assistance (EUR/EEA) program was focused on all the countries in Eastern Europe, but in the post Yugoslavia war period the last year and a half I was there the budget for Bosnia alone was huge, we had a \$600 million budget or thereabouts. Therefore, most of my attention was on Bosnia.

During the EUR/EEA assignment, Alexander Ian Hurley was born (Feb. 28, 1997). For some reason I cannot recall any details of Alexander's birth -- a source of much humor and ridicule within the family. A complete blank.

Q: In Bosnia were we doing anything to improve the media?

HURLEY: In the beginning they brought "parachute professors," which didn't work very well. We would send in specialists in media from various universities to give two days of lectures and then leave. None of them spoke the language and virtually none of them knew the culture. What did they leave behind? Very little. We also created schools of journalism that would be attached to various universities throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These had longer term trainers and professors. We had contracted with a firm called Internews and with IREX who had a longer term commitment in these places, with a goal of trying to teach them how to create an editorial page, how to keep opinions out of articles that should be just reporting, just the facts, ma'am type of thing, as opposed to "I think so and so is a bastard." We are not interested in your opinion unless you are writing an editorial. That is different. Then investigative journalism and how to look at corruption. We did quite a bit with that.

Q: It would seem to be a much more worthwhile effort than the occasional lecturer stopping over.

HURLEY: They were people who were not familiar with the culture, so everything was hot dogs and inches and people would say, "What is a hot dog? I don't understand. They would come in with kind of a tin ear. People would think, well do we really need this?"

Q: Did you get involved in the disputes between the Serbs and Croats and the Bosnians and all. I mean they hated each other's guts.

HURLEY: We did. The television network worked primarily because it was done by satellite, so people could stay in their ethnic enclaves and broadcast. I mean they had to eventually talk to each other from remote locations. But we didn't have them all in one room tearing each other's throats out. So that probably helped, but yeah there was a lot of "you killed my family," sort of difficulty with relatives.

Q: Well too, sort of in the early years they were digging up these mass graves and all which must have caused, I mean the war was so fresh and it was being thrown in people's faces all the time.

HURLEY: Yeah, and although they had lived together peacefully for a long time, the hatreds were just below the surface and came out very quickly. It was amazing to drive into Sarajevo in the immediate post-war years. The first time I flew into Sarajevo (spring 1996) was at night. It was a few months after the war officially ended, but we were still a little concerned about the occasional sniper who might not have gotten the word. Or just somebody who wanted to shoot, get a little shooting practice because they were up on the hills above the airport. We had to land in this often fog-filled basin. So we came in by military plane. It was at night. There were few lights, only to guide the plane in. On disembarking, you had to walk through a wall of containers to protect the airport itself. So I stepped out of the back of this military airplane. I couldn't see very well because it was dark, and stepped into a hole filled with water. In the dark it looked like one surface and I stepped back into water up to my thigh. A great start. You had to be very careful where you walked outside the airport because of mines. We drove in and stayed at the Holiday Inn. This is the Holiday Inn that was clearly a popular target during the recently ended hostilities. The hotel was so full of bullet and shell holes I don't know how it could stand. I will never forget on my floor when I stepped out of the elevator I turned to the left to go to my room, but I looked to the right and there was a hole through the concrete wall that was a foot in diameter. I could stick my head through it. I looked to the left side on that floor and could see the entry point, and the shell came through the hallway and went out the other side of the building.

Q: Well how did you find the people you were talking to? I mean were they trying to look for a new birth or they just getting on with their lives?

HURLEY: It was a bit of both. Sarajevo was quite a beautiful town, café society in the old prewar days. All of that was gone in the immediate postwar period. It was a very hard life. So yes there were people mostly trying to get on with their lives and interested in the training we were doing mostly as a means of improving themselves. They didn't dwell on the atrocities and political parties jockeying for power and that sort of thing. They wanted to get on with their lives.

Q: Well you did this for three years. How did the State Department accept you at that time as a USIA officer?

HURLEY: Well I didn't have USIA written on my forehead. The office of East European Assistance worked with USAID to move the money into projects. The office consisted of many parts. My part was the democracy portfolio. Someone did investment funds making loans to small businesses. Someone did more political stuff, working with the international High Commission.

Q: How about on your side with democracy, how about corruption? I understand this is quite a problem there.

HURLEY: Yeah, everybody on the take. But the democracy end of it was small compared to the things USAID was doing -- building infrastructure and working with the Minister of Finance and that sort of thing. I didn't see too much of that. I did journalism schools and university exchanges. We had a lot of Fulbright participation and scholarships.

Q: I think you would have a problem with the Fulbrighters and various exchange programs with people saying once they got to the States saying "Hell I want to stay."

HURLEY: This came up from time to time but not in great numbers. Every once in a while you would lose someone, but not very often. They should have tried to screen for that at the Embassy. This one looks like a runner, but very few in my time.

Q: So that was when?

HURLEY: 1995 to 1998.

Q: Where did you go after that?

HURLEY: Moscow for a second time. I went back in 1998 as the press attaché. Now it was a different country. It was an exciting time after the end of the Soviet Union. There were 33 U.S. media outlets in Moscow at that time. So we dealt with the American press and the Russian press and then the third country press. It was a big job.

My older daughter Erin came to live with us in Moscow at this time.

Q: Why so many American ones?

HURLEY: Well they were fascinated by what was going on in the post-Soviet era. Just a lot happening, a lot of change. So it was a hot topic.

Q: What would the work consist of?

HURLEY: Well it was a revolving door. We had lots of visitors. Presidential visits that would go to multiple cities. Virtually all of the cabinet came individually. Of course CODELs one after

another. The Ambassador at the time was Jim Collins (1997 -2001), and then Sandy Vershbow (2001-05). I was there for five years (Alex Almasov and then Anne Chermak were the PAOs). I think they forgot I was there. As the Press Attaché position came to an end, I began to look for the next assignment in about 2000, and at that time there was a deputy PAO position in Moscow. The deputy PAO who was assigned was not able to come to Moscow. So all of a sudden there was an opening and I said I would do it. So we stayed for two more years, 2001-2003, and I was deputy PAO, with Anne Chermak as the PAO.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived, the political situation in Russia?

HURLEY: Well, these were the Yeltsin years until 2000. Things were fairly fluid, They had pretty much gotten through the early 90's when it was particularly tough. The Russian resources began to disappear, such as State subsidies for the arts and just about everything. So people were poor, people were out on the streets selling their junk, whatever they could sell. The oil wealth had not revitalized the economy yet. In 1998 it was also a time of economic collapse. Marlina had gone back to school to get an MBA. So with her tremendous Russian language ability and a business degree, she was optimistic about her job prospects. In Moscow she was promised a job by one of the big banks, which then promptly yanked the offer when she got there because it was August of '98 when there was a huge economic crisis in Russia.

Q: How was Yeltsin perceived in the embassy from what you gather?

HURLEY: Kind of a loose cannon. Lots of stories about the drinking, but he was the guy who pushed it over the edge after Gorbachev struggled to have better communism or socialism. Yeltsin said "Come on, let's just do away with this."

Q: How did you find the Russian staff of your office?

HURLEY: In the mid-80s there were no Russian staffers at the Embassy -- all 260 Soviet employees of the Moscow Embassy and Consulate in Leningrad had been withdrawn by Soviet authorities in retaliation for expulsions and reductions in staff of Soviet diplomats in the U.S. In the late 90s when I returned for a second tour (1998-2003), it was a younger Russian staff. We always wanted to be a little bit careful with them. We knew they were likely being asked to report to the KGB and various security forces. But they were good employees. Many were capable people. Some of them now are in the United States. There is a special immigrant visa (SIV) program where you had to work 15 years or 20 years and some of them took advantage of that.

Q: What was the media like at that time?

HURLEY: The Russian media? Well this was the time when organizations like radio station Ekho Moskvyy started up after the wall came down. It was a hard hitting news station. It is to this day. I became friends with the editor in chief who is still there, Aleksey Venediktov. They tried to gather all opinions. I convinced White House staff to have Bill Clinton appear at the radio station for an interview as per the station's longstanding tradition, and a few years later convinced the Secretary's staff to have Secretary Clinton appear there. The broadcast media was

owned by rich oligarchs. It was the time of Gusinsky and Berezovsky, guys who were fabulously wealthy largely because they had stolen a lot of the previously state-owned resources and were more clever than their peers. They were eventually run out of town by Putin. In the time I was there NTV was Gusinsky's media empire. The government came in and just pushed them out of the way. They took it over and now it is an often aggressive state mouthpiece. The same way with a lot of the other media. One of the things I noticed at the time that concerned me greatly was the Russians didn't seem to care. When NTV was taken over by Putin's forces, there was virtually no protest in the streets. Whereas in Eastern Europe if this were even threatened people would be out in the streets immediately. But in Russia there were just a couple of hundred protestors who went away as soon as it was gone. The next day all the people I had known as journalists were gone.

Q. In a way it fits a simple stereotype of people who had never known a democracy and all so it is the same old thing. We had a brief window but there was a very complacent electorate.

HURLEY: Yeah it is an odd thing with the Russians. In my third tour 2009 to 2012 there were huge anti-government protests. I just thought looking back on the time we are talking about why did this happen now in 2010 and 2011 and not in 1999, 2000, 2001? It was a different world. There is much more of an established middle class in Russia now, though not always in the way that we think about it. People who have something to lose and who later got tired of Putin just thumbing his nose at the election system said, "OK, I was prime minister and now I am going to be president again." People said, "What are you talking about?" So there were lots of protests about that, but not in the time of transition to Putin.

Q: Did Putin come in while you were on this tour?

HURLEY: Yes.

Q: How did you and your colleagues view Yeltsin picking up this guy Putin?

HURLEY: It seemed like a pretty strange choice at the time. We knew that he was a KGB colonel in East Germany. He worked for the mayor of Leningrad, Anatoly Sobchak, but he was not a major player. Then all of a sudden they put him forward to be the president of the country and where did this come from? Hard to say.

Q: How did you find your contacts with the media?

HURLEY: I had great contacts as the press attaché. One method was this -- every Friday I would pick one Russian journalist, and I would just ask questions. We would go to a local place and sit and have lunch. It was a time of huge transition for the Russian journalists because they were all learning about how to become journalists.

Q: Were the reporters responding well to this new way of doing business?

HURLEY: Yeah it was a new generation. I mean the farther that we got from communism the more difficult it was. Eventually it got to the point where the younger people had not lived

through communism and certainly not as adults. So they had no memory of it other than what their parents told them. Once at a reception at the Ambassador's residence a former PAO introduced me to two young women who had asked him about life in Soviet times. They asked, "How was it in Moscow in the 1950s? I told them I had experienced the 1970s, but perhaps not as far back as the 1950s. This was also true with the journalists. Eventually we had a generation of journalists who had less and less direct experience with Soviet times. There was a school of journalism that we supported at Moscow State University run by Yasen Zasursky. Professor Zasursky (as dean 1965-2007), trained a lot of journalists.

Q: Was this a competitive media?

HURLEY: Yeah, the post-Yeltsin media was, but the sort of iron fist in the velvet glove became more prevalent as time went by. The first to go was the television networks that started as being independent but ended up being largely not. There is virtually no independent television now. The last one to go was one that was created much later, Silver Rain. They were just eventually shut down more recently by Putin by just saying OK, all of you companies that support this television station are now no longer going to do so and they stopped. So when I was there as press attaché (1998-2001), in the beginning it was very good and open and competitive and changing. The newspapers held on longer than the television stations, but within the last couple of years they changed the laws once again to say that foreigners can no longer own media in Russia. So all of the foreign participation, e.g., the Moscow Times, Vedomosti, that had foreign owners, they are all now owned by Russian interests. Radio station Ekho Moskvy, which is now owned more than 50 percent by Gazprom, still maintains their more or less independent editorial line. Sort of like B 92 in Belgrade in similarly dark times. They still exist.

Q: Were you able to place articles in the post-Yeltsin years?

HURLEY: We often did. The Ambassador would be interviewed on e.g., what we could anticipate as the outcome of a presidential visit. There were physical limitations on how much space they could give us and sometimes they cut things, but never without asking us first. The Russians often showed us the questions in advance, and then would send us a copy of the proofs so we could edit if needed. Not massive changes, but like a word here and there. It was great.

Q: Did you talk to the political officers in the Embassy much?

HURLEY: We had good interaction. Sometimes we tripped over each other. There was a young political officer in the late 90s who was doing internal, you know how they have external and internal offices in the Moscow because it is such a big unit. This young man was quite aggressive and was talking to journalists. I eventually had to go to his boss to say I don't mind him talking to journalists, but when I get journalists calling me up saying "Look you people from the Embassy have to talk to each other because I get a call from the political section, I get a call from public affairs and I can't spend my day talking to different people in the Embassy. You have got to coordinate better." So I met this young man at a party later on. He came in and as he reached his hand out to shake my hand, he stepped on my foot. He didn't really notice until I stepped back and removed my foot. The symbolism was too great. Nice young man, just a bit too over eager. Some were a little full of themselves, but that's your political officer. The political section

then was headed by people who started with me in the Foreign Service and we moved up to middle positions and eventually to senior positions, so it was easy to talk to them.

Q: Did you find the American and Russian journalists during the time you were there a good source of information?

HURLEY: They were and that is why the political section wanted to talk to them so much. They were a good source of information, and some of the Americans, not all, had good Russian language ability.

Q: Was there much talk about who is this guy Putin and where is he going and what is he up to?

HURLEY: Whither Putin? Yeah there was. It wasn't clear in the early stages that he would still be there for the long haul. Within five years they began to ask questions about what Putin is going to do and speculating about how he could work it that 25 years later he could still be in office even under the Russian constitution.

Q: Did you find the Moscow society that you worked in had changed a lot because at one point in Moscow foreigners spoke mostly to foreigners? Had this opened up considerably?

HURLEY: It did. The American journalists told us they were having an easier time of getting sources so they could get into ministries and develop sources with real information, whereas in Soviet times they wouldn't let them anywhere near them. That changed, it went back the other way later. Journalists had good access in the early 2000's to Russian officials.

Q: How about the computer and the internet? Was that a basic source or was it still the early days.

HURLEY: Probably a little early for consumer electronics. It was not widely available. Consumer goods generally didn't really appear until late in the 90s. The established price of oil went up and therefore the budget went up and people could afford things in post-Soviet times. All of the ships did rise in the economy -- the extractive economy did enrich people to a certain point. Of course now...

Q: On the oil in a way it became a kind of Saudi Arabia.

HURLEY: Yeah, but with the unfortunate effect that it was a single source economy, an extraction economy and that is a finite resource. The oil won't last forever and we know that the more accessible oil was long ago taken out.

Q: Did you ever sit around with your colleagues and wonder why the hell Russia doesn't make anything people would want to buy? I mean here are extremely talented people, but I can't think of anything outside of vodka that I would want to buy that has a Russian label on it. I mean it is oil but that is stuff you pump out of the ground.

HURLEY: No, they have never quite gotten it. In my later tour in 2009-2012 they tried to create a kind of silicon valley knock off in Moscow, the Skolkovo Institute. I don't think it is doing very well. It was a state effort to have a center of computer technology and innovation that had a partner in MIT. It started out well of course when the money was there. Putin then scaled it down, and I think it is not doing very well now. So they just never had quite understood the need to diversify, and you are right. Other than oil I can't think of anything anyone would want to buy. Quite good dairy products, but it is a big county so they consume everything. There is not much left over for export. I once bought a Soviet Army belt buckle. Caviar used to be cheap.

Q: Well this is probably a good place to stop. You left there in 2003. We will pick it up next time. Where are you off to?

HURLEY: I am going to try to get a haircut.

Third Session

Q: Today is 20 November.

HURLEY: I think it is the nineteenth actually. My sister's birthday.

Q: OK, so today is the nineteenth of November, 2015 with Michael Hurley. Where did we leave off?

HURLEY: In 2003 I believe it was.

Q: What was happening in 2003?

HURLEY: It was the end of my second tour in the Embassy in Moscow. The family then came back to Washington. The director of EUR/PPD asked me to be her deputy so I became the deputy director of the EUR/PPD office, the European press and public diplomacy office in the State Department. I was there from 2003 until 2005. In 2003 we bought the house we live in now. It's in McLean and has become my current big project, like running a farm almost.

Q: The house?

HURLEY: Yeah with the yard and the leaves. The leaves are like snow; you get a foot of leaves, remove them, and another 2 feet follows.

Q: I used to threaten, but my wife never let the leaves lie there as mulch.

HURLEY: Yeah there tends to be mildew with the leaves. I have tried different things. I would get as many as 150-175 huge black plastic bags filled with leaves in a season, and it just is back breaking stuffing all those leaves into bags. And quite a lot of dust. On the life's too short theme, I now pay for someone else to get most of the leaves.

Q: OK so let's stick to what you were doing in Washington.

HURLEY: In the EUR/PPD office I was the deputy starting in 2003 when Adrian O'Neil was the office director. She left after a year and was to be replaced by someone who went off to Baghdad instead, one of the first PAOs there. So we were without a director for several months. I finally talked to Beth Jones who was the Assistant Secretary. I said, "Look I am doing all of the work. I am the acting head of the office; why don't you just make me head of the office." They finally agreed to do it. So for a year I was the director of EUR/ PPD. At the end of that time I was assigned to Budapest to be the PAO. My particular punishment was to take Hungarian language at FSI -- nearly killed me.

Q: What did you find were your main challenges, jobs or whatever?

HURLEY: One of the big projects was what they called embedding public affairs Foreign Service Officers into the various area offices. USIA had their own bureaucracy. So we had to get used to the State Department system of writing memos and the office of assistants for the Assistant Secretary and the area offices where I worked. Part of it was the bureaucracy and part of it was figuring out how we fit into that system. That was the biggest challenge.

Q: You were dealing with public affairs in Europe? Is that it?

HURLEY: Well it was all of Europe. I was the head of the European office for public diplomacy, so it was all European countries including the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

Q: I would think we would have the equivalent of handcrafted policies for each country because they have different types of media, different outlooks.

HURLEY: In the 1990s in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union we focused on training journalists how to do some of the mechanics of reporting independently from the government. But also how to do things like investigative journalism. So by the time I was the director of EUR/PPD we were working in mostly former Soviet Union countries because most of the East European countries, Poland and etc., had "graduated" from the assistance program. We had more of a traditional relationship and not an assistance based relationship with them.

Q: Did you find yourself concentrating on any particular program or countries?

HURLEY: Well Russia was always a big focus. And a lot of what they called the Stans, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, those countries and Ukraine as a matter of fact, that is where the big assistance programs migrated.

Q: Well I assume that quite a few people going out there are sort of recruited from the media world would go out and talk.

HURLEY: Yeah there was a bit of that. We worked with organizations like Internews that had people who stayed there. We also had an East-East program. So some of the people we trained in Poland would then work in the former Soviet Union because they were more familiar with Soviet realities and plus they had been trained well, then we had the traditional public diplomacy tools such as the International Visitor program, the speaker programs. We would always have a big elections program at the time of U.S. elections. We still do that. You know, have a late night or early morning after depending on the time zones.

Q: So this would be more how you do something rather than here is the State Department line on American policy.

HURLEY: Absolutely. We always emphasized the technical aspects of say investigative journalism, but not do it this way because we do it this way in the U.S. We of course always allowed for local traditions and differences in culture and that sort of thing. Albania is not Poland. It is not Kyrgyzstan for instance.

Q: Well looking back on it how did you feel you did?

HURLEY: Hard to say at this point. You could look at a country like Russia and say well what good did it do to train all those journalists where the state took over the media anyway. The answer is that we planted a lot of seeds and the game isn't over yet. Who knew that Putin would come in and take back virtually all of the media in Russia and turn it into a state mouthpiece as opposed to what we were trying to do with it which was trying to make it independent of the government and to give people information they need to make informed decisions?

Q: So what you did to a certain extent is plant seeds that could flourish at some point.

HURLEY: Many of the journalists that we trained work at places like Ekho Moskvyy, the big radio station in Moscow. They've let it continue to broadcast since the beginning, based no doubt on some behind the scenes personal relationships. There is a propaganda purpose in that as well. So those journalists are all legitimate careful journalists, and a lot of them write from the outside. We worked with a lot of the journalists who were with Radio Liberty in Azerbaijan who were just thrown out. So it is an ongoing battle. If they cause discomfort with the government, that is usually a good thing. It is usually a sign that they are doing their job well.

Q: On another front, how is public diplomacy faring? To my mind this is incredibly important. I come from a consular view, but I have sat in country team meetings in many posts and it is just part of the web and woof of what we are all about. Did you find you had a problem selling your work to the Department?

HURLEY: Looking back on a 30 year career in public diplomacy, I have always found that the primary purpose has been to establish the basis for a conversation. We have exchange programs that allow people to see things in the United States with their own eyes. Professional or academic exchanges send them through the Fulbright program to graduate schools in the United States. So if people understand that we are not preaching at them -- people all over the world are not stupid. They know propaganda right away when they hear it. They understand that they don't want to be

our lap dog, and so we must figure out how to establish a dialogue with them. You may not like our election system, but this is how we do it. It is a better way than saying well because we do it this way you should do it this way too because we are just good. In the past I have said only semi-tongue in cheek (half a tongue?) that we are not in the business of making people love us, but we do want them to hate us for the right reasons. To a certain extent we are in the business of making sure that at least people have the facts straight when they disagree with us.

Q: Well did you have problems selling your approach in the political world or with interest groups?

HURLEY: Well I guess there are two answers to that question. One is I never worked in a place where they were shooting at me. Not much you could do with that. But I worked in hostile atmospheres where they just didn't like us, and that would be in places like the Soviet Union in the exhibit guide days where we had professional agitators and would spew their Soviet line. I also worked in two Islamic countries where it wasn't the religion that was an issue, but rather what various political factions tried to do with the Islam that was difficult for us to deal with. So dealing with hostile or somehow anti-U.S. questions is something that I have done all along. Another day in the life. Of course we had our own little embarrassments to try to explain to foreign audiences -- things like capital punishment which a lot of people outside of the United States don't believe in. Or pro-abortion and anti-abortion positions. And of course gun control is a huge one. Most people in other countries understand that guns have a purpose for hunting and that sort of thing. The Second Amendment giving the right to arm against a militia or against a hostile government, is something that most people just do not understand -- that is, how this got turned into something it wasn't meant to be -- e.g., to arm oneself in a college campus or in a public place. They do not understand Americans' love affair with guns. So explaining issues like the murders at Columbine, that was always very difficult. I am not sure how many of those public diplomacy battles we won, but once again, our purpose was not to say it is a good thing, or don't look over there behind the curtain where they are shooting high school kids. It is more to say yes it is a problem. Yes, people are crazy and yes they have guns, but there is a process to deal with this and it is the federal judicial system and the local judicial system (although more and more you have to wonder). It is so they understand a little bit about the context in which things like that occur. It probably doesn't make them like us, but it makes them understand our reality a little better. That is in many cases about the best we can do. It is important that people in other countries understand the context and understand a little bit more about us and so they don't recoil in fear and say "Oh, an American. Go away." Otherwise if we can't talk to people why do we even have embassies?

Q: Did you have much intercourse with the various sections of the Embassy?

HURLEY: Public diplomacy people were active members of the country team. In Budapest our political Ambassador wanted to meet every day, and we did unless we were travelling. In Moscow once a week and a little more often when there were visitors coming. So we always interacted with different sections. The political section was a good source for getting participation in the internal embassy speakers programs. They could talk about the election system in the United States. Or someone in any section might have a specialty in something either as part of the policy discussion or as part of the human interest discussion. We had quite a

bit of luck for instance in Poland where we had one of the best internal speakers programs. They asked people throughout the Embassy to sign up and list their interests. High schools would call saying "We would like to talk to a fireman," or someone who had been in the army or still is. We would have them go to that high school and give a talk on what it is like to be a fireman in Rhode Island or Illinois or something. That would be a valuable experience. When the public gets a chance to see us in our non-policy persona, then it is easier to understand that oh yes they are human beings too. Because we have firemen and we have welders and beauty salon operators and that sort of thing, so people with that sort of experience were very good to know.

Q: How did you deal with angry white elderly males and the consequences of their increasingly vocal protestations, the Rush Limbaughs and all who tend to spew discontent in our media and have quite a following?

HURLEY: As a public diplomacy officer, my key responsibility was to explain the policies and various aspects of our diverse culture and society: Why is President Bush invading Iraq or why is President Obama not doing more about whatever he is not doing more about, that sort of thing. I didn't consider it my responsibility to justify the extremes on the far right or the far left. Everyone is entitled to an opinion. We have crazy people; you have crazy people. Actually it was more difficult in Russia to explain e.g., how self-proclaimed Christians can be against broadened health care, or for the sale of assault weapons to everyone, including those on terrorist lists. Always difficult to explain individual Senator's opinions that were perceived as hostile by the Russians. In their minds, e.g., Senator McCain is part of the government and therefore he speaks for the whole government. Russians are suspicious when we tell them, well, that's just McCain's personal opinion -- he doesn't speak for all of the American people. Well they are really speaking on behalf of the government or the American people, therefore that must mean you hate us. But it is not exactly like that. For a public diplomacy officer, this gives an opportunity to explain the two houses of Congress and how things work -- that was the way the country was set up to have three separate branches of government and to be to a certain extent independent of each other. It was always useful to turn conversations like that into the means to explain why we do things a certain way from our history, from the political situation.

Q: Well it sounds like you had quite a bit on your plate. When you left, did you feel that public diplomacy was now in accord with the political economic reporting of the State Department? I mean it always had been overseas, at least that is my impression. But it was Washington and a different bureaucracy and all.

HURLEY: Yes. It works for the most part. My last job as an active duty Foreign Service Officer was with the Department's Office of Inspector General. So I traveled around for 2 ½ years to observe primarily how the public affairs sections were integrated into the operation of the Embassy. A few Public Affairs Officers focus only on the tools of their trade, the exchange programs and the international visitor program and they get caught up with that. They think that is their goal rather than their integration into the whole fabric of the embassy and how they support the ambassador's vision. Also, some of the political ambassadors do not quite understand what public affairs is, what public diplomacy is. Some think of it as their own personal public relations, because if they came out of business and they were say a CEO they probably had a public relations staff. But that is not really what we do in public diplomacy. We promote the

ambassador, but not his or her personal vision of themselves, but rather as they fit into the fabric of policy. There were some more difficult times when USIA was first integrated into the State Department, but I think we are pretty much through that.

Q: OK, well then you were off in 2007?

HURLEY: 2003-2005 I was in the EUR/PPD office, and then in Hungarian language training. It is one language that requires more than the current 44 weeks of study in order to speak with any proficiency. I am pretty good at languages, not a language genius like my wife, but Hungarian was just so different and so difficult.

As I was finishing up the Hungarian language program in summer 2006, my mother's health began to fail. In the last two weeks before the language test I went out to Seattle to be with her. She decided that she didn't want to prolong her life any more though surgery that would only promise marginal results. She insisted on being at home in her apartment in Edmonds, Washington, rather than in a seniors' home. In the end, she stopped eating, would only sip coffee, and didn't speak. I was at home asleep when she passed, the very kind hospice person woke me at about 2 a.m. to tell me she was gone. I called my sister Jan. Mom lived to just past her 85th birthday (she was determined to reach it), lived a good long life, and had a powerful and healthy skepticism about the way the world works, and she passed that along to me.

Q: I remember taking a trip to Hungary from Yugoslavia. Boy oh boy in Hungarian language there is hardly anything that resembles something from the western world.

HURLEY: It is one of those languages with almost no common cognates. It is not an Indo-European language, but rather Finno-Ugric, and I think there are only something like nine or eleven words that it has in common with Finnish, and all of those about fishing and agriculture. So a year of studying Hungarian and I am off to Hungary. Truly it is one of my favorite countries. Marlena was only three hours from Vienna by train or car, and from there she could get home to southern Austria to see her family. We all went sometimes. In Budapest the PAO residence (for fifty years) was in a two house compound on the Buda side. Buda is on one side of the river and Pest is on the other side of the Danube. Pictures of Budapest inevitably show the river and the exquisite bridges. Buda is the side that goes up the hill. That is where we lived.

Q: Wasn't there a massive statue of a Soviet soldier or something?

HURLEY: In Freedom Square or Independence Square it was called, there was a monument to WWII and Soviet Soldiers, an obelisk. There is something like that in Vienna that has a Soviet soldier (Heroes Monument to the Red Army at Schwarzenbergplatz). But in Budapest, it was not one of more popular places. It is on the square right outside the American Embassy. Depending on the mood of the time they had a single or a double metal fence around it so people could not approach and deface it, pulling the letters off. I was there for three years and most of the time they had the double ring about six feet high. People would just get in there and do nasty things. (Footnote: During my time in Budapest the Embassy dedicated a memorial to Carl Lutz, a Swiss diplomat who worked in the abandoned U.S. Embassy during WWII to thwart Nazi efforts to exterminate Jews. He was very successful and risked his life in doing so.)

Q: Well you were there from when to when?

HURLEY: 2006-2009.

Q: How did things stand politically in Hungary when you arrived?

HURLEY: Relations with the United States were pretty good. The Socialists (PM Ferenc Gyurcsany) were in power the whole time we were there. One characteristic of Hungarian politics is that it is even nastier than ours. It makes ours look like a kid's game (although one wonders lately). The two political parties seem to exist just to hate each other. Any initiative that they undertook always had an element of running down the other party. Of course it is the other party that is in power now, the Fidesz party of Viktor Orban.

Q: Is it sort of a conservative/socialist mix?

HURLEY: The more conservative element has a nativist coloring, a nasty streak in Hungary going way back. The country has quite a substantial Roma population. People say it's ten to 15 percent of the country. Roma are most often very poor and live in their own isolated communities. They tend to have darker complexion so they have become the "other." There is an element of the current regime's political association (Jobbik) that acts quite nasty to them and racist. But the socialists weren't much different toward the Roma. So observing politics was very much a part of what we did in Hungary. You had to be aware of people's sensitivities.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

HURLEY: The Ambassador was April Foley. She was a political appointee. She and George Bush went to Harvard business school together. After that time, she worked at Pepsi Cola. George Bush appointed her as vice president to the Ex-Im Bank. She was there for 2 ½ years and then stayed for 2 ½ years in Hungary as ambassador.

Q: How did you find the Embassy?

HURLEY: I turned left at the Imre Nagy statue. It was a small embassy. We were in two separate buildings. The public affairs office, and Commerce were in a separate commercial office building just off Freedom Square. Patricia Gonzalez was head of the Foreign Commercial Service -- she and her charades cheating husband were good friends from that time.

Q: Consular?

HURLEY: Consular was in the Embassy. One part of the military office was with us as well in a separate bank building. I think the Embassy worked well. The Ambassador had a steep learning curve when she arrived. She did not have any diplomatic experience. We convinced her that political ambassadors bring their own value, corporate experience -- that management of people is management of people. There are not many differences in the principles of managing a group of people to get them to do diverse tasks. She was someone who disliked the socialists, I think

didn't understand them very well, and disliked them more because they were called socialists than because of what they actually did. But that was April Foley. She claimed to be a Rockefeller Republican. She was big on women's issues. She wanted to promote women. She wanted to make sure we had women in our programs, addressing things that were important to women.

Q: Well how was the United States viewed? I realize this is a diverse issue, but basically how did you see our role in that society?

HURLEY: Better than now. Hungary is in NATO. While we were there, the Defense Attaché helped to establish a NATO air function in Hungary. In my own PD realm we set up American Corners. These were little libraries we established to extend our mission. We established one in the University at Eger, and in Budapest. There hadn't been a Corner in Budapest. The Corners were invented in Russia by Eric Johnson who is still a PAO (now in London). He is one of the great, creative public diplomacy officers. He had this idea that we should make little libraries (since Congress took away the funds for American libraries) that would be cooperative institutions where either the university or the city or regional public libraries would give us a room, provide a director and we would provide a certain amount of equipment and books. People could come to learn about the United States. I set up two or three of them in Hungary. We had great cooperation with all the universities in Budapest including the Central European University set up by George Soros. That was based in Budapest.

In Russia, unfortunately, all of the Corners have been closed by the Putin regime.

Q: Well with universities, they often tend to have radical leftist students who sort of display their credentials for future political life. Was this happening?

HURLEY: There was a smattering. I didn't have a strong sense of a left leaning student faction. Never had any hostility toward any of the speakers that we brought over. We expanded the Fulbright program. One of the ambassador's contributions was to ask me did we ever think of having a "money board" (she was a bundler for George Bush) for the Fulbright program. Hungary is one of those places where we do have a Fulbright commission, established when the Soviet Union fell apart. Over the years it was staffed by board members who were very senior academics who by my time basically just parsed applications. The director had been there since the beginning in 1992. So we decided to change the board. We asked some of the people in their 90s to think about moving on, and that created space for Hungarians and Americans who would give the program a breath of fresh air. We brought in the country director for Citibank, and the communications director for OTP (one of the largest commercial banks in Eastern Europe). We had an entrepreneur and a couple of younger academics. We asked them what can we do with this program. It had become too academic, sort of professors talking to professors type of thing, and the younger potential students had become less interested in the program. We thought we needed to bring it into the 21st century and create some new energy. I did fundraising, something completely new for me. I recruited companies and the Ambassador offered: "Let's have them at the residence for lunch when you get them into the position of talking about contributions." So she had several lunches at her residence that I attended where she would do the ask. This was quite interesting for me, because I had not done fundraising before and it is really hard work. People don't want to give money without a strong purpose. Most companies have some kind of

corporate social responsibility under which they already are giving to charity. In countries like Hungary there is little tradition of philanthropy except for some charity for the poor. One of the big investment bankers whose office was in our building had a huge private art collection. One time in the elevator I recognized him and asked to see the collection. He apparently was flattered and invited me up. I suggested that we establish a Fulbright scholarship for the arts in his name. It would be Fulbright-bankers name- arts scholarship. He gave us \$25,000 the first year. Another one was a foundation by a famous Hungarian who worked for Microsoft (Charles Simonyi). They gave us \$75,000 over three years to establish an IT scholarship. Washington was flexible enough so that as long as we kept the Fulbright name it was OK. And with the understanding that the person giving the money can't choose the candidate. He can't choose his son or daughter. The commission processed the application to make sure the person was qualified. The donors understood and cooperated. It worked really well and it is a better Fulbright program today. I don't know whether my successors kept up the fundraising. I raised \$300,000 for the Fulbright in a little more than one year.

Q: Could you make any dent in the Roma problem?

HURLEY: We did do a little bit. We started a Roma intern program at the Embassy. We did have Roma participate in the International Visitor program, so some went to the United States. We did what we could with the PD tools at hand.

Q: Right now in 2015 in November Hungary is faced with refugees coming from Syria and I take it that it is the conservative government that is there now. They have taken the hardest line of any European country on this immigration. Of course the United States due to terrorism and all we are beginning to take some of the same line.

HURLEY: Yeah it is unfortunate. We pride ourselves on being a country of immigrants. The Hungarians have a 1000 year plus history, and of course as a small country they seek to protect the purity of their language and their traditions. I think the feeling is if they are overwhelmed by people from the outside with people who have a different religion and different cultural traditions that the fabric of society will somehow be damaged.

Q: It will be.

HURLEY: Oh yes, there is no question. Europe will be different. Europe is already different.

Q: Things are changing. It is a tremendous challenge. Well how did you find the media in Hungary when you got there?

HURLEY: The media in Hungary were independent for the most part and cooperative. We had lots of editorials published under the byline of either the Ambassador or someone in Washington. So not a huge issue for us.

Q: Did they have good schools of journalism and all?

HURLEY: Yes. In Budapest as I mentioned there was Soros's Central European University and they did amazing things with university studies including journalism. They had a very good school there. So it was a kind of a hub for Europe.

Q: Could you talk a little bit more about this university because I haven't heard anyone talk about it.

HURLEY: It is a university that George Soros established.

Q: Who is Hungarian.

HURLEY: Yes, Soros is Hungarian by birth. He was frequently there. He would come in and out and participate in graduation ceremonies. He wanted to establish a university that was independent of government and would be a hub primarily for Eastern Europe. It was great for us. It was not too far from the Embassy. They had better facilities than we did, a nice auditorium. Whenever we had speakers we said you can invite some of your students to hear whoever it was. I invited Robert Kagan to speak there. Also Karen Hughes.

Q: Were any aspects of American policy either internal or external of particular interest in Hungary?

HURLEY: Some of the NATO issues were and what NATO was doing and what we wanted the Hungarians to do. We felt they should contribute more as we did with most of the Europeans. They were very sensitive to criticism. They didn't like us criticizing the various Roma policies and that sort of thing. But relations in those years 2006-2009 were really very good.

Q: How stood Hungary dealing with Austria?

HURLEY: Not really an issue. There were questions about energy policy and where the various pipelines would be built and who would benefit. There were a lot of wind machines in Austria and are probably in Hungary now. But it was something the Austrians did first. Relations were pretty good. Open highways with a border crossing of course, but not something that was ever a problem.

Q: Were there any after effects of the Soviet domination of the area?

HURLEY: Well there were of course. I was quite surprised in a small town to see a statue of Stalin at the local library. Why was it still there? People said that the Hungarians didn't have the visceral hatred of the Russians in the way for instance the Poles do. The relationship was not really that bad. Of course PM Orban now deals with Putin. The Hungarians do this dance with the energy pipelines because they are a small country. The Russians were talking to them about placing storage tanks for oil and that sort of thing in Hungary. They wanted to run one of the pipelines through there. I can't remember which of them. Probably South Stream, cancelled in 2014, seen as a rival to the Nabucco pipeline. Hungary was a country that had to have a delicate balance with the Russians because the Russians were in a position to influence the whole energy outlook.

Q: How stood relations with the European Union? It was a member of the European Union wasn't it?

HURLEY: Yes. At the time I was there, I believe they had not adopted the Euro. They still have the Forint, the Hungarian currency. To the extent they benefitted they liked it. They didn't like the European Union telling them what standards they should have in the economy. They had the usual fears of having the Europeans come in and create standards that weren't Hungarian in all things. It was not a hostile relationship. It is shakier now because the Europeans are upset about the right wing leanings of the current leadership.

Q: I assume the food was very good.

HURLEY: The food was just fabulous, and the wines were much better than I remembered for socialist times. In the old days you could get Egri Bikaver, which comes from the town of Eger, one of the wine producing areas. It was a mediocre mixture of various red grapes. But Egri Bikaver now is actually quite good. Hungary doesn't export much wine. You see a few but the great variety of Hungarian wine is just something to enjoy when you are there. I made several trips, pilgrimages really, on weekends to wineries where I had my favorites in towns like Pecs in the south, one of the great wine producing areas. The Takler brand, the cabernet franc, was a particular favorite. The food was also fabulous. It was a lot of meat and potatoes, but the sauces and everything were just fabulous.

Q: I remember having cherry soup there. It was good.

HURLEY: Garlic soup the way the Austrians do it and a lot of game, ducks and pheasant and venison. It was a great eating experience. I didn't lose any weight in Hungary.

Q: How did your wife find being Austrian there?

HURLEY: She was happy there. First of all, she was working. My wife actually did quite well in our travels in the Foreign Service. She worked the whole time we were in the Foreign Service starting in Indonesia. After the Moscow assignment 1998-2003 she telecommuted for about ten years. When we left Moscow in 2003 we came back to Washington and then she would travel to Moscow once a month for a week. The rest of the time she telecommuted. When we moved to Budapest she did the same thing. Of course Budapest being much closer it was easier. Then we moved back to Moscow, 2009 to 2012. It worked very well. In Hungary, she was constantly struck by how much it was like Austria in terms of the food and traditions. Hungary is a very Catholic country. She was raised Catholic and was very much at home. She got into a church singing group there right away and was very happy.

Q: How about the children?

HURLEY: The children were happy. They attended German schools from beginning to end. They graduated, my daughter graduated from the German school in Moscow, and my son who is four years younger graduated from the German school in Potomac, Maryland. I think it was a good life. My son was quite an active soccer player and he had a very good soccer team there

that he enjoyed, so there were activities outside. My daughter began to be interested in acting other than just at the dinner table. Of course she was a huge Harry Potter fan. She read all of the Harry Potter books 20,000 times each. I bought her the first one coming through an airport. I didn't know what this Harry Potter stuff was. So we read some of them together and had great fun doing that. I made it a point to read to both of my children. My daughter enjoyed this immensely. I did a lot of reading with my older kids as well.

A footnote: I had a serious bout with cancer in Hungary. One day at home in Budapest sitting on the edge of the bed I felt a small lump like an almond on my left rear shoulder. There was no medical doctor at the Embassy at the time. The Embassy nurse recommended seeing a Hungarian doctor, the beginning of a small adventure that could have ended my life. The Hungarian doctor didn't know what to make of the lump, but assured me that it was harmless -- come back in a month. A month later, roughly August, there was no change -- no apparent growth, no discoloration, no pain or any other sensation. The doctor said it might just be a gathering of tissue under the skin -- he said he could "cut it out," but I was skeptical about surgery. We did a CAT scan of such poor quality, that it was inconclusive.

At this point I had one of those serendipitous moments that likely saved my life. I had swapped duty officer weeks with a colleague (each officer in the Embassy was volunteered to have a week to be the duty officer outside work hours -- if something happened that affected us after close of business, the Marine in the Embassy was directed to contact the duty officer first to decide if anything needed to be done). So at about 6 a.m. one Sunday morning the phone rang, and the Marine said that a U.S. military plane was being diverted to Budapest on the way to Washington, flying out of Baghdad. A Marine on the plane had shortness of breath, and it was thought he might have had a heart condition, so they landed in Budapest -- what should we do? I told them to get him off the plane and to have someone with him, and that the plane should continue on from Budapest. All I could think to do was to call the Embassy's Hungarian nurse at home to find if there were any medical facilities where he could be examined. We got him to a clinic and the Hungarian nurse said, oh by the way, there is an American temporary duty doctor in Budapest. Why I was not told this as the duty officer is still a question. So I contacted Dr. Moore, who met us at the clinic. When it was finally determined that the Marine was out of danger, I happened to mention my own situation with the lump. She said she would take a look. When I visited her the following week she could not say from looking at it what it might be, but thank G. she was concerned enough to call her colleague in Vienna. They decided it might be serious and called for a medevac. Off I went to London for a biopsy. The following day the verdict: a malignant tumor, sarcoma, that required immediate surgery.

Off to Washington for surgery that took place in October 2007. The very helpful MED office in the Department said I could not be reimbursed anytime soon (bills by this time had exceeded \$12,000) as it was the end of the fiscal year. I said the cancer probably couldn't wait for the new FY and asked to see the head of MED who provided some reassurance. They sent me to sarcoma specialist Dr. Robert Henshaw (a specialist in oncologic oncology for musculoskeletal tumors) who operated at Washington Hospital Center. Subsequent treatment consisted of radiation (not chemo) for three months. I was back to Budapest for Christmas. My Hungarian language suffered greatly. Great kindnesses were rendered to me in this, of course by the doctors who cared for me, but also by Hungarian Embassy colleague Col. Kevin McGrath, who got me to the

hospital and waited overnight through the surgery, and friends Margot Mininni and John Aldridge who put me up in the immediate post-surgery days and got me on a plane to Budapest. Also London friends who offered good beer and reading -- all the Rogers and Carolina Kuhnert.

Q: Where are your younger children going on to, are they in College?

HURLEY: Julia is 22. She had a gap year with us in Moscow, at the Moscow Arts Theater Institute. She is in her fourth year at UVA right now (update: Julia graduated "with distinction" on May 21). My son Alexander just entered UCLA in September. He is doing well. As I told his mother the other day, I think he still wonders who is going to do his laundry. It is kind of hard to do from Los Angeles, but we will see them at Thanksgiving. My older son Johnny lives in Denver and participates in the Caveman Catering Company. Daughter Erin is executive manager at the B.J.'s. restaurant in Portland, Oregon.

Q: What about Germany? The prediction was that when it unified it would dominate central Europe. How did you find Germany as an influence in Hungary?

HURLEY: German was the second language, replaced pretty much by English now but many of the older taxi drivers spoke German, and they always spoke German first when you stepped into the cab. Very few non-Hungarian foreigners speak Hungarian. They have always been geographically between Russia and Germany, so they have to do the dance with both partners. I think in the years since I was there it was more a benign influence. They were talking to Putin, but Russia is the big bear and has them by the energy handle so it was a more fraught relationship.

Q: Well then after three years is there anything else we should talk about?

HURLEY: In Hungary? No that is pretty much it. There was a rumor that during WWII the house that we lived in was a Nazi headquarters. When the Ambassador left we all went to the airport to see her off, at her "request." She left in April 2009. Hungary was one of my favorite tours. Budapest is a fabulous walking city. Around every corner there are buildings with stories. It was a great place that way. I also had a tailor there.

Q. Well then when you left, whither?

HURLEY: In 2009 directly to Moscow. No language brush up this time. John Beyrle, a career diplomat, was the Ambassador. Eric Rubin was the DCM. I had two years together with John Beyrle. This was by far the best Foreign Service tour for me. This is what I did there (showing Kennedy the American Seasons book).

Q: You are showing me a book that says U.S. Russia bilateral presidential commission "American Seasons in Russia."

HURLEY: Right. When I got there they had created the U.S. Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission that consisted of 20 or so committees on various topics: arms control, traffic in persons, environment issues and things like that. The part of it that concerned me was the one

that dealt with sports, media, culture, and education. My task was to figure out what to do with all of this. I decided to focus on culture. In education we were already doing the Fulbright program. In post-Soviet times we wanted to draw them in as full partners. The Russians threw up some roadblocks of their own, finding bureaucratic reasons to slow negotiations. We almost got them, but the Department pulled back at the wrong moment -- saying "the budget for Europe is fat" -- very shortsighted. Then there was sports, but sports were ongoing and didn't need a Presidential Commission to promote hockey, basketball, soccer and the rest. Media we also did things, but other than some small exchanges, media is just too hard because we have such different traditions and Russia had already been through the assistance years. The training had already been done in the 90s.

So I thought a focus on culture made the most sense. I decided to create a campaign somewhat in the mode of a traditional USIA program of the past. The centerpiece was the Chicago Symphony Orchestra which hadn't been in Russia since 1991. We had all sorts of groups. We had Alvin Ailey. We had Bang on a Can. We had Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys, zydeco, gospel music and bluegrass. We had plays, we did poetry. We had cowboys, we had Indians. We had Herbie Hancock and Dee Dee Bridgewater. You name it and we had it. This is the brochure from the Ambassador's residence when we had Herbie Hancock and Dee Dee Bridgewater. The jazz greats. This is the program for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Riccardo Muti conducting the orchestra. I went to visit one of the big theaters called the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theater, one of the great Moscow dance venues. The director of the Stanislavsky at the time, Vladimir Urin (now with the Bolshoi) said, "You know we had Alvin Ailey in Petersburg years ago and they haven't come back." So we brought them back and it was just fantastic. They did all their great dances (including Revelations and several others). They were just getting a new artistic director, Robert Battle. The real show stopper they did in the middle of the performance -- they showed a short film on the history of slavery. This was so moving it made a huge impression on the audience. Here we have this performance sponsored by the U.S. government and they are showing about slavery. Alvin Ailey's dance troupe is primarily made up of African American traditions, that was just a fabulous show, and got a standing ovation.

In order to hold what became a yearlong cultural festival, I looked to the private sector to raise two million dollars. Our Ambassador John Beyrle engaged in the project by meeting in Washington with Judith McHale who was the Undersecretary for Press and Public Diplomacy. I made the case by drafting a cable laying out the plan, proposing to raise a certain amount of money and asking the Department to match it. McHale agreed and so I had quite a substantial budget. Inspiration came from different parts. Heidi McCormack who had been head of GM in Russia met with me several times and provided great advice on how to do a fund raiser -- she advised holding a coffee during the day at the Ambassador's residence to make the initial pitch -- reasoning that an evening reception would be harder for busy executives to attend. Heidi suggested having a "what's in it for the company" pitch as most of the companies would say they already have a charity they contribute to for corporate social responsibility. She suggested following up on the coffee (we held two coffees at the residence and garnered a total of 60 company reps) with personal visits to each of them -- it was like having a second job at one of the busiest embassies in the world.

There were many places where the project almost went off the rails. The first was thinking small -- there are specific rules for Department employees for raising money in the private sector (one can raise up to \$75,000 for public diplomacy without having to notify the Department -- any more than that requires an elaborate process involving memos to various Bureaus and ultimately must be signed off by Under Secretary for Management Pat Kennedy). My initial memo mentioned \$500,000 and that no single contribution could exceed \$50,000. Shortly after getting approval I went to a friend (Teresa Mavica) who is an art curator for one of the big oligarchs (Leonid Mikhelson, CEO of Novatek that builds all of the steel pipes for Gazprom) to find out if her patron might be interested in a small contribution (and by this time the Chicago Symphony let me know that I would have to raise all of their fee of roughly \$1.3 million -- and that this should be in substantial chunks -- not 1000 times \$200 in contributions -- too messy). We met at a fancy coffee shop near the Christ the Savior church (torn down by Stalin, rebuilt by Putin -- I remember it as a winter swimming pool from the 1970s) in downtown Moscow. Mikhelson came unaccompanied and a couple of minutes into the conversation asked, "So, how much do you need?" Now this is a man worth about \$9 billion -- I had met him previously only once -- he asked for help with his daughter's visa to study in the U.S. (It turned out the daughter didn't need any "help" with the visa -- she was given the visa on her own merits.) The wheels spun very fast as I really hadn't come to grips with how to ask, or how much to ask for. So I said (in the full knowledge that at this point I had secured not a single commitment) that fundraising was going well and that with about \$400,000, it would be pretty much complete. He said "ÖK, let me know if we can help with anything else," and with that the meeting ended. I walked out of the restaurant (somehow appropriately walking past the statue to anarchist Peter Kropotkin) with my jaw on the floor trying to understand what had just happened. One thing that occurred to me was the fact that I had just spent about 2 months getting the Department's blessing to raise a maximum of \$500,000 with no single contribution more than \$50,000. Sounded like a short term in Sing Sing to me.

I was able, with the help of a sympathetic attorney in L (Department's Legal Advisor office), to turn this around and lose the minimum requirement and to raise the limit to \$2 million. I had great support on this and many other issues from our desk officer Ray Castillo. Among other issues that might have derailed Chicago's participation -- Coca Cola was a very difficult get -- they held out until that last minute and in the end reduced their commitment to \$100,000. I acquired John Deere because they are based in Illinois and saw the Chicago connection. One surprise donor was Amsted Rail, also based in Illinois -- they enthusiastically took up the cause of the receptions and helped me to understand that this was what was "in it" for any of the donors -- the receptions where they could schmooze with Russian government officials, Embassy people and their own executives, some of whom came from the U.S. to be at the event.

How did it come to the Chicago Symphony? I had an early conversation with the Bank of America reps who came to Moscow and had a meeting with Ambassador Beyrle. They expressed an interest in doing something in Moscow with their own art collection. They put me in touch with their art director who suggested, "Well why don't you bring over the Chicago Symphony? (The Bank of America is a permanent sponsor of the Chicago Symphony.) Riccardo Muti is world famous. It is one of the great orchestras in the world." I noted that this would be quite a tall order. "How do you suggest I do this?" "Well just call up the president of the Chicago Symphony Organization." Easy peasy. Shortly after this meeting I was on vacation in the

summer of 2010 and just made a cold call to Deborah Rutter, the president of the Chicago Symphony organization (and now President of the Kennedy Center). She said, "You know we are pretty much booked up through 2015, but we will think about it because we know the Maestro likes Russia." He had been to Russia before his time with CSO. So this started about a yearlong discussion. The first time I thought well this is great. They are thinking about it. The next call is of course you will have to pay for this. Where were the rich patrons? Then there were scheduling issues -- the CSO had committed to playing in Italy and in Abu Dhabi -- so we needed to squeeze someone out. The Italians had already paid, so we waited and eventually the UAE was dropped. Eventually all of the eight donors came through, including the Russian Railways system that donated an entire speed train to get us from Moscow to Petersburg. That was one glorious ride.

One final anecdote about derailment: the Russians pushed and pulled the whole way through. Our interlocutors at the Ministry of Culture suggested that the CSO should play at Tchaikovsky Hall, a venue that the CSO advance group could see had crappy acoustics and was set in a sort of Coliseum/circus arrangement that they knew the players would not like. At this time the Moscow Conservatory was just finishing up a renovation worthy of that institution. Though carpenters and dust were everywhere, the advance group insisted on seeing the venue -- when they saw it they knew that it had to be the Conservatory. And how much fun is it to work in Russia? The Ministry's chief negotiator's son was the general manager at the Tchaikovsky -- so they did everything they could to convince the CSO to play at that Hall. CSO politely declined, stating their strong preference for the Conservatory. At my last meeting at the Ministry they said that the music Maestro Muti had chosen (Shostakovich fifth symphony; Strauss Death and Transfiguration; Franck Symphony in D) "wasn't really classical after all." I had serious difficulty at that point in restraining my desire to jump across the table and strangle.

The Chicago Symphony travels heavy but the result was just something to behold. They played wonderful music. In the press account the CSO appearance was called the "cultural event of the year." I wrote a cable afterwards (12 Moscow 1096 May 18, 2012) called "How to Run a Railroad." We called this whole yearlong festival "American Seasons in Russia," which is a play on the Russian seasons in Paris when Serge Diaghilev took the Ballet Russe to France (thanks to good friend Dilyara Timergazina for the idea) and played there. Of course that helped with name recognition as well. So this is how I raised funds and how I got them to come to Moscow. Couldn't have pulled it off without the unstinting support of FSO colleague Mike Snyder.

Q: From your perspective how were relations with Putin?

HURLEY: Well relations with Putin are never very good because of who he is. He is very suspicious by nature. But the Russians misperceived a lot of the things we did and tend to make connections and feel slights where they are not intended. On the other hand some of our policies have been fairly criticized, though we still cooperate with them on things like counter-terrorism and space travel, but we are at a time of minimal engagement right now. This cultural festival we were able to do because it was kind of sandwiched between the Georgia incursion in 2008 and then what happened later in Ukraine. So it was a period (2011-12) of relatively good relations.

Q: I guess when you were getting that Chicago thing you must have been holding your breath for some horrible event or something.

HURLEY: Not really. I didn't think about it. This was so successful -- just event after event after event. Every week there was a new group in town -- dance groups like Momix and City Dance and Bill Jones and Arnie Zane, the Parsons Group from Chicago. We had a group called Bang on a Can. We had Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys a Cajun band, Savion Glover the tap dancer, the Aeolian Gospel Choir, Annie Leibovitz, Wiley and the Wild West, R. Carlos Nakai of the Navajo tribe, the Merce Cunningham Legacy Tour, violinist Joyce Yang, pianist Christopher Taylor and many others.

We had the brotherhood singers from Covington, a gospel group. As I said in Petersburg and Moscow, it is kind of hard to impress an audience. Russians applaud a performance, but they rarely stand. We had two or three gospel groups over there, and Russians would be standing on their seats. I thought my God I don't know where we are. They are standing on their seats. They never do this for anyone. They did this for the gospel singers. Of course how can you sit in your chair when you have this wonderful music? We did a yearlong program of radio shows which I introduced in Russian on Radio Orpheus. It was about American classical music starting with Copland, to Gottschalk, Charles Ives and Roy Harris and all sorts of classical composers. Each month there would be a new program featuring a new American classical composer.

And one of the great projects was pitched to me by an American resident in Moscow -- John Freedman, who was the theater critic for the Moscow Times. He and his professional partner Philip Arnoult, based in Baltimore with the Center for International Theater Development, had brought Russian plays to the U.S. via Towson University. They wanted to bring new American plays to Russia -- not one offs like the great musicals, but to embed contemporary plays by the likes of Annie Baker, Suzan Lori-Parks, Nilo Cruz, Eric Bogosian, Deborah Zoe Laufer, Chuck Mee, Adam Rapp. Not just translate, but have a Russian playwright work with the language so it would become something that the Russians could readily identify with. Then bring the plays over and have Russian actors. They did readings. The purpose was to insert the plays into the repertoire and not just in Moscow. During my tour there they did readings of plays all over the country in cities like Perm and Yekaterinburg where there is a very lively theater scene. I am happy to report that these plays are now part of the Russian repertoire and are still being performed (see johnfreedman.webs.com under American Plays Project). Cultural diplomacy at its best. We had Double Edge Theater from western Massachusetts doing their special brand of...

Q: What is double edged theater?

HURLEY: Double Edge Theater in western Massachusetts. We went up to see them not too long ago. They do avant-garde theater and they do a lot of innovative work both indoors and outdoors. They arrived in Russia after I left.

Q: Where are they located in western Massachusetts?

HURLEY: Ashfield.

Q: I went to college up there. Williams. North Adams. Well Russians love and are interested in American jazz and all that.

HURLEY: In fact, just this week I saw a movie on the topic of how rock music brought the wall down ("Rockin' the Wall," directed by Marc Leif). So it is about the contribution of rock music primarily in the 80's -- from the point of view of rock practitioners -- everything happened because there was rock music, which I don't buy. They of course overlooked earlier influence of jazz and Dizzy Gillespie tours and Benny Goodman and all the people who went over, and the blues players, BB King etc. who went there and laid the groundwork for a lot of it. But it is a very interesting movie to film these massive audiences right at the time that things were coming apart for the communists and the influence that rock music had. Russians have also always been huge jazz fans.

Q: Well you had been away from Russia for six years hadn't you?

HURLEY: I left the last time in 2012.

Q: Well in the last few years did you see much outlook for change from your perspective?

HURLEY: First of all, the physical face of Russia changed enormously. Moscow is such a dynamic city that if you blink you miss something. It is enormously difficult for people who aren't there to perceive what is going on. Our worst enemy in the Embassy was somebody who had been there in the 90s or earlier and then came back as an academic for a conference or a CODEL (Congressional Delegation). They would assume they knew everything about Russia. They would think: I was here in the 90s and 15 years later it is still Russia. But it changed physically, it changed enormously. One of the scary things in 2009-12 was the massive billboards that said things like "Rossiya dlya Russkikh," Russia for Russians. Everybody else can piss off is what they meant. It was a nativist thing. At the demonstrations of 2011 you would see 100,000 people in freezing weather in the streets protesting about Putin stealing the election and telling people "Mr. Medvedev and I have just exchanged positions." That was something of a last straw. People protested like I have never seen before in Russia. They would whistle at Putin when he appeared at public venues -- a sign of disapproval in Russia. On the other hand, by the time I left a lot of that had disappeared. You don't see massive demonstrations now in Russia. One of the problems with the demonstrations was there was no unifying theme. There was sort of anti-Putin, but there wasn't much else that seemed to hold them together. There were lots of disparate elements. The Communists were demonstrating too and were not pro-Putin.

Q: Were you seeing any change in the economy? I can't think of anything that I would want that is made in Russia.

HURLEY: I just bought a bottle of Stolichnaya yesterday. Other than that it is true that it is an economy of extraction. They have the oil wealth and the price of oil is down now. One of the things with the sanctions -- now they are producing more food for themselves. One of the great differences of let's say the 90s to now is the comfort level. But going back this last time 2009-2012 I can't tell you how many times I was sitting in a restaurant just thinking "where am I?" It

is so different. The service is polite. They have shorter menus and everything on the menu was available and modern well heated places. It was just unimaginable in Soviet times. And a huge price range from fast food to the most ridiculously luxurious restaurant you could imagine. Japanese food was huge. A lot of sushi. I was always a bit skeptical about eating raw fish in Moscow, but it was good.

Q: Housing and the Embassy. The building and all that.

HURLEY: The Embassy was a huge place and undergoing construction in the 70s and 80s. There is now a new construction project to build an annex to finally get all of the Embassy out of the old fire trap on the Ring Road. My neighbor is an architect who works with the firm that is building the new annex that will house the consular section and some residential apartments. Everything else earlier moved down the hill to the new embassy, which finally opened officially in 2000. This of course was the building that had the bugs in it discovered in the 1980s and they had to cut off the top two floors and add three more. They are now building an annex to the Embassy and the whole thing will look completely different -- a huge undertaking.

Q: Well when you left what was your feeling about whither Russia?

HURLEY: In 2012 we were beginning to see signs of this nativism. I personally was on a high from the cultural festival that ended with my departure. The Chicago Symphony was there in April and I left in July. So I was still glowing from all of that. Right up to the end we had Cajun music and Zydeco that they had just never seen before in Moscow. So I was personally very happy but the writing was on the wall. Oil prices were pretty high so the economy was doing well. But only from a sort of disappearing fossil fuels point of view, not because they had improved or diversified. So that was coming and Ukraine was coming. Not quite as serious just at that point, but not too long after that Ukraine happened. So it is a messy situation, but it is a fascinating country. I have no regrets. My wife and I both lived in Russia 13 winters, though not simultaneously. I was there earlier. She was there at the university before we met. So it wasn't 13 years together. Moscow is a big city and it requires a lot of energy just to keep up, but it is a place that we will always go back to visit.

Q: Well you came back to Washington in 2012. What have you done, some inspections?

HURLEY: Right. I went to work for the Department's Office of Inspector General. The first inspection I participated in was the Foreign Service Institute School of Language Studies. I subsequently have done inspections in exotic places such as Sudan and South Sudan -- those were my first overseas inspections.

Q: On language studies, what did you, how did you find they were dealing with it?

HURLEY: We looked at a lot of different aspects. We divided it up in different ways. There were five of us who each took one of the main languages. They gave me Russian. We did Chinese, Spanish, French, Russian and Arabic. Each of us also had one of the smaller languages. I did Dari. We couldn't do all of the more than 70 languages that they teach at FSI. I reviewed the Russian program and was quite impressed. I learned my Russian outside of the Foreign

Service Institute. In the inspection I observed that since immigration from Russia has been fairly large, the pool from which they choose Russian teachers was also substantial. FSI has about 45 teachers of Russian. They come well-trained. Russians have great respect for pedagogy, and they do languages well. Some of the instructors have PhDs from Russia. Some even PhDs from the United States in linguistics, specializing in teaching foreign languages to adults. We encouraged the School of Language Studies to look beyond 3/3 (the minimal professional level on a 5. scale) because 3/3 in language training gives you the ability to buy garlic in the marketplace and to say some pleasantries, but it doesn't give you the ability to conduct your business unless you are an exceptional language student and have the time and the capacity to devote to studying the language after you are overseas. And that 3/3 foundation quickly crumbles if not used daily. Speaking a language as an adult is not easy in any language. I mean some are a little easier. Indonesian was relatively easy -- speaking not so difficult, or Spanish for an English speaker. Expressing yourself as an adult and conducting business in different languages is an entirely different matter. So we looked at that. We looked at the exam system, is it fair, particularly the way they do the written part of it. Are they testing for the right things? We made lots of recommendations.

Q: How did you find things in South Sudan? This is a brand new country and all. I would think it would be particularly difficult to run a mission there.

HURLEY: South Sudan was a consular district in the country of Sudan and had a big USAID mission, but in 2011, the new country was established. There is quite a lot of mineral wealth in the ground, but people can't stop killing each other over it. It is just a terribly tragic place. There are a couple of miles of paved roads in the capital city of Juba. The road by the Embassy was paved for just about the length of the embassy and then it immediately became a dirt road. Just poor and of course it is very hot. So we inspected it. I encouraged the PAO there to work more with USAID because there was a propaganda battle with the Chinese. The Chinese were building things like soccer stadiums while USAID focused on infrastructure and sewers. Not too hard to guess who got the better publicity out of it. Sudan itself was under a drawdown when we were there. It was a smaller staff so we did our business and left. It was a brand new facility built way outside the city for security purposes. The Embassy had a small library (Information Resource Center) that was used only by appointment. Things were still in plastic wrap because it was built so far from the city no one could get there.

Q: Any other places that stick in your mind.

HURLEY: Well each one is unique. We did Brazil where our conclusion was in Brazil they were doing fantastic things with educational exchange. The Ambassador was on board and public affairs did a great job in linking up with Brazil's initiative to send 100,000 Brazilians abroad for study. But Brazil is a great place to do cultural diplomacy and they had done less of it, so we encouraged them to adjust that balance. Not to stop doing education exchanges, but also not to forget about the cultural diplomacy in places like Rio or Sao Paulo. Japan was my last active-duty inspection -- Caroline Kennedy was Ambassador. I did Mexico before that. My sister and Marlina visited me in Merida, one of the Consulates cities. I had not seen Mexico before although Spanish was my first foreign language. It is a great country, another great eating country, Mexico is, and just a wonderful wealth of history. We got over to the Yucatan Peninsula

to the town of Merida where we have a consulate. On the other hand, Mexico is a big and diverse country and I know some awful places too. Cities where there is high crime and drug traffic. I went to a couple of those cities as well. We have nine consulates in Mexico.

Q: So what are you doing now?

HURLEY: I did the Department's job search program, a great course for those making the transition to "civilian life." I retired at the end of April 2015. One of the things I wanted to do in the job search program was to consider whether I want to work full time or part time. In going through this course at the Foreign Service Institute, it also occurred to me I never have had a hobby. In the Foreign Service you work quite a bit and then there is the family life if you have that, and I do. So I don't have any hobbies. So in answer to your question I have taken up a project that I always wanted to do which is family research. I am trying to find where the Irish side of the family, my father's side of the family, came from. It is my father's side that is almost a complete blank. At this point, the progress has been slow, but also rewarding. I am still collecting information from living sources -- the cousins and my sister. Hurley is a fairly common Irish name.

Q: I would think it would be fairly typical really.

HURLEY: But on the other hand you have computers and all this technology now that helps. Last year I was in the town where my father was born and raised, La Conner in the northwestern part of the state of Washington. I found somebody who suggested looking up ancestry.com. It is one of these companies that does this research. You pay a monthly fee and they give you access to all kinds of records. I found things like draft cards for WWI and WWII for my grandfather, and did find the name of my paternal great grandfather, Michael Hurley, who emigrated from Ireland. He left very few traces behind, having died at the grand old age of 37. The more difficult part is to determine where he lived (we know it's Cork, but that is like saying Fairfax County), where he left from, did he come alone, where did he land (could have even been Canada), what ship was he on, when? One cousin thinks his father was Timothy, but I have not found any documentation for that. Having some of these details will help me make the leap to doing research in Ireland. That is part of the fascination.

Q: That is great. Well anyway I thank you very much.

HURLEY: Thank you for the opportunity to get some of this down.

Q: This can be handed on to your kids, what I did during the cold war.

End of interview