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

AMBASSADOR JAY ANANIA

Interviewed by: Mark Tauber
Initial interview date: January 21, 2020

INTERVIEW

Q: Alright. So, today is January 21st, 2020, and we're beginning our interview with Jay Anania. Jay, we always start with where and when you were born.

ANANIA: Well, I was born in December 1959 in Washington, D.C. at the George Washington University Hospital, just a few blocks from the US Department of State.

Q: Were you a D.C. resident for all of your upbringing, or did you move after that?

ANANIA: I briefly resided in an apartment in Glover Park, just above Georgetown. My father worked for the National Security Agency. As a matter of fact, when he began at the National Security Agency, he was working on these very grounds (the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, VA).

Q: Wow. That's interesting, because at that time, was it the Army or the Navy… It was one of the branches that had control of it.

ANANIA: It was probably under the Army. I think it was an Army security group. They worked here. They had Quonset huts (so-named because the original company that made them was in Quonset, Rhode Island) or something like that in the '50s, and then they moved out to Fort Meade, Maryland. So, my parents bought a house in Silver Spring, Maryland, and that's where I grew up.

Q: That's interesting, because the property here was used for codebreaking in World War II. Was he, without going into classified things, involved in codebreaking?

ANANIA: Yes. He was involved with the "Soviet Problem," as I think they called it. He tells the tales of working here in the summer, without air conditioning, when it was so unbearable that they would all be let out early and they would go swimming at Glen Echo or places like that. Of course, they couldn't leave the buildings open, so they would become like ovens, with the DC-area heat and humidity.

Q: Sure. In a Quonset hut with no other cooling system… Holy cow. That's a real sacrifice. Alright, so, brothers and sisters?

ANANIA: Yes, I have two sisters.

Q: Where are you in the birth order?

ANANIA: I am the oldest. My sisters were born when we had already moved into the house in Silver Spring.

Q: Alright. Now, did your mother work?

ANANIA: My mother, Joan McKaig, left college with an offer to join the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). About 1950, she went down and spent some time with her sister in Raleigh, North Carolina while she was waiting for her clearances or whatever other bureaucratic events. Then, she was moved up to Washington DC, where she initially lived in a boarding house behind the Capitol and Supreme Court building. Again, she was waiting for some final clearances, so she worked for several months in temporary buildings along Constitution Ave on the National Mall. They were located down where the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is today.

Q: Yes. I remember a few of those last buildings from way back when I was going to Georgetown in the mid-'70s.

ANANIA: She had an overseas assignment to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Many years later, when I was in college, I received a big, fat envelope, I think from Johns Hopkins University. They were doing a study to see if the various microwaves and other things that were being beamed at U.S. government personnel way back had any long-term deleterious impact on the health of children. I don't recall ever being informed about the results -- perhaps they concluded that there was no such impact. The former Soviet bloc, and Yugoslavia wasn't exactly part of that, but they were also beaming a lot of things at the embassies. But my mother had a very interesting time in Yugoslavia, driving all over the country in her yellow Chevy convertible, which was frequently stolen. Somehow the authorities always knew precisely where it was.

Q: What a surprise.

ANANIA: Yes. She met and was quite friendly with the man who would have been king. She used to tell tales of going to the opera and parking right in front because there were no cars and no traffic. She had an interesting, but brief, career, which she left when she then got married. At the time, she was studying Cantonese and her next assignment would have been Hong Kong.

Q: How did she meet your father?

ANANIA: They met in high school. My mother was from northern Maine – Limestone, Maine – which is smack on the border with Canada. Her mother's parents had a potato farm, with livestock as well. It's where the U.S.-Canadian border runs due North/South and she used to like to ride her bicycle in Canada because the roads were paved. Her early life was there during the Depression. Her father was a John Deere mechanic and had a John Deere garage. But trying to sell equipment and get paid to repair equipment in potato country at the height of the Depression was not an easy task, so my grandfather Merrill McKaig ended up taking a job and working at the Portsmouth Naval Yard, which, interestingly enough, is actually not in Portsmouth.

Portsmouth is in New Hampshire, and the yard is in Kittery, Maine. All the land entrances to it are in Kittery, Maine. So, they moved down south, first to Portsmouth itself, and then Kittery, buying a house on Whipple Road, pretty much right outside one of the gates. My father was born and raised in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Because my mother lived in Portsmouth for a bit before they got their house in Kittery, my parents knew each other from high school. And the two towns were separated by a bridge, a WWI memorial bridge which lasted until its replacement in about 2015, and of course people moved back and forth.

Q: Wow. Now, before we move forward, a lot of people these days are doing ancestry work. Have you looked back at your forbearers?

ANANIA: On my mother's side, I wouldn't have to do much, because one of her ancestors published a book in the late 1800's tracing the Morris family. That was one of the family names. She was a Morris and a Bennett. It goes back to the eastern part of England in the early 1600's. They came to the U.S. – then the Colonies – in the early 1600's. So, on my mother's side it goes way back, with a lot of interesting things back there. That was her mother's side of the family. They ended up in New England and, ultimately, Maine. Her father's grandfather came from County Tyrone in what is today Northern Ireland. As I understand it, his father sent him off at the age of 14 with a merchant bound for Canada. Somehow he made it to America, settling in Wisconsin when it was a territory, and reportedly taking on the responsibility of placing the legal land claims of his neighbors when that became an option. He became a surveyor and reportedly laid out the town of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. My grandfather grew up on a dairy farm there. He joined the US Army and was training when World War I ended.

On my father's side, I don't have a lot of information. I just know that both of my grandparents came from the same town in Southern Italy – Gasperina in the region of Reggio Calabria, to be precise. My parents visited there in the 1980s and did meet one cousin, an Anania, who was still there. He was, of all things, an English teacher and a poet. He had a book of poetry he had written in Calabrese, the dialect of Italian. Unfortunately he passed away not long thereafter. My father, growing up with both parents from Italy, heard a lot of Italian. They had many Italian friends in their neighborhood of Portsmouth. But in the family lore my father's older brother, August (Augie), when he was fairly young, came home from school one day and declared that they were all Americans and they were going to speak English at home.

Q: Right. Not uncommon.

ANANIA: So, amongst the family, that's pretty much what they did. My father understood dialectic Italian, Calabrese, but he never learned to speak it until he himself was assigned to Rome. Then he took FSI (Foreign Service Institute) Italian, along with my mother. When Mark (the interviewer) and I joined the Foreign Service together, during a period when I was studying Spanish, they were studying Italian. So, we used to commute together. When he transferred to Rome, he always said he got along great with the embassy drivers and cleaners, most of whom came from the poorer south of Italy.

Q: Interesting. So, you begin life in Silver Spring. Did you go to school there? To public school?

ANANIA: Yes. It was public schools all the way in Montgomery County, Maryland. It's a very solid school system that's only gotten better, so I'm proud to be from Montgomery County. Both my sons had great educational opportunities overseas, but also benefited from the public schools in what is still my home county.

Despite that, I was fairly clueless when it came to college or what I might want to do.

Q: Oh, wait. Before we get onto college, just a little bit about education. When you were in school, did you take part in any other activities like scouting or band or track or sports or anything like that?

ANANIA: I did very little of that in any organized way. I would have been a terrible college applicant candidate by current standards. I feel sorry for all of these kids who are forced into doing all these activities that they may have no interest in doing, just so that they can build up their resume at the age of 15.

Q: Right. What about after school, part-time work?

ANANIA: Well, I was always very enterprising. I did a lot of different things. Some friends and I had a lawn-mowing business that we ran in the summers. In fact, I still have the flyer that my friend David Stembel, who's still an excellent graphic artist, made for us at the time. He's an architect now. I babysit, and I worked at Baskin-Robbins for a while. I also painted lead soldiers.

Q: Interesting. You purchased them, painted them, and then sold them? How did that work?

ANANIA: There was a shop in Wheaton, Maryland called the Little Soldier Shop. I was interested in war games at the time. There were board games, and that was the time when Dungeons & Dragons had just come out. So, some high school friends and I used to go over there and play Dungeons & Dragons. The owners were going to publish a game that they were working on that they had made for the Napoleonic wars. They sold little lead soldiers – 15-millimeter lead soldiers, which are pretty tiny – and the idea was that you would paint them and mount them on stands, and then conduct campaigns on tabletops. It was a ping pong table, in that case.

So, there were a bunch of men – they were all men – who were interested in this, and they wanted their soldiers painted. They would buy their strips of lead soldiers, and then I would paint them. That was great, because I could sit at home and listen to the radio and paint and do it at my own pace. So, I did that for many years. I even did that into my freshman year of college. The store even did an all-day re-creation of the Battle of Waterloo in the basement of the White Oak public library – I think that made the "Washington Post."

Q: Wow. Now, did your family travel while you were growing up?

ANANIA: We took family vacations, piling three kids and at some point a dog in the car. They were sort of a tamer version of National Lampoon's "Vacation" movies. We went all over the place. We used to go up into New England to visit family, but we also took trips that circumnavigated the U.S. We had a trip to the Northwest, where we visited national parks. We went to Yellowstone and Glacier and Mount Rushmore and places like that. My parents occasionally had friends who lived in these areas, so we could visit out there. We did another trip to the Southwest. They had some friends in Tucson, so we went to the parks including – Arches National Park, the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon. Then we also had a trip that went to the South. We went down to northern Florida and Georgia and various places like that.

Q: But no overseas travel?

ANANIA: The only two times were when we visited Tucson, the couple we were visiting took us down to, I think, Piedras Negras, Mexico, a border town. I remember going to a restaurant and having a hamburger. It wasn't a particularly impressive town, at the time, although as I recall, the fellow who took us down there said that they had fixed it up for the Olympics –the 1968 Olympics were in Mexico City. Perhaps he was joking. It must have been, I guess, just after that. It must have been '69, or maybe it was even '68.

Another time, when we took the trip along the northern parts of the U.S., to Glacier, we drove into Canada and then drove back east across Canada. So, we went to the beautiful Canadian national parks Banff and Jasper. Then, we had some extremely long rides driving east, stopping only in Moose Jaw and Thunder Bay, during which I discovered the truly flat plains, which in the US we associate with Kansas. We drove through Kansas, and it was relatively flat – it didn't have mountains – but it was rolling. It was when we got up to Canada it was dead flat. You could see for miles towards the horizon with nothing in the way.

Q: Was there anything while you were in elementary school or high school that began to get you interested in international affairs?

ANANIA: Well, my mother was always interested in that topic and, in particular, pointed me towards the Foreign Service. She had mentioned – probably not as early as elementary school, but when I was getting into high school and college – that this was a possibility, and that I could take the Foreign Service exam. So, that's where the idea originated.

Q: Had you, at that time, thought about an internship at the State Department?

ANANIA: As I mentioned, I was rather clueless about anything having to do with careers, so I didn't know anything about it and there was no one to provide any guidance in that direction.

Q: Okay. Were there other recollections from high school that, today, looking back, were somewhat formative to what you would end up doing? Were there particular teachers or something you read or a subject that really stuck with you?

ANANIA: Well, I did take some history classes in high school. That opened things up a little bit. As I mentioned, I was also very interested in war gaming and military things. Actually, from a very early age I was always fascinated by the military. The Vietnam War was going on, and that rather horrified me, the prospect that I would be drafted and sent off to Vietnam. But really, probably the most formative thing was that my father was assigned to Japan at the end of my high school years. They went off and left me behind because I was going to college. I stayed with a neighbor, and they moved to Japan.

So, I did get to go out to Japan after my freshman and sophomore years of college, and I did some travel within Japan. With my mother and sister, I went to Korea and went up to Panmunjom to the [Demilitarized Zone](#) and actually stepped into North Korea, which one could do at that time within the building where the armistice ending the Korean War was signed.

A short visit to N. Korea, summer 1979. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

That experience was a rather chilling reinforcement of what totalitarian communist governments were about. All the roads north from Seoul had what appeared to be bridges, but which were instead anti-invasion barriers, which apparently would be blown up to block the roads in case North Korea attacked. There were also several deadly attacks by North Korean troops violating the terms of the demilitarized zone, and we visited some exhibits on the American compound commemorating the victims of those murders. The American soldiers there had a club which I recalled was named for their nickname -- "The Merry Mad Monks of the DMZ."

I also went on my own to Taipei in the summer of 1978, during a period when we still recognized the Taiwanese government. That was quite interesting, and it turns out – this was during the Carter administration – it was only a few months (December 1978) before President Carter made the momentous decision to recognize the communist government of China and officially break relations with Taiwan. Perhaps it should have been obvious what was going to happen, because it was pretty clear that the base was being run down and they weren't investing in upkeep. So, I don't know if that was just bad management, or if they actually had some sense that we weren't going to be there for the long term. But at any rate, that was an interesting experience. Taipei was a bustling capitalist city, growing by leaps and bounds. The streets were clogged with small motorcycles, 100 cc or so, which far outnumbered the cars. When we later visited Taipei in about 2000, the city was almost unrecognizably grown, the US base had been turned into a park and redeveloped and the motorcycles had been replaced by cars. I went to Ho Chi Minh City about the same time, and despite Vietnam being ostensibly communist, the city's street level commerce and traffic reminded me distinctly of Taipei circa 1978.

During that period, because my father was assigned to Misawa Air Base in northern Japan, it was considered a hardship post. It was perfectly nice in the summer, but in the winter, it snowed almost every day. It was kind of muddy and gloopy and had volcanic soil, so there was a fine black grit that would get into just about everything. At any rate, because it was considered a hardship, we were eligible for special environmental and morale leave (EML) orders, which entitled us to fly what the Air Force called "space available," meaning if there was a seat on a plane out, we could fly.

The Anania family duplex officer housing, Misawa AFB, August 1979. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

We could go down to the air terminal and sign up for so-called "MAC flights" (Military Airlift Command) to specific destinations. You could show up when a flight to a desired destination was scheduled, and hope you'd get a seat. You could also wait for an "unsched" flight and you might get lucky and jump the line since people high on the lists probably wouldn't be hanging around the terminal. These flights were frequent to Yokota Air Force Base near Tokyo and from there you could hop flights to other locations. As I recall, the cost was $10 to the final destination, so the trick was to declare Bangkok, Seoul, or Taipei as the final destination and then if from Yokota you could catch a flight there your onward flights were free. If not, we could visit Tokyo or take trains to other locations. We had a great trip to the beautiful city of Kyoto, which largely survived World War II intact.

That's how we traveled around. There was quite a sub-culture of flying MAC. When I flew on my own to Taipei I had a hard time getting a flight out of Yokota, and was basically living in the terminal for a few days, mostly reading and trying to get a bit of shut eye. Military retirees could also fly space available and I remember hanging out with them a bit and playing cards. They designed the terminal seats out of molded plastic and they were about as uncomfortable as could be when it came to sleeping. The Japanese cleaning crew were also unpleasant and seemed to make it a point to wake us up as they worked overnight.

Q: Fascinating. So, to go back to high school for one more minute, I imagine your parents started talking to you about college, or you began getting interested from guidance counselors and so on. What were your thoughts about where you wanted to go to college and what you wanted to get out of the experience?

ANANIA: Well, the word clueless again comes up. I don't know why, but somewhere along the way I got it in my mind that I wanted to go to a liberal arts college. That was presumably from talking to my parents, though my mother went to the University of Maine and my father went to the University of Vermont, so neither of them had that experience. I applied to a variety of well-known colleges, most of which rejected me. I was accepted at Kenyon College, and I had visited a few colleges, particularly in New England, which was mostly where I had applied. On short notice, my father was kind enough to drive us out to Ohio, where we wandered around the campus for a day. We said, "Oh, well, this looks nice," so that's where I ended up going. To this day Kenyon has one of the most picturesque campuses you could imagine. The movie "Liberal Arts," made by Kenyon grad Josh Radnor and starring my classmate Allison Janney captures the place well.

Q: Now, Kenyon is whereabouts in the state?

ANANIA: Pretty much dead center. In fact, Centerville, Ohio is about 10 miles away.

Q: Okay. So, you liked the campus, and it had a good feel. How big was Kenyon, back then?

ANANIA: It was about 1,400 or 1,500 students; it's only slightly larger now.

Kenyon College, Leonard Hall, 2010. Image courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Great. But it is, in other words, the small, liberal arts experience?

ANANIA: Yes. The courses I took were economics, history, English, and some science and math classes, but pretty early on, I decided I wanted to be a history major. So, I did history and several political science classes, which were quite interesting. One in particular was on the history of the U.S. in Vietnam. That was an eye-opener.

Q: Yeah. We were literally ending the war just as you were beginning to study it.

ANANIA: Well, it had been over for a few years, but there were some very interesting works that we read. *Fire in the Lake* was a very influential book written by Frances Fitzgerald. Another was "The Best and the Brightest" by David Halberstam. Both made clear in great detail how bureaucratic processes and political decisions combined with ignorance about foreign cultures could lead to disaster.

Q: So, you chose history as your major. As it's getting to the end of the '70s, the old counter-culture movement is waning. Was there much political activity or political sense on campus when you arrived?

ANANIA: No, I would say there was not. Kenyon was fairly well-known for some of the things that went on there in the late '60s, but not so much when I was there. It was a pretty conservative bastion, I would say. A lot of kids and young people were from prep schools. There were a lot of preppies, which was something I was completely unaware of, prior to going there. There were guys wearing khakis, and girls wearing seafoam and pink wool sweaters. It was completely not what I was used to, coming from a public school that was in Silver Spring, Maryland and well-integrated. We had a school that went from AP (Advanced Placement) English to auto shop. That was great. In fact, it's a pity that our educational system has so devalued vocational training, because that was actually something that was quite a positive, back in my day.

Q: Right. Campus life. Were you involved in student government or any of the other activities that go on at a college?

ANANIA: I was one of the co-heads of the film society. We used to select films. We'd get a lot of interesting foreign films, the sort of things one would maybe see in college or at a so-called repertory theater but not necessarily otherwise. Things were quite different, then, because these were 16-millimeter films that came in big boxes and weighed 30 pounds. So, prior to the year, we would order these films. There were several companies that specialized in this. We'd put on, typically, four films a week.

Q: Wow, that is something.

ANANIA: We had a Wednesday night film, and then we'd have three films over the weekends. We'd show them back to back Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, two a night, each one twice. We were the projectionists. We'd be up in the projection room, threading the films into the 16-millimeter projectors and hopefully paying enough attention that we wouldn't miss the reel changes, and changing the lightbulbs before they burnt out.

May, 1980 – Kenyon College Film Society – Destruction Weekend Advertising
Lawrence Evans, Edward Spodick. Images courtesy of Jay Anania

Q: Oh, yeah.

ANANIA: We did have some fun, and showing "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and some related horror films made for a good "Destruction Weekend." I also was very active with Ultimate Frisbee, which was a…

Q: Take a moment, for people who don't know what Ultimate Frisbee is, to describe it.

ANANIA: It was a fairly new sport, at the time. Now it's popular enough that there are actually professional leagues and championships. At the time, it was a sport whose origins are somewhat clouded in history. Columbia High School in New Jersey was what we understood as the place where some high school students started this sport. It was probably played on a football field, or maybe a soccer field. (The sport is now just called "Ultimate" because "Frisbee" was a trademark of the Wham-O company, which was surpassed by many other "flying disc" companies.) The size of an Ultimate field is essentially the same as a football field. It's a little bit larger, including the end zones. You throw the disc to advance it, and once you catch the disc, you can't run with it. So, you advance the Frisbee by passing, and then a team scores by catching it in the end zone. So, there's constant running. I learned the game as part of the Washington Area Frisbee Club, which was founded by Larry Schindel, who attended Columbia High School and was one of the earliest players. My friend David Stembel was a keen player and dragged me down to the Washington Monument grounds, where we played every Sunday. We could park on the Ellipse, a secure zone for White House parking now.

At the time, it was kind of a countercultural sport. It was deliberately not supposed to be ultra-competitive. It had no referees, and it was supposed to be that you played friendly matches. That's pretty much the way it was, then, although it was changing. We did go to many other colleges to play. So, we drove all over Ohio on Saturday mornings. It was all very informal. Somebody had a crumpled piece of paper with a phone number, and they would call some guy at Ohio University or Oberlin or Antioch College in Yellow Springs, which was the ultimate in counter cultural places. They barely even cut the grass at that place. Unfortunately, I think Antioch went bankrupt at some point.

Kenyon Ultimate Frisbee Society, 1978 (Anania to the left of "Frisbee Fred" Grubb, KUFS "Czar" Perry Degner at left). Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

But, yeah, it was quite interesting to go around, and then they would come and play at Kenyon, as well. But we were right in the middle of the state, so for us, we could kind of go in any direction. We played at Ohio State one time, in the football stadium, as I recall. That was pretty funny. We played at Ohio University, which had like 25,000 students, and Kent State, which was probably 15,000. So, we played against some of these schools. But again, because it was kind of countercultural, it was just ragtag bunches. But a couple of places where we went – and, in fact, Ohio University was one of them – they were very organized, and they wanted to be like a football team. They ran plays. We didn't like that too much.

Q: That's a fair amount of activity. What about the academics? Were you surprised? Was it a lot harder than high school, or about what you expected?

ANANIA: I was pretty well prepared, relative to some of the other students who were there, but it was quite different, having to write research papers and things like that.

1980 Kenyon College: End-of-year studying frenzy (Thomas Preston, Peter N. Dayton III, Jay Anania). Images courtesy of Jay Anania

I had had a few notably good teachers in high school. One of them was a woman named Sylvia Wubnig, who was kind of a legend at Montgomery Blair High School, where I went. She was a fascinating woman, and I wish I knew more about her background, but she had been very involved in the New Deal and leftist politics. She was a somewhat eccentric woman, and she taught AP English. I had her for a class in which we read *The Iliad,* and we read it out loud. She would pose us moral problems. Our quizzes were like, "What's the right or wrong thing to do here?"

So, she was quite an influence, I would say, and improved our writing. But this is, I think, a real problem with the U.S. in general at the moment. We've sent a lot more people to college who aren't really prepared for it, and who don't get the counseling that they need – especially young people whose parents may not have gone to college. So, they're not necessarily prepared academically, but they're also not prepared in general to be at a college. There needs to be, I think, a lot more in the way of guidance for these young people. Traditionally, people who went to college came from well-to-do families with more resources, so maybe you didn't have all the issues you have today. But even for me, I was just thrown into it. You read the books, and you wrote the papers, and hopefully it came out.

Q: Now, also while you're in college, other than the summers, were there exposures to international relations? Were there clubs? Did you consider going abroad your junior year?

ANANIA: We did have a program at Kenyon that took some students to Exeter, England, but I didn't pursue that. So, no. I went to Japan those two summers, and that was pretty much it. I ended up taking the Foreign Service exam at the end of my senior year.

Q: Just to go back to Japan for one second: Since it was your first foreign experience, what stayed with you? What impressed you about being overseas for the first time?

ANANIA: Well, the first time I went, I did fly on a regular commercial flight. The second year, I didn't; I came in on an army transport, which was an interesting experience. The first year, in May 1978, I landed at Narita Airport, and at the time, it was an almost brand-new airport. It had been very controversial in Japan, because it was built outside of Tokyo in an area that had been an agricultural area. The farmers had protested, and back in those days, there was a very violent Red Army faction in Japan that was assassinating people and committing violent acts. Narita was, basically, an armed camp.

It seems kind of quaint, now, to think back on it, given what we ourselves in the U.S. do, including the State Department. But the airport was basically sealed off. You could only go there if you had a ticket or other business. I remember arriving, and my father must have sent me some kind of instructions by U.S. post about what to do when I got there: go down, get on this bus that would take me to where they were going to meet me. So, I remember coming in and just trying to soak it all in, basically, because it did seem so different. Getting on the bus, the bus was playing Japanese music. We went through the countryside, which looked very different and wasn't organized the way the U.S. or Canada were organized. So, yes, it made an impression. On the way back to the airport, we had to get out of the bus for some cursory security searches, which seemed highly unusual at the time.

Q: Great. So, now, you're completing college and you're taking the Foreign Service exam, but are you also thinking of other things?

ANANIA: Yes. I also was thinking about possibly going to business school, which is what I ultimately did. I went to business school in North Carolina. But another thing that I had been doing in college was that I had a business with a friend of mine, Peter Dayton, selling stereo equipment and accessories. We had a captive market. There were no stores in Gambier, Ohio other than the Kenyon College bookstore, which charged outrageous prices for the few things that they carried. Back in those days, people were making cassette tapes. Everybody had their albums, but then you could make cassette tapes of your friends' albums. So, there was a big market for that.

The hi-fi industry had changed. There had been some changes in the law. Previously, companies were allowed to enforce "list" prices. So, if Pioneer put out a receiver, and they wanted to say it was a $300 receiver, they insisted that all their dealers sell it for $300. But this was declared illegal restraint of trade sometime in the '70s, and so you had the development of mail order hi-fi companies, which were located particularly in certain states that had banned these practices of restraint of trade. Wisconsin was one of them. So, there was a company called Wisconsin Discount Stereo. We could buy equipment for far lower than the prices that were available anywhere locally. There really wasn't any place locally; you had to go to Columbus, which was 60 miles away and few students had cars.

So, we started to sell hi-fi equipment. We were both interested in it. We'd read the hi-fi magazines, and we would buy literally thousands of cassette tapes. We kept those in stock. We had cleaning devices for vinyl LPs (long playing record) and we knew how to install phono cartridges, or needles, as some people would call them. There was a lot of demand for that, because people would wreck their cartridge and then we could come over to their room. We offered excellent service and our prices were lower than the competition. We then ordered hi-fi equipment – amplifiers, speakers, receivers, cassette decks, whatever it might be – and we would get them COD (cash on delivery) from Wisconsin Discount Stereo or Illinois Audio. We'd add a markup and sell them.

1981 Kenyon College – Magic Mountain Audio, Pete Dayton, Jay Anania. Images courtesy of Jay Anania

So, we had a little business and kept ourselves in beer and pizza or whatever. So, when I left, I was wondering about what would happen with the Foreign Service. I decided to just move home. There was another hi-fi store where we also bought from called Hi-Fi Buys, which happened to be in Langley Park, Maryland close to my parents' home. I went in there and asked them if they'd like to give me a job, and they said, "Sure." So, I started working there, and that's what I was doing for a year. I finally ended up going to grad school in Chapel Hill and joined the Foreign Service after that.

Q: But it's so interesting to mention the stereo and the hi-fi equipment, because I remember, in high school, that people who were really interested in music in the highest fidelity and so on would buy parts separately and make their own hi-fi. They'd get some kind of a piece of furniture and the amplifiers and all of the other things, and I was amazed that they knew how to put all of these things together. This was a going concern, back in the late '70s.

ANANIA: Yes, and on college campuses at the time – I'm sure it's totally different now – it was certain kids who had some money who had really good stereos sometimes. It would sometimes be an issue when they played them too loud. I had a friend who I used to play Ultimate Frisbee with named Rich Talbot. He didn't have an expensive stereo, but he did have a stereo, and he played Grateful Dead records pretty much morning, noon, and night. In fact, you could walk down the hall – he lived way down the hall – and you could hear the sounds of the Grateful Dead. You'd get down there and his door would be open; he was at class, but still, the Grateful Dead were playing because he had a record changer, which permitted him to stack the LPs, which would play consecutively.

1981 Kenyon College Graduation – Edward, Joan, Jay Anania. Images courtesy of Jay Anania

Q: Wow. Okay. Now, the first time you took the Foreign Service exam, did you pass?

ANANIA: I did, but I didn't get onto the register, ultimately.

Q: Ah. Just because your score wasn't high enough, or because of the security test, or what? Why didn't you get on?

ANANIA: That's a little bit on the murky side, but eventually I had gone back to school, anyway, so I just took it again when I was in grad school and I was successful.

Q: Okay. So, now, how did you determine Chapel Hill? What about Chapel Hill attracted you?

ANANIA: It was a well-regarded school, and it was very inexpensive.

Q: Even for out of state, because you weren't a resident there yet?

ANANIA: Yes. So, I'm grateful to the citizens of North Carolina for making public school education affordable. That's another huge problem for this country now. During the '70s and '80s, the University of Maryland had nowhere near the quality that it does now. Now it's a highly selective school; when I was there, it was not. I don't even recall considering business school at the University of Maryland.

So, I looked at some other schools. I went up and visited a friend who was going to Wharton in Pennsylvania, but I ended up not applying because it was $30,000 a year or whatever it was then. The University of North Carolina tuition was negligible – it was $2,500 a year, or maybe a semester. I can't remember, but it was affordable. So, I managed to go down there and support myself and graduate with a very low amount of debt.

Q: That, obviously, is fantastic. While you were in graduate school, this was business school. Your terminal degree was an MBA (Masters of Business Administration).

ANANIA: Yes.

Q: What did you focus on?

ANANIA: It was on the finance side of things. It was somewhat a generalist program, so we took marketing and operations, but we also did things on the side of the numbers. Corporate finance was my specialty. If the State Department hadn't called me right around the time I was graduating, I probably would have gone into banking or another career in finance.

Q: There were a lot of banking programs at the time that were taking fresh-out-of-MBA-school students, because they wanted to train them and impress their own corporate identity on them.

ANANIA: Yes. I had some interviews in North Carolina and New York. North Carolina, at the time, was a hotbed of banking. The U.S. had changed some of the laws and opened up interstate banking for the first time because of the savings and loan crisis. The government was trying to get banks to absorb bankrupt savings and loans and let them do that across state lines. So, NCNB, North Carolina National Bank, as it at one point was called, was acquiring all sorts of banks in Florida and elsewhere. Wachovia Bank was a very well-regarded bank, also in North Carolina. The banking industry was the number one employer of my graduating class members.

Q: Were there any other experiences in that two-year program that also exposed you to international finance or other things that would help prepare you to enter the Foreign Service?

ANANIA: Very little, perhaps a few business case studies of firms with overseas operations.

Q: But the recruiters came to campus?

ANANIA: Yes. They did. It was interesting, because ultimately, I would say that my MBA was at least as useful to me in the Foreign Service as the history degree, but both were very useful and in different ways. One of the things that was particularly useful about the MBA, which might be a little counterintuitive, was honing writing skills. We were going from college, where you had to write a 15-page research paper and you were potentially trying to pad it to reach the 15 pages, to the MBA where, in some of the classes, you were limited to a single page. You had to summarize an issue and make recommendations about a company.

The way that they taught at North Carolina was case based, so you would read anywhere from a few pages to dozens of pages about a company, and these cases were generally written by professors at other business schools. *Harvard Business Review* published many cases. Then, you had to say what you thought the company should do, and you had to be very concise. So, it was the rare paper there that maybe went more than three or four pages. That was very useful as a skill to come into the Foreign Service, and, frankly, one that was lacking in the Foreign Service. A lot of people were very long-winded, writing in the passive voice, particularly. It's still that way.

Q: I can't object. There's certainly an element of State Departmentees that could afford a little bit of change.

ANANIA: We all have our little idiosyncrasies, and if you were to talk to people who worked for me over the course of my career, they would definitely point to that. I was very clear that I wanted concise material in the active voice, and because I was mostly in administrative management positions, I would say, "We are in management. We are active. We do things. I don't want any of this 'has had' stuff in our memos and my cables."

Q: So, you took the Foreign Service exam again while you were in Chapel Hill, and you did well enough to get on the register this time. You did get on the register?

ANANIA: Yes.

Q: When you did, did they tell you which cone you were most likely to be offered? How did that work?

ANANIA: No. This was probably in the dark days of the recruitment efforts of the State Department. I heard all kinds of horror stories about people being told things that weren't true, like, "We're offering you a consular position, and if you don't take it, you've got no chance of ever getting hired." That sort of thing. Then, they would turn it down and get hired as a political officer or whatever it is that they wanted to do. But in my case, their communication wasn't particularly specific at all. I just got on the register, and when they called me, they said, "Administrative cone?" (It became the Management cone.)

I said, "Well, I'm coming out of an MBA program, so that makes sense to me." So, I just did it. It didn't occur to me to hold out for anything, but, in fact, I was perfectly happy to be in the management cone.

Q: The last question for the graduate years: Were you thinking about any foreign travel or foreign study before you went into the Foreign Service?

ANANIA: No.

Q: Okay. So, you were really looking forward… Once you knew you could get in, you weren't thinking about other alternatives.

ANANIA: No.

Q: Okay. Great. What I'm going to recommend is that we pause here, since we're just about ready to follow you into the Foreign Service, and we'll pick up at the next session with A-100, training, your first assignment, and so on. We'll take it from there.

BREAK

Q: Today is January 24th, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Jay Anania as he goes into A-100. Jay, what year did you enter A-100?

ANANIA: That was June of 1984. We were the first class that was in the new retirement system.

Q: That's right. Interesting that you remember that.

ANANIA: Well, I remember it in part because the State Department didn't actually have a new retirement system, and we were without one for quite a while. We ended up being somewhat financially penalized for that.

Q: Alright. So, you get there, and you're still single. You hadn't married yet?

ANANIA: Correct.

Q: Okay. So, what were your impressions? This is your first time working for the government.

ANANIA: This was the first time I was working in an office at all, as a matter of fact. We had an interesting class. There was a lot of age diversity in the class. I suppose that was the beginning period when the Department was hiring more people who already had a lot of professional experience, so I think the average age of our class was somewhere in the 40's. I was on the very low end of the scale; there were two or three of us who were in our early 20's.

So, it was definitely an adjustment. I had no money. I had very few professional clothes. Fortunately, I was hired from Chapel Hill, North Carolina where I was in graduate school, so I was on per diem. I could at least eat. I think our first paycheck was fouled up and we didn't get paid for a month, so there was that. So, yeah, it was an adjustment in many ways, but overall, positive. We had a lot of interesting activities, and I think our class coordinators did a good job. It was Kathy Peterson and Glen Munro. Rest in peace to Glen. Kathy went on to a very successful career, including at least two ambassadorial assignments. She also headed FSI where we are doing this interview.

Q: Looking back, were there any particular things you learned in A-100 that were particularly valuable in your career later on?

ANANIA: That's an interesting question. We had to learn the bureaucracy, so I guess that was really useful, especially since I was going into the management side of the house. Some of those sessions were quite interesting. But also there were just the nuts and bolts things, like what's a telegram, and what are TAGS and Terms (the system by which the Department added meta-data to official communications). It's unfortunate that, it would appear, entering employees don't seem to learn some of those things very well anymore.

As I've supervised other officers and civil servants over the years, I'm just amazed at the poor level of basic State-centric professional skills. They don't know how to prepare and mark cables or use the SMART software, which by the way, we can talk about when we get to that, because I was working a lot on that project. Ultimately, the Department just had to dumb the system down.

I had a very different perspective because I didn't have professional experience before. Many other new colleagues were quite different; we had people coming from military backgrounds and various professions. So, we had a very good group in our A-100 class.

Q: Okay. So, now, as the A-100 proceeds to its end, we get to a point where you're putting together your bid list for your first tour. What were your thoughts back then, if you recall?

ANANIA: Well, back then, the post reports were printed. They had blue covers, and I remember reading those. They were stacked in the back of the room we were in, which was at 1500 North Kent Street in a building the State Department still occupies. I remember being somewhat appalled at the conditions of some posts. I believe it was Nigeria where they had this whole section on how the insects were so voracious that you had to put your food in boxes and somehow suspend them from the ceiling or something. My limited overseas experiences didn't prepare me for that.

But in putting together my bid list, I had no problem with going out and doing a hardship tour or a consular tour first. That was the expectation. I don't know that I bid on any other types of positions. I had some French in high school, so I thought, okay, that would be a good thing to learn. I like French movies. I'd like to be able to read books in French. So, I bid on Port-au-Prince, Haiti. We had two positions there, and I figured, this is a real hardship post. Chances are I'll go there. Then, I had many other diverse posts on the list and several different bureaus. Lo and behold, I didn't get anything on my list. I was assigned to Tijuana. I was not pleased about going to a border post. I figured, if I'm joining the Foreign Service, I want to go overseas to someplace exotic. So, it was Tijuana.

Q: Right. Did you get any Spanish language training to go along with the assignment?

ANANIA: I did indeed. Like most of the new officers who were coming in then, we were going to consular posts, so we took consular training and whatever language we needed. In some cases, it seemed almost perverse that colleagues who spoke one language would be assigned to posts where they had to learn another.

Q: Did you have Spanish to get all the way to a 3/3, or was it not that highly designated?

ANANIA: Unfortunately, my position was only designated as 2/2, which made no sense. Welcome to the State Department. The policy at Tijuana was actually to rotate officers pretty much indiscriminately between the non-immigrant visa, immigrant visa, and American Citizen Services sections. But the positions themselves were tied to different sections. Perhaps mine was officially tied to the American Citizen Services, and for whatever reason, was only designated as a 2/2, which was really, in retrospect, ridiculous. In fact, no matter what section you worked in, you needed to speak Spanish.

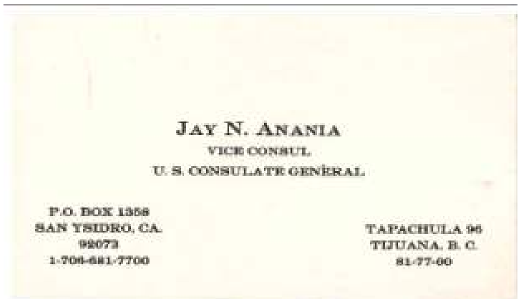
The common perception was that you would get the score you needed to go out. I saw some instances where that appeared to be true. Not that my Spanish was notably good – quite the contrary. I think I went out with a 2+/2+ or something like that. It was just enough to keep me on language probation, which was fine. My Spanish was not good, and I learned it on the visa line. I learned it the hard way. Then, having social relationships in Tijuana with Mexicans helped. I do remember having to do some translation for one of my bosses, who had "earned" a 3/3 for his position. I'm very pleased to say that my Spanish continues to improve to this day, in large part thanks to the fact that I got married in Tijuana.

Q: We will get to that. The consular training – as you think back, was it adequate? Did it prepare you for what you were getting into?

ANANIA: Yes. I think they did a good job there. FSI had a sort of little set up in Rosslyn, including a fake jail, where we could go and play act. In fact, we role-played the American citizen locked up, and we would help our colleagues conduct mock interviews with us and things like that. So, yes, generally speaking I would say that the training was effective. It definitely would have been preferable to have the Spanish more focused on the things that we were going to be doing in the consular section.

I think this is something that FSI continues to struggle with to this day. I don't think it's ever really been satisfactorily resolved. Why not have several weeks where we just spoke Spanish and role-played as if we were visa applicants ourselves or interviewing officers. That definitely should have been an area for improvement. But the consular course itself was just fine. Back then, it was very much rules-based, so we spent a lot of time reading the Foreign Affairs manual and guidance. But that was appropriate. We were there to implement the law, and that's what we did.

<u>1985-86 US Consulate General, Tijuana, Mexico</u>



Q: Now, when you arrived in Tijuana, how big was the section? Give a brief capsule of what the consulate was like back then.

ANANIA: Okay. I'm trying to think what the number of American employees was, and I want to say it was about 15. We had four people in the NIV (non-immigrant visa) section, perhaps two in American Citizen Services, two in the front office – the consul general and his then-secretary, now office management specialist – one management officer, and the rest were in the immigrant visa section. We had a head of the overall consular section. So, maybe a little bit more than 15.

1985 Consulate General Tijuana – Immigrant Visa Waiting Area, Interview Windows – Note lack of physical security barriers. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

1985 Consulate General Tijuana, rear of building. Consul General office clearly visible at level of unguarded parking lot. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Was that enough? In other words, for the amount of visas that you handled, was it more or less sufficient?

ANANIA: I would say yes, but unfortunately, that post was notably badly organized and managed. In fact, later, my career development officer told me that when they assigned people to Tijuana, they considered that we were being sent to the worst post in the Foreign Service. I'm not sure why they thought that, but the fact of the matter was that those who were not junior (now entry-level) officers were in several cases there for other than professional reasons. They didn't go there because of some great challenge professionally. They were there because they had family problems; they needed to be close to the U.S. It was possible to send your kids across the border every day to go to school. Whatever it might have been.

We did have some notably good officers there, but overall, it was not a strong crew, and we had a lot of management problems. Now, it's become a lot more visible, but we had problems with sexual harassment complaints, EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) complaints – some of which were justified. We also had someone who was constantly extremely disruptive and a very poor performer, who would then abuse those processes of complaint to get back at people. So, really, it was very unfortunate, because they were using those processes improperly.

We had a couple of junior officers who basically said, "That's it. This is terrible. I'm not going to continue," and resigned from the Foreign Service afterwards. The other thing was that at that time there was a program called the Stateside Criteria Program. This was a bizarre, sort of Frankenstein-like program that would allow people who were illegally in the United States but who had some claim to an immigrant visa to apply for the visa, be approved through the Immigration and Naturalization Service, INS, as it was then called – later it got wrapped into what is now the Department of Homeland Security as Citizen and Immigration Services– and instead of having to go back to their home country to have their immigrant visa interview, they could come to a border post for visa adjudication.

The Consulates General in Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana were the border posts in Mexico that had this program. There were also some posts in Canada where this could be done. I'm not exactly sure, in the mists of time, how this was organized or how they determined which cases went to Juarez as opposed to which cases went to Tijuana. But both the Mexican posts got cases that were truly horrible, and by horrible, I mean that the incidence of fraud was extremely high.

One of the major problems was that the previous management of the post had allowed an enormous backlog of these cases to build up. So, about the time I got there, the word came down from D.C., "You've got to clear these cases." I originally was assigned to the NIV section, and our workload was moderate, the reason being that most people in Tijuana didn't want to get visas. They wanted to get border crossing cards. Those could be obtained at the border from INS. So, the reason people wanted those was that you didn't need to get a passport, which was somewhat difficult to get for Mexicans. They had to travel to Mexicali, which was a city to the east, and basically do an overnight trip there to obtain a passport before coming back to get their visa.

The other thing was that a passport is an unwieldy thing to carry in your pocket, whereas if you got a border crossing card from INS, you got a credit card-sized credential. It was just easier to get, and it was easier to use. It didn't allow you to overnight in the U.S., or travel more than a limited distance from the border (I recall 25 miles). However, if you did want to stay overnight, you could request permission to do so. In fact, since there was little enforcement of our immigration laws in the interior of the U.S., once people were across the border they could easily remain there.

So, we didn't have a tremendous demand for non-immigrant (tourist) visas. I would say that with three interviewing officers, we were probably each interviewing about 75 cases a day or less, which wasn't bad. We finished up by early afternoon and had time to process paperwork or take care of other projects.

To actually enter them into the system as ineligible section 212-A-19 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, we had to write a cable stating the facts and send it to the Department requesting approval. Again, Tijuana was poorly managed. We were sort of discouraged from doing that, but I felt that it was my responsibility, so I did it anyway. I would send in these cables, and they would always be ratified by the Department. Then the person could be officially entered in that way. But in order to do this, you had to go up to another floor, where we had a little office with one or two terminals. Otherwise, we were sitting around typing on IBM (International Business Machines) Selectric typewriters.

On the immigrant visa side, post management decided to process 135 cases a day. This sticks in my mind. They organized it really badly. Actually, it was 135 **people** – not cases -- per day. They organized it so that on certain days, they had families coming in, and on other days, they just had single people coming in which typically meant it was the wife or husband of the petitioner. What that meant was that on some days you had 135 separate cases to process, while on other days, you might have only 65 cases, which included multi-person family units with spouses and children. To make it worse, it was those single cases that were the most prevalent and where you saw the highest prevalence of fraud. So, some days, when the families were coming in, were relatively light work. But the days when you had 135 individual people coming in, it was horrendous.

To make matters worse, there was no requirement that the petitioner actually show up with the applicant. So, you might show up, and you're the applicant. Now I'm trying to interview you to determine if your marriage is really a valid marriage or not, but I don't have your supposed spouse there with you. So, as I said, there was a very high prevalence of fraud, and some of it was quite obvious. The Immigration and Naturalization Service had a great difference in the quality of their review, depending on which office received and processed the original petition.

As I recall, the worst was Newark, New Jersey, where you had a lot of people who potentially were open to committing fraud. You had a lot of Spanish speakers who were American citizens, including many Puerto Ricans. So, what would tend to happen was, you might come in from Colombia or Peru or wherever you were from – we had a lot of cases from Colombia – and you could have a phony marriage, pay somebody to get married or maybe you were friendly with them and they were doing you a favor. Whatever it might be. The paperwork would be submitted in Newark. The office there would give only cursory glances to things; they didn't do their job, because they should have been interviewing people to make sure that these were legitimate marriages. They would approve them, and then this poor-quality paperwork would make its way over to us. The worst part of the Stateside Criteria Program was that we were seeing applicants who were coming from countries where we had never been and that we knew nothing about.

So, for instance, Colombia, as I recall, had a lot of official documents issued by notaries public. Well, we had no idea if these notaries were legitimate, or if they themselves were corrupt. Who knew? So, even the basic documents, even the birth certificates – which were used to prove someone was, for example, the child of an American citizen or someone who was applying for an immigrant visa -- were questionable, and yet here we were trying to adjudicate these things. There was a lot of pressure on the officers at our post to simply issue the visas to clear the backlog of cases. What would happen is, if you had a bad case, we would do our best – I think the junior officers definitely did – to delve into the case and try to figure out what was really going on.

We had what, at that point, was a very wonderful innovation, which was called a tie line. Even though we were in Mexico, we could pick up the phone and dial nine, or whatever the number was, and get a line to the U.S. Then, we could make long distance calls. So, we would call. If the petitioner wasn't there – let's say it's a woman, and she claims that she works at a particular company or officer – we would call them up and say, "Hey, we've got Jorge here. He's married to Maria. Just checking to see if Maria really works there."

Quite often, "Well, no."

There were times when I would say, "Hey, Jorge whatever the last name was," and they'd say, "Oh, yeah. He's a great employee. His wife, Dolores, and the four kids…"

And I'd say, "Wait a minute. The petitioner isn't Dolores."

So, sometimes we really could reject these people. But the crowning indignity under all of this was that under the terms of the Stateside Criteria Program, if we rejected them for fraud, they could still go back to the U.S.! The US had made an agreement with Mexico. Mexico didn't want all of these people coming down there, getting rejected and then getting stuck in Mexico, presumably then trying to cross the border illegally. So, we had made an agreement that said, basically, if they're rejected, they still get to go back to the U.S. INS would "parole" them back into the US. So, this was a very poor introduction to the Foreign Service, as you can imagine.

We also knew that our post's consular section was badly run. One of the reasons we knew was because we had statistics about what was happening in Juarez. There, with immigrant visa cases similar to ours, they were turning down, as I recall, something like one third of the cases for fraud. We were turning down less than 10%. Well, they were coming, basically, out of the same pool. Juarez had a reputation of being a well-run post with a consul general who was on top of these things. Logically, we should have been turning down a lot more people. One reason that we weren't was that we would get to the end of the day, and if it was a bad day and we had a bunch of cases where we had really done our due diligence, obviously we hadn't plowed through the 135.

These cases were on paper, in folders, and they were stacked on the table. I can still remember this in my mind. The head of the IV (Immigrant Visa) section, who didn't typically do interviews, for some reason – frankly, I don't know what he did most of the time – would just come out, pick up a stack of these things, and start calling people up to the window and swearing them in. "Raise your right hand, yes, boom, you're approved." That was with nothing more than cursory review of any of these cases.

So, if you were trying to commit fraud, and you got lucky and your case was assigned to Tijuana, the best thing that could happen to you was if your case was at the bottom of the pile. Basically, it was a "get into the U.S. as a citizen for free" card. That was quite discouraging.

Q: Just by contrast, my first assignment was to Jamaica as a consular officer. We had non-immigrant visas and immigrant visas. An immigrant visa would typically take an officer half an hour to 45 minutes, because you'd have to review all of the documents. Every once in a while, documents would be missing or questionable, so you would send them away to fix it. We maybe did a dozen immigrant visas a day with three officers interviewing because we reviewed every single thing. If something was wrong, we sent you away. So, it's just an interesting comparison of the way things were done in Ciudad Juarez as compared to another very high visa applicant pool in Jamaica.

ANANIA: Yes. That really points to the progress that the State Department made over the years, and in particular that the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA). I would say CA led the way in many things, and further on in this discussion, I'll probably mention them again. But at that time, CA was just at the very beginning of the process of trying to closely track the performance of overseas posts and statistics. CA/EX, the executive office of CA, continued to progress. Very importantly, our IT (information technology), back in the time when we were junior officers, was very poor.

The only thing that we had was something called the AVLOS – Automated Visa Lookout System – which was a very rudimentary thing. I guess you could type in the name of the person and the birthday, and then it would spit out whether this person had recently come in for a visa somewhere. Sometimes, people would visa shop, so you could have people show up at the border who had just been turned down in Mexico City or wherever it might be. And if the phone line was down, our Mexican staff would be reduced to checking records which were on microfiche, often months old. That was about it.

Otherwise, we just had paper files, and we would put stamps on the last page of the passport, noting the date when people came in and requested a visa, this being an unstated notation that they had been <u>rejected</u> for the visa on that date. So, if they were turned down, we could tell because the stamp was in the passport. Of course, you could just get another passport, and then we wouldn't know that. You could come in and say you've never been in before, and we might not figure that out. So, what CA has done in the meantime – going to centralized databases and connecting all the posts globally to these databases – now allows us to be infinitely more effective. You can also much better track your own performance as an officer, or whether people have been apprehended in the U.S. for overstays.

In our day, we would just receive, periodically, envelopes from INS with copies of reports. If somebody that your post had issued a visa to was apprehended in the U.S. for an overstay or any other reason, INS would typically report this back to the post. So, that was at least some feedback, but it was kind of sporadic and it wasn't really used in any clear way.

Another problem we had in Tijuana, frankly, was that we had a very poor manager in the non-immigrant visa section. She was… I don't know. She wanted people to be judged on subjective characteristics. She used to say, "You have to look at the person, not the documents." There was truth to that, but when the documents are clearly fallacious…

You know, people would try to prove that they had a job, and they would bring in copies of what were called *nominas* (payroll), which were usually hand-written, on accounting paper, lists of when people were paid. Some of them were just obviously created that morning, all on the same paper with the same pen. That sort of thing. You know, you just didn't feel like you wanted to give a visa to somebody like that. Now, it could be that they really did work at the place and they just couldn't get the records, so they made them up, but nonetheless, come on. That was pretty common.

We also had a problem with third country nationals, people who were not Mexicans, showing up in Tijuana for various reasons to get their visas. This included people who were already in the U.S. on trader or student visas or what have you. It was just convenient for them to come visa shopping down to Tijuana. They might even have a valid visa to go back. So, they would come down to get the visa in Tijuana. But again, we didn't know anything about South Koreans or Bulgarians. Sometimes, when I would dig into cases, I would send telegrams to the post where they should have gone, and you would find out that, in fact, they were stretching the truth or what they were saying was just outright false. My supervisor at the time would actually discourage us from doing that. She just wanted to keep the line moving. So, again, it was a very poorly run post and discouraging for the officers trying to uphold the law.

Q: Once again, just by contrast, we did the same thing in Jamaica. We would get, periodically, people from Lebanon, maybe, because Jamaica is so multi-ethnic. They might have relations in India, they might have relations in South America. Various people were showing up. We, periodically, would send cables to these countries and say, "Are these real companies? Does this sound right to you?" The replies would come back hilarious. Every kind of fraud that you could imagine was there, and of course, we would deny the visa, but it was, at a time when we didn't have the centralized system, a reasonable way of at least preventing a certain amount of fraud from taking place.

ANANIA: But very discouraging, especially to the bright new entry level officers. Though in some cases I felt that my two fellow officers in the non-immigrant visa line were experienced professionals, they were new to the Foreign Service. Well, in fact, in one case, one of my co-officers (Claudia Serwer) had been a Foreign Service secretary for many years before becoming an FSO. She was the spouse of a fellow who became an ambassador and deputy assistant secretary among other things. So, she had a lot of experience and perspective. She was very helpful to me in telling me that, hey, it's not like this everywhere. This is an aberration. Don't completely sour on the Foreign Service based on this. She had worked in posts that had been much better managed and knew that things were going off the rails. So, that was very helpful mentorship.

Q: Now, in American Citizen Services, the typical thing you have to do is visit Americans in jail or something like that. What I think many people don't realize is that there were over two million American citizens living in Mexico who required passport needs, records of birth, or a whole variety of things. What was the American Citizen Services like for you when you were there?

ANANIA: Well, the biggest things that we did were visiting people in jail, usually for charges of drunk and disorderly or drugs, and stolen car recovery. A lot of cars would be stolen in California and simply driven over the border, because there were almost no checks coming into Mexico at that time. Things have changed at the border, but you could basically steal a car in the U.S. and drive it to Mexico and sell it or drive it around for a while and abandon it. So, there were whole lots full of cars that were recovered, for one reason or another. I never worked in the ACS section myself.

I only ended up staying in Tijuana for 15 months, because my second assignment was to Jordan, and for some reason, they decided that they really needed to rush me out there. Our post was badly managed, so they let that happen, which, in retrospect, they probably shouldn't have. After about a year, I had worked in the NIV section and started working in the IV section. Our management officer was removed from post for poor performance and general disruptiveness, and I became the acting administrative officer – with no training whatsoever, I should note. That was another story.

But as far as the American Citizens work, all of us had to stand duty. So, every three months or so, you were on duty for a week. There was barely a day that went by that I didn't get calls at night, at home, related to somebody being arrested or, in some cases, to medical problems. The strangest things would happen. I remember getting a call, one time, from a family in the U.S. – I don't know where they were, but maybe it was California; most of them were in California – about how their son had disappeared. He had mental health issues, and he was running out of his medicine or was likely out of his medicine. They told me he was down somewhere in Baja California Sur, which was a long way away.

I had never been there. I just had numbers for these places – the police or the hospitals or whatever – and so I remember that for this one, I just called the police station. They said, "Oh yeah, he's here. Would you like to talk to him?"

"Okay, sure." You find out that this guy had been picked up for something or other, and I could put the parents in touch with him. A lot of strange things like that would happen. That was bizarre, being able to basically solve the problem with a phone call. My Spanish, again, wasn't very good, so I was using halting Spanish while trying to talk to these police down in wherever it was.

But the other thing was that on the weekends, we had to visit the jails. During the week, we had professional staff who would be in touch with the police or the hospitals or other institutions. The officers in the American Citizen Services section would go and visit these people. But if they got arrested on Friday or Saturday night, then the Foreign Service National (Mexican citizen) colleagues who worked for us would call around in the morning, find out how many people had been arrested and where they were, and then call the duty officer. You'd have to go and visit them. At the time, there were three separate jails: they had a municipal jail, they had a state police jail, and they had a federal police facility – each level could potentially arrest people.

Most of them showed up at the municipal jail, which in Tijuana was known as *Calle Ocho*, or Eighth Street. It was really a scene out of a movie. You'd go in there, and from the street, you'd walk into a little alcove. They had windows where I could go in and say, "I'm from the consulate. I understand you've got some people here." They would just kind of bring out these hand-written logs that would show all of the people who were locked up the previous day. It was very unscientific, because you had a lot of people who were Mexican Americans who would get locked up. So, unless they had an obviously non-Mexican name, they didn't necessarily know if these people were Americans. Some people were legal permanent residents who we weren't responsible for, because we only dealt with American citizens.

So, you'd go in, and maybe I would be told there were two people there. One time I went, and I was told that there were one or two people there. I ended up interviewing, I want to say, seven or eight people. I would talk to one person, and they would say, "Oh, yeah, but there's this lady in the next cell. I think she's American."

So, I'd ask the guard, "Is she American?"

"We don't know. You want to see her?"

"Okay. Bring her on down."

Often, they would just bring them down, and I'd talk to them through the window, which I may be remembering was a barred opening with no glass, but this one time – in fact, it was this very day – it was a really strange thing. Some American had stolen an RV (recreational vehicle) in the US and decided that he was going to drive this thing on vacation down to Mexico. Somewhere along the way, he picked up a couple of young American women and had them in the RV with him when something happened that got them apprehended. He took great pains to say that he just picked these women up and they were hitchhikers. I don't know where he encountered these women. No, they didn't have anything to do with any of whatever it was he was up to. They didn't know it was a stolen RV or whatever. So, I interviewed him, and I interviewed the women.

But then somebody said, "Oh, well, there's also a woman upstairs who we can't bring down." So, I went into the jail. It was a central courtyard, and a three- or four-story jail. It had the bars, the doors, whatever you think of as a jail. I had to walk up, because she was up on the third or fourth floor. People were yelling, and they were banging things on the walls. I think they were cleaning or doing something, so they were spraying water from hoses, and people were throwing water. I remember that I was wearing a polo shirt, and I got water all over it.

I go up, and there's a woman. She was an American street person, a homeless person, who had somehow wandered over the border. She had no clothes. She was wrapped in blankets. They had given her blankets. She was somewhat coherent, so I interviewed her and managed to get a contact name for her, I think her sister. I was able to then call the sister. Who knows what became of it, because as a weekend duty officer, you didn't necessarily carry through. But I had a variety of these experiences.

Another time I went to one of the prisons, and this was not the municipal jail. They had a guy locked up who was an American from Alabama or maybe Mississippi. He was in the Navy, and he had arrived on a ship recently. He had somehow gotten it into his mind that he would go down to the border and rob the illegal aliens who were coming across. This was a known phenomenon. The people who were coming across would often hire people to escort them. The people who were trying to get across were known as chickens, or *pollos.*

So, they had what they called *robo pollos* (rob chickens), where criminals would rob these people, who were often carrying cash. They would be illegally crossing into the U.S., and thieves – often Mexican thieves from Tijuana – would go into the canyons on the US side of the border, which is where these people were coming through. Just east of the Pacific Ocean is a sort of flat plain where the official border crossing is. As you move east, this then becomes very rugged countryside. This was where people would cross, many from the Colonia Libertad district of Tijuana. There was an open area on the Mexican side of the border, which was known to some as the "soccer field." People intending to cross would gather in the evening, perhaps kick a ball around, buy some food from mobile vendors and wait for the cover of darkness.

This guy, I don't know how he even thought to do this. He had gone down to rob these migrants. Our Border Patrol people had somehow encountered him and attempted to arrest him, so he ran into Mexico, where the Mexican police arrested him. Now he had washed up in either a federal or a state jail – it was probably the federal jail – and he was just stuck there. He was kind of cut up and bruised, because he had been running through the canyons and fell down, perhaps he had a scuffle with the Mexican authorities, he didn't say. I went out to a drug store and bought some paper towels and alcohol so he could clean the wounds. He wasn't appreciative. Because he was a Navy sailor, the Consulate wasn't responsible for him – the Navy Shore Patrol took over.

So, those were the kinds of things you would see in Tijuana that you wouldn't necessarily see other places. Literally, as in the case of the homeless woman, pretty much anybody could just roll into Tijuana. The more typical cases were young people who would cross over – the drinking age was 18 in Tijuana and 21 in California, at the time – and get drunk. They would be arrested for drunk and disorderly, and typically, if they had 50 or so dollars, they could just pay the fine and leave, but if they didn't, they had to spend up to three days in jail. So, we would get calls from parents who were wondering about where little Timmy was or what have you.

Sometimes, if you went to the jails, people didn't want us to tell anybody that they were there. They said, "I'll just do my three days and go back and pretend it never happened." So, we really saw a lot of weird things. The ACS officers saw more than the duty officers did. We had the case of the headless American, one time. Some Americans had gone down to Ensenada, which is a city a little bit to the south, and they had some bars that were popular with Americans. They had gotten drunk, and somehow had gotten into a traffic accident that resulted in an American being killed and beheaded. They drove up to the border, and as they were crossing, INS noticed that there was blood on the car and detained them for a while. But I guess because the incident happened in Mexico, they didn't have any reason to arrest them. They were basically allowed to just go on about their business in the U.S.

On two occasions, I went out at night with the Border Patrol on their patrol. That was an eye-opener. We went out into the canyons on what were probably dirt roads, driving through areas which perhaps had a few run down houses on the US side, and then waited for crossers. The Border Patrol had a pickup truck with a large infrared viewer mounted on the back – I believe it was surplus military equipment from the period of the Vietnam War, something which might have been mounted on an armored vehicle. At any rate, it was sensitive to warmth, so it was possible to see people moving north and then intercept them. I remember looking through it and seeing a cow standing in a field. The border was a place of many rumors as the smugglers and illegal crosses matched wits with the Border Patrol. In this case, the agents told me that word had gotten out about the infrared viewer, and that some of the crossers got the idea that it wouldn't work if they weren't wearing clothes. So for a while they had been apprehending naked people.

Some of this was amusing, but in many cases it was tragic, since robbery and rapes were common crimes against the migrants. The popular writer Joseph Wambaugh wrote a non-fiction book "Lines and Shadows" detailing the efforts of a police task force setup to go after the perpetrators of these crimes.

For most, it was probably more a matter of routine. On our patrol, the agents apprehended several people, all very calmly, and took them to a detention center, which was Spartan but clean and apparently well organized. Those apprehended were typically not prosecuted, unless they were wanted for another crime, and were simply bussed back down to the border. Most of those apprehended presumably just tried again until they made it. Thus, the apprehension numbers weren't necessarily a good marker for how many individuals were trying to cross since some would be caught multiple times. Presumably anyone really determined to make it would ultimately get across.

Q: Wow. Fascinating. Now, you mentioned that you got married in Tijuana. How did you meet your wife?

ANANIA: She worked at the consulate, so that was a fairly common thing that would happen. Single officers would go off and go to Latin American countries or other countries and find their spouses.

April 1986, Consulate General Tijuana, Non-Immigrant Visa Section (Lourdes Bernal, future Lourdes Bernal Anania, seated in front of Wang terminal) Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Was there much of a social life beyond work? What was that like, if anything?

ANANIA: Oh, yes, very much so. The junior officers and some of the mid-level officers were very sociable. We would get together. We were just to the south of San Diego, so sometimes you'd go to a San Diego Padres baseball game or go to the beach in La Jolla. There are beautiful beaches there or in Coronado. Then, in Tijuana, there was a professional baseball team. In fact, my wife's father was a professional baseball player, and he was the manager, at that point, of the Tijuana Potros, later Metros. So, I remember going to games with her and her family.

Then, we also had friends. We socialized with some of our Foreign Service nationals and met their friends. At that time, and probably still, U.S. embassies and consulates are somewhat prestigious places to work, and a lot of times, in many countries, especially women who might not have had the same professional opportunities and in many cases still don't, would get jobs. It was considered a respectable place to work, frankly, while they were looking for husbands. I'm not saying that was necessarily what was going on in Tijuana, but it was the case in some of the other posts I was at.

We benefited greatly from having people who were often very well-educated and came from prominent families, and who otherwise probably wouldn't take jobs that paid as little as we did. We had some very capable Foreign Service nationals. We would, naturally, meet people who were perhaps a couple of steps higher in local society than we otherwise might.

Q: Did you deal in any way with public affairs? Was there any going out and speaking? Were there major public affairs issues you had to deal with?

ANANIA: Not too much. We didn't have a Public Affairs officer, but we had a very capable officer who was head of American Citizen Services, Sharon Wilkinson, who later became an ambassador to Burkina Faso and Mozambique. Among the more senior people at post she was the best in many respects, but particularly in that she was a leader who tried to take care of the junior officers, even those not in her section, to help us with our professional development. She encouraged us to do reporting on local issues, write some cables. She also was sometimes the public face of the consulate, and she would go and speak to civic groups. People in San Diego were interested in what was going on at the border and how we managed a consulate. That sort of thing. We were also dealing with tourism organizations, travel agents, things like that. She invited me to participate in some of those activities, which was positive and appreciated. It didn't surprise me that she went on to be a two-time ambassador.

Just as I was transferring from Tijuana, we added a public affairs position, which was overdue given the importance of migration issues on both sides of the border.

1986 Consulate General Tijuana, American Citizen Services Chief Sharon Wilkinson at her desk. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Now, you mentioned that you were called by the Department to leave your post a little early. How did that come about?

ANANIA: I was bidding on my second tour, and in those days – and perhaps still – in the entry level division, your career development officer would help you and steward you through. I think there was, generally, a sense that if they dealt you a bad card on your first tour and sent you to a difficult place, then maybe they would take care of you a little bit better on your second tour. So, we had several officers who went off to pretty nice jobs in Spain and places like that.

Q: Just as an example, I went from Jamaica to Costa Rica, and anybody who has a problem living in Costa Rica has other problems as well. It's a very pleasant place.

ANANIA: Yes. Well, anyway, for whatever reasons, I didn't choose to bid on cushy posts. I bid on, I remember, a couple of posts in AF (Bureau of African Affairs) and a couple of posts in NEA (then called the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asia Affairs). For some reason, they convinced me that I would do well being the general services officer in Damascus, Syria. I knew that was, again, going to be a hardship post. The extra pay was probably an inducement, but it sounded like an interesting place to go, so I said, "Okay, fine." I was assigned there.

Well, then we ran into one of our periodic disputes with the Syrian government and with Hafez Al-Assad, who was the president at the time. There were all sorts of terrible things going on in Syria that have only gotten worse. So, we removed our ambassador and reduced the size of the post, and they decided that, well, we're not going to fill that position, after all. So, they said, "Not to worry. We'll put you in a general services officer position in nearby Amman, Jordan."

So, okay. Jordan was a whole lot nicer than Syria in many respects, so I guess you could say I lucked out a bit there. I ended up being assigned there.

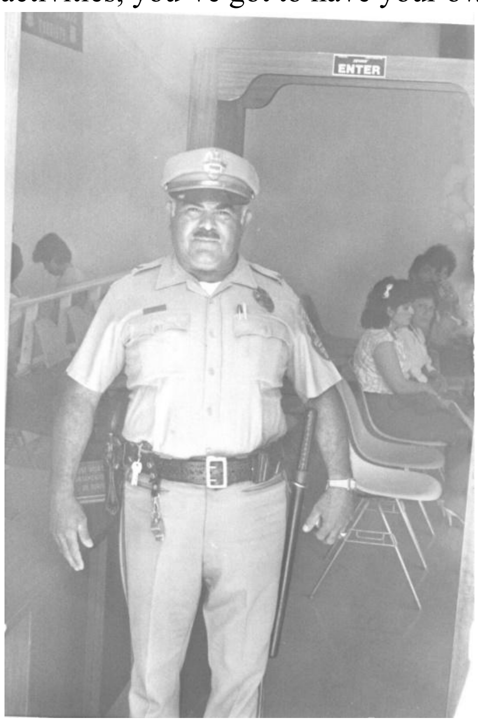
Acting Administrative Officer

In the meantime, with the removal of the management officer in Tijuana, I had been thrown into that job. It was very chaotic, and it had all kinds of problems. I remember the cash count had not balanced for literally years, and this had never been properly looked into or investigated. Something had been lost in the pouch going to Mexico City or something, maybe some of the documentation. Basically, the management officer had, instead of resolving the issue, with the funds probably just written off, basically used this as a threat to the local staff. If they didn't watch out, she was going to get them.

The files were an absolute mess, and to make matters worse, we were being inspected a week or two after I took over. She had done none of the preparations for this. You had to fill out a bunch of questionnaires about if you had various internal controls and things. I didn't know what half of this stuff was. So, I guess my time spent in business school started to be much more relevant to me as I tried to deal with these issues. I was renting residences, trying to address maintenance issues, managing the cashier and (literally) teletype, etc. Anyway, I didn't have much guidance and I made some mistakes. It was a learning experience -- nothing terrible happened, but that was a very interesting process.

I was also the post security officer, and we had rudimentary security at this place. We had what were called "commercial police" in Tijuana. They had uniforms, and they looked like police, but it was basically a rent-a-cop outfit run by the municipality. They weren't trained. They weren't issued their own firearms, so they would go out and buy their own. We had this weird collection of guys with odd pistols. One fellow had this pistol with a really long barrel. There was all this kind of crazy stuff, and these were the people who were out in front of our building managing the visa lines. They didn't get paid well, so they would be taking money from the visa applicants. I remember being sorry to have to fire the most capable guard supervisor we'd had because of a verified complaint he had taken money to put someone to the head of the line. I was sorry because I was certain his successor would engage in the same behavior and likely be less efficient, which was the case.

It was a mess. The regional security officer was in Mexico City, and I remember talking to him, saying, "Why do we have to do this? Why can't we just hire our own guards and manage them through a local guard contract?" I was told that no, we couldn't possibly do this, because under the Vienna Convention it was the responsibility of the host nation to protect us. I pointed out that the Mexican government was not protecting us; we were paying for these guards. Anyway, obviously policies have changed over the years and now, pretty much anywhere you go, the US diplomatic posts has its own local guard force. Yes, the host government is still supposed to protect you, but for day to day activities, you've got to have your own local guards.



1986 Consulate General Tijuana, Local Guard Commander. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Just out of curiosity, this force that you're talking about in Tijuana: did they even have certificates indicating that they knew how to use firearms?

ANANIA: I don't think so. Fortunately, we never came under attack. The building itself was appalling in terms of modern-day physical security. It was an aluminum frame, almost all glass, two-story building. It was built into a hill, and in the back, at the level of the consul general's office – which, again, had these big glass windows – there was a parking lot. We used it, but it was an unsecured parking lot. So, you could have walked into that parking lot. There was just a chain link fence. If you wanted to, God forbid, attack the consul general, you'd be at eye level about 30 or 40 feet from his office. As it happens, as I recall, his desk was right up against the windows. I think he kept the blinds closed, at least, but even then it seemed pretty appalling, and we didn't move out of that building until many years later. Fortunately, they finally built a new facility about 10 years ago.

1986 Consulate General Tijuana – local staff parking lot, rear of consulate building. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Consulates can't get Marines, so it has to be local hires?

ANANIA: I don't know that it's true that you couldn't have Marines at a consulate, but it was unusual, at that time. We only had them in Mexico City. The security situation in general in Mexico at that time was becoming much worse. Prior to that, they hadn't really had the violence that's now associated with Mexico, with tens of thousands of people being murdered every year, mostly because of *narco* trafficking gangs. They were in the early days of that, and there was a particularly violent gang in Tijuana at the time. Arellano Felix was the name of one major criminal and they were starting to have murders that were perhaps unprecedented in Tijuana.

During that period, in Guadalajara, there was a DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) agent named Kiki Camarena who was murdered. Also, at one point, there was a vehicle with a bomb in it that was found near the embassy in Mexico City. The embassy actually closed the visa section in Mexico City for several weeks, if not months, as a result of that in order to try to pressure the Mexicans into giving us control over the streets immediately surrounding the embassy to prevent a car bombing. So, even though we hadn't had any incidents in Tijuana and never did, thank goodness, against our little consulate general, the situation was definitely getting a lot worse.

Unfortunately, you could see the seeds of what later became a far more virulent problem with so much violence and murderous activity. One incident really struck me at the time. There was this drug gang in Tijuana – it might have been this one I mentioned – and they had corrupted some police officers. For some reason or another, they decided that they would murder them. They shot them and left them for dead, but one of them survived. The police arrested a fairly high-level criminal and had him in the municipal jail. This was sort of scandalous, because in Mexico at the time – and perhaps still – if you were sent to jail, your family or friends could give you food and bring you things. So, this fellow was sort of ensconced in a private cell with a television and girlfriends visiting him and all this kind of crazy stuff. There were even photos of this setup in the newspaper. As the case dragged out, he would be taken out of the jail and be sent over to various courts for hearings.

Well, one day, they sent him out on a Friday and he never returned. Somehow, they didn't discover he was missing until Monday, and of course he was long gone. But this, to me, was somewhat shocking, because he had been arrested for killing policemen. You would think that if there's one thing the police would really be serious about, it would be killing police. But even then, both the corruption and the threats… This is the thing. *Plata o plomo,* they used to say. Silver or lead. "Here, we'll pay you off, and if you don't want to take the money, we'll kill you." Well, okay. Given the weak rule of law that existed at the time, the narcos began to have more and more influence. But this, to me, was a clear sign that things could get completely out of control, and that is unfortunately what has happened.

1986 – General Services Officer Training, Roslyn, Virginia

Q: Wow. Alright. Now, as you're looking forward to Amman, are you going to go back to Washington to get any training, language or otherwise?

ANANIA: Yes. Unfortunately not language, because typically officers who were assigned – and this is still the case – overseas to administrative positions were deemed to not need the local language. So, there was no Arabic training. Frankly, two years of Arabic training or even one year of Arabic training would have been, probably, a poor investment if you were just sending somebody to be the assistant general services officer. On the other hand, I ended up serving several times in the NEA region, and had I had the language, I might well have served even more times in the NEA region.

But what I did get was the general services officer (GSO) training, which, by contrast to the consular training, was appallingly bad. This wasn't really the fault of the instructors, who were pretty good. They had been told there was going to be an entirely new curriculum, and somehow the funding didn't come through or FSI didn't get the curriculum done. So, when we went in, we were assigned… Our classroom was in a private building in Roslyn, which has probably been knocked down since. USAID (United States Agency for International Development) had leased the space and had moved out. There was an entire empty floor, other than the several of us taking this GSO course.

So, we would basically just go in and read the FAM (Foreign Affairs Manual), read the regulations. There wasn't much in the way of exercises or anything else. Occasionally, we would have a field trip, or someone would come to talk to us. I remember that there was a guy who came to talk to us about building safety, which was somewhat useful. I think he used a TIF voltage detector to see if the electricity was properly grounded in the outlets, and then we went and saw how to use a fire extinguisher and things like that. At this point, general services officers were in charge of building maintenance as well. There were no facilities maintenance officers, as was later established. So, that was not particularly good training.

Q: As a GSO, were you also a contracting officer, or was that separate for the financial section?

ANANIA: Yes, and at that point, I think the contracting warrants were handed out pretty much like popcorn. There wasn't much in the way of training. You got a warrant, and it came with the position. I'm sure there must have been some rudimentary contracting officer training that we received, but nothing like what later became the norm and needed to become the norm. There were all kinds of problems with the way the Department was contracting. We weren't properly competing things, and we weren't necessarily documenting things. Again, it's been a huge improvement over the years in the State Department since then.

Q: At that time, were they recommending that you get personal liability insurance as a contracting officer, because a mistake could land you in jail? Even an honest mistake could land you in jail.

ANANIA: That's a good question. I know I started to get personal liability insurance at some point, but I couldn't say when. I don't think the Department was recommending it. Many years later, Congress passed a law that gave agencies the authorization to partially reimburse people for the cost of personal liability insurance, which was a positive thing. People really should have it. But no, I don't remember having it back then. I might have. Hirshorn and Company was a company in Philadelphia that sold that insurance for many years but recently got out of the business.

Q: Once again, just by contrast, I became a Public Affairs officer and had grant authority. My PAO (public affairs officer) told me, "You'd better get personal liability insurance." Grants are relatively easy, in terms of the complexity of how to do them, in comparison to contracting and other financial activities, but even as easy as grants are, relatively speaking, I was told immediately to get personal liability insurance. You get an Inspector General inspection, and with one small thing, you could be liable if you did something wrong.

ANANIA: That was good advice.

1986-88 - General Services Officer, US Embassy Amman, Jordan

Q: Okay. So, we're going to proceed with you, then, to Amman, Jordan. You mentioned that you had some training. So, you and your wife arrive there when?

ANANIA: Fall of 1986.

Q: When you arrive, are there any major irritants in the U.S. (United States)-Jordan relationship that you were kind of warned about before you arrived?

ANANIA: Not with Jordan – relations were excellent and we had a large assistance program there. The conflict in the Middle East was and remains largely between Israel and the Arab states. Jordan had fought a war against Israel, along with other Arab countries, and had lost the West Bank and the parts of Jerusalem that they had controlled for many years. Despite that, our relationship with the Jordanian government was quite good. King Hussein was there, at the time. It was a time when there was still a fair amount of optimism about the prospects for possible peace agreements. In fact, subsequently, I think, we learned that Jordan actually did have fairly robust discussions going on all the time with Israel, sub rosa. They didn't recognize Israel and were officially still hostile, but they did cooperate.

Secretary of State George Shultz became very personally involved in the Middle East peace initiatives and conducted extensive shuttle diplomacy in February, April, and June 1988, visiting Jordan multiple times. As a GSO, I was supporting his travel, managing the motorcades and making sure that the luggage got picked up and taken to the hotel and that sort of thing. So, I had some modestly interesting experiences with that, driving through the center of the old part of Amman in a motorcade, with helicopters flying overhead and machine guns pointed out. All the roads were closed off by police a few minutes prior to the motorcade's arrival, so we could just cruise through ordinarily-very congested streets.

King Hussein hosted Secretary Shultz at one of his palaces. In Jordan, the palaces are fairly modest affairs. They didn't live opulent lives. I recall seeing the King's garage door open, with his children's bikes and toys inside. I was going over there and hanging out with the drivers and the security personnel. King Hussein and his wife, who was an American citizen originally, were very gracious. Even for those of us who were in relatively minor positions, they made sure that we were all fed and had places to wait and things like that. So, we really enjoyed Jordan. We were pleased that the relationships between our countries were quite good.

1988, March – 4th from left -- with the Motor Pool Team, Visit of Secretary of State George Shultz, Marka Airport, Jordan. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Now, you get to the embassy. Roughly how big was it when you were there?

ANANIA: I want to say it was maybe 125 Americans. We had a substantial USAID (United States Agency for International Development) mission. The U.S. Information Agency also had a separate facility. These were in buildings that were not too far from the embassy. The embassy itself was in a truly ramshackle chancery facility. Traditionally, in Amman, they had a road that ran along a hilltop ridge. It was called the Circle Road. There were seven circles, and there was an eighth circle that was just being built and developed. We were in a building that was between the second and third circles. The Intercontinental Hotel was across the street. Our embassy building had originally been constructed as an apartment building. I don't know if it was ever completed; I don't think it was occupied as an apartment building, but we had taken it over. It was pretty much right on the street, behind a poorly built concrete wall. Behind that, we had stacked sandbags in case there was a bombing. The sandbags had been poorly placed and not properly protected, so they were deteriorating, and sand was all over the place.

It was a really terrible facility. So, one of the things that I was told, when I was headed out there, was that somehow, we would be building a new embassy. This would be a big part of the job, supporting the new embassy project. In fact, we did get started, towards the end of my tour there, but it was nowhere near finished. Later, it had to be mothballed during the Iran-Iraq War, when Jordan, for highly questionable reasons, supported Saddam Hussein fairly strongly and we either closed our embassy or reduced it to minimum staffing. The Foreign Buildings Office (FBO) shut down the project, at least. The embassy wasn't completed for several years thereafter.

Q: Wow. Since you're speaking about security, did you do anything to tidy up or improve what was there?

ANANIA: Yes. I don't have the sequence of events, but there had been… What bombing would there have been around that time?

Q: In Amman?

ANANIA: No, elsewhere.

Q: So, this is '85, '86? No, the Marine bombing was later…

ANANIA: Well, there had been the bombings in Lebanon. President Reagan had sent the Marines into Lebanon, and they had not taken proper care to secure the building that they were in. I don't know which group did it – I can't remember now – but they basically drove a truck bomb right next to the apartment building the Marines were in and blew it up. Hundreds of Americans were badly hurt and killed, in many cases. So, we began to take security a lot more seriously than we had before, despite the fact that actually, for many years, we had been suffering attacks throughout the world. In Latin America, for instance, and places like Peru, there were active, mostly leftist-based guerrilla groups that would regularly rake our buildings with machine gun fire or detonate bombs. There was a bomb that was detonated by the ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru. My boss at my next post, Havana, had been in Lima at the time. His staff made him a memento from some metal from the destroyed car attached to a wooden base.

Q: Sendero Luminoso *(Shining Path, terrorist group), yes.*

ANANIA: Yes. So, we were beginning to take things more seriously, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security was becoming much more professionalized. It was starting to receive specially earmarked money to augment security, not just at our facilities but also at American-affiliated institutions. In particular – you asked about projects – one project, which some of us didn't think was such a great idea, was to build a concrete wall around the American school in Amman. It was to be around not just the school building but also the large sports field and everything else. In retrospect, it's kind of laughable that we would have thought of that as overkill, considering what we do in other places now, but nonetheless, we did spend quite a lot of money. I was tangentially involved just because in the General Service Office, we did the contracting. Our RSO, regional security officer, was really in charge of that project.

We also tried to do what we could to augment the security of our facilities, but frankly, they were in such bad shape that there was really nothing much you could do. We fixed the sandbags. We took out the sandbags and put in new sandbags that were properly covered in plastic sheeting or whatever we did. But there wasn't really much you could do. That included the ambassador's residence, which was kind of just a nice house that was not too far away. It was between the first and second circles. Again, it was sort of on the street, and the ambassador's residence had a swimming pool and a tennis court, so we used to be over there. There was an American club as well. The RSO installed drop arm poles, basically, that could block the little alleys and streets around the ambassador's residence compound, and we had guards. I spent a lot of time there, both looking after the ambassador's residence, but to a greater degree playing tennis. We were lucky to have a good group of players at the embassy, more than we ever had since.

1988, March – Amman, Jordan -- Tennis tragedy. With Roman Wasilewski and his prized Davis Imperial, casualty of a doubles match. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Behind our embassy, we had leased another building, which was actually where my office was. The General Services Office and the Budget and Fiscal Office, as it was then called, were there. I think we closed that stretch of the little road that was back there. We had local guards, at this point, who the embassy was actually paying, and the Jordanians also had some of their personnel, police and others, who sort of kept an eye out for us.

Q: Now, when you arrived, how large was the management or the administrative section? Where did you fit in the overall situation?

ANANIA: Let's see. We were headed by an administrative officer supported by a foreign service secretary. We had three general services officers, one budget and fiscal officer, one human resources officer, and several communicators, as they were then called. We were fortunate to have two outstanding admin officers – first Eric Boswell, later Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, then Anne Hackett, a gifted officer who very tragically passed away young after she completed a tour as management minister counselor in Rome. She would have been a tremendous Director General and was an excellent mentor and friend.

We didn't have anyone who was in charge of the computer systems, really. I think times have changed. We had a Wang VS computer system, and we had a helpful local staff member who is still working for the U.S. embassy in Jordan and who I heard from about two weeks ago. It was all very rudimentary. I was somewhat interested in computers as business tools, though was never a "computer nerd" interested in them simply as computers. I kind of got involved with that. That was very early on, and that was something I worked on a lot during the course of my career. In 2005/6, I was the acting chief information officer for the State Department. But I definitely got, again, a worm's eye view of the way we were managing our automated systems – or not. It was pretty decentralized and not very well controlled, at that time.

Q: And at that time, the only sort of computers, so to speak, were Wangs. They were principally processing devices.

ANANIA: Yeah, okay. Let's get into that a little bit. I actually wrote an article for the *Foreign Service Journal* about the history of IT (information technology) at State. (https://www.afsa.org/e-hell-there-way-out)

Early on, the State Department did not have any bureaucratic entity that was in charge of computers. The Bureau of Administration had the communications responsibility, but at that time, they were basically running the equipment that managed the telegraphic traffic that went back and forth between posts. So, you had a communications section, which received telegrams, printed them out, photocopied them, and stuck them in boxes. Then, people would come up and open their mailbox and get their traffic. If it was classified, they couldn't carry it into the non-classified areas, etcetera. But computers started to come out, and, in fact, started to make their way into the communications centers. But it was up to the individual bureaus – and really, even, individual offices within bureaus – as to whether or not they bought these things.

At the time, Wang was a leading computer manufacturer. I'm not really sure how we ended up with Wangs in the first place, but it wasn't an unreasonable thing to do. As I said, they were well-known. They had what were called OIS – Office Information Systems. These were, basically, word processors. It was a central processing unit to which you could attach peripheral devices. The terminals at that time were all in one. It was a case with a little CRT (cathode-ray tube) monitor and a keyboard. There were no mice at the time. They also had printers. As I recall, the minimum size OIP had eight ports, so you could have eight terminals and printers in any combination you wanted. Then they had what were called the VS (virtual storage) mainframe computers. The Department started to use these before I ever joined, but not too far ahead of time, and was starting to develop some rudimentary software that was specifically, I think, for managing immigrant visas and some other things.

So, when I got out to Amman… When I was in business school, I had been introduced to personal computers and had used the spreadsheet software, which was called Lotus 123. I had never used word processing. In Tijuana, we had both a VS and an OIS. As a consular officer, when I needed to write a cable, because people would come in and we decided they were most likely presenting fraudulent documents, in order to turn them down on the basis of fraud – which, as I recall, was 212-A-19, a section of the Immigration and Nationality Act – you actually had to have the Department agree that you could do that. Lazy people could enter them into the system. They had some code. I think they added 50, so it was 69, or something like that, so if you put it in there, that would tell a future officer who might be interviewing the same person that this person had been turned away on the suspicion of fraud.

So, when I got to Amman, we had some of the first Wang personal computers. They used the 8086 processor, which was one of the very first ones from Intel. We had Microsoft DOS – Disc Operating System - software. At that time, if you turned on the computer, your interface was a blinking cursor. That was it. Then it was up to you to do whatever it was you were supposed to be doing. You had little disc drives for floppy discs where you could put the disc in, and then you could type in "A:" to access that drive. If it had software on it, you could run the software, which was Lotus 123. When I arrived in Jordan, someone – one of my predecessors – had bought but never used a copy of software called dBase, dBase I, which was a database application but flat file, meaning it was not a relational database. It was very unsophisticated. At any rate, there was no automation in the office. We weren't keeping track of our work orders. Work orders were coming in on paper.

So, I got out the manual and read how to use dBase I and created a work order database. Then I taught the secretary how to enter the work order information and print reports. I mentioned that in many cases, working at the embassy was considered something of a prestigious place to work. She came from a very well-known, well-to-do family in Jordan. At that time, Jordanian women were not typically working, but I guess they were a progressive family and thought it would be okay for her to work at the embassy. So, she ended up working in Amman in the GSO section, which was kind of a weird thing. She was from, I believe, a Christian family. Almost everybody who worked there was a Muslim. We were among many Palestinians. She was somewhat flashy by Jordanian standards. It was an interesting office dynamic. At any rate, I taught her how to use this thing, so we started to enter all of the work orders into this database.

Q: Just one quick thing – as a user of GSO services at many posts, that is a fantastic achievement. Half of the time, when I would make a request for a GSO service, it would get lost. Not deliberately, but just because it went through so many inboxes that you literally had to check with each individual, all the way down to whoever was finally going to do the work, until you knew something was actually going to happen.

ANANIA: Right. Our customer service was appalling, basically. Unfortunately, in some cases, it may still be, but we've come a long way. Let's put it that way. So, yes, by having this database now, I could keep track of which things were still open and, importantly, which things had been open for long periods of time. So, we didn't just lose your work order. The other thing was that we had, as I recall, five-part forms for work orders. So, you'd fill out the form and send it to us. Well, the other thing that we did – and I don't know if I came up with this or one of my predecessors did – is that when we finished, we would actually send you the fifth copy, saying we finished and asking you to let us know if we did the job we were supposed to. Often, somebody would have a work order for something at their apartment. We might go while they weren't there and do the work, and you might not even know we had done it. Alternatively, we might not have done the correct thing, but closed the work order. It was almost comically bad.

Q: Yes. There were times when I requested one service and got a different one.

ANANIA: Right. "Fix the electrical cord!" We would fix one, but not the one you actually wanted, so you're still waiting, and GSO thinks it's done. So, yes, again, it's almost comical. But those were the early days. Then I also started to do other things, like using Lotus 123 I created a stock item application. As agencies would order office supplies, we would enter this all into the spreadsheet. What had been happening was that the guy in the warehouse would get each and every request and wander around the warehouse, pulling out the five pens and two boxes of staples and whatever. Then he'd go on to the next request, and those people wanted some of the same staples, so he'd wander around the warehouse again. This way, we could enter all of the things into one spreadsheet, and then he could see, "Okay, I need to get five staples and 15 boxes of pens." Then he could put them in boxes for the people who wanted them. So, this passed for efficiency gains.

We also had lots of problems with the inventory. The State Department didn't have any clue as to what it had overseas. Our procedures were horrible, and there was no enforcement. There was a lot of frankly false certification of inventory. When we were first doing the inventory, just after I arrived, the local staff member, a very nice guy I came to appreciate who worked there for many years and unfortunately passed away, rest in peace – was working with me, and I said, "Okay, it's inventory time." This is one of the main problems that the Department always had and still does, to an extent. You get to a post, typically, towards the end of summer or early fall. It used to be that you had to have your certifications in pretty much instantly upon arrival. So, if your predecessor hadn't done a good job or left the place in order, suddenly you're being pressured to sign an inventory that you didn't really have anything to do with. Unfortunately, a lot of people would just take it on faith.

Well, I wouldn't take it on faith, and I wouldn't sign the inventory, because I knew it was terrible. Then the Department would get mad at me. This happened to me at more than one post, because I would say, "No, I'm not going to falsely say we have a good inventory. We don't have a good inventory."

What they did was, every year, they would just count everything up and compare it to what they had last year and say, "Okay, we'll just update the records. We now have two less of this and six more of that." There was no real reconciliation. So, we had to deal with that. Just in that period is when the Department finally came out with some software to do inventory, the Non-Expendable Property Application, NEPA.

Actually, speaking of training, I got some very good training. I went off to Paris, and they had the first training for NEPA, which was run on these Wang 8086 computers. We went off and learned about how we could enter in data on all the property that we had, and then we could do inventories using scanners and run programs to say, “Okay, we found everything,” or, “Here’s what’s missing,” or, “We found extra stuff.” Then you could properly do an inventory and certify things. That system has evolved and is now the Integrated Logistics Management System, all these many years later. In fact, last year, when I was in Kabul, they were putting in the latest system, which instead of using little barcodes is now using the little symbols that you find on Amazon boxes, which can then be read by phones. So, it should be easier, still, to do the inventories. But NEPA was the original.

Q: Fascinating. So, you improved the basic IT capability. Did that extend into other offices in the embassy, offices that did reporting, like the economic office or the political office? Did they also have Wangs, and were they kind of beginning to enter, I guess, the 20th century before desktops and personal computers arrived?

ANANIA: Well, one of the problems with all this was that what I was doing at my post, other than NEPA, was in total isolation from other posts. So, in fact, at that time, I remember that at FSI (Foreign Service Institute) there was a fellow in charge of management training, who later became a friend of mine and a close colleague. He actually put out the call to posts, like, “Can you please send us whatever software you’ve developed?” Many posts were coming up with all kinds of things, and I remember sending him the stock item spreadsheet, which again, was a rudimentary kind of Lotus 123 file. But we were all working in isolation, and there was no real coordination. In fact, there was no Bureau of Information Resource Management at all, at the time, which was really a pity.

Now, for the Wang VS computer, there were some offices, like CA (Bureau of Consular Affairs), that were doing some real software. Eventually, HR (Human Resources) did some software. But these were not very well-developed programs. So, in terms of what other offices were doing, they were basically just using word processors. I think I did this -- created a template so that you could type cables. In those days, you had to print out your cables on forms that would then be fed into OCR – Optical Character Reader – scanners. Of course, now that’s not a big deal. Back then, it seemed like, wow, this is the latest in high technology!

So, you’d carry your cable up, and the then-called “communicators” would feed it into these scanners. It would then transmit the telegram. Well, when we first started getting PCs (personal computers), there was no template, if you will, for how to do this. Nothing to tell us how to make sure it was spaced properly, or how to ensure that when you sent it to the printer it would print out perfectly on top of the form that we were supposed to use. So, I think I created some templates and shared those around with the political section or what have you. That saved them from having to manually type cables on typewriters.

Q: That’s huge, because that is a productivity gain.

ANANIA: Well, it sure beats typing. In my next post, which was Havana, we had no classified information handling systems, and we actually did have to go back to typing our telegrams, if they were in any way controlled. Limited Official Use is what was then called (now sensitive but unclassified) and if you did one of those LOU telegrams, as I unfortunately had to do, you had to type on IBM Selectric III typewriters, which was a major hassle.

Q: Okay, so to go back to Amman: you've arrived, and you've begun making some improvements and so on. Were there particular goals that were set for you when you arrived? Like, "You need to replace the fleet of cars," or, "We're going to be changing the housing, and we need to begin looking at different apartments," or something like that.

ANANIA: Sadly, not so much. Most of what I was doing was on my own initiative. I was just sort of on my own. In fact, I had two offices – one was right behind the embassy in this little annex, and the other one was the warehouse, which was some distance, a 15- or 20-minute drive, away. It was a warehouse that had originally been built to be an auto assembly place or something. I think Ford Motors somehow had thought about setting something up in Jordan. It was a decrepit building that didn't meet structural standards for earthquakes, and we were always worried about it falling down if there was an earthquake. We had a rudimentary office building out there, and I was kind of just on my own with our Jordanian team, who were mostly Palestinians. We had a warehouse with furniture and expendable supplies, a motor pool with mechanics, and a large maintenance team, mostly contractors who worked for a Swedish company Electrolux.

My predecessors hadn't done much to institutionalize or put in policies and procedures, so I wrote up a whole series of what I called "GSO procedures." I would write down what we were supposed to be doing, because my staff really hadn't been given much guidance. I mentioned that the inventory process was totally out of control. Nobody had trained these people. I perhaps could have hoped that they would have done more on their own initiative, but at the end of the day, if you don't train people or tell them what they're supposed to do, then you can't really complain if things aren't going well.

So, I worked very hard on those projects, and we were there for two years. I discovered that this was a formula for success for me. If nobody's going to tell you what to do, just think of good ideas and implement them yourself. I pretty much did that throughout my entire career. This will be another theme that comes up – the State Department is not run by administrative officers, as we were then called, or management officers. The State Department is run by, for lack of a better term, and this is painting with a broad brush, political officers. Political officers aren't all that interested in making sure that management is strong. That's just a fact. You see it every day in the State Department.

We do things in the State Department, and while we've made tremendous progress since I joined, there's still a lot of basic tasks that just don't get done well. We don't have a good strategy for the way we manage the State Department. Even to this day, we're still in the situation where individual overseas posts are developing software to meet their needs. Often, these are the needs of many other posts, as well. We could get into a long discussion of that, too.

But to return to the subject of the way we managed IT, as I said, it was up to individual bureaus and posts to buy equipment. So, people bought whatever they wanted to buy. If I had known about Apple computers, who knows! We might have had Apple computers in Jordan. But perhaps the main reason why the Department bought Wang was that Wang was a company that promised to support their computers anywhere in the world. They had a lot of local affiliates; in fact, there was one in Jordan. So, if you had problems with your computers, these people could come in and fix it. If they didn't have a local affiliate, they had a team of people who the Department would pay to send out to fix things. My next post was in Havana, Cuba, and there we had a VS computer, so periodically, a computer specialist from Wang would come down and do whatever magic he was doing to maintain that VS computer. So, those were the early days for computers at the State Department.

Q: Now, in terms of maintenance, what about maintenance regarding security of the equipment? In other words, security from counterintelligence and that kind of thing?

ANANIA: Yeah, there basically wasn't much of that for the unclassified computers. There were some minimal standards, along the lines of keeping the central processing unit in a locked room, probably with Halon fire extinguishers, which I think were later determined to be a huge health hazard, so we stopped having those at some point.

So, there was some of that, but the PCs were just sitting there. Anybody could have done anything, but this was pre-Internet, so there was less risk, other than the risk of physically putting disc drives or floppy discs into the computer and copying data. That was, potentially, a risk if you had HR data or things like that. However, I kept most of our files on so-called floppy disks, and those were locked up. IT security and information assurance came about considerably later. Now, we also had some classified information handling systems, which in the early days were basically just PCs that had been treated so they wouldn't emanate information. In those cases, they had removable hard drives, which were taken out and locked up in safes.

Q: Okay. Now did you have a seat on the housing board? Was there even a housing board?

ANANIA: I was the lead GSO for housing and did most of the grunt work to identify the properties and try and match them up to the incoming and outgoing personnel. We had a supervisory general services officer; perhaps she ran the meetings, and she certainly was engaged in reviewing the houses we planned to lease. I seem to recall writing the memos, taking the minutes in the meetings, proposing housing assignments along with her. The board members came from different constituencies, including various of the agencies represented in Jordan.

That was a time when Jordan had, unfortunately, built a lot of housing using iron pipes from somewhere in the former Soviet bloc, as I recall Poland. They hadn't properly treated and wrapped these pipes. They just put them into concrete walls and concrete floors, and then they rusted like crazy. So, we had a lot of reasonably nice housing that became uninhabitable. You had to crack open the walls and floors to entirely replace these pipes. We were in the process of turning over much of the housing pool, in the process improving housing quality for our customers.

Q: Now, was security of housing also beginning to be a major issue?

ANANIA: Yes. In fact, my wife had several jobs as a local hire and eligible family member. They used to call them PIT (part-time or intermittent temporary appointment) employees if you worked for the State Department, a particularly bad acronym. Why they didn't call them Temporary Intermittent Part-Time – TIP – I don't know. It was kind of crazy. "I'm a PIT." "Oh, great."

But anyway, she worked for the RSO office for a while doing residential security. They got money to have a contract to do residential security, and we ended up installing security doors to create safe havens. We were trying to cordon off the bedroom areas so that if intruders came into your house, you could hide there. We were also putting bars on windows. It was also very important, for fire safety, to incorporate emergency escape devices in the bars, so that you could pop the thing open and get out if there was a fire. There were burglar alarm systems, all those things. We had hired a local company to install all of this, and her job was to go around and make sure that they were doing what they were supposed to. So, yes, these were the early days of security. Although in Tijuana, I did have a burglar alarm in my apartment.

Q: Were there, in general, serious security concerns about living in Amman at that time?

ANANIA: There were a lot of problems with residential burglaries, so that was on most people's minds, but yes, there were also security incidents. But they were nothing compared to the sorts of things that have gone on since then. I'm not sure we ever really knew who was doing it, but there were presumably Islamist groups that were carrying out some minor bombings. By minor, I mean they might have blown up a vehicle. In fact, shortly after I left Amman, they blew up an abandoned vehicle next to our warehouse. They put a bomb underneath it and it detonated, but these were not highly destructive devices. They weren't murdering people in the streets or anything like that.

Jordan had an effective and probably brutal internal security group. Our landlord was a member of this organization and we lived in his building, which was directly behind the "Queen Mother's Palace" which was guarded by military personnel. So we felt unusually secure there, although we suspected the soldiers of stealing the grapes off the vine in our backyard.


March, 1988 – Our home was on the ground floor. A rare snowfall. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

But there was some low-level terrorist activity -- definitely of concern to many of us. We didn't have any danger pay, at the time; in fact, our hardship differential was reduced, much to the dismay of many people. We were a 15% post and then we were reduced to 10% while I was there.

Q: Did your job take you out of Amman, maybe because USAID projects needed you out there or for something like that?

ANANIA: USAID was a large group with some impressive projects. They occupied a separate building and ran their own management section. It wasn't particularly –integrated with the support structure which applied to the other agencies, which included several Department of Defense offices, the United States Information Agency, and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Integrating State and USAID support structures is something else I worked on extensively over the years, trying to find ways where we could eliminate duplicative efforts. That was not an entirely positive experience, I must say, but overall after many years by about 2006 there was significant progress. As an example of duplication, in our Amman warehouse, USAID had its own section fenced off and kept their own inventories. When they wanted to get things out of the warehouse, they would send their own truck. That sort of thing would go on. They had their own motor pool. So, all of that was inefficient and costly.

My work was in our offices and visiting various residences. We would try to support our embassies elsewhere, for instance by procuring items for Embassy Baghdad, which was operating under great hardship during the war between Iran and Iraq. We also supported Embassy Damascus, which had been drawn down and where the hardship was high due to the poor relationships with the brutal and corrupt regime of Hafez al-Assad.

One rather unpleasant experience was an attempt to support Damascus. We had reduced our staffing there and withdrawn the Ambassador, who I believe had been David Ransom. We could sometimes assist Damascus by buying things in Amman for them or receiving items shipped from the US in Amman. Customs clearances were relatively easy for us and it was very difficult for them, so we could receive things and then transship them. There was a shipment of Wang computers and I was somehow assigned to go with the truck – a big panel truck – to drive the computers up to Damascus. I got stuck at the border, and we could not cross. I think we must have had the paperwork, but the Syrians just refused to let us go across. We basically sat there for hours. I met a couple of times with some very thuggish Syrian officials, and then we were finally turned around and had to just go back to Amman.

That was a really interesting experience, because it was really a mafia state, more than anything else. You'd get up to the border, and the border guards would be slovenly dressed, poorly groomed, and wearing bits and pieces of uniforms. They might have blue jeans and a uniform top. Their weapons were casually displayed; weapons were stuck in pockets or machine guns were slung over their backs. While we waited we could observe them openly stealing from people who were coming across. They would inspect a service taxi taking a group of people from Amman to Damascus or elsewhere in Syria, so they'd pull up. The trunk would be opened, and the customs guys would just reach in and help themselves to toilet paper or Kleenex. That was a big thing. I guess they couldn't get those items, or at least couldn't get good quality products, so they would just steal whatever they wanted, and that was the tax for crossing that day. The taxi drivers just loaded it in the back to be taken. It was a very gloomy way to spend a day, but interesting in retrospect.

Other times, we did go to Damascus as tourists. It was a fascinating place to visit but we'd see some of the same aspects of the corrupt Syrian police state. As diplomats, we were not hassled too much, but it was depressing to see the state of Syria, under the authoritarian dictatorship under Hafez Al-Assad. Things have only gotten worse under his son.

Q: Yeah. You've been talking about all of the IT. What about communications in the city, using either… Well, this is the pre-cellphone era. I imagine you were using radios. You're doing motorcades for the secretary of State, and you need to be in touch with people ahead of you, behind you, and so on. How did that work?

ANANIA: We had handheld Motorola radios and radios we installed in some official vehicles. Amman is a city built on hills. I'm trying to think of how many hills; I can't remember. So, there's hills, and then there are steep ravines between them. So, as you're driving around, you're going up and down. It was a very challenging place for radio communications, and we had to have radio repeaters. The folks in the Communications Program Unit – CPU, as it was then called; it would now be the Information Program Center, IPC – had to try to find ways to install radio repeaters. I want to say we had a radio repeater in the Marriott Hotel, where we did a lot of business and appreciated their fine service. The repeater meant we could bounce signals around. We especially wanted to be able to reach the military airport, which was called Marka, so that when VIP planes came in – typically U.S. Air Force planes bringing congressional delegations or the secretary of State, who visited several times – we could actually reach these places, and we could. So, yes, when we were rolling around in the motorcades, we could do that. There were also radios installed in some cars, particularly the ambassador's and DCM's vehicles.

This, by the way, was the time when we started to first roll out a lot of armored vehicles. I don't know if this was for Ambassador Paul Boeker or his successor Ambassador Roscoe "Rocky" Suddarth, sadly both now deceased. We received a Mercedes Benz armored vehicle, and whichever ambassador it was, he was pleased. But the problem was that, as I said, Amman is a city of hills, and when you're going up and down hills, you have to use the brakes a lot. So, it seemed like every several weeks we had to send this vehicle to the Mercedes garage to have the brakes repaired because they would wear out so quickly due to the weight of the vehicle.

The DCM (deputy chief of mission), later ambassador, Patrick Theros had a light armored Buick sedan. The Department paid to have a US firm apply armored plates to the doors and put Plexiglass on the windows, and those were not very well-done jobs. It's very hard to retrofit. I remember that car also had a lot of problems, and all the added weight made it very difficult for it to perform. I remember during a SecState visit I was using that car as the motorcade control car, because the DCM was either not in the motorcade or was riding with the ambassador or the Secretary of State.

When we took Secretary Shultz and his entourage from the military airport to the embassy or perhaps King Hussein's palace, we were cruising the middle of Amman at fairly high speed due to a very well-orchestrated security plan. But then we had to climb the hills and suddenly the Mercedes that the DS (Bureau of Diplomatic Security) agents were in and the Mercedes that the ambassador was in were taking off, and we just couldn't keep up. We were chugging up the hill like the Little Engine that Could. I remember getting separated from the motorcade briefly.

1987 (circa) Jay and Lourdes Anania with President Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, US Ambassador's Residence. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Oh, yeah, that's agony. Did you do any reporting outside of GSO or administrative issues?

ANANIA: A little bit. I remember driving in Syria on a tourist trip I made with a colleague and A100 classmate, Roman Wasilewski. We spotted a convoy of Soviet military vehicles; they were supplying the Syrians at the time. So, I did a report on that. Other times, I would just be chit chatting with people, hearing about projects in Syria. There was some talk of a new port project, and some Jordanians were interested in bidding on that so I wrote a report on that topic. So, for random topics like that, we could do a memorandum of conversation or perhaps a cable, which was generally appreciated. I remember the political officer and defense attaché being happy that I was contributing a bit in a minor way.

Q: Your work in management of equipment and so on also brought you out into the local market and business community, because you'd have to buy things or get services and so on. Was that helpful for what you were doing? In other words, did you establish relationships that you could hand on to your successor?

ANANIA: To an extent. I mentioned that contract management was pretty poorly developed for the State Department. So, I do recall that we were supposed to do some contracts. One was for packing and shipping household effects. We did a Request for Proposal or whatever it might have been called at the time and went out and met with some companies. But it was hard to find firms that could reasonably be expected to fill out US government paperwork or read through our voluminous clauses. It wasn't a very sophisticated place. Amman was more like a large village, really.

Our contracting rules and regulations were and remain a great impediment to efficient operations. We just pile on one rule after another. Every time there's a scandal, we add more rules and requirements. You have all these clauses, which are included by reference as if the local vendors are going to go back and read the Federal Acquisitions Regulations and figure out thousands of pages. You can't use slave labor, and there was the Arab boycott against Israel, so we'd have to get a waiver to that every year. Legally, the Jordanian companies were required to comply with the boycott.

So, you know, generally speaking, as I said, I tried to document the policies and procedures that we had, I tried to automate things where I could do that, and when I left, I definitely left fairly extensive notes about the projects that we were working on at the time. There were descriptions of the pros and cons of the various GSO staff members, things to look out for or that they were particularly good at. I made that practice when leaving every position. I was disappointed at how few colleagues took the same care to leave things for me.

Q: Now, if I were your supervisor, based on the description of activities you just gave, I would be thinking about giving you an award. Did you get an award in Amman?

ANANIA: I don't recall that happening. I don't know.

Q: Just because you're showing initiative, creating efficiencies, improving productivity, and so on. You aren't necessarily even doing it based on a mission program plan. You're just noticing things and getting them done.

ANANIA: Well, I think I generally felt I was recognized for doing positive things, but I have to also note – and this is something that has endured throughout my career – that the State Department doesn't necessarily want greater efficiency. It can create friction, and we're a very conflict-averse group. I'll give you an example. In fact, I had a nickname there, among the local staff, which was "The Hammer," because there had been very little discipline or internal controls. So, here's a small example. We would supply people with cooking gas. These would come in gas canisters; probably butane, I think we called it Butagas. Whatever it was, we distributed it, free of charge, to all the residences because there was no natural gas service and we used gas stove/ovens. We would install two gas canisters at every residence. The idea was, you would finish one, shut it off, open the other one, and put in a work order. We would come and give you another canister of gas. Pretty simple, right?

Well, as people are people, they would use one, forget to put in the work order, run out of the second one, and then expect us to come and deliver natural gas to them immediately, at whatever time. "Oh, my God, it's Sunday and I'm having people over! You've got to come and deliver the gas." Well, we had some local maintenance staff who were on call. One thing I noticed was that this was very unfair; some of these guys lived a long way away, and they'd get called, so they'd have to spend an hour coming in, unlock the warehouse, get the thing, and go deliver it. The time spent actually on the job might only be an hour, but this was three or four hours out of their day, and it was very unfair to disrupt people's lives like that. I also, through the course of my career, really tried to support my staff. So, I put in a new policy that said, "We'll deliver it, but you have to pay something." It was meant as a disincentive for careless behavior.

The outrage! "How dare you charge me!" As I recall, the charge was 15 Jordanian dinars, about 10 dollars. We did have to actually pay overtime for these guys so we were only covering the cost to the USG. That was the sort of thing that would really get people rankled. Another thing that I did was… Remember, I had an MBA (Masters of Business Administration), right? We were just giving people fuel oil to heat their furnaces. It got quite chilly in Amman, and you also had to, of course, heat water for radiated heat and household use. I put timers in all of the houses, just rudimentary timers with little pins to turn the system on or off at pre-programmed times. People could set them to turn the furnace off at 8:30 when leaving and then turn it on again prior to their return so the house would be nice and toasty when they got back. But in the meantime, you weren't heating the house all day.

I started to do a spreadsheet and enter the consumption of oil for all the houses. Then I ran a regression analysis to see if I could figure out how you would predict somebody's usage. I tried various things, and about the only thing that had a good correlation was the size of the house. If you had a bigger house, you were probably going to use more, not surprisingly. But I started tracking, and I started sending people memos that said how they were doing relative to what I predicted they were going to use based on the size of their house. Some people took this very well and said, "Oh, my God! I had no idea I was spending 150 dollars a month more than you predicted. I didn't know why that timer was there. Now, by God, I'm going to use the timer."

In some cases we would have identical apartments in a building, so I could really compare. Three people, same apartment, same building. None of them have kids, none of them have spouses, and they all come to work every day. One is using 500 dollars a month; one is using 200 dollars a month. It was that sort of thing. Well, again, other people thought that this was just outrageous. "This is my right! The U.S. government has to pay for all my utility bills, and if I want to spend 500 dollars a month, that's my business." It's like, well, not really. So, anyway, I was only a second-tour officer and I guess some people thought I was getting ahead of myself and shouldn't be doing these things. I didn't stop, then or later.

Q: So, your wife worked as a part-time employee. Since she's coming from a Spanish-speaking country, did she adapt well?

ANANIA: Yeah, she did. First of all, Jordan was a very hospitable place to us. Early on, our sponsors were excellent. Somehow post had the idea that my wife didn't speak English well, I don't know why. My wife grew up at the border watching PBS and other US television; no one who meets her would guess she was from Mexico. Maybe she had a slight accent, but you couldn't place it. At any rate, we had a sponsor who was the defense attaché, and his wife was a Cuban American who spoke fluent Spanish, and they became very friendly, to this day she is a dear friend. They were pretty tied in, and they introduced us to some fascinating Jordanians, some of whom are still our friends today. Jordanians are very hospitable people, and that was a very positive experience. We would get invited to dinners. One particular extended family was well-to-do and extremely accomplished – amazing people. They had a summer house overlooking the Jordan Valley. We went there a few times.

So, we had a good social life, and Jordan is a fascinating place if you like archaeology. A lot of the sites there were very underdeveloped, so you could actually go places and they wouldn't be marked or have signs. I remember going to Herod's castle. You could just see bits and pieces of masonry or ancient glass just lying around. It wasn't marked, so you had a hard time finding these places, but our friend Roman, a very intrepid guy, had a four-wheel drive vehicle, and he'd go off and find these places. Then, when he went back, we'd go with him. Jordan was a great place for a second tour.

Herod's Castle, Jordan June 8, 1987 – Jay Anania, Roman Wasilewksi. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Fortunately, my wife was interested in working and was able to find employment. She ended up working for the Military Assistance Office and was working for the Air Force. The Air Force treated their staff far better than State did. If you were a civil servant, you were treated as you would be in any other place. It was really sad that the State Department denigrated the people that we hired, but that really didn't change for many years. It's better now, but still, I would say, a big weakness for the State Department. We could do a whole lot more. In fact, when I was the director of the Office of Management Policy (M/P) I prepared formal proposals, which I gave to the director general, to improve opportunities for family member hiring. These would have been great for morale and resulted in major cash savings for the Department. Sadly, for whatever reasons, those weren't implemented – but still could be!

Q: As a junior officer, you're in your second tour. Did you get tenure out of Amman? How did that work for you?

ANANIA: That's very interesting. Again, I was very green, didn't have much sense of the way things worked in the world. There were big federal budget cuts at that time, and there was a fear that there would even be layoffs. Those of us who weren't tenured… I was very concerned that we would somehow all be laid off. I remember the political officer there sort of poo-pooing that and reassuring me. He was, of course, quite correct, but I was very worried about that. So, when did I get tenured? I honestly don't quite recall if I got tenured just before I left there or at my next post, but it was an area of concern, for sure. USIA (United State Information Agency) was undergoing a lot of turmoil and I believe didn't hire some people who were in line to join USIA. So, it was a rather tumultuous time. I don't think State was hiring to attrition. We were starting to fall behind and have more staffing gaps, a problem that became far more severe starting in the early 1990s.

1986 Jordan Valley. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Now, before we leave Jordan, are there other recollections or insights that you want to share before we start planning for your next assignment?

ANANIA: Well, it was a fascinating tour. It was a real "Foreign Service experience." It was what I was hoping for, perhaps, on my first tour. As entry-level junior officers, we were, as I say, pretty green. We stumbled around and made some mistakes here and there, or faux pas'. We had ambassadors who were very traditionalist and had great expectations for our behavior. The problem was that neither they nor our supervisors necessarily did much to mentor us about what those expectations were, nor had the State Department ever told us. So, we were all stumbling about, in certain cases.

Nonetheless, it was a very favorable tour, and we had some very capable people in Amman. Amman attracted many of the best officers. Several people went on to become ambassadors. Political Counselor David Welch was a multiple time ambassador and NEA Assistant Secretary. His wife, Gretchen Welch became a deputy assistant secretary in the Director General's office. Two political officers, Gordon Gray and Matt Tueller became ambassadors -- Matt is US Ambassador in Baghdad as we speak. Both of my DCMs, Edward "Skip" Gnehm and Patrick Theros went on to become ambassadors at NEA posts and Skip was also Director General. We had a lot of talent at that post. That was a good learning experience for me, and kind of the polar opposite of my first tour in Tijuana, where the average was considerably lower.

Q: Right. Ambassador Gnehm is also working on his oral history now. So, it's a two-year tour. You get to the end of your first year and get into the cycle of bidding. What's on your mind, now that you're married and have two foreign tours under your belt? What's your thought on where you're going to go next?

ANANIA: Well, I mentioned that I studied business. I studied corporate finance and learned about investing. Since an early age, I had an entrepreneurial bent. I was always very interested in making sure that I would be financially secure, even if that meant being able to afford next week's comic books. I am definitely a child of children of the Depression. I remember my grandmother darning socks. I certainly never went without during any time in my life, but nonetheless, we didn't spend money we didn't need to. My parents were frugal, a value I still appreciate. They saved money to put their kids through college and accomplished that goal.

I absorbed all that. So, one of my goals was to go someplace else where I could make money. I didn't have children. We wanted to have children, but I did not want to have children before we had some sense of financial security. Also, I assumed that when we came back to Washington, we would want to buy a house. I, fortunately, didn't have a lot of student debt and paid it all off while in Jordan, along with the car loan from my father. So we were debt free but I thought "Hey, I want to save some money so we can buy a house." So, naturally, we chose Havana.

1998-2000 US Interests Section, Havana, Cuba – General Services Officer

Q: Yeah. What was it, a 25% hardship differential?

ANANIA: 25% when I went, and then it got cut. People were very upset. I was not. I said, "Hey, we could be in Moscow. Moscow is 25%, and it's a lot nicer here in Havana than it is in Moscow." So, I was in the minority that was not outraged when our differential went down. My career development officer from when I was a junior officer, his name was Steve Nolan. He had moved on to what was then ARA, the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, now WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs). He was there, and I got in touch with him. He said, "Hey, we're going to have a GSO position in Havana."

They had never had a full-time GSO before. I said, “Okay, I’ll go for that.” The Department being what it is, that dragged on. In the meantime, other positions were assigned to other people and I was starting to get worried. But eventually, they did create the position. I was assigned to Havana, and again, I figured that my wife – particularly given her consular background and native Spanish skills -- could probably work there, which turned out to be true. She ended up working in the consular section and, to a certain degree, kind of running the IV (Immigrant Visa) section. She had been an FSN, knew how things should work, and spoke Spanish. She really knew how to work with the local Cuban staff, whereas the officers who were there… Their Spanish wasn’t very good, and they weren’t experienced consular officers.

1988 - US Interests Section, Havana. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

So, we went to Havana. Unfortunately, prior to that I suffered a badly broken leg. So, that limited my ability to play tennis, which was an activity that was really nice. My wife also took up tennis in Jordan, and that was another way we could meet people. There were Jordanians who I played with and other expatriates. We would have little diplomatic tournaments with the Brits and the Canadians and other diplomats. But I broke my leg very badly and was in a cast. In fact, I had to work from home for a while. The GSO was happy enough to have me keep working, so they sent me my little computer at home. I could sign all the papers and call and talk to people on the phone. Actually, since I had been working in different offices, I was kind of working virtually anyway and that worked. We lived between the chancery and the warehouse so the motor pool just added me to the daily mail runs and filled up my inbox. I could only work so many hours a day but was still productive.

But I had a cast covering my entire leg, so I couldn’t get around for the first month or so. Later, I would go into the office and put my cast up on a chair. That, by the way, is one of the things I think people overlook. Quite often, pretty much inevitably in any place you are, no matter how remote it is, people have health problems. We are subject to the quality, or lack thereof, of the local health system. You hear a lot of tales of people who get various diseases and suffer long-term health consequences as a result. In my case, had I suffered the same accident in the U.S., my leg would have been treated differently. My bones would have healed differently than they did.

I suffer to this day from the fact that one leg is slightly shorter than the other. That causes me hip problems. I manage it, and I still play a lot of tennis and am active. Thank goodness we have the Foreign Service Benefit Plan for healthcare, which covers chiropractic and massage therapy. Without that, I'd be a lot less active than I am now. We had a very good doctor in Jordan, for what he could do, but they just didn't have any technology. He basically just put my bones back together by manipulating them externally. I was eventually medevacked to the military hospital near Frankfurt, and I spent a few weeks there. They put me in a different cast, but by that point, it was too late for them to do anything differently. This is, in the long term, a fairly minor thing that I suffered, but I know a lot of people who have had far more serious problems and suffered life-long changes to their lifestyle and health because they had the misfortune of having a medical issue develop in a very remote place.

Q: Or just in a less-developed place. Yeah. Did you get training to get up to 3/3 for your Spanish?

ANANIA: When I was in Tijuana, I took some language lessons. We had a post language program, and I was, at that point, dating my wife and speaking Spanish every day on the visa line. I managed to get the 3/3 there. Still, I wasn't a great Spanish speaker. It did come in handy in Jordan as some of the spouses were Spanish speakers with limited English and they appreciated having a GSO with whom they could communicate. Going to Cuba, to some degree, was a setback, because Cubans speak a very different Spanish and there wasn't much of the communist propaganda I could stand reading. We had Cuban friends, so I did improve somewhat there, and then over time I continued to improve. My time at the Organization of American States was very productive in that respect and I was able to finally use Spanish at a professional level since many of the documents in emails I received there were in Spanish only. My staff were predominantly Spanish speakers, so I spoke Spanish with them.

Q: Very nice.

Q: Today is January 28th, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Jay Anania. Jay, you had a few more thoughts you wanted to share before we go on to your next post.

ANANIA: Yes. When we were talking about my period in Amman, Jordan, I mentioned that we had a pretty extraordinary collection of talented individuals there, several of whom went on to become ambassadors. I should have mentioned then that there was another very talented individual there who was our consular officer. He was an outstanding consular officer, highly respected. His career didn't go much farther, and that's because of the Department and federal government's policies at the time, which were so prejudicial to gay people. As I understand it, he resigned from the Foreign Service shortly thereafter because of that. That was a real loss, and of course he was but one of many people over the years who either didn't come into the Foreign Service in the first place, or perhaps left early, or perhaps were forced to hide the essential truth of their being during their time in the Foreign Service. I'm very glad that those times are past. I deeply regret the personal tragedies for these excellent colleagues.

Q: Do you know where he went from there? Did he remain in international affairs, or did you just lose touch?

ANANIA: I lost touch. He wasn't a particular friend of mine or anything like that, he was just somebody that I had a lot of respect for. I think everybody at post did. The few occasions that I had to work with him professionally, he was just an outstanding officer.

1988-90 US Interests Section, Havana Cuba

ANANIA: Okay. In September 1977, President Carter decided to reestablish a physical presence in Cuba with limited relations. Switzerland looked after U.S. interests in Cuba starting in 1961. Cuba's interests section in Washington, DC was part of the embassy of Czechoslovakia. So, we were the Interests Section of the United States and formally part of the Swiss embassy. My business card said: "Embajada de Suiza, Sección de Intereses de los Estados Unidos."

The US moved back into the old U.S. embassy building, which was almost new when Castro took power. It was completed sometime in the mid- to late-'50s. The building had not been properly cared for during any of that time. The U.S. had sent some money to the Swiss to do various things, but the building was really in poor condition.

It was actually similar in construction to the facility that we had in Tijuana. It had an aluminum frame and mostly glass walls, located directly on the seafront. It was subject to very salty air, and, in fact, during certain parts of the year, the Malecon, which is the seafront boulevard in Havana… The sea would go over the seawalls, with waves crashing, and seawater would be all around our building. Our vehicles would get all salty and rust out. By this point, a lot of the aluminum frames were corroded and some were badly deformed. In addition, the building was clad with marble panels on each end. I believe the marble was purchased from Italy when the US was trying to use up "blocked" Italian lira when that currency could not be freely exchanged. At any rate, the marble was hung on some kind of metal which had also corroded, so there was a risk the panels would fall off. We had to keep people away from the base of those parts of the building. (Years later, I was minister counselor for management in Berlin and we had the same problem with our consulate general building in Munich, which had been designed and built in the same time period.)

So, we were constantly having problems when the winds would whip the rain into the building and there would be water coming into the offices. In particular, the principal officers' office was in a spectacular location. It was near the top of our building, and it had a basically unobstructed ocean view and the Malecon on both sides, but it would fill up with water when the wind blew from certain directions when it was raining. Because it was in a controlled access area, we couldn't send the cleaners. So I, as the GSO, was also the char force. I'd have to go up with buckets and mops and dehumidifiers. I'd go in and mop up the water from the principal officers' office. I'd roll out the carpets and take them downstairs to dry them out. I'd put on the dehumidifiers and all of this kind of thing. The post had never had a full time GSO. They had a security officer who was somehow dual hatted as the GSO. You can imagine how much interest most security officers would have in doing the inventory and maintaining the warehouse and those sorts of activities, especially given the security challenges in Havana.

So, again, having gone through all of this in Jordan, it wasn't that big of a surprise to me. I was prepared to have to start from scratch, which I did. It was truly amazing, though, because it was like a time capsule. The Swiss had a very different approach to things than the U.S.; they have their own rules and regulations, and they tend to put a lot of stock in protecting the property of Swiss nationals. We don't do that. But the Swiss, as the protecting power, had allowed people to come to our embassy building and deposit their valuables. Our basement was filled up, at certain points, with all kinds of things. There was cash, stock certificates, legal documents, hi-fi systems, American flags, art, furniture… Who knew.

At some point prior to our arrival in 1988, the Department had sent people down to actually remove all of the cash and negotiable bonds and who knows what all other valuables, but the rest of the stuff was still sitting there in the basement. When I say it was a time machine, among the other things we had was a Coke machine from the U.S. embassy circa 1960. It still had good old Coke bottles in it. We also had 48-star flags, because we didn't go to 50 states until 1959, and I guess they just didn't dispose of the old flags. So, we had these wool, 48-star flags in the basement.

During the time that the Swiss were in charge, we had been sending vehicles to them. We sent them Ford and Chrysler vehicles. So, when I got there, all of our vehicles were Chevrolets. We had Malibus and Celebrities and Impalas and Sport vans and all of that. All of our vehicles were white Chevys. So, early on I went down into the basement, in the stock room, and I saw all of these auto parts that were Ford and Chrysler.

I said, "Why do we have all these auto parts?"
"Well, we used to have Fords and Chryslers."
I said, "Why are these things all still here?"

Nobody had ever told them to get rid of them. So, one of the things that I did was to actually have sales. At that time, the Cubans had an artificial exchange rate. They claimed that the Cuban peso was worth more than the U.S. dollar. So, let's say it was supposed to take 1.20 dollars U.S. to buy a Cuban peso. Well, of course, there wasn't a whole lot that we wanted to buy, except that at this time, there was a major refugee program that had started up. A large percentage of what we were doing there was processing these refugees, people who had for one reason or another run afoul of the Communist state trying to escape. Maybe they were dissidents. Whatever it was, we were processing all of these refugees in large numbers. There were also immigrant visa applications to be dealt with, etcetera.

So, we did have a big demand for Cuban postage. We had to buy postage at the official rate. Now, my predecessor, or rather the management officer who had left –the brother of Steve Nolan, my career development officer -- Rob Nolan was the management officer – had made some attempts to get rid of some stuff by selling it to the diplomatic community, which could purchase things in dollars. But the budget and finance officer, Mark Young, and I thought, "Wait a minute. We're buying a bunch of pesos at the official rate. Why don't we sell the stuff that we have in pesos, which we can then convert at the official rate? These will then become proceeds of sale, which we can then use to buy more furniture."

We had a very poor stock of residential furniture and other things. Then, we also wouldn't be feeding new dollars into the Cuban system. After all, we were pretty hostile to the Cubans. We didn't want to be giving them more US dollars – after all we had an embargo on Cuba.
So, that's exactly what we did. We started to have auction sales, and basically cleaned out all of this stuff. The Cubans were, and I presume still are, very clever people at repurposing things. Motor vehicles were in short supply down there, as were parts. So, somehow, we were able to sell all the new but aged auto filters and air filters and spare brakes or whatever it was, because there was almost nothing that Cubans could buy. They had pesos. So, we had these sales.

Owing to Cuban government restrictions, we couldn't just have a sale open to the general public. We could probably only sell stuff to our own staff, who were technically employees of the Cuban government's organization to provide "services" to diplomats (CUBALSE), of whom there were many. We sold pretty much everything, and at the official exchange rates, we were probably making more money than the original cost of these auto parts and used furniture and other items we sold. So, we ended up taking in pesos, which we then converted at the official exchange rate (perhaps US$ 1.30 per peso), which meant tens of thousands of dollars in proceeds of sale, which we used to buy the things that we needed for the Interests Section. In the meantime, having purchased the pesos in cash, Mark locked them up in the safe and used this case whenever we needed to buy postage. Because we had a very active refugee visa program, as well as regular immigrant visas, we had a great demand for postage and were able to use the pesos steadily. This helped us get through a period of very tight funding.

We were pretty pleased with ourselves about that. Plus, we cleaned out a lot of things. Then, shortly after I transferred, unfortunately, there was a huge flood. Our building was right on the ocean front boulevard (the Malecon) and the sea rose to unusual levels and rushed into the basement, and whatever was left was destroyed or water damaged. I don't think it was all actually underwater, but it was close to it. A lot of the things that people had left behind with the Swiss government for safekeeping were destroyed.

1989, December 20 – Protest in front of US Interests Section, Havana, Cuba. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Wow. What were the new things that you initiated there? Obviously, we're getting into the late '80s now, but you're in a hostile environment, and it's difficult to get things in. You have to be very aware of security, or at least counterintelligence. Since you were the first GSO there, what were the major activities?

ANANIA: Well, it was an extremely strange place, and in many cases very difficult. That wasn't entirely negative, because on the positive side, people didn't have high expectations. So, if you did things, people were generally appreciative. We had no way of using normal commercial shipments, which was inconvenient but also, to some degree, a positive. The system was that the U.S. dispatch agent in Miami, who was a very capable professional, would organize chartered airplanes for us. Challenge Air was one of the companies. I think one of these companies that they used was later exposed as a CIA front company. They would get… I don't know what the planes were at the time, I recall they were 737s, but they would periodically charter entire planes to move our household effects, cars and other miscellaneous cargo. So, it was actually somewhat easier, not having to deal with Cuban customs on a day to day basis.

Every month or two months or however long it took to fill up a plane and justify a flight, you would get an entire plane, and you would just have to do one set of paperwork. Oddly enough, the Cubans would let us land the plane, and their customs officials were there, but they would basically just watch us take things off, put it in our trucks, and send it to the chancery building. That was the majority of the items. Household effects (HHE), for whatever strange reasons, they forced us to send them to their customs warehouses, and then we had to go through customs clearances as is normal in other places. They also had customs inspectors on hand at residences when people unpacked their HHE. But it wasn't too bad; they would clear this stuff, and we would bring it in.

The houses we leased – and they were almost all single-family homes – had originally been the homes of well-to-do Cubans who had pretty much all fled the country in the wake of the Revolution. We acquired most of these residences upon reengaging with the Cubans in the late '70s under President Carter. This was now 1988. So, we had had these places for about 10 years, and they were generally not in good condition. A lot of the houses had never even had glass windows. They had what were called Miami louvers, which were wooden louvers. It's a very hot and humid climate, so what had happened was that the Cubans had fabricated makeshift glass windows in frames, which would then be put up against the louvers and then hooked on. They weren't airtight, and mosquitoes, lizards and other creatures could get in. But when we fixed the houses up, they were mostly quite pleasant, having been the homes of the well-to-do.

We acquired the house we lived in, which was in the Siboney suburb to the west of the city, just prior to our arrival. It had been used as a library in the 1960's when the Cuban government brought in thousands of youth from the countryside to attend schools. The children and teachers lived and studied in abandoned or confiscated residences. Once the government built enough schools, the children went home and in many cases the staff were left to live in the houses. Most were in dismal condition because the occupants simply could not acquire even basic supplies, such as paint or glass. However, our house had been a school library, and was then converted into a government VIP guest house, so it wasn't as worn out and then was somewhat maintained. It still had the original American bathroom fixtures and electrical panel, some of which we could repair.

Otherwise, we had to do a great deal of work to get it ready for occupancy. We had a terrific maintenance supervisor, Guillermo Samper, who had an interest in swimming pool maintenance and satellite TV installation. Cubans were forbidden to operate private businesses, but he made extra money working after-hours for foreign diplomats. He had purchased a used Ford Escort from a departing staff member, so was the very rare Cuban with a private auto that wasn't a Soviet Lada, which were infamously unreliable. At any rate, he ordered the parts and managed to get the swimming pool in our large back yard operating safely. We had a well and pump, so unlike most Cubans, we had plenty of water.

We entertained frequently, as did many USINT colleagues. There wasn't much to do so we had an active social life. I can't talk about our time in Havana without mentioning the generally high morale of our tight-knit USINT community, or our many friends in the small international community, including those from Canada, Greece, Finland, Germany and the UK. Hardship conditions place enormous stress on people, but in our experience, it can and did bring us together. Often posts with the most difficult circumstances have higher morale than so-called "dream" posts, such as Paris.

One of our dear friends, Jason Matthews, went on to become a successful writer of spy thrillers. "Red Sparrow" was made into a big-budget movie.

1989 – Our home in Siboney, Havana Cuba – productive mango tree on the left
Below: one of our frequent social gatherings, Jason Matthews smoking cigar. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

1990, July – Private home of Consul William and Elizabeth Brencick, Siboney, Havana, Cuba -- Jay Anania, Wallis Haynes, Lourdes Anania, Benito Krawczyk, PAO David Evans. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Also, our costs of utilities were extremely high because we had air conditioners (aka "window rattlers") that we installed, and no insulation whatsoever. These were leaky windows. So, we had a lot of work to do all the time to keep these houses going. The power was constantly being cut off; the water supply was bad. So, we installed electrical generators at all the houses. In some cases, including in our house, we were actually lucky enough to have wells. Where we had well water, we could make sure that there was a steady supply of water. In other residences, we would pump the water up to roof tanks, and then you could have a reasonably steady water supply. It was very difficult.

The phone service was horrendous; the phones rarely worked, and even if they did, it was almost impossible to make any kind of call outside of Cuba. It was also extremely expensive. Occasionally, you'd get a call from somebody, with the reaction "How on earth did you get through?" I remember my uncle calling me once, and I was like, "Who is this?" He said, "Yeah, I tried about 400 times." That sort of thing would go on. The Cubans also cut the phone lines to our on-call communicators, so we had to keep a driver on duty so that if there was an alert the Marine on duty could send the driver out to recall whoever was needed.

So, it was a very strange place to be. We were under constant surveillance. My wife worked in the consular section and she would often have contact with the dissidents who would come in. They were human rights activists and people like that, some of whom were sent there by the Cuban intelligence services to find out who we were and who would be talking to them so they could identify people they might consider particularly hostile to Cuba. That sort of thing. So, my wife, because she was dealing with these people… I guess they probably assumed that she was something that she wasn't, like an intelligence agent. So, she actually attracted more attention than I did.

But we were followed all the time and harassed to a moderate degree. Other people were harassed a lot more than we were. But, you know, they would come into your house and install listening devices or whatever they did. You would find something, maybe, that they left behind, such as a piece of wire; perhaps it was on purpose, perhaps not. In some cases, they would definitely leave things behind on purpose. I remember one friend of ours. She found an AK-47 bullet in her sewing basket. That sort of thing would happen. We were followed, we assumed, pretty much all the time when we were driving around, but sometimes they would be very aggressive.

The consular officer who was in charge of the consular section, William Brencick, who was meeting pretty regularly with the human rights people, was definitely a target of Cuban ire. One time he was riding his bicycle – he was a keen cyclist – there wasn't much traffic. He was out on a highway, I think, and the people who were following him were irritated that they were driving along at 15 miles per hour, however fast he was going, and they started pelting him with things.

As I recall, they hit him with oranges and knocked him off his bike, which, obviously, could be a very dangerous situation. In retrospect, it's kind of amazing that they would have been pelting him with oranges, because they didn't have much food there and oranges were kind of hard to get. With other people, they would drive big trucks right up to them, tailgating them in town and flashing their high beams at them. It was all kinds of things like that. So, it was very unpleasant.

Q: And this is a two-year tour because of the hardship?

ANANIA: Yes, it was a two-year tour. It was our third tour, so I was no longer considered an entry-level officer, or a junior officer, as we were called.

Q: Were you able to establish new procedures and so on that could be used, again, for your successor?

ANANIA: Yes. Like I said, early on in Jordan, and even in Tijuana before I left, I always tried to take a methodical approach to things. I used to jokingly say, "I have admin in a box," because I would ship via pouch a box of computer disks with all of the policies. So, everything I had written in Jordan I would modify so that we would have GSO procedure 88-1 in Havana when I got there. Again, my predecessors had never really documented much of anything, so I created new forms, such as, here's how you request a motor vehicle. I made sure that my team was actually doing what they were supposed to, such as filling out the forms about the motor vehicle usage. I started tracking the use of gasoline in the vehicles.

Actually, I had started doing that in Jordan, and I would notice discrepancies. In Havana, we had three Caprices of the same make and model, and they were all lightly armored, and yet one was getting far worse gasoline mileage than the others. Why was that? Was it because we weren't maintaining it? Was somebody siphoning the gas? Was the driver leaving the engine running to blast the A/C while waiting for a passenger? It was putting in those basic controls. Once I started watching, the gas mileage improved. Having a few personal computers in the building made a positive difference in all of this.

I had a Wang 8086 PC with what seemed like an amazingly large 10 mb hard drive, then got an upgraded model with an Intel 286 chip. That computer had an early version of Windows software but it wasn't clear why we would want anything more than the Wang interface on our two-tone monitors.

It was difficult to reduce the electricity usage there, but I would at least encourage people to not run their window rattlers all day when they were at work. Some people would go on leave and leave all of their air conditioners on. To some degree, you needed to do that where your clothes were so that they didn't get covered in mold, but not in your living and dining room.

So, sure, I wrote all kinds of procedures. I started tracking our real estate costs. We were in a dispute with the Cubans, because they were overcharging us. They were charging us outrageous amounts of rent for these dilapidated buildings, far more than they charged other diplomatic missions, which I document. Whereas, meanwhile, they were paying lower total rents in the U.S. So, I tried to work with the Office of Foreign Missions to impose reciprocity. That was something that… Like I said, the State Department was run by political officers, and the people on the Cuban Desk – despite the fact that we were officially hostile to the Cubans – for some reason didn't want to engage on this issue. One even told us that her brother was in real estate and that our rents were comparable to those in other Caribbean countries! You can tell that that still rankles me to this day. We had a good principal officer there, Jay Taylor, who was patient with me, I guess you could say.

Q: Well, it's the first time they had had a GSO, so one hopes.

ANANIA: Plus, I came up and mopped out his office. So…

Q: That's amazing. Wow. Were you able to upgrade, in any way, the telecommunications or the computer activity there?

ANANIA: There was a Wang VS mainframe computer, which was used for the consular section. I didn't have anything to do with that, really. I think I ordered several more PCs (personal computers). So, we gave the head of the consular section a PC, which I installed. I had, originally, one of these same 8086 Wang PCs that I had in Jordan, and then we got some Wang PCs with Intel 286 processors. They came with something called Microsoft Windows. What the heck was that? It actually wasn't very useful at the time, because we didn't have mice. But, anyway, the computer was a little bit faster, and you could still use Lotus 123 and word processing. I think we maybe even had Microsoft Word, or some initial version of that. So, you know, we just did some rudimentary things. Oh, but all the reporting things, as limited official use or above, were considered sensitive and for that it was all IBM (International Business Machines) Selectric III typewriters.

This was a time period when Radio Marti – have you ever heard of Radio Marti?

Q: Absolutely, sure.

ANANIA: We had Radio Marti, which was broadcast on the AM (amplitude modulation) band from southern Florida. It was basically… Well, unfortunately it was not to the same journalistic standards as Voice of America. It was not run, necessarily, to high professional standards of journalism by any means. It was reporting all kinds of gossip about corruption among Cuban government officials or whatever. This was somewhat tolerated by the Cubans. They were broadcasting a tone on the same frequency. So, if you listened to Radio Marti, you got this irritating tone, but you could listen to it.

There were some influential elected representatives from South Florida who were militantly anti-Castro. They decided we should have something called TV Marti. The idea was that they were going to put up what was basically a blimp or two at the southernmost point of the Florida Keys, where there was a military installation. With a blimp, we would then be able to have a TV transmitter that could transmit to Cuba, which was 90 miles away at the closest point. We were going to have this TV Marti. Well, this, of course, could be considered to go against international standards for broadcasting. It was very complex stuff.

We had actually had broadcasting wars with the Cubans, over the years. We had tried to push propaganda or – hopefully – better quality information to the Cubans for many years, and they had countered by broadcasting extremely high-powered signals to basically wipe out radio signals in the southern U.S. That, of course, caused problems with commercial broadcasters. So, we had a sort of semi-truce at this point. They were broadcasting the tone, but you could still hear Radio Marti. Anyway, they made it very clear that if we put on TV Marti, they were going to take steps against us.
We did make some plans not to interfere with Cuban TV broadcasts. But because TV Marti was announced and discussed months before it was initiated, the Cubans prepared a "defense." They didn't have many television channels, perhaps only 2 or 3, but they started to broadcast the same programs on all of the UHF (ultra-high frequency) channels, channels two to 13, which were the only channels most of their Soviet bloc TVs could receive. So, if we started broadcasting, we would now be interfering with Cuban TV broadcasts. The other thing that we discovered, though, was that they turned off all of their TV at a certain point, two in the morning, or maybe it was one in the morning.

The bright idea among those proponents of TV Marti was, okay, we're not going to interfere with Cuban broadcasting. We'll show TV Marti at two in the morning until they sign on again at six or seven in the morning, whenever it was. So, this was going on, and you could see that this was not going to work out well. At some point, the US decided that as of X date, we're going to have TV Marti.

I, for whatever reasons, was designated as the TV Marti reporting officer. This was because, I think, I knew how to run various AV (audio visual) equipment. I was Captain

Video. We had set up a satellite TV system, and we purchased subscriptions to HBO (Home Box Office) and Showtime and whatever, and I would videotape movies onto video cassettes. The admin secretary kept a little library of videotapes, and our staff could join the video club by contributing a small amount of money that we used to buy the blank tapes. Then, you could check out these movies. Otherwise, we had no access. There was no Blockbuster or Netflix or anything like that in those days.

At any rate, somehow it was determined that I should be in charge of monitoring TV Marti. So, every day, I would set up the video recorder to record. I'll never forget the first night. It came on, and I was at home, and I stayed up for the grand event. They put on a Pete Rose baseball program, an instructional show for kids, as I recall. So, the very first night, I tuned in at home and lo and behold, you actually could watch TV Marti. It was coming in well.

We could receive regular TV from the U.S., with "snowy" picture as we used to say, sometimes, if the signals were bouncing off the ether just the right way. We all had TV antennas on high masts to catch the occasional US broadcast. I remember watching a Washington Redskins Monday night football game, one time.

Shortly after TV Marti started its broadcast, the jammers came on, and the picture was completely wiped out, it became "snow." Not only that, but then the Cubans said, "Well, okay. If you're breaking our truce, we're going to wipe out Radio Marti." They had warned us in advance that this would happen, and so Cuba then began to fully jam Radio Marti. So our policy was completely counterproductive and we could only conclude it was implemented to satisfy some narrow domestic political imperatives.

Unfortunately, some of the people running TV Marti were dishonest, and they were claiming that they were having great success and that Cubans of all stripes were watching TV Marti. They did some ridiculous surveys of people who were arriving from Cuba at the Miami airport, and they would ask them if they had seen TV Marti. A lot of people answered "yes," because the first night, you could actually see TV Marti. I don't know if it was the whole night or just for an hour or whatever it was, but they could say, honestly, that they had viewed TV Marti. So, from this, whatever branch of VOA (or perhaps it was a separate organization) was running TV Marti was trumpeting "Oh, yes. We've brought wonderful programming and free information to Cuba."

That was complete balderdash. We knew this wasn't true, but now we had to document what was really going on. Every work day I would set up the video tape machine at the office building (a standard VCR) to start recording at one or two AM, whenever TV Marti was supposed to come on, and every day it was the same thing. At one or two AM, the TV Marti test tone would come on and be visible, and then 30 seconds or so later, jamming equipment would turn on and wipe it out. I would fast forward the tape and sit there in front of this VCR, watching snow go by for however long TV Marti was supposed to be on – four hours or five hours, until the start of the Cuban's regular TV broadcasting day. .

I would have to go up into the classified area and get out the IBM typewriter and type up a limited official use telegram – we didn't have computers for sensitive material – saying exactly what I just described. And it was the same cable every day, but I had to retype it. The people at TV Marti didn't want to admit that this was a dismal failure and a huge waste of U.S. government money. You might as well have just been taking dollars and flushing them down the toilet. Then they claimed, "Oh, people are still seeing it in some places outside of Havana."

So, we were dispatched to check that out. I remember that I had to go out with a PAO a few times – we didn't go out alone – and we would drive around to see if we could detect TV Marti. I had gotten a Sony Watchman, which was a little miniature TV. You may remember the famous Sony Walkman, which was for audio cassettes. Well, they came out with a Watchman, which was a TV. It had a three-inch screen, and it was battery operated, so the PAO David Evans would pick me up, probably in the USIS vehicle, and we would drive around Cuba at two, three, four in the morning. That was interesting, because there was zero traffic. We would drive around, and periodically I'd turn on the TV, and you could see the snow.

We did, actually, validate that you could see TV Marti in one place. It just so happened that that one place was the diplomatic beach, because there was a geographical or geological quirk. There was a protected cove with a small stone promontory around it, so the beach was protected from the jamming signals. The jamming beams couldn't go in there, and it was open to the north. So, there, I remember… We drove to the east of Havana along the coast and went down there to this beach area and I turned it on, and lo and behold, TV Marti was coming in loud and clear. As I recall, we saw a few minutes of a show on Ted Turner's America's Cup yacht racing event. Because it wasn't an area open to Cubans, and few if any people lived there, the potential audience that was not in any way, shape, or form part of our target audience… If you happened to be a diplomat at that beach, at two in the morning, and you had a Sony Watchman, you could watch it.

Then we heard, "Oh, yes, but even though it's being blocked around Havana, other parts of Cuba can see it. On the south coast of Cuba you can see it." That seemed highly unlikely given that TV signals don't reliably travel great distances, but somebody else was sent down there at some point, and they took the Watchman with them, and no, you couldn't see it at all. It was just a complete waste of money, all done, basically, for U.S. domestic political purposes. It was disappointing that we were wasting that money, and that the U.S. government was lying about the effectiveness of it. That was, to me, appalling.

TV Marti subsequently had all kinds of scandals – mismanagement of funds, sexual harassment, you name it. At some point they switched over to satellite TV, which at least wasn't being jammed. Of course, the problem with that was that only a handful of people in Cuba had satellite TV, and they were probably government officials who were not exactly open to our message of democracy promotion. The ingenuity of Cuban people being what it is, today there are some ways for Cubans to access foreign media. I doubt many are very interested in TV Marti.

Q: Right. Wow. Remarkable story. Okay. Before we close on Cuba, were there any other anecdotes that you recall that are really compelling from your tour there?

ANANIA: Well, one of the things was that, as I mentioned, the Cubans were constantly harassing us and monitoring us. They were also trying to entrap people. Prior to my arrival, they had introduced some of the Marines… Actually, the Marines had somehow become acquainted with some young ladies and had brought them back to the Marine house, which was totally against the rules and regulations. The Cuban Ministry of Interior police, because they were constantly monitoring everybody, knew this. Now, I don't know that these young ladies were originally agents of the Cubans; in fact, I don't think they were. But they were quickly rounded up and told, "Now you're going to be working for us."

Well, they didn't like that, apparently, so they went to the Canadian embassy and sought asylum. This, of course, caused a big stink, because it revealed that our Marines had been improperly fraternizing with Cuban women. So, I don't think all of the Marines had been directly involved, but they had all known that this was going on, or should have. The entire Marine detachment was removed from Cuba. So, when we came in, which was just after that, the new detachment was on total lockdown. Nonetheless, some people who had been interviewed by Diplomatic Security had suggested that, somehow, there were improper activities among other USINT staff. This is unprecedented. I've never heard of it before or since. Our entire staff was flown out of Havana to Miami and interviewed by diplomatic security to see if there were terrible things going on. They didn't take us all at once. We went in shifts. There were two or three groups, or whatever it was.

For me, because I had just gotten there, they didn't have much to interview me about. I hadn't noticed any problems. So, for me, it was a free trip to Miami. We went and stayed at the Holiday Inn and I took the bus to the mall and bought some new shoes or something. But for some people, it was really a very intense thing, and they were interviewed for hours. It really shook a lot of people. The then-assistant secretary of DS – Robert Lamb if I recall correctly – subsequently acknowledged that they should not have done this and apologized.

Nonetheless, that was an extraordinary event. The Cubans continued to try to do things. In fact, a junior officer had been removed from post just prior to our arrival for fraternizing with a woman who wasn't a Cuban and was from a friendly country, but because he had a fiancée, the Cubans could have attempted to blackmail him. So, he was taken out of post. I don't think that had any long-term implications for his career; he continued to work for the State Department. But those sorts of things were going on all the time.

The Marines were the subject of continuous harassment. There was one Marine in particular who was, as I recall, Mexican American. He was from California, I think the Los Angeles area. They would call him. The phones usually didn't work, but they made sure the phone to Post One worked at night, and when he was on night duty, he would just get calls from what were presumably Cuban intelligence agents – women – saying that they wanted to meet him. He was a handsome young guy, and they were telling him how attractive he was and how they wanted to meet him in person. It was constant. I remember, for some reason – maybe we went out for TV Marti or something – going in in the early hours and hearing some of these phone calls. Oh, my God. All night, this was going on. And because it was the phone number for emergencies, he had to answer it.

Then we had other people. We had a colleague who was an avid photography nut and, frankly, didn't always use very good judgment. He was constantly taking photographs. Whenever we went out to the U.S. – somebody was going on R&R (rest and recuperation) or any kind of travel – you always took the US mail with you to deposit upon arrival. We could receive our mail via diplomatic pouch and it worked pretty well, but we would hand-carry the outgoing mail. Well, this guy would full up the outgoing mail box like it was an inbox for papers. You'd go to get it, and he'd have like 50 rolls of film that he was mailing back to York Photo Labs or whatever firm he used.

The Cubans did not like that he was always taking these photographs; they thought that he must be some kind of nefarious person. If he was, he wouldn't be doing it so obviously, but at any rate, they didn't like that. They were constantly harassing him and his wife. They smashed out the lights on his car. They flattened his tires. They did all kinds of things like that, but he just kept taking photos.

Q: Wow. That's also remarkable.

ANANIA: This wasn't as bad as what some of our other colleagues were experiencing in other Communist countries at the time, like Bulgaria. In fact, some friends of ours in Cuba had served in Bulgaria. Their dog had been poisoned in Bulgaria. Bulgarians would come in and turn their apartment upside down. Things like that would go on. But we were harassed, there's no doubt about it. In retrospect, recently there's been a lot of talk about the Cubans beaming sonic waves at us and things like that, and that was definitely happening when we were there. It was a topic of conversation at cocktail parties with diplomats. People would be holding glasses, and the crystal would just explode mysteriously. Presumably, they were beaming some sort of high-frequency at us. This happened, in particular, at our principal officer Jay Taylor's residence. So, that sort of thing was going on. I don't think we ever figured out just exactly what that was.

Q: That is wild. Huh.

ANANIA: That was a very strange place. We were under a microscope all the time.

Q: In the long run, looking back on it, was it a tour that was useful for you later in your career? Were there things that you learned or talents and skills you picked up that were helpful later on?

ANANIA: Well, it wasn't a particularly difficult job. I came and went on normal office hours. I had time to record video tapes and go out at night looking for TV Marti.

Everything was pretty static. I had time to… I tried to do things correctly, and the Department did then and still does a very poor job of giving posts direction as to how things should be done. So, I would look at the FAM. There was something called the GSO Handbook, which was written by an officer named Dave Bennett who was bored somewhere in a small post in Africa. He wrote basically a how-to manual for GSOs, with all kinds of forms and policies and things. He had just done this on his own, and it was really well-done, and the Department started distributing this. But it was out of date, it was several years old.

I would try to do things according to what the FAM said to do, and I would notice that there were problems. It was unclear. So, I became a gadfly, if you will. I would send cables to the Department saying, "You know, you're telling us to use this form, but that's not the right number, or it is missing data fields." I remember that on travel, we used to have GTRs -- Government Travel Requests. They were a controlled form, and every time somebody was going to fly, they had to fill out these forms. Then, you were supposed to send a copy of the form to an office that no longer existed. It was just things like that that helped fill up the day productively. Sometimes, the offices would come back and say, "Thanks for letting us know."

As is so often the case in large organizations, nobody takes responsibility. Who should do this? Nobody ever really would. So, I was one of the people who would actually tell them, and hopefully, then, they would update the FAM, and that would make some marginal difference to other GSOs somewhere. But otherwise, it was an interesting tour. I did my best to manage our resources responsibly, and we did an okay job of that, but I don't think it had any wider impact. It was a lot of the same things that I had been doing in Jordan.

Q: Okay. Now, having three tours in a row overseas is a little different from most junior officers. Most tend to go back to Washington after two. Were you starting to think about that?

ANANIA: Yes. In fact, when I was in Jordan, I had also been offered a job as a post management officer in EUR (Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs), and I remember one of the communicators in Amman telling me I was an idiot for not taking that job and for going to Havana. Well, okay. As it ended up, I guess I remembered that, because I ended up being a post management officer in EUR. I got the same job. At the time, that was, in fact, a great job, particular for an FS-03 officer. Post management officers were the interfaces between the posts and the domestic bureaus. You got to see all the things that were going on, and the frictions and problems that bureaus and the Department tend to think very narrowly about. They don't think about the post perspective.

So, in that regard, having worked in a place like Havana, where I had gotten involved in a lot of things to do with financial management and HR (human resources) and other issues, I had a good sense of what the reality was. So, when you would see things coming across your desk for clearance, you could intervene. Posts would have problems where two functional bureaus had to work on the problem, and they wouldn't, so we could negotiate solutions. I often would actually draft the cables and clear it with the others who were really supposed to be doing the work. By taking the initiative, I could shape the agenda, a good lesson.

It was a really good job. Unusually, EUR had post management officer positions at the FS-3 (Foreign Service) level. The other bureaus all had post management officers at FS-2 levels. I wouldn't have been able to go to any other regional bureau.

During the time we were in Cuba, that was the time that the Soviet Union collapsed and there was the fall of the Berlin Wall. That was a huge change for Cuba. When we got there, the economy was terrible, but it only got worse. Basically, although the dollar value of trade was heavily oriented towards the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), because the USSR was giving them oil, in terms of the function of the Cuban economy, a lot of the most important trade was actually with the other Eastern European countries. After the USSR collapsed, the former satellite countries quickly became democratic or quasi-democratic, and that put the Cubans, basically on a cash on delivery (COD) basis. Because there was no C, there was no D.

1988 – Highway between Havana and Varadero – an unintentionally appropriate "inspirational" billboard "The Future in the Present". Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

For instance, Cuba used Hungarian buses - Ikarus brand as I recall which is rather an odd name but perhaps appropriate given their reliability. Well, they didn't have any parts. They were badly maintained even before, but suddenly they had no parts, so when they would break, that was it. They had these big accordion double-length buses. I remember that axles were breaking or something, and you would see these things, and they just looked like abandoned beached whales. We were right on the coast. You'd drive by these things, and they'd sit there for weeks, sometimes, because they had no tow trucks and they couldn't repair them. We used to sing the Queen song "Another One Bites the Dust" as we passed by. A lot of the machinery used for the sugar harvest and things like that was coming from, let's say, East Germany. Again, they couldn't get parts.

So, the whole city kind of just ground to a halt. It was horrendous at all times, but it became even worse. Our lifestyle actually improved somewhat, because they had all of the Eastern European technicians and spies and who knows what else who had been in Cuba, but they all left. The Cubans had these so-called diplomatic stores, *diplomercados,* with certain things you could only buy if you had dollars, like imported Spanish wine, for instance. A lot of stuff was actually American stuff that was transshipped through Panama or Canada. I remember that they had Old Milwaukee beer for a while. But at any rate, the Eastern Europeans and the Soviets could go to these stores and buy fresh things using dollar-denominated coupons. So, they could get the milk, the ice cream – not that there was ever much of this stuff. Occasionally they would get shipments of Pilsner Urquell Czech beer, or East German beer, rum, things like that.

Well, there was a huge black market going on. These foreign technocrats would get certificates that were dollar-denominated, and they could buy certain products, which they would. They would go in there like locusts and clean out the stores. Then, they would resell it on the black market. Our Cuban employees would say that if they were having a party or something, they would go to the apartment of a Soviet guest worker to buy what they needed.

When all these people cleared out, suddenly we had a much better chance of actually finding some onions or meat or whatever food items we needed. Otherwise, we were importing a lot of our own food. I mentioned that we had charter flights coming in from Miami. What we would do when we had the charter flights coming in was that we could then put in orders to food wholesalers and liquor wholesalers, and we had a purchasing agent called IPG – International Purchasing Group. We would send this company the orders. The owner and workers were Cuban American. He would basically assemble all this stuff and take it out to the plane and get it on the plane. They charged a flat percentage above whatever the cost was.

That's how we ate. We would just import things. So, we ate a lot of spaghetti and Ragu spaghetti sauce. People would bring in flour. You had to bake your own bread, because Cuban bread was hard to find and absolutely horrible, with terrible chemical flavors. They were fumigating the wheat or whatever it was they were doing. So, when their economy collapsed, life became a little better for us. All traffic pretty much ceased, so you could drive around anywhere with no traffic. They would still sell us gasoline for dollars. The problem was that you couldn't get gasoline outside of the city, so you really couldn't go many places, not that I was particularly interested in doing that. But yes, the fall of the Berlin Wall had a catastrophic effect on the economy. Fidel Castro called it the "special period in peacetime" – *el periodo especial en tiempo de paz.* This was a great challenge, and all the slogans reflected that. *Socialismo o muerte* – socialism or death. *Patria o muerte, venceremos!* (Country or death, we will triumph!)

As far as our mission went, it was a bizarre time, and there was a lot of thought that the Soviet Union had collapsed, so Cuba must be next. Our reporting was supposed to be focused on, are there dissenters in Cuba? Are they going to overthrow the Castros? We were sent out to drive around the countryside and try to run into Cubans and have casual conversations. That was never really possible. We were followed all the time. I remember going out with one of the political officers, because again, you always had to go in pairs. We just went to some places around Havana and would chit chat.

The problem was that there were not a lot of gathering places. They didn't have bars, and there were no cafés. You couldn't buy anything. So, if you went to some little town, it's like, okay. There are a few people hanging around on the street, but how do you access them? It's not like you can go into a bar and then you're drinking a beer and talking to Cubans. That just didn't happen.

Of course, whatever dissent there was, it was horribly suppressed. Because people could escape and were escaping, a lot of the people who may have opposed Castro just disappeared. They called them the *balseros* (rafters), at that point. These were people who would get inner tubes and build makeshift rafts and boats and set off into the high seas. It was amazing, the desperation of people. Many of them, of course, died. They would set off with inadequate supplies of water; they didn't have proper cover for their skin. They'd be horribly sunburned, and they would just hope that as they floated along in the Straits of Florida, a boat would see them and rescue them. There were also groups in Miami or southern Florida that would fly planes around to try to see these people and then have people in boats pick them up.

It was really, truly terrible. As I said, life got better for us, but it was terrible for the Cubans. The food supply was horrendous. Despite the fact that we could literally drop seeds in our backyard and have things grow, you couldn't buy fresh fruits and vegetables. We had mangoes falling off our tree, but you couldn't get mangoes in the stores. It was just an absolutely terrible time for Cuba and individual Cubans. That was very sobering.

I found it hard to believe when Hugo Chavez became president of Venezuela. With his great personal power, he looked around the world for an economic model and chose one which abjectly failed, that of Cuba. It isn't hard to read history and find examples of disastrous leadership, but this was one. Years later when I was ambassador in Suriname and Venezuela was imploding due to its communist-like economic disaster, corruption and ideological fanaticism. It was no coincidence that the Venezuelan government had brought in thousands of Cuban security forces to prevent the deserved fall of the Chavez/Maduro government. They followed the Castro model with the same tragic results, the complete betrayal of whatever idealistic principles might have somehow motivated them to address the very real inequities of the two countries.

Q: Alright. Then, let's follow you on to the next assignment.

1990-93 Post Management Officer (PMO), Executive Office, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs (EUR/EX)

ANANIA: So, we were in Havana during the time when the Berlin Wall fell. That was a very traumatic time for the Cuban people. The situation there changed a lot. Day to day, for us, it made our lives a little bit easier, because we didn't have to compete with the Eastern Europeans who would scarf up all the fresh food available in the markets and sell it on the black market to Cubans who couldn't get food themselves. But that was a very odd assignment. For my next assignment, I was fortunate enough to be assigned as a post management officer in what was then called the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs – EUR. Canada was later moved over to the WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs) bureau, which itself was renamed at that time.

Q: It did happen in the late '80s or early '90s, because I was also back in the Department when it happened. That was the period of time I was there.

ANANIA: A post management officer is a sort of amorphous job title. Basically, it was a job with a lot of flexibility to make it what you wanted it to be. The overall idea was that you were looking out for the posts that you were responsible for, whatever that meant. It could mean anything as mundane as… I remember the financial management officer in Turkey used to ask me to do things like figure out what happened to the ambassador's medical bill when he was at Georgetown University Hospital.

Then there were much more substantive things, which often involved trying to get functional bureaus to do their jobs, frankly, or to talk among themselves. Often, two offices in the same functional bureau couldn't agree. You could be a facilitator and perhaps drive the agenda a little bit, as well. So, I'll give you an example of the sorts of things one might do. We were in a period where the budget was shrinking, because we had won the Cold War and there were not going to be any further foreign policy challenges for the United States. Naturally, it was time for us to close up shop in many places and hire fewer people, etcetera.

Q: The peace dividend.

ANANIA: Yes. It didn't exactly work out as planned, but at any rate, the European Bureau, during that period – this was under President George H.W. Bush and Secretary James Baker – was interesting. In the bureaucracies of Washington, a lot goes on under the surface. Congress was pushing for budget cuts, and many agencies were doing an effective job of, frankly, working against the wishes of the president to retain their budget. Of course, the U.S. military and Department of Defense are past masters of doing that. But because – or so it seemed – Secretary Baker was very close with President Bush, the State Department really didn't do that, even though we had a huge case to make that we, in fact, shouldn't be cut so much. That was especially true because, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, we were being charged with opening new embassies throughout

Eastern Europe, South Asia, and whatever you want to call the area formerly encompassed by the Soviet Union.

To make matters worse, not only did the State Department not get additional resources, but there was a strategic-level decision made that the resources to open these new posts in Europe, at least the human resources, should be drawn solely from Western Europe. So, this required a wrenching period, during which we took what I think were, in many cases, reasonable actions to close some posts that, perhaps, didn't have the mission that they once had. We also had to move a lot of positions. For instance, there was Embassy Bonn, which might have had literally dozens of political and economic officers, and they were shorn of many of these positions. They were then moved to places like Dushanbe, Kiev, and places like that. We, in the executive office, were ground zero for this, because we had to orchestrate a lot of it. So, that was going on. We had, fortunately, an extremely able team of PMOs (post management officers) who were working on those issues. But in the meantime, we also had a lot of issues related to the downsizing.

So, now, to get to the example, Mission Italy was told to close various posts – Genoa and Palermo in particular. The problem was that Congress needed to sign off on these things, or they needed to be notified and given a chance to object to the closures. So, what the Department did was essentially eviscerate a lot of these posts without actually closing them. So, we got, in Palermo, an essentially closed consular section, which at one point had been a very busy place, especially in providing services to American citizens. It did things like processing Social Security payments, etcetera, for Americans who had retired back to Sicily or who had relatives in Sicily and who were now the beneficiaries of Social Security payments or whatever. But the level of work had gone way down, and there probably wasn't a great justification to keep that post open. So, we removed the positions, leaving only the consul general, his driver, and perhaps a secretary.

This, at one point, had been a thriving post, and it occupied two stories of a rented building. I never actually made it to Palermo, so my memories are not quite as sharp as they might have been, but in the meantime, post suggested, "Hey, we should give back one of the floors and save the rent." The problem was that this was in the era when we had started to put in physical security upgrades. So, we had forced entry ballistic-resistant – FEBR – doors and windows and things like that. You couldn't just give the space back. Or maybe you could, but somehow post didn't think that they could.

At any rate, one task I took on was to kind of referee who should pay for these things. It was clearly in the best interest of the Department that we give this space back. Yes, it was going to cost some tens of thousands of dollars to remove this equipment, but then we were going to quickly recoup that. In fact, I think the payback period was just about a year. But at the time – and still today – different bureaus would argue about which is responsible for various costs. In fact, it was the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that was supposed to pay for the dismantling of this material, but they weren't going to see any savings. The savings were going to go to what was then called the Foreign Buildings Office – FBO – and is now OBO (Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations).

FBO said, "Hey, we're not going to pay for this," even though it would clearly be in their interest to do so because they would save a lot of money. Another constant challenge at the State Department is that the money comes from different pots. So, even though it was clearly in the best interests of the Department, and it was clearly in the best interests of FBO, maybe the money that they might have had to spend to take away these doors wasn't the same pot of money as the real estate lease money came from.

Anyway, these were the sorts of issues that we often got involved in in EX. We had a very well-run EX, and we had an excellent executive director, Douglas Langan, rest in peace. We had very capable deputy executive directors, Dick Shinnick and John O'Keefe. We had a stellar group of supervisors in post management. So, we were given, as post management officers, a lot of leeway to get out and really try to work these issues. That was an issue that I really was able to work on, and I don't even remember quite how it came down, but eventually we got an agreement that the Department was going to pay for the removal of these doors. We were able to then give back that space, and then some months later, Congress finally either approved or didn't object, and we ended up closing the post completely.

This was played out in many different ways at many different posts. It just so happened that I had a fairly large portfolio because we were having to devote so much attention to opening the new embassies and dealing with the fallout from the collapse of the Soviet Union that, at one point, I think I had something like 20 posts that I was managing. That's including consulates. So, that gave me a real education about the way the bureaucracy of the Department worked, and it was a fantastic assignment in terms of building substantive knowledge. I was working for great people and working with great people. Kenneth Messner and Jeanine Jackson were the PMOs, successively, who handled the Soviet Union and Russia. They worked extremely hard to make sure that a lot of the things that needed to happen to open the new embassies actually happened. Theresa Leech was another PMO who was just doing amazing stuff back then. So, that was a really professionally rewarding posting for me.

Q: Did this rightsizing, change of location, and so on also involve USIA (United States Information Agency) or the public diplomacy functions, or was that still to come?

ANANIA: At the time, USIA was still a separate agency. We did deal with other agencies at a lot of these posts, but they weren't making any major strategic shifts that involved us in EUR. One thing that I did get very involved in, however, was NSDD (National Security Decision Directive) 38 issues, which I continued to work on throughout the course of my career. At one point, I was the head of the Office of Management Policy, and I was actually the Department's coordinator for NSDD 38 issues. Because this was a time of such turmoil, other agencies, as well, were facing some budget cuts. So, when they would propose to add, or more likely subtract, positions, these would have to go through the NSDD 38 process.

I remember some of the chiefs of mission were extremely frustrated by the limitations of their actual authority. They might feel that a particular position was particularly important at their mission, and yet an agency would just not fill it, and might not even request to remove it through the formal process, which they were supposed to. They would just not fill the position and essentially make it go away. On the other hand, I remember Ambassador Briggs in Lisbon, an ambassador who was, I would say, unusually interested in post management, felt that he had a lot of people who were not necessary there, and who were getting in each other's way. He tried to reduce positions by taking the initiative, which was well within his authority. He found that to be a very frustrating process.

Q: Also at this time, EUR is beginning to create the Bureau of NIS (Newly Independent States) to begin pushing money and pushing assets out to some of these new embassies. Were you involved in any of that?

ANANIA: Only tangentially. By that point, Jeanine Jackson and Terry Leech were the primary people who were working on all those issues, and they were doing amazing things. I have to say that in many cases, the functional bureaus kind of dropped the ball. It was left to EUR to do things that we, perhaps, shouldn't have had to do. So, they were going to the extent of having to order American flags and cassette tapes of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which would be delivered to our offices. Then, they would pack these things into boxes and send them via the pouch to places like Dushanbe – I don't know why I keep thinking of that place – and Almaty and Ashgabat. All these places. That was a particularly difficult period.

I will say that the Bureau of Administration… Was it the Bureau of Administration? Maybe it was actually a special office in M that the Department setup to do real estate issues in the former Soviet Union. There was a senior person – he may have been a political appointee with a lot of real estate experience – who basically would go out to these places and try to find embassies or buildings that we could use. Of course, the Soviet Union was not known for its prowess in constructing quality office buildings.

So, that was a real challenge, and we had people who were operating out of hotels. We were setting up communications centers in hotel rooms, and sometimes in some fairly dangerous places or very high-crime areas. Actually, another place that was part of this was Albania. I think that because I was the post management officer for Italy, I became the post management officer for Albania, where we hadn't previously had representation. The Italian government had been protecting our property that we owned there and using it. Well, misusing it, as it turned out. It seemed that the Italian ambassador had been requesting funds from the State Department to make various renovations of the building, which, it turns out, hadn't exactly been completed as promised.

So, I do distinctly remember that when we were first going back into Albania, we were struggling. We took back this building from the Italians, and I don't know if this was the same ambassador or another one, but as he left, he took out the air conditioners in the windows, leaving gaping holes. It was all kinds of things like this. So, we had to go in and try to fix this place up to get it working. In the meantime, we had people staying in a hotel where it was apparently so dangerous that, literally, if you walked out at night and turned either left or right, within steps you'd be accosted and potentially robbed at gunpoint. So, the people who went out to open these places really had some adventures, and they took a lot of risks for their country.

But it was a very exciting time, and the atmosphere and the mood were very positive. The U.S. could really make a big difference in helping these countries. We were sending out advisers to help countries write new constitutions, to make changes to their economies, which had been state-controlled and very inefficient. So, it was a very interesting time to be in that position, even though, for a lot of this, I was more of an observer than anything else. This was during the period when the Department went to more open-planned offices with cubicles. That was, basically, because we wanted to pack more people into these offices. That, in general, I think, is a trend that crested and is now receding.

But at that time, it worked out well for us, because we got along very well. You could hear what people were talking about. We had people constantly coming through on consultations, going out to Moscow or these posts in the former Soviet Union. They were called the newly independent states, at that period – the NIS. I sat in my cubicle next to Jeanine Jackson, so I could hear these things. I was also, to some degree, her backup, so it was very useful. I would meet people as they came and went. So, the layout of the office proved to be a positive for us.

Q: Interesting. Speaking of that, as this whole new ramp-up of doing business with countries that hadn't existed a year or so earlier began, were regulations and habits of doing things changing as well?

ANANIA: Yes. It's a constant evolution. In fact, this was another great thing about being a PMO. We were each given assignments, not only for countries… I basically had the EUR countries around the Mediterranean. So, I had Portugal, Spain, Malta, Italy, the Vatican, Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. I ended up with Austria, which was a particularly challenging one because we had various missions in Vienna with dueling ambassadors who were constantly at each other's throats about various things. Then, for a while, I also had the Nordic countries. That was for several months because we had a staffing gap. So, I really did get a look at a lot of different issues.

But in addition, we also had assignments for functional bureaus. So, each PMO was responsible for following functional bureaus. The reason that was important was that if functional bureaus wanted to change policies or communicate with our posts, we had to clear. The regional executive directors had a lot of input into what those policies were. Some regional offices didn't take that particularly seriously, and they were kind of rubber stamps, but in EUR, we were not. I had responsibility for the Bureau of Administration, and FBO, Foreign Buildings, was part of that. So, I got a chance to really look into and comment on and occasionally, to a minor degree, shape policies.

For example, we had a new housing policy that came out then, and I remember representing the position of the regional bureaus regarding what was then deemed to be an unfair situation where single persons at lower ranks were going to get fairly miniscule housing assignments. I remember then-Assistant Secretary for Administration Arthur Fort

– I think he had been an admiral – being a bit peeved when I raised this quite legitimately. I was representing all of the regional bureaus. He dismissed that out of hand. Then, about a year or two later, they ended up doing what the regional bureaus had wanted, because the people in the field were so upset by this new interagency housing policy. Married couples were getting substantially more space than single people.

That replaced a policy that was issued as Airgram A-1093 in 1979. This, of course… The very phrase "Airgram" is now completely obsolete. We used to type up policies, and an Airgram, typically, would be a longer communication. These things were typed up, printed, and sent by pouch out to post. E-mail was only just coming on-line, and only at a few posts. For some reason the Bureau of Administration, I think the Operations division, was setting it up.

Q: Right. My experience with airgrams was when my political chief – I was a political officer – didn't think a cable was very good but didn't really want to spend the time editing it and going back and forth with the officer. He would just say, "Oh, send it as an airgram." You could be sure that it would never see the light of day until, of course, airgrams were eliminated. Alright. So, now, you're quite busy. It's a two-year tour?

ANANIA: I ended up extending that job to a third year, and it really was fascinating. I did get to visit all of my core posts, basically, so I also got to meet a lot of senior management officers who each had their own unique styles. The State Department was a far more free-wheeling place, back then. So, that was a really interesting thing to do, to see our facilities, and to see the challenges we faced. I didn't always necessarily agree with the posts; for instance, we had a lot of excess properties. After World War II, we acquired a tremendous amount of real estate at rock bottom prices. They were often properties that included antique furniture and other things, but that didn't necessarily make a lot of sense in the time period we're now talking about, which is the early '90s.

Keeping these places, some of which were crumbling palaces… We, frankly, have never been particularly good landlords, because even when we get money to build new buildings, we don't necessarily get money to fix the old buildings, which is a real pity and continues to be despite many efforts to correct that. So, for instance, I remember visiting a lot of posts where FBO would be trying to sell properties. They called it "asset management" – the idea was that you would sell the properties, and then you would buy other properties that made more sense. This was always very controversial. What we tried to do in EUR was ensure that the money stayed at the post, if possible, although it didn't always make sense. At least, we tried to ensure that the money would be spent within our bureau if we were giving up these properties. FBO, not surprisingly, wanted to basically just throw the money into a pool and buy the best available properties globally. But in many cases, posts were very opposed to the idea that we should even sell these properties in the first place.

So, I would visit places. Athens was one of the places where we had several large, old houses, and we were housing officers in places way above space standards. They were very expensive properties to maintain, and in many cases, it would make more sense to sell the properties and buy others or to demolish properties and build higher density housing. It was interesting to work on those issues. One particular issue that I'd like to emphasize was the issue of building new consulates. Consulate General Istanbul was a place where we were in a very historic property. It had been built, I think, during the period when Italy had, to some degree, control over parts of Istanbul. It might have even been Venice. There was basically a *palazzo* (palace) that was built, and we occupied it.

1991, April – US Consulate General Istanbul, former office building. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

This was at a time when there were numerous terrorist organizations in Turkey. They were very violent, blowing things up, killing people, what have you. So, the question was what we should do. I remember going out as part of a team with OBO and DS (Bureau of Diplomatic Security) people to look at properties within Istanbul. Our historic consulate compound was surrounded by rundown buildings affording excellent views of our property – perfect for snipers – with no setback to speak of, making it vulnerable to bombing. Not surprisingly, it was pretty hard to find a property in the city itself that would have met the security standards.

The new undersecretary of state for Management, Ivan Selin, had made a trip out there, which I believe was even a private trip, but he was doing some government business along the way. The then-consul general in Istanbul convinced him that we needed to stay close within the city. This was a very unfortunate situation, because post had worked out a deal to purchase a property in an area called Istinye, which at the time was somewhat outside of Istanbul. Now it has actually been sort of enveloped by the city. So, the deal to buy the property, which had taken years to work out and was very complicated, fell through.

We were sent out to look at other sites within Istanbul. The very first one we went to, I remember, was directly next to a mosque. There were other places that had high buildings around or limited setback. There was no way that the sites we were visiting were ever going to meet the security standards of the time, which have only gotten tighter. So, not surprisingly, in the end, we ended up going back and buying a property outside of town, also in Istinye, although not the same property. We ended up building a new consulate.

As a coda to that – this is now years later – very shortly after we occupied the new compound, one of the Turkish domestic terror groups detonated a bomb against the British consulate in Istanbul, as well as against other targets. I think there was an American business or two that was blown up; I'm not sure there was loss of life. When they arrested the people who had been planning this, they found out that they actually had wanted to bomb us, as well, as part of this campaign, but they had been deterred by the fact that we had moved and now had a building that had proper walls and setback, etcetera. Had we stayed where we were, we almost certainly would have been bombed.

So, that was a case where success generates no headlines. Failure on the other hand…. when a building gets bombed and people get killed, of course, people hear about it and actions are taken. It's unfortunate, sometimes, that we don't take the lessons from the good things that we do. That was definitely a good thing. That bombing campaign didn't happen for many years afterwards but thank goodness we had moved to the building months before this happened.

Q: Yeah. Alright, so your entire period of time as a PMO in the European Bureau went from which year to which year?

ANANIA: So, I would have arrived in, probably, September of '90, and I left, probably, in late spring of '93 en route to FSI training.

Q: Okay. So, that encompassed a change of administration. Did that have any impact on what you were doing?

ANANIA: Probably not so much. I was working on management things, and I wanted to be a management officer. I had been a general services officer twice in Amman and Havana. The post management officer job was classified as a management officer position, as it should have been because we dealt with so many different things, and I wanted a management officer position. At that point, I was promoted, when I was a post management officer, from FS-3 to 2, which opened up, now, more management officer positions. Typically, at the 3 level, there are very few management officer positions, and those would be at small consulates. Now I was able to bid on positions that had more substantial responsibilities.

What I settled on was Abu Dhabi, which, frankly, was probably an under-graded position. Abu Dhabi supported Consulate General Dubai, and there were about a dozen different agencies or sub-agencies represented. Many of them were DOD (Department of Defense) sub-entities. It was a mission of over 100 direct hire Americans. It was very important, in the wake of the First Gulf War. We had a lot of military things going on in the UAE (United Arab Emirates). So, at any rate, that looked like a good job to me. As it happened, our deputy executive director, Richard "Dick" Shinnick, had moved over and was now the executive director of what I think was still, then, the NEA Bureau. SCA (Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs) had not been split off from NEA. So, I had a good connection there, and I was able to get that job. I'm not sure it was a highly sought-after job in the first place. Dick was a great mentor and is still a friend. We worked closely in the office of the Undersecretary for Management starting in 2002.

Actually, I had originally thought that I was going to be assigned to Embassy Riyadh as the deputy to the management counselor. There's an old Woody Allen joke – something like "I wouldn't want to be a member of any club that would have me as a member." I was bidding on Riyadh, which was not exactly a popular location, and the NEA Bureau supported me for the job. But there was another bidder on a separate position in Riyadh, and for some reason, the HR bureau felt that he needed to get that assignment. It was complicated, because it was a tandem couple, and it went to a shootout in HR. When the other fellow won the shootout, his wife was paneled into the administrative officer positions. When I didn't get the job in Riyadh, it was like, wow. It was actually reminiscent of my first assignment, when I thought I might go to Haiti and I couldn't get assigned there. So, at any rate, NEA was then happy enough to send me to Abu Dhabi, and that turned out to be an excellent tour in terms of learning things about the Department. It was in many ways a difficult tour and sometimes highly stressful.

Q: Did you get any Arabic language training for it?

ANANIA: No. Again, most of the management positions have no Arabic language designation.

Q: Okay. So, you leave for Abu Dhabi in late summer or early fall of '93?

ANANIA: Yes. I insisted that I get some training that I felt I needed, financial officer training in particular. The Department, because it's typically not properly staffed, always has gaps and vacancies. So, there's always pressure to move people out to post without properly training them. In this case, I think I just said, "Hey, I really need to get this training." But I hadn't been trained in finance and knew that, inevitably, I would have to perform the function when the budget and fiscal (B+F) officer was on leave, or during a possible staffing gap.

So, I did get it. That turned out to be quite useful, because although we were a rather large post, that relative to other posts, we were clearly understaffed in the administrative section. Post's overall staffing grew significantly during a time when the budget was tight, so the Department hadn't increased the management staff. So, as the administrative officer, I did not have an HR position, and I had a single financial management officer position. The incumbents had, at times, been told that they were both the financial management and the HR officer. That is not a good combination. The skill sets typically don't work well together, although it wasn't an uncommon arrangement.. Of course, you really need to have someone who's properly trained in accounting to be your financial management officer. So often, the financial management officer would be told, "You're also the HRO (human resources officer)." Well, the HR skill set is considerably different. You need different training and, frankly, different personality types, I would say, although that is painting with a broad brush.

At any rate, we also had a thriving and very busy consulate in Dubai, which did not have an administrative officer. There, they had a single RSO who was also assigned management duties, and again, that's not a great match. Your typical RSO has not served in management jobs before, is not necessarily all that interested in management work, and then that causes a problem, although our RSOs did take the administrative duties seriously. I also only had two information management officers at the time, and again, nobody in Dubai, although we were the service provider for both posts. That caused unending problems for us as we tried to provide decent service to that post. It's not that they were that far away, 2 hours of so one-way, but nonetheless, being apart as we were caused a lot of issues. That and other factors made for a difficult assignment.

Q: Was the post growing, given the fact that it's on the Arabian Sea and all of that? Nothing ever got less complicated there.

ANANIA: Yes, and the dynamics of the United Arab Emirates are very peculiar, because they are seven separate Emirates with their own Sheikhs as leaders. Abu Dhabi was then, and still is to a large degree, the dominant partner, because that's where the oil and gas is. The other Emirates had lesser amounts of oil and gas, but had pretty much exhausted what they did have. Dubai, traditionally, has been the trading port, and had leadership that in some respects, at least on the economic side, was very visionary about turning themselves into a little Singapore or Hong Kong. You can use the comparison you might want to use. In fact, that was starting to pay dividends. They were building up a tourist industry, which has mushroomed further since then. They were and are a relatively peaceful and relatively tolerant place for people with money in the region to visit, including to drink alcohol, which was banned in other Muslim countries.

So, the consulate in Dubai really was… It was almost as if they were in a different country. They didn't have a different border, but Dubai had its own security services. To some degree, I think they managed the UAE's national borders at the airport, which, at the time, seemed like a really big airport. It's probably five times bigger now as they've turned their airline, Emirates, into a global powerhouse. But these were all very early days.

In terms of the U.S. and our interests there, this was in the wake of the First Gulf War, and we were enforcing a no-fly zone over parts of Iraq. We also had a massive number of US Navy ship visits, primarily to Dubai, but occasionally to the smaller Port Zaid in Abu Dhabi. The Navy also had facilities in Fujairah, on the Indian Ocean. The US Air Force was flying many missions from a base in the United Arab Emirates, a place called Al-Dhafra, in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. We had rotating Air Force units that were coming through, on what I recall as six-month rotations. That caused a lot of problems, because most of these people did not live at the base. Our Air Force personnel were renting spaces in the city. It was very unclear what the role of the chief of mission should be over these activities, because we did not have a formal Status of Forces agreement. Technically these military personnel were under Chief of Mission authority. During the time I was there, our defense attaché worked very closely with the front office, and they were negotiating a defense cooperation agreement. It was essentially agreed to, and operated de facto, but never signed.

The issue there, as it has been in other places, was over the issue of immunity. We wanted formal immunity for our soldiers and sailors, because we also had a lot of Navy personnel who were paying ship visits and using the eastern Emirate of Fujairah, which is on the Indian Ocean side, as a refueling and logistics point.

This was a period when there were dozens of military units overseas for whom security responsibility was not clear. The Departments of State and Defense made a global agreement to identify these units and categorize them to fix this security responsibility. So a unit might be under Chief of Mission authority for command and control but not security, which could be very confusing.

Not only did we have these people coming through, but we also had, I want to say, something like eight distinct DOD entities which were clearly within the embassy.

The UAE, at that time, was beginning to purchase arms through US defense sales. In particular, they bought Apache helicopters and Hawk missiles. Each, for some reason – this is within the complexity of the Department of Defense bureaucracy… It wasn't just good enough to have one office managing these things. No. There had to actually be four. So, for the Apache helicopters, there was one group doing one set of tasks, and then there was another one doing training. So, they had the Apache field office and the Hawk field office, and then there were other people working on those same programs but in separate offices. There was also a Navy Port Liaison Element to coordinate the perhaps 100 or so ship visits per year.

This reminded me of being a PMO. Generally there were colonels or captains in charge of these offices, reporting through different DoD chains of command, and they didn't get along. They wanted me to referee their administrative arguments. Say some of them were sharing office space, and they wanted me to referee who was supposed to pay for what, and who was going to pay for the unused common area. All these kinds of things. It was always a great challenge, and this gave me a lot more insight into the NSDD 38 process, dealing with DOD colleagues who were given no training whatsoever about what it meant to be under chief of mission authority. They did not look at the ambassador as the person they needed to listen to for security or for anything else, in some cases. Often, I was the one that got caught in the crossfire.

We also had a lot of issues because in foreign military sales, you generally have a contract with the host government. A lot of very bad practices had taken effect at

Embassy Abu Dhabi, in particular regarding procurement. It was very clear that we had poor internal controls related to procurement. What essentially was happening was that the DOD personnel had the impression that, somehow, if the UAE was paying for the case, then we didn't have to follow U.S. government regulations related to contracting. In practice, what that meant was that they thought the UAE commanders who they were working with could just tell us which vendors to use. The opportunity for corruption was obvious.

So, what I found was that, for instance, we either were directly told which vendor to use, or – and in fact, in some cases, this was definitely happening – we were told that our procurement staff should type up the purchase orders. They were actually typing them up when I got there. Then, they would be sent to UAE military officials to review and approve. Of course, this gave… if you were the UAE military person and you received a draft purchase order, saying the embassy was going to go to X Trading to buy something, you could pick up the phone and call somebody at X Trading and say, "Hey, I'm about to send you an order. I'd like a few dirhams back." For some amazing reason, the colonel who was in charge of that particular outfit professed that he didn't see that this was a problem.

This was a huge dispute, because I insisted that, hey, if the money is given to the U.S. government and sent to my staff and my contracting officer, we follow U.S. government rules. This was a source of great contention until, at some point, somebody from the Defense Logistics Agency came out. I remember having a meeting with one or more of the heads of these DOD entities at post, during which they were vociferously saying that I was impeding their mission. They were irate with me. The guy basically just turned to them and said, "He's totally right. You can't do these things."

Finally, we shut that down. But the larger question was why we were even buying a lot of these things in the first place? We were buying spare parts for airplanes, fuel, and all kinds of other things. We only had one not-very-well trained FSN (Foreign Service national), as they were then called, who was a third-country national. In fact, we did not employ a single UAE national at our embassy or our consulate. We had perhaps 30 different nationalities of people who worked for us.

We were really understaffed. I only had one GSO, and he was only an FS-3. Fortunately, he was somebody who actually spoke Arabic, because he was a naturalized American who had come from Tunis originally. He had been a Tunisian air force pilot and was trained to fly fighter planes in the U.S. So, I had to get involved in a lot of these things in ways that I wish I hadn't had to. But there were a lot of things to fix, and a lot of things going on.

We also had some very concerning security-related situations. As I mentioned, we had DOD entities which either weren't under chief of mission authority, or not clearly under chief of mission authority, or didn't think they were under chief of mission authority. They would kind of just do their own thing. So, the Al-Dhafra people came in, and at the time, the administrative officer position at post also supervised the RSO. So, I sat in a suite with the RSO – we only had one in Abu Dhabi – and our office management specialist. I remember the Air Force personnel -- because they would turn over every six months, it was very hard to maintain a good relationship due to lack of continuity. Once you brought them up to speed, they were gone. I remember the then-RSO briefing the folks coming into Al-Dhafra on security requirements and the need to try to get setback from the street when renting buildings, and various other things.

Well, they then went out and rented a building in the middle of Abu Dhabi, which had pretty much everything wrong with it. There was no setback; it was across the street from an Iranian bank. It just went on and on, but fortunately, we never had any issues there.

We did have issues with the Navy. Unfortunately – I talked about bad management practices – the consulate in Dubai, under previous leadership, had decided that they would put consulate plates on vehicles that were controlled by the Navy in Fujairah. These were people who were not under chief of mission authority and didn't necessarily coordinate with the RSO. These vehicles were driven around for various purposes, and unfortunately, at one point, there was a fatal road accident where a Navy sailor – I think it was an enlisted man – was driving at fairly high speeds on the multilane highway in Dubai. There was a family that had dangerously over-packed a station wagon or a minivan. They were driving in the fast lane but driving very slowly. This fellow collided with them, and there were several fatalities.

Again, we didn't have a Status of Forces agreement. We had an unsigned Defense Cooperation Agreement, which was sort of the rules of the road, but this fellow was arrested. Well, then it turned out that he was not a U.S. citizen. He was a legal permanent resident. So, our consular staff did not have responsibility, because he was not a U.S. citizen. Then this became a war of words in Washington, where the Navy, having caused this problem, was releasing informal statements or talking off the record to the press and suggesting that, somehow, the embassy wasn't doing enough to help this person. This became a huge issue, and went on for weeks and weeks, until finally, as I recall, the Navy's legal officers negotiated some kind of "blood money." I hate to call it that, but that is what it was called. They did that to pay off the survivors or the family members and resolve the case. The sailor was then released and immediately taken out of the country.

But that just goes to show you how inattention to management issues can cause a big problem. This person was driving a consulate vehicle, which was not under the control of the consulate. We had basically just allowed them to plate these vehicles for conveniences' sake. Those issues were never really resolved during the entire time I was there.

Another thing that happened during that time period was the bombing of the so-called Al-Khobar Towers, which was in eastern Saudi Arabia near the oil production center of Dhahran. Again, this was a case where the U.S. Department of Defense had gone in, probably not consulted with the chief of mission fully, not followed the rules that would have applied to all other mission personnel under the RSO, and had leased property that was bombed. As a result of that, or perhaps an earlier incident, there was a general tasked with going around to various embassies and talking about what lessons were learned.

I remember having this conversation, in Abu Dhabi, that one lesson learned is that if you're part of the mission, you need to really be part of the mission and you need to follow the rules. You can't just go out and lease whatever property meets your apparent need to house people. These were some very serious issues that did result in loss of life, though not in the UAE. Had things been done more effectively, that would have resulted in those people not dying.

This is a theme that I've mentioned before – the State Department is not run by management personnel. We're very focused, as is the Department of Defense, on mission and not letting bureaucratic requirements get in the way of the mission. I can appreciate that; in fact, as an administrative officer and as a management officer, I always believed that it was my job to find ways to get the mission done within the rules. If the rules didn't make sense, the answer was not to ignore them, but to try to work to change them and suggest that the Department or other agencies should actually adjust their policies, guidance, and rules. So, to me, that's the mark of a good management officer. You've got to be as flexible as you can be, but at the end of the day, to simply ignore the procurement rules is to invite corruption. To ignore the rules that pertain to physical security is to invite, in some cases, terrible tragedy. As frustrated as I was and still am by the rules and regulations that pertain to the U.S. government, there's generally an underlying reason why those rules exist. You have to try to meet the intent of legislation or regulations in your day-to-day operations. Not everyone does.

Q: Now, we're getting into the mid-'90s. Are the average officers' information tools getting better now?

ANANIA: I'm glad you raised that. This was a theme throughout my entire career. I talked about how in Jordan we had no software, and I created little spreadsheets and rudimentary databases. It was exactly the same thing when I got to Abu Dhabi. My predecessor, as one of his last efforts, had purchased a batch of personal computers and a server. The brand, at the time, was ALR – Advanced Logic Research – which was a U.S. company. They were, I think, Intel 386 and 486 computers, which seemed like pretty hot things in that day. He had bought all of this from a local vendor, and he had also bought the operating software for the local area network. He bought Novell NetWare. The problem was, number one, that the Department didn't support Novell NetWare, and number two, although it was a leading product of the time – in fact, the leading product of the time – he didn't buy any other software to run on the PCs.

The idea, I guess, was just that we would use pirated Microsoft software, which was what everybody did in the UAE, in those days. Most certainly, it was not consistent with U.S. government policy. Another main problem was that neither of my IT (information technology) personnel, who were more communications personnel than IT personnel anyway, had much idea of how to use Novell NetWare or set up the network. Now, the senior fellow was a former communicator, and basically did not know anything about computers. He was a hard worker and managed the Information Program Center (IPC) well, and he worked very hard. In fact, he probably worked too hard because he typically would correct people's errors without telling them, so they would repeat the errors. The younger specialist did have some IT skills, so he took this on.

One thing we determined right away was that we weren't going to use Novell NetWare. The Department of State, at that point, was, for various technical reasons, unable to establish a standard. I think they would have had to conduct a procurement competition, and they didn't want to do it. Who knows why. But basically, they were telling us that we needed to use another product called Banyan VINES (Virtual Integrated Network Service). So, we had to return the Novell NetWare and somehow acquire Banyan VINES. In the meantime, these computers, maybe we set them up, but they weren't even connected to a network. We didn't even have internal email. They were just standalone PCs.

So, we eventually got these things together, and it happened that Microsoft had a regional office in Dubai. I went up there, and they spent several hours with me, showing me the capabilities of their newest Microsoft Office product. At this point, Microsoft was not necessarily in use in the Department. We were still using Wang products. When I was in EUR/EX (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Executive Office), we got our first PCs, and we started to get other software, but it wasn't necessarily Microsoft. People were using Word Perfect and other things. So, I had used Microsoft Word, but I hadn't used, probably Excel, and I was introduced to Microsoft Access, which was a relational database. At this point, these things came in big boxes, with the software on disks, and you got printed manuals with each copy of the product. Talking to the people at Microsoft, it became apparent that these were great products that could really help me out. I had literally zero administrative software. In fact, our HR staffing pattern was a Wang document. If you wanted to print out a staffing pattern, it was just a document. You couldn't do analysis; you couldn't easily update things.

So, sort of similar to what I had done in Amman, I bought the product. In fact, we did use bootleg software for a time because we didn't have enough money to buy the software. I had to do it in tranches. It took a year or two to buy all the software. So, if we bought 20 copies, we loaded it on 50 computers, but I wanted to buy it and eventually did. I felt somewhat bad about that, but we had to operate, for Pete's sake, and I wanted to shut down the Wang, which, as far as I remember was only a word processor. So, anyway, again, I got the books. It was great to get the books, because with the manuals, you could actually learn about the product. I started reading about Microsoft Access. This was a relational database, so it offered a lot more in the way of power and a lot more in the way of efficiency when compared to DBase I (which I'd used in Jordan) which was a "flat" database. A relational database meant we could save a lot of duplicative data entry. The first thing I did was that I created a rudimentary HR database system with just a few tables, and I set it up, and I figured out how to make an interface for it.

Then I said, "Well, what we also really need is a real estate database to keep track of our properties," of which there were about 125 or 130 in the UAE. At that time, what Foreign

Buildings (FBO) was doing was, they had a Wang real estate management system, REMS, and they ran this only in Washington. If you did have a Wang VS (Virtual Storage), you didn't have software. So, periodically, they would send us a big envelope with the big computer paper that came off of a dot matrix or impact printer. It would be this thick package that we would get via the pouch, and someone would have gone through with a highlighter and highlighted all of the things that they wanted us to update, for instance lease expiration dates which may have passed. Often, you might have a lease and it might only be for one, two, or three years, and even though you've kept the property for much longer, you had to keep updating the dates. So, they would highlight this information, and then our staff would have to go through and handwrite the new information, or cross out the obsolete properties and fill out a piece of paper with the new properties. Then we would send this back via the pouch, and they would rekey it in Washington.

This was a perfect example of something that still pertains, which is Washington solutions for Washington problems. FBO clearly had a requirement that they needed to keep track of all of our real estate holdings overseas, but they designed their system to meet their needs and not the needs of posts. We actually did have a need to query the system to see, for instance, which of our properties were coming due in the next quarter so that we could renegotiate with the landlord. Or maybe, let's do some analysis and figure out if we're paying more per square foot than we need to. It was that sort of thing. Anyway, FBO was having none of this, so I created my own database for real estate. Because it's a relational database, I could then connect it to the HR database. So, if Jay Anania was coming to post, he would be put into the HR database, and then the folks down in GSO would be able to look my name up and assign me to a particular property, which was useful. Then, if things changed – if the Anania family had a child while at Post, for example, which we did – that information would be entered in the HR database and automatically be reflected in the real estate database. If I extended my tour – which I did not – that, too, would immediately be known to the folks in the GSO section.

1996, March – US Embassy Abu Dhabi, Administrative Officer. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Previously, GSO had to sort of, somehow, be told or just find out when these things happened. In some cases, that would not happen, and that would then cause all kinds of inefficiencies. If you're managing a housing program, you need to know what houses are coming up in the next year. Well, if somebody was assigned there for three years and they extended to a fourth year and nobody told the GSO, then they would try to assign somebody else to the house. It was just little, simple things like that. Anyway, we created this interrelated system of software.

Also, I mentioned that we were then typing up our procurement orders on purchase order forms. Well, I created an application to do contracting with different tables. So, instead of having to retype the vendor's name every time you reissued something to the same vendor, now there was a table that had the vendor information in it. If you were doing a new purchase order, you could just select the vendor and that was it. It was very rudimentary, but yet, somehow, the Department didn't have any software to do this sort of thing. Then, our financial management office had to pay bills, and they were constantly having to go back to the procurement section to find out what was in the original procurement. Well, I created a payment database linked to the procurement database so that the financial team could have a read-only view of the procurement database. That way, they could just look up the information they needed by the contract number.

This all saved an amazing amount of time and energy, and I was doing this on my own because I had no IT people who could do it. I had an FSN who was the systems manager who wasn't very good at these things. In fact, I remember that her performance evaluation mentioned her lack of attention to detail, which is not a good thing for the person who's running the IT system! She had been hired, basically, to turn the Wang system off and on, and that was pretty much all she could do. She ended up emigrating, I think, to Canada. She was a very nice person, just not a good fit for that job. As I said, I only had two people in the information management section, in the IPC, and they also had to support Dubai, which was another big challenge. We then hired an FSN who was working at our embassy in Yemen, for a very low salary. He had been trained, I think, in England, so spoke English well and was very pleased to come to Abu Dhabi.

So, as we developed these systems, I was also proselytizing. I ended up sharing some of this work. In fact, I went back to FBO and I said, "Hey, why don't you guys create an Access database like the one I did? I'm sure you could do it much better than I did and distribute that to posts. Then, rather than sending out these voluminous paper reports for manual correction, you could just ask posts to put their data on a diskette and send it back to you. You could upload it into your system." And, oh by the way, this would be great for posts because we could then run our own reports. The working-level people at FBO thought that was a grand idea, but of course, higher up, they never did it, and they continued to use this real estate management system. We continued to fill out their stupid pieces of paper for years.

It was similar with HR. HR had a product that, fortunately, I was glad only went on the Wang. It was terrible. It was not a relational database; it was a flat file database, and it was basically just, sort of, like just typing information in. For instance, in my relational database, I had a list of the agencies at post. So, if someone new came, you had to type in their name, of course, but then you could just select their agency from a dropdown. You didn't have to retype it. When you have to retype it, it's a problem, because if you give people the task of putting in data, 10 different people are going to do it 10 different ways. So, you could have Drug Enforcement Administration, you could have DEA, you could have Department of Justice/Drug Enforcement Administration. It went on and on and on.

So, it's impossible to use a lot of these things for any kind of analysis or reporting if it's not done consistently. These were problems, at the time. Things have gotten a lot better, but frankly, a lot of these problems still exist, very frustratingly. I returned to these issues over and over again throughout the course of my career.

Q: Right. So, now, take a moment. You mentioned that you had your first child in Abu Dhabi?

ANANIA: We had the first child before we went out, and he was just about one when we got there. Then we had a second child while we were there.

Q: So, how was your family adapting to living in the Arabian Gulf?

ANANIA: Pretty well. It was a peculiar place, because just as we had no UAE nationals that worked at the embassy, we essentially didn't know any UAE nationals. It was a country where, I want to say, 80% or more of the people who were in the country were not UAE nationals. The day-to-day work was being done by expatriates, across the board.

At that point, in Abu Dhabi, to the extent that the UAE nationals from Abu Dhabi worked, they had cushy government jobs that didn't really require them to actually do much. They would come in and supervise the Indians or Iranians or Pakistanis who actually did the work, drink some tea and go home early.

We had a very capable FSN who was from Yemen who had been there a long time and knew a lot of UAE nationals. He was the fixer. He got stuff done. He was great. Mr. Mackawee. He eventually got a special immigrant visa and came to the U.S., but unfortunately passed away very shortly thereafter. It was tragic.

So, I would try to reach out and meet UAE nationals, but it was very difficult. I would arrange to make a courtesy call on the people at the foreign ministry, and generally speaking, we got excellent cooperation. If we wanted to do things, we could do it there. But what you couldn't actually do was meet the UAE nationals. It was very strange. Only on a few occasions… I would go over to the foreign ministry, and I was used to, from Jordan, really getting to know people and talking to them about whatever issues they had. And there were some issues. But you could go over and drink a little bit of tea, and they either weren't interested in the issues, or they weren't interested in talking about them with me. So, that was a very peculiar thing, but things worked, and we got what we needed, frankly largely because of Mr. Mackawee's relationships. He had a value that couldn't be measured in terms of the grade of his position, which was a constant issue as post had inflated his official duties to get him the high grade he undoubtedly deserved given his value to the embassy.

We needed to have visas for all of our workforce, and that was generally not a problem. We did a few things that were bending the rules a bit. We had a very long-serving, very hardworking and loyal senior Indian national FSN who had terrible cancer. By the time he paid attention to it, it had advanced to the degree that he was not going to survive. I remember that he was put in a hospital in Al Ain, which was a city in the interior and is where Sheikh Zayed and his family were originally centered. By the time he got there, it was too late.

I remember going out there and having a very wrenching visit. There were several of us. Mr. Mackawee and I probably went out there, maybe with the GSO and some others. It was very emotional. After he passed, the odd thing in these places is that, often, these expatriates have been working there for many years, even decades, and that was the case here. His children had been going to school in the UAE, and their whole life was in the UAE, even though they were Indian citizens. So, we were able to, basically, keep his wife and his teenage son on the books, nominally, as FSNs until the son could finish his school. Then, they eventually went on back to India.

So, the UAE was pretty humane about these things. I don't know to what degree they knew that we were fudging things or not. Maybe they didn't. But at any rate, it wasn't difficult to get things done there, whereas in Saudi Arabia, at the same time, it was considerably more difficult. Later on, when I was the executive director for Near Eastern Affairs, we had to deal with a lot of these issues. Unfortunately, in a lot of these countries, trafficking in persons was a huge, and remains a huge, issue. People are brought in, and when you start looking at trafficking in persons indicators, one of them is, does the employer keep the passport? Are the people working in the country prohibited from moving to other jobs with different employers? Are they segregated from the local population?

Basically, all of these things were happening in the UAE, but not to the degree that they were, perhaps, happening in some of the other Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. But certainly in the UAE, there were some terrible things that went on. I remember that there was a fire, and I think this was in Dubai. Dubai had a big duty-free area where companies were encouraged to come in and set up factories. Somehow, the UAE started to have a textile industry, because the US had all quotas that limited how much could come from any particular country. So, because the UAE had a quota, it made sense for people to make clothing in the UAE to send to the U.S.

Of course, none of the people who were doing the work were UAE nationals. In fact, the commercial sector there was bizarre, because technically, UAE nationals had to own all the companies. So, what happened was that enterprising businesspeople from throughout the region – many of them Palestinian – would essentially set up companies and be the owners, but they weren't the owners. They had 49%. They would basically just pay a UAE national to be their sponsor and owner, and oftentimes, those things ended up badly. The company would become very successful, and then the UAE national owner would step in and throw out the person who had no right to live there. Once the UAE national decided that they didn't like their partner anymore, boom, they were gone. They were told, "You must leave, and whatever effort you've put into this company, you've just lost it."

It was a very strange place to try to work. With the trafficking of persons, there was a factory where people – presumably South Asians – were working, and they essentially were locked into this factory. There were inadequate fire escapes, and there was a fire, and many people died. Another big issue that for years and years afterwards was contained in our trafficking of persons reports had to do with camel jockeys. They had, literally, camel jockeys because camel racing was a popular sport. There was also horse racing, too, where they used small boys who, often, were taken from South Asia, again, and brought in. This is a very rough sport, and a lot of these young boys were mutilated or even killed. This was a big source of tension between our countries for many years, as we would, correctly, include these abuses in our annual reports. But, it added friction to the relationship, and I'm sure made it harder for the ambassador and DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and others to interact with the UAE, whose officials might be quite upset by these things.

Q: Was your wife able to work?

ANANIA: She could have, but she didn't, because we had two small children. It was a pretty expat life. Boring, with very little in the way of cultural events. You weren't going out to the opera or anything like that. They were, at the time, opening some of the first cinemas, which was interesting. Some of the movies were censored a bit, but not too badly. I remember seeing *Sense and Sensibility,* which was, perhaps, a Merchant and Ivory movie of the time. I took my son to a Disney movie. That was the first movie he went to. So, things were starting to open up a little bit in Abu Dhabi, and things were much more open in Dubai, where they did encourage tourism. They had a lot of people coming from the former Soviet Union. They would come down to buy things, because it was a place where you could buy electronics and other things with no tax. They would come down on charter flights, purchase lots of stuff, take it back, sell it back home.

That was a thriving industry and unfortunately, also related to a thriving prostitution industry. Women from these places would come down and work mostly in Dubai. I'm not sure I ever heard that it was such a big deal in Abu Dhabi, where things were much tighter. Those women were generally known as the "Natashas."

I was part of the Abu Dhabi Tennis League, and actually on the directorate of the Abu Dhabi Tennis League. I was the fixture secretary, writing press releases that were badly edited and turned into articles that were published in four different English language dailies, but never with a byline. The byline always said "a correspondent" or a "staff writer" or something. I would basically write up press reports describing the results of the league matches or the tournament that we sponsored. These newspapers were hungry for any kind of local content, so they were more than happy to publish. That often introduced all sorts of editorial errors and spelling mistakes in the rewrite process.

But I had a partner who was a very handsome young guy; he was an expat, I think from Lebanon. He was a technician who worked for a foreign company. I remember him being aghast. One time, he went to Dubai, and he was having a drink at a hotel bar (alcohol was only sold in hotels) and started chatting with a woman. Things seemed to be getting friendly, and then she basically said that if he paid her a certain amount of money… You know? He was interested in her, and he said, "Oh, my God. I was just startled by this." It's not the sort of thing that you necessarily would have expected in some of those countries, I guess. Apparently these women came with few resources, saved their money, then bought goods to take back and sell for a profit.

What made it particularly strange was that the culture was not the culture of the UAE. There were many different cultures. The Tennis League was a great way to see what the UAE was all about. The teams were from, in some cases, hotels which had sports clubs, and in other cases private clubs. I was a member of a club that was called, literally, The Club. Most people knew it as The British Club. The reason it was formally named The Club was because the UAE had been the British Trucial States. The UAE was under the sway of British protection until recently, December 1971. So, there had literally only been one club, and it was founded by British expatriates, and they called it The Club. So, that's where I played. Then there was the Meridian Hotel, which had a team. For whatever reasons, most of the people who went there were Lebanese.

Our team was a multinational group. We had some European expatriates, but we also had some folks from Lebanon and other places on our team. There was the Indian Social

Club, and their team was all Indians. A lot of these clubs would also sponsor their own tennis tournaments, so you really got to meet a lot of interesting people that way. The Intercontinental Hotel had a team led by two brothers, the Ali brothers – that was their last name – and they were Egyptians. They were older by that point, but they had played for the Egyptian Davis Cup team. They were very good players. In fact, I think that one, if not both, of the brothers played senior doubles at Wimbledon during that period.

So, it was interesting. Every week you went to a different place or played at home, of course, and you got to meet some very interesting people. They were all expats. My wife also played tennis. The social life tended to be around these clubs. If you went to the Meridian Hotel, you could sit around the pool and chat with Lebanese people. If you went to the Indian Social Center, you would meet some Indian people. Everybody was employed, because you couldn't be there if you weren't employed, so sometimes they were the de facto owners of small businesses. Other times, they were just employees, accountants, or whatever. It was a very relaxed lifestyle, and relatively safe. A lot of people had household help, so you could, maybe, hire somebody to come in once a week. You could have babysitters. So, it was slow-paced, but perfectly nice for a young couple with small children.

Q: Had Al-Jazeera been founded, and was it active?

ANANIA: No. That did not exist, at that point. There was satellite TV, one of the big networks was Star TV, owned by Rupert Murdoch. They had their own Star Sports and Star News and showed primarily programs from the US, UK and Australia. It broadcasts pan-Asia and the Middle East. They were very heavily India-centric, so we used to see advertisements for products that were for sale in India. They couldn't really differentiate, as it was coming off a satellite. So, we watched a lot of cricket, which was extremely popular given the mix of nationalities in the UAE.

You know you've been in the Foreign Service too long when you understand the rules of cricket and you have an opinion on it. Because our local national staff was predominantly South Asian, when the Cricket World Cup was held – and I think it was actually held jointly between India and Pakistan, one year – it was limited overs cricket. As I said, I actually learned some of the rules. There would be 50 overs, or limited overs. Many of our staff were intensely interested in this, and you would have TVs turned on around the embassy, sort of like how, when I was in other parts of the world, the Football (Soccer) World Cup would have similar interest.

Q: Now, you had talked about some of what the U.S. military was doing while it was there in Abu Dhabi. I imagine that role grew. Was there anything else about the military presence worth mentioning?

ANANIA: Well, again, subsequently things, as you surmised, grew a lot. The UAE, as it became increasingly prosperous, had more and more money. Now, it has actually got a capable military that has even been deployed in other places. During the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and that period, when there was a coalition of countries that were intervening militarily with aerial bombardments, the UAE was participating. The UAE also sent troops to support the largely NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) effort in Afghanistan.

This was all subsequent to my being there, and it was very early days when I was there. They were just starting to buy advanced military hardware, like the Apache helicopters. Later, they acquired – and they were negotiating for them at the time – advanced fighter jets from the U.S. So, as the embassy continued along, there were even more U.S. military people coming. Years later, the defense attaché position was upgraded to a one-star general.

We were also having a huge number of ship visits, especially to Dubai. Jebel Ali was one of the ports that they had there, near Dubai. There was also Port Zayed, the name of the port in Abu Dhabi. We had a lot fewer visits, but we still had some there. We had an aircraft carrier and a Los Angeles Class submarine visit. In Dubai, they would routinely have aircraft carriers come in. It was one of the busiest places in the world for ship visits. Subsequently, I served in Hong Kong, and at certain points, Hong Kong was even busier, although our geopolitical differences with China severely restricted that after a while.

1996, January – visit of former US president George H.W. Bush, connecting a microphone. Ambassador David Litt at the podium. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

But again, there were all sorts of possibilities for problems. Sailors would come off these ships and go into town and sometimes get into trouble, so we had consular issues. Mostly, though, even though we didn't have a formally signed defense cooperation agreement, the terms of the defense cooperation agreement were pretty much the rules of the road.

We had a de facto immunity unless there was a serious crime. Drunk and disorderly, that sort of thing, was managed directly by the Navy. None of these people were under chief of mission authority which, again, was problematic. Theoretically, they were under chief of mission authority in the absence of a signed Status of Forces or defense cooperation agreement.

Q: Right. Wow. So, it's a three-year tour?

ANANIA: That was three years,'93 to '96.

Q: Are you starting to think about where you're going to go or extending?

ANANIA: I don't think we ever considered extending. I don't know why; we were happy enough there. But I think it was just time to move on. At that point, again, I was looking for management officer positions, which were not abundant as an FS-02. Because I spoke Spanish, I always tried to go back to Inter-American Affairs – ARA (Bureau of Inter-American Affairs), as I think it was still called; later it was WHA – but it just seemed that there were never management officer positions that were opening in the right time frame or whatever. I always thought, gee, I'd love to go to Chile or Argentina or Venezuela. Those positions were often graded at senior levels, so I couldn't bid on them.

I ended up being assigned as GSO, again, to Berlin. But then, unfortunately, this was Embassy Office Berlin. It was an unusual arrangement. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, we had had a U.S. Mission in West Berlin because we were an occupying power. As part of the U.S. mission, there had been a large State Department and other agency presence. But after the fall of the Wall, our occupation ended, and we became part of Embassy Bonn. It might have been called a consulate, but for whatever reason it wasn't. It was called Embassy Office Berlin. So, we were a sort of constituent post with an unusual name. Michael Cutter was the name of the administrative officer in Berlin. I had known him because I had been his post management officer when he was in Vienna, where he was the supervisory GSO. He passed away prior to my arrival, so I was then put into the position as administrative officer at Embassy Office Berlin.

Q: Now, I think the reason they were calling it Embassy Office Berlin was because they were planning on moving the entire embassy there. So, they didn't even want to leave the impression with the Germans that this was, in some way, a separate post. It was actually a piece of the embassy, and one day, when we're done, it will be the complete embassy.

ANANIA: I agree this was likely the case. In fact, a little-known truth is that Berlin was always the official capital of Germany. Bonn was never the capital of Germany. It was the governing capital.

Q: Ah, I understand.

ANANIA: It was the Regierung Haupstadt," or the government capital, of West Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany. But technically, Berlin always remained the capital, and then, subsequently, this was ratified in a vote in Germany, the issue being whether or not the government should move back to the actual capital. Germans voted to move the government from Bonn to Berlin several years before we arrived. We were well into the planning to move the embassy, and that was a lot of what I was doing in Berlin, preparing to move the embassy, and reunite in Berlin. Interestingly, we left behind a few elements in Bonn, as Embassy Office Bonn. On my subsequent tour in Berlin the ambassador approved my plan to close that office.

Q: Now, finally, you're going out there in '96.

ANANIA: Yes.

Q: Did they give you German?

ANANIA: Once again, I basically insisted that I get some training. They would have been more than happy to send me out there without German, particularly since there was more of a push to get me out there upon the death of my predecessor. So, there was a gap. But I insisted, and I was allowed to get eight weeks or so of FSI German. I decided that I didn't want to take the "FAST" course, which was basically to give you a little bit of conversation. I wanted to take the programmatic course, which, in retrospect, was a good idea, because you then get some grounding in the grammar. German grammar is quite different from English grammar, despite some similarities.

It proved useful because I could do more to learn German once I got there. Then, subsequently, we returned in 2006 for a second tour, and that time, I got another dozen or so weeks of FSI German. Unfortunately, once again, I needed to get out there sooner than I had hoped because my predecessor's wife had cancer and ultimately passed away, so he needed to leave much earlier. I would have had the chance to get maybe 20 or 24 weeks of German, but I was pulled out after 12 when the ambassador insisted I transfer. But at that point, I had learned enough about German grammar that I could build from that, and I did. It was very useful, of course.

Q: Alright. So, you get out there in summer or fall of 1996, and you are going to take on a real management officer role now.

ANANIA: Well, actually, less so than in the UAE. In the UAE, I was really in charge of the whole mission, in terms of management. In Germany, I was subordinate to the embassy. We had our senior HRO (human resources officer) in Bonn, and our senior financial management officer and, of course, the minister counselor for management.

Q: Ah. So, they had not moved any of those people out. Okay.

ANANIA: My third year in Berlin, the management minister counselor position changed over, and the incoming minister counselor, who was transferring from London, decided he would not go to Bonn. He would go straight to Berlin. So, the third year, he was actually sitting right there. That was a very positive thing, because the idea was that we were supposed to be shifting the balance to Berlin. By that point, we were starting to move some locally engaged staff – FSNs – up to Berlin. It was a very complicated situation. So, the first two years, I was kind of on my own. We had a principal officer who was perfect for the role, John Barcus. He had been the consul general in Frankfurt, and he was asked to go up there. He was a very self-effacing person, which was great, because he wasn't in any way, shape, or form competing with the embassy in Bonn. That said, very unfortunately, the front office in Bonn, I think through some process of mental projection, just had this sense that, somehow, our principal officer was trying to do things he shouldn't – trying to have a presence apart from the embassy.

I cannot emphasize enough that I never saw that whatsoever. He was a totally loyal officer who worked very hard to maintain good relationships in Bonn. He was also a strong leader and kept morale up. But, basically, the Bonn front office treated him shabbily, I have to say. It was declared that we were no longer even Embassy Office Berlin. We were Embassy Bonn-Berlin. Henceforth, we should not do anything to suggest that we were a post in and of ourselves. So, even things like invitations that were sent to our principal officer had to be sent to Bonn for approval or disapproval. Often, there would be no response whatsoever. This was really bad diplomacy.

Of course, we had longstanding, very highly positive relationships with many organizations in Berlin. We were suddenly, basically, insulting them, not only by not going to their events, but by not even responding, in some cases, to their invitations. This was, I'm sure, mortifying for John Barcus, who was tireless. He would go to all of these events. He was constantly driving around within Berlin, and to places within former East Germany (which surrounded Berlin) to go to these things. He was basically cut off at the knees, as if, somehow, having that presence was a competition with the embassy, which it most certainly was not.

Q: Odd. Alright, take a step back for a moment. Describe what the office or this subordinate element of the embassy was like when you arrived in '96.

ANANIA: Well, it was very interesting. We were still physically in the properties that had pertained to us prior to the wall falling. The U.S. mission, led by the Army, had been in a large compound, which originally was a Nazi *Luftwaffe* (air force) air defense headquarters on a road (Kronprinzen Allee, or Crown Prince Boulevard, I think) that was subsequently renamed "Clay Allee" after General Lucius Clay, who was instrumental in the post-war period of retaining a strong presence in Berlin and maintaining Berlin as a free city, in the portions that were under U.S., British, and French control. He had had a lot to do with the Berlin Airlift.

After the war, we had taken over this facility, which was a very well-built compound with several buildings. The U.S. mission, under General Clay and others, was headquartered there. One building was handed over to the U.S. Mission at the State Department. We had what was called a minister, who was the diplomatic representative there. So, by the time I got there, we had turned back most of the buildings, the ones that the U.S. Army had occupied. But we, as the State Department, retained one large building under very advantageous terms. We were only paying rent based on the space we had occupied at the time of the agreement, and most of the building had been empty. We subsequently filled it up. So, we had a great deal on that. Also, during the occupation, the Germans had been paying for many of the expenses associated with the mission. Under the terms of the occupation, the Germans had to pay us to be there. That's the kind of arrangement that our current president, perhaps, would like to have in South Korea.

At any rate, we had seized a variety of residential properties, for which I think we paid no rent. The Germans paid to maintain these things, and the Germans had paid to put furniture into our buildings, so we had some very nice German office furniture. It was much better than the usual State Department stuff. It was the same thing with a lot of the furniture in the residences. However, it had been several years since the fall of the wall, when the money flow stopped, so we were trying to adjust. We also had a facility that had been built for the mission to house its warehouse and motor pool on Curtiusstraße (Curtius St.). This had been purpose-built, at German government expense. Now, we were renting it.

But the front office, where our principal officer, John Barcus, was, as well as the political and economic section and some others, were in the former U.S. embassy to East Germany on a street called *Neustaedischekirch Strasse.* It was the New City Church Street, which was right in the heart of Berlin, very close to the Brandenburg Gate in a historic building that, I believe, had originally been built by some German trade unions. They were manual trades, like masons, carpenters and metalworkers. It was a very well-built building and had some beautiful wrought-iron work on the windows and things depicting hard-working craftspeople.

So, we had that building, which had been renovated for us by the German Democratic Republic, the DDR, and which really looked like a Communist building in the interior. It also smelled like one, unfortunately. It was some kind of a… I can almost smell it now. Whether it was the cleaning products or bad sewage connections or whatever it was, that building always had a little bit of an odor to it. So, that's a building we had used, and that was going to be the building where the embassy front office moved. We had been trying to build a new embassy in Berlin, and had not made a whole lot of progress, at that point.

The original U.S. embassy had moved around a few times, but in the early 1930's, we secured a property that was just to the side of the Brandenburg Gate on the Pariser Platz, (Paris Plaza) which was perhaps named that because the Germans defeated the French in the Franco-Prussian War or some such thing. That building had originally been owned by Marshall Blucher, who had been the Prussian general who arrived in Waterloo in time to secure the defeat of Napoleon. Apparently, Blucher had been gifted this building, but had lost it gambling. By the time we got it, it had been used as a building with leased residences.

When we took it over, apparently, there were people in it. Either we moved in while they were still living there, or we didn't move in. But at any rate, there was somehow a fire that burned it down. So, by the time it got rebuilt, it was now the Nazi period, and we had pretty much no sooner gotten into it than we were ejected due to World War II. Then, of course, the aerial bombardment of Berlin was extremely intense, and the building was completely destroyed, along with virtually everything else in central Berlin. So, at the conclusion of the war, the occupying powers – Great Britain, France, the U.S., and Russia – divvied up Berlin. The dividing line was right in front of the Brandenburg Gate. So, the famous speech that Ronald Reagan gave – "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall" – was given right there in front of the Brandenburg Gate. But our property was in no man's land.

So, in the early years, perhaps, we had some access to it, but then as the Soviet Union imposed itself and wanted to prevent the escape of East Germans and others who could simply walk over to West German territory or occupied Berlin, they then erected the Berlin Wall. That originally was probably just barbed wire and small brick walls and things like that. Later, it became a massive construction using prefabricated concrete modular pieces. We call them T-walls now. We use the same things to defend a lot of our posts, such as where I was in Iraq and, recently, in Kabul. They put all that into place. At any rate, our property was right behind all of these fortifications, and the Brandenburg Gate was viewed negatively by the East Germans, who viewed it as part of a militaristic past and what have you. So, it certainly wasn't fixed up or treated as a positive monument. We had no access to the property.

Interestingly enough, I was very involved in a lot of real estate dealings. I could probably spend an hour just talking about the complexities of that. I mentioned that we had this facility on *Curtius_Strasse,* which was a maintenance facility and a motor pool facility. I ended up, finally, negotiating for – and then we ended up buying – that property. In the process of doing the notary work that was necessary, the notary that we hired – just because he was curious – looked up in the property book what the deal was with our property next to the Brandenburg Gate on *Pariser Platz.* What he discovered was that in the 1960's, the East Germans – unbeknownst to us, as far as I know – had expropriated the property. Because Germans are pretty good at maintaining records, there was a record that they had, in the property book the Grundbuch, as I think it was called, a notation that said "Eigentum des Volkes" or "Property of the People." But that was then crossed out, with a big X as I recall. They apparently thought better of it. "Maybe we'd better not do that." So, they expropriated it, and then they reversed the decision. But this is still in the property book, and I think that somewhere I have a copy.

But at any rate, now, of course, it was a unified Germany, friendly to the U.S. We thought, well, gee, we should build our embassy back where it was. We should return to that spot. That was kind of conveniently overlooking the fact that there was absolutely nothing positive that had ever happened in U.S.-German relations at that spot. Quite the contrary. It was a reminder of the horrors of the Nazi period, if anything. So, at any rate, we decided we would build there. This went on… The process of getting permission to do that and getting the money was extremely complex and lasted many, many years. Number one, it was right smack-dab in the middle of Berlin. We have had, and have, requirements that there needs to be a 100-foot setback from the street to any of our new buildings. It turned out that there were technical things that could be done to strengthen the building to make it less susceptible to attack. But still, we had to have a setback.

This became a huge issue played out in the press, as the U.S. tried to assert rights to move streets. One of the things that… In fact, the Germans tried to help us out, and did a pretty good job of it. There was still a residual friendliness towards the U.S., which, I have to say, we did a lot to dissipate. Our ambassador made some inflammatory statements that suggested that the Germans owed it to us. There was this tremendous reservoir of goodwill. You didn't need to tell them that they owed it to us, because they were constantly doing things for us that they probably weren't doing for other missions. That was because of this goodwill, which began to evaporate.

The then-Mayor of Berlin – Berlin is actually not just a city; it's a state, so minister president was his title, I think -- Eberhard Diepgen, had been the Governing Mayor of West Berlin. He had essentially been told by the U.S. Mission to do many things over the years, and probably some of it he didn't want to do. So, now that he was the Governing Mayor of unified Berlin, he probably was not in a great mood to have the U.S. embassy trying to tell him how to manage his city. This, again, played out in the press. There were all kinds of inflammatory things. At one point, I think, a German politician –said, "The U.S., they just want to put a McDonald's on the corner." So it even became tabloid fodder.

At any rate, it was, eventually, resolved, and the Germans were somewhat flexible. They moved a street for us, and in fact, the movement of that street reduced the site of the Holocaust memorial, of all things, which is adjacent to us across a minor street in downtown Berlin. They also adjusted another street slightly, which cut off a little bit of a big park. Germans love their parks, so trying to do something like that was not easy. Of course, the sensitivity of the Holocaust memorial kind added to the difficulty. Eventually all that was successfully negotiated. However, during the time I was there, this was all being thrashed out.

In fact, from a practical standpoint, it would have made far more sense for us to acquire not only the building we were in in the former U.S. mission, but also additional buildings there. We could then have built a more modest embassy building on Pariser Platz.

The Germans had originally thought that they were going to move their intelligence services, which were headquartered in Munich – or Bavaria, at least to Berlin, and they were going to take over the buildings adjacent to us on Clay Allee, which eventually they did not do. We could have acquired those buildings. That compound was very well-built, and it did have good setback. It could have been our future compound. That, in fact, might have had more positive resonance with the Germans, because they associated our occupation as being a positive thing. That's unusual for U.S. military presence, but a lot of Berliners viewed the U.S. very favorably. I even had people tell me that they wished the wall had never come down because they liked the way life was in West Berlin – freewheeling, getting paid more. The government workers got extra pay bonuses for living in West Berlin. There were a lot of tax benefits for companies. It was all kinds of things like that.

So, for many Germans, their view of us was very positive, whereas, again, the resonance of the *Pariser Platz* property was minimal and not necessarily positive. Nonetheless, we were told under no uncertain terms that we couldn't even raise the possibility of not building on *Pariser Platz.* One of the problems was that the site was clearly too small to move the entire embassy. So, we were going to have to eventually have other spaces as well. In fact, I ended up, my second tour in Germany, signing the papers to buy our property on Clay Allee, the former US Mission building, where we remain to this day.

Originally, the Foreign Buildings Office (FBO, later OBO) designed a small consular section to go into the new building, but with the assumption there would be very few visas issued because of waivers or whatever. That was not very practical, and of course that didn't happen. We ended up leaving the consular section exactly where it was. It had been built out to German specifications and paid for by the Germans and it was a very nice place with very nice furniture. We subsequently had to re-renovate it, many years later, but still. So, we were working on all of these issues.

Now, in addition, we at Mission Germany were having an enormous dispute with the State Department about the properties. We, as the State Department, had fumbled the ball badly in property negotiation. Shortly after the decision was made to move the government back to Berlin, we entered into negotiations with the Germans over what to do with the properties. We owned outright a lot of the properties in Bonn. We had a huge compound and many other things, including a church, small shopping center and riverside club, in Bonn that we owned. Now, in Berlin, we had extensive holdings, but they were owned by the Germans. We had controlled them under the occupation. So, there was a decision made that we should try and sell properties in Bonn and make a deal to acquire properties in Berlin. But this was to be done outside of commercial channels; this was to be a government negotiation. In retrospect, that was probably not a great idea.

The other thing was that we were asking to get properties in Berlin immediately, but not giving up the properties in Bonn until we were prepared to leave. That complicated things. The Germans, I have to say, negotiated in good faith. They put values on properties based on fairly well-defined real estate values. They worked very professionally. Unfortunately, right after the decision was made by the Germans to leave Bonn, the property market there, unsurprisingly, went way down. Berlin had an enormous speculative period, which led to, essentially, a crash thereafter. What we ended up doing was selling low and buying high. What we negotiated for in Berlin was, basically, to keep a lot of the properties we had been in, but unfortunately, a lot of those properties were in poor condition. We had housing that was essentially shot in large numbers.

We ended up selling our properties in Bonn that we owned, and in exchange we received a usufruct right to the properties we acquired in Berlin. We had the right to use the properties, but not sell them. This was a concession the German government made to make it possible for use to acquire all the properties given the then-current values. This became very problematic because eventually, when I was there, I had some very capable people working for me – a general services officer and a German architect engineer – who pointed out that it was going to cost us a fortune to renovate the properties we had acquired, many of which were really too small for their purpose.

In one area we called the "Pueckler houses" (they were located off of *Pueckler Strasse*), we had about 50 1,100 square foot houses, which FBO somehow decided we were going to shoehorn mid-grade and senior officers with families into. That was way below space standards, plus the buildings were in terrible condition – they were built for US Army officers as family housing in the 1950s and needed complete overhauls. They needed to basically be rebuilt. But, whoops, there was no budget because the Department had rashly promised the US Congress that all construction in Berlin would be paid for from the proceeds of sale of properties in Bonn.

However, many of our houses were sitting on very large and valuable plots of land. The obvious thing to do was knock these things down and build apartment buildings or townhouses or whatever to the higher density permitted under Berlin law. In fact, we found that it might be possible to raise a lot of money by turning some of them back to the Germans. But then we had the problem of the use right. We didn't actually own them. FBO, the negotiators, had claimed that we got a level of usufruct that would allow us to basically sell the rights on to third parties. We had 99-year leases. Well, unfortunately, FBO had apparently taken an economic measure and had not hired a German lawyer to review these documents, using an American lawyer only. So, while they claimed the USG had a particular level of usufruct, which, in German, is called Erbaurecht, and would have allowed us to sell off our rights to the properties, what they had actually agreed to was something called Nutzungsrecht, which is a use right which could not be sold. That meant we could use the properties ourselves, but we could not sell the rights.

Presumably because this was a very embarrassing error for FBO, they didn't want to admit it, so they just kept claiming that we had a right that we didn't. So, when we would go to negotiate with the Germans, we'd be instructed to insist the US had the right to sell the long-term property rights. The Germans would respond, "But you don't. Look, in the document it says Nutzungsrecht." So, it was a very difficult thing. However, the Germans were actually trying to help us out. We ended up finally negotiating to the point where we turned back quite a few of these properties and got cash out, which we then reinvested in building new buildings.

So, we ended up building what are called, in German, Stadtvillas, basically small apartment buildings with two stories and maybe four units in each place. It was in a very nice land, right up against the Grunewald, which is the green forest, an enormous park. It's a great place to live with very nice neighborhoods. We also ended up turning back some of the enormous houses included in the agreement. While their size was beyond anything we needed, we ended up keeping several. So, senior officers in Berlin, or some large families, then and now, live in some fabulous properties.

Q: Amazing, the unique way real estate works itself out in diplomacy.

ANANIA: Yes. And this was an unusual opportunity for me to deal a lot with the German government. The fact that I had gotten some German helped a lot. In the meantime, we also had the issue of what to do for the motor pool, warehouse, and maintenance facilities. In that case, as I said, we had a purpose-built property for warehousing and a motor pool. It was not built, however, for maintenance shops, and because we had many properties, we needed to have something there. We had sort of shoehorned facilities maintenance people into the warehouse property. Well, during these same property negotiations, for some reason unknown to me, we didn't acquire that property on *Curtius Strasse.* We were paying rent for it and paying a lot – a commercial rate – for it.

What OBO had instead done, which was an error, was that they had gotten, again, a usufruct right to a former heavy tracked vehicle maintenance facility on Goerzallee, some distance from our residential properties. This property was in the middle of a much larger property, which the federal government of Germany owned. That made it difficult for us to work with. It was not a facility that was useful to us, because it was basically a giant garage, for vehicle repair. We would have to put half-tracks and tanks in to maintain them. Well, we didn't have any half-tracks and tanks. What we had was a need for a warehouse, a need for a motor pool – and it was not a very convenient location for that – and maintenance shops. And again, we did not have enough money to renovate and adapt this facility.

FBO had determined that it was going to cost, I don't know, six or seven million dollars to renovate this place. That was more than it would cost to actually acquire the place we were already at. Now, we did need to build an extra building, but the building had originally been built for the U.S. mission, and my German architect, who was an extremely capable fellow, had been involved in the construction of the building and knew the architect who designed it. The original architect still had all the plans and documents. The building had been built in a somewhat modular fashion, so our embassy architect was able – as a registered German architect engineer – to prepare the preliminary drawings to put an attachment onto the building, which would meet all of our needs, and to provide an accurate cost estimate for possible construction.

Again, because FBO had negotiated the original deal, they didn't want to admit that there was, maybe, a better approach. That was really crazy, because, okay, we identified a better deal. Let's go for the better deal, and FBO could take credit for it if they wanted. The Germans wanted to sell their huge property, and they needed our property to make it more attractive commercially. We agreed that while we had no obligation to sell, we would participate in the process of their sale. They advertised the property. It was very interesting to see how their bureaucracy worked, as opposed to ours, and I have to say that theirs was far more effective. Rather than just putting it out for bid and opening the bids and saying, "Okay, you won," they did something quite different. They got preliminary bids, and then they had the companies come in and make presentations about what they intended to do with the property.

The fellow leading it, Herr Regeler was his name, a federal government official. We were there for every step of the way. This was dozens of hours and, again, having some German helped. It was also a good German lesson for me, because the companies that were bidding were coming from all over Germany, so I was hearing different German accents. But I had our architect there with me to keep me up to date on what was going on with technical phrases. Herr Regeler, who was conducting the negotiations, would tell them, "You haven't bid enough. If you're serious, you really need to bid more." So, what he told them… I think the high bid was something like 30 or 35 million German marks. We were going to get a percentage of this. He would say to them, "It's going to take 50 million marks to get this done." We went through, and we had all of these presentations. It was clear that some of these companies weren't all that serious. Then, he told them, "If you want this property, you're going to have to bid more."

Sure enough, one of the companies bid just over 50 million marks, and that's what he got for it. It was a company called OBI, and it's basically like a Home Depot. OBI Baumarkt. If you go there today, on Goerzallee you will see an OBI Baumarkt. So, now we had to sell this deal to FBO. Not only did Herr Regeler do a masterful job of selling this property and getting a lot more money for the German government and for us, ultimately, but he also agreed to intervene and try to work out the deal to buy the *Curtius Strasse* property. In fairness to FBO, one of the reasons why we didn't get it in the first place was that it, too, was complicated. The German railroad (Bahn) actually owned the land, because it was right next to a main rail line. The S-Bahn 1 went right along there, too, the one that we would take downtown. So, this property was owned by the German Bahn. That was the land. But the building had been put up under the occupation using German funds, so the German federal government owned the buildings.

But Herr Regeler agreed that he would talk to the *Bahn*, which had no need for this property and was probably more than happy to get money for it, and acquire the property on our behalf and tie up all the loose ends. In fact, we ended up even getting the neighboring property, which was a big, vacant lot that we had also been using during the Occupation period, but had returned. It was just sitting there, vacant. So, Herr Regeler did the whole deal. We basically ended up giving up our rights to the derelict property on *Goerzallee*, and we got a free simple title to the *Curtius Strasse* compound and neighboring land. The USG still owns it, and the land next door to it. We got out of having to pay a very steep rent for the property, and we got out of the need to spend, I think, six million dollars to renovate Goerzallee.

So, we at post said, "Hey, this is a great deal." Of course, we expected that they would then build what we needed for our maintenance staff, which would still cost far less than we had been projecting to pay. But this wasn't good enough for OBO. They didn't like the deal. They basically wanted to leverage more money from the Germans, as if this was some sort of Middle Eastern bazaar. All of this was being done according to German regulations and according to property values that were legally established based on actual property sales. It was a very sophisticated real estate market.

So, again, this was a huge struggle. I could only think that they were just somehow embarrassed that this was a better deal than had been there before. We kept saying, "Wait, this is really good. Take credit for it. Feel free. Report to Congress that FBO has done a great deal in Berlin," which was true. Again, it took tremendous effort to get this finally done, and we did do it. Then, the worst part was that instead of using our architect's plans drawings, which would have just extended the building… Again, this being Germany, he could cost it out with some degree of precision, and we knew it was going to cost way less, but no. That wasn't good enough. FBO hired some German company of architects and engineers who weren't even in Berlin, and they designed a completely different building that was not properly modular and ended up costing far more. It was not nearly as useful. Then they built this thing, and we are stuck with it today. So, as you can tell…

Q: Incredible.

ANANIA: So, that was a good part of what I was doing during that tour, but by no means was that all. We had issues across the board. We were also moving the FSNs, who were coming up to Berlin from Bonn. Germans tend to not be very mobile. They tend to have grown up in a place and stayed there. That's changed a bit, over time, but typically, the German LE (locally employed) staff were very much tied to their roots in the Bonn area. Many of them didn't want to move. It turned out that this was a somewhat favorable thing because, frankly, we had some people who we maybe didn't want to keep and were getting close to retirement. Those people tended not to come. I remember going down to Bonn and talking to the employee association and selling the virtues of Berlin.

Also, a lot of people were worried that they were going to simply lose their jobs, because we weren't going to have as many positions in Berlin. I remember trying to reassure people that it was going to work out well, and it did. It really worked out extremely well. The people who moved to Berlin, especially the first ones, were so happy. The prices in Berlin were so much lower – because the market had crashed, in the meantime – that they were able to get single-family homes or nice apartments for less than what they could have in Bonn. In some cases, from a social perspective, they were actually happy to get out of the small town they had lived in their whole life.

So, it worked out well. People who really wanted to stay in Bonn were able to do that, and they got fairly generous severance packages or retirement packages. Then, there were others who came up. It was really important that the first people who came up were happy, and they were. This was starting in 1997, two years before the move of the embassy. I had several people come into the management section, and they were very happy, and I think word got back to their colleagues in Bonn that things were okay. I think there was a bit of fear – the Big City, Berlin, crime, even though Berlin was and is an extremely livable city with a very high quality of life. So, that was going on.

We were trying to also work out internally within the embassy what roles and responsibilities should be. After all, if we were Embassy Bonn-Berlin, we weren't really subordinate; we were just all part of the same team. That was a good thing. Then, when the minister counselor for management came directly to Berlin in 1998, that accelerated, because now the boss was actually sitting in Berlin. It was very hard for people in Bonn, because they had their own culture. It was little America down there. They wanted to try to replicate that in Berlin, which just didn't make any sense.

So, for instance, the Employee Association had a club. It was a country club, basically, with clay tennis courts and a big restaurant. They were right on the Rhine River. It was beautiful. They basically sold – this was, in my mind, somewhat improper – memberships to well-to-do Germans who were funding pretty much the whole thing. The Americans, on the other hand, could use these facilities for next to nothing. They thought there was just no way they could move to Berlin without having something very similar, which, of course, is not what you find in most places in the Foreign Service and not what you needed in Berlin, which offered a huge range of opportunities to do things. So, there was a real culture clash, and there was a real desire, on the part of people in Bonn, to be in denial. Of course, most of the Americans were not moving to Berlin, anyway.

Q: Right, because their tour would end.

ANANIA: Right. So, they were continuing to try to maintain Bonn in the fashion to which they had become accustomed while starving Berlin. We had barely any resources for our Employee Association, which was not necessarily all that bad of a thing. They had literally hundreds of thousands, maybe even several million, dollars that they just wouldn't invest in Berlin. So, it was a very trying period, overall. I mentioned the conflict with the principal officer. He eventually transferred out with a year to go. We didn't even have a principal officer in Berlin from 1998 to 1999 when the ambassador moved to Berlin. Just absurd things would happen. We were banned from having any staff meetings in Berlin.

Q: Good heavens.

ANANIA: The political section was part of the political section in Bonn. We couldn't have meetings where the political, econ, management and USIA public affairs officers got together. That was insane, of course, because we really did have issues that we needed to talk about that had to do with the management of our post. So, that was really unpleasant. It made that last year in particular extremely difficult. We also had a lot of ethics issues that were starting to come up. We had a front office that was demanding to do various things to properties that just weren't consistent with State Department regulations.

Then, too, I, as a manager and as a leader, had to make sure that my staff were very careful about not breaking rules and regulations. We were being directed verbally to do things that we weren't supposed to be doing, like making renovations to the ambassador's residence and that sort of thing. So, it ended up being an extremely stressful period for me, and for my staff, and for my colleagues. We had a kind of bunker mentality, towards the end of it, which was really unfortunate. We had done a good job of getting things ready. There were also extensive renovations that had to be made to the old building on *Neustaedischekirch Strasse* to prepare for the front office to come up. That meant, again, dealing with Foreign Buildings. It was very problematic to try to renovate a building of that sort while doing it on the cheap. But, eventually, it all got done, and the ambassador was able to move up and work effectively from day one. So, we were proud of what we did, but it was very difficult.

Q: Okay. So, the incredible story of the real estate related to the move of the U.S. embassy to Berlin – that's a really fascinating and crazy story, but I imagine you had a few other things you did there, as well.

ANANIA: Yes. As noted, it was very busy. One of the biggest things was related to HR. While it did work out, it was not an easy process by any means. We just had a lot of internal turmoil, determining roles and responsibilities as staff moved up – who was going to do what, where, and when. Some of these problems actually were still to be resolved when I returned 10 years later as the minister counselor for management in Berlin. We can talk about that when we get to that point. But the real estate issues were often the ones that dominated. We still had a lot of issues with IT, as did the Department. At this point, the Department was finally trying to impose some sort of standards for what would appear on the desktop. This was in large part due to the good work of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which had decided for various reasons that they needed to centralize a lot more of the processing of visas and American Citizen Services. They had started to go with centralized software. In order to make that work, they needed to make sure that the PCs around the world in every consular section were to the same standard.

At this point, I believe the Department had gotten… There was now a visa application fee (the Machine Readable Visa or MRV fee) that had gone into effect. Previously, based on reciprocity, we would charge a visa fee or not. In many places, it was free to come in and apply for a visa. That was certainly the case in Mexico when I served there. You didn't have to pay anything for a tourist visa. But now there was a global fee that everyone had to pay -- Congress decided this would pay for the costs of running our visa operations. So the Department was receiving tens of millions of dollars, and the Bureau of Consular Affairs was able to tap into this money to improve the infrastructure related to visa processing, which is very important for visa security.

It was a huge improvement. Suddenly – well, not so suddenly, but over a not very long period of time – we were able to actually process things and look at records to make sure that somebody hadn't applied somewhere else or that they didn't have a problem or what have you. So, the Bureau of Consular Affairs started to put out this standard, and they hired a company to go around the world and install these computers that had Microsoft Office on them. Most posts were already using Microsoft Office anyway, but they didn't necessarily configure them the same way. So, CA (Bureau of Consular Affairs) had done this. I don't know if it was CA's name or if IRM (Bureau of Information Resource Management) named it when they were finally able to get on board – of course, IRM had to get the funding to do it for other offices – but it was called the ALMA program – A Logical Modernization Approach.

I was now in Berlin, and the State Department was finally saying, “Okay. We’re going to have a standard, not only for the PCs themselves, but also for the hubs and the router boxes and other kinds of things. This is going to be funded, and contractors will go around the world and help you do this.” We were implementing that at the same time, which, again, was a big project. But, as was the case before, there was still very little being done to establish standards for the software that the posts needed. Again, Washington solutions for Washington problems. Some of the functional bureaus had established standards for software that met their needs, but which generally didn’t do much of anything to help posts manage themselves. In fact, to some degree, in Berlin I felt that the software was less useful to me than what I had created in Abu Dhabi several years previously. We still didn’t have any kind of decent real property management software, etcetera.

On the other hand, Embassy Bonn had been a leader in developing software for the Wang. They actually had developed some software that has migrated many times but that is still in use now for contact management. However, again, this was done for the Wang. Maybe it had been rewritten to work on PCs, but it wasn’t really good software, either. Many posts were doing things in very progressive ways, especially the EUR Bureau. In particular, the missions in Brussels, London, and Rome had started to develop a lot of software using Microsoft Access, the same tool I had used in Abu Dhabi. But they had skilled programmers who were far more capable than I was, and so they had built some pretty sophisticated things.

This was recognized by the European Bureau, and the then-Executive Director Don Hays said, “Hey, wait a minute. Why do I have all of these different posts and these talented people developing software just for their post when all or many of my posts could use the same software?” So, he decided that we should have a meeting, which took place in Paris in December of 1996. It was not that long after I got to Berlin. Susan Vanhaften was the EUR IT person at the time, and unfortunately, she became ill and couldn’t attend this conference. So, Bob Bryson, who may have been the supervisory PMO – I’m not sure what his position was at the time – ended up, with me, co-honchoing the conference on the ground. They had invited people from many different EUR posts to attend, many of whom were going to actually display and talk about the software they had developed.

So, it was a very progressive group of people there, both IM (information management) people, the American staff, but also several of our very talented FSN staff. I had a reputation from my period in Abu Dhabi and also from my conversations and consultations in EUR of being interested in these things, which is why I was invited. So, it was a very productive several days in Paris. We sat in a room with all of the curtains pulled and projected up on the screen and looked at what people had done. It was very clear that in several cases, multiple missions had developed the software to meet the same basic requirements – motor pool management, real estate, whatever. The comic relief, unintentionally, was provided by the Bureau of Human Resources. This being 1996, we were starting to get to the point where people were concerned about the year 2000 and how somehow there was going to be some sort of IT Armageddon.

Q: Y2K, yes.

ANANIA: Some computer programs were only written with two-digit years because early on, storage was at a premium. That was completely overblown and ended up being an enormous waste of time and energy and money by the State Department, which tasked posts with laying supplies of fuel, food, etc. in case there was, I don't know, chaos and rioting. But at any rate, the positive was that it was spurring bureaus to pay attention to the fact that they had a lot of, excuse the word, crappy software, which had been written for the Wang VS. Now, the reason I say it was unintentionally comical was that the poor fellow who was sent out by HR to display what they had done…, well HR had taken the Wang software and rewritten it so that it looked exactly the same on a personal computer, meaning that it was monochrome. It didn't have any graphics, it didn't have any colors. We had seen demonstrations from posts which had built relational database software to solve problems and meet requirements that we had, and then sometime into the conference, poor Al Haynes, who I worked with subsequently over the years and is a good fellow… This wasn't his fault. He didn't make the strategic decision to do this. He turns on his presentation and it looks like a Wang computer.

There's just… I don't know if there was audible laughter or groans or a combination of both, but yeah. So, it became very clear that if we wanted to do things, we would have to do them ourselves. It wasn't going to be the Department that was going to solve these problems, sadly. To this day, it's still an issue for the State Department. The result of this was that at the conclusion of the conference, we, the participants, continued to contact each other by email and put together a report and recommendations to go to Don Hays.

There was an IM employee named Cheryl Pavin, who ended up running the office we created, and another leader in the effort was Steve Lauderdale, who was as I recall the systems manager at Embassy Ottawa. There were also several other people I'm sure I'm forgetting. I was part of the loop as well. This paper went to Don Hays, and the recommendation was that we should have an office in EUR that would take the best software created so far and ask the posts which created it to merge their projects and put together more generic versions of software that we could then distribute to the other EUR posts. This was called AESOP – American Embassy Software…something Program -- I don't remember what it stood for.

Q: American Embassy Standard Operating Procedure?

ANANIA: Not that! It was called AESOP, and Cheryl took this on. It was decided that we would start this up in Frankfurt. Prior to Embassy Bonn moving to Berlin, there was a decision that the regional offices in Bonn would move to Frankfurt, which would become a regional center. Bonn had had a wide variety of regional offices that were moved to Frankfurt, not Berlin. In our earlier conversation, I was very Berlin-centric, because that was my responsibility, but at the same time that we were moving people to Berlin, we were also moving offices and people to Frankfurt.

So, Cheryl set up this office, and she was coordinating the efforts of the FSNs who were working at various other posts. I mentioned that Brussels, London, and Rome in particular did a lot of the work. We ended up coming up with some nice software. There was one for motor pool management, real estate, and a few other things, I think. She put that together, and it worked very well. Subsequently, in 1999 we transferred to Hong Kong, where I was the management officer, and what happened, not surprisingly, is that other posts in other regions started wanting to get the same software. Why wouldn't they? They heard about it; it was good, and it met the need. Plus, of course, people would transfer from EUR who had been using it, so naturally they wanted to take it to Africa or the Middle East or wherever they might be.

So, very quickly it became apparent that this should not just be limited to one bureau, which, after all, didn't have the resources to really support and provide the support that posts around the world would need. We can get back to that later, but when I was in Hong Kong, EUR hosted yet another conference, this time in Frankfurt. The other regional bureaus sent representatives. This time, the most forward-thinking State Department regional executive director was Bart Flaherty, who was EX for NEA/SCA (Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs, South Central Asian Affairs), a job I subsequently held. He, like Don Hayes in EUR, saw that this really should happen. He and I attended this conference together, and we ended up driving forward some further recommendations where we essentially turned the EUR effort into a global effort supported by all the bureaus. We ended up calling that ISIS, not a great acronym in light of the rise of the terrorist group that became known to many by that name.

Q: Wow. I should remember all of these, but the past is too dim at this point.

ANANIA: I'm not sure who thought up the name ISIS. It might have been Cheryl Pavin, but in Egyptian mythology, Isis is a goddess whose husband, Osiris, is chopped up into a lot of little pieces and she puts him all back together. That was exactly what we were trying to do, put together the disparate pieces of Department data and applications. So one of the "I's" in ISIS stood for integrated and one of the S's for software.

Q: Beautiful.

ANANIA: It was a perfect name, even if we struggled to come up with what it actually meant. I think the acronym came first, and the actual name was shoe-horned into the acronym. It was integrating software for… I don't know what. I could go into more detail about that later, but ultimately it was very successful. In the meantime, the State Department's IRM Bureau had created a little framework called PASS, for I think, Post Administrative Software Suite. In response to the Y2K "crisis", IRM organized other bureaus – the Bureau of Administration, Human Resources and the Foreign Buildings Office, in particular – to take their Wang software and jointly sponsor a project to have IRM create a new software platform with these applications in it. That was PASS. Sadly, this was done in a very unintelligent way—rather than creating common data stores, each application would maintain a separate set of data files. So if a user was in the real estate database and wanted to assign an employee to a residence, they could look up the data in the HR database, but when they assigned the person to the residence, the system would copy the data. That meant the data wasn't "dynamic" and if information about the employee changed and the HR staff updated it, the changes wouldn't be updated in the real estate database. This was because the bureaus zealously guarded their own software, and the CIO didn't have the authority, or didn't seek to exercise the authority, to take an "enterprise-level" approach and force all the bureaus to work together.

So, eventually what happened was, after Cheryl Pavin transferred, her successor thought, "Hey, wouldn't it be a great idea to take these things that we've developed and have IRM incorporate them into PASS?" That was a good idea and it happened. The problem was that the regional bureau executive directors, who apparently had little understanding or interest in what was happening, foolishly decided, "Hey, our work here is now done. Our applications have gone corporate. We have no need to have the ISIS office anymore. We're just going to close it." That's what they did.

I have, still, my emails from the early 2000's where I was decrying this. I was, at the time, the head of the Office of Management Policy. I was pleading with them, "Listen, if you do this, you're going to put us right back where we were in 1996 with posts developing their own software and there's no mechanism for them to share it or make it an enterprise application."

In fact, that's exactly what happened. Just a few years ago, the EUR Bureau started up, basically, AESOP again. Once again, various posts started developing applications, now even more sophisticated in some cases due to advances in software tools that were of use to other posts, and so once again, the regional bureaus came together and now they have the Application Development Group (ADG). So, the old is new again, and the Department is still struggling because, once again, how does this fit into what IRM is doing? How does it fit into what the functional bureaus are doing? So, this provides historical perspective on some of the problems that the State Department is still struggling to address with its IT.

That pretty much wraps up what was going on at Embassy Office Berlin and perhaps even wider, in those days. That takes us up to 1999.

Q: '99. Okay.

ANANIA: So, as if all these activities with real estate and IT development and everything else weren't enough, another legacy of our occupation of Berlin was that during the course of the occupation, the U.S. had been an occupying power in a good chunk of Berlin and the district of Zehlendorf, in particular. In the early 1960's – I don't know if it was '60 or '61; something like that – the U.S. Mission or the U.S. Army or both together, founded with the Berlin government a bilingual, binational school in partnership with the people of Berlin. It was in fact a Berlin public school, but half of the teachers and half of the students were to be Americans, which is really peculiar, especially for a public school. It became known as the John F. Kennedy *Schule,* the John F. Kennedy School. It became a kindergarten through high school institution. Kindergarten is a German word that most people would associate with Germany. Unfortunately, the Germans don't actually call it "kindergarten," they call it *vorschule,* "before school."

So, it went from kindergarten on through 13th grade, because the Germans had a different system. Well, they had a different system. I think it's now changed, and they only do 12 years. But at the time, they had what was called the Abitur. German schools are very differently organized than in the U.S. Basically, they slot students into schools based on what your perceived skills and interests are as a child. So, you might go into vocational training; you might go into academic training. Academic training is at a *Gymnasium* (academic secondary school), or was. Again, there have been some changes and reforms since I left. The John F. Kennedy school was a *gymnasium* for its German educational track, which meant it was an academically oriented school, and it was accredited to give both a high school diploma and the German Abitur, which is their academic, roughly high school-equivalent degree. The U.S. military, particularly the Army, strongly supported the school during this period.

Now, there was also a Department of Defense school, because we had a large Berlin Brigade there with a lot of housing and a lot of kids. As it broke down, and I think this was generally the case, the Americans who went to the John F. Kennedy School tended to be the sons and daughters of officers. The DOD school tended to serve not only officers' children, but also more of the enlisted children. So, this was a very successful school, and as I said, it was bilingual and binational. This worked much to the benefit of the German students because they would typically go through their entire school career in a bilingual school. So, when they graduated, they had studied with Americans and American teachers. They spoke English, and you would have sworn they were Americans.

Now, for the American citizens, those from the Department of Defense or the State Department part of the Mission, they tended to be there for shorter periods of time, so they probably didn't become totally bilingual in German. That said, if you stayed for three – back in those years you could also extend – or four years, if you really wanted to speak German, you could speak German at the end of it. So, it was a very successful school.

So, now there's the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Berlin Brigade marches out proudly. There's no U.S. embassy there. There's the embassy office, but it's much smaller. Now the school is sort of in crisis. They don't have 50% of the students who are American. There aren't that many Americans in Berlin. This was actually fantastic for private Americans, though, because basically, if you were an American– not just with a passport, but a native English-speaking American who had been living in America as a kid – you could easily get into the John F. Kennedy School. In the meantime, this was a very prestigious place for the German children to go. They even had to have lotteries to get in. If you had a sibling there, you were admitted if you met some standard, but otherwise they actually did have a city-wide lottery.

This was not all that unusual in the time we were in Berlin - Berlin also had *EuropaSchule* – European Schools. There was a French one, a Greek one, a Spanish one.

You could put your kids in these schools and they, too, were bilingual. The difference was that the Kennedy School actually did have American teachers – American citizens who were there, teaching. Many of them obviously had ties to Germany or spoke German, but there were some who did not. We had some fantastic teachers. The administration of the school was also quite complicated, because the elementary school and the high school each had both a German principal and an American principal. So, there were four principals. Very unusual, too, was that the school board gave the U.S. Mission – and, then as successor, the U.S. embassy – three positions on the school's board and an absolute veto on any decisions.

Now, by the time we got to Berlin, it was 1996 and it had been several years since the end of the occupation. So, in the meantime, Berlin had been confronting – and still, to some degree, does confront – the challenge of integrating a very different set of schools and students from East Germany into the West German system. They were dealing with the fact that investment in facilities and technology and things like that was very poor in the East. Berlin was pretty much bankrupt, as they were trying to integrate the system and deal with the legacy of Communist government. So, there wasn't necessarily a lot of interest in pouring money into what was perceived as an elite school associated with the Americans. Because the U.S. Army had put a lot of time, energy, and resources into the school, when they left there was suddenly a vacuum.

For instance, the U.S. had – I don't know by what means – been buying U.S. textbooks and other books, such as English novels for English classes, and sponsoring many activities that German schools didn't typically have. They don't necessarily have sports programs, for instance, in the same way that U.S. schools do. We'd been paying for all of this, and this was now decaying because there was no mechanism to support the school financially –it was a public school and students from the Embassy office attended with no charge. Literally, the bindings of the books were falling apart. You know how kids can be rough on their books. Well, six or seven years after the Army went out, we had a real problem.

The same Don Hays who had been so instrumental in setting up the ASEOP program, as the executive director of the European Bureau, had lived in Berlin as a child or young adult, and attended the John F. Kennedy School, I believe. That was his educational background. He had a real soft spot in his heart for Berlin and really understood it in ways that others didn't because it was such a peculiar place. Prior to my arrival, he had been working with Post to set up the groundwork for having a trust fund for the school, which the Office of Overseas Schools was very much involved in. They had some excellent people working there at the time. They had set up the groundwork, apparently based on some successes in other countries, but hadn't actually implemented it.

John F. Kennedy School Trust Fund

So, the idea was that we were going to set up a trust fund that would be jointly administered by the city and by the embassy. We would, in essence, pay tuition for all of the embassy kids. The money would not go to the German government or the Berlin government (Berlin is both a city and a state in Germany) but would instead be administered by the trust fund. The purpose of the trust fund would be to uphold and support the programs that were uniquely American in nature, the things that we could not reasonably expect the Germans or the Berlin government to pay for. It took a great deal of effort to finally set that up. We had a legal adviser who had, unusually for Germans, a large family, and had sent I don't know how many children through the John F. Kennedy School. He had perhaps even studied there himself. He helped us register ourselves as a non-profit organization, a Verein as the Germans call it. We had many a meeting with the JFK School principals and our legal advisor to set all of this up.

At the same time, I was also on the school board. Here, we were very lucky. We had a spouse, the wife of our Foreign Commercial Service representative, who is still a friend of mine, Grace Sharples Cook. She took on the role of being the school board president. She had a lot of experience working in the Philadelphia area, where she came from. Her family was very involved with private schools and Quaker schools. She joined the school board. The previous principal officer's wife had had the same role. She was another very talented woman. She and the principal officer – his name was Jock Covey… I only overlapped very briefly with her. But they had also written up very insightful analyses about the issues facing the school, and it was very helpful to have this information. We had good documentation and a good partner in the Office of Overseas Schools.

So, besides dealing with the day to day school board issues, we were also setting up the trust fund. We ultimately succeeded. I don't know… There was a consular officer named Ed Wehrli also on the school board and he and his wife Rose graciously hosted some of these meetings. The principal officer, John Barcus, hosted some others. We eventually managed to register ourselves, and we started charging, essentially, tuition. In the early days, we were spending the money, almost entirely on books. In the first year or two, we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on books. Each of the teachers on the American side was able to put in requests to buy the books. I have to note, here, that I modified the contracting software application that I created in Abu Dhabi, and the John F. Kennedy School Trust Fund used it to keep track of expenditures and produce purchase orders. We bought a Gateway brand computer.

I loaded up the software, and we hired a spouse from the embassy to work part time at the school and be our administrative assistant to help the school submit purchase orders for all the books and other purchases. As we met the needs of the books, we were able to expand a little bit further, and we started to purchase some technology. I think we were paying to put an internet line into the school, which German schools, at the time, didn't typically do. We began to purchase a few PCs for the administrators. It was very early days for IT. When I was assigned again to Berlin in 2006, I was rejoined the trust fund. It was very gratifying to see how much the trust fund had done for the school. And surprising to discover the Trust Fund was still using the purchasing software I'd created.

The school had also created its own *Verein* to do fundraising from alumni. They organized a gala event, and I was able to give a speech describing the things the trust fund had done in 10 years. At that point, they had spent well over a million Euros (originally it was German Marks) to restore and to maintain the school as an American bastion in Berlin. There were so many issues we had to deal with that were very complicated and thank goodness that Grace Sharples Cook was there. It was like a full-time job for her. She got involved in a lot of things that I frankly would never have been interested in. It was really in the weeds of the management of the school. But it was important that we had Americans who were interested in upholding the school that way.

My older son started off there and went to *Vorschule* and first grade. It was a very positive experience for him. When we returned, both of my sons studied there, and they got a really good middle school and high school education. For my younger son, when I became ambassador to Suriname, there were no suitable schools in Suriname. He had been studying in Montgomery County, MD where we lived, but he really loved being in Berlin at the school and asked to do his junior year in Berlin. He ended up going back there and boarding with a German family. After that year, he decided to stay and boarded with another German family who we had met working, that first time, in Berlin. He graduated from the John F. Kennedy School, which is a very unique institution, not only in Berlin but really globally. The then-Ambassador Murphy, later Governor of New Jersey, spoke at the commencement event.

To have that close tie… What a great diplomatic tool that is, too, to have Germans and Americans studying and working together. The school had a really tremendous ethos. They were very supportive of the students. They definitely believed that the students should be very independent and that they should take responsibility for their actions and activities. That didn't always work out as a positive; there were some little scandals, now and then, but it was a very positive experience. In the early years, they also believed it critical to "socialize" children, so there was perhaps less of an emphasis on academics and more on group activities.

1997 – Son Nicholas celebrating an American tradition in a binational German public school. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

I should say that the school did not suit all of the people from the embassy. There were definitely people who were not comfortable with the German system, and by going to a bilingual, binational school, you are really buying into the fact that this is a cross-cultural experience. Just to give one example, Germans don't have a problem with nudity. So, if the little kids were going off to a pool, they all changed in the same changing room, and the teachers changed there, too. By golly, there were some American parents who weren't going to have any of that. The nice thing was that we were also able to work with other schools. There was another school called the Berlin Brandenburg International School, which we also supported to a degree, even though that wasn't our official school. That was a private school, and people at that school paid an actual tuition, which was somewhat higher than the John F. Kennedy School.

In fact, the school had been founded by teachers who had worked at the John F. Kennedy School. They had a different approach to things, and that was much more suitable for some of the folks at the embassy. Unfortunately, the school had financial difficulties and was about to go bankrupt, but was finally rescued and moved to a different campus, still in the surrounding state of Brandenburg, but closer to where most of our families lived. It was very complicated. It is now a very successful but very different school from the John F. Kennedy School. It was great that we had a choice, and that parents could choose the education that was best for their own child.

Those weren't the only schools, either; there was also a Berlin British School, where a few people went who had perhaps had their children in schools that were on the British system. They were able to continue there. Then, there was another one that was called the Berlin International School, which was much more multicultural and had children of diplomats from many other countries. A few of our students also went there. So, visiting all the schools and providing information to parents was quite an interesting part of what we were doing during that period. As you can see, that was an extremely productive and busy position to be in, with the real estate issues, HR issues, embassy move challenges, IT things, and then all these school issues. So, that's probably a good place for us to stop today.

Q: So, today is February 5th, 2020. We're resuming our interview. Just, for the record, you completed that tour in what year?

ANANIA: That was 1999.

Q: Okay. So, we are going to resume with Jay in 1999. So, as you're completing that tour, you're thinking about the next one and bidding and all of that. Sometimes that can be very easy, and sometimes that can take several months. What was that like back then for you?

ANANIA: Well, I had started, probably, early on trying to figure out what options might exist. Back then, I don't know if we still had microfiche, but I remember that typically I would look at the microfiche of the staffing patterns of other posts to see what jobs might be open. Again, I was looking for management officer positions. I probably looked at what I think, by that point, was the WHA Bureau. I probably didn't find much. For some reason, it just seemed like the jobs there were never open when I was transferring. I had mentioned early on that I had worked very closely with Jeanine Jackson in the EUR/EX office. At that point, she and her husband, Mark, who I had also worked with --he had been the desk officer for Austria and Germany, and therefore, when I was the post management officer for Austria, for a while, I worked with Mark. So, I knew them both, and he was the administrative officer in Hong Kong. Jeanine was the HRO. I was in touch with them, and the admin position was just what I wanted. So, I guess they recommended me to post management, and I was offered that position.

Q: And HRO is human resources officer?

ANANIA: Yes. So, that was a happy outcome, definitely, after a very stressful Berlin position. I should note, here, one of my long-term frustrations with the State Department and HR in terms of the way we manage long-term training. I'm not totally current, but I suspect some of these problems still persist. They certainly did throughout my career. After I had lined up this position in Hong Kong and I considered myself to have committed to them, late in the day HR sent me a cable saying, "Oh, we have this wonderful opportunity. You can go to one of the War Colleges." I hadn't been focused at all on that, and again, I felt that I had already committed myself to Hong Kong. But that probably would have been a very rewarding assignment, had I gone to one of the War Colleges.

Later, I was the director of the Office of Management policy and was able to work on some of these issues with FSI and others. I remember making the same points. "Hey, if you really want to identify people to go to some of these premium training opportunities, this should be part of the entire performance management system, and you should be identifying people earlier on before they get well into the assignment cycle. It shouldn't just be something that gets dumped on somebody at the end." Quite frankly, in some cases, those positions at the War Colleges were going to people who were having a hard time finding a job. That's not necessarily a knock on them; there are various crazy things that go on in the assignments process, but it shouldn't be a last-minute thing.

I did have the opportunity once to attend some senior leadership training at the Army War College for several days. It was for DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary)-level people in the Department. It was superb training. You know, when you go to these places, you know that, for the military, these are capstones. It's a huge honor, and the military is explicitly selecting the people who they think have the most potential to rise higher in the ranks of officers. The State Department has just never treated training that way. I understand that ADST (Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training) is also doing oral histories of people who used to do what was called the Senior Seminar in the State Department. That was elite training, where people really were identified as the people the Department judges are going to make it to the ambassadorial rank or to assistant secretary or DAS or whatever it might be.

Senior Seminar training was terminated during the time when I was in the Office of Management Policy. It was a controversial decision made by Secretary Powell, because he felt the training wasn't focused enough but more to the point, because he felt that there shouldn't be just a small number of people getting this training. The idea was that we should drastically improve our overall leadership and management training at all levels, and in large part, that happened. However, there has never been anything quite like the Senior Seminar or a War College that was substituted for it. So, to some degree, it was a loss. Overall, pretty much everybody gets leadership and management training now, and that is a positive. On net, I would say it is overall a positive, but nonetheless, we aren't doing perhaps what we could with senior leadership training.

Q: So, at this moment, you did not go to any of the service academies or the War College and so on. Did you have another opportunity later on? Or did it just never work out that that kind of long-term training would fit in your career path?

ANANIA: No, it never really was an option after that. When I was in Hong Kong, I was planning to extend there. Not long thereafter, State changed its policies and prohibited extensions at non-hardship posts, the idea being that if everyone could extend in the "nice" places, there would be few options for those serving in difficult and dangerous posts. But then I was asked to come back and be the head of the Office of Management Policy working during the Secretary Powell period under Undersecretary for Management Grant Green. Dick Shinnick, who I mentioned earlier having worked for in EUR/EX, was the senior executive officer in the Bureau. He recruited me to come back, so that was that.

Q: Okay. Because you are right; I did go to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, the sister school to the War College, and you do get a lot of leadership training and some management training. But really, they are there focused on leadership training for lieutenant colonels and colonels who they think are going to make brigadier general.

ANANIA: Right. And of course, it's great exposure both ways. The State Department participants bring a perspective that is truly unusual for the military officers there, but then, of course, the State Department people get a view into the military world or the Department of Defense world, which has been increasingly critical over the years as we've been involved in so many conflicts. It's critical especially for people who serve in conflict zones like Iraq and Afghanistan where you're working very closely with military counterparts. Having later served as a management counselor in Baghdad, I definitely would have benefitted from that sort of training in that environment.

In fact for my Iraq assignment, I replaced the same Jeanine Jackson, who was herself a reserve US Army officer, as was her husband. So, she was very comfortable, having been in the U.S. Army, there. I had to come in, and it was quite a toss into the deep end of the pool, I can tell you. I was the senior management officer for the U.S. mission, but the U.S. Forces Iraq – USFI – was a very sizable force, at that point. It was withdrawing rapidly, and ultimately, we withdrew almost all of the troops by the end of that year. I was dealing with brigadier generals and major generals who were heading up the various elements of USFI, and they assigned numbers to their directorates. They had numbers that succeeded the letter J, for "joint." So, they had the J-2, the J-4, the J-6, whatever. I used to joke, "General Austin," the four-star for USFI and as of January 2021 the Secretary of Defense, "has 8 Js but Ambassador Jeffrey only has one Jay." That would generate some chuckles from the people around the table, but it was true.

The other thing, and I think this was an expression that Jeanine used to use, was that we were "out-colonel-ed." You'd go to these meetings, and… Actually, we had colonels on our own staff, probably thanks to Jeanine, but we'd go to these meetings and there might be 10 colonels from USFI. So, that was amusing, but we'll get into more detail on that later.

1999-2002 Consulate General Hong Kong – Administrative (Management) Officer

So, at any rate, off to Hong Kong we went. The consul general there, at that time, was a chief of mission. That was an unusual situation. Consulate General Jerusalem was another place where you had a consul general who was a chief of mission. Richard Boucher was there. He departed just before I left, and he was succeeded by Michael Klosson, another very able diplomat. Richard Boucher had a saying. I think they even printed it out and put it on bulletin boards. He said, "Consulate General Hong Kong: Like an embassy, only better." It was true, I'm telling you.

There was an assumption among many that we were subordinate to Mission China and that somehow, we were part of Mission China and reporting to the embassy in Beijing. That was a reasonable thing to assume, because the British had returned Hong Kong to China the previous year with great pomp and circumstance. The State Department and the U.S. government decided that we would emphasize… The expression was "one country, two systems" because China formally agreed to allow Hong Kong to maintain its own unique institutions. We decided to emphasize the two systems, and to treat Hong Kong as if it was a separate entity, which, to some degree, it was. Therefore, we maintained chief of mission authority in Hong Kong. Sadly, China reneged on its promises and by January 2021, the communist government has crushed independent thinking in Hong Kong and any prospect of the promised expansion of democracy.

So, I came in there, and having gone through various torments having to do with real estate, building renovations, and things like that in Berlin, I got to Hong Kong and Post had just finished renovating the office building. It was in tip top shape. I had an excellent facilities management officer – Rodney Coe -- who kept the place looking like it was new. We had very good local staff in facilities. We did have some issues with some of our government-owned housing, but generally I considered it my cosmic reward to go to a place where things were working.

It was a fascinating post, because for many of us we think, "Oh, if only we had the resources, if only we had the money, if we had a stronger FSN workforce," in some cases, "how wonderful it could be." Well, that was Hong Kong. We had been treated very well by the EAP Bureau (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs) for many years. They had been able to recruit strong people to work there. The local staff… It was a very interesting situation. Our Hong Kong-ers were not necessarily superstars, but everybody was at least competent. You didn't have weak performers, and as it turned out, there were a lot of hidden talents that were there just waiting to be unleashed. I was fortunate enough to have several people working for me who were very adept at revealing those hidden talents. As a result, we became a little mission of innovation. We were doing some really progressive things there, and it was just an extremely positive experience all the way around.

Q: Recognizing talents that go beyond a local employee's work requirement statement, do you also have the room as a management officer to actually cross-train or give them opportunities outside of their work requirements?

ANANIA: Yes. This is an interesting leadership lesson. When you encourage people to break out of the mold, you'll often find that they can and will. They become much more productive, but that also increases morale a tremendous amount. So, if you were speaking about entry-level officers, of whom we had many in Hong Kong, we had a good entry-level program where we encouraged people to take on projects outside of their cone. We had several consular officers who were entry-level, and I would encourage them to participate in management projects, maybe to join the housing board, that sort of thing. In fact, we had a management cone officer who was very interested in doing some of those things, so he did. Similarly, I encouraged the entry-level folks in my section – there were only one or two – to look for projects, like being a control officer. We had many visitors to Hong Kong; it was a popular place to come. That included very senior people in the U.S. government. We hosted Secretary of Defense William Cohen when I was there, and we had visits from other secretaries of other departments, certainly from Commerce and I believe Agriculture, Hong Kong being a big trading location.

2002 – Visit of Secretary of Defense Cohen to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

But the most extraordinary work was often done by our Foreign Service nationals. I'm not sure we were still calling them that at the time; the nomenclature changes. But I was very fortunate. The Jacksons were good recruiters, and they had stocked the place with some very talented Foreign Service management personnel. In particular, the first year – maybe it was the first two years – that I was there, the financial management officer, Ismail Asmal… The State Department is blessed with a number of very talented financial management officers. Among the specialists, I would have to say that's probably our top group in terms of just overall excellence. Ismail was right there with anybody. I've worked with several truly excellent financial management officers, but besides his other skills, Ismail had a great management philosophy.

The Hong Kong Chinese tended to be kind of reticent. It was almost, at least among those we hired, like there was a real marked leaning towards introversion. So, they would not necessarily volunteer or raise issues. But he put in place a policy whereby he required each and every member of his staff to participate in every weekly staff meeting. They had to say something. He also encouraged them to let their skills blossom, and it turned out that we had several people who were absolutely masterful with IT and Microsoft Excel in particular.

So, under his leadership and with him very much directly involved, as well, we created a whole system of things he named "smart forms." Typically at posts around the world, if you wanted to fill out a form to request reimbursement for a miscellaneous claim or something like that, you had to fill out a paper form. Maybe you could type it up on a computer, but you still had to print it and deliver it in hard copy. Well, he created these forms in Excel, and we put them on our intranet.

This was the early days of the State Department being connected to the Internet. This was something that Secretary Powell later insisted should happen so we couldn't access the internet from our own computers, but we were part of a global internal (intranet) system and could send emails and share files that way. We were in the VERY early days of web-based software applications.

Previously, we had to have separate computers to access the Internet. We would run in some places – and Hong Kong was one of them – a separate network. So, you could have one Internet computer and a separate one that connected to the State Department system, OpenNet. We had a box so we could use the same keyboard and monitor and switch back and forth. But we did have our own intranet, which meant that things could be put on the local server and accessed. We started using web-based software. So, we had a page for the financial management section. And this all sounds obvious now, but at the time, this was really groundbreaking. Posts did not have these sorts of things.

We set up these pages with links so that you could open up these smart forms – which were essentially Excel spreadsheets, although they didn't really look like it – and they had all of the instructions you needed. They did all of the math for you. They filled in the fiscal data. If you were doing a representational claims voucher, you had a link you could click, and it would take you to another spreadsheet that showed how much money you had available in your section. All of the rules and regulations were right there, and it was just super easy. Now, unfortunately, this didn't then connect to the corporate systems, which is what should have happened so that when you filled it out, all of the data would go right into the financial management system. Nonetheless, it was a huge improvement.

At the same time, we had another extraordinarily good and progressive manager, Kirk Ingvoldstadt was the systems manager. Kirk did an excellent job working with Ismail on all of these things. He had the idea that we should actually have web-based software that could support multiple posts, and in particular China. At that time, there was an odd situation where, within Mission China, if Beijing wanted to purchase an IT connection to the consulate in Shenyang, they could do that. The telecom authority in China would be perfectly happy to sell them a line and to charge them for the line, but wouldn't actually give them a reliable, functioning line. So, Mission China had constant problems with basic connections.

Now, on the other hand, if Hong Kong went to the Hong Kong telecom authority and said, "We want a line to Shenyang," they would sell a line, and the mainland Chinese made sure that it actually worked. So thanks to Kirk, we had all the China posts setup connections to Hong Kong, and that's the way they connected among themselves – via Hong Kong. This was actually, in my view, something of a scandal. Beijing continued to pay for the domestic lines that didn't work, and that was very expensive, in some cases. I remember having this discussion. Hong Kong was also supporting Mission China in many other ways. We were the medical evacuation point, and with Mission China being quite large with posts in cities with unhealthy environments in terms of environmental contaminants, air pollution, and many other things like food safety issues and basic hygiene, we had a lot of people who were coming to Hong Kong for medical treatments. Hong Kong had excellent medical services. We were supporting that from our very busy Health Unit.

We were also providing offshore procurement and mail support. We would have a US Navy office in a separate facility, and operated a Fleet Post Office (FPO) so we could receive US mail. We also received the mail for Consulate General Guangzhou, which was formerly known as Canton. It's in the south of China, very close to Hong Kong and accessible by rail. They would send staff down every week on a pouch run, transporting the mail via unclassified diplomatic pouches our Hong Kong information program center team would put together.

So, we had many ties to China, and we were doing a lot of work for them. Kirk had the idea that we could create some web-based software, host it in Hong Kong, and then they can use it. He started with one for procurement, and he did another one for contacts. So, we used it for ourselves in Hong Kong, but we also encouraged Mission China to make use of it. They didn't necessarily embrace it wholeheartedly, which was really a pity, because it was much better software than what they had at the time. But this, for instance, would have allowed – and to some degree did allow – for non-location specific support. For instance if the contracting officer at Embassy Beijing was visiting Consulate General Shanghai, she could login to the system and conduct her business as if she were in

Beijing. This was and is something I'm still very interested in, and that's finding ways to do work away from overseas posts where, often, the threat level is much higher and, always, the cost is much higher.

So, Kirk got started on those projects, and that was also another very innovative thing that he did. Consul General Klosson really wanted to encourage visitors to Hong Kong, and he especially encouraged us to host conferences. We did, to an amazing degree. We had all sorts of conferences come through – a GSO conference; I mentioned having worked to help start up the AESOP program, and we organized an AESOP conference in Hong Kong. It was remarkably easy to do these things in Hong Kong because the hotels were absolutely fantastic. We had many thousands of room nights per year that we reserved through the consulate general services officer. So, we were a good customer.

There had been a large Asian financial crisis in 2008, which had really depressed business. So, we could get very competitive prices, even from some of the most extraordinary hotels. There was the Peninsula Hotel, which we managed to host two conferences. That's the finest hotel I've ever experienced in terms of service, but it was within the *per diem* rate. But the majority of the work went to an American company, which was the Marriott. They had a JW Marriott there, which is one of their premium brands, and they simply could anticipate what we wanted. So, if a VIP visitor was coming, you could go to the Marriott, and they understood some of the peculiarities of the U.S. government. If we wanted an extra meeting room, they should just give it to us, because we were going to have a hard time figuring out who was going to pay for it. That sort of thing. We also had a Grand Hyatt, which ably hosted the Secretary of Defense visit.

The security forces in Hong Kong – the Hong Kong police – were highly professional and could always assist the RSO. The RSO reported to me in Hong Kong for, I believe, the first two years. Then the Department made the decision to have RSOs report directly to DCMs. But for the first two years in Hong Kong, as in Abu Dhabi, I was supervising the RSO position as part of the admin section.

So, Hong Kong was a very interesting place to be. It was the early days of the return to China. Not much changed. It was very interesting to observe the institutions of Hong Kong, because it was a country – technically a special administrative region of China – where you had a strong rule of law with almost no true democracy. My observation was that the rule of law, if followed, could, in some ways, be considered more important than elections, which were only held at the local level, while the Chief Executive was essentially chosen by China through compliant appointed officials. Things ran extremely well; corruption was low. The government was efficient.

Unfortunately, a lot of those things have begun to change now, because China decided to impose more of its authoritarianism on Hong Kong. That clearly damaged the rule of law; as we speak, we're following a period of massive demonstrations in Hong Kong regarding a law pushed by Beijing to allow for extradition of Hong Kong Chinese to China. Again, Hong Kong has a well-developed judicial system, which was generally considered to be very high quality and fair. None of that applies in China. China began, a few years ago, to apparently kidnap critics of China who lived or worked in Hong Kong. They would kidnap them, spirit them over the border, and subject them to unfair judicial procedures, if any, and punishments.

The Hong Kong Chinese realized that this is almost an existential threat to them. They have been protesting, but it's unclear what the result of that will be. At least the initial law was withdrawn, but I don't think that under the current Chinese government, the outlook is positive. Nonetheless, in that period of 1999 to 2002, Hong Kong really was a unique place, and things were working well.

This was also the period when in December 1999 Portugal also returned Macau to China, so that became a 2nd special administrative region. I think that was viewed, probably, in a more positive light. Unlike the British, the Portuguese had never devoted a lot of time and attention to Macau, and Macau was not a place with strong rule of law. It was considered far more corrupt and something of a backwater. Once it turned back to China, a lot of new investment came in. Unfortunately, it was almost all related to gambling, including U.S. investment. At least in terms of its prosperity, Macau, I think, viewed the return to China as a positive.

Q: Interesting. Now, you haven't yet talked about the school opportunities, needs, and so on for your kids. How did that work out in Hong Kong?

ANANIA: Very different situation than Germany. Hong Kong had, and still has, the Hong Kong International School, which is an excellent school with a rather spectacular campus and (unusually) a large sports field. They have a U.S. curriculum, but it has a religious affiliation with the Lutheran Church. It wasn't a negative for most people, and it wasn't a heavy weighting in the curriculum, but nonetheless, that was somewhat of an issue. The school was absolutely outstanding in terms of the academic quality, and it was great, particularly for younger children.

As you got older, though, there began to be issues. They wouldn't accept our students if they didn't have strong academic records, number one. There was also a lot of competition to get in, so they were basically charging a seat fee, a financing arrangement common at some other international schools. Corporations would pay a high price to obtain what was essentially a license to place a student at the school. The US government had purchased many of these seats and were then guaranteed to get admission for children who met the academic standard, but there were a lot of issues related to managing those seats. Different agencies had bought their own seats, and it became quite complicated. None of these were major problems, but nonetheless, there were always little issues that were popping up.

Also for the older children, it wasn't necessarily an ideal situation because so many of the students there… It was a very expensive private school, so the students tended to be the children of very well-paid international executives or the children of well-to-do Hong Kongers. By well to do, I mean fabulously rich, in some cases. You had children who were being driven to school by chauffeurs. The U.S. government children were sort of the poor country bumpkin cousins in that school. Everybody had fancy phones. This was when cell phones were first starting to come out. So, everybody had phones, and many would all talk about their vacations in Bali, business class travel, and things like that. The social atmosphere was somewhat difficult for some of the older children. Certainly no hint of the equalitarian spirit we experienced in Berlin.

There weren't a lot of obvious options of high academic quality. There was another school – which I in fact worked with quite a bit – called the American International School. It was actually very similar to the school I mentioned in Berlin, the Berlin International School, where it was extremely multicultural. It was founded in 1986 by a gentleman named Dr. Thomas T.S. Liang, who had apparently lived out a quintessentially-Hong Kong rags-to-riches dream story. He had been a refugee from communist China in the late '40s and arrived virtually penniless in Hong Kong. He had been supported – even though he wasn't Catholic – by the Catholic school. He was deeply grateful for that. He became very wealthy, apparently in the real estate business, which is the way, typically, many people in Hong Kong became wealthy. He got into Hong Kong's favorite sport – horse racing – and had horse farms in the US and Australia. We enjoyed attending several races with his family.

2003-03 Sha Tin Race Track, Hong Kong – Australian Trainer Peter Alpar center. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

He decided to spend money on several charitable endeavors. One of them was this school, which he founded. Some of his family members were very much involved in running it. He recruited a veteran educator from the U.S., who herself was ethnically Chinese, to run the school, and they basically started it from scratch.

It wasn't charitable in the sense that it was losing money and he was giving a lot of cash away, but it was charitable because he controlled the land it sat on. Land prices in Hong Kong are stratospheric, so it is very challenging to set up institutions like schools without government support. By allowing the school to use some of his land essentially for free, he was subsidizing the school heavily. They have an international curriculum, the IB (International Baccalaureate) program. So, I worked quite a lot with that school as well, and delivered an address to the graduating class of 2001, although we didn't have a lot of students who went there. I'm very pleased to see that AIS is still in operation, providing an American-style education to a broad international community. There were also one or two other smaller international schools where some colleagues who had particular educational requirements sent their children. But overall, the great majority of the children were at HKIS (Hong Kong International School) and that was an excellent school.

In conjunction with a Catholic school, Dr. Liang also sponsored a lavish "Respect the Elderly" day celebration each year for several hundred people, with performances by the students and impressive prizes for the elderly attendees, ranging from rice cookers to televisions. Certainly Hong Kong has a special culture. We attended once with my own parents, and I got an unexpected call to deliver a speech and then hand out the prizes in the "lucky draw."

2001-12 – Call to the stage -- respect the Elderly Day, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR. Benefactor Thomas Liang on the left, my mother Joan on the right. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Okay. Now, as the management officer, did you have a human resources officer under you?

ANANIA: Yes. In fact, this was another area where we had made some great progress. I mentioned that Jeanine Jackson had been in the position, so when I got there, everything was running very well. We had excellent FSNs in the section who were very efficient. The new HRO was Bruce Burton, also a management generalist who went on to have a very interesting career and recently retired. Bruce did a number of important things. One of them was – and this is something that is a real weak point for a lot of places – improve the FSN retirement system. The money had been invested with the American International… What is it? AIA? The American International Group? Anyway, it was a large American insurance company that almost went bankrupt in the great financial collapse of 2008. Somehow, it was resurrected and has been sold. I think it still has the name, but it's a different company now.

Hong Kong was a major financial center, with many international firms represented. AIA was the company that managed our FSN retirement funds, but they were very complacent. They didn't offer very much in the way of service directly to the employees or education. Hong Kong passed a new law that required that all employers – I think all employers over a certain size – to establish retirement systems. It was sort of like a 401K, where a financial company would provide a retirement scheme and money would be paid into it. It would be in the name of the employee, and it was portable. I'm trying to think of what they called it there. I can't remember offhand.

But at any rate, we went through and did a very large RFP (request for proposal) and attracted bids from many very high-quality companies, including some American companies. Fidelity was a major player in that market, and they were one of the bidders. They put in a strong bid, but we ended up going with a German bank, Kommerzbank. We vastly improved the retirement financial prospects for our FSNs, because in addition to

Kommerzbank's fees being lower, they also offered in-person training sessions for our staff to explain to them the investment opportunities that they would have. They offered a variety of mutual funds, including stock funds with US and other international holdings. They explained why our Hong Kong Chinese colleagues, who were very conservative in their investment choices, might want to invest in something other than the equivalent of Hong Kong Treasury, and why they might want to diversify their investments via stock mutual funds.

I hope that many of our FSNs did that and stuck with it. If they did, they made out very well. Unfortunately, at many of our posts, we don't have such opportunities for FSNs. The State Department, for various bureaucratic reasons, can only invest money on behalf of our FSNs in the very safest T (Treasury) bills, which return almost nothing. For that reason, we have a lot of massively-underfunded retirement schemes around the world. Periodically, regional bureaus have to bail out these funds, providing extra money to fund the pensions. This was and remains a big problem for the State Department.

Q: While you were there, did you have to deal with human resources problems? Were there people who were having conflicts in the workplace or other issues that required either counseling or actually sending somebody home?

ANANIA: There were some relatively minor issues like that, but again, Hong Kong was kind of the dream job. You always thought, "Gee, if everything lined up well, how wonderful life could be." That really was Hong Kong. We had strong people in most positions. We had good local staff, and they were very experienced, and they knew what they were doing. So, pretty much, no. I can think of a few exceptions and we were very careful to document issues and work with the employee to ensure their performance improved. I did have one or two low-performers among the management team, and their evaluations reflected that. But they were outnumbered by the many, many colleagues who deservedly earned awards. I nominated several for Department-level awards, and even won myself for "Innovation in the Use of Technology."

That was also the closest I've ever come to a nine to five job. You just didn't need to be there beyond hours. You came in, you got your job done, and you went home.

Q: Now, for you, in this particular management job, did it offer you opportunities to travel, teach a course, go to Guangzhou, or so on?

ANANIA: I did a little bit of that. I went up to Beijing and worked with Ray Boneski, who was the management counselor up there. As I mentioned, we had China Net and we did a variety of things for them. We also hosted the China management officer conference. They had their own internal management conference, and we did that at the Peninsula Hotel; they were very happy with that, as they should have been. Again, it was easier for all of them to come to Hong Kong than to go anywhere else. You could fly on international airlines. China had a rapidly expanding aviation market, but I think that for domestic flights, maybe, the quality control wasn't quite so high back then.

Again, we were working a lot on software. I was still in touch with people who were doing things related to AESOP. I participated in the AESOP conference that we hosted, and the GSO conference. At that point, when Secretary Powell came in, there was definitely a strong push to look at the State Department's management processes. I was invited back on multiple occasions to participate in conferences in the Washington, D.C. area. There was one that, for lack of a better phrase, was called the "Good Ideas Conference." They basically just brought back management officers known for innovative thinking, and also included some who were working domestically, and then they asked us, "What should we focus on?"

It might even make you laugh to think of the things we said. One of the things was, "Hey, we need access to our email when we're traveling. We should be able to log in in Washington and get our email from Hong Kong. How about when we're on the road?" I actually ended up working on some of those things, and we implemented a few of those things when I was the acting CIO (Chief Information Officer) a few years later in 2005/6.

Another thing that we were pushing for – and which is still an issue– was to establish service standards for domestic offices. Overseas, with ICASS (International Cooperative Administrative Support Services), the government introduced the concept of formal service standards. We thought the customer should actually have an expectation that service providers would do certain things in a certain period of time. Well, that just didn't apply once you came back to Washington, nor did it apply when posts were depending on Washington to provide them service. So, we were emphasizing that the good things we had been doing with ICASS really belonged in Washington as well. There should be service standards and accountability. We should have customer service surveys. That was another very useful aspect of ICASS.

Something that I used, by the way, throughout my career is looking at what your customers tell you about how you're doing, especially over time. Posts participated in ICASS surveys year after year so we could see trends and identify problem areas that were maybe persistent. Then, as a management officer – by the way, the Department changed our cone to "management" from "administrative" during this period -- you could try to work out solutions. Later on, when I was management counselor in Germany, I made several changes, pretty much based on what the customers were telling me. In addition, customers, in these surveys, could also include specific comments. I can't say that many of them were particularly useful, but occasionally people would have very pointed criticisms or recommendations that I acted on. So, I appreciated that, but again, to this day you still don't get a lot of that when you're working in Washington. We can provide some feedback via automated service request systems, but I don't get the sense that people domestically are really paying much attention or taking action based on the feedback, which is disappointing. Certainly there is no overarching survey that permits domestic employees to provide feedback on the full range of State Department services.

Q: One other major management-related event that took place while you were in Hong Kong was the integration of USIA into State. Did that affect you significantly in Hong Kong?

ANANIA: It was something, at least on the management side, that I viewed as entirely positive. Maintaining separate bureaucracies with their own vehicles and, in some cases, warehousing, with different processes and procedures and especially with separate computer networks -- again, this is something that I worked on later on -- it didn't make a whole lot of sense. Now, you could definitely argue that by subsuming USIA more directly into the State Department, this had negative consequences in terms of the work that USIA – now Public Diplomacy – is doing. I don't necessarily agree with that, but I know that especially from USIA veterans, there is still, to this day, a lot of bitterness about that. We definitely saw some of that in Hong Kong. There was the feeling that somehow, they were being enveloped and they were losing out. I'm sorry, but I just didn't see it that way. I felt like at that point, the State Department was doing well. We were well-resourced and, generally speaking, I think that's been the case ever since then.

It had clear benefits for administrative efficiency, but there was definitely dissatisfaction among more experienced USIA officers. Maybe not so much with those who were more junior at the time. I just figured that over time, that would dissipate. One of the ironic things, though, was that the USIA headquarters became a State Annex, and it got the number 44.. Well, in Hong Kong, and I gather in other parts of China… I don't speak any of the Chinese languages, but they have a lot of puns that are based on the way things sound. Certain numbers sound like things that have other resonances. Well, four is a symbol of death. So, SA (State Annex) 44 was "double death." So, there was this idea among the conspiracy theorists that this was all on purpose, in order to show that, I don't know, the State Department was killing USIA or something.

Q: That reminds me. In interviewing other people who have served in China – and some who have served in Hong Kong – every once in a while, the issue of feng shui *(Chinese geomancy) comes up. Did anything like that come to you for action?*

ANANIA: Funny you should say that. Yes. One of my colleagues from the Commerce Department apparently took this all very seriously. My memory is a bit hazy, but I seem to recall him hiring a *feng shui* master to come into his apartment. We had certain apartments that didn't face the right way or whatever, so, yes. To some degree, it could be an advantage if you didn't really care about it. There was a fellow from the South African consulate who was the acting consul general for a while. He left their diplomatic service and got a job in the private sector; his wife was… I don't know if she was a doctor, but she was a medical provider. At any rate, they were able to buy an apartment that looked out over a cemetery. It had extremely bad *feng shui*, and I think it had some kind of a negative street address number, too. So, the price was much lower, and I guess the *feng shui* issue didn't bother them. That was the only way they were able to afford this place, because of its horrendous *feng shui.*

Q: That's great. Well, my last question for you in this position is, you had mentioned being able to host a lot of conventions or meetings and so on because of the efficiency of local hotels and providers. Were there other long-term contracting issues that you had, where you made decisions that would affect the mission over several years?

ANANIA: Not particularly. One thing that happened very early on when I got there – and this had been negotiated before I arrived – was that we had a sort of nebulous title to the land that we were on, on Garden Road in central Hong Kong. Hong Kong's economy is heavily based on real estate, and the rules that pertain to real estate have a lot to do with the companies that prospered in Hong Kong. The reason was that all the land in Hong Kong, with a couple of exceptions, was considered Crown land. So, you didn't actually own the land; you had the right to use the land. This caused a lot of issues in Hong Kong.

But some of the original companies, the Hongs, were business groups that went way back to the middle of the 1800's, I guess, when Hong Kong became part of the British Empire. Some of these groups acquired land early on that was unrestricted in use. I don't know if they had time limits, but if they did, it was 999 years or something like that. It was essentially unlimited. Thus were born the fortunes of companies that were still there and thriving in the year 2000. What they could do was, any time they wanted to, they could knock down their building and build a bigger building.

That's the history of Hong Kong. You start off with little buildings, and by the time we were there, you had all of the 50+ story towers. Well, anyone else who wanted to put a new building in had to pay the government for the value of the land based on what they were about to use it for. So, let's say there was a single-family home – not that there were many – in Hong Kong. You couldn't sell the land to a big company that was going to put up a skyscraper because you didn't own the land. You would only get the value of the land as a single-family home, and the government would get the additional value of the land for the 50-story office tower. So, if you had some land that didn't have any of these restrictions, you had a huge advantage over everybody else.

So, some of these long-term companies – Jardine Matheson was one, Hutchison Whampoa – had thrived and thrived because they had this gigantic advantage based on the value of their land. That was still visible in Hong Kong when we were there and probably is today, as well. Another thing that was problematic was that especially in the post-war period, Hong Kong was a place that had a lot of industry and a lot of production of things – clothing, what have you. But by the time we got there, most of that had disappeared because China, mainland China, was now the low-cost producer, as well as many other places in Asia like Vietnam, Thailand, wherever.

So, a lot of these industrial buildings were sitting essentially vacant, and you would say, "Well, how is it that that could happen?" The value of land was sky-high. The value of apartments was sky-high. Hong Kong Chinese were almost obsessed with trying to acquire some sort of property that they could own, even if it was a condo. The reason the buildings sat vacant was basically twofold. One, what I just said. The owners didn't necessarily have a huge financial incentive to sell, because it would be the government, not they, which would receive the windfall. But there was also the fact that the rights to these buildings had often been broken up. They didn't have primogeniture. So, sometimes you might have 10 different owners who had inherited rights to these buildings. Trying to get them all to agree… Again, when there wasn't necessarily a huge financial incentive, they couldn't agree. So, you had a lot of undeveloped areas that were run-down and not necessarily even very far away from the central district. That was a quirk of Hong Kong.

Another observation was that during this period, conservative institutions in the U.S. like the Heritage Foundation used to laud Hong Kong for its commitment to capitalism. They would uphold Hong Kong as a paragon. "This is the great stuff that can happen if you don't hold back private industry," etcetera. To some degree, that was true, because there weren't a lot of barriers to setting up a new company or exporting or doing various things. Again, rule of law was critical. That was the reason why there were so many major financial companies that had large operations in Hong Kong. The rule of law was strong, and in China, that was definitely not the case. But, on the other hand, Hong Kong was also a socialist paradise. The government owned all the land, and a major percentage (I think well over 50% of the population) lived in government-owned apartment buildings that were heavily subsidized.

Thus, there was also a very strange property market. If you lived in one of these subsidized apartments, you weren't paying very much, but you probably also had a tiny little apartment. If you wanted to move and actually buy something, the price might be 10 times higher. It was a gigantic leap to go from the government-subsidized places to the free market. The lucky ones were people who actually had government-subsidized places in very nice buildings, because there were some of those, too. In fact, a very close friend of ours was a Hong Kong police officer who was originally from England. He and his wife had a very nice apartment, and that block of apartments was reserved for government employees. It was an ample space. It had parking and was on the side of a hill, so it had a view. It was fantastic.

If you were lucky enough to have that, then you were pretty well set. But for a lot of Hong Kong Chinese, you were living in pretty dismal neighborhoods of high-rise blocks, probably on the Kowloon side, across the harbor from Hong Kong proper, or in the New Territories further north. The other thing was that the government used these property rights to also enrich other institutions. So, the subway system -- the MTR (Mass Transit Railway) – was a very good and efficient subway system. One of the writers in one of the local papers used to say that it was masquerading as a mass transit company, because it really was a property company.

What happened was, whenever they were going to extend the line, where their stations were, they had the land rights. So, they could sell the land rights to developers – or rent it to the developers – who were then going to put up apartment blocks and shopping malls and whatever adjacent to these stations. So, again, it was a very socialistic economy in major respects. Domestically, that's the way it was – I would say it was socialism. Outwardly looking, yes, it was very freewheeling and capitalistic.

Q: Interesting. So, you're there for three years, and there are all of these activities. As you approach the end of the tour, what are you thinking about in terms of your next *assignment? At this point, when you're just about at the end of your Hong Kong tour, where are you in terms of promotion? What grade are you?*

ANANIA: I was promoted to FS-1 while I was in Berlin, and Hong Kong was an FS-1 position. Let's see. I think I was promoted to OC (Officer Counselor) in 2002. So, it was just as I was transferring. As I mentioned, I was asked to come back and run the Office of Management Policy, at that point, so I didn't really bid, except I suppose on that one position.

Q: Oh, I see.

ANANIA: I don't know if we had already extended and then curtailed the 4th year, but I hadn't intended to bid, anyway, and then I was asked to come back.

2002-2005 - Office of Management Policy, Office or Rightsizing the USG Overseas Presence, State Department

Q: Okay.

ANANIA: So, I did. Secretary Powell came in with some very well-defined priorities for the State Department. This is an excellent lesson that, unfortunately, other secretaries of State have not learned. Owing to the bureaucracy of our own executive branch but, more importantly, owing to the way that the legislative cycles work – especially the budget cycle – if you don't come in on day one knowing what you want to do, you're probably not going to be able to implement anything that requires the movement of resources. The budget, when you first come in, has already been set by the preceding Congress. So, you've lost that. You need to work a year or two out. That's pretty much what he did.

Some of the things that they decided that they wanted to do related to rebuilding the human resources of the State Department, but particularly the Foreign Service. He also made it clear the Department would concentrate on facilities and security and to improve the situation with IT. Basically, they were able to do that. Secretary Powell arrived with great, bipartisan credibility. He was regarded as an excellent manager and leader, and he was able to work with Congress. Congress, at that point, I think, had figured out that cuts overall to the government but especially to the State Department had gone too far in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. We needed to rebuild. It was clear that the State Department couldn't fill its positions; we had vacancies around the world. We didn't have the so-called "training float" to permit us to assign employees to long-term training without leaving staffing gaps

Q: Take a second to describe what training float is.

ANANIA: First of all, the State Department just had outright vacancies. I don't know how many positions we had overseas, but we could only fill, let's say, 90% of them at any given time. Well, in addition, as people are transferring from one position to another, they're supposed to get training. It could be professional training, but very importantly, it should also be language training, which typically would be six months or a year. For hard languages, it would be two years. The problem is that if you've got vacancies in the field, there's a tremendous incentive to push people into the field without getting them training. Powell, having come from a military environment originally, understood the value of training, number one, but he also knew that you have to have enough people to both fill the positions and have people sitting at FSI or wherever they were receiving their training.

So, that was the training float. If you have 100 positions, you need to have 110 people. The State Department definitely did not. We're sitting and doing this interview at FSI – that was also a big emphasis, building up FSI. If you're going to hire a bunch of new people – which we did – you have to train them as well. I mentioned earlier on his emphasis on the importance of leadership and management training. He terminated the so-called Senior Seminar, which reached just a few tens of State Department people every year. The idea was that now we would have mandatory leadership and management training at every step of an employee's career. Largely, I think that's been successful. So, that was a big change as well. He also had put the Internet on the desktop, which was a boon for productivity but also exposed our network to threats – threats that realized themselves in very negative ways over subsequent years. So, that wasn't an unalloyed victory.

Q: Right. Now, you're coming back to this position. Describe what the position is in the hierarchy. Where did you fit?

ANANIA: The way the State Department works has obviously changed a lot over time. At one point, the Office of Management Policy had been a real powerhouse where policies actually were considered and disseminated. Previously, the undersecretary for Management had had something called the Office of the Comptroller, which now would be the Chief Financial Officer. That was part of M (Management). It was M/COMP. At that time, there had been a number of management analysts who were working in M/COMP to support M. That was very important because the M family is very diverse, including Administration, Consular Affairs, Diplomatic Security, Information Resource Management, Human Resources and other offices. Originally, the IT function was under the Bureau of Administration, but then it became its own Bureau of Information Resource Management.

Trying to coordinate the efforts of these different bureaus was quite challenging because they each had their own institutional goals and objectives that didn't necessarily line up well with what you would call enterprise goals and objectives. So, in the earlier days with M/COMP, the Management analysts worked in M. But then there was a decision made to create a new bureau for resource management. I think it was called FMP, in the first place – Finance and Management Policy. It later became the Bureau of Resource Management, RM, then was split into two parts. They keep changing the names.

But at any rate, the analysts went along with the financial folk, leaving M with no analysts. That was a major problem, in my view. We went through a period when there were some undersecretaries for Management who weren't necessarily particularly good managers and didn't really know much about the State Department. We started to bring in people who were not in the Foreign Service, a trend that has only continued over the years, with some exceptions, as new administrations put more and more political appointees in lower and lower positions. Certainly they always filled some positions as undersecretaries and assistant secretaries, but over the years we've seen more in DAS and other positions.

We were lucky when Secretary Powell came in because he actually believed in the importance of management and knew the importance to the institution of doing things for the long-term. He brought in a trusted former military colleague of his, Grant Green, who had worked with Secretary Powell before. So, even though Undersecretary Green didn't have any State Department experience, he was certainly well-versed in the U.S. government and, very importantly, very attuned to what Secretary Powell wanted. However, by this point, the Office of Management Policy had been reduced in size to just a handful of people, all civil servants. Two of them, at least, had formerly been in the Foreign Service, so they had had overseas experience.

But some of the duties and roles had been pushed off to other bureaus. For instance, traditionally chief of mission authority is extremely important for the State Department to maintain order at overseas missions. That function had been deemed to be of little importance and that part of the office had been moved to the Bureau of Human Resources, which wanted nothing to do with it. So, when I came in, we were a very small group, and we had some very major tasks to perform.

Q: When you came in, you still had a few civil servants who had been there for a while and had an institutional memory and the ability to think back and say, "Oh, yes. We tried it this way once," or, "In previous years, there were problems because of this." Was your office mostly Civil Service or mostly Foreign Service? What was the breakdown?

ANANIA: It was all Civil Service other than myself when I came in, and when I left, it was very different. It was much bigger. We actually had two offices, at that point – one was Management Policy, and the other was called Rightsizing the U.S. Government's Overseas Presence. So, we had M/P and M/R. I headed both and I ran them as one organization. The reason for that was, number one, Secretary Powell had brought in a new spirit of management. But second, and very importantly, President Bush had something called the President's Management Agenda where the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, was pushing government-wide initiatives that all U.S. government departments and agencies were supposed to make progress in, as well as some specific initiatives that pertained only to certain government departments and agencies.

Let's see. What were those? Human Capital was definitely one. E-Government was another. M/P, my office, was the lead for the State Department. So, a lot of what I was doing was actually responding to OMB and trying to feed that bureaucratic beast. I can't say that OMB managed the process well. They set up a stoplight system where they would grade agencies on how they were doing, but also on their level of effort. Part of their problem was that they kept, as the expression goes, changing the goalposts. They would set some goal for an agency, you would reach the goal, and then they would say, “Oh, no. Now we have a whole bunch of other goals.” So, you’ve reached green, but now you’re red.

This was a kind of Lucy putting the football in front of Charlie Brown exercise. In part, though, this was positive, because it did show that the administration was serious about management. They did make some advances, here and there. Another PMA item was that they wanted to foster competition in contracting, and they wanted to make the government more efficient by exposing it to possible services being acquired from outside of the government. That didn’t come to much, in large part because such a high percentage of services – such as cleaning, grounds care and security -- were already outsourced, but it generated a huge amount of effort on the part of U.S. government agencies. That was a politically controversial thing; the Democrats didn’t necessarily like it. But at any rate, a lot of what we were doing was responding to OMB.

At this point, also, the Congress was very much engaged in a lot of issues related to foreign policy and related to the way the overall U.S. government was working overseas. So, one of the initiatives, which was not a government-wide initiative, was called “rightsizing.” Theoretically, OMB was supposed to be in charge of this, but to them, being in charge meant telling the State Department to do it while not actually giving us much in the way of guidance as to what they wanted done.

This was particularly problematic because, as I used to point out with little success, it was one thing to say that the State Department should do things, but quite another to actually give us the authority to do it. The State Department did not have the authority to tell the Department of Defense how many people should be overseas. Now, we had certain mechanisms, first and foremost chief of mission authority, where the chief of mission, under NSDD 38, had the theoretical authority to determine the size, scope, and composition of her mission. However, in practice, it didn’t necessarily work that way. There would be large initiatives, say DHS (Department of Homeland Security), for instance, that were unstoppable bulldozers. They would say, “We’re going to put another 50 people overseas to have X initiative.”

Yes, you had to work through the bureaucratics of getting the NSDD 38 request out there and the position authorized and everything else, but in practice, the chief of mission didn’t have a lot of leeway to say, “Hey, this doesn’t make any sense here.” You could delay it, but it was probably going to happen. The Congress – especially some of the staff, and particularly the Republican staff in the Senate – were very interested in rightsizing. There was a feeling that there were too many people overseas. The Government Accountability Office did some extensive reports on the whole subject, and they pointed out some very real problems.

As I mentioned before, things with obvious duplication… I mentioned that when USIA was absorbed into the State Department, we eliminated a lot of duplication. Well, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) continued to do many of the same things. In fact, in GAO (Government Accountability Office), one of their reports had a picture of a warehouse complex in Cairo where, in the same warehouse, there was a fence down the middle of it. USAID was managing their own warehouse. They had their own software, their own locally engaged staff, their own trucks. It was pretty obvious that this was not the most efficient thing to be doing.

So, we started to get involved in a lot of issues like that. Particularly with USAID, Undersecretary Green set up something along with the then-head of USAID, Andrew Natsios, that was a State-AID Joint Management Council. M/P became the secretariat for State. In addition, OMB was putting a lot of pressure on agencies to address the laws regarding management of information technology. It was grading agencies very strictly, especially on things having to do with what you might call IT security or information assurance, as is the more technical phrase for that. State was really taking a lot of hits. We had some real problems with the management of the IRM Bureau, at the time. The CIO was ultimately moved out. So, we were extremely busy.

Another big thing was, as I mentioned, Secretary Powell wanted to concentrate on improving our facilities and our security overseas – the security of the personnel and of the facilities. That was a huge effort. He brought in Charles Williams, a former general from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He renamed the organization, which had been the Foreign Buildings Office, "Overseas Building Operations (OBO)" and it eventually became a separate bureau, separate from administration. We implemented a number of new initiatives. We started something that, I think, General Williams might have originally dreamed up. It was called Capital Security Cost Sharing. Up until then, all construction of overseas embassies had been funded through the State Department.

The State Department appropriators were not keen to give the State Department a lot of money to build buildings in general, but certainly even less so because the cost of the buildings was driven by non-State agencies who had the majority of the personnel in many places. The system had just broken down. We just weren't getting any money appropriated. We'd be lucky if we got money for one building every couple of years. In fact, in the wake of the East Africa bombings, there was a major report issued by, I believe, Admiral Crowe – I think we had hundreds of printed copies stacked in our offices in M/P – and there was definitely a realization that our facilities were at risk. New laws were passed requiring that physical security standards be upgraded substantially, that we would have setback from streets, that different kinds of windows would be installed that wouldn't be destroyed so easily with bombs.

It went on and on. Capital Security Cost Sharing was the State Department's attempt –ultimately successful– to overhaul the way we funded the construction process. It was actually very similar to what we had done when implementing the ICASS system.

Previously, we had had a system called FAAS – Foreign Affairs Administrative Support – and the idea was that the State Department would fund all of the basic administration at a post, while other agencies would only be charged some marginal fee. It didn't work at all. It was very difficult to tell what was ICASS or FAAS, and as other agencies sent more people overseas, the budget didn't keep up. At any rate, because other agencies were growing rapidly and the State Department's budget was not growing much, if at all, in real terms, we were becoming increasingly stressed. We couldn't support all of these people. The decision was then made to transition to something called ICASS, where basically now for most cost centers, all agencies share reasonably fairly in the cost. You would look at using figures to determine how much people should pay. So, if you had a motor pool, you could assign the miles driven for each agency to that agency. If you had a warehouse full of furniture and were distributing furniture all over town, well, you could count up the number of houses or apartments for each agency and distribute the costs.

ICASS was implemented in about 1996, during the period when I was in Abu Dhabi. It started up then and then went on from there successfully after initial bumps. So, capital security cost sharing was similar to that. It did require a bit of bureaucratic effort, and I worked very closely with OBO and Director Williams. It took a lot of selling and, in some cases, arguing. On the Hill, our appropriators were definitely in favor of it, but appropriators for other agencies were sometimes less enthusiastic. Some other agencies were very concerned that this would drive them to abandon overseas positions if they had to actually pay a fee.

The idea was, in fact, that there would be a fee charged for every overseas position – not just in the places where we were building buildings. This was being done on a global scale and was a very intelligent idea that ultimately did work. It was not without problems, because this meant that the appropriators for all the agencies that were overseas – which is pretty much all agencies – were going to have to include money in the budgets of these agencies. If they didn't, then yes, there really was a risk that the agencies would have to withdraw positions. In some cases, that happened. Unfortunately, the Foreign Commercial Service – for various complex reasons – has receded considerably from its overseas positions, which I would say is a real pity. We have lost ground to a lot of other countries as a result of that. But in fact, CSCS was completely consistent with our rightsizing goals, because it forced agencies to factor in the full cost of overseas positions when they decided how many positions to maintain.

Q: Now, we'll go back to the question of chief of mission authority later in your career as you move up. But this is also the period when Secretary Powell is there, and they had to scramble the CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority) to Iraq. There was a very large group of people who had to work very quickly. Did that impact your office? Did you have to do any support for that large effort?

ANANIA: Yes, definitely. I'm very glad you raised that. But before we get to that, I am going to talk a little bit more just to tie up the loop. Because of the interest in rightsizing – there was a presidential management agenda item on rightsizing – and because the Congress was very interested in rightsizing, this dovetailed very well with some of the other things that I was doing. Capital Security Cost Sharing we definitely looked at as a very important element of rightsizing. If you didn't charge agencies the full cost of being overseas, they would tend to put people overseas who didn't need to be there. So, that was one thing. We mentioned chief of mission authority; that had been pushed off to HR. But the HR front office wasn't really interested in it.

The reason it had been pushed off was that NSDD 38 was viewed as merely a useless bureaucratic process by which agencies would fill out a request, it would go to the chief of mission, and it would come back. It wasn't thought that there was any management or leadership necessary. That was not true. In fact, as rightsizing came along, chief of mission authority became increasingly important, and I was the one who was actually directing, to some degree, their activities. Those were largely bureaucratic in nature, but they weren't supposed to be. In the Office of Management Policy, we had to clear everything that went to the undersecretary.

So, when they would be doing their annual reports or sending cables or things, we often had to clear. I didn't clear a lot of the things because it was clear that they were just dealing with it as a bureaucratic exercise, which it was not. So, when the Congress decided that we should start an Office of Rightsizing the U.S. Government's Overseas Presence, perhaps the longest office name in the State Department's history, we did create that office, and we absorbed back into it the folks who had moved over to HR. We also expanded it, because we had a lot more duties. We started to have to do rightsizing exercises to justify the size of overseas missions. Again, this went very much to embassy construction. The OIG (Office of the Inspector General) and GAO had pointed out – very correctly – that we were building wrong-sized embassies based on projections that were not done according to any standard methodology.

Agencies were basically… If we were going to build a new embassy somewhere, the post would say how big it should be, and agencies might say, "We'd like to expand and add three more Agriculture positions," or whatever. They'd build it into the plans. But those agencies didn't have to pay for it. They might, in fact, never even establish those positions. So, we were building embassies, in some cases, that were way too big, though in other cases we were building embassies that were way too small because requirements would change during the many years it took to plan, fund and construct the facilities.

Of course, the world changes. So, in Central America in the 1970's and 1980's we had major efforts to combat communism. We had built up big AID programs and all other kinds of things. We built all these embassies, and then maybe we didn't care about those areas so much after all. The conflicts receded, and we were left with these big, empty embassies. So, at any rate, these things really – to use a management buzzword that was used a lot, previously – had synergy. We had a lot of synergy in M/P and M/R. All of these issues did interconnect.

Q: Okay. Just as a very quick example, I was in Budapest in the mid-2000's – 2005 to 2008. We were building a new embassy, and I was in the Public Affairs section. I was just one of the people who worked in the section – I was a cultural officer – but I had to sit down with the blueprints with my boss and the DCM and talk through every possibility we might need over the next 10 or 20 years for our office. We really gave it a lot of attention and explained what the needs are, what the needs would likely be because of *growth or the need for more space for desktop publishing, supporting major visits with swing space, and on and on. So, it was a very real thing in the field that did get a lot of attention.*

ANANIA: Yes. That goes, actually, well beyond the planning for the positions. That was Capital Security Cost Sharing. Basically, what it said was, "We're going to have a unified process that's going to be consistent. When we make projections for who's going to be overseas, the agencies are going to start paying for those positions as soon as that gets locked in." So, that added a lot of discipline. We were also going to follow consistent formats, so that if the OIG or the GAO goes over to OBO, they can pull out of the files, "This is why we built this building as this size. Maybe when it finally got built it wasn't the right size, but here's why we did it. We had a process, we had a procedure." That didn't exist. In fact, I remember one weekend at home writing a short plan for how posts would do these projections. We fleshed it out and that was the initial policy.

What you just described goes also into the issue of design. General Williams also went with something called the standard embassy design. The idea was that you weren't going to spend so much money – and, very importantly, you weren't going to spend so much time – designing architectural wonders at every different post. You were going to have a standard design. Yes, the exterior could be altered to meet local circumstances, but the basic design was going to be the same. The first iteration of that, I would say, was not a very good design, which is really unfortunate. We've got some posts that are saddled with that. But over time, they refined it, and generally speaking, it's improved a lot. No doubt, it saved us many – probably hundreds of millions – of dollars. So, that was going on at the same time.

Also on the issue of rightsizing, we were working directly with different agencies. DHS had just been formed a few years earlier; it was chaotic. Unfortunately, I think it remains chaotic, in many ways. They had a lot of issues with their management of overseas positions. They had never submitted NSDD 38 requests to note the changes of agency and position. Our database was full of absolutely horrendous data that was useless, at that point because it documented positions belonging to obsolete agencies, and in many cases the duties of the positions were different. Despite the clear requirements of NSDD38, DHS hadn't bothered to document and request authorization for these positions and their new roles. It was very unfortunate. That was one of the bureaucratic things that State office was supposed to be doing, keeping track of the positions, which it definitely was not doing in an effective way. We tried very hard, and we did engage with DHS. They had an Office of International Affairs that "got it" and was helpful, but the key leadership of the operational parts of the organization didn't get the job done in several areas.

For managing overseas positions, we wanted to convince them that we should do an overall scrub of all the positions and really look at that as an opportunity to examine what they were doing overseas. We did conduct a review and reconciliation of the overseas positions, but that was more of an accounting effort, vice getting to the more important issue of what the roles and responsibilities would be. At least DHS did name senior DHS representatives at posts so that chiefs of mission would have a single "belly button" to talk to. Unfortunately, this proved to be more of a theoretical benefit than practical because the senior DHS rep didn't necessarily have authority to direct the actions of the other DHS offices.

I also wrote up some letters for Undersecretary Green, who sent these letters with various recommendations, including one that suggested that DHS should have its own Foreign Service. The core reason why DHS was created was because of a perception, often true, that the various agencies of the U.S. government (such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service – INS – and U.S. Customs) that were related to what are now DHS activities were not coordinating together. Unfortunately, the same problem occurred in DHS because people brought in a lot of their old institutional objectives and biases, and they weren't working well together. One of the problems was that they had civil servants overseas. Well, civil servants are not managed the same way the Foreign Service is. We're used to having a tour of duty and then bidding on jobs and going somewhere else. Civil servants would get parked overseas, and then there was no mechanism by which they could get another job. They basically had to compete for jobs in other places.

So, in Hong Kong we had a fellow who was originally sent out there by Immigration and Naturalization Services. He'd been there for perhaps six years. It wasn't because he particularly wanted to stay there, although they liked it; anytime he wanted to get a job, he had to just apply for it in whatever new DHS office was there. So, not having a Foreign Service also meant that there were not a lot of institutional incentives for people to be trained, especially in languages.

So, DHS was theoretically taking on new duties – for instance, for visa oversight, per a law from Congress that was not fleshed out or funded – and they would quote the law and say, "Hey, we're in charge of this." But then I would ask them, "Okay. You want to send people overseas to do this. What are they going to do? Are they just going to stand behind the consular officers and look over their shoulders all day?" They could never answer that question. During that period, the Department, probably Secretary Powell, fought off an effort to remove responsibility for visa issuance from the State Department and move it to DHS.

In the meantime, they had a mandate to put people overseas, but they didn't have the budget to do it, and they basically had no clue as to what the duties would actually be. They did put some people overseas, and it was kind of a waste, which was really a pity. They didn't establish a Foreign Service, which was also a pity. What's the point of sending a DHS officer to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia if they don't speak Arabic? There was no provision for them to learn how to speak Arabic. There was also an institutional obtuseness about roles and responsibilities. There was an assumption that as federal law enforcement officials they would be empowered to conduct investigations in other countries, not exactly kicking in doors, but investigating companies and individuals. That wasn't realistic, and the regional security officers at many posts were already covering that activity to the extent they could gain cooperation with local authorities. That was an extremely frustrating and negative experience. We just couldn't get over that hump.

Some of the political leadership at DHS… I sometimes got the impression they were more focused on their own political ambitions than on actually making that agency work. Asa Hutchinson was one senior leader who became governor of Arkansas. It wasn't that they didn't have enormous management challenges – there were enormous management challenges. But they didn't address them effectively, or even really engage on the issues we were trying to help them resolve. Okay, so, enough about rightsizing.

We'll switch over to the invasion of Iraq and the Coalition Provisional Authority. Yes, so, early on we decided, after we invaded Iraq and we were now the "conquerors" of Iraq, the U.S. was going to run the country.

The U.S. set up the Coalition Provisional Authority, which was a temporary U.S. government agency, under the law, this was possible. You could set up an agency, which then had its own authority to hire people as government employees and do many other things. There were, obviously, many controversial decisions that were taken during that period by the CPA, but among the ones that have probably never been discussed was the decision on how to organize it. The people out there were drawn from many U.S. government agencies. They were Americans hired on very short notice who sometimes had no idea what it was to work in a government position.

But, of course, there were a lot of people from DOD, and there were a lot of people from the State Department and other Foreign Services. So, they could have, at that point, decided, "Hey. We're going to run this by DOD standards," or, "We're going to run this as if it were an embassy." That later would have made a lot of sense, because ultimately you figure that it's going to be an embassy. But they did not do that. They decided, "We're our own thing. We're CPA. We're proud. We're going to just make it all up as we go along." So, they had no policies. They had no software. They just winged it.

It was just chaotic. That's the only word I can come up with. So, the State Department was sending off, USAID was sending off, Commerce was sending off, and other non-foreign affairs agencies were sending people over there. They were just being detailed out there, and on the ground, we had State Department senior management people – Pat Kennedy was one of them – who were trying to make sense of all of this. But there were no preexisting structures.… It was chaotic, that's all I can say. At some point, I was sent out there – I was still in the Office of Management Policy – as part of an interagency team that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld wanted to send out. We were there to determine what the size of this monster should be.

That was an extremely interesting group. We were a motley band of some Civil Service, some Foreign Service, some DoD, some State, and then a bunch of people who were private Americans. Some of them had had experience with DOD; some hadn't. We were told, basically, that we should go around and interview all of the different sections of the CPA. I was relatively low on the totem pole, so I went around and was interviewing some of the lesser… What did we call them? The minister advisers. The CPA was officially in charge of the Iraqi ministries and the CPA assigned advisers to help with oversight. But there were so few of them, that this was mostly nominal. So, the power ministries, if you will, would be like Defense, Energy, Foreign Affairs, and what have you.

CPA had minister advisers – who were often people just hired… I wouldn't say off the street, but almost – and some of them were very erudite people -- who were supposed to go over there and tell the Iraqis how to reform their ministries. We went out and we interviewed these people. I wasn't doing the power ministries. I was doing education or what have you. It was a pretty sad tale, because of course, we had devastated the country and the infrastructure. In many cases, we had bombed the ministries, so their job was literally to find some place that was out of the rain. Not that there was much… Well, actually, it was raining while I was there. You know, they didn't have computers. They barely had desks and chairs.

Some of these ministries had enormous tasks, because under Saddam Hussein, Iraq had been suffering tremendously from international sanctions and had not been able to invest in infrastructure. So, the Ministry of Health and hospitals were in terrible condition; the Ministry of Education and the schools were in terrible condition. So, there were a lot of very well-meaning minister advisers who were out there, but in many cases, they were out of their depths. Alternatively, they weren't out of their depths and they knew exactly what the problems were, but there was nothing much they could do about it. After all, the Iraqis were…

Again, the Iraqis supposedly weren't independent, but they were still kind of running things. So, my top-level conclusion, when we came back and wrote a paper – I don't think my text was ever particularly used – what I wrote was basically, hey, this is ridiculous. Either we need exponentially more people out there if you really think we're supposed to run this place and reform these ministries, or we're just wasting our time. There's no way that, even with what looked like a large CPA mission to us, there were anywhere near enough people to actually get the job done. Especially when you had all the issues related to how we had hired. We had people who didn't speak Arabic, people who didn't even have any experience in the NEA region, maybe some who didn't even have overseas experience.

The joke was that Saddam Hussein had had a Republican guard. The palace that we took over and used as CPA headquarters was called the Republican Palace. So, the joke was, "Hey, they don't call it the Republican Palace for nothing." We had hired a bunch of people with strong ties to the Republican Party who were ideologically very keen to get out there and fix all of Iraq's problems, but who really were just not up to the job. It was a sad experience. But it did drive home to me the importance of things that we needed to fix for the State Department. When President Bush decided to return sovereignty of Iraq to Iraq and to turn CPA into an embassy in a relatively quick period, I was able to do several things that have had a lasting impact through today on the way we support these posts in warzone areas.

I mentioned that at the Office of Management Policy, we had taken on the task of managing the rightsizing of the U.S. government's overseas presence. The General

Accounting Office, as it was then called – I think it's now the General Accountability Office, still GAO – had issued a number of reports. In there, they put forward what they considered a framework for how we should consider what rightsizing is. They concluded that we should look at mission, security, and cost, and they had not prioritized those. But then it was up to us in the Office of Management Policy to better define what rightsizing was.

I found that was actually a very useful framework, but not if all three were considered to be equal. They weren't. We would not have been in Iraq unless the mission was the most important thing. It was very dangerous and very expensive. So, if they were all equal, we should have just closed the mission and left. This was true in many other places, as well. So, mission, security, cost – we're going to put mission first. When you started looking at what we were doing in Iraq at that point, what immediately struck me was that because the CPA had decided to do it all on its own, they were performing a lot of functions there that didn't need to be performed there. People were risking their lives to be out there so that they could fill out their Designation of Beneficiary forms or wait around two days while we created their user account on the computer network so that they could actually start to work. Those sorts of things were going on.

What I took away was, hey, we now have a modern global IT network. We can start doing things offshore. The other thing is that we can certainly do a far better job of preparing people to go overseas. What was happening was, let's say you were assigned to Bangkok, Thailand, and your next assignment is going to be Iraq. You might come through the Department for consultations, but we were basically just sending you off on your own to take care of all sorts of bureaucratic requirements like obtaining a Department of Defense common access card, which was a requirement. We would send you to different State Department offices to take care of various things and then not really finish the job, because once you got to post, you had to do the things that you typically did at a post.

This was the thing. We're a large bureaucracy, and you do things the way you do things, because you've always done things that way. I started to develop a lot of presentations, which I made multiple times on the Hill but also to other agencies and to State Department management conferences and other things, about what exactly is rightsizing. One of the things was that we should not be doing non-location-specific tasks everywhere in the world. But our management paradigm – to use another buzzword of the time – was that posts should do the maximum work possible.

This was the post-World War II paradigm where we didn't have reliable communications and it was very inexpensive to hire Germans and Italians. We acquired a bunch of big buildings at knock-down prices. So, we decided, hey, we're going to do everything here. We're going to do financial vouchers, we're going to run independent IT systems much later on. Everything is going to focus on the post. Well, that made sense in 1952, but that didn't make sense in the years we're talking about. Now we're up to like 2003. It didn't make any sense at all, but that's what we were doing. So, what I was arguing for – unsuccessfully, in terms of an overall strategy, but successfully in some piecemeal ways over time as it happened without much strategic guidance – was that we had to **flip the paradigm and say that posts should do the minimum, not the maximum.** We did a lot of work. There was another office… the assistant secretary for administration William Eaton had set up an office called the Center for Administrative Innovation – CAI. I worked very closely with them. In fact, it probably should have been part of M/P in the first place, and ultimately, it was absorbed into what has become of M/P.

They did some terrific work along with my staff. We worked very closely together, looking at what posts actually do overseas that are administrative in nature. Let's make a list of all these things, and then let's categorize it to say, "What is it that actually has to be done overseas, and what could be done somewhere else?" So, going out and looking for houses, okay, that has to be done overseas. But processing the rent payments doesn't have to be done overseas. It was that sort of thing. So, the idea was that we should do a lot less overseas. We should seek to move work to safe and secure regional centers… This was another big issue at the time, because we had acquired a very large former U.S. military hospital compound in Frankfurt. That was being converted into the consulate, and we knew we were going to have a lot of space there.

I didn't actually agree with this, but Congress thought that as long as we had all that space, we should make other offices move there. I said, "That's not exactly what rightsizing is supposed to be. If they shouldn't be overseas, they should come back to the U.S., not to Frankfurt." Often, there were regional offices in other places, but there's a reason why they're there and not in Frankfurt. Nonetheless, we embarked on an enormous effort where we required all the posts in the EUR, AF (Bureau of African Affairs), and NEA regions to catalogue all of the things that they did regionally and explain why they shouldn't come to Frankfurt. The presumption was that they should all move to Frankfurt, and not surprisingly, that didn't result in a lot of movement. It made sense to have them where they were.

Nonetheless, there was a little bit of discipline being imposed that had never been imposed before, and we did move some offices to Frankfurt. Okay, so we're talking about rightsizing and regionalization, but on a smaller scale, we're also sending hundreds of people off to Iraq. So, as I said, as we're converting over to an embassy, my office had to do a lot of work. I took the initiative to host several large gatherings for the interagency to explain to them what NSDD 38 was all about. If they were going to be at the embassy, they had to put in NSDD 38 requests. We also tried to disseminate information about what conditions were like on the ground, what people should expect, all of those things. But I had the idea that we needed to create a new office that's going to help people deploy to these places.

From the beginning, I always thought that this shouldn't just be for Iraq; it should be for other places. But it was definitely for Iraq in the first place. There was one of the M special assistants, Lisa Gamble Barker, who said, "We should call it MOMS." It became the Model for Overseas Management and Support but I think she came up with MOMS before we figured out what it was supposed to mean. We had hats made that said, "Who better to take care of you than MOMS?" We were very lucky, because my first tour in

Berlin, my HRO was a very experienced, very capable woman named Shirley Norlem, who had retired in Annapolis and agreed to come out of retirement and head up this office. I also had some people on so-called “Y” tours – people who were in between tours for one reason or another, whether it was medical issues, or their job got canceled, or who knows what it might be. I had people on Y tours who spent a lot of time and energy helping set this up.

So, the idea was that we would work with the functional bureaus to identify things that didn’t need to be done in Baghdad and that we could do for people before they went overseas. In the original iteration, we were asking people to come to MOMS for several days. It wasn’t a full week, but maybe it was four days or something like that. The idea was that they were going to come in, and we were going to have them fill out all of the paperwork they would otherwise do at an embassy overseas and take them on field trips to collect their DoD ID cards, body armor, whatever was needed. IRM was very helpful. They set up a system whereby they could create the user accounts for people, or transfer their user accounts to Baghdad, before they ever went so that the first day they could log right on.

We would also do little bus tours to Fort Belvoir to get people their DoD ID cards. I think that at various times, people also had to pick up body armor. That was a big deal, because you weren’t supposed to be wandering around without it. Once you arrived, you had to get in an unarmored bus, or get on a helicopter, and they didn’t have any body armor for you, so you had to pick up your body armor and travel with it. We spent a whole lot of time figuring out how people were going to get their body armor.

At any rate, it was a fairly small office, but we also tried to incorporate some of the things that I mentioned earlier. We wanted to have service standards, and we particularly wanted to get customer feedback. We knew that people were going to tell us where we were falling short. As it happened, we didn’t fall short in very many areas. People were ecstatic about this because it was such a lifting of burdens for them. It was not having to figure out how to get to Fort Belvoir on your own, and not having to call up five offices to try to get them to maybe give you an appointment to come by and talk to them so that you could fill out your Designation of Beneficiary forms. Whatever it might be. We brought people into a room. We had people there to coach them on how to do things.

Several years later, when I deployed to Iraq, we still had this office, and I was very pleased to get the support that I got before going out there. That was really very gratifying. We didn’t necessarily get full buy-in from some of the functional bureaus, which was disappointing, but nonetheless, we made it happen. We had to hire contractors to be the people who staffed the office, mostly. In fact, I don’t know if Shirley was hired … She might have been hired as a 3161 employee, or maybe she was in fact there through a commercial contract. I can’t even remember. But she did a terrific job, as did her team.

I should mention that section 3161 of the law (5 U.S. Code § 3161. Employment and compensation of employees) is the section that says that a temporary organization in the

U.S. government has hiring authority. The State Department… It has to be a temporary organization. It can only last a certain number of years. So, what the State Department kept doing was recycling. So, there was the CPA. Then, at some point, there was the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office – IRMO. Maybe that expired, so we spun up a new name. We could hire, as civil servants, people to go out and work at these places. That was an enormously challenging thing. The NEA-SCA/EX office was managing all this, but in M/P, I was peripherally interested in that. You were bringing in, again, people who had no experience with the State Department and perhaps no government experience. There were enormous challenges of training them, getting them out there.

Then, again, CPA had no performance management system, so they weren't necessarily getting ratings. In fact, at one point, the policy was actually not to give them ratings. Somehow, if you did this, they could sue you or I don't know what. It was very poorly managed, that whole process. The State Department, of course, didn't really know how to deal with 3161s. Our software didn't really allow us to put them into the system. So, it was very challenging.

In fact, separately with ADST, I think, I hope we're going to be doing a roundtable with Jeanine Jackson, who I've mentioned several times, and Kathleen then-Austin, later Kathleen Austin-Ferguson, two individuals who were intimately involved in these things over many years. Both served as management counselor in Baghdad. Kathleen was the NEA-SCA/EX director. Jeanine was the head of the NEA-SCA/EX Iraq Management Office at the time that I was in M/P. So, we were working pretty closely together on some of these issues going way back.

A lot of my insights really came from having put, as they say, boots on the ground – some people say wingtips on the ground – in the Republican Palace in Baghdad. I saw how chaotic it was. So, again, when the decision was made that we were going to turn this into an embassy, I automatically had some things that I thought were very important to do. They were fairly minor in the larger scale of things, but nonetheless very important in terms of properly preparing people to get out there and helping to give them a good start and get morale off on the right foot, which we had not been doing.

Q: So, today is February 11th, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Jay Anania. Jay, just to remind us, where are you at this point in the story?

ANANIA: I was, at that point, the director of the Office of Management Policy.

Q: What year?

ANANIA: That was 2002, 2003, and 2004. It was a very busy office, because again, we were essentially the extended staff of the undersecretary for Management. There were not many of us, and in our job, we had to review and coordinate a lot of things coming into M for the Undersecretary for Management. There were some outstanding special assistants up there as well, but they were more dealing with the day to day bureaucracy of it all. Dick Shinnick was the executive assistant, a senior Foreign Service officer with impeccable judgment. He had recruited me to come in for the job. He was an excellent recruiter, which is why they had these top people as specialists, several of whom went on to be very successful in their own right. Adam Namm ran OBO in an acting capacity for a while and was ambassador to Ecuador. Jennifer McIntyre was an outstanding officer who later worked for me and who is now the management counselor in Baghdad. She was also a principal officer in India and a management counselor in Cairo. So, he really brought in some good people. Sorry if that sounds like I'm patting myself on the back, but I'm meaning to compliment Dick on his astuteness.

He and I were and are very different personalities. If you met the two of us separately, you wouldn't necessarily know that we would get along, but somehow, we just always did. Even if we approached things from different angles, we tended to end up in the same spot. It was very gratifying, working so much with Dick. Technically, I reported directly to the undersecretary, but in fact, Dick and I worked out what I was going to be doing.

So, I believe I mentioned earlier that there was something called the President's Management Agenda. This was under President George W. Bush. Generally speaking, when presidents come in, they have something like this. Under President Clinton, there was "reinventing government" with Vice President Gore leading that. I would say this was probably a little bit more successful than most of those. Clay Johnson, I believe, was over at OMB as the Deputy OMB Director for Management. He was connected to the president and was coordinating this.

So, we were concentrating on the President's Management Agenda items, and at the same time, we were also concentrating on the priorities that Secretary Powell brought in, along with Undersecretary Green. Those were more limited, but they were basically trying to rebuild the human capital of the Foreign Service, to have sufficient people so that we could properly train people, to advance leadership and management training. There was a lot of effort put into expanding FSI, where we are today. He also wanted to deal with our IT, which overlapped with the President's Management Agenda. That had an e-government element to it that unfortunately was largely a failure, I would say.

Facilities was another one of Secretary Powell's major initiatives, and it was highly successful. I mentioned that with the initiative called Capital Security Cost Sharing, I worked very closely with General Williams, who was the head of Overseas Buildings Operations, the bureau formerly known as the Foreign Buildings Office, to set that up.

He came up with, I would say, a very solid scheme whereby agencies would pay on a per capita basis based on the number of positions they had overseas and the type of space they occupied. You paid more if you required CAA space – Classified Access Areas – and much less if the people you employed didn't even have desks, like a motor pool driver or a gardener or something like that. We went up on the Hill and talked to different staffers about that. That then dovetailed into the rightsizing initiative, with rightsizing the U.S. government's overseas presence. This is something that Congress was very attuned to. They felt that there were too many people overseas.

Q: We talked somewhat about the changes that needed to be done in order to make buildings congruent with the new regulations on setback, security, and all of that.

ANANIA: Yes. That's where Capital Security Cost Sharing came in, because the State Department appropriators weren't prepared and didn't have the authority to give the State Department the money to build all of these buildings. So, by doing Capital Security Cost Sharing, the idea was, originally, to spend, I think, 14 billion dollars over 10 years and to address the priorities the State Department had to replace facilities that did not meet current standards. That was controversial. Some agencies felt like it was going to really hurt them, they wouldn't get the money, and then they would have to curtail their operations overseas.

To a slight extent, that may have happened. The Foreign Commercial Service, at the time, unfortunately was not being supported by the Department of Commerce, and I'm sure this didn't help them any, that they had this new bill. At any rate, the idea behind rightsizing was that the GAO had put forward a framework for mission, security, and cost. Theoretically, OMB was supposed to be in charge of this initiative, but they had some very passive-aggressive people working at OMB. So, their idea of being in charge was basically to blame the State Department when things didn't go right, but not really give us the authority to do much. In particular, the Secretary of State has never had the authority to tell other agencies to either increase or decrease their staff overseas.

That authority, to the extent that it exists in theory, is vested with the chief of mission under NSDD 38, which comes from the Nixon White House. It gives the chief of mission authority over the size and composition of the mission and overseas staffing. It's limited to direct hire personnel, number one. Things get kind of fuzzy when you start talking about contractors, although the ambassador or chief of mission still has authority over those programs. The reality is, of course, that it's really Congress through the budget that in large part controls a lot of what's going on. If Congress decides that the Department of Homeland Security should have a Container Security Initiative, which they did, through Customs and Border Protection, well then, by God, Customs and Border Protection is going to try to steamroll their way overseas so that they can put people at ports.

Whether the chief of mission thinks that's a good idea or not, at some point it becomes kind of irrelevant. If they got the money and they got the mandate, they're going to do it. Now, of course, most chief of missions would probably be happy to have people inspecting containers. Nonetheless, this put us into a lot of unknown territory as we had to approach agencies and try to convince them to play ball with the State Department as it tried to implement this government-wide initiative. Again, Congress was very interested in reducing the size of overseas staffing, and that was certainly part of it. But in fact, as Iraq illustrated and Afghanistan did, too, in many cases, we're trying to actually expand staffing very aggressively.

As it worked out, because OMB didn't really define what it was that we were supposed to be doing, at some point, I had a sort of lightbulb moment and said, "Eureka! I know what rightsizing is." What it is, is first of all, we're going to prioritize. Mission has to come first. We wouldn't be in dangerous places if the mission didn't dictate that we be there. Also, what we should be focused on is making sure that we only have people overseas who need to be overseas.

I may have mentioned that we worked very closely with the Center for Administrative Innovation (A/CAI) to determine what functions needed to be overseas. It dovetailed perfectly with the MOMS initiative, because we were essentially taking work away from an overseas post. So, we also were given funds by the Congress – an earmark – to further study this. We did a tremendous amount of analytical work. We hired a contractor and they went around and talked to people. I was gently guiding them. We came up with a report that showed that if we were to establish a regional center to take on work that was currently being performed overseas, the best place to do it would be domestically. It just so happens that the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau has a regional center in Fort Lauderdale.

So, if you moved various tasks to Fort Lauderdale and took away the non-location-specific work of HR and financial management and some of the IT work from various posts in the WHA Bureau, you would save yourself a fortune. You could eliminate positions overseas, not pay all of those allowances, and importantly, not build such large embassies. So, the idea then became that our mantra should be, posts should do the minimum. That should be the management paradigm, whereas historically, the paradigm has always been for posts to do the maximum. Again, in the wake of World War II, with Europe in ruins, it was both inexpensive and necessary to perform many functions overseas. I remember as a post management officer in 1992 going to Embassy Athens. They had a furniture factory. They had some warehouse that we had acquired; one place or another, and they were literally building high-quality wood furniture instead of buying it via the State Department's global furniture contract. Post figured out that probably wasn't a good thing to be doing, and perhaps due to the impending loss of the property, they were finally the operation down. But we had been doing it.

One analogy I used to use was, Safeway being a major chain, I would say, "Imagine if you went to the Safeway and you went through the swinging doors into the back, and then it turned out there was a trapdoor, and you went down into the basement and saw that they had their own IT section there and their own accountants there. Imagine that was true in every single store. That's exactly what the State Department does." It made no sense then, and it makes even less sense now with dramatic advances in information technology. It's extremely frustrating how little progress we've made on that.

Q: There's just one question on reducing the number of full-time employee positions. Is reducing the number of human resource officers at posts a good idea? If you take away an American FTE (full-time employee) in that position, you're going to cascade onto, basically, the DCM or the management officer every personnel issue that comes up, no matter how small.

ANANIA: Well, to start with, a lot of posts didn't have human resource officers in the first place. So, in those cases you're talking about vastly improving the service, potentially. It didn't happen then, and it really hasn't happened since then. But the idea was… We worked this out in great detail, including how we would implement this in terms of the ICASS system so that all agencies would fairly pay for the service. One of the problems with some of the regional centers in the domestic environment is that the State Department was funding them, even though they were supporting all agencies overseas. In fact, that's one of the many things we looked into and one of several things I've done in my career where I basically saved or acquired enough extra money from the State Department to pay my salary for my entire career.

Before moving to that topic, there certainly was concern that if there were fewer American administrative personnel overseas that this could have a negative impact on flexibility, to say assign a junior GSO to be a control officer, or note taker. On the other hand, robust regional centers would remove a great quantity of work, so there would be no NEED to direct many functions. And clearly, it would be much less expensive, and in the case of dangerous posts, we would expose fewer people to risk. It would be critical that the regional centers be well staffed and funded so that regional officers could regularly travel to their posts. This is why it would require a clear State Department doctrine, so that all these resources could be analyzed and reallocated at the global level. If one or more bureaus see savings but the new regional centers aren't properly funded, support would suffer and the project would rightly be considered a failure. Sadly, this applies to many of the one-off regionalization projects regional bureaus have implemented over the years. Even when they are effective, changes of leadership and priorities have undercut their effectiveness.

Getting back to the topic of saving money, or obtaining reimbursements from other agencies. One example illustrates both opportunities. The State Department had and still has a system to refresh computer equipment and infrastructure at overseas posts on a cycle. It was called the GITM (Global Information Technology Modernization) program. This was a great improvement – originally posts had to purchase their own IT and that resulted in inconsistent standards and in many cases, inadequate IT services to employees. Under GITM, the Department was centrally funding IRM to, every three years, replace all of the PCs, monitors, and network equipment. Originally, contractors even went out to install the equipment. Later, when I was the acting CIO, I modified that policy and saved a lot of money by saying, "No, we don't need to throw the monitors and printers away after three years as long as they're working well – extend the lifecycle and send just a few replacements." That was the rare decision I could make with no obvious downside, and it saved hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Beyond the important cost savings to the taxpayer, in many cases we were sending these computers to ICASS-funded personnel, whose costs were supposed to be paid for by all agencies, but State was paying the entire bill. So, I highlighted this, and we brought it to the ICASS council in Washington. Eventually, all of those agencies started to share that cost, which was a multi-million-dollar infusion to the State Department. I don't know if it was millions of dollars every year. It probably was. It certainly was over many years; we're talking about, probably, tens of millions of dollars. That was the sort of thing that we tried to do in M/P: not just identify issues but find solutions.

Often, the functional bureaus were just too narrowly focused. IRM would say, "Well, we're getting the money, we're sending out the computers. What do we care who pays for it?" But from a State Department perspective, that's very wasteful. We got involved in many things.

Another area I'd like to talk a little bit about is the Accountability Review Board. M/P was the executive secretariat for the Accountability Review Board process, which is an interagency process. Congress had passed a law saying that the Secretary of State would have to convene an accountability review board under certain circumstances, basically when there were security incidents overseas with significant loss of life or damage to human health or to property.

This was a period when there were many security incidents and it was an extremely complex process with many factors to consider. I believe we convened a Permanent Coordinating Committee, but regardless of what it was called, we had an interagency process that included the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations) and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), as well as several State Department offices. The regional bureau in which the incident took place would be represented, typically by a deputy assistant secretary. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security was a critical member. After an incident, there was a time limit for the consideration, so we would organize the meetings and provide the background information, framing the issue to get an answer to the initial question – "Should we convene an ARB (Accountability Review Board)? " We had, in M/P, a compendium of all the incidents that had taken place that had led to an ARB committee meeting, documenting whether or not they had decided to convene an ARB. These precedents weren't always consistent, but it was helpful as a guide.

Q: Who makes the final decision?

ANANIA: The Secretary of State made the decision about whether or not to create an ARB. This board would meet, and then my office would put together a memo to Secretary Powell describing the situation and noting the recommendation. I don't quite remember if we sent memos if the PCC decided that an incident didn't meet the conditions to have an ARB. But certainly, if we recommended convening one, that went to Secretary Powell.

Q: Right, because of course, I'm not thinking of Secretary Powell or Rice; I'm thinking about Secretary Clinton and Benghazi.

ANANIA: Right. There certainly was an ARB for that one, and very famously so. That led to a lot of ill will at the State Department over the way that came out. But at any rate, you would think that it might be relatively straightforward to decide whether the criteria were met. If you thought that, you would be wrong. I'm hoping I'm using this expression well, but it is to a level of almost Talmudic analysis. In fact, the committee often sort of bent over backwards trying to figure out reasons why there should NOT be an ARB.

So, for instance, in Afghanistan, shortly after we re-occupied the historic US embassy compound, there was an incident. U.S. Marines, not the embassy Marine security guards, were manning the perimeter of the embassy compound wall, and across the street from the embassy in what is now the embassy's east compound – at some point it was called the compound across from the embassy, or "Café," now it's called the east side, because we've expanded tremendously – there used to be an Afghan military base. As reported to the Department, an Afghan soldier apparently decided he would enjoy pointing his rifle at the marines. Well, that wasn't a good idea, so they shot him and killed him.

So, on the face of it, you might think, "Loss of life, security related, we should have an ARB." Well, no. Those marines were not under chief of mission authority, so it was determined that the ARB process shouldn't apply at all if people are under DOD combatant commander authority, even though the incident took place on the embassy compound. So, we didn't have an ARB for that. Other incidents included maybe a bomb going off. Somebody might be hurt but not maimed or killed, so maybe you didn't need to have an ARB. It was that sort of thing. But nonetheless, we did have to convene several ARBs in tragic circumstances

One was for the murder of a USAID official overseas – Foreign Service, I believe – in Amman, Jordan in October 2002. Laurence Michael Foley, Sr. was assassinated coming out of his house one morning. Someone shot him and assassinated him, and the Jordanian authorities did apprehend the murderers. We organized an ARB for that. Another one was when the U.S. mission in Israel was sending people into Gaza to manage certain educational projects. Unfortunately, there was a car bomb or a roadside bomb set off that blew up one of the vehicles in a small convoy, and it resulted in multiple deaths, I believe of some of our trusted security contractors, so that met the conditions and we organized an ARB for that.

At any rate, that was a very important function that M/P carried out. We also had to manage the ARBs themselves, figure out who should be brought onto the ARB. Often we brought in very distinguished people – former ambassadors or generals or admirals – to head them up. Then, we would fill out the ARBs with, usually, retired Foreign Service people who were known for good judgment, but also generally with someone from law enforcement, intelligence, what have you. Then they would go about their business, working under their own authority.

We would typically get an active duty Foreign Service officer to be the executive secretary for each ARB, something that could be a bit challenging, but we ended up with some excellent exec secs. Often, this would be somebody who was available for whatever reason between assignments due to medical issues or whatever it might be. They would be on a Y tour, and then they could work for however many months it took. It was sort of indeterminate. Each ARB was unique, but generally they would travel to the country where the incident took place and interfere with the relevant personnel. When the ARBs completed their work, they submitted a report which went to the secretary. Sometimes, in the case of Secretary Powell, he would meet with the ARB to hear their recommendations. The ARB's put together a series of important recommendations and several translated into new policies, for instance to expand security-related training for persons assigned overseas. I didn't necessarily always agree with the recommendations, but it was a valuable process and continues to this day.

I was also very much involved in work with State IT. We had a CIO, at the time I joined M/P, who was then moved out of that position. There was a President's Management Agenda item on e-government, and OMB was being very aggressive about trying to enforce certain standards on the State Department and all other agencies for information assurance, or IT security, as most people would call it, although that is a bit of a misnomer. OMB was also scrutinizing our proposals in the budget process for major systems. What I will again mention is that M/P would often review materials before they were sent up to the undersecretary of state for management. We would also review things that were going to OMB.

What we discovered early on was that the State Department was not doing a good job of coordinating IT projects. I remember that, famously, we had the Bureau of Administration implementing a new system called the Integrated Logistics Management System – ILMS. At the same time, the Bureau of Resource Management – RM, as it was then called – was implementing a new Global Financial Management System, GFMS. If you read the paperwork (perhaps it was the OMB 365 that was the designation for the reports that we had to send it) the two bureaus submitted separate reports and each said that they were closely coordinating to make sure that as contracting personnel were procuring things in ILMS, the data would flow seamlessly into the Global Financial Management System, something that had never happened before. You had to hand type into one system and then hand type into the other system. But when you read the paperwork, it became clear: one of them said, "We're going to finish this in five years," and one of them said, "We're going to finish in two years."

That sort of thing would come up, and unfortunately, with the bureaus in charge of their budgets, was not atypical. It pointed out how poorly State was coordinating its major IT projects. We spent a lot of time on these issues, doing things a properly-empowered and capable CIO should have been doing. OMB was grading us very negatively in several of these areas, and the Congress was, as well. There was a congressman from Northern Virginia who scored agencies for information assurance and IT security. The State Department was regularly being lambasted, I think scored with "Ds." In part, it must be said that it was because the State Department was probably more honest than most. Some of the agencies that were getting high scores were basically just reporting things that weren't true and getting away with it. That was unfortunate. OMB, at the time, had a process whereby they had a chief information officer for the entire federal government. The State Department would be represented at those meetings, as well.

Q: Now, you mention that you also worked with USAID on the Millennium Challenge Corporation and PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) Relief) during this period while you were in M/P. What was the nature of that cooperation?

ANANIA: Yes. So, we set up something called the State/USAID Joint Management to address – and again, this fell within rightsizing – the obvious overlaps and inefficiencies of having two agencies providing a fairly full range of services at the same places overseas. This was very controversial. USAID viewed this as a big threat to their organizational integrity. Somehow, if they were taking services from the State Department to do their warehousing, this meant they weren't really an agency anymore, despite the fact that all of the other agencies at the post were taking the services from the State Department. If the State Department was leasing the houses and filling them with furniture, this was a threat to USAID. You can tell that I didn't think that held a lot of water.

On the other hand, some people in the State Department were quite arrogant when it came to USAID. So, we had a project early on where the two inspector generals for the agencies pointed out that both were pursuing extremely complex and expensive financial management system overhauls, and were doing this completely independently of one another. In M/P we were tasked with the issue. We hired a contractor – Grant Thornton was the name of the firm that did the work and did a good job – to basically talk to all of the people and find out if there were ways that we could integrate these systems.

During the course of that, it was clear that some of the State Department people working on this were, frankly, rather arrogant, saying, "USAID is a wholly owned subsidiary of the State Department. They should just use our financial system and basically shut up." That wasn't appropriate, because USAID had a different accounting structure and they had some things that they did that, clearly, the State Department didn't do. USAID was much more project oriented and their cost accounting requirements were different. Ultimately, the recommendation that went up the chain – I guess to Grant Green and probably the head of USAID or at least to John Marshall, who was their senior management official – was to, yes, maintain separate systems in terms of the accounting, but to have an integrated infrastructure so that the servers would be on the same platform and location. In fact, both of the agencies had already intended to use the same basic commercial software, which I think was called Momentum. So, having a unified infrastructure made a lot of sense. It didn't make sense to have two separate server rooms and backups and all of that. This saved millions of dollars for taxpayers.

Q: Now, USAID in Iraq had to fund and receive funds for its own security. Did that ever become an issue for you from a management point of view?

ANANIA: No, that wasn't something I ever dealt with. There were times when, outside of Capital Security Cost Sharing, if USAID had a requirement to build a new building basically for itself, then somehow, they were expected to pay for it. I remember this specifically several years later, when we built the new consulate in Karachi. As soon as we finished, there was a thought that USAID was going to build a new building there, having just completed the building. This was going to cost, let's say, 20 million dollars, and it just so happened that at that time (around 2010) I was the executive director for NEA and SCA.

I made a trip out there for the opening of the consulate. Adam Namm, who was the acting head of OBO, and I were there. This was an issue being discussed in Washington, and I was walking around the building. It was apparent that OBO had put in modular furniture that clearly allowed for a very abundant amount of space for various people. If we simply tightsized, as we called it, and put in smaller cubicles, we could fit the AID people into the building. We also build buildings with about a 10% buffer of extra space. In fact, that's what ended up happening – AID was going to pay for the modular furniture, which was also expensive but not the same as building a new building. I am not sure if that happened or not, because US priorities may have changed, but either way, thank goodness we didn't build a new building.

Q: So, now, at this point…

ANANIA: Oh, but to answer your question about the Millennium Challenge Corporation: Basically, there was a lot of dissatisfaction with USAID – it was too bureaucratic, it was focused too much on the so-called "loser countries" of the world, pouring money into countries that were corrupt and likely weren't going to improve. This was, really, almost a philosophical decision or issue to discuss, because from the perspective of many people, yes, going into the poorest countries was precisely what USAID should be doing because it was a humanitarian mission and you were saving lives or enabling people to improve their own lives.

During that time, the PEPFAR program was started under President Bush. I don't know if you'd call it unprecedented, but we put in perhaps unprecedentedly large amounts of money to deal with a specific health issue. It was billions and billions of dollars and really, maybe, one of the most effective things President Bush did. It was certainly one of the most effective assistance programs ever on the face of the planet. It was right up there with basic vaccinations of children overseas. The program saved, and continues to save, uncounted numbers of lives. It was hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions of lives around the world.

But at any rate, Congress didn't like the way USAID managed a lot of these things, so they decided that, okay, instead of fixing USAID – and, after all, USAID was simply responding to the laws Congress had passed over the years; it wasn't like USAID decided things should be done that way – which is what I thought should have happened, since, at that time, Republicans controlled the House and Senate and the White House… I mean, if you don't like it, fix it. But no, they decided that we should create an entirely new organization called the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The idea was that this organization was going to be different. They were going to deal with countries that were the up-and-coming strivers, the succeeders, which just needed a little bit of extra funding or support to put them over the top. These poor countries had to meet certain standards where corruption was under control, leading indicators were going well, etcetera. But, as is always the case, if you create a new agency then there's more bureaucracy.

So, my role with them was to try to help them understand what it was like to work in an overseas environment. They were hiring some people who had experience with USAID.

In fact, a fellow who I knew quite well, Nimalka Wijesooriya, had been the USAID controller in Jordan when I served there, and he became the chief financial officer for this new agency. He had even briefly been on my staff of M/P but was then hired into this position. We were sorry to lose him, but it was certainly for the higher good. We would try to educate them, frankly, on what it's like to be part of a US mission overseas. Their idea was to give money to countries, not to field their own people to run assistance programs. They wanted to actually give the money to the countries, who would then presumably spend it reasonably well. They signed "charters" with individual countries that set up the standards for how the money was supposed to be spent and on what.

Nonetheless, they still needed to send people overseas, both to negotiate and also to be there permanently. So, we had to explain to them, "This is what chief of mission authority is. This is what it means." Yes, you have a certain degree of independence, but that doesn't mean you're just on your own overseas. You actually have to comply with the security standards and you're under chief of mission authority. As is often the case, the people who were coming in thought that they were crusaders who could do things better. "We don't need to listen to those government bureaucrats." Well, no. There are realities overseas.

So, yes, we worked quite intensively with them on that. With the PEPFAR program, it was the same thing. It was frankly irritating. The Global AIDS Coordinator reported to the secretary of state, so was part of the Secretariat, S, in the State Department. That made the office symbol S/GAC (Secretariat/Global AIDS Coordinator). But the head of the PEPFAR initiative, the global AIDS coordinator, wanted to pretend they had nothing to do with the State Department. If you went to their offices, which were up near Washington Circle on Pennsylvania Avenue, a few blocks away from the State Department, it didn't say anything about the State Department. It just said, "Global AIDS Coordinator" on the door. There was no branding whatsoever for the State Department.

Again, this was even more complex than with the Millennium Challenge Corporation because here, you had the programs actually being implemented by multiple U.S. government agencies. It was USAID, yes, but also the Centers for Disease Control and Health and Human Services, and it was largely in Africa, although it was a global initiative. The epicenter of the AIDS epidemic and the greatest number of deaths were occurring in Africa, so that was a big priority. These agencies suddenly had these massive infusions of money, and often, the countries involved didn't have much in the way of infrastructure to implement the programs, refrigerate the vaccines, or anything like that.

This was a major initiative that involved, in some cases, constructing buildings. There were certainly many training efforts, working with public health authorities in these countries in order to train people as to how to handle, store, and administer the medicines that were being distributed. There was a huge issue with the capacity of our diplomatic missions to absorb all of these extra people. Again, because some of these agencies didn't necessarily work overseas all that much, so we had a lot of work to do. For instance, the CDC is in Atlanta, Georgia. Yes, they already had some people overseas, but this was a huge number more. They had to be integrated into the ICASS system more fully.

Q: The U.S. Public Health Service?

ANANIA: I don't remember specifically that, but it was definitely the CDC. Fortunately, the person who was representing them on the ICASS board was a former USIA and State Department employee, so they had a much better idea than many about how to do things. But this was very difficult because there was insufficient office space at some overseas missions. Again, the USG was in the process of replacing buildings that were generally insecure when measured against the upgraded security standards. Maybe they had to lease new space, and that's very expensive because of installing the equipment to address the security standards being implemented for leased offices. Posts didn't necessarily have the locally engaged staff sufficient to support people. Maybe they needed to move around in motor pool vehicles, so there had to be vehicles purchased and there had to be extra drivers. All of these things made it very challenging. We didn't necessarily have clear guidance as to whether or not individual missions should insist the expanding agencies provide the resources necessary to build up support capacity within the ICASS framework, and some missions instead advised expanding agencies to build their own support capacity, which would mean duplication of effort. We helped facilitate discussions but there were no easy answers given the urgency of the programs and the slow pace of our budget processes.

Then, also, very importantly there was the NSDD 38 process, which is the formal process by which agencies request changes in the size, composition, or mandate of their overseas presence. On that note, again, my interest in IT… The process was pretty horrendous. Agencies would submit essentially letters to us. We would have to prepare cables out to the chief of mission saying, "This is what they're asking for." The response would come, as well, by cable, which we would then have to somehow disseminate, since many agencies did not have access to the telegram system. This was maddening inefficiency, so I decided we should automate the NSDD 38 process and create a web-based application whereby agencies could submit their requests and we could transmit these over to the posts. As of 2020, the Department was still using the system M/R installed around the time I left the office in 2005. The system was slated for replacement, because it is definitely showing its age and isn't as customer friendly as it should be.

Similarly, another aspect of chief of mission authority is country clearance. There's a requirement that direct hire personnel who are going overseas on TDYs (temporary duty assignments) receive country clearance. Well, again, this was happening via cables, and we had agencies like the Department of Energy that sent huge numbers of people overseas but didn't have easy access to cables. Their staff didn't send or receive cables from their own desks. It was just a huge nightmare, and not very effective, either. You kind of lost track of people, and frankly, if people traveled without country clearance, who knew, in many cases, if they were going to, for example, a European country for a technical conference.

So, again, we created a web-based application that was in service until 2019 to automate that process. Unfortunately, those two applications, while I started them and set some of the overall requirements, I wasn't there when they were finished, and they were mediocre. I'm not totally proud of the results, but both systems were a big step forward from sending letters through the mail or trying to deal with cables with agencies that didn't receive cables.

Q: Do you think, as far as your initiative on this went, that posts could keep track of, let's say, the majority of U.S. government officers coming into the country? Because you're right; it could be the Department of Energy, it could be the Department of Education. Who knows? Any number of departments could be going overseas for some reason or another and never even imagine that they needed to be in touch with the embassy until they got in trouble.

ANANIA: It was, and still, to some degree I'm sure, remains a problem. One of the other issues is that there's just a natural bureaucratic way of doing things, sometimes. Essentially, in many cases laws are passed, and the State Department just shovels the new responsibilities off onto the posts and says, "You're responsible for that. Our work is done." Well, in the case of e-country clearance and, to some degree, NSDD 38, the assumption was that posts were going to each come up with their own systems to record the incoming requests and record the decisions that were made and keep track of these people.

You know, when you're talking about 150+ overseas missions, that's absurd. Even if they came up with effective systems, which they certainly didn't, why would you want 150 posts to each come up with a unique solution? This goes back to the whole thing with our AESOP program, where we tried to organize the software development of individual posts. It's sort of the same thing. One of the ideas behind the e-country clearance and NSDD38 applications was that they inherently provide a database, both for individual missions and the USG globally. For country clearance, all of the requests would go into this database, so posts would then be able access this and see, "Okay. Who's in town this week?"

Over time, you could then use it for analytical purposes. How many people from each agency have been showing up? Maybe it factors into the ICASS billings. You might have local policies at post that require agencies to pay into ICASS if they have more people coming over. That sort of thing. So, those were modestly successful initiatives, and as I say, the e-country clearance application changed only in 2019 as the Department incorporated it into a global system called MyServices. As it happens, I was in charge of implementing that at Embassy Kabul. I had some real concerns about the new system, too, as the rollout was not well coordinated or explained.

Q: Yes. And, you know, it's the cost of the people going overseas, it's their safety, but it's also deriving some benefit from their presence in the country beyond whatever the topic they're supposed to be examining is. A lot of times, embassies can get a great deal of value from visitors from other agencies coming there, especially if they're going out to the hinterlands somewhere where the embassy hasn't been able to go for a while. A political officer or econ officer could say, "While you're out there, would you mind taking *a look at X, Y, Z? I can't get out there as often as I'd like, and it will impact some of what the embassy's doing." A lot of times, they couldn't do that because these individuals just came and went, and the way they found out is by talking to their local contacts. "Oh, yeah. I met with one of your Department of Energy people last week."*

And everyone's like, "What?"

ANANIA: Yeah, absolutely, that's the case. That sort of coordination at a well-run mission is very important, because often these people are specialists who are coming out to work in agencies of the local government, where the embassy may have little or no visibility. Suddenly, USG colleagues are in there working with their fellow specialists, and they're picking up the scuttlebutt, if you will, about what's really going on in these agencies. So, yes, they can contribute to post reporting, most definitely. But then, just as a basic security responsibility, the chief of mission needs to know where these people are in case something happens or there's an evacuation, as there sometimes are. It's an important function.

I mentioned that when I originally came into M/P, the chief of mission portfolio had been pushed off to HR because this was viewed as simply a bureaucratic process of little interest to M. Like, okay, process the NSDD 38 requests, tally them up, and… In fact, they weren't doing a good job of that at all. The database was just full of a bunch of junk, which sadly made it into annual reports. But there was no thought of, "Hey, these are very important issues for a whole host of reasons." It was security responsibilities, but also exactly what you mentioned as well; these are actually important programs, and we need to help the chief of mission manage these processes if COM authority is going to have any substantive meaning.

So, at some point, the Congress decided that the State Department needed to have an actual Office of Rightsizing the U.S. Government's Overseas Presence, and they put an earmark in saying, "Thou shalt start up this office." Undersecretary Green made the decision that I was going to run both offices, and we created M/R. So, we had M/P, and M/R. We then took, organizationally, the office that had been handling chief of mission authority from HR and brought it back into the M front office family. We ended up adding additional staff, in part because Congress mandated that we do periodic rightsizing reports for all missions. We had to make the missions say just what it is they were doing and justify why they had the people that they have.

I mentioned previously that we worked very closely with OBO to have a formal process by which we set the projected staffing for overseas missions in order to allow OBO to correctly size their building projects. Through Capital Security Cost Sharing, the other agencies were going to start paying for these positions as soon as they said, "Yeah, we intend to add two positions when you've got the bigger, more secure embassy." So, these things tended to dovetail pretty well, and that was often the exciting thing about working in M/P+R. We could bring different strands together, and that's what the individual bureaus who managed programs often missed. They were "stovepiped."

OBO, colleagues were, I can reasonably say, thrilled that they now had a partner to help them size their embassies. At the end of the day, they didn't particularly care what the size of the embassy was as long as they got the money for it and didn't vastly overbuild or under-build and get embarrassing reports from the IG (Inspector General). They were agnostic on the size, but the idea was that M/R was not agnostic on the size. We actually did want to make sure that we didn't have people overseas who didn't need to be there, particularly in dangerous locations. That, again, was one of the great frustrations on the Hill, the perception, which was sometimes the reality, that agencies were maintaining positions overseas that didn't need to be there.

While I was going around and speaking on the Hill and to State Department conferences and to other agencies about what rightsizing was, the mantra was, "Posts should do the minimum, not the maximum." That definitely was not the way the State Department or any of the other agencies' bureaucracies were working. So, if an agency typically did all of their accounting at their overseas mission, well, they were just going to keep doing that. I mentioned that Secretary Powell came in with some priorities, which he addressed very positively – buildings, restaffing the State Department, improving our IT, things like that. Unfortunately, as far as State's management priorities went, what that also meant was, if your initiative didn't get in from the beginning, you weren't necessarily going to be a priority.

That, unfortunately, is what happened with rightsizing. It took us a while to figure out what this all meant, and then we were drawing towards the end of the Powell period. As is often the case, we just couldn't get a strong leadership push to make these things happen. So, even though we did all of the analytical work and we showed, certainly to my satisfaction, that the State Department had an overwhelmingly strong business case to change the way it did its management support --- to regionalize and centralize many functions, to reduce overseas staffing, to cut the risk to people in dangerous places and reduce costs – remember, mission, security, and cost are a triad – it didn't happen in any strategic sense.

With the change of administration, we had a new secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. She selected a new undersecretary for management who was not really part of the inner circle, as far as I could see, and who didn't arrive with a lot of strong ideas about how to manage the State Department. At that point, I was no longer in M/P anyway. I had been moved over to be the acting CIO because the CIO, Bruce Morrison retired.

Q: Oh, and take one second: CIO stands for…?

ANANIA: Chief Information Officer.

Q: Okay.

ANANIA: He was heading the Bureau of Information Resource Management. At that point, he decided he was going to retire, which he did, and Undersecretary Green decided to make me the acting. I had been working on a lot of the high-level strategic initiatives related to information technology. When Undersecretary Holsman-Fore came in, I was no longer in M/P. I did submit papers for her briefing, but we just, basically, lost traction. I think OMB and Congress also just took their eyes away from rightsizing, which was a real pity. We could have done a whole lot more. What's especially frustrating is that the same things that I was saying then apply now (2021). Now that I'm back working as a reemployed annuitant (the REA program, formerly known as When Actually Employed or WAE) I continued to share the results with colleagues, and they say, "Hey, we should really do this." But, in the Trump administration with Secretary Pompeo there wasn't any apparent interest in taking on this issue, a pity.

Q: Yeah. Okay.

<u>2005-2006 – Chief Information Officer (acting) – Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM), Department of State, Washington</u>

ANANIA: So, in terms of my transition to be the acting CIO, within M, I had been doing a lot of work that was IT-related. Again, I was dealing with OMB, trying to help M manage the IRM Bureau. During this period, we had also had an initiative that started before I came into M/P that was eventually called SMART – State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset. It was meant to address several requirements. Basically, email had come along, and the State Department and other agencies had failed dismally to address the archiving implications of that. All of our rules and regulations assumed that things were printed out on paper and put into file folders. When the material met standards for archiving, it would be retired upon expiry to a government warehouse in Suitland, Maryland, to the Archives of the United States.

But we were losing the history of foreign affairs, and this was, frankly, contrary to the law. People were sending e-mails around and we weren't capturing these things. Again, the CYA (cover your ass) approach of a lot of bureaucratic entities is, "Okay, we have this responsibility. So, we at the State Department will just tell posts that they have to do it and that relieves us of further responsibility." There was a very unrealistic expectation that, again, you were going to print out all of your emails and put them in file folders and send them back. Of course, that wasn't happening. So, that was one thing.

Another thing was that it was very difficult to access the archive. You're supposed to preserve these things as a matter of law, but you also want people to be able to cross-fertilize and look at information, both State Department personnel and ultimately researchers at the National Archives. If we have a new econ officer going to your post, you want that person to be able to start reading about that post before they get there, access the cables, look at the history of the cables, and all that sort of thing. The joke was that for a political officer, history begins the day they arrive at post. It was often true, because unfortunately, a lot of departing officers didn't necessarily leave behind transition notes or explain who their best contacts were, etcetera. So, that was also a major requirement.

Originally, this was viewed as just another IT project, and the Bureau of Information Resource Management was brainstorming how they were going to address it. The company Oracle had a web mail product, and IRM was proposing to basically just create another standalone system – separate from regular email -- that employees would have to turn to in order to look at your cables. I remember, when I first joined M/P, going to some of these meetings. I believe I actually did have the insight of, listen, we don't want to have a separate system. We need to integrate this into the email system people already have on their desktop. Otherwise we haven't solved the problem because people will just keep churning out emails that aren't part of the archive. That's when we really started looking at how to integrate this into Microsoft Outlook.

Again, under the leadership of Grant Green and Dick Shinnick, in particular – Dick was very focused on some of these things – we decided this wasn't just an IT product, this wasn't running wires and making sure that the infrastructure works. This actually has a lot to do with how the State Department works. So, we're going to have a steering committee that is composed of a broad section of high-level people from the M family, but also from the so-called program bureaus. So, we had deputy assistant secretary-level people from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, from the EUR Bureau, and, of course, the Bureau of Administration (A). A was the bureau responsible for archiving the State Department's records. This was a high-level committee, and our goal was to set the top-level requirements for the system, divorced from technical aspects. What did we actually want to accomplish? We need people to access this from their desktop; we need for them to be able to get the proper clearances as they send cables out, we need to make the database searchable and accessible to those who need the information. That sort of thing.

The idea was that we would implement this in such a way that the existing cable system would be incorporated, but also that we would archive the emails. We were very successful in setting up the requirements, and we ultimately issued a contract to Northrop Grumman. We were also experimenting with the type of contract, because at that time, there was an initiative to have competition in contracting. You were supposed to have more contracts that were not based on time and materials, a contract type that tends to drive up costs, which was the traditional way. With time and materials, if the contractor is not doing a good job, they can just bill you more. So, instead this was going to be a performance-based contract, and the firm had to meet performance goals in order to get their payments and keep their contract going. We also hired a separate company, Gartner Group, to keep an eye on what was happening and evaluate the progress Northrop Grumman was making against the stated criteria of the contract.

This was a very well-managed process. We had a SMART program office, and we brought back some very talented people from retirement. Larry Emery was one of the people who had had a long experience in government. It was very well-managed, which made it all the more depressing when Northrop Grumman did not meet their targets. So, it's ironic to say we had a very well-managed program that we ended up curtailing, but in fact, that was a sign that it was well-managed. In the old days, we would have just kept throwing money at Northrop Grumman. As it was, we spent a considerable amount of money, and we did get quite a bit for it, but we didn't get a usable system, which was a real pity.

At any rate, this was the point at which I was starting to transition to the CIO job on an acting basis. The Steering Committee eventually decided to recommend that, okay, IRM will now serve as the general contractor for this project. We won't hire a successor to Northrop Grumman. We had things that Northrop Grumman had built, and we had further refined our requirements, so now IRM could finish this off. They could hire other companies, perhaps several companies, and that's what happened. Unfortunately, I wasn't in the CIO office long enough to actually finish the project, but it was finished a few years later. At that point, I was at Mission Germany as the management counselor in Berlin.

The system worked very well from the beginning. However, there was a major problem. With the departure in the transition of Grant Green and Dick Shinnick, the M front office started thinking of this as just another IT project, which it wasn't. That is why SMART, even though it worked technically, never worked the way it was supposed to. The idea was that the SMART Steering Committee – which, again, was broadly based – was going to guide implementation. They were going to make sure that senior levels of the Department understood and used this system from the beginning. Sadly; the absolute reverse happened. Undersecretary Fore terminated the Steering Committee prior to the launch of the system, which was crazy.

Now, you only had IRM instructing employees to implement SMART. IRM thought of it as a technical system. "We want to make sure the system works technically." But they were dealing with the fact that front offices might not want to use it. There is a bureaucratic tendency among many employees to evade putting things on the record. They were happy firing off emails and not archiving them. So, who was going to tell them to do it? What you needed, in this case, was clear mandates combined with leading by example. That meant senior leaders who used the system. In particular, to me, it would have been critical that the secretariat use the system. In fact, they didn't. The assistant secretaries and deputy assistant secretaries of the bureaus didn't want to know about it, and they just kept blithely sending emails without properly creating them using the available tools in SMART. This was and remains highly disappointing.

Technically, it was a success; SMART worked well, and you could search for official messages, both "cables" (which were sent via SMART) and SMART "record email" messages, which were essentially emails with metadata attached. With just a little bit of training, you could easily learn how to set up templates. So, if you were a reporting officer, you could set up templates with all the tags and terms and everything so that the next time you went to send a SMART message, which might be a record email or a cable, you could just call up the template. The training was inadequate, and the leadership failures were manifest. People didn't see their bosses using it, and not surprisingly got the message, "We don't need to use this," despite what the official cable says. That's exactly what happened.

Ironically, when the system was being designed, the steering committee heard from users who were concerned that these SMART messages, which would be sent via the email system, were going to flood their email inboxes. People were accustomed to receiving telegrams via a separate system, and many of the telegrams were routine communications of little interest.

When IRM implemented the system, they loaded software that modified Microsoft Outlook. Per guidance from the Steering Committee responding to customer feedback, that software created Outlook "rules" that would automatically move arriving messages to subfolders. Under your inbox, would be a subfolder called "SMART messages." There was a rule applied that would move messages coming from the SMART server (as opposed to regular email) into this subfolder. But when we implemented the system in 2007 or so, it was so disused that people didn't look at their subfolders! Years later, the CIO was Susan Swart and I remember corresponding with her when I was ambassador in Suriname, perhaps 2013, and I said, "Hey, Susan, why don't you just stop having that rule so that these things stay in people's inboxes and they'll actually look at them?"

Sadly, it was almost a joke. Sometimes I felt like if I was sending an important message I wanted to get on the record, if I was only concerned with getting it on the record and didn't really want somebody read it, I could just send it as a SMART message, because the recipients probably wouldn't read it even though I would be on the record as having said something. I hate to suggest that I'm that sort of passive-aggressive person, because I'm not, but that thought crossed my mind. In fact, as ridiculous as it seems, some people took the approach that sending an official SMART record email or a cable was a hostile act, rather than responsible communication in compliance with law.

But as I repeatedly pointed out to my teams, only an official cable or record email could serve as an instruction. That meant it was properly cleared. As wonderful as email is for facilitating communication, a downside is that it can disrupt command and control, because supervisors don't see messages sent person-to-person. With cables, they were sent and distributed organizationally so that relevant individuals would automatically be on the distribution. We did have cases where individuals in Washington offices, sometimes even contractors without the authority, would instruct my team members to take action.

Q: From the field perspective, I was in Costa Rica, and we were implementing SMART. It did go into a file, and it made it difficult for me, as a supervisor, to go into the file every day and deal with it. I eventually just had my secretary do it. Most of the SMART messages were unclassified and dealt with routine matters, and she knew how to separate the ones that I needed to see. So, yeah. I imagine it might have done better as a system, but you're right. From the field point of view, we didn't quite get it.

ANANIA: Right. There was inadequate training – I don't think it was properly built into the curriculum of FSI – and years later, when I was ambassador, I was very frustrated. I had relatively junior people working for me who had no idea how to use the SMART system. How could that happen? It really was a problem. In fact, you could say that had

SMART been properly managed, we wouldn't have had the whole Hillary Clinton email imbroglio. Had people been sending SMART messages… By the way, they didn't have to be telegrams. You could send "record emails." But still, they would be in the archive and maintained according to law. Had people been doing that, the State Department would have had a proper database and could have responded to the Congress and freedom of information requests could have been managed far more expeditiously.

So, the assumption that Secretary Clinton says she had, which was that things that were being sent to her private server were still somehow being archived in the State Department, was false. This should never have happened. We realized that, on the SMART Steering Committee. The steering committee set the requirements so that we would have a system that would address these exact issues. It's highly unfortunate that the leadership transition occurred and that the new leadership basically dropped the ball. I was and remain very disappointed by that outcome, because it was a solid system.

To make it worse, what happened then was that IRM was, apparently, only concerned by the technical aspects of it. They weren't really concerned about the user aspects of it. This is an important tool for the State Department and its business. So, SMART came out whenever it came out, around 2007, let's say. Of course, technology continues to change, but nobody was looking at that. Again, this is what the steering committee could have been doing, saying, "Okay, now we have some new tools, now let's make sure to adapt the system as we learn what colleagues are doing with it."

One of the reasons why Northrop Grumman failed in the first place was that our requirements stretched the outer limits of the technical capacities of both our network and the underlying Microsoft technology. It was supposed to be a web-based system, originally, but our overseas posts didn't all necessarily have the bandwidth to use a system like that. So, ultimately, it was not a fully web-based system. With IT, time marches quickly on. I remember even sending messages to the IRM Bureau, saying, "Hey, here's a list of enhancements that you could add to SMART to make it much more user-friendly." But there was no steering committee. There was no user group. It was just being dealt with as a legacy system, and one more system that the IRM Bureau had to manage, without any extra money.

So, when we did have the big scandal with Secretary Clinton and her emails on the private server and all that, at that point, the State Department still could have fixed SMART, but they didn't. They then came up with an entirely different scheme – a very clumsy scheme – that basically now makes everybody put some basic markings on their cables or their emails when they send them. You're prompted to say whether it's unclassified, sensitive but unclassified, or something else. But that's without capturing all of the metadata the archiving system needs, functionality built into SMART. Now, again, because there have been big advances in technology, some of that is now happening, in the background. Key words can be pulled out of the message to determine how it should be tagged, if you will, to use a State Department term.

Nonetheless, it should have been done within SMART and it wasn't. It created yet another system. SMART continues to go, but meanwhile, there's this other system. We're wasting huge amounts of money, in part because individual bureaus have developed their own archiving systems to meet their own perceived specific needs. This happened in several bureaus – INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) did this, the European Bureau did this – at enormous expense, when these efforts should have been concentrated, managed by the CIO, and managed, again, by a broad-based steering committee that actually understood the way users work in the State Department. None of that happened. So, tens or hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent, and we don't have the outcome that we could have had had we focused proper attention on this project.

This was a leadership failure. Of course adding metadata to messages takes a bit of extra effort, and yes that can be a nuisance. But just sending emails willy-nilly was a violation of the law and as a result the US lost a big chunk of the history of diplomacy. Employee laziness trumped the law. It's very frustrating.

I want to take a jump back to when I was in Hong Kong. Another one of the initiatives that I can say I pushed hard for and where I can say we saved enough money to pay my salary for my entire career had to do with the management of telecommunications bandwidth. There's an organization called Diplomatic Telecommunications Service Program Office – DTSPO. This was an office that was set up because the Congress and OMB, going back to the '70s or '80s, noticed that multiple agencies were running communication centers in the same embassies, which was highly inefficient. They were buying their own bandwidth, at great expense. This was pre-Internet days. You had to lease dedicated circuits to run, basically, telegraph lines so that you could send down your communications, classified and unclassified, to the embassies. So, DTSPO was set up, and the secretary of State was the titular head of DTSPO with day to day management of the office at another agency.

Q: Just a very quick thing here – when you worked as a U.S. Foreign Service officer in U.S. delegations to foreign negotiations or UN (United Nations) organizations, where you had many other agency representatives working, you really saw this. The other agencies had their own little system back to their home agency, and they bought bandwidth. Sometimes, their computers worked much better than ours, and they got information back to their home office quicker than we could.

ANANIA: Well, during that period you're referring to, it may very well be that DTSPO was buying the bandwidth. The idea was that all agencies would have to buy their bandwidth through DTSPO. So, the Foreign Commercial Service and Foreign Agriculture Service had their own little computer networks at various times. Subsequently, they've mostly been rolled into the State Department system, but the idea was that DTSPO would have economies of scale. Instead of having four or five agencies each buying bandwidth connecting into the same embassy, DTSPO would do this. DTSPO was not supposed to bill agencies for anything other than the direct cost associated with their lines.

So, that's fine. That was working for many years. We established somewhat joint communication centers. It wasn't exact; people were still working on different terminals. But the lines coming in were being managed, by and large, by this single agency and for all agencies overseas. Now, in the meantime, guess what? Technology changed. The Internet arrived. What is the Internet? Well, one thing about the Internet is that the routing is via whatever means works. It's not just a cable between point A and B, and then if the cable gets cut, you're out of service. That's what was happening to the State Department. In fact, in many of our overseas posts, reliability was in like the 90% range. Imagine if every 10th time you picked up the phone you couldn't get a dial tone. That was what we were experiencing, and you could have outages that could last for days.

There were these strings of point-to-point communications with equipment connecting at every junction box. If anything broke, you were just offline. In some cases, many posts could be offline, because there were relay stations that collected the aggregate of lines and then sent them back to Washington. So, if they had a problem, everybody was out. Well, the Internet was designed to not have that. Originally, coming from the Department of Defense, the idea was that the signals would go via whichever path they could go. So, these became what were known as virtual private networks – VPNs. You could buy bandwidth with an Internet service provider, and they had to connect to your embassy, so of course there's a point of failure there. If their lines go down, you have a physical connection back to their telephone central. But beyond that, you have no idea where the signals are going. If you're in Hong Kong and the undersea cable going directly to the United States was cut, okay; maybe it would go via Tokyo or over to Bangkok and then to the U.S. Who cares, right?

Some State Department people in the IRM Bureau, as a sort of skunk-works project, started to buy VPNs. They called it an experiment and labeled these as "backup" circuits. It was typically to have multiple paths -- the primary circuit would be via DTSPO on dedicated circuits, and the backup circuit was perhaps a slow satellite circuit. That would cause big problems with IT, because the signal has to go up to a satellite and come back down before hopping back up to a second satellite, creating very high latency, or transmission delays. This wasn't a problem if you are sending a traditional telegram – it doesn't matter if it takes a few extra seconds for it to get through. But if you are working on web-based applications, it is devastating – either frustrating customers who had to wait for screens to refresh or perhaps the application would simply time out. So, anyway, that wasn't very good. Maybe you could get basic communications and send a telegram, but you certainly weren't going to be surfing the web on these backup connections, which also had very low bandwidth. So, what IRM started to do was buy some of these VPNs, and then, as an "experiment," make them the co-primary circuit. The DTSPO circuit, which cost considerably more, was then essentially the backup circuit.

Some of these folks came out to Hong Kong for some reason or another, and they were briefing me on this. One was Jeff Myers, who went on to be a senior foreign service IRMer. He worked for me previously in Abu Dhabi, where he was what is now called the information management officer. There was also a contractor by the name of Jean Garneau, who was one of the many unsung heroes of the State Department. These contractors may not even work for the same company, over the years, but they stay in the same position. In many cases these are the people who have the expertise and know what's going on. They were explaining this to me, and I was intrigued. We set up a VPN in Hong Kong, and the cost was four percent of what we were paying for the DTSPO bandwidth, and the reliability was much higher, and the speed was better. This was cutting-edge technology. This put this into my head. Then they started telling me what they were doing at other posts, and at some point, they sent me a chart – a spreadsheet, I think it was – that showed how much this was saving.

Again, the number four percent sticks in my mind. Maybe in Hong Kong it was three percent, and in other places it was six. I don't know. But it was a fraction of the cost of what we were paying DTSPO for the same lines. Then I would say, "Why isn't DTSPO doing this?" Basically, it was kind of that it wasn't invented here, and they wanted to do it their way. But the arguments that were put forward were, frankly, ludicrous. They would say, "Oh, you can't do that because you'd be subject to failure of the line." But then we'd say, "Wait. We're far more reliable than you are. It's you who are subject to the failure of the lines, because you have these Point A to Point B things, strung together globally."

So, DTSPO was trying to build out a topography where they were basically going to funnel all the Asia traffic, let's just say, to Tokyo. Then it would all go back to Washington from there, but in the meantime, it was all point to point connections. With the VPNs, it was like, well, whichever way the electrons flow that day, it gets there. So, anyway, when I came back to M/P, I hadn't forgotten this. I looked at those spreadsheets and I ended up working the issue hard, now with authority to do it.

At this point, there was a fellow named Steve Shinnick who was a civil servant. He had been a Foreign Service information resource management specialist, but had converted to civil service, and he was the State Department's representative to DTSPO. He sat at the DTSPO headquarters, which was in Northern Virginia, and made himself very unpopular there. He kept pointing out that their strategic path was wrong. In addition, they were bureaucratically doing things they weren't supposed to do.

I mentioned earlier that they were supposed to only be billing agencies for the actual cost of the service. What they had done instead was… This was a time when telecommunications prices were dropping fairly rapidly, because bandwidth was becoming far cheaper. Whatever the price was that they had set in Year X for a particular circuit for a particular agency, they continued to charge, even when the price became a fraction of X. So, they were building up, basically, a funding war chest -- improperly, if you looked at the documents that established DTSPO -- and their intention was to build up this antediluvian network of point-to-point communications on the backs of other agencies that did not know what was happening. There were, theoretically, some reasons why they wanted to do this point-to-point thing. Again, I definitely disagreed.

Ultimately, several years later, new DTSPO management went to an all-VPN model, so they validated what Steve Shinnick and Jeff Meyers and Jean Garneau had impressed upon me. At the time, there was a sort of an urban legend within the State Department that we were mandated to use DTSPO circuits. In fact, there was no such requirement -- there certainly was no law that said this, and you couldn't even really find a policy that said it. It was just sort of assumed that you had to do it. So, in about 2003, I took the bull by the horn – and the IRM Bureau really should have been doing this, but there were leadership issues there. I worked with elements of IRM, but specifically Steve Shinnick, to put together an action memo for Undersecretary Grant Green, whereby we said, "We shall not necessarily use DTSPO circuits. If we can find our own VPNs that are much cheaper, we'll still try to work with DTSPO, and if they can come up with something equivalent, we'll work with DTSPO, but otherwise, we're going to buy our own VPNs and we can use them as the primary circuits."

Now, we also had a very progressive chief financial officer, at that time, CFO Christopher Burnham. He was also very interested in this, of course, because we were shoveling money towards DTSPO that was, frankly, improper. They were overcharging us and other agencies. I also talked to people from other agencies, including DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency), for instance, who said, "Hey, we want to go with VPNs." The argument had been made that, oh no, these intelligence agencies really want to have the network the way it is. But no. DIA didn't. If DIA didn't, you'd think, well, maybe others shouldn't either. Certainly Agriculture and Commerce and other agencies didn't want to be paying multiple times what they should have been so that DTSPO could build out some network that theoretically would benefit some agencies but clearly not others.

So, anyway, we put that new policy into effect, and Chris Burnham, the CFO, immediately cut of 20 million dollars of funding a year to DTSPO. He said, "You're overcharging us. We're not going to pay these bills anymore. 20 million dollars per year." So, again, that was one of those things where I paid my career-long salary and all expenses associated with me with that one paper. Giving credit where credit is due, I certainly didn't invent any of this, but that's the critical role that responsible leadership can play.

As I may have mentioned before, there's a lot of passive-aggressive people in government. Frankly, it drives me crazy. Even the way things are worded in the State Department involves a lot of passive-voiced sentences and things like that. I used to tell my staff in the management section, "Hey, we are actors. We are managers. We write in the active voice. None of this 'has had.' Get rid of those words. We do things." In a world of passive-aggressives, people who are trying to get things done experience a lot of frustration on the one hand.

On the other hand, when you push to get things done, there's sometimes no effective opposition because people aren't putting up alternatives. They're just sand in the gears. But if you can just keep pushing on the gears, you can get things done, and reforming the way State bought its telecommunications services was a good example of that. We saved a lot of money. Years later, when I was going off to Baghdad as management counselor, I went out to DTSPO and met with the then-management, thinking it was probably going to be more of the same contentious discussion. It couldn't have been further from the truth. They were totally on top of this. They had completely reinvented what they were doing; there was no more of this point-to-point stuff, and there were VPNs for everyone with far lower costs and much better service. That was one of the most positive meetings I've ever had in government, and I finished it saying, "Hey, you guys are tops. You're the best."

During the period when I was first in M/P doing that and then my less than a year in the IRM front office, it was just a pitched battle with the then-DTSPO management. God bless Steve Shinnick for going to work there every day, because he was *persona non grata*. They didn't want to see him there. He was representing the State Department and doing a heck of a good job of it. I had many meetings with the head of DTSPO, who just did not want to know what we were talking about when we pointed out that they were overbilling us and wanted this stopped. We went through a whole process of basically wringing out those extra costs. It was very contentious, and Steve deserves enormous credit. He was the brains behind keeping this issue front and center with IRM, even in the face of others who were happy enough to leave the issue alone.

Another thing that I also learned about when I was in M/P – and this also may have been Jeff Meyers and Jean Garneau; I can't quite remember… I remember, though, sitting in my office in M/P (suite 5224 in the Harry S Truman building, which at the time had a view of the Lincoln Memorial) and them coming in and briefing me. Again, it's sort of a skunkworks thing. They had figured out a way to manage classified computer access for our consulate in Merida, Mexico from Washington. People in Merida, Mexico could log in using a thin client, which is basically a terminal that connects to a server in the DC area. In the meantime, we had gone from Wang mainframes with terminals to personal computers, where you had a lot of computing power on the desktop.

Well, to some degree, their project was a shift back to terminals or so-called thin client, where there's really nothing on the thin client other than a little bit of memory, just enough to connect it to a server somewhere else. That somewhere else happened to be in Washington. So, Merida, Mexico was then able to get classified communications. There were no printers, and once you turned it off, there was nothing, essentially, there. There may have been some residual data on the flash memory. They had done this, again, just sort of *sub-rosa*. That, then, inspired a lot of thinking and a lot of things that eventually bore fruit in other areas. Other overseas posts also started to do things like this. You mentioned international organizations; well, at one point I had been the post management officer for Vienna, Austria, where we had, I think at the time, three international organizations – the UN Vienna Office, UNVIE, was there, as was US Mission managing the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty, CFE. There was also another mission US CSCE.

Q: OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe).

ANANIA: Two of them combined to become OSCE, yes. So, at that time we had four ambassadors and there were all sorts of intrigues about who got the best house, etc. It was kind of a nightmare for the embassy administrative officer, as they were then called. But they had at least two communications centers. One of them was in a satellite building for perhaps two of the missions, it was an apartment building where some of these folks worked. They had their own comm center, and then you got into, well, who pays the overtime for the people if one of the ambassadors wants to stay late and send a cable and what have you? At any rate, Vienna was one of the first posts that said, “Okay, we have the technology to run this more centrally.”

They started to run the classified network from servers that were only at the embassy’s single communications center. Years later, they even started to support Embassy Bratislava that way, so that Bratislava would log in to the server that was in Vienna. Embassy Moscow did this for some of their satellite offices in Moscow. But this all started with these IRM folks who were working on Merida, Mexico. This is another area of great disappointment, to me, because this was another rightsizing thing that we were trying to do. We wanted to say, “Okay, we don’t need to have these fully-staffed comm centers, especially in constituent posts where we do have some. We should be running these things out of embassies, in the first instance, but really we should be running these things out of regional centers or even from Washington.”

At that time, the technology was rudimentary. The bandwidth was low, so it wasn’t a great user experience, but it was a lot better than spending huge amounts of money to have extra people overseas or to send people to these posts to manage these systems. Many years later, as the executive director for the NEA and SCA bureaus, I worked very closely with the EUR/IO (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and Bureau of International Organization Affairs) Executive Director and the other executive directors of regional bureaus. Tom Tiernan in particular.

We put forward a proposal to have Classnet regionalization. A regional center would run the classified communications for posts, especially, in my view – because I was the NEA/SCA director – in dangerous areas. I particularly had in mind posts like Algiers, Tripoli, what have you. These were posts that actually had good bandwidth, so you could feasibly run these things from other locations. They weren’t large embassies, so they didn’t have a lot of users on classified networks.

The objection might be that the service wouldn’t be quite as good. If you had somebody new coming at post, yes, it would take a little bit of planning to ensure the setup of their user account from another location. Let’s just say the support person was sitting in Frankfurt. You had to tell the office there, “We need to create a new user account for this person.” I don’t want to suggest the service would be exactly the same, but there’s no reason why the Department couldn’t have restructured the service delivery.

Either both the servers and support personnel would be located at a regional center, in which case we would greatly reduce the risk those servers could be compromised, or the Department could leave the servers at the post, but provide the support service from persons stationed elsewhere. The offshore support personnel would login to the servers at the post and manage them remotely. This would minimize the number of people the Department would have to leave onsite, in dangerous and expensive locations.

Again, I'm frustrated with how little progress the Department has made in this, because at the time, we were projecting that using these sorts of things – and when I say "we," I mean the Office of Rightsizing; I suppose at that point it had that hat on – we could have saved easily over 100 overseas positions. This was a time when IRM was struggling mightily to fill its positions because the Department could not recruit IT people. We were in the midst of an IT boom. People were jumping ship from the State Department to work for private companies. It was very hard to recruit people. After all, if you're a talented IT person, who wants to come in and haul pouch bags? That's what junior people were expected to do, at that time, and still are, to some degree. The IPC – Information Program Center – is still in charge of the classified pouch, and even the mailroom, in most areas.

So, we were having a hard time recruiting, and you would think, "Gee, here's a way we could actually cut the workload overseas and have the posts do the minimum, not the maximum. We could move work out of dangerous, high-cost areas." So, again, I talked about how strands would come together in M/P – here was an example of that. Unfortunately, the Department, bureaucratic as it is… IRM isn't in charge of the IRM positions. What do they care if there's 100 extra people overseas? They're not paying for it. Those are in the regional bureau budgets. If IRM spends money to build up a regional center, then the savings would go to the other bureaus, and they don't have a clear incentive to do that. In addition, some IRMers viewed this as a threat – if we have fewer overseas people doing IM work overseas, how can we justify the grades of supervisory positions?

Again, this was the sort of thing that, at M/P, we tried to address – these cross-cutting issues. But by that point, I moved off. I was in IRM still trying to do the same things, but I was only there for less than a year. Undersecretary Fore decided to hire somebody else as the CIO, and off I go to Germany. I never forgot these things, and to this day haven't forgotten them. Still, this is something that should happen.

Years later, in 2010 or so, the regional executive directors – the so-called REDs – we put together a proposal, a short paper, to M, which was at that point Undersecretary Patrick Kennedy. He approved it, and it went to IRM.

IRM basically didn't move with any alacrity. I guess they did some things, but instead of concentrating on the dangerous and expensive posts, somehow it ended up being an initiative in Western Europe. So, still good, but never implemented the way it should have been implemented. Then, in 2019, as a reemployed annuitant I was in Embassy Kabul, and we've got hordes of IT people in a warzone. That's super expensive. They're doing a bunch of stuff that doesn't need to be done there. The bandwidth is good, and yet there's a whole bunch of people who are managing classified networks in Kabul. Now, admittedly, that's a complicated environment. They're also managing some Department of Defense systems. It's not like you wouldn't have anybody there; clearly, you would. But you don't need to have people doing software development, which is what's happening, while sitting in Kabul.

This issue is one I've raised again with the executive office, which is still now, again, trying to do more regionally for the NEA and SCA bureaus under the new executive director. She's trying very hard to do that, but you're going against the grain of the State Department. We never implemented or enunciated a new strategy where posts do the minimum and the work is done elsewhere. It's such a simple thing. A lot of bureaus have done it for their own reasons – the Bureau of Consular Affairs in particular runs consular systems globally from locations in the US. All of the databases and everything are back here. But they didn't do that because of rightsizing or because they wanted to have fewer people overseas. They did it for their own reasons, which were that they needed to have consistency and they needed to improve internal controls.

Those were great reasons, and I give them full credit for that. But the State Department and the undersecretary for management or higher should have, years ago, said, "We are going to do shared services in a modern way, using our modern global network to take work that doesn't need to be done overseas and move it to at least regional centers overseas, often in low-cost areas like Bangkok or Manila or Bulgaria, or better yet, bring this work back to the U.S." It never happened, and it still should happen.

Q: Wow. Is there any reason to believe that it will? It sounds like you're still advocating for it. Are you getting any support for it in today's State Department?

ANANIA: I would say not really. I shared some of my papers with the current head of what M/P and M/R became. First it was Management Policy and Rightsizing the U.S. Government's Overseas Presence. There was an A Bureau office, the Center for Administration Innovation. Those three were combined into M/PRI (Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation). Now it's morphed again into M/SS (Office of Management Strategy and Solutions). The idea is that now they're going to use analytics and metrics to help guide decision-making, which is all good. Anyway, I sent this to that office. I got a response back: "Hey, this looks really great. We're going to set up meetings on the subject." Unfortunately, Secretary Pompeo had put a political appointee into the job, someone without previous experience at State. I never heard anything back. Persistent as I am, I kept pushing and as of early 2021 some new staff in the office are once again looking at linking the past work to address related projects they are working on. We'll see if there is any traction with the new administration of President Biden.

But again, I mentioned that if you want to do anything big in government, you typically have to get started at the beginning of an administration. Management and leadership have to set their priorities right out of the gates. The Trump administration departed from the norm in many ways, including that there was no overarching management initiative, except perhaps in implicit hostility towards government in general. There's no reinventing government. There's no President's Management Agenda. Managing government agencies well does not seem to be part of the plan. Frankly, I didn't see much in the State Department to the contrary.

Now, Secretary Tillerson, supposedly, was going to reorganize the State Department and famously put in place an extremely damaging series of freezes on hiring and transfers, which did lasting damage to the State Department. This Trump administration continued to propose major funding cuts. One presidential budget, I think, proposed a 22% cut for State and USAID. Now, Congress kind of treats those things as DOA (dead on arrival), but nonetheless, it just shows how little importance this administration places overall on foreign affairs, but also on anything having to do with management. They're simply doing blind cutting. Secretary Pompeo, righted the ship a bit and took off the hiring freezes, but he did leave the cuts in place. So, the cuts had already occurred and basically stayed there, and I don't see any major management initiatives whatsoever. So, no, I was not at all optimistic (interview conducted in 2019 and 2020) that the remainder of the Trump administration would yield any positive results. We'll talk some more about that, perhaps, when we get to my work in Afghanistan.

Q: Alright. Today is Valentine's Day – Friday the 14th, 2020. We are resuming our interview with Jay Anania. Jay, just say, again, where we are picking up in your story, just in terms of dates.

ANANIA: In 2005, I was the head of the Office of Management Policy and the Office of Rightsizing, and I was asked to head, on an acting basis, the IRM Bureau. So, I was the acting CIO for most of 2005.

It was an interesting time. President George W. Bush was reelected. I guess there was a thought that there would be a new secretary of State. So, I think the Department was essentially waiting to permanently fill various positions until the second Bush administration was formed up. I was sent down to IRM. I had been working a lot on many of their issues and was very interested in the importance of technology in making the Department's operations work more efficiently. I was also becoming more and more involved in some of the issues related to information assurance or IT security, as some would call it. Information assurance is the term of art. So, when I joined there was a President's Management Agenda e-government initiative. The State Department was scored on those progress and we were constantly trying to deal with the issues that were involved in the scoring.

One of those was, in fact, information assurance. At the time, it was, I would say, a worthy initiative. Agencies for many years had been developing IT systems, and there weren't necessarily good standards to determine whether or not they were securely protecting information. The abbreviation that you might use is, actually, CIA – confidentiality, integrity, and availability. Those are the three components of information assurance. You want to make sure people can't see information they're not supposed to, you want to make sure they can't alter the information, and you want to make sure that the people who should have access to it, do have access to it. Hostile actors – be they criminal or foreign government intelligence agencies – are interested in compromising all three of those things.

The State Department was required to start doing things that it had not previously done and that other agencies had not previously done, which was to adhere to then-nascent standards that were developed by NIST, the National Institute of Standards and Technology. These were standards that were fairly new at the time, and this was an extremely difficult and expensive thing to have to do. One of the problems with the State Department is that we never managed IT systems centrally. Individual bureaus, as I mentioned before, always had the money, and they would develop these systems. Early on, there was no central authority. By the time IRM was created and there was a CIO, the horses had left the barn. Different bureaus were doing different things with different technology.

In fact, IRM couldn't even say with any certainty that it had an inventory of systems. Even defining what a system is, was difficult. Obviously, with the global financial management system, you're going to have to track that. But what about somebody who developed a little Microsoft Access database that is an application running at a post to track utility costs, the sort of thing I did during my earlier career? What about people's spreadsheets? You would think, "Oh, systems don't include spreadsheets," but really, people did some extremely complex things with spreadsheets. They could actually be helping to manage a program and be very important.

So, theoretically or more than theoretically, if people who weren't supposed to have access to that system gained access to it, maybe they could change data. Let's say INL had a little system to track Leahy vetting, the program to ensure the USG wasn't giving money to human rights abusers. You could only give training to people who have not been involved in war crimes or who were not part of organizations that had been involved in war crimes. Well, what if foreign intelligence personnel could have access to that? They could alter the integrity of the data to say that somebody was cleared to go to U.S. government programs. You wouldn't want that to happen.

So, at any rate, at the State Department there is a major problem with complying with the law. The law has been changed since then and has only gone more in the direction of giving the CIO control over IT systems and security. But at the State Department, there was previously a Diplomatic Security Act, which had somewhat nebulous language in it that gave DS (Bureau of Diplomatic Security) responsibility for information assurance. The Diplomatic Security Act preceded the CIO act and subsequent laws and regulations. All of those say the CIO is in charge, but for whatever reason, the State Department decided that most of the elements would remain in DS and would have a sort of dotted line relationship to the CIO. So, in the meantime, the actual Office of Information Assurance is an IRM office. The then-head of that office was extremely frustrated because she felt – with justification – that her authority was clear, legally, but she was unable to exercise that authority because DS would do basically what DS did.

That was a huge issue, and it remains an issue, even many years later. That was a fairly nightmarish thing. In the meantime, we were being dinged for not having good information assurance programs, and such programs are extremely expensive. If you have to hire contractors to come in and review your code line by line, it costs a lot of money.

There were issues as to who should pay for it. The bureaus, obviously, didn't want to pay for it, and they thought, "Oh, well, this is being imposed by IRM. IRM should have to pay for it." Well, IRM didn't have the budget, because as I said, the bureaus developed all of these things on their own. Clearly, the cost of certification and accreditation, as it's called, was part of their project.

So, they basically had to pay. How the system was going to work, who was going to pay for it – these were difficult and contentious questions, and things have probably changed four or five times since that period. This made the job an enormous headache as we went through these processes. IRM had some terrific people working who were very dedicated to what they did, and also very frustrated. We were continually being dinged, not only by the federal CIO office, which was the one that was grading us for the President's Management Agenda, but also by our own Office of the Inspector General. They, in fact, at one point wanted to say that the Department had a material weakness because we were using Microsoft software. Well, how do you deal with that? We and virtually all other agencies and all major corporations in the U.S. were using Microsoft software. Are there problems with it? Yes, there are problems with it. Is that a material weakness? Not in my view.

Q: At this moment, a quick question: Apple has been known, in general, for having more hack-proof systems. Have we ever considered Apple?

ANANIA: We did at various times, including recently, consider alternatives to Microsoft. The Department has looked at alternatives to Microsoft. I don't know in the very beginning that Apple was ever given much thought. Originally, Apple didn't have much in the way of corporate software that it developed. Even now, that's not really Apple's niche. It's more of a consumer product company. More importantly, a lot of the corporate software was developed to run on Windows, and not on Apple platforms. Recently, under Secretary Tillerson, there was a look at possibly shifting over to Google. Google has an online web-based system of software, word processing, spreadsheets, virtual meeting platform, etc. USAID, I believe, uses that, and there was a move to push the State Department to do that. Some elements of State do use Google. But State just has a huge investment in Microsoft-based products. If you were starting from scratch, maybe the alternatives would prove superior, but given the huge investments and the fact that we've been using these products for so many years with the employees trained to use these products, it's probably not very feasible. But the Google platform is clearly superior in some respects and for that reason is used as the foundation of the Foreign Affairs Network, or FAN.

Q: And one last, more strategic question: At that time at least, wasn't somebody thinking, "Gee, DS is not really equipped in terms of training to be able to understand all of the technology and the software and the interfaces. Why is it in charge of ensuring information security?"

ANANIA: Well, the fact of the matter is that no one anywhere at the State Department has any idea what's going on at the State Department with IT, at least in the aggregate.

Q: Oh, I see.

ANANIA: So, you could pose the same question of IRM. IRM doesn't have the expertise. They don't understand how most of these systems work; they were developed by individual bureaus. Could IRM tell you how the Global Employee Management System, GEMS, works? Nope. They couldn't do it. In fact, when it comes to information assurance and doing the certification and accreditation process, that's also a term of art. Certification, you might think, meant, if you're certified, you're good to go, but you're not. Certification just means we've looked at the system in great detail and we've determined what issues there might be with that system. At that point, a decision is made as to whether or not to accredit the system. No system is completely foolproof or un-hackable.

So, then the question becomes, how much of a risk are you willing to take? Again, if it's built on a Microsoft platform, Microsoft and Windows have known vulnerabilities. In fact, those vulnerabilities have been exploited on numerous occasions by foreign intelligence services. But if the system is certified – let's just call it System X – and you say, "Yes, it has these vulnerabilities," then you decide, well, should we still go ahead and accredit it? You might say, "Yes, System X, if we turned it off, that would require shutting down the State Department for a month or a year until we created new systems." If the system had national security information in it and was susceptible to these same threats, you might say, "You do have to shut it off, immediately." But if it's on the unclassified system, you're probably going to go ahead and accredit it.

This was one of the big problems that we had. At the time, the president's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) was in charge of all of this, and they had a federal CIO. Unfortunately, this was an individual who I didn't have a great deal of respect for based on decisions she took. Under the President's Management Agenda, they said that in order to get to green, you have to certify and accredit 100% of your systems. Originally, I think you had to reach a threshold of, let's say, 90%. So, we got to 90%, went green, and then they changed the goalposts and said, "Now it has to be 100%." I wrote a letter with the head of the Office of Information Assurance, the chief information security officer for the Department, Jane Scott Norris. She and I wrote a letter – mostly her – basically saying, "This is not a good thing, to say that you have to have 100%."

On the face of it, it seems like it would be, but in fact it's not. One of the challenges of certification and accreditation is that you can develop software in a laboratory and look at it and see what its vulnerabilities are, but until you've actually put it online and started to use it – many applications connect with other applications -- you can't fully test it. So, what we wanted and what we had was something called an Interim Authority to Operate. So, you would do these certifications, see that there were some issues, issue the Interim Authority to Operate, and then you wouldn't actually accredit the system until it had been online and gone through further testing. Now, if you have to get to 100%, then you can't do that. So, what was happening, of course, was that agencies would just cheat, or they would just give the accreditation even though they shouldn't. So, this was our point: "Hey, by saying 100%, you're actually reducing security, not improving it."

This was not appreciated. There was a federal CIO council, and I remember going to these meetings. We were told, "We really want to hear what you have to say and what the issues are." Well, I didn't necessarily expect that they really wanted to hear it, but nonetheless, I took it on good faith that they really did, and so I would say things like this. Some of the other CIOs would say, "Yeah, that's right." Well, the federal CIO didn't like that one bit. That may be one of the reasons why I was only the acting CIO and was not, ultimately, appointed to the position. As an "acting," you don't have a lot of tenure, and if you're a troublemaker, out you go. I'm not saying that's why it happened; that may have not been an issue at all. I can't really say.

But as long as I was there, I used to say that I put the "acting" in CIO. I did not just sit on my hands and keep the seat warm. There were many very important things that were going on, and pretty much every major issue in 2005 is still an issue today, because functional bureaus still control the funding for most of the major individual software applications. So, the CISO, the chief information security officer, has a completely impossible job. Now we get to the heart of, really, why the State Department has so many problems with its IT, and that is the lack of proper data management. These bureaus create these systems, and they have a lot of data, and there's a tremendous amount of overlap in the data, right? If Employee Z is hired, they're in the HR system, but then there's also systems for paying you your paycheck. So, your name is in the pay system, and your name is all over the place. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security has your name in various systems to make sure that you have an actual security clearance, right? Without the CIO controlling the overall architecture of IT systems, you end up with major problems.

Now we get a new undersecretary of State for Management, Henrietta Holsman Fore, and we're doing briefing papers for her and discussing things with the transition team. This was one of the issues that I was raising: if you just have two IT systems and they need to communicate, fine, you make a direct data connection between the two. If you have three systems, okay, you can do the same thing; now you have a little triangle of three systems and three connections. So, it's not a big deal. Four? Still not that much of a problem. But when you start getting beyond that, now you have a spider web of connections. When you have literally hundreds of systems, which the State Department does, depending on how you define them, if you really want to share data, you basically need an exponentially large number of data connections.

So, that's what we used to call the "data spider web." This is bad between different bureaus, but it's even worse because several bureaus have a lot of systems within themselves, and they themselves have a data spider web. In modern systems, there are solutions to this. You have something called an enterprise data bus. The State Department actually implemented such a system, using a product sold by Oracle, and the idea is that rather than maintaining your databases separately, you have the data in this central data warehouse, and that way, if more than one application needs to access the data, they can all access the same data.

That doesn't just mean that if you have a new application, you can go in and get whatever data you want. No. The bureau or the office that's charged with protecting that data – you could call them the data stewards – still determine who can see the data. You can't spread personally identifiable information just anywhere, for instance. But if a bureau has a legitimate need for the data, then they come to the bureau stewarding the data and you basically sign an agreement saying, "Okay, under these circumstances you can see these data fields." Maybe you have read-only access; maybe you're allowed to edit it. Whatever it might be, you define that. Fine. But all of the data is then coming through the data bus. Then what you have is a hub and spoke.

The data bus is the hub, and all of the data is there. Any data that you need for your application is going to come down that same pipe. It could be flowing into the bus from five or six different applications, and then it's flowing back out just on one. Each system owner needs to build an interface only to the bus, and not to several different applications. So, now the chief information officer and Bureau of Diplomatic Security or whoever know that this is how we manage those connections. We can actually inventory the connections and have a list of all the agreements. For any particular piece of data or data field, we know where it's going, who's using it, and why. That's what you should have, but that's exactly what the Department doesn't have. Instead, it has literally uncountable numbers of connections. IRM will periodically go out and try to harangue bureaus into filling out inventory forms about their systems and going into great detail.

All of this is legally required, by the way, but with so many people involved – so many different offices, so many different bureaus and, importantly, so many different contracting companies that are constantly turning over – the government employees have very little idea of what's actually going on. Often, the individual contractors are the institutional knowledge. They're shifting from company to company, coming in, coming out. It's literally impossible for anybody to understand what the heck is going on. So, anyway, I was presenting these sorts of things to Undersecretary Fore in 2005.

I could make the same presentation today. That's what's so frustrating about it. 15 years later, almost no progress has been made. There is now a bus, but when bureaus want to use it, they get frustrated because IRM says they don't have the resources, necessarily, to integrate their data into the bus or to manage the bus or anything else. So, what do they do? They just keep doing what they're doing. To make matters worse, of course, the bureaus have created these very complicated systems, and the expectation in IRM is that the bureaus, of course, have to pay for whatever it is that they want to do to change it. But the bureaus, having created the system, may no longer have a budget to update the system, and if you update the system, maybe you have to apply new standards, which will have even further cost implications. They don't have the money, and if they screw something up and there's a data leak, then maybe they'll be subject to discipline, bad publicity, or who knows what. So, the *status quo* remains. That's the reason why the State

Department has most of the problems that it has with IT, and why it is spending so much money.

Q: When you were talking about this in that larger grouping with OMB, did you find that there were other agencies that were similarly afflicted?

ANANIA: Absolutely. This is by no means a problem unique to the State Department. Where State is perhaps a little bit unique is in the sense that we operate in so many different countries and we have so many different categories of employees that other agencies just don't have to deal with. I myself am a reemployed annuitant. Well, the State Department has the authority to hire people who are retired while still paying them their pension. Other agencies don't have that authority. So, our IT systems somehow have to deal with that. Some of that may not even be dealt with by the IT systems.

Like, I have a limit to how many hours I can work. What happens if I work more hours than that? Apparently, dire consequences. They'll throw me off the rolls and I can never work again. I don't know what. But in the meantime, I am keeping a spreadsheet that shows how many hours I worked, and I'm going to come up pretty close to the limit before my reset, but I'm satisfied that I'm not going over. But there's no place I can look in any State Department IT system that's going to show me that. If I didn't keep a record and I wanted to know, I'd have to call the HR service center or send them a work order, basically, and then wait.

There are all kinds of manual systems that are involved. Working in Kabul, I stumbled across several of them. I was working a lot of overtime in Kabul, and those overtime hours don't count against my cumulative hours. Only up to 40 hours a week counts against my limit, so that was nice. I worked a lot of overtime. Well, it turns out there's limits to how much you can get paid, every bi-weekly paycheck. So, they were paying me only a little bit of my overtime, and then when I left, I had to submit a request to pay me the rest. Well, I submitted that in December, 2019 and here we are in February 2020, and I still haven't been paid. I've had multiple communications back and forth about how much I'm actually supposed to be paid. Somebody, somewhere, is having to manually calculate this – probably, yes, on an Excel spreadsheet – to make sure that I don't get overpaid.

Again, when these errors happen, they can have big consequences for people. It's not just that if you get overpaid, they're going to come back the next year and try to get the money from you or whatever, but also if I worked too many hours and they didn't alert me to this or I wasn't paying attention, then maybe I could get thrown off the rolls. All of these things are so important to people; having the IT work efficiently and well is a huge factor in the overall efficiency and morale of the agency. To have the problems that we have, without addressing the strategic problems, just perpetuates things. The cost implications are enormous. We're spending… I don't even know what the State Department spends on IT these days, but presumably it's over a billion a year, depending on how you define IT-related costs. So, we're not talking about peanuts here.

Q: Wow. That really is remarkable. Of course, people outside of the management cone or the management specialty wouldn't, unless they were very interested personally in how systems like this work, have any idea.

ANANIA: Exactly. Even people within the State Department who are nominally in charge of these things have no idea, and this is a big problem, too. Again, I talked about how these individual functional bureaus have created all these systems. Which bureau is it that has to do with everybody? It's the bureau of human resources. They have all these systems – at one point there were over 75 different applications. Do you really think that the director general of the Foreign Service, when she takes the job, has any idea how to manage IT systems or any capacity to do that? If such an individual ever existed, it would only be by chance, because you don't get hired to be the DG (director general) because you have IT expertise, or in some cases even much management expertise.

Q: Right. That would not be typical.

ANANIA: And this is true with other bureaus as well. I mean, okay, maybe these days if you're selected as the chief financial officer, you'll have IT expertise, especially if you're coming from the outside and you've worked for a big company. Maybe you've worked on some of these IT things. But that's not your skillset. Your skillset is financial management; it's not information technology management. This is a lot of the problem. As long as the bureaus have the money, they have the responsibility. The implication is that the assistant secretaries of those functional bureaus are the ones that are actually paying attention to these things.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth in many cases. So, in the case of HR, it's the executive director of HR who's saddled with this. But even there – does the executive director of HR have IT development experience? Probably not. It's usually a well-regarded Foreign Service generalist, maybe a management cone officer. In the past, though, it was a civil servant. At least then you had some continuity and there was one individual who worked there for many years. Whatever you could say about HR and its problems, at least you had people there who knew what they were doing. They had the history of why they had done certain things. Whether those things made sense ultimately or not is a question.

Of course, I don't want to make it sound as though I'm solely blaming the bureaus, necessarily, for this; to some degree, I am. Sometimes they would be very parochial and fight to preserve their own freedoms at the expense of what was good for the overall enterprise, but I also have a lot of sympathy for the bureaus. It's not as if the IRM bureau was actually coming in and being able to help, and IRM was often seen as just causing trouble.

IRM has all of these legal requirements under what was then FISMA (Federal Information Security Management Act). So, yes, IRM had a legal responsibility to inventory all of the systems and do certification and accreditation. The bureaus just feel like, "Hey, this is a waste of our time and we don't want to do this." It's a bad relationship. It's not like IRM was well-funded enough to actually come in and help them do it. Ideally, maybe IRM would have sent people to the bureau to sit down with them and have them fill out the questionnaires. From the bureau perspective, they wanted IRM to pay for the certification and accreditation and all of those things.

Q: Have IGs reported this? You know, IG reports reach Congress, and Congress, if it were to bestir itself to become interested, might be able to stir the pot a bit.

ANANIA: All of this is very well-known in the community. Inspector generals are very important; having said that, I often took great exception to the quality of work that the State Department's IG did over the years. Again, it is very important that we have IGs. I don't doubt that. But in the case of the inspector general, they had an entire office that was responsible for looking at things IT. If you think about it, if you're an ace IT person, are you likely to be working for the inspector general, or are you likely to be working someplace where you can manage IT systems?

To say that sort of explains part of the issue. They didn't necessarily have the most up-to-date people working. They would sometimes come up with kooky stuff. But overall, yes, they knew this was a big problem, as did the IGs of other agencies. In fact, I think there was a FISMA report, and then there were interested people in Congress. I'm trying to think of the name of the congressman, and I can't remember, but he was from Northern Virginia.

Q: Connelly?

ANANIA: I don't think so. He would grade agencies on how we were doing.

Q: Oh, it could have been Wolf. He's retired.

ANANIA: That might be it. In fact, I even went to some sort of event one time where he was unveiling the scores. I think State had improved so they wanted us to come. Maybe we had gone to D- to C or something.

Congress was aware of these problems. For that reason, they kept passing new laws. There was the so-called CIO Act, which said that the CIO was supposed to be in charge of these things. State, like many other agencies, didn't really comply with the CIO Act; they would come up with a new law. I don't even know what the most recent one was, but the most recent one that I recall was very clear that the State Department is in violation of it. The CIO is supposed to be in charge of making the allocations of money resources, and that's not happening.

In my experience, which went until recently, the undersecretary for management and the chief financial officer –CGFS, the Bureau of Comptroller and Global Financial Services, which used to be the Bureau of Resource Management – is more influential in making funding decisions, through the budget process. In fact, when I was the acting CIO, I tried very hard to cut funding to some systems that I felt were highly problematic. We actually set up an IT governance board, the E-Government Program Board, which was supposed to facilitate a process by which at least the CIO and the CFO would be heavily involved in the allocation and decision-making process.

That just didn't happen. I wasn't there long enough, and Christopher Burnham, who was the CFO and also in favor of these sorts of things, also departed. I think he was hoping that he would be named the undersecretary for Management in the second Bush administration, and it's a pity that he wasn't. He was a very capable manager with several years of experience learning about how State worked. Anyway, off he went and off I went. This whole idea of an empowered e-government program board fell apart.

Q: So, blue sky: If you were to be given the opportunity to reorganize it in a way that made sense, what would be the key things that you would do, based on your knowledge as of now?

ANANIA: Well, I wrote an article in the *Foreign Service Journal* that summarizes these thoughts. (https://www.afsa.org/e-hell-there-way-out). Basically – and not surprisingly, from what we've just been talking about – the number one thing is that the Secretary of State and the Undersecretary of State for Management have to finally implement the law. That is to say, give the CIO the responsibility for these programs. The CIO must control the money, and the CIO should control the information assurance process, as well.

Those elements that are in DS should be in IRM. But this is going to be a long-term thing, because the expertise and the money has been with the bureaus all this time. It's not as though IRM has the capacity to do these things. So, over time, the development effort should shift to IRM, along with the people who do it. No doubt about it: the people doing the technical work should shift. That's not to say that the bureaus don't still have a key role; they do, because they're the business owners. They're the ones who have to determine what the requirements are for the systems supporting their operations. But it should be the CIO and the IRM Bureau that look at the big picture and say, "Yes, Bureau X. You need to do this, but that has an impact on these other four systems, so we're going to integrate them all."

At that point, over time, you also need to migrate these systems onto more common platforms so that you don't have a huge multiplicity of different systems. I don't know if we mentioned this earlier, but there's a category of software called Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. Did we talk about this?

Q: CRMS… I don't think so.

ANANIA: Okay. So, CRM software. Great fortunes have been built on CRM. Salesforce, for instance, is a company that went from pretty much nothing to being one of the biggest companies in the world. They have a market capitalization that's greater than the GNP (Gross National Product) of some countries. The highest building in San Francisco is the Salesforce Tower, which just opened up a few years ago. Alright. Microsoft has CRM;

they have a product called Dynamics. ServiceNow is another company that's been extremely profitable over many years. Another company is called Remedy.

So, those are just four examples, and there are others. Those are market leaders. You would like to think that the State Department would have one of these that we would use. In fact, we use all four of those. Not only that, but even worse: we use different versions of the same product. So, for instance, the Bureau of Administration, going back to about the year 2000, started something called the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). I used to call that the Disintegrated Logistics Management System, because it integrated things that the Bureau of Administration wanted to integrate, but at the post level, it actually disintegrated because posts had systems that were shut down that communicated information to other systems.

The new ILMS did not do that. Now, the Bureau of Administration used different tools itself in putting this system together, but one of the main tools has been and still is ServiceNow. However, because they only wanted to address the issues that the Bureau of Administration felt were requirements, they implemented the system in a way that prevented other bureaus from taking advantage of that investment. They created an "instance," as it's called, of ServiceNow that was very limited. I would call it crippled, because they bought licenses on the assumption that people would only be doing limited things. So, someone overseas might need to access the system to put in a work order, but they're not managing anything. So, maybe they bought licenses that said, "Anybody in the world can access this to submit work orders."

Well, now if another bureau comes along and wants to use ServiceNow, that license doesn't cover them. They would be required to buy new licenses. In the meantime, within the Bureau of Administration, in their own executive office, they started another instance of ServiceNow. They did it, in my opinion, the right way. This was an open instance, so other bureaus could then come and say, "Alright. You've bought these licenses, and we're going to leverage these licenses. You've set up this instance, and now with whatever has already been built, if we build another module on, we can share the data."

That's the way it's actually supposed to work. If you were starting completely from scratch and you decided that you wanted to use ServiceNow, you would create a single enterprise-wide instance of ServiceNow. Presumably, the CIO would now be controlling all the money, right? So, the CIO decides that we're going to buy a corporate license that will allow bureaus to all develop within this same instance and share the licenses. Now, there may be additional licensing costs associated with the new application – you might pay more to have systems administrators who are working to develop the new application. You'd have to pay extra. But once the average user is using the system with a license, then they can use all aspects of the system, if that's the way it's engineered.

You only get full value from your investment if you do it on an enterprise-wide basis. But as I've just explained, that's not what the Department did or does. IRM itself uses Remedy, and they use it for their IT service center. If you put in a work order in the State Department, it goes into Remedy. If you put something into the MyServices, which is the work order application people use now, both overseas and domestically, that's going into ServiceNow, run by the Bureau of Administration. It's not the Executive Office, but the Office of Logistics Management. If you use other ServiceNow applications, you may be using a completely different instance.

In the meantime, the Department… well, it's a Microsoft shop, as you might say. The desktop computers run Microsoft software. The average user is using Word, Excel, PowerPoint, the MS Office applications. The Department recently migrated to Office 365, which is the web-based version. We now have the One Drive, so you're supposed to put your files on the OneDrive, which is in the cloud. That's all swell. Well, guess what? Microsoft has a product called Dynamics, and some bureaus said, "We're going to develop using Dynamics."

Well, that's a CRM system. It's a good system, and you might say, "Well, we already have all of these Microsoft licenses. We're a Microsoft shop. Theoretically, at least, Dynamics should interface well with the other Microsoft applications." So, for instance, within the application, maybe there might be times when you need to send an email, so it's maybe easier in Dynamics. All of these major applications have interfaces to Microsoft software, but you might just, for the sake of argument, say that as long as we're buying all of this Microsoft software, maybe we can get a better deal from Microsoft if we use Dynamics.

Some bureaus thought that that was a good idea, and they used it. Salesforce is a leader in corporate America. Some of the R (Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs) family, the public diplomacy offices, have used Salesforce for projects. But again, if the CIO was in charge, you would never be using four separate CRM products and then multiple flavors of individual different CRM software. Guess what? This has enormous cost implications. I can't tell you how big they are, but I can say it's tens of millions of dollars. There are perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars that could be saved if the CIO could simply put this all back together.

Now, of course, none of this could happen in any short period of time. You make these huge investments in these systems, and it's very hard to reengineer and start from scratch. On the other hand, the tools for doing IT development continue to advance, so a lot of the work can be done in much more automated ways. Instead of having to physically code a lot of things, now these products have graphical interfaces. You can kind of drag and drop things to create forms. The code is being written by the application itself. Those are things you couldn't do before. My own limited programming experience was using Microsoft Access; I mentioned this before. That was a very manual process. Now, with Microsoft Dynamics, which is also a relational database, it's a lot more automated. It requires more skill to learn it, because the interfaces aren't necessarily user-friendly, but once you do, you can do a lot of this work much faster.

Anyway, there are a lot of arguments about which product you might use, which one is the best, and it may not be one size fits all. It may be that there are unique qualities to some of these programs or applications that would lead you to have multiple, but you certainly wouldn't have four, and you certainly wouldn't have multiple instances of the same product, if you were being run on an enterprise-wide basis. So, you asked what they should do. Number one: comply with the law. Put the CIO in charge, and then, over time, pull this work into IRM where it belongs, take the responsibility away from the assistant secretary for Consular Affairs, who has no idea what's going on, I'm sure, in CA systems. Maybe at a high level, yes, but not in the day to day. Then build up a workforce. That's critical, because we have eviscerated the federal government direct hire workforce. We do not have IT experts who are civil servants. There are some, but by and large it's the contractors who outnumber the government employees by, I don't know, 100 times to one. Again, consolidation in IRM would make things more efficient and you wouldn't need as many government employees if they were properly organized with fewer applications to manage.

Q: Okay. Here's a question: What has happened with that choice is that it is both a Republican and a Democratic choice. They are thinking that by hiring contractors, they don't have to pay the long-term retirement costs and medical costs that accrue when hiring a full-time equivalent. Has anyone made the argument that we have now become penny wise and pound foolish with this type of hiring?

ANANIA: Well, I'm sure a lot of people have. I certainly would. I'm not arguing that we shouldn't have contractors; I'm saying that we need to have a well-trained and properly motivated IT workforce of government employees to supervise the contractors. You could also make the argument that, in fact, some of this stuff should just be done in-house. What often happens is that the contractors are essentially a shadow workforce.

The theoretical advantage of hiring an outside company is that they have the expertise and can actually do the work sort of turnkey. You say, "I want this kind of system," and then one day, they march in months later and say, "Okay, the system is ready. Let's turn it on." That's not at all what happens. What really happens is, bureaus end up hiring companies essentially as "body shops." They bring in contractors, and then the bureau managers, who are of uneven skill sets, direct the contractors as to what to do day to day. There isn't a clear set of goals and objectives up front that says, "This is the system you're going to create and run." Or, we can't turn to a company and say – we want you to manage an HR system you've already created. Things like that mostly can't be completely outsourced, though as the Department and other agencies are moving to the Cloud, Microsoft and other companies are now taking on much of the work of running both software and infrastructure.

But in terms of IT applications traditionally managed by functional bureaus, it's very difficult to outsource that work. As part of IT development, organizations used to develop software using something called the waterfall approach. Basically, systems engineers would be given highly detailed sets of requirements. They would go off somewhere, write a bunch of code in old languages – COBOL (common business-oriented language), Fortran, whatever it might – and then they would come back and say, "Okay. You told us that the system had to do all of these things. It does it." Boom. That's it. From one day to the next, we turn it on and that's what we're using. That's waterfall. That's not the way software is developed anymore for various reasons.

Now, the idea is that it's an iterative process. Ideally, you are developing and implementing much sooner, and you're doing it in modular ways. So, you're adding functionality. Your developers are working directly with the customers, and you're implementing things over time. That's much more realistic, especially if you're going into an organization that already has a lot of software. It's unusual that you would go in and actually say, "We're going to take this old system and completely redo it in a new platform. We're going to turn the old one off and turn the new one on." Usually, what you're doing is modifying the old system. So, the so-called GEMS system, the Global Employee Management System under HR, has been around for a long time. Requirements keep changing, and we keep switching and doing various things with that system. A whole series of different contractors and different companies may have worked on that system at times.

Q: I can tell you, as a user of that system in the field, several years ago now, I don't want to say it was full of glitches, but the amount of changes that went in and the frequency of changes made it very difficult for the average user to use it with confidence. Generally, you had one GEMS genius, like the ambassador's secretary or maybe the management counselor's secretary, who knew everything. Every day, you had to go to that person and say, "I've just tried to enter this data into my GEMS information sheet. I can't do it. What do I do next?" He or she would open whatever the booklet is, or maybe they went to a training course, and they would say, "Try this. If that doesn't work, then try this." That's how it actually worked in the field.

ANANIA: Yes. In fact, most employees don't really go directly into GEMS. You have to be an HR specialist to do that, and you may even have to be in Washington as a domestic employee to access it. But GEMS incorporates a variety of different things. So, HR, at certain points, developed pages that had links to all of these different applications, some of which were part of GEMS, some of which were drawing information from GEMS. They were all developed over different periods of time. There are interfaces for employees, but historically these haven't been very customer friendly, in large part because the entire system is based on software which is now obsolete.

I mentioned that HR had approximately 75 applications. Well, a lot of these are available to the employees. You might have one to manage student loan repayments, and another one that would show you the Foreign Affairs Personnel Registry, FAPR. I mean, there were all of these different things, but they were developed by different contractors over different time periods. Those companies lost the contract and moved on. The individuals moved on. Whoever the government employees were who originally set the requirements and accepted the systems have left, many to retirement. Technology changed. So, you're just left with this Tower of Babel, really. Again, you don't have a CIO for the entire enterprise, so there's nobody trying to sweep up the mess.

Q: In your experience, because you also interact with these systems on an interagency basis, at least periodically, is there another agency that has it right?

ANANIA: Not that I know of. Most agencies have very similar problems. In fact, you mention the interagency, and another thing that I tried to do when I was the acting CIO… I had worked overseas, and I understood that in many overseas locations, you might have multiple agencies, each with their own computer rooms. In particular, the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Foreign Commercial Service – both foreign affairs agencies – were managing systems overseas. Remember, we had all of these information assurance things that we were supposed to be doing.

One of the things that was a big problem was so-called patch management. Software goes out, bugs are discovered, patches – software fixes – are released, but now it's up to the systems managers at all of these different locations to implement them. This was another issue that I took up when I was the acting CIO. IRM's view was, well, all of these systems are in the field, and therefore it's the responsibility of the bureaus to make sure that the systems are patched. If something goes wrong, it's their fault. Well, does the executive director of the EUR/IO Joint Executive Office know that somebody at Embassy Bern is not properly updating their network software? No. In fact, I had some really good people in IRM in 2005. The Microsoft software was improving, and it became possible to actually look at what the level of patching was on a global basis. We could go out over the network and check and see, for all of the devices that were connected to the network, whether or not various patches had been applied.

You ask what other agencies did well. Well, USAID did a terrific job of this. They had set up a system where, basically, their patch management software would crawl the network in the background and check every single device to see if it was up to date. If it wasn't, they would produce reports, and the reports would go to, I guess, the overseas mission, but also to people higher up in the chain. They would grade you, and they would say, "This is your grade," and that was an excellent thing. If there were USAID missions that were falling down in this area, the chain of command knew it.

John Streufurt was the acting CIO at USAID, and after I left IRM he came over and worked for the State Department in the Office of Information Assurance. So, in talking with John, I saw that they were doing it much better than we were. I remember having these meetings with IRM, saying, "Hey, we should be doing this. We should be in charge of this, not the bureaus." The feeling in IRM was, at least among the then-DAS equivalent in IRM, no, the regional bureaus, which were in charge of overseas posts, would get upset and consider this a power grab.

Well, I had regular meetings with the regional bureau executive directors, so I asked them. I said, "Listen, this seems crazy to me. You guys are supposed to be responsible for all of this." I looked around the room and said, "Does anybody really understand what you're supposed to be doing?" Of course, they all said no. I said, "Did you know that if something went wrong, IRM considers it your problem?"

They said, “What?”

So, I said, “What would you say if I said IRM we could do this centrally and we could manage this?”

They said, “That’s a great idea! We love the idea.” So, that’s what we did. We started grading all of the posts. Yes, we informed the bureaus of what was going on. We informed the post management officer, we informed the regional bureau EX. It was similar to what USAID was doing. Then, lo and behold, guess what? Posts started to improve. What gets measured gets done. You have to be careful about what you measure, because if you measure the wrong thing, you might be doing things you don’t want to do. But in this case, we did want to measure software patch compliance and we developed a grading scale that scored posts down based on the importance of individual patches, and for those not applied, how long the delay had been. We did want this done, and it did get done. If post sees that they’re rated as a D-, then they’re going to devote attention to it.

The other thing this would do is that it also highlighted problems that we didn’t even know existed. There were problems, maybe, that a post had with downloading a patch – it didn’t work, or there was some problem with the software. IRM also put in place dashboards for the IM personnel at the post, where they could see the status of various systems and things that we were tracking. It was a very good tool for them. That was all very positive, and overdue, and we started to see much better implementation. The other thing was what got me started on this tangent, which was that I was talking to other agencies.

I knew other agencies had these same problems, and I knew that the Foreign Agricultural Service and Foreign Commercial Service did not have IT people in the field. They might have an office of just three or four people, and yet they’ve got these servers to manage. So, any time these agencies wanted to do anything, they had to actually hire someone to go out and travel around to these places and update the system. That’s crazy. It’s extremely expensive, plus you can’t keep up with all the patches.

So, I went over to the CIOs who represented those offices, and I said, “Why don’t you just join the State Department system? Go on to our Open Net system, and then, with your access to the Internet, we can also create data pipes between our agency and your agency. If you want – of course, you wouldn’t need to – you could give your people access to your corporate applications via a secure pipe.”

You could also just do that straight over the Internet if you did that, but typically, agencies did not want to do that. They wanted to run through other government-secure pipes. But that was perfectly feasible to do. Somebody from your agency could be on Open Net and type in a URL (uniform resource locator) that would take them over to the Agricultural Service system. If they wanted to have some sort of separate log-in process, they could have that with IDs (identifications) that were coming out at the time or with PKI (public key infrastructure) certification. They could have card readers; they could do whatever they wanted. At any rate, I didn’t make a lot of progress, but a few years later that's exactly what happened. These agencies were getting hammered because they couldn't secure their overseas networks. It was exactly what I had said at the time: They should just join Open Net. That's what they finally did. They don't run their own systems overseas. It was crazy that they were doing it back then. But it took a while.

Q: I'm not sure this is relevant, but did you also have contacts with any, I imagine, allied government foreign affairs agencies to compare how they do things?

ANANIA: Maybe slightly. When I was in the Office of Management Policy, I would occasionally meet with people from closely allied governments, like the British. Sometimes, they would have people who would come to Washington – high level officials – who would seek meetings at the State Department, so then we would meet with them. But not too much, no. We did have people who were fellows from some of our close allies who worked in our building. They had security clearances to see limited amounts of things. That, too, was a technical challenge, to try to figure out how they could log into a State Department system but only see certain things. Anyway, I really can't get into that, but those discussions would go on as well.

Q: But none of those fellows actually worked in the management field that you were in?

ANANIA: No, not that I can think of. I think they were mostly working in regional bureaus on country desks. We had somebody from the German government who might have been working in the EUR Bureau. It was that sort of thing.

Q: Yeah. I worked in EUR, and we definitely had a German. Then, after the German, I think we had somebody from France.

ANANIA: The Fellowship of Hope was a NATO program. There were also… I remember that there was an Australian fellow who I met with a couple of times who was working somewhere or other. So, yes, some of those things were going on. Anyway, most of what I've been talking about is expressing my frustrations at the big challenges of the day that we could not seem to address and, in some cases, State still has not addressed. That's unfortunate but I can at least talk about some positive things that we did, as well, including the introduction of mobile computing options.

Q: Okay.

ANANIA: So, again, having served in the field and been a management officer, which was not always the case with people who worked in IRM – some of them were civil servants, some of them were Foreign Service personnel who had worked in overseas IPCs (information programs center) but hadn't necessarily looked into a lot of the challenges across the management platform – I had a certain perspective that was different. It was a bit of a culture clash, because IRM had its own customs that I didn't necessarily understand or appreciate or, in some cases, even accept. But as I mentioned before, there were always very progressive people in IRM who were working on ideas that, somehow, they just couldn't get done. Leadership or management just didn't support them.

So, they would be cooking away in the background and, in fact, we were able to implement some systems that were very valuable for State Department employees generally. Remote computing was very much on people's minds at that point. There was a very limited program to implement Blackberries, an early example of a smartphone, which allowed people to get their email on their mobile phone. That was a pretty radical idea at the time. By this point in corporate America, there were many different ways that people could log onto systems from their homes. IRM had been working with some of these things but had never quite figured out how to implement it on a wide basis. So, with Blackberries, when I joined IRM, there was a pilot program – a few people here and there had been given them. They were being used elsewhere in the federal government.

Q: Now, what year does the first trial with Blackberries take place, as you recall?

ANANIA: I couldn't really say, but probably no earlier than 2003 or 2004 time period.

Q: The reason I asked is because they were introduced in Budapest, where I was working in the period from 2005 to 2008.

ANANIA: Right. That was the program that I authorized. Again, most of the technical work had been done before my arrival, but there were a host of management issues. First and foremost, as always, was the issue of who was going to pay. The assumption had been that, somehow, IRM was supposed to fund these things. Well, IRM didn't have a budget for it, and it was quite expensive. You had to pay user licenses and buy the devices themselves, set up servers in various locations, etc.

So, in the pilot program, IRM was handing them out. When I first got there, the assumption was that, somehow, IRM was going to ration these things out to bureaus, based on who knows what standard. Based on the total number of people in your bureau, you would get a percentage? Who knew? I said, "No, that doesn't make any sense. IRM doesn't have the budget for this. We're the Program Management Office. What we need to do is, we need to let the bureaus decide how many they want. They can have from zero to infinite, but they have to pay. We need to set a fee up so that the money we take in will allow us to set up a program office, the technical infrastructure, and the help desk support necessary. It has to be 24/7/365, if you're providing global support."

So, that's ultimately what we did. I prepared the material to go up to Christopher Burnham, who was the acting undersecretary for Management, who approved it. Again, we set the fees so that IRM got a generous amount of money to properly support these devices. There were also a host of other issues about how you were going to field them. Originally, the idea was that each and every bureau and post that wanted to have these things was going to put the servers in. Blackberry servers were going to be attached to their local area network. Well, again, no. Look at an enterprise-wide basis. At least we wanted to make sure that IRM was managing the servers for the domestic bureaus.

The cat was somewhat out of the bag, as I recall; some bureaus already had purchases and were using these Blackberry Enterprise Servers, BES. We also had to look at the topology of the network and make some decisions there. Basically, to the extent I could do it, I made sure that it was centrally managed. But, as is inevitably the case, especially back then when networks weren't as good and telecommunication lines weren't necessarily as high speed as they are now, there were locations that really had to run their own servers, just to make sure that it would work. There were also all kinds of complicated things with connecting to the telecommunications providers and what overseas companies would support Blackberries.

There were a host of issues. When you traveled from region to region, it might work; it might not work. I remember that one of the fixes was that you had to shut down the Blackberry, pull off the back cover, pull out the battery or the SIM (subscriber identification module) card, and put it back in. You would do all kinds of crazy things. It's hard to imagine, now when mobile communications are so ubiquitous, but it was very challenging. The reason that we could use the Blackberry, by the way, was because Blackberry was a Canadian company and considered trustworthy. They implemented an encryption scheme that encrypted the data all the way to the device, which they had not previously done.

When Condoleezza Rice came in as secretary of State, she came from the National Security Council, and her very aggressive staffers were insisting that they had to have these Blackberries. They had been taking a major risk by using them because they did not have proper encryption. There's a lot of sensitive information, even if it's unclassified, especially in the NSC (National Security Council). When someone is traveling, if you're communicating the specifics of where some important person is going to be and what time they're going to be there, well, this is a big risk. That's the risk that they had been taking. I don't know that there were ever any hacks of their systems, but the problem with those things, often, is you don't know. You could be hacked, and people could be looking at what you're doing, and you wouldn't even know it.

That's going back to information assurance – confidentiality, integrity, and availability. They can just be reading your system, and the confidentiality has been breached but you don't know it. They haven't changed any data, so they haven't messed with the integrity, and you have full availability of the system, so you are blithely going along and thinking everything is well when it's not. When they came in and started demanding we issue Blackberries, thank goodness that this was just after the company that owned Blackberry, Research in Motion (RIM) had implemented this encryption. Luckily, I could, with good conscience, say, "Yes, we're going to use the Blackberry system."

There was another company that was actually pushing very hard to get the State Department to use their technology for mobile email. It was a company, as I recall, in Maryland. In fact, IRM had been experimenting with them, and their company had, theoretically, a lot of advantages – their system didn't need to have as much infrastructure, the licenses were much cheaper, and if their product had worked, I would have used it. But, in fact, it didn't work; there were technical glitches, and I don't know that I've ever heard of them again. So, they didn't succeed.

Of course, in the meantime, Blackberry itself was washed away as Apple and Android devices took over the world with all sorts of apps that take care of all these things. But at any rate, pushing Blackberries out and doing so in a way that would let bureaus and posts buy their own devices was a very positive thing that we were all very proud of. That was the start of widespread mobile computing at State.

Similarly, we had the so-called ONE system – Open Net Everywhere. This allowed people to get a so-called fob with a code on it, and you could then, from your home computer login via a virtual private network to State's OpenNet system. Unfortunately, you had to, and still have to, download a little bit of software. Then, you could go to the one.state.gov website, which was an IRM interface, and log in and put in the code from the fob. Then you got a facsimile of what your desktop might look like at work, and you could use Microsoft Office products.

It was never perfect; it still isn't. It's now called Global Open Net, GO. I use it myself, and it generally works pretty well here in D.C., but it goes down and there are glitches. At any rate, it's a lot better than nothing, and I was able to work productively from home as the global Covid-19 pandemic took hold, supporting people in Afghanistan and Iraq from my basement. Again, it was pretty much the same set of issues on the management side. Originally, the intention was that IRM was going to pay for all of this. IRM had no budget, so how are you going to ration availability? It didn't make much sense. So, we set up a licensing thing and said, "If you want to get a fob, this is what it's going to cost you per year for the license." We just let the bureaus work it out.

So, we did both Blackberries and the ONE system. Mobile computing finally came to State.

At the time, 2005, there was a big push, federal government-wide, to have a lot more telecommuting. This was viewed as a good thing. There would be less traffic on the roads, perhaps agencies could lease less office space, etc. That tide rolled in, and it subsequently largely rolled out, right up until the global pandemic. There was a lot less enthusiasm for it, certainly during the Trump administration. Starting during my time in IRM, there was always a suspicion that if people were working from home then they weren't really working, and that productivity would drop. And there are management challenges when people aren't physically present.

At any rate, the State Department was under a lot of pressure to allow people to sign telework agreements, not necessarily to work at home all the time, but to do situational telework, as it is termed, so that if there was an ice storm they could login and work. In fact, some of the people who had those agreements ended up wishing they didn't, because when the weather caused the government to close offices, they were still expected to log on and work, whereas colleagues might be given the day off to go have fun with their kids sledding down the hills. You can't do that anymore.

At any rate, it was very interesting to see. Theoretically, we had X number of thousands of people who could log in and work, and were supposed to be working, but we had the statistics in IRM to show the number of so-called concurrent users – how many people were using the system at any given time. That's the way our licensing worked. You might have 30,000 people who theoretically could be using the system, but you only paid licenses for, let's just say, up to 3,000 concurrent users. Most of the time, people weren't logged in. You don't want to have a license and be paying for all of these people if they weren't all logging in.

Well, what we saw was that even on these days when there was a snow emergency and, theoretically, a huge number of these people were supposed to be logging in, it wasn't happening. We could also see that the usage rates at eight o'clock and nine o'clock in the morning were low. Then, they would sort of start building at 10 and 11 and 12, and then they'd start going down again. You wondered, were these people really working? I remember reporting this to the director general, who was really behind all of this and insisted we had to have this teleworking program and expand it. I said, "If you think all of these people are really working, then maybe they are. Maybe they're doing other things. But from the logins, it appears to us that they aren't." It's funny what you can get.

But again, often the way the bureaucracy is and the way the IRM bureaucracy is, they're not necessarily worried about these larger management issues. That's the problem. When I was in the Office of Management Policy, our goal was to look across the enterprise at what DS was doing that had an impact on what the Bureau of Administration was doing, or Consular Affairs. How did this all come together? You don't have a lot of that, and that's a big problem.

Q: Yeah. DS. Are you going to talk at all about DS and how it has changed? Or is that really outside of your purview?

ANANIA: There have been huge changes. When I joined the Foreign Service, regional security officers actually were regional, because there were so few of them. You might have somebody covering multiple countries. Then, over time, we got RSOs not only in every mission but now at pretty much every individual post. Meanwhile, the DS bureaucracy itself mushroomed in size. DS views itself as, almost, a separate agency, which is, in large cases, a negative, from my perspective. They often don't understand or appreciate what's going on in the rest of the institution.

But there's no doubt that there's been a huge increase in professionalization of the agents, who are now federal law enforcement agents. They receive the same training as a lot of other agencies do. They do have an important law enforcement function that a lot of people don't understand. They investigate visa fraud. They perform criminal investigations in the U.S. and arrest people in the U.S. They don't arrest them overseas, but they might work with local authorities to have arrests made. So, it's a totally different organization than it was when I was a post security officer in Tijuana in 1985.

Q: Right. Well, alright. At this moment, does this take you to the end of your tour here?

ANANIA: Yes. All of this, by the way, is going on in a period… I was only there from March or April of 2005 until January of 2006. So, very busy. I must say, on a personal note, that it was highly stressful. At this time, I started to get migraines, which at the time were thought not to be related to stress. I think that subsequently medical science decided that yes, stress can be a trigger to migraines. I started to get a special kind of migraine, not a headache.

Q: Yes. There's been a lot more medical research done on the issue of migraines. I get them occasionally, but the interesting thing is that you can get a migraine without getting a headache.

ANANIA: Yes. That's the kind of migraines I have.

Q: I think most people always imagine a migraine as a headache, but no; in fact, there's a concatenation of symptoms, which, if you experience them all together, are now considered migraines even if you have no headache at all.

ANANIA: What I had is called a classic migraine. A classic migraine does not have a headache. It's not… You would think, if it's called the classic, it would be the most common, but it's not. So, yes, IRM was a very challenging place to be. In the meantime, I went through the Foreign Service bidding process again, and I had bid on two positions in particular that I was interested in, both management counselor positions. One was in Berlin, where I had been before, and one was in Mexico, my first tour having been in Tijuana. I was ultimately assigned back to Berlin, which we were very happy about, because we liked Berlin a lot and I understood the mission very well. It was a highly complex mission with seven different posts.

I wasn't selected to continue in the CIO slot and I had time to go back and get more German language training, which… Typically, for management officers, bureaus just sort of rush you out. Many times, the positions aren't even language-designated in the first place. I can't actually remember if mine was or wasn't, but I had served in Germany before and had eight weeks of FSI training. I had picked up a lot of German vocabulary. I had a basis in the grammar but didn't speak German with reasonable proficiency. So, I said, "I'm going to go back and study some more German," and I started to do that. That was very productive.

Unfortunately, my predecessor in the position was required to leave his assignment several months early for family health reasons. So, the ambassador, Ambassador Timken, said, "Hey, we can't have this position vacant. You've got to get out here sooner rather than later." I had to cut short my language training.

2006-2009 – Minister Counselor for Management, US Mission Germany, Embassy Berlin

At any rate, I got out there in May. I did that on the basis of, "I will go out there, but then you have to pay for me to travel back to Maryland so that I can pack out." My family had to stay and finish up school; we had to pack out and get the house fixed up and all those sorts of things one does in the Foreign Service.

Q: Just to confirm – this is now May 2006?

ANANIA: Yes. So, I went out there, and I really enjoyed getting back to Berlin. Berlin has very different weather from the rest of Germany; it tends to be a little bit brighter, with not as much drizzle and rain. It just so happened that that spring was an amazing spring with a heat wave. Early on, when I first got there, there was the soccer World Cup going on in South Africa. There was a lot of excitement because Germany, as was generally the case, had a strong team.

It was good to be out there for a few months, and then I went back and packed out and brought the family out and started working again in Germany. It was familiar; I knew a lot of the staff from my first tour there. A lot of the key management staff and almost all of the Berlin personnel had remained. I also knew a fair number of the folks who had moved up from Bonn. Some had moved up while I was still in Berlin; others had moved up later, but I already knew them. So, it was very congenial.

I still understood a lot of the building issues. The mission had made a lot of progress in the meantime, but there were still issues that needed to be dealt with. Some of the school issues were still the same, but again, there had been a lot of progress. I took a lot of satisfaction in seeing what had happened. You don't often get that in the Foreign Service. Usually, you don't return to a post. In the case of management, the issues tend to stay the same. So, coming back seven years later, I could really pick some things up, but in other cases, I could just be satisfied that, in the interim, my predecessors had made a lot of progress.

Q: Alright. So, now you are going back as management counselor. Has the embassy been completed? Is it still, in a sense, being built? I've lost track of that.

ANANIA: As I think we discussed earlier, during my first tour in Berlin, I was very much involved in real estate issues. The expectation and desire of the State Department was that we were going to build a new embassy on Pariser Platz, which was named after Paris, France, almost directly next to the Brandenburg Gate. This was where we had our embassy building in the 1930's. We had only briefly occupied it due to various strange things; the building had been destroyed during World War II. It was then in no man's land next to the Berlin Wall. So, when we came back in, we wanted to return to our home on Pariser Platz. That was kind of overblown, because again, it hadn't been our home for very long and there was nothing very positive that had ever happened there, but nonetheless, that's what we wanted to do.

So, we put forward a plan to Congress to build a new embassy that would incorporate all of the offices in Berlin. We had several separate buildings where we had been working.

We had a separate chancery, which was the chancery that had been our embassy to the German Democratic Republic. It was nearby, also in the center of Berlin. *Mitte* means center, and it was in the *Mitte* District, on a street called Neustaedischekirch Strasse, which was New City Church Street, named for a church that had been bombed and was no longer there. That had been right across the street from our embassy. It was at that time an empty lot and we used it as a surface parking lot. As of a few years ago, it was a city park. We had an *Amerika Haus* (house), spelled in the German way. In the aftermath of World War II, we had established these Amerika *Hauser (houses)* in many cities around Germany as cultural beacons, basically to help Germany become a democracy and celebrate the democratic values we hoped to share with the new German Federal Republic. These were very successful. They were meeting places for German intellectuals and artists and others, and we sent many eminent U.S. scholars and musicians and painters and who knows who else to these places for cultural and intellectual exchanges.

It was a great thing, but those times had passed, and they were no longer especially relevant. Most of them had been closed down, and we ended up closing down others during my first tour. The rest of them, including those in Frankfurt and Cologne, closed down while I was there. So, we had this Amerika *Haus* in Berlin near the famous Zoo Station in the former West Berlin, and at this point, the embassy determined the building's security was inadequate – it didn't have setback, it had glass windows – so the decision was made that we were going to take the workers out of the Amerika *Haus*. They would then work in the chancery or wherever else we could fit them. I'm not sure if we closed the building just before or just after my return. We still used it for some events, but there weren't people working there, and it wasn't open regularly to the public, a pity.

We also had this big building on a boulevard called Clay Allee. I don't know if I mentioned before that this was named after Lucius Clay, who was instrumental in the administration of the American sector in Berlin after World War II. He was very well-regarded. The grateful citizens of Berlin renamed this major boulevard for him. I think it had previously been Kronprinzen Allee (Crown Prince Boulevard). So, we had this other building. During my first tour, I had advanced, tentatively, the notion that maybe it didn't make sense to build a building to put everyone on Pariser Platz when we had this very nice building that already had a custom-built consular section and abundant office space for many back-office personnel. So, maybe we should just buy that building.

This idea was shut down. The then-ambassador was hell-bent on us building on Pariser Platz and moving the entire embassy team there. We would get this done. He even made some fairly outlandish claims to the German press that this would all be done by the end of his tour, which was really unfortunate to say. That was never going to happen. We also had a general services facility on Curtius Strasse, which I mentioned before. It had originally been a purpose-built motor pool and warehouse compound for the U.S. Mission to Berlin. During my first tour, I negotiated the complicated purchase of that compound. In the meantime, OBO – or FBO, as it was then called, the Foreign Buildings Office – had constructed additional space to allow the maintenance personnel and other people to work more properly there.

I didn't like the way they did it. It cost a lot more money. We ended up with a building that wasn't nearly as nice as it should have been. So, we had these different, disparate areas, and the original plan was that we were just going to have this one chancery. Well, in the meantime, we had the first Iraq War. There was a lot of controversy when some of our NATO allies were not enthusiastic about this war. In particular, there was a lot of hostility in some parts of the U.S. and in Congress towards Germany and France, which were cautioning us against this and not joining with us in this "Coalition of the Willing," as I think it was called, to invade Iraq. So, we had things like people who didn't want to call them "French fries." We had "freedom fries" and other things like that.

There was this sort of visceral negativity towards Germany, and this happened at the same time that the Department was continuing to advance its request for funds to build this big new building. There were a host of issues with the local government in Berlin regarding the siting of the building. We were trying to get permission to close a major street, an east-west Street. We wanted them to make modifications to the street plan that would cut off a little bit of the major downtown park, the Tiergarten, or the Animal Garden, which originally was a hunting preserve for the Prussian royal family. It was located right outside the original wall; the Brandenburg Gate having been part of that wall. Now, it was incorporated into the city and very dear; Germans love nature. We also wanted to encroach slightly on the planned Holocaust Memorial.

So, very difficult to get these things done; eventually, between my two tours in Berlin, the US did reach an agreement with Berlin, which did in fact move a street (*Ebert Strasse*) and cut off a bit of a large Holocaust memorial site, which had yet to be built. In fact, it also cut off a bit of the park. These were major achievements on the diplomatic front. We got these approvals, so now the budget and the request go up to the Hill, and they're mad at Germany. So, with all these factors, somehow word is conveyed back that, yes, you can build your embassy, but you have to live within a much lower budget. I think the original request was around $180 million and Congress offered $125 million, a substantial cut.

This happened while Secretary Powell was in office. That was the time of the First Gulf War. This wasn't when I was back in Germany; this happened several years previously. Secretary Powell had a difficult decision to make, which was, do we hold out and try to get the full funding that we need to build this big building to house everyone, or do we just say thank you and go ahead with our project? He decided to go ahead. This required that the building be redesigned and downsized. Some very lamentable changes were made – lamentable if you were the person responsible for maintaining the building, as I ultimately was.

The Department had held an architectural design competition and the winning design was going to be a square "donut" construction with a central garden in the middle. There were going to be offices all the way around on the four sides. One side was a neighboring building. It was just a blank wall there. So, as the firm made the design changes to cut the costs to fit the budget, they took out all of the offices that were going to be up against that blank wall, and the central courtyard became bigger. That at least was nice. Another thing that they did was, they were originally supposed to have a basement that was going to contain a lot of the technical equipment, like heating, ventilation, air conditioning, a frame room for the computers, whatever it might be. They took that out. So, they integrated all of these technical areas into the rest of the building above ground, which, if you think about it, was kind of insane. This is some of the most expensive real estate, not only in Germany but presumably in all of the world, and here we were putting in a telephone frame room on the ground floor, right on the Pariser Platz.

So, at any rate, I inherited all of this. You originally asked, what was the status of the building? Well, the building was well under construction when I got there. But because the building was also smaller, we now couldn't incorporate everybody into the building. In particular, they had designed the consular section as if there weren't going to be many visas, because there's a Visa Waiver Pilot Program, as it was then called, which meant that Germans could basically go online and get permission to travel. They didn't need visas. But that didn't account for the fact that hundreds and thousands of other people, like third country nationals, refugees, Germans going for purposes other than tourism, all needed to come in and get their visas. So, the small consular section included in the design was clearly, completely inadequate for any such thing. They also hadn't built in a good space for our Public Diplomacy colleagues, so that was another big issue.

Pariser Platz and the Brandenburg Gate, December 31, 2008. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

At any rate, we needed, basically, to keep the Clay building. That went right back to what I said in the beginning – something I had quietly proposed in 1997 or so. Accidentally, things had come around to that. Sometimes good ideas need time to germinate and sometimes persistence pays. So, I had the great pleasure – and it truly was a pleasure – of finally negotiating for and buying the so-called Clay II building. It was one of several large buildings originally constructed by the German Luftwaffe as an air defense headquarters, a compound the US Army occupied after World War II. I signed the paperwork. I got a codicil from the secretary of State saying I could sign the paperwork to buy the Clay building, which we did. The Germans gave us a very reasonable price for such a large and well-built property. It was a bargain though we ultimately did spend additional funds to upgrade the physical security.

We still have the Clay building, and that's where the consular section was and remained. Basically, that's where a lot of our back-office staff were from the management section, because it never made sense to put your HR people and your financial management people downtown in this new building. Unfortunately, we did end up moving some of these staff. The HR people did move down there. Cost-wise, it didn't make a lot of sense, but that's what we did. Nonetheless, we ended up buying the Clay building. We also retained the Curtiusstrasse general services compound. So, those are the three functional properties that now exist in Berlin with the embassy. We closed the Amerika Haus down, and we continued along with the buildings that really, ultimately, we should have kept in the first place. It didn't necessarily happen by design, but it did eventually happen.

Q: In terms of footprint, are the buildings… Is it relatively easy for a person to go from building to building?

ANANIA: Using public transportation, yes, or driving. Berlin is a very large and spread out city. The Curtius Strasse facility was convenient because it was located in the district of Zehlendorf, which was the American sector. That's where most of our housing was. Our government-owned housing was pretty much all there. So, in terms of being able to maintain the properties, having the maintenance section there made a lot of sense. It was also located directly next to a major rail line, with an S-Bahn station a short walk away. Having the warehouse there made a lot of sense. We were also maintaining the Clay building, as we called it. Well, Clay 2 was what we actually called it; originally, the U.S. mission occupied an entire compound with several buildings. They had numbers, and our building was Clay 2. The rest of it had been the U.S. Army's, and it went back to the Germans. That is also in the Zehlendorf district.

As I may have mentioned, originally the Germans intended to use their intelligence agency, the BND – *Bundesnachrichtendienst,* or Federal Intelligence Agency – from Munich up to Berlin. They eventually did not do that, and the buildings that they had intended to occupy on the Clay compound, the former US Mission, was sold to a private developer and is now condominiums. One of those buildings sits right next to our building. Then, the original headquarter building, where the general of the U.S. Army command used to be, just sat there. Throughout my entire tour there, I'm not sure what, if anything, they did to it. In the meantime, it was a great set for movies. The German film industry returned to the town of Babelsberg, which is right outside Berlin near Potsdam. They were constantly making movies and television shows in and around Berlin.

At both places, when we lived in Berlin – both of the houses we occupied – they made movies or TV shows within a block or two of us on multiple occasions. It was interesting to see how that whole process worked. At any rate, you'd see, occasionally, at our compound a whole bunch of Nazi soldiers running around for these productions. It was a little disquieting. In fact, our compound had originally been a *Luftwaffe* – German Air Force – air defense headquarters. That was what it was originally built for, and that was why we had taken it over after the war. I don't know if we deliberately didn't bomb it, or if we had just never hit it, but it was in good condition after the war and we took it over. It was a very well-built set of buildings.

Q: Now, here you are. The infrastructure, in essence, has been established. As a management counselor, was it working effectively? Were you getting the level of productivity out of all the different services that you wanted?

ANANIA: Well, again, the building was under construction when I went there. That, too, was an issue, because naturally you always have issues when large projects are going on. We had to deal with the federal government of Germany regarding these issues. Unfortunately, the OBO people had made some serious errors in the way the project was originally set up, and these had to do with tax refunds. This is extremely important, and OFM, the Office of Foreign Missions, which exists in D.C., was part of the DS Bureau at the time. They actually had a fellow named Cliff Seagroves, who's still there, who did a superb job of highlighting these tax issues. In many cases, you needed to negotiate, with the host government, a tax agreement to make sure that the taxes your construction company paid locally would be reimbursed.

In the case of Germany and many other countries, they have a value added tax system. So, the payments would be made, and they would be shown on invoices, and then we needed a system by which we could reclaim that money. They hadn't done this properly prior to this contract being issued. Hensel Phelps was the construction company. At this point, I can't remember all the details, but basically, the way they had registered and paid the taxes did not permit us to reclaim the money. This was a very large amount of money. The contract value was, let's just say, 50 million dollars. It might have been more. When you're talking at that level, it might have been seven percent or 12% or whatever was applicable, and you can see that this is many millions of dollars.

The Germans were generally pretty helpful in terms of repaying the money, even though they had problems with some of the ways the company was set up. But we had blown past all kinds of deadlines. There were procedures for us to reclaim that for our own U.S. mission purposes, because we were buying things as well, but you had to submit paperwork, and it was a real pain. Also, as individuals, we could reclaim taxes paid for certain things; again, not everything. It was inconvenient, and we had a lot of grumbles about it, but we had blown by all kinds of deadlines. We ended up sacrificing, I think, many millions of dollars, which was really a problem.

We also had other issues. The OBO folks weren't necessarily maintaining the sidewalks and things. I remember a German notable from another town had slipped on the ice and hit his head and was asking for reimbursement. We checked, and he was a legitimate guy. I remember saying, "Just pay him." He wasn't asking for much. German healthcare costs aren't high, and he had had to go to the doctor a couple of times, so, "Just pay this guy." We didn't need a lawsuit, and we were in the wrong. We hadn't cleared the ice. So, there were just all kinds of things like that. I would meet with the project managers. Then, of course, it was extremely important to coordinate with them about when the chancery would actually be ready, how we could move in, and all of these other kinds of things.

We hired a full-time employee who was our move coordinator, which is a best practice that's used at other posts, as well. She would put out newsletters informing people about what was going on, which was important as internal communications. But we also had to organize the plan for how we were going to move – who was going to pack, etcetera. We went with a mostly self-pack model. We would basically give every office boxes and people would pack their own office materials. We had to give them explicit instructions about how to label everything, because we had to make sure everything went into the new spaces. We would also give, as the building became almost complete, each agency or office tours of the building so that they could see their space and visualize what it was going to look like. I also tried to use the move as a spur towards improving certain things that needed to be improved.

For instance, we had some political and economic locally engaged staff who were packrats. They had giant stacks of newspapers, like, all of the Berlin newspapers going back 10 years or whatever it was. Frankly, it was a fire hazard in some of these places. I told them, "Listen, you cannot move this stuff. We're moving into modular spaces. You're no longer going to have that office where you can close the door and stack up all your stuff. You can't do this anymore." This was kind of a psychological challenge, for some people. They felt attached to their possessions.

I remember… This is a little amusing. I told our facilities staff, after we had told these LE staff that they weren't going to move this stuff, to gradually whittle down these piles by pulling out newspapers from the bottom of the pile every night as they did their cleaning. They would get rid of this stuff, recycle these newspapers. That's a minor thing.

More importantly, I also told people, "We're not going to move all of these paper files." At this point, we had so-called network scanners where you could feed documents in and scan them to PDF (portable document format) files on the network. I especially said to our HR staff that they could not move all of their paper files, and they were going to have to scan these things. There were a lot of sour faces about that. Number one, they liked working with paper, but number two, this was a big job. It turned out it was something like half a million pages that they had to scan. But we had a superb office management specialist, Michael Jahnke, who was really into these sorts of things. I worked with him first on our own files in Management – they call that eating your own cooking. If you're going to tell other people to do something, you should try and do it yourself.

Of course, by doing it ourselves, we saw what some of the challenges were. Mike and I prepared, basically, operation manuals to do this. Mike in particular then wrote this all up, and he became a great asset to our move effort by going around to the other agencies and sections and training them on how they needed to do this. It was very granular, like which way to feed the papers in, because you had to do that in reverse. If something is stapled, you take out the staples. If you try to feed them in from the top, where the staple was, everything gets mangled, but if you do it the other way, you can feed the documents smoothly. When you first scan all of this stuff, it's going to go to a certain file location.

You have to then use a computer to check for quality and rename the files. We had a file naming convention.

Q: Right. All of this is very important.

ANANIA: Yes. The Department still does not have an electronic file naming convention, which is ridiculous and very important for meeting legal requirements, but also just for the day to day. So, at any rate, we did all of that. We got these network scanners, and we ended up destroying a huge amount of documents, which then didn't need to be moved to the new embassy because there wasn't space anyway. The coda to this is, nobody was happier, in the end, than my HR team. They thought this was the greatest thing since sliced bread. Previously, they had to go back and forth to these filing cabinets all the time, and you never knew where the file was. Worse, we were a mission with several different posts. The paper file could only be in one place. Sometimes, people in Frankfurt might need to see a file that was in Berlin. It was that sort of thing. So, that meant somebody would have to go and make photocopies, and who knows, mail it to them or scan it and email it.

So, this worked out well. We did it in a very methodical way. Then, authorized staff could find the performance files and the HR files – this is for the German employees, we're mostly talking about here – online on the network, and you could share them. At the end of this, we had all of these boxes that were stacked up by the back entrance of the building, which was a semi-loading dock but wasn't really a loading dock. We brought in a German firm, and they brought in a device that was called one of my favorite German words, and it was the *Aktenvernichter*. *Akten* means documents, and *vernichter* means to destroy. So, it was the document destroyer. A truck pulled up, and they would basically just pull down a hatch and roll up these boxes of documents. It wasn't just paper; it was also computer discs and binders, even with metal.

They just chucked it into this giant device and turned it into pulp before our very eyes, which was important, because you have to make sure these things are destroyed. This is, after all, HR data with lots of PII (personal identifying information). Basically, they proved to us that they had destroyed it, and we were left with these big bags of pulp. I can't remember if they took the pulp off or if we used it as mulch for our gardens. The *Aktenvernichter* came, it was done, boom. When it came time to do the move, we didn't have to move and relocated those tons of paper.

At that time, I had a management officer whose job was basically to supervise Berlin. We also had management officers at other posts. We had a "one mission, one management team" approach, which my predecessor had created, much to his credit. That was Ray Boneski. We can talk more about that, but Sarah Drew was the management officer in Berlin. She organized the move and did a superb job of it. So, on the day of the move – we basically did this all in pretty much a day – we went down to the old chancery in East Germany. We probably did it on a Friday. So, on a Thursday everybody had put their belongings in boxes and labeled the boxes and stacked everything up. There were, of course, some classified things that needed to be moved, so that was a different effort. We did that with our own staff and our own trucks.

But then all the unclassified material, including computers… We had people unhook their own computers. We gave them instructions and a seminar on how to do this, just to make sure it would work. On the move day we were lucky it didn't rain. The German packing company came in and they picked up all the material from the offices in the former US Embassy chancery to East Germany. Fortunately, it was only a few blocks away. They would drive over, and everything was labeled. They knew where to put it, so they would just put everything on the desks where they were supposed to be. Then the staff would come in and unpack the stuff. It must have been a Friday, and maybe it was even a three-day weekend, because the hard work was then to hook up all the computer systems and make sure the systems worked. As you can imagine, they did not work immediately. So, there were some little bumps and losses of productivity as people couldn't necessarily work that first workday that they came back in.

In the meantime, the IT team had installed new servers, so they weren't necessarily moving everything. There was some new equipment installed. They needed to transfer tape backups of all the data. In some cases, they would recopy that onto new servers, and in other cases they would move the servers themselves. Ultimately, though, it was very well-run. We nominated Sarah for an award for that, which she richly deserved.

We also had to move other people between different buildings. For instance, some of the people who had originally been programmed to move into the new chancery – I want to say it was Commerce, or maybe Agriculture – decided they would really rather be working at the Clay Building.

In most cases, we were more than happy to have them do that, because we had space shortages in the new building. So, if they said they'd rather be in the Clay Building, we had space there so we would put them there. That meant we were also moving people from the old chancery to the Clay Building. We also had people in the Clay Building who were moving to the new chancery. So, it was kind of a Rubix cube, but it worked out well.

This took place in late 2008. It was starting to get a little bit cooler, so maybe this was fall. I could be wrong about that. So, we're now in the new building. I had mentioned earlier that to meet the reduced budget, we made significant design changes, and we began to see the negative impact of some of those changes.

There were also other problems. Most of what State was building was done according to the "Standard Embassy Design" concept. Although the exterior building might look different, on the interior, a lot of the design was the same. But our Berlin Chancery was a one-off building, which was the old model, where every design was completely unique, and you hired an architecture firm to do the work. It was supposed to be a monument to America and reflect American values. That's what we had, in part because this was a unique site. We didn't have a green field to work on. We were working in the middle of a city. We had very limited setback. We had to make a lot of changes to ensure the physical security of the building. The building was built in very different ways to make it secure. While there was some setback from vehicles, there wasn't a lot of setback – in fact, no setback – for pedestrians. You could literally walk up to the building and touch it.

There were very unique things that went on there. But despite some of the challenges caused by the budget cuts, especially concerning the building infrastructure, it was a very nice building to work in. Being in the center of Berlin was inspiring, and being right on Pariser Platz, which is kind of ground zero for tourism, you just saw amazing stuff. Also, Germans who wanted to protest against government policies were always protesting around. There were demonstrations. When the World Cup returned to Berlin, we had the so-called Fan Mile where they closed down a major boulevard right next to the embassy and the Reichstag, which was also very close to us and within view. So, we had this giant celebration, street fair, you name it. It was an amazing place to work.

But to manage the building and be the building owner was, initially, a bit of a nightmare. One of the reasons was that we had had staffing shortages, and we did not have an experienced facilities manager to take us through the transition, which was a ghastly error on the part of the Department.

Over our protestations, they sent in people TDY. That's just not the same. Then they didn't train our staff properly in the new building systems, which were very unusual. There were systems that were installed that we literally did not know about. So, in the first winter, we were complaining that it was very cold in certain parts of the building. We later discovered that there were separate heating systems. There was a heating system on the ground floor that we had somehow not known about. So, it was very cold when we came into the building until somebody finally figured out how to turn on the heat. Then, by golly, it was much nicer.

There was also a very strange and unique conference room for the front office on the top of the building. It was called the Lantern Room, because it kind of looked like a lantern from the outside. It was a round room, largely, with about half of the circle exposed to the exterior. It was all glass. It was a very high room, and it had an unobstructed view of the top of the Brandenburg Gate and the Quadriga, which is the four horses and the chariot that sit on top. You can look across to the Reichstag and out at the *Tiergarten* across the street. But it was cold in the room because it had a separate heating system that nobody told us about.

April 2009, Location, location, location. View of Brandenburg Gate and Reichstag. With my wife, Lourdes. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Also, was it a good thing that it had a lot of windows? It can be difficult to protect that room for purposes of confidential discussion.

ANANIA: That was probably an issue, too. Yes, there were all kinds of issues with the building. It wasn't necessarily designed by people who understood how embassies work. Now, not too long after we moved into the building, it was towards the end of 2008, we have another election, and President Obama is elected. Our ambassador, Ambassador

Timken, was a political appointee. He submitted his resignation and departed before the inauguration in January. He departed, let's just say, sometime in early December. At that point, the DCM, now Charge d'Affaires, John Koenig asked me to be the acting DCM (deputy chief of mission). I actually moved upstairs and had the ambassador's office with this spectacular view of the Tiergarten and the Reichstag. That was an interesting situation to be in.

June 2008. With DCM John Koenig from the terrace outside the Lantern Conference Room, Reichstag behind. Fan Mile setup for the Euro Soccer Championship. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Yeah. How long did that last?

ANANIA: That was until the end of my tour, seven or eight months.

Q: Right, because it takes a while for a new administration just to get in and then to start selecting people for ambassadorships and so on. So, it's not terribly surprising you ended up being in an acting DCM role for quite a while.

ANANIA: Yes. So, that was also very interesting. In the meantime, the ambassador decided he wanted to have a giant, grand opening celebration. This was very challenging. He wanted to do this for July Fourth. Fortunately, if you do things for July Fourth, you can raise money, but typically you can only raise money from American companies.

There weren't that many in Berlin, because the American companies that were in Germany weren't in Berlin. Berlin was not the commercial center.

So, one of my colleagues, Helena Finn, who was the minister counselor for Public Affairs, pointed out very astutely that the State Department had other authorities for fundraising for special events. An embassy opening would qualify for that; therefore, we could raise money from German companies. So, we embarked on a process of planning out a gigantic opening ceremony, which took place roughly on July Fourth 2008. This was while the ambassador was still there. The planning began in about 2007. So, in 2007, there was discussion about how we were going to plan this thing. Who was actually going to be in charge of this grand celebration? There was discussion about various senior leaders at post doing it. At some point, it became apparent to me that it really should be a management project, so I raised my hand.

Q: I am really relieved on the part of the management counselor for Public Affairs. She could easily have been stuck with it, and does not have the staff or the bandwidth to do something that big.

ANANIA: In fact, the Public Affairs section in Germany was very large, and they did have a lot of staff, including a senior Foreign Service counselor for cultural affairs. They, of course, played a big role in certain things. But, yes, I concluded for various reasons, based on the skillsets of the individuals who might have been selected – it didn't necessarily have to be Public Affairs – but also just based on what was involved with this, the logistics and the solicitation of funds and getting the money and managing the money and paying for everything -- it really needed to be me. The DCM was John Koenig, at the time. He then became the charge when Ambassador Timken left.

I think that in large part, because we had worked so closely together on this opening ceremony, that's probably why he said, "Hey, you should be the acting DCM." Because he was, in fact, much more interested in the policy side of things. He was a good manager, too. But as the acting DCM, my portfolio was basically to deal with the management issues, so that worked out well. In the meantime the Embassy grand opening and July 4th event was truly incredible. I can't say this with any great precision, but I am going to put on the table that that was the largest, most expensive embassy July Fourth grand opening ever in the history of our republic.

Q: I totally agree. Even from your brief description, something that is going to raise money from local commercial establishments is gigantic.

ANANIA: So, ultimately, we raised around the order of just under two million dollars for this event. Now, when we first started the planning process, we had no idea how we were going to pay for this or if there was going to be a lot of money coming in. So, this was white-knuckle stuff for me, at least. I'm the management officer, right? You can't be committing the government to paying for things that you can't pay for. So, we had some initial meetings with the Berlin authorities, who were very positive. They put us in touch with some event management companies. So, early on, we started working with these event managers. Germans love a party and a street fair, so there were all kinds of policies and procedures in place. You had to get permits and work things out with the police. Our RSO colleagues had a lot to do with that. You had to arrange for things like trash pickup, having ambulances on site, and whatever. The support of the Berlin government was critical.

Our proposal was to close Pariser Platz and the boulevard that runs from the Brandenburg Gate down to the Victory Monument, all the way down the *Strasse des 17te Juni* (June 17th Street), a politically resonant name, commemorating the 1953 uprising by East Germans, brutally suppressed by the Soviets. Almost everything in Berlin is fraught with history and meaning.

We also partnered with a nonprofit organization called the German American Friendship Society, which was, again, a sort of Cold War holdover. We still had a lot of friends in Germany. The head of the group was from the area around Dusseldorf, and she would come in and work with us. This was very important, too, because they were nominally the sponsors of the street fair, which was open to everyone. We weren't just going to have a reception on one night. Oh no. This became a multi-day street fair, and that's why we closed down June 17th Street and the Pariser Platz. We erected a giant stage on the Pariser Platz. Then this German American Friendship Society went out and did what Germans always do, which is work with vendors to come in so that you can have bratwurst stands and beer stands and everything else. So, this wasn't nominally the embassy's doing, and we didn't have to get involved in serving alcohol and commercial things and everything else, even if we raised the money to pay for everything. This was all one team.

Speaking personally, I knew how much gratitude there was for the US, given our history of preserving freedom for Germany overall, but Berlin particularly. I wanted the event to be a big "thank you" to Berliners in particular for all the support they showed us during the sometimes tortuous process of planning for, and building, our new chancery.

Then, we started meeting with our event planners. This was frequent. I can't tell you how often it was, but certainly, as we got closer and closer to the date, it must have at least been every week. We would work on every aspect of this, like putting up bleachers. Then, we did get the American firms that were around. They built little cafés and serving areas in temporary buildings. McDonald's at the time, was introducing their McCafé concept where they were installing somewhat upscale coffee shops in their McDonald's restaurants. If you walked in and turned left, you'd be in a regular McDonald's; if you turned right, you went to a nice coffee shop. So, they built a McCafé. We had Burger King there, and they said, "We have all these experimental menu items that we're thinking about introducing, so we're going to offer those."

We had American wine importers donating really nice wine, so we had a wine bar. You could go in and ask for any one of a number of different premium American wines. In the meantime, the Public Affairs people lined up some notable American acts, including a prominent dance company. We also tapped into local German artists who did American things. The John F. Kennedy School, which I've talked about before, had some teachers who had a barbershop quartet, so they got on the bill. McDonald's has sponsored a battle of the bands competition throughout Germany, and the winner was a rock group that sang in English, they were young Germans who had grown up near a US military base. I guess they liked rock music because they had been listening to Armed Force Radio. So, they came and performed.

We had multiple days of these events. The actual embassy event, which was the most important one, was on a Friday. Berlin had been going through a drought. It didn't rain all of June, and it didn't rain the first couple of days of July. This wasn't actually on July Fourth, but whatever day it was it rained. The forecast was surely for rain. We had talked about all kinds of things – should we erect a rain cover over the stands or the entire thing? Should we have tents? We ultimately decided not to do that. We did receive umbrellas donated by Opal, which is GM's (General Motors) subsidiary in Germany.

We had invited on the order of four or five thousand guests, which made for logistics and security challenges. We staged it so that the invitations had different start times on them, the idea being that people wouldn't all show up at the same time. We had to set up all of these security lines. Embassy staff would check people in. Then, they'd have to go through metal detectors. That was for all the normal reasons, but also because Ambassador Timken, who had close ties to the Republican Party, arranged for President George Herbert Walker Bush, the former president, to come and speak. This was a celebration of German American relationships, and he was instrumental in the reunification of Germany when the Berlin Wall fell.

Ribbon Cutting, US Embassy Berlin – President George HW Bush, Ambassador and Sue Timken, July 2008. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Guess what? We also had German Chancellor Merkel on the agenda for this event, and she agreed to speak. We had wall to wall media coverage. We had international media there, but German media live broadcasted the entire event. They had a pregame show, hours of programming, all live throughout Germany. You want to talk about a Public Affairs bonanza? Imagine, in your wildest possible dreams, getting something like that. It was all there.

German Chancellor Merkel, former President George HW Bush, at the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, July 2008. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Wow. No. By comparison, the biggest thing I ever did was a TEDTalk (Technology, Entertainment, Design Talk) with a live audience of about 300 students, and we live streamed it through a country. So, several thousand got to see it online. But this? Unimaginable.

ANANIA: Have I mentioned the fireworks?

Q: Oh my God.

ANANIA: So, this is taking place in the heart of Berlin, and we had been there a long time. As I said, we had very good relationships with the local Germans, and by and large, Berliners liked America. We had saved their city. Now, maybe the East Germans weren't quite so keen on it, but even then, I think they viewed us positively. So, having served in Berlin before, I wanted to also do some nice things for the Berliners. We decided we were going to have fireworks, and anybody can see the fireworks. Not only are we going to have fireworks, but after interviewing several firms, we ended up dealing with a superb company, FlashArt. I had no idea what goes into planning fireworks displays. This company had developed a computer program, which they even sold to other fireworks companies, that would manage the entire fireworks show. They could sync it to music. So, we arranged to have the music simulcast on the radio. Berliners who wanted to watch the fireworks could come out, bring a blanket, put it down on the lawn in front of the Reichstag, or they could be standing on *Unter den Linden* (Under the Lindens), which is the main boulevard that runs from the Brandenburg Gate through the heart of central Berlin, and watch these fireworks exploding over the Brandenburg Gate.

I mentioned we had closed down the 18th of June Street. Well, the fireworks were all set up to fire from that street. We used the park right outside of the Brandenburg Gate for the street festival. Well, that was going to be held on Saturday and Sunday. Beyond that was the launching point. So, if you were standing on Pariser Platz or down *Unter den Linden*, you could look at the Brandenburg Gate with the Quadriga, and all of the fireworks would be going off directly over it. You'd also be hearing simulcast music if you had your radio along with you, or, if you happened to be on Pariser Platz, we also had loudspeakers that were broadcasting it. So, I worked with the owner, and I met with him several times to come up with a soundtrack.

They were very clever. They made a pastiche of well-known songs, as well as clips from famous speeches. So, you'd have John F. Kennedy's "*Ich bin ein Berliner,*" (I am a Berliner) which is kind of a joke there, because a Berliner is also a jelly donut. But it does mean someone from Berlin, so it was perfectly okay to say that. There was also, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," the famous words spoken by President Reagan from a platform overlooking the Brandenburg Gate. They also had Neil Armstrong saying, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." They worked this all in, and then we had various music that was themed somewhat patriotically. I remember that we had a discussion about whether we should use "Born in the USA," because it's really not a patriotic song. It's about some poor guy who gets shoved off to Vietnam and then treated terribly afterwards. So, it's kind of a misunderstood song.

I have the audio file. So, we put this all together and it was computer controlled. He could control when things were going to be fired off and what was going to be fired off, and precisely sync the exploding fireworks to the music. So, I remember that for some reason we ended up playing part of "Enter Sandman" by Metallica. That was one of the sound clips, a very dramatic thing. So, things could explode when they were supposed to explode. We also tried to color-coordinate, although some colors are quite difficult to do. Blue, apparently, is a difficult color to do. So, red, white, and blue was a bit of a challenge. They did something along those lines. So, we had all of that set up. Then, the day of, everything is being constructed – there's the fencing, we've closed off Pariser Platz, and it's raining.

Q: I know nothing is so destructive of fireworks as rain.

ANANIA: Well, nothing is so destructive of having an outdoor event. We invited, by the way, perhaps 5,000 people on the guest list. They entered through the Brandenburg Gate. You want to talk about a spectacular site for an event? People did show up, but it was a gloomy day and started raining once the formal event started. The idea was that we were then going to have this big party, and we had food and wine, decorations, and everything else. But naturally, because it was raining, a lot of people, after the ceremony and the speeches from the chancellor and the former president, just left. It was really a pity. Then there was the question of, what about the fireworks? Well, one thing is that it doesn't get fully dark in Berlin until pretty late in the summer.

July 2008, welcoming guests to Embassy Grand Opening Ceremony under threatening skies. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

Q: Right. Because of the ambient light?

ANANIA: Just because it's in the north. So, in July it doesn't get fully dark. I want to say it was 10:23 when we decided… I don't know what it's called, but that's the time when the sun has technically gone over the horizon completely. There's still some ambient light. But because it had also been raining and there was cloud cover, it was a little darker than it normally would be. Fortunately the rain did stop. We went ahead with the fireworks, and it was not quite as nice as it would have been, but it was pretty spectacular to be standing at the Brandenburg Gate and watching this all go off over the embassy, with the audio and music tracks simulcast on Berlin radio and over our PA system. The fireworks guy was nice enough to send me a CD (compact disc) at one point with pictures and all kinds of other stuff. It's pretty amazing.

Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

So, that was the official event for the opening of the embassy. The grand opening event. Again, this was white-knuckle stuff, because I had no idea where we were going to get this money. In the end, we actually did raise a huge amount of money – again, it was about two million dollars – and almost all of it was from German companies. We had the parent company of Airbus donate a lot; there were some defense contractors that donated. Basically, they were companies that had been involved in the German American relationship over many years. Not only did we raise enough money, but we had a huge surplus. I mentioned earlier the VAT, the value added tax, right? We had to have enough money to pay the VAT, but then you got the VAT back. So, not only did we have more money than we needed to pay all the expenses, but we then got the VAT back. So, not only did we have this very successful overall event, but we also rolled over about 400,000 or 300,000 dollars to be used by the embassy for future events.

So, we bequeathed this to our successors. The ambassador was very happy with the way things came out. Beyond the 5,000 people, a subset of that was the VVIP guests, including some of the people who were donors and others. He invited them to an exclusive event after the speeches. They went into the embassy and went up to the Lantern conference room, which had an exit onto the roof, which put you at eye level with the top of the Brandenburg Gate, more or less. You could then look out and see the fireworks from up there. We had separate catering up there and everything else. He was thrilled, which was great. He was the boss. That all worked out very well. In the meantime, the people who did stick around enjoyed themselves quite a lot.

At any rate, the rain definitely put a damper on it, from my perspective. When the fireworks went on and you could see them, I was at least very pleased at the end of the night. I went back in and went up and hobnobbed it with the VIPs. Everybody was happy, so it worked out.

But now we have the weekend and this street festival. For this, the weather was perfect. I mean, it was the most beautiful day you could possibly imagine on Saturday and on Sunday. It was wonderful. It really was nice, because I had said that we wanted to thank Berlin for having hosted us these many years and treated us very well despite occasional provocations on our side. That was especially true with the whole construction process, when there had been some bitter moments; one of the ambassadors had made all negative comments about Berlin and how they owed us and all this other stuff.

Anyway, the street festival was magnificent. Germans love street festivals. I don’t know how many people went by – I don’t think anybody knows – but it must have been in the hundreds of thousands. We had entertainment on the main stage pretty much all day for both days. There were a whole variety of different acts – dancers, singers, rock bands, barbershop quartets, you name it. Then there was plenty of food and drink – for sale now, because this was a street festival. People just wandered around Pariser Platz. There was no traffic; it was all closed off. They could go down the 17th of July Street and visit the booths and do whatever. They had all kinds of events – balloons for the kids, face painting, etc. It was a pleasure to go down there and wander around and meet the event managers we had been working with and who were coordinating all the activities on the stage. We got to see how it all came through.

They had several ladies who had been involved with setting up all the programming, the technical aspects of running the stage, and doing costume changes and that sort of thing.

So, it was nice to say thank you to them for all the great work they had done. We didn't have any security incidents; I'm not aware of any medical emergencies. But we had ambulances standing by, and of course there were a lot of city security people. I should say again, that this was a big effort on the part of the city. They liked it, because they were having a great event and got a lot of tremendous international coverage for them as a city, but nonetheless, they were very helpful to us throughout. We got the police out there and all those kinds of things. So, that was really something amazing and a tribute to the strong bonds between our countries.

Talking about it, you kind of forget these things, but it brings back the memories of working with some fantastic professionals. You could not have done this in just any place, I assure you. Having the contractors that we worked with was absolutely superb. Everything from the setup of the stages… We went over, in great detail, exactly how we were going to stage everything, where the stage would be. In fact, the stage for the speakers – the chancellor and former President Bush – was right under the Brandenburg Gate, right in front of it. The main stage was on the side. We talked about where we were going to put the booths, what the decorations were going to look like, the red, white and blue balloons, the flags… You name it, it took an incredible effort.

Of course, on a mundane scale, it was also a big effort from the embassy staff. My financial management folks… I had a German colleague who was keeping all the financial information for me, and as the money was coming in, I would get updates. Maybe even every day he would send me the updated spreadsheet: here's how we're doing, here's how much we've taken in, here's how much we've obligated. In the beginning, it was, here's how many thousands of dollars we're short. Then things would get better, and it would be like, okay, we might make it. Then, finally, yes, we could pay for this thing. All that was going on. So, that was an amazing thing.

I mentioned Sarah Drew had coordinated the move of the embassy; well, we also had committees that had to organize getting people into their seats, because amongst the 5,000 guests, we had certain guests who we anticipated would be seated on bleachers. Others were just standing in Pariser Platz. Certain people had to be moved over to the bleachers. Where were they going to sit? How are you going to organize everything? It was a giant logistical challenge. I can't say it all worked out the way we intended it to; things happen. But by and large, it did work, and I really owe a great deal of gratitude to hundreds of people who made things work. So, I guess you could say I was the executive producer of the whole thing.

Q: Brilliant. Did you end up having a little book or a pamphlet of photos, commemorating the event?

ANANIA: That is a good question. I want to say no. Certainly, we had a lot of material, but did we actually put anything out? Not as far as I know. That's the sort of thing that the Public Affairs section might have thought to do. Perhaps there was a program guide. I have some mementos myself, like discs with pictures.

Here I'd also like to comment on another very positive aspect of the new chancery – the art collection. Unfortunately, when Congress cut the construction budget, the Overseas Buildings Operations bureau essentially zeroed out the budget for art. Fortunately, the organization Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies (FAPE) stepped in to ensure we had an impressive art collection. They contributed all of the new art works that we eventually installed, over 70 pieces, even sending a professional out to Berlin to hang the art and ensure it was properly labeled. Most of the art consisted of prints from prominent modern American artists, including a series of works by Ellsworth Kelly and pieces by Roy Lichtensetin, Susan Rothenberg, Andy Warhol, Chuck Close. They also sponsored the installation of a mural, visible to the public in the glass enclosed employee entrance lobby on the corner of the building facing the Berlin Tiergarten. This mural was by the artist Sol LeWitt, who had passed away, but it was painted on the wall per the instructions of his family.

January 2008. Installation of Sol Lewitt mural at Embassy Berlin Chancery employee entrance. With an unidentified OBO colleague and art installer. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

July 2008. Ambassador and Sue Timken greeting German Chancellor Merkel at Embassy Grand Opening Celebration. Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

FAPE and an extremely generous donor also sponsored the installation of a large stainless steel sculpture – the Berlin Totem -- by Ellsworth Kelly. This was shipped to us in a 40 foot shipping container from the US. To install it in the chancery courtyard required the embassy to hire two cranes, one to remove the piece from the container, and the other, a large construction crane, to lift it up and over the 5 story building and lower it into the courtyard. The German technicians did this with great precision, lowering the base of the sculpture precisely onto the exposed steel bolts on the base located in the center of the courtyard. Kelly himself was there for the installation, so that was quite an event. *(There are photos of the installation on the FAPE website, along with a description of the entire Berlin collection.* https://fapeglobal.org/us-embassies/berlin/)

A local German had also donated a piece of the Berlin Wall taken from a very visible portion of the Wall prior to its dismantlement. While the original Wall consisted of masonry, over time the East Germans had constructed it from prefabricated concrete sections (similar to what we called "T Walls" when I served in Baghdad and Afghanistan). The reason the Wall disappeared rather quickly was that the segments could simply be lifted up by cranes and then trucked away. But some sections in prominent areas were covered with graffiti on the western side, and we had one of those pieces, which had some badly-degraded designs. We located the artist, who as I recall was a French citizen, and he was still in Berlin. So we commissioned him to restore the cartoon figures, and placed that piece of the wall in our courtyard, where it is visible to anyone headed to the building elevators.

All of this was wonderful from a public diplomacy standpoint. Germany invests heavily in art and there was great interest in the media in documenting what we were doing. After the chancery opened, we were also able to offer tours of the collection. Our management office manager was an American with a security clearance, one of several who made our jobs a lot easier, and our operations more cost effective. She had been our move coordinator before gaining a permanent position in the management front office and was herself artistically inclined as a talented jewelry designer. She did a terrific job of putting together a brochure to document our collection, and we handed this out to our visitors, which was much appreciated.

It was also inspiring to work in the chancery, and I always felt the quality of work was better for our surroundings.

Not long after the chancery opened, FAPE held their annual meeting and we hosted them in the chancery for a gala dinner. We greatly appreciated their generosity and professionalism.

Q: Okay. So, now, was this the crown of the tour, or was this just a part of it, and then you still had activities going on afterwards?

ANANIA: Well, I was there from roughly April or May of 2006 until July of 2009. So, this was July of 2008, and I had another year to go on the tour. We had moved into the building. That first winter, as I mentioned, was a cold one. Then, later in that year, I moved up and I was the acting DCM for the remainder of my tour. In the meantime, of course, there were plenty of activities going on at Mission Germany. There were all kinds of management issues that we had to deal with. I had mentioned that my predecessor had taken a one-mission approach to management operations. This was a big change.

March 31, 2009. US Embassy Berlin Front Office Team with Charge John Koenig (right). Images courtesy of Jay Anania.

This actually relates back to a lot of the things I said about rightsizing and regionalization and centralization, because we were kind of in the same situation ourselves. At this point, we had a huge consulate general in Frankfurt, which was, in terms of staffing, significantly larger than the embassy. It was over 1,000 people who were projected to be there, and we were maybe 500 or 600 in Berlin, if that. We also had a sizable consulate general in Munich, which had a big consular section, among other things. It was in a nice government building that was in poor condition. We had consulate generals in Hamburg, Leipzig, and Dusseldorf, as well. There was a Voice of America transmitter site in Bavaria, near Munich. VOA (Voice of America) also had a site near Frankfurt, which I visited at one point. So, we had a lot of different places to deal with, and different challenges in each location.

Q: Just a quick question: Since we're assessing all the constituent parts of the embassy, was there anything left in Bonn?

ANANIA: Yes. So, that was number seven. I'm glad you mentioned that. Embassy Office Bonn. Originally, when I was in Berlin, it had been U.S. Mission Berlin. Then it became Embassy Office Berlin, which is an unusual thing, to have a constituent post that's part of the embassy and not a separate consulate. But then when the embassy at Bonn moved to Berlin, we left behind Embassy Office Bonn. The reason was that the German government did not move completely to Berlin; some of the key ministries stayed behind, and one of them was the Ministry of Defense. So, we left behind a small office in the former U.S. embassy building, as tenants of the German government's department of agriculture equivalent. Our small office included several U.S. Department of Defense elements that did a variety of things having to do with the German government.

So, the set up to this had all happened when I was first in Berlin in 1996 to 1999. Now, it was 2006 to 2009. So, when I came back, I was dealing, again, with issues that I had worked on during my first tour. The setup of that office was difficult in the first place; it was under chief of mission authority. You had to explain this to people. Now, though, the purpose of the office had largely expired. The DOD… We had gotten involved in conflicts overseas. DOD had done their periodic staffing reviews and had stripped away a lot of the positions that had been in U.S. Mission Germany. So, now, the Embassy Office Bonn had way too much space. They didn't really have a lot of activities. So, the question became… I had mentioned, when I was in M/P, that we were trying to dragoon regional offices to go to Frankfurt to fill up that building and be in a safer, more secure location.

So, the question became, "Could some of these offices in Bonn move to Frankfurt?" The answer was that yes, they could. So, ultimately, I took the initiative on that too, because this was a chief of mission authority issue. I convened some meetings, as management counselor, and basically put together a paper for Ambassador Timken saying, "Here's the plan to close Embassy Bonn."

We were pushing on an open door. It wasn't as though any of the offices were desperate to stay there. They knew they had real challenges, because as I said, it was a big space. It was a controlled access area, so you had to have locks and alarms and a lot of overhead. We had originally set up the place as an ICASS island, where the agencies that were present there had to pay for the costs of it, including the locally engaged staff member who was an American citizen and had a security clearance. So, we could have him there managing the place. He was, nominally, part of our one-mission management team. I say nominally because he was a locally employed staff member; we didn't have any American supervisors there from the management section. So, basically, he was working directly for the DOD elements who, after all, were also paying the bills. So, he pretty much did what they needed to have done there.

So, this was also a challenge. But again, this is what you're supposed to do, taking leadership of these things. Lacking anybody else to do it, frankly, these DOD elements probably should have put their heads together, but they didn't. So, I put together the plan to close out Embassy Office Bonn. Similarly, we had issues with some of the consulates. Originally, Consulate General Leipzig had been conceived of before the fall of the Berlin Wall; the idea was that we wanted to have more outreach to the communist part of Germany. After the fall, the idea was that, just like in the aftermath of World War II when we established many Amerika Hausern that were engaging with the Germans and teaching them about democracy and all the things we hold dear, similarly, we wanted to maintain Consulate General Leipzig to do outreach to the former East German states.

That made a certain degree of sense. We did not have a consular section there. We did have American Citizen Services. It was always a small post, but its role was being questioned, especially because the State Department's budget was very tight, and we were having a lot of staffing issues. Although Secretary Powell had expanded intake, we had now become involved in Afghanistan and Iraq, and this was drawing hundreds of people to meet those priorities. So, we were unable to fill all our positions. We lost our training float. The priority was clearly these warzone posts. A lot of my colleagues didn't seem to get this, that the fact that we were taking staffing gaps in Mission Germany was us "getting with the program." There were people who thought this was just a terrible injustice that they couldn't fill all their positions. *C'est la vie*.

Unfortunately, the Bureau of Consular Affairs took a very passive-aggressive approach to this. They simply refused to fill our consular positions in Hamburg and Dusseldorf. Now, like Leipzig, we did not do visas in either location, but we had American Citizen Services offices. They were performing notarial services and dealing with US citizens who might get in trouble or arrested or what have you. Of course, these positions were sought after. They had lots of bidders, but CA would just assign all the bidders to other places and left these places vacant. So, I saw the writing on the wall. Our minister counselor for Consular Affairs frankly should have been taking the lead on this, but he was retiring early from the Foreign Service and taking a private sector job. He probably felt like he didn't want to be the one who closed the consular sections in these places. What consular officer wants to do that?

So, again, I just took the bull by the horns and said, "Listen, we need to close the consular sections in these places. Yes, it's unusual to have a consulate that doesn't have a consular section, but CA is telling us they're not going to fill the positions." Our choice otherwise was that we were going to have to send people TDY from Frankfurt and Berlin to these places. That's very inefficient. We were also going to have to maintain consular IT systems, and that again meant sending people from Frankfurt and Berlin to these places to do it. There's a lot of overhead associated with having a consular section. Then, of course, you have to have a local staff, and Germans are expensive. In fact, some of the people were actually American citizens, but we paid them on the German pay plan. The so-called Rockefeller Amendment was a law that permitted us to pay Americans who had the legal right to work in Germany on the local compensation plan as opposed to the American pay scale. That was a great thing in Germany, because we hired several Americans, and they could get security clearances and therefore could do things in controlled access areas. So, I had a maintenance staff in Berlin who could go into the CAA to fix the wiring or do the cleaning or whatever it was. It was tremendous. In Berlin in particular, we had a lot of people who had come over – mostly with the military – and had gotten married or whatever it was. We could then hire them. So, we had people who were running the APO (Army Post Office) post office, and we had a maintenance team, my own office manager, all Americans with clearances.

In Hamburg and Dusseldorf, the consuls general had divergent views of this. The consul general in Dusseldorf basically saw the writing on the wall and said okay. The one in

Hamburg said, “This is an outrage. We can’t possibly do this. Congress is going to be upset.”

So, I wrote an action memo for Ambassador Timken, who was a very decisive leader – I sent it out for clearance, and I said, basically, “Anything you want to put in there as a counter-argument, feel free. If it’s really lengthy, it can be an attachment. I’m not going to edit you. But in the main body of the action memo, which should be brief, there can be a condensed argument. A paragraph or two.” So, the CG (consul general) in Hamburg put in a dissenting view, and otherwise it showed that we couldn’t fill the positions and it was costing us a lot of money to keep these places going.

By the way, our own budget had been cut by the EUR Bureau. So, this was a way that we could streamline. In terms of the actual consular work, we already weren’t doing visas, and much of the work we were doing was for Germans. Germans would need to come in and get U.S. documents notarized, or perhaps German documents they were going to send to the U.S. or what have you. A lot of this work could actually be done online. In terms of American Citizen Services, things like passport renewals and other things could be done there. Maybe we were accepting applications, but you didn’t need to do some of this work in person. Then, of course, let’s face it: Germany has excellent transportation links. You could jump on a train in Hamburg and be in Berlin in 90 minutes or so. If you were in Dusseldorf, you could easily get down to Frankfurt. It’s not that big of a deal. You could drive down or take the train. So, this went up to the ambassador. I don’t think he even asked for a meeting. He just signed and said, “Yes, let’s do this,” so, boom. We closed the consular sections.

Then I went on my Trail of Tears Tour, as I called it, because of course, I had to go and talk to our local staff. I didn’t do this blithely. If I had felt there was a compelling argument to be made to keep these consular sections open, I would have made it, or at least supported it. But there just wasn’t. Again, the key was that CA was not going to send us consular officers. We didn’t have the staffing to simply transfer our limited number of consular officers or to send people for extended TDYs. Those are very expensive, what with all the time you lose in travel and putting people up for several days and paying high per diem rates. It just didn’t make any sense. So, I traveled to both posts and had some difficult meetings with the LE staff. We told them we would do our very best to accommodate them and to find them other jobs within the mission.

In fact, we had a fairly steady turnover, because we had a lot of very long-term employees who had reached retirement age. So, there were jobs available. Some of the people did find jobs. We also had cases, one for sure in Hamburg, where somebody found another job at the consulate there. One of the Dusseldorf local staff members ended up working in Bonn. But ultimately, yes, we had some people who didn’t find a job and lost their job. That was a pity. I think we had a few lawsuits afterwards. I don’t know if we’ve talked about the lawsuits yet.

Q: No, I don’t remember that.

ANANIA: Okay. That's another topic we can touch on. At any given time, we generally had a few dozen pending lawsuits in mission Germany. We had literally thousands of employees over the years. Some of them were separated under terms they didn't like. I remember making the trip: I went to Dusseldorf, and then I took the train up to Hamburg. I did town hall meetings. These were not large posts. There weren't a lot of people there, and we were just talking about the consular section, so you're really talking about a handful of people. Of course, I also liked to visit the posts because again, it was a one mission approach. The idea was that just because I was sitting in Berlin, they were still as much my customers as anybody else was. I tried to make it so that it wasn't an "out of sight, out of mind" situation.

Also, speaking on that, we had management officers in Hamburg full time, in Munich full time, and a big management staff in Frankfurt. As part of the "One Mission" approach, I didn't just want it to be the imperial embassy dictating and doing all the work. In fact, much of the work – maybe even the majority of the work, in many cases – was being done in the consulates, especially Frankfurt. But I made a point of giving mission-wide assignments to the management officers at these constituent posts. It wasn't practical for any given project, but if we were going to do, let's say, a review of our ICASS scores by post, I could have the management officer in Munich do that. We had a very good management officer in Munich when I first got to Berlin, and he was keen to do these things. I had two management officers in Hamburg, so I would try to give them some things to do, and also in Frankfurt.

It was funny. Sometimes, people would actually resist this. I remember that there was an officer in Frankfurt whose attitude was, "Why are you asking me to do this?" Well, we're one mission. I'm looking at this as a positive thing. This is something we can put in your EER, that you did a management, mission-wide project. So, people's reactions varied, but nonetheless, it was pretty successful. In fact, one of the most important things that my predecessor had done to advance this initiative was to put the HR officer in Frankfurt in charge of the mission-wide HR program. That made sense, because that was our largest post, and we did have a large team of local HR staff there. The idea was to work together, whereas previously what had happened is, if positions needed to be classified, if it was in Frankfurt, the Frankfurt people did it; if it was in Berlin, the Berlin people did it. For the other posts, I'm not sure who did it; maybe it was Berlin.

But instead our senior HRO Andrew Siegel determined, "No, we're going to do this based on function." So, if it's a motor pool position, it's going to be done by this person, who's in Frankfurt, and if it's a financial management position, it's going to be done by another person who happens to be in Berlin. So, now, these HR members are doing mission-wide work. A lot of this was based on meetings that Andy organized -- he actually did the "remarkable" thing of asking the LE staff how things should be done. He had, probably, an offsite, and everybody got together in person, and they just talked about it. "If we're one mission, how should we organize ourselves?"

The ideas, as is often the case, were coming up from below, and he did a fantastic job of leading that initiative. It was a model for the way we wanted to work. He also got involved in quality management systems. He got ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9000 certification for HR processes. This was also the way I wanted the Financial Management Office to work. That was more challenging, though, because just as I arrived in Berlin, the embassy financial management officer decided to volunteer to go to Afghanistan. She essentially just disappeared, so I had a prolonged gap. Now, I had an outstanding senior locally engaged staff member in Berlin who basically was the financial management officer.

I also had a financial management officer in Frankfurt, but frankly, he was not very interested in leading the management team mission wide. He was preparing to retire, and our Berlin locally engaged staff member, Wilhelm Reif, was the lead financial management officer for all intents and purposes. We did some really remarkable things. Again, work had previously been divvied up by location, which didn't make a lot of sense. Voucher management… We had something on the order of close to 20 full-time financial voucher examiners in the mission. A large part of the reason was that in Frankfurt we had a regional procurement office that was issuing huge contracts, not just in Germany but all over the place, including posts throughout the NEA and Africa Bureaus. They were doing a lot of big contracts.

This was a time when we had the PEPFAR program, so the U.S. was spending billions of dollars, heavily, in Africa, helping local governments set up public health systems, including constructing buildings, establishing new systems, who knows what else. A lot of this was being contracted out of Frankfurt. So, the bills had to be dealt with in Frankfurt. What I discovered was that we had major service delivery and quality problems because of the way things were organized. Certain people were assigned specific types of vouchers. If those people got sick – and Germans have very good sick leave – somebody might be out for a prolonged period of time. In those cases, a lot of times, those vouchers would just pile up.

So, we weren't managing the vouchers as a pool of vouchers. Wilhelm, working with a local German systems developer named – I think – Gerhard Zampich -- who had developed many systems for the embassy, including, once upon a time, an HR system to manage the very complex HR things that have to do with German regulations, performed a process management review. We came up with a new system – Wilhelm was leading a lot of this – to completely overhaul the way we did vouchers. Number one, we looked at the process. A lot of the initial work is just making sure you have all the documents you need to process the voucher. We had been making the individual voucher examiners do this themselves. So, if the voucher arrived missing material, they had to figure this out and communicate it back to the customer.

Well, this is fairly low-level work, so we established an eligible family member position. That was another goal, to make sure we could hire when we had good reason to hire. We wanted to hire eligible family members of our embassy staff who would otherwise have a hard time working in Germany. We established a position so that this person would do the initial document check and deal with those issues. Then, when the documents were ready, she would then scan the documents into the system so the processing could then be done exclusively using electronic files. We then worked on most of the vouchers on a first in, first out system, so that you didn't have these pileups based on the type of voucher. A utility voucher could be different from a voucher to pay miscellaneous claims to somebody for their newspaper subscription and taxi fares, but it was basically first in, first out. We also, for each of the voucher examiners, had been working entirely in paper. So, they were hopping up and down to go to the copying machine, they were filing things in paper. There was a whole corridor, basically, full of people doing this vouchering work, which was very inefficient.

So, under the new system, we bought people two computer monitors, which was a new thing back then. We got them Adobe Acrobat software, not just the Reader but the full Acrobat software, so that they could make annotations, put in comments, show their math, and all kinds of things like that. The reason you had two screens was, of course, that the Department didn't integrate its IT very well, so when you did the voucher, you then had to go to another screen to access the financial system and add in the fiscal data or show that the payment was partial, complete, or whatever. So, this was huge for us. At the beginning, people were complaining because I wasn't allowing them to fill the voucher positions. The financial management officer in Frankfurt and others were complaining.

As I would so often say, it's not that you need more people, it's that you need less work, and that's what this did. We streamlined the entire process. In fact, I used it as a cudgel. I said, "You've got to implement this new system, because I'm not letting you fill these vacant positions. The only way you can make this work is by using the new system." We had some challenges, for sure. Originally, we wanted to have a unified database. At that point, for whatever technical reasons, that didn't work so well; the performance wasn't so good. So, we did have to split the database. But nonetheless, the new system would allow us to manage more or less centrally and assign work. Even if the voucher was initiated in Berlin, it might be processed by somebody in Frankfurt or vice versa.

Another thing that I did was, again, going back to rightsizing. Why are we doing this work in very expensive Germany? Our voucher costs in ICASS were quite high, because Germans are expensive and, in part, because our processes were so inefficient. What could I do to reduce costs? Well, I mentioned that the regional procurement office was doing a lot of work for other regions. This was a huge pain for us, because we couldn't control what the financial management staff in all the other embassies were doing. So, if not enough money was obligated to pay the bill when the bill came in, we would then have to correspond with, say, Embassy Ouagadougou or wherever it was to try to get them to obligate more money.

So, what I basically said to the Regional Procurement and Supply Office, RPSO, as I think it was still called then – it kept changing names – was, "You should fire me as your service provider. What you should really do is, you should work directly with the RM (Resource Management) Bureau and have them process the vouchers from Charleston." Part of the advantage of that is that people in Charleston, who worked for the RM Bureau, had authority to make minor changes to the amounts that were obligated. If they were trivial amounts, they could just update the system to obligate the additional 15 dollars and then pay the bill, as opposed to my staff, who had to correspond with Ouagadougou to get them to put the 15 dollars in and then tell us when they did it.

As a result of that, we basically had a divorce, and a very large chunk of our work – which really didn't belong in Germany, at this point; maybe at one point it did – just went away. That, too, meant that I didn't need to fill these positions. Again, because we had turnover, I never fired anybody, but we were able to significantly reduce the number of people who worked there and cut a lot of costs. A lot of this, again, was directly the result of the fantastic work of my LE staff. In Germany, I had people who, in some cases, frankly, were superior to my own Foreign Service management staff. I had people around the mission who you could identify as being real experts. We had a fellow in Munich who was a global resource for motor pool management for VIPs.

So, when we had the president come – as we did multiple times during my tours in Germany – you could count on him to come up and organize the motorcades, motor pool drivers, etc. Almost any place else, you would have had an American GSO do it. Maybe they would have to bring in people TDY to do it. But Mission Germany could do it totally in-house, because we had these tremendous assets and people who had tremendous experience. A Secretary of State visit, to us, was just, "Oh, it's another Secretary of State visit." Now, at most posts, you get a SecState visit and, oh my goodness, that's a big deal. But I can't tell you how many times we had Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice… It was three or four times. It was just kind of constant. My first tour we had President Clinton; my second tour, we had President Bush and President Obama. So, yes, it was something in Mission Germany. Doing things on a mission-wide basis really paid off.

The *coda* to that, unfortunately, is that my successor and Ambassador Timken's successor had a very different view of this. They did have more of the imperial embassy approach, and they thought the consulate should do what the embassy tells them to do. I don't know what all the details of that were, but I was disappointed to hear the shift had taken place. Nonetheless, we were very proud of what we did, and my staff performed very well. The other thing was, doing a mission-wide approach, again, allowed you to even out some of the resource inequities that existed.

It also focused attention on the smaller posts that didn't necessarily get that attention. If you were in Hamburg or Dusseldorf or Leipzig, you were basically depending on the embassy, in most cases, and to some degree Frankfurt, to take care of you. We didn't always do a good job of that. So, we looked very carefully at ways to equalize service and involve those posts' personnel in our initiatives. I mentioned a mission-wide project to look at our ICASS scores and figure out… Overall, we had very high ICASS scores in those consulates, off the charts. At some point, you have to say that you don't want them that high because you're probably giving people services they shouldn't get. If everyone gives you a five for motor pool, that means you're giving them the keys to the BMW and letting them drive wherever they want.

But yes, Hamburg and Dusseldorf and Munich had very high scores. In Berlin, we were okay; we were around four out of five, which was the goal. Frankfurt was kind of all over the map, and we had some real problem areas, particularly in customs and shipping. By looking at the customer satisfaction scores, you could highlight these issues and devote attention to them. The Office of Medical Services in the State Department had imposed upon Frankfurt a model of outsourcing all the medical care and sending people to German doctors. That wasn't necessarily wrong; in fact, that's pretty much what we did in Berlin, too. But because there were regional medical officers in Frankfurt – who were really supposed to be traveling around and taking care of people at other posts – they had basically become the medical providers for that very large mission, which had a lot of families with children. So, when Med shifted that, the people who were there had been accustomed to basically getting free visits to the doctor and they were really upset.

Using the data, you could then have a discussion with the Office of Medical Services and say, "Listen, we've overshot the mark here. We need to draw this back a bit." We had medical personnel in Frankfurt, including our locally engaged staff nurses or nurse practitioners. We needed to start seeing more people. We couldn't just have these people sitting there doing paperwork. So, we were able to address some of those inequities, establish new positions for shipping and customs, and fix problems with the motor pool's registrations of cars. You're doing this on a very large scale, here. These are not mom and pop operations, when we're talking about Mission Germany or Consulate General Frankfurt. Frankfurt, as a standalone post, is one of the largest posts in the Foreign Service, way bigger than almost any embassy.

Q: Yeah, it's huge. It's also huge because there are military facilities near there.

ANANIA: Yes, many. This was a time when we were, in fact, withdrawing a lot of our troops. Sometimes a unit would be shipped to Iraq, and then they would just never return. It was kind of a stealth draw-down, in some cases. So, yes, DOD was closing down some of the bases. Some bases were kind of ghost bases. A lot of that was going on, and this had some implications for us, as well. Consulate General Frankfurt had a huge consular section that was doing traditional things, but also dealing with American Citizen Services for a lot of DOD personnel, like registering births or deaths and issuing passports. It was the whole gamut of services for American citizens.

Q: Frankfurt is not just an R&R (rest and recuperation) post for some places, but the medical evacuation post for some posts.

ANANIA: That kind of varied. I think for a lot of people, the medivac point was London, in large part because of the language. But yes, we definitely saw that. Then we would just see other things. At one point, there was an evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon, and they were being flown out on charters and coming through Leipzig, of all places. So, our consular staff were down there. Mostly, it was transit. Definitely on other occasions we had people who came into Frankfurt and might go to a military facility, and our consular team would be down there working with them.

So, yes, there were just any number of things going on in Mission Germany. It was a huge, very complicated mission. It was kind of a microcosm of the State Department and the US Government overall, in certain respects. Certainly, the management challenges seemed that way. Another thing I should mention, and that I think I mentioned earlier on when talking about M/P, is rightsizing and regionalization and the way our IT could be, but generally is not, used to move work to safer and less expensive locations. When I was first going to Germany, the consul general in Munich buttonholed me. I had known him before. He was a management cone officer. He was pushing to have a second information management officer. I said, "Well, why do you need one of those?"

He said, "Well we've got a communications center, and we have classified and unclassified computers. When my IMO – information management officer – isn't there, we have no support and it's a real big problem. You have to send TDYers," which we did, typically from Berlin and Frankfurt.

But I said, "I don't think you need two people. I think that what you really need is less work. In particular, what you don't need to do is run your own classified computers." I mentioned this earlier, when we were talking about my days as a Post Management Officer for the European Bureau. In Mission Vienna, which had four ambassadors and four missions, they had two separate communications centers, and it was all kinds of squabbling.

Well, in the meantime, Vienna had centralized the one comm center, and they had started to remotely support the classified computer needs of the other missions. So, you would log in through a terminal at your office, wherever it was – let's say OSCE Vienna, which was located in another part of town from the embassy – you could connect back to the servers in the embassy. Well, this had been done in several places. In fact, Embassy Vienna had started to support Embassy Bratislava, which was in a different country. It was close by, but still a different country. So, I said, "Why can't we do this for Mission Germany?"

The fact was that we could do it. Another fact was that IRM wasn't going to make it easy. There was no handbook on how to do it; there were no regulations on how to do it. So, it was like *samizdat*. The Soviet dissidents used to distribute *sub rosa* information or copies of books that were banned, and it was sort of the same thing. My information program officer in Berlin – I think it was Dane Howard – would just reach out to these posts and ask, "Okay, Vienna. How do you do this? Okay, Moscow. How do you do this?" Maybe there were other posts that were doing this as well.

So, they figured out how to configure this, and lo and behold, yes, we did not have to have somebody managing the classified computers in Munich anymore. At the time, that IMO, Joel Wisner, expressed some misgivings about this. "How can I justify my grade, and what's my EER going to look like if I'm not using these systems?"

But in the end, he was thrilled, because what it did was it unshackled him from these mundane, day to day duties that could easily be handled by the Berlin team members.

After all, in Berlin we had a much bigger user base, so adding a few extra users in Munich was no big deal. What are you doing? Its password resets and that kind of stuff. It's not that he didn't do anything; he still had to do some things. If there was a physical problem with the device, he had to deal with that. But it unshackled him from the day to day of doing updates, computer patching, security updates, and things like that. Now, he could do much higher-value things, including being the acting management officer. You want to talk about helping your EER? Well, being the acting management officer for fairly prolonged periods, for one reason or another, looked great on an EER, and it really broadened his horizons and gave him the opportunity to be a manager and a leader and to supervise more people.

He embraced that, so it was very successful. Again, that's rightsizing in action. Take the work away. You don't need to do all this work in all these places. Again, it's so frustrating because that's exactly what we continue to do in almost every location. Every embassy has to have its own IT section. Like I said, it's like going to the Safeway and going into their basement and finding out they all have accountants and IT people. Of course they don't. That's absurd. They have corporate, shared services, and unfortunately, the State Department by and large does not do these things.

Getting back to the topic of lawsuits, I had a woman on my Berlin staff who was very good at this work. She was not a lawyer, but she was very good at this work. We always had a whole bunch of lawsuits going, and I worked closely with her. I think she really appreciated the fact that I took an interest –people appreciate when you take an interest in what they do – and I made it clear that I thought what she was doing was important. More importantly, I listened to what she said, and I started to impose some discipline. Post had this idea that somehow, because the German labor laws were famously friendly towards the employees, we would inevitably lose, no matter the merits of the case, and therefore we should just give people whatever they wanted. I said, "This is not going to be my approach in any way, shape or form."

Now, if I looked at a case and felt that the person was justified in what they were asking for, I didn't want to prolong the case. Let's settle. Let's give the person what they asked for. Absolutely. We've done wrong here; we shouldn't have done this. We had cases like that. I remember that we had an ambassador who had definitely had somebody improperly fired. It was just wrong. We straightened that out and found the person another position. This was a long-term FSN. There were personal issues that got involved in that. So, anyway, we found a job for this person. Others, we settled. They were asking for whatever they were asking for, and it was, fine just pay them. Of course, this saved us in terms of legal fees and general hassle, but more to the point it was just doing the right thing. It's amazing how bureaucrats have a hard time doing the right thing, sometimes. I've never understood it.

In fact, central HR is that way, I think. You see people all the time who have really strong cases that they're being mistreated by the State Department, and yet they have to take it to a grievance. They might win the grievance. I've even had people on the Grievance staff tell me the person's case was strong. They wouldn't just admit that the State

Department was wrong, and it would have to go to the Grievance staff. It's a pity. Nonetheless, if people didn't have a good case, Germans would have something called legal insurance. Somehow, they could bring a lawsuit with their insurance paying for the lawyer. So, it didn't cost them a lot to bring the lawsuit.

Well, in those cases, they were kind of nuisance suits. Maybe the people legitimately believed they were being mistreated, but I didn't agree with them, and sometimes they clearly weren't. So, we said, "No, we're not going to do that." In one case, the Voice of America had been running radio transmitter relay stations, and guess what? People didn't listen to shortwave radio anymore. We have the Internet now, right? We were starting to have the Internet. It wasn't quite as widespread then, but nonetheless, VOA decided they would have to shut down these transmitter sites. Well, who works at a radio transmitter sites? Radio technicians and electricians and people like that. They don't have jobs anymore. I'm sorry.

Yes, German labor law required us to be quite generous, paying severance based on years of service. Many of these people had been around for a long time, and yes, it was a pity that these people were going to lose their jobs, although frankly, they were technicians, so you would think they could find another one. But they didn't view it that way. VOA worked through the embassy, and we informed everybody: "You're going to lose your job as of X time, and here's how much you'll get as severance," and what have you. One of the things that I had done was, I was irked by the fact that we would pay these generous severance packages and then people would sue us.

So, I set a policy to say, "I'm not going to pay anyone unless they agree to accept that we've treated them fairly according to German law, and they accept that their termination is proper, and that's it."

If they wouldn't sign, I wasn't going to pay them the severance. If they're going to say, "No, this is improper and I'm going to sue you," okay! We'll see you in court, and the courts will decide how much you should get. These people from VOA… I don't know who was advising them, but they decided that they were going to sue us.

I said, "Okay, fine. We're not paying you, and we'll see you in court." As it happened, the myth of "the embassy always loses" was exposed as a myth. We did not lose. In fact, the court decided that they should be paid a certain amount of money, and that amount of money was less than they would have gotten in the first place. It also took them I don't know how many months to get this all into the courts. So, we ended up establishing that yes, in fact, we could win. We could come out of it doing very well. We did, in that particular case, and there were others as well.

In Leipzig… In fact, this even goes back to my first tour in Germany. In Leipzig, we had fired the driver for the consul general. He was erratic, showing up late, had other performance issues, what have you. So, he was fired for good reason. He sued us. In fact, we ended up paying him less than what he would have gotten, and he was very happy about that. He felt that he had won, because we received a monetary settlement. Okay. It worked out well for all concerned, I guess, and I was perfectly happy that he was happy. Good for him.

But yes, we had literally dozens of cases at any given time that were going on, and that was a big part of the job. I guess I had first worked with our locally engaged staff member during my first tour, so I knew her quite well, and coming back it was very easy to go back into this. She was not used to, then or later, dealing directly with the minister counselor for management. But these were important things. They were fairly high dollar value and had a lot to do with morale. Frankly, being too nice to people is also a negative for morale. Your good employees or responsible employees take it badly if the poor performers or malingerers are allowed to continue their irresponsible behavior. If someone is outrageously abusing sick leave or doing things like that, the other employees actually appreciate it when there's consequences for that. They're having to do the extra work for the person who isn't doing the work, and they're all thinking, "Why am I coming to work every day?" So, establishing that kind of discipline was quite useful.

Q: Yeah. During the first time you were in Germany, you had a lot to describe about how the schools were run and so on for your family and kids. Were the schools equally as good? Had anything changed?

ANANIA: In the first tour, we had the John F. Kennedy School, which we worked with a lot, and as I mentioned, there was a significant minority of families who weren't comfortable putting their kids in this German bilingual, binational school. There was the Berlin Brandenburg International School, which had been founded by teachers who had left the John F. Kennedy School. So, they were very aware of this bilingual, binational thing. They wanted to have a slightly different model with the IB program, the International Baccalaureate. They established this school near Potsdam. It was originally called the Berlin-Potsdam International School. They had acquired a site that was some sweetheart deal from, I think, the Siemens Company, a giant multinational company. It was originally headquartered in Berlin and still may have been. But the school wasn't well-capitalized. The original facility was a mansion or something like this – it was beautiful, but it wasn't necessarily the best for a school. Then, they were idealistic teachers, but they weren't necessarily businesspeople.

So, just as I was leaving Berlin the first time, the school essentially went bankrupt. Siemens, "Hey, we didn't promise you that you could use this facility forever. You're supposed to find your own place, and now we want it back." All kinds of things happened. Essentially, some parents, who must have been wealthy Germans, engineered a takeover of the school, which was then reestablished as the Berlin Brandenburg International School in a different location. It was still in the state of Brandenburg, but closer to Berlin. They got a facility, which had had some kind of horrible connotations with some Nazi history. It was supposed to have been a scientific research institute, but more nefarious stuff had gone on.

Anyway, it was a pretty nice facility, and I think the German post office had been using it. It wasn't very far from Zehlendorf, where our people were, and so in the interim years, they had moved, and they had started charging a much higher fee for tuition. This was now an international school with a boarding component. You had international students from other places who were coming there, and the school became something that was very much different from what it had originally been. It still had the IB and was an excellent choice, chosen by some people from the embassy. In fact, I think that at one point, more people were going there than were going to the JFK School. The JFK School had various issues and had gone through a down period.

It was great that there was choice. There was still the Berlin International School, as well. When I came back, I reengaged with the John F. Kennedy School, which was still our official lead school because it was accredited as an American school curriculum. The State Department usually has a lead school, and the Office of Overseas Schools would give technical assistance to those schools. They used to have a sister school relationship with Fort Collins in Colorado. They would come out and help us with accreditation or whatever. So, I didn't rejoin the school board, the Educational Directorate or ED, but I did rejoin the JFKS Trust Fund. I was somewhat surprised – somewhat pleased, as well – that they were still using the exact Microsoft Access software that I had created first in Embassy Abu Dhabi for procurement and then modified for the Trust Fund.

In the meantime, of course, we had taken in lots of money and accomplished the goals of the Trust Fund. Originally, we refreshed all the textbooks. Then we started to branch out a little bit into funding extracurricular activities that weren't a part of the usual German school, so more athletics and Model UN. They had a fantastic Model UN program that brought kids from all over Europe. There were extracurricular activities like foreign language clubs and things like that. The Trust Fund had branched out and was supporting technology, which we had started to do my first tour. So, by this point, we had raised several million Euros, I think. It was very positive that we saw that this was happening. Another thing I should mention – and this was a very tricky issue during my first tour – is that the German federal government was moving many of its ministries to Berlin. Also, there were some companies that were moving their headquarters.

The JFK School had gone through a down period because there weren't enough Americans to fill up the American slots. We had accepted other native English speakers in lieu of Americans. So, if you were Canadian or something, you made it. We didn't necessarily take you if you were American but didn't speak English as your first language. There were such people. It was very hard to get into the school if you were a German, and admission was via a lottery system. Preferences were given if you already had a sibling at the school, but otherwise, it was very difficult to get into that school.

During my 1996-1999 tour, there was pressure being placed by a corporate senior person, a president of a major multinational company. There was pressure to get this person's child into the elementary school – but we didn't have space. This pressure kept coming back, and would be raised at school board meetings. "We've got to get this person in," or whatever. I was working, then, with one of the embassy spouses, Grace Sharples Cooke who was the tireless president of the school board and is still a close friend of mine.

Ultimately, I don't know whose idea it was, but we said, "Okay, we'll admit this child, but we have a condition. The condition is that the city is going to expand the size of the school." We had the building space, and we definitely had a huge demand for further admissions. What we said was, if we take this child in whatever the grade was – let's just say it was first grade – from now on, every year, we're going to add another class of the following grade. So, the first year we're going to add another first grade class; the second year, we'll add another second grade class. It's going to be a cascade of kids who will be put into first grade and flow through. That is what happened.

On the one hand, you could say, "Hey, this wasn't right to take this person's child," but on the other hand, we did a great service to Berlin and the school. Now, we could accept a lot more children than had originally been coming in. That did work out well, and by the time I got back in 2006, they had expanded the size of the school. Berlin, of course, had to make some investments in upgrading classrooms. I honestly don't recall, but I think that it was simply the elementary school we expanded. Then, they probably just added extra individual classes once they got to high school, where students are taking subject matter classes and not just learning together all day.

Both of our sons attended JFK. They had some tremendous teachers, several of the best being idealistic Americans since roughly half of the teachers were American citizens, reflecting the unique nature of the school. After we returned to Maryland in 2009, one of our sons decided he wanted to return to JFKS, which he did after a year at Bethesda Chevy Chase high school, boarding with a German family in 2011-12, the year I was assigned to Baghdad, unaccompanied. My next posting was as ambassador to the Republic of Suriname, where there was not an adequate high school, so he ended up staying at JFKS and graduating there in 2013.

Q: So, before we leave Berlin, I have two questions about when you were the acting DCM. Did you end up having HR cases buffed up to your office, the difficult HR cases? I'm not looking for names, but more how you manage really difficult HR cases.

ANANIA: In some cases, but interestingly, I had thought about naming an acting management counselor, but I didn't. So, I continued to be the management counselor. I didn't just abandon my office and say, "Over to you all." No, I did both jobs. Frankly, at Mission Germany, it wasn't that big of a challenge. Among the jobs I've worked where I've had to work long hours, that wasn't so much one of them. As an executive, you need to learn how to delegate, and I delegated. We had many capable staff members. They were of varying quality of course, but in terms of both American staff and local staff, I had some real superstars. So, I didn't have a problem with delegating.

By that point, we had already moved into the new embassy. Our one mission approach was working just fine, as far as I was concerned, for management operations. So, I just continued to be the management counselor as well. I'm sure I delegated more duties here and there, but basically, I was still doing it. Some of the problems that would have come to me as the management counselor, I was now dealing with as the acting DCM. So, yes, there were some.

The worst ones were family issues. There were some families that were having difficulties. We also had a family where the State Department employee's spouse had just done all sorts of reckless things at their previous post and had been involved in a terrible accident, which resulted in the death of a prominent person in that place. I think that the spouse who had done those reckless things was probably also an abusive spouse. So, you had some of these terrible things going on.

We had another family that was just having issues with their kids and the neighbors. I mentioned earlier that we had had a project to return properties to the Germans and then build some new places, which we did. They were called *Stadtvillas*, essentially townhouses. Well, one of the families was living there, and their neighbors were noting that their children were getting locked out of the house, they seemed to be alone, there were questions of possible neglect. So, yes, those kinds of issues were extremely thorny, and you have to deal with them very delicately.

Q: Okay. My last question is, given that you were acting DCM for quite a while and management counselor, that sounds like the kind of thing you get an award for.

ANANIA: Maybe. I honestly don't recall. I certainly had awards over the years, but as a senior officer, my feeling was – and not everyone would share this –that's what performance pay is for. I was getting performance pay. That's determined by the EER panels. In some cases, at some posts, they would put senior officers in for all kinds of awards, or maybe you would be included in a group that got an award. I certainly nominated quite a lot of people for awards. I can't remember the details, but I mentioned Sarah Drew, who handled the move of the embassy, so probably her. It was probably also because she was heavily involved in the embassy opening ceremony; maybe it was a combined award, but yes.

Then there were group awards. I'm pretty certain that I would have put a lot of people in as part of a group award for doing the embassy opening ceremony. On that one, that was probably an embassy-wide award. There were probably dozens of people on that one, because so many people were doing great work. I had gotten some awards, which I don't think I mentioned, for innovation in the use of technology, going back to Abu Dhabi. As I said, I had set up all of these integrated management systems. I think I got a Superior Honor Award for that. Then, when I was in Hong Kong, I nominated my IMO and my financial management officer for Department-wide awards. I don't think they won, but I definitely would have made sure that they got awards at the local level, probably Superior Honor Awards.

Yes, I won the Department-wide award for innovation and the use of technology. Secretary Powell signed that one, so that was a proud moment. I got to come back to Washington, and it was very interesting to participate in that. There were all the awardees from around the world, and you could see what people were doing and meet some very inspiring people, including LE staff members from several posts. So, yes, there were some awards involved. But basically, once you hit senior, from my perspective, that's when you get performance pay.

After all, it's a strange system we have. You can be senior and have a pretty easy job somewhere, not supervising people. You can be off at a War College or be an adviser somewhere. Not that they don't have their challenges, but you could be instead the deputy assistant secretary for logistics management in charge of Department contracting efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Holy moly! If you don't get performance pay, something is really wrong. The person who wrote your EER didn't do their job or the panel really screwed up. So, anyway, I got performance pay every year, I think, throughout those years.

Q: Alright. I do not have more questions for you on this assignment, so if there are other things you want to mention, let's do that. Otherwise, I'd recommend we look at what you were thinking about for the next post and take the next step.

ANANIA: Just briefly, I'll go back to something I talked about earlier, which was the way we re-engineered certain processes in voucher management, in particular. I should have mentioned, at the time, that part of this was also outsourcing vouchers. The reason I was able to have a divorce from my regional procurement customer for vouchers was because the RM Bureau was now actually doing remote voucher management in Charleston. This was bittersweet, in a way, because originally, when I had been setting up the MOMS Office to support Iraq, I had a DAS from RM tell me, in no uncertain terms, that it was impossible to do these vouchers remotely; posts had to do their own vouchers. Well, okay. I never bought that. It certainly wasn't true, and it didn't work out that way.

But I also told my staff, "I want you to start outsourcing some of our vouchers to Charleston." We had been in touch with Embassy Paris, and in Paris, the FSNs apparently would take whatever month – July or August – and go on paid leave for holidays. They couldn't process many vouchers. So, what they started to do was ship most of their vouchers to Charleston which happened to charge much less than what it cost Embassy Paris to process them in-house. Of course, that led me to say, "Well, if I could do that, why wouldn't I want to have Charleston doing my vouchers all the time?"

There are various reasons, and of course, a lot of our vouchers had to do with Germany or were in German or would be better off processed by our staff. But nonetheless, a lot of our vouchers could clearly be shipped off, and to some degree, that's what we started to do. Then, I was having discussions with the person who was in charge of that office, who I had worked with before, and I said to them, "We developed this software to manage our voucher processing."

They basically said, "Well, we should use the same software." But this being the State Department, with all these weird regulations and a CIO who isn't really in charge of much of the IT work, this software had been developed by, horror of horrors, a German national, so they couldn't just take the software and start using it. A few years later, when

I was the executive director in NEA, I actually gave them some money to help develop a domestic version of this software.

But I'm telling you, Mark, as of today, they still don't have software that works anywhere close to what we had in Mission Germany in 2009. I'm not even sure they have a proper intake system. It's just, basically an email box. Stuff comes in, stuff goes out. I don't think they have any process management software. I didn't mention, or I only did briefly, that our voucher examiners in Berlin, when they worked on the vouchers, would put marks and everything onto the PDF and save the PDF. So, when you opened it up, you saw everything. Well, they weren't doing this in Charleston. By the way, Charleston eventually – or fairly early on – started to use voucher examiners in low cost areas in other places, like Bangkok and, later, Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, we built an embassy that was too big, I seem to recall because we constructed space for USAID and the USAID mission closed. So we had space. We had a highly educated labor pool with Bulgarians whose labor market was inexpensive. So, they established an office there.

Q: Yeah, I recently heard about vouchers going to Bulgaria, and I thought, "What?"

ANANIA: Anyway, I 100% love the fact that they've set up this global operation to do it. Unfortunately, they haven't done it as well as they could have, and like I say, in Mission Germany in 2008 and 2009, we had systems that were better than what they seem to have now, which is a pity. Nonetheless, that's rightsizing in action. In fact, at a certain point later on when I was the NEA-SCA/EX (Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of the Executive Director) director, I mandated that all my posts sign up for services with this office, which is today called the Post Support Unit (PSU). I didn't mandate how many services they should take, but I wanted them to go through the process and be able to send vouchers.

Some of my posts embraced this wholeheartedly and started sending large percentages of their work. Other posts didn't. In many cases, it had to do with the personalities of the management personnel at these posts. My goal was that the posts that were in dangerous or very expensive places would be the posts where I really wanted to send the vouchers off. In fact, what I found in one case was that Mission India, which was not particularly dangerous or high cost, was sending a lot of vouchers. I talked to the financial management officer, and he explained why that was. He said, "They basically charge based on the strip code, and I've got a lot of complicated vouchers. They'll do it for a lot cheaper than I could, and then it's not my headache anymore." He was the smart one.

Q: Interesting. The vouchers that go to Charleston, are they of every different variety or are they for specific things?

ANANIA: Well, ultimately, the RM Bureau – now CGFS, there somehow became a Department policy that all of the travel vouchers for people going on permanent change of station would go to Charleston, which made a lot of sense. The rules and regulations are kind of complex, and why not have the same people working on these things? But in the meantime, individual posts were also sending vouchers, and they could be pretty much anything. Thus, yes. If you were putting in a miscellaneous claim for reimbursement of the bus ticket for your kids to go to school, that's a very simple thing. It could also be, though, that it's the local guard contract voucher payment for Mission Germany, which might be 400 pages. So, maybe that's the one you kept in Mission Germany, because it's so complicated. I'm not sure if Charleston would even accept a voucher like that. But apparently, they would accept some pretty complex vouchers from Mission India.

So, he was more than happy to give them the work. If you think about it, if you're doing the work in Bulgaria, Thailand, or maybe Manila, these people get paid, probably, 15 or 20% of what somebody gets paid in Germany or France. Of course you should be doing that. That's what shared services is all about. If you really need to have voucher examiners getting paid German wages, well then, they should be working on things that really should be done in Mission Germany, highly detailed things with a lot of German language text. Somebody in Bulgaria can't read German, right? So, now we can wrap up Mission Germany, for the time being.

Q: Alright. We will pause here and pick up with the thinking you had about where you were going to go next and how all of that came about, if that's okay with you.

ANANIA: Yeah. That's fine. In fact, I was looking to do another domestic assignment, after that, and I looked at being an executive director. I had worked in EUR/EX, and I knew what it was like to work in an executive office. Traditionally, those were the sort of powerhouse jobs for State Department management officers, and because I considered myself very much a field-first person, I felt that that would be a very good assignment, supporting overseas posts. So, I bid on two jobs in particular. One was what was now WHA/EX (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Office of the Executive Director), and the other was NEA-SCA/EX.

I had interest from both bureaus, and at some point, I think I was asked what my preference was, and I said, "You decide. I'm okay either way. If I got to WHA, I'll be very happy. The job will probably be a lot easier. I speak Spanish. I'm happy to go back to WHA; that's swell." On the other hand, frankly, from the Department perspective, I should have gone to NEA-SCA (Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs), because I had a lot of experience working on war zone issues. As a seasoned management officer, I had worked at major posts. That's what happened. So, I ended up going to NEA-SCA.

Q: Okay.

End of Part 1