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

RAZVIGOR BAZALA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	
Born in Berlin, Germany	1943
BA in History, Rutgers University	1961–1965
MA in International Studies, Johns Hopkins University	1965–1967
Peace Corps Headquarters Staff	1966
Work Experience	
Washington, DC—Agriculture Department, Foreign Regional Analysis Division	1967–1970
Entering the Foreign Service	1970
Ninety-First A-100 Combined Class of FSOs and FSIOs	
Warsaw, Poland—USIA, Junior Officer Trainee	1970–1973
The International Chopin Piano Concert	
Food Price Increases	
Nixon's Trip to Warsaw	
The Roman Catholic Church	
Voice of America Tapes and the Role of Music	
Congressional Delegations	
Family	
Films	
Orientation Travel to Sofia and Belgrade	
Da Nang, Vietnam—USIA, Branch Public Affairs Officer	1974–1975
Vietnamese Language Training	
The Paris Peace Accords	
Life in Da Nang	
A Consular Task	
Leaving Da Nang	
The Evacuations	
Saigon, Vietnam—USIA, Chief of Program Development	1975
Life in the City	

The Calder Exhibit
The Evacuation
Operation Babylift and the Last Pan Am Flight
Witness to the Bombing of the Presidential Palace
Post-Tour Informal Briefing for Dean Rusk
State Department Task Force for Vietnamese Refugees

New Delhi, India—USIA, North India Branch, Deputy Public Affairs Officer 1975–1978
Language Training
The State of Emergency
Indian Politics
President Carter's Visit
Bicentennial Celebrations
USIS Programming
The Ambassadors
Role of the Non-Aligned Movement
The Gandhi Family
The Staff
Travel in India
The Mosquito Bite
Life in the Foreign Service

Belgrade, Yugoslavia—USIA, American Center, Director 1979–1982
Yugoslavia Resists Stalin
The American Center
Kosovo and Gateway to Albania
Politics and Identity in Yugoslavia
The Death of Tito
Travel in Yugoslavia
Celebrity Visits

Washington, DC—USIA, Eastern Europe Division, Office of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania, Desk Officer 1982–1983
Reacclimating to the U.S.

Washington, DC—State Department, European Bureau Press and Public Affairs Office, Desk Officer 1983–1985
Preparing Daily Press Guidance
Working with Department Spokesmen

Washington, DC—State Department, European Bureau, Office of Eastern European Affairs, Yugoslavia Desk Officer 1985–1987
Role of a Desk Officer
Freedom of Navigation Exercise in the Adriatic Sea

Washington, DC—Special Counselor's Office, Special Assistant to White House Counselor for Iran-Contra Affairs 1987
The OEOB Office
Working with the White House
The Iran-Contra Affair
Nancy Reagan

Washington, DC—USIA, Public Diplomacy Working Group 1987
The Venice Economic Summit
Handling Foreign Media
Berlin

Washington, DC—USIA, Office of Policy Guidance, Senior Policy Officer 1987–1988
Director Wick
The Balkan Dignitary

Kingston, Jamaica—USIA, Public Affairs Officer 1988–1992
The Ambassador
Hurricane Gilbert
Wick's Emphasis of Satellite Technology
U.S. Foreign Policy in Jamaica
Jamaican Politics
Crime and Security
The Media
Nelson Mandela
Tourists and Official Visitors
Bauxite and Ian Fleming
Discreetly Handling a Personal Issue
The Jamaica-America Society
Watching the Deterioration of Yugoslavia From Afar

Washington, DC—USIA, Eastern Europe Division, Office of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania, Desk Officer 1992–1994
Support for East European Democracies Office Dissolved
USIA Rep on the American Foreign Service Association Board
Duffey Dismissive of USIA
Caught up in Clinton Administration Reinvention of Government
Tension between FSIOs and Civil Service
Supported Clinton's April Visit to Poland

Skopje, North Macedonia (Macedonia)—USIA, Public Affairs Officer 1994
Four-Month Assignment Replacing Incumbent
Restoring Morale

Washington, DC—USIA, International Information Programs, Democracy

and Human Rights Division, Team Leader 1994

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina—USIA, Public Affairs Officer 1995–1996
Opening of the Dayton Accords
Conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Talented Local Employees
Polling the Citizenry
Role of Religion
Assistance with Civic Education
Infrastructure Problems
Freedom of Expression Programs and Rebuilding the Press
The Sarajevo Winter Music Festival
VIP Visits
Rebuilding Television Networks

Washington, DC—USIA, Equal Employment Opportunity Office 1996

Belgrade, Serbia—USAID Survey Team, USIA Representative 1997
Serbian Radio Station B92
Knitting Independent Radio Stations Together

Brčko, Bosnia and Herzegovina—Office of the High Representative, Media Advisor 1997
Powers of OHR
Territorial Divisions, the Evacuation, Stripping Sarajevo
Ethnic Tensions
The Media, How to Get the Word Out
The Arizona Market, Free Enterprise?
Plum Harvesting

Budapest, Hungary—USIA, European Regional Public Affairs Officer 1997–1998
USIA and the Newly Independent States
Exchange Programs

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina—USIA, European Regional Public Affairs Officer 1998
Covering Moldova
Kosovo Conflict Heats Up, NATO Airstrikes
Covering Skopje, Macedonia
The Kosovo Refugee Crisis
Working in Kosovo
Ethnic Politics

Retirement 1999

Unretired 1999

USIA Dissolved and Embedded into State Department 1999

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina—State Department,
European Regional Public Affairs Officer 1999–2000

Pristina, Kosovo—State Department, Regional Public Affairs Officer 2000
Setting up an Office
UN Mission in Kosovo

Re-Retirement 2000
Podgorica, Montenegro—State Department, WAE 2000–2001
Value of International Visitor Program
Podgorica subordinate to Belgrade
Washington, DC—State Department, Political/Military
Action Team 2002–2003
Insights into Iraq Occupation Policy
Washington, DC—Chugach Alaska Corporation, Evaluations
and Logistics 2003–2004
Contract to Engage Iraqi-Americans in Reconstruction
Washington, DC—Presidential Public Diplomacy Advisory
Commission, Executive Director 2004
DoD Creeps into Public Diplomacy
Stuttgart, Germany—Anteon, European Command, Website
Content Manager 2005–2008
Tampa, Florida—MPRI Contract with Central Command,
Website Content Manager 2008–2009

INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The following narrative evolved from six two-hour interviews I had with Charles Stuart Kennedy of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training conducted in the fall of 2011 at its facility on the campus of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

My father Borislav Bazala was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1910, the son of a Croatian father and a Bulgarian mother. He passed away more than a century later in 2011. His father, Maximilian, was the youngest of six children in the somewhat rigidly structured home of my great-grandfather who specified precisely the careers he intended his four sons to pursue. They were to become a doctor, a military officer, a professor of classical

studies, and a Roman Catholic priest; his two daughters were only expected to marry well.

Having no interest whatsoever in becoming a priest, Max rejected his father's will, left home, and went to Paris where he mastered seven languages. Ultimately, after settling in Bulgaria, he became a professor of linguistics. After he returned to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, Max became involved with an effort to create a federation among south Slavic peoples, a *yugo Slavia* (south Slavia). He had become an adherent of the idea propounded by Roman Catholic Bishop Josip Strossmayer who was a leading politician in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Croatia. Strossmayer's objective was to encourage Slavic populations in Southeast Europe to form a federation, initially under the aegis of the Austrian Hapsburg Empire to replace the Ottoman Empire, whose grip over the Balkans had diminished significantly in the decades prior to World War I.

Unlike other similar movements prior to and during World War II, however, Strossmayer neither espoused nor engaged in violence. Rather he promoted religious unification in the region, an objective that would have the largely Orthodox populations of the Balkans accommodating Roman Catholicism—a proposition that posed a major limit to the advancement of his ideas for a *yugo Slav* federation.

Furthermore, unlike the nineteenth century pan Slavic movement promoted by Russians that presumed all Slavic peoples west of the Ural Mountains shared a collective destiny and would willingly coalesce under Russian leadership, Strossmayer's focus was on the Balkans. His vision foresaw fragmented ethnic Balkan populations having enough in common to establish some form of federation among themselves that would strengthen the region as World War I brought the Ottoman Empire to an end.

Boiling down a half century of my grandfather's life into a single sentence, his role in the scheme of things was to promote Strossmayer's thinking in Bulgaria. To do that he moved to Sofia, met a Bulgarian woman named Ivana Pashmakova, fell in love, married her, settled down, and raised a family with two children, my father, and his sister. Father always took pride in the fact that his father had moved independently to shape his own future, and he followed a similar path under very different circumstances. Arriving in the U.S. from war-torn Europe in 1947, he had a brief career as an accompanist for an operatic soprano and later was self-employed for more than thirty years as a classical piano soloist, occasional accompanist, music producer for a television program, university adjunct faculty lecturer, and teacher of piano performance.

Father studied piano and earned a doctorate in orchestra, conducting at the University of Leipzig during World War II. He studied in Berlin with Wilhelm Furtwängler, arguably among the finest orchestra conductors of the twentieth century. Because Bulgaria was allied with Nazi Germany, father was able to travel to Germany for his advanced studies. In Berlin, he met a German woman who was a secretary for the German-Bulgarian friendship society or student association. They married in 1941, and I was born in Berlin in July 1943. We left Germany permanently five months later, moving first to Vienna and then, in 1944, to Olomouc, Czechoslovakia before emigrating to the U.S. in 1947.

Mother on several occasions credited me with saving my parents' lives by providing them the motive to leave Germany. Nightly air raids rained Allied bombs closer and closer to their apartment in the Charlottenburg district of Berlin as summer transitioned into fall. Because he was a citizen of an allied nation, father was free to leave Germany. Whether a German citizen spouse could obtain permission to depart with him apparently changed from time to time. In any event, in December 1943 mother and I were able to accompany my father to Vienna where he worked in the classical music division of state radio in Nazi-occupied Austria. My parents spent only a year there while he completed his doctorate. Father then accepted the position of conductor of the Olomouc Opera Orchestra in Czechoslovakia in 1944. An uncle who was an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army and then a general in the Czechoslovak army provided him a recommendation for the position.

The war prevented public performances during and immediately afterward; and the orchestra gathered only for rehearsals through late 1947. Father's socially prominent position in Olomouc provided a comfortable income and a spacious apartment. My brother Michael was born there in November 1945. We had a housekeeper who father said was a sister of Albanian Communist Party First Secretary Enver Hoxha who ruled Albania brutally until his death in 1985. Despite the fact that ours was rather a good life in Olomouc, there were postwar hardships and shortages. Toes on my left foot became permanently misshapen because my parents could not replace shoes I had long outgrown. In October 1947, our departure from Czechoslovakia ended my father's conducting career.

Months earlier, with his good *Fingerspitzengefuhl* (intuitive feeling)—father figuratively applied saliva to the tip of his forefinger, raised it in the air, turned it into the breeze, and concluded that the wind was coming from the east—that Soviet power would soon replace the government in Prague. Prior to the end of the war, on September 9, 1944, Soviet forces entered Bulgaria and installed a communist government there. My grandfather told father he should not even consider returning to Bulgaria where his time in Germany during the war could lead to his apprehension, detention, trial, and possibly imprisonment as an anti-Soviet activist. The course of political events in Czechoslovakia less than three years later convinced father that it faced a similar fate and that he might have to face the same problems he would have in Bulgaria. He just sensed that Soviet power was intent on expanding westward beyond lines established at the end of World War II, and for four decades he held President Roosevelt accountable for doing nothing to prevent that.

As someone who was becoming a prominent member of Olomouc society, father was pressured to join the Communist Party. This was the catalyst that led him to contact his mother's sister, Helen Rylla, who had settled in East Orange, New Jersey in the 1930s. She agreed to sponsor the travel of our family to the United States. Mother, in the meantime, acquired a U.S. immigrant visa. I do not know on what grounds she qualified, but she said she had initially applied for a U.S. visa years before in Berlin when she became disenchanted with growing Nazi power in Germany. Fortunately for father, he

got the only U.S. immigrant visa allocated in Czechoslovakia for a Bulgarian that year under the old quota system. Children qualified based on the parents' eligibility.

With visas in hand we departed by train for Paris, arriving during a strike of some sort that brought public transport to a standstill. I actually remember as a four year old riding in a truck that replaced a Paris municipal bus. We crossed the English Channel and transited the Atlantic aboard the HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, and I recall our arrival in New York harbor where Aunt Helen was waiting for us. We arrived at 160 Halsted Street in East Orange, New Jersey, our new home, late in the afternoon on October 31, 1947. I remember being troubled by children who appeared to have the heads of rabbits and other creatures that appeared every so often in my dreams for maybe a year. That ended when it occurred to me that the rabbit-headed youngsters were actually trick-or-treaters out early on Halloween evening.

Aunt Helen had been a cabaret or light opera performer of some sort in her youth in the Balkans. I still have some picture postcards of Elena Pashmakova in costume for a performance back then. I do not know what brought her to East Orange, or how she acquired the three-story boarding house she owned. She claimed to be the widow of a Hungarian about whom we never learned a thing. He must have been a musician too, because she had a violin and cello she said belonged to him and brought over from Europe. Aunt Helen was the organist for a Catholic church in Newark, New Jersey. Father occasionally would play aunt's cello for a change of pace. The sounds he elicited from the instrument fell far short of those he produced on the piano.

Father sat me down at the piano keyboard when I was five or six, but I resisted his efforts to interest me in playing the instrument even though I enjoyed listening to classical music. I eventually studied the violin for four years, but then gave it up after high school. My daughter Alison, however, has become a fine professional cellist, so it appears as if the musical gene in father's DNA may just have skipped a generation.

I never really heard much about mother's life in Germany. I know that she was a socialist and very much opposed to Nazism. She told me her apartment had once been searched for banned publications. She apparently had several of them on her shelves, but concealed them with the covers of other books and the police who conducted the hasty search did not come across any. My understanding, from what little my parents told me, life in Berlin during the war was grim; nightly allied air raids over Berlin in 1943 left nearby neighborhoods unrecognizable the following morning. The Germans who made it through the night showed up for work the next day, however, just as they always did right up to the bitter end. My parents never said much more about life in Berlin during the war.

Years later I asked my parents whether at any time they had regrets about leaving Europe behind. "Not one," my mother said, adding that there was much about German society and culture that left her cold. Father, who told me later that if necessary he would have played piano in a bowling alley bar rather than return to Europe, was able to avoid that fate within months of our arrival in the U.S.

A neighbor of Aunt Helen, with connections to the world of classical music, introduced father to Columbia Artists, a prominent concert management agency in New York. Columbia had nothing to offer him early in 1948, but several months later a soprano under contract to Columbia complained about her alcoholic accompanist and threatened to terminate her nationwide tour unless he was replaced. With all its other pianists fully booked, Columbia Artists called my father and asked him to take a train as soon as possible to Philadelphia to meet her at the station there; she was staying with her aunt's family in the city. Father asked how he would identify her. He was told she would have a rose in her hair. He needn't have worried about that because she knew who he was the moment he disembarked from the train in his distinctly European attire. Father was most surprised to find that she was African-American.

His limited English made their introduction awkward, but they took a taxi to her aunt's home where he accompanied her as she sang an aria. Father said her voice was as fine as that of the best German operatic singer he had ever heard. It belonged to Camilla Williams, the first black American soprano to perform with the New York City Opera two years earlier in the lead role of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. Father became Camilla's accompanist that day and they performed together in recitals for five or six years across the country and in South America into the mid-1950s.

After mother passed away in 1999, father moved to Bloomington, Indiana where Camilla lived in retirement following a distinguished career teaching voice at Indiana University. A few years ago they were featured in a ten-minute segment of a PBS TV documentary, "The Mystery of Love," that highlighted the subject of love and friendship and was aired repeatedly in 2007.

Within months of our arrival in the U.S. our family's economic situation looked promising. Father's work as Camilla's accompanist for recitals across the country, however, entailed lengthy separations from the family. By the time I was about ten, he decided to terminate his contract with Columbia Artists to develop a private studio in East Orange. From then on, he was self-employed, with the studio being his primary source of income for the next twenty-five years or so. He also became the music producer for a local weekly Ukrainian-American TV show and was involved with the program's choral group for a number of years thereafter. In the mid-seventies he traveled with them to the Vatican to perform in a concert for the pope. He also became an adjunct professor of music at New Jersey's Montclair State University and performed frequently as a soloist and accompanist over the years.

Mother, née Loni Gutschmidt, hailed from the north coast of Germany, but she never mentioned where. That may be because she was very young when the family moved to Berlin. Her father became an accountant with the German electronics firm that today is the multinational Siemens Corporation. The youngest of four daughters, her mother died when she was eleven, and she never really got along with her stepmother. Her father died in 1933.

Loni, who was eleven, fifteen, and eighteen years younger than her sisters, considered the eldest, Frieda, her surrogate mother, and she most regularly remained in touch with her until Frieda died in the late 1960s. Mother told us that her father regretted never having a son. After the births of three daughters he expected his fourth child to be a son who would have been named Wilhelm. His obvious disappointment that she was another daughter along with the early loss of her birth mother, gave me the impression that she experienced long periods of deep sadness.

Left to her own devices, however, mother became a somewhat adventuresome young woman. In the early '30s, for example, she toured the Balkans with a girlfriend on a cruise along the Adriatic coast, which I don't think many young single German women did at that time. That's when she discovered that Balkan men appealed to her. The tour ended in the Greek isles where a fortune teller foretold the girlfriend's death, which occurred just two years later. The friend made a charcoal portrait of my mother depicting her bent contemplatively over a table; it remained over the fireplace in the living room until father sold the house after her death. She told me several times that the numerous Islamic mosques and their minarets that dominated Sarajevo's skyline made an indelible impression. Against a background of the construction of taller buildings after the war, they were no longer very remarkable features of the city's architecture by the time I arrived at the embassy there four decades later.

Despite not having a formal education after high school, mother had a very broad understanding of German society and culture. She read extensively and her knowledge of the English language was particularly impressive. As a teenager, I recall that she was able to complete the *New York Times* crossword puzzle without consulting our dictionary. She had long used such puzzles to help improve her English, which was very good. In fact it was close to perfect. She held several jobs as a secretary and worked in a bank during our first decade in America. She also taught German for a while.

This may be a good place for me to introduce myself. My name, Razvigor, combines the Slavic verb *razviti* (to grow, to develop) with the noun *gora* (mountain, hill). The word refers to a gentle breeze that wafts over the Balkans in March as a precursor of spring and stimulates the emergence of buds. As father told it, when he laid his eyes on his "firstborn," as he frequently referred to me, he saw an infant with a head full of black hair, tussled, or so it appeared to him, by that breeze. At that moment he announced something like, "Henceforth, let this child be known as Razvigor!" There may have been something to this tale. Years after the fact my secretary at the American Center in Belgrade, Yugoslavia clipped a short poem from a local newspaper entitled "Razvigorac" that described the wind's effect over the head of a boy, displacing his cap, disheveling his hair, and otherwise messing things up in general.

Understandably, as a toddler I was unable to utter my name in full, let alone its four-syllable Slavic diminutive form, Razvigortcho, and referred to myself with the last two syllables as Gortcho, the name by which I was known through the end of elementary school. Then, just days before the start of the next phase of my life, junior high school, father pulled me aside and said, "Son, we need to talk. You are no longer a boy. You are

becoming a young man now—" Oh, oh, I was sure a birds and bees lecture was coming up.

He surprised me by stating only that my given name is Razvigor. I was aware of that, but had given my name little thought over the years because I was rarely referred to by it. Father added that he had notified the school that I was to be identified as Razvigor, and that was that. When the assistant principal introduced us seventh graders to one another on the first day of junior high school and cited my name using the R word my friends turned to me quizzically. Almost immediately, however, Gortcho was replaced by Raz, the nickname by which I have been known since that day. It is pronounced "rahz," not "razz."

My surname is a different story, however. For starters, Bazala is not of Slavic origin. Father hypothesized that the name refers to and is a variant of the word Basel, a city in Switzerland. Adding an "a" to singular masculine nouns in Slavic languages indicates the genitive case that denotes "of" or "from." He believed our forefathers were persecuted French Huguenots who first settled in Switzerland and later migrated into the Austro-Hungarian empire, settling in both Croatia and what is now the Czech Republic where several Bazalas can still be found in phone books. Not having researched it beyond what father told me, however, I know nothing more about the origin of my family name.

Emigrating to the U.S. after World War II was the single most significant transition in my life. Although only four when we arrived in East Orange, I was quadrilingual for a few months thereafter. I picked up English almost immediately, but spoke with my brother in Czech to the extent that I had anything to say to my two-year-old sibling. I spoke Bulgarian with my father and German with my mother. The European languages faded away rather quickly thereafter. My limited Czech vocabulary did not expand. My mother did not speak Bulgarian. My father was fluent in German, but in the years immediately following a war in which the U.S. and Germany were adversaries, mother wanted to de-emphasize her German background for several years. She also wanted her children to become Americanized as quickly as possible. Later, however, I studied German in high school and college.

East Orange was a city of about seventy thousand people, one of 566 municipalities in New Jersey's twenty-one counties, all of which have mayors, city councils, police and fire departments, boards of education, and a varied array of other administrative and social services departments. That amounts to a lot of government for the fifth smallest state in the union. East Orange in the 1950s was a predominantly white middle class multi-ethnic suburb of Newark and New York. An Erie Lackawanna Railroad line ran through it providing an easy commute into midtown Manhattan.

A racial transition began slowly after World War II with the number of African-Americans moving in and growing year after year. By the time I was in junior high school, East Orange had a good mixture of African- and Caucasian-Americans, but a decade later in the 1960s, the city had become overwhelmingly African-American. The transition occurred in the era of "blockbusting," a brief phase in post-war suburban real

estate that was terminated by the Fair Housing Amendment [1968] passed during the Johnson Administration. At that time, there was widespread fear among whites who moved *en masse* into post-war suburban homes that the first African-American family to break the barrier and move in would trigger a fall in real estate values compelling white families to relocate as rapidly as possible. Real estate brokers, needless to say, played a role in this process and made money fomenting the white evacuation of cities like East Orange.

The city was a pleasant and safe place to live in the late 1940s through the mid-fifties. I walked to school every day with other kids in the neighborhood with no accompanying adults even when I was in kindergarten. We had nothing to fear along the five-block stretch between our apartment in Aunt Helen's house and Nassau School along Central Avenue, which was lined with a variety of small businesses including a bowling alley, several dry cleaners, a Lincoln-Mercury auto dealership, delicatessens, a bank, a barber shop, an ice cream parlor, and others all in one- or two-story buildings. We also played frequently in local Orange and Memorial public parks, both no more than five- or ten-minute walks from where we lived.

Religion did not play a major role in my youth. Father never attended church, either Roman Catholic or Orthodox, and mother was a fallen-by-the-wayside Lutheran or Congregationalist. Mother said my brother and I inquired about Sunday school after we heard playmates talk about it. A neighbor across the street introduced my parents to the Methodist Church in East Orange, and that is where we spent Sunday mornings for two or three years. Both my brother and I were baptized there. After my father bought our home in Maplewood, New Jersey in 1958, we became involved for a few years with the Unitarian Church in nearby Summit.

I first became aware of international affairs in elementary school. Father was always ready to discuss the day's news events, particularly anything about the Soviet Union. He ranted on about Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin as a force of evil long after the Soviet Union disappeared. My brother and I were made aware of the global dynamic between East and West in the Cold War at very early ages. I was also an avid reader of the daily *Newark Evening News* at home. After my parents purchased an eighty-acre farm in east central New York in 1954 as a summer home, I read the *New York Herald Tribune* when we vacationed there, which, as I recall, was published on green newsprint. Both papers covered international affairs in some detail.

Our farm in the village of Carlisle in Schoharie County, New York had no running water, no electricity, and no telephone, but it did have an icebox. A fifty-pound block of ice would keep things cool for a week. We acquired a gas refrigerator several years later, one of the few upgrades we made to the place until my brother Michael, who was a university student of architecture in the mid-1970s, redesigned the house and with father's help, almost single-handedly rebuilt it. He wired up the house and had the power company extend a cable from the nearest house a quarter of a mile away.

Mother loved the farm because for three months of the year it got her away from Aunt Helen who she could barely tolerate. My brother and I were free to roam the countryside by bike for miles on end across Schoharie County where two boys on bikes had nothing to fear other than getting a flat tire or having farm dogs run out onto the road and nip at their heels. Despite the lack of modern conveniences, we regarded the farm as a little piece of paradise. We bought milk from a neighboring farm straight from a cow's udder in a one-gallon tin that we cooled in our well. A hand pump in the kitchen provided what we needed for drinking, cooking, washing, and flushing. Life on the farm was great for us as youngsters.

I enjoyed my public school K-12 education and never experienced any real difficulties with any of my studies except for physics in high school. I recall doing an oral presentation on beavers in the third grade based on an article in *Reader's Digest*. According to father, I summarized the information comprehensively and articulately. Up to the last year of his life, he repeatedly cited my report on beavers as evidence of my academic capabilities.

In high school, I became very interested in American history, in particular the founding of the United States, the colonial period, Thomas Jefferson, and the Louisiana Purchase and the expansion into the west following the Lewis and Clark expedition. I attended East Orange High School my freshman year and then went to Columbia High School, which was attended by students both from Maplewood and neighboring South Orange. There were more than six hundred students in my graduating class in 1961.

I was also interested in the origins of the Cold War beginning with the Berlin Airlift of 1948–1949, the first major East-West post-war crisis. Mother monitored it daily and we talked about it in considerable detail. She had a stake in its outcome because her three sisters and their husbands remained in Berlin during and after the war. The Soviets attempted to blockade West Berlin and deny the U.S., the UK, and France overland access to the city from the sectors of West Germany that they occupied. Their efforts failed after more than a year, but solidified the division between East and West in what by then was already known as the Cold War. The Hungarian and Polish anti-communist rebellions in 1956 and the Soviet violent response to them also made very strong impressions on me.

Years later I accompanied my children who were among a group of youngsters from their school that sang Christmas carols at Vinson Hall, a home for retired veterans in McLean, Virginia. I recall passing a door with a plaque with the name Mrs. Lucius Clay on it. Her husband was the army general who led the U.S. response to the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 and 1949. I made a point of seeking her out so that I could introduce my children to the widow of one of the greatest American heroes of the early Cold War era and thank her for his invaluable service to the United States. He had become firmly embedded in my mind as a legend from the tales mother told me as a six-year-old child.

We studied civics in elementary school and followed, in particular, the election of Clifford Case as New Jersey senator in 1954, after which I was elected president of my

fourth grade class, the only elective office I have ever held. Presidential politics generated considerable interest among my classmates. I recall a ditty prior to the 1952 presidential election that reflected clearly the sentiments of those who sang it: "Whistle while you work, Stevenson's a jerk; Eisenhower has more power, whistle while you work." We were exposed to what was going around us politically, but we were just school kids with little beyond a surface awareness of what was involved, especially with something as incomprehensible to us as the McCarthy hearings in the Senate.

Around that time I discovered that father was not infallible. My teacher asked the class to inquire about the meaning of the letters G-O- and P. After he came home in the evening I asked him what those three letters meant. He raised his forefinger to his chin, tipped his head back, and contemplated. He then stated GOP means "Government of the People." Thus edified, I quickly thrust my hand in the air when the teacher asked us the next day who had solved the puzzle. Needless to say, my response was not the one she was looking for. We were learning about political parties and she wanted us to know that GOP is short for Grand Old Party, a colloquialism for the Republican Party. I never let father know how disappointed he made me feel that day. I later forgave him; after all, he was a Bulgarian transplanted to America and could not be expected to know everything.

As I have already noted, mother had very little positive feeling for Germany. Father, on the other hand, was deeply upset that Bulgaria fell behind the iron curtain. That barred him from returning to see his parents again. The last time he saw them was when he and mother flew to Sofia in 1942 to introduce her to them after they were married. At that time she was already pregnant, and a rough flight caused her to wonder if I would survive.

Father was unable to return to Bulgaria when his father, who he had not seen in more than fourteen years, died of heart problems in Sofia in 1956. I knew Max, my grandfather, only through the brief warm letters he wrote in English and sent to me after seeing the latest photos of me that father had sent him. Father told me Max, an accomplished linguist, learned English just so that he could write to me in what had become my native tongue.

I was naturalized as an American citizen in 1958. By my junior year in high school, I became interested in the presidential campaign of Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy [JFK]. I monitored it daily by reading the *New York Times* in study hall while other classmates fooled around tossing paper airplanes into the mesh covering the overhead fluorescent lights in the auditorium. JFK illuminated the entire American political process for my generation. After two Eisenhower Administrations, there was a call for new thinking and turning the baton over to a new generation. Kennedy was only forty-two when he ran for president in 1960 and he embodied the idea perfectly.

I spent my freshman year in college at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. It gained some notoriety from Sigmund Freud's lecture there in the late nineteenth century. Clark was the only American university that had any interest in hearing from him at that time. That had nothing to do with my decision to study there, but it was something I cited

as a reason for selecting that B-list university for my undergraduate studies. After my first semester, I concluded that I had no interest in staying in Worcester, an unappealing and declining nineteenth-century industrial town. I applied to transfer to Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and completed studies for a BA in history at its division in Newark in 1965. The school was just a few miles from my home in Maplewood and I was a commuting student for three years.

My first overseas travel, after immigrating to the U.S. fifteen years earlier, was to Berlin, Germany with my mother following my freshman year at Clark in the summer of 1962. It was the year after the Soviets first surrounded West Berlin with barbed wire in an attempt to prevent citizens of communist East Germany transiting through it to non-communist nations. The trip was mother's first visit to Berlin since she left the city in December 1943. I met her three sisters of whom she had spoken frequently. They were all married, but none had children, leaving me without cousins on my mother's side. My father's sister, Amalia, who arrived in the U.S. from Bulgaria in 1958, never married. Sad to say, that left my brother and me with no first cousins at all.

As a young adult and college student, I relished the prospect of staying in Berlin independently of mother and her family. An uncle directed me to a student residence of the Christian-Democrat Party just off Kurfürstendamm, then West Berlin's major boulevard. I worked as an unskilled laborer on a new subway line for several weeks and encountered some Turks at the same job site. They must have been among the first *Gastarbeiters* (guest workers) in the country, brought in to supplement West Germany's limited labor force at a time of rapid economic expansion. Turks have since become a significant component of the German work force and are now firmly embedded in the German population. Other than chugging a few beers at several parties attended by visiting American college student groups, I did not have much of a social life that summer.

I did have a chance to wander around East Berlin on a few occasions, entering the capital of the misnamed German Democratic Republic via the Checkpoint Charlie border crossing in the U.S.-occupied sector of West Berlin, and riding under a section of East Berlin by subway. Stations in the East between stops in the West were shut down and barricaded. East Berlin was already engulfed by Soviet-style high-rise, slipshod, mass-produced high-rise apartment blocks devoid of any design features, and motorized vehicles of any sort were still a rarity on its broad boulevards. The East Berliners I encountered were obviously fearful of contact with strangers.

In August, mother and I flew from Berlin to Vienna to visit the couple that hosted my parents and me for most of 1944; I found fascinating the grand architecture of major sites within the "Ring," the boulevard that was once the wall of the city in the middle ages. Mother's friends also paid for a three-day bus trip through the Alps centered on Grossglockner, the nation's highest mountain. After that we flew on to Cologne to visit one of her old girlfriends for a few days before returning to New Jersey. Classes at Rutgers started a few days later.

Rutgers played Princeton in the first intercollegiate football game back in 1869, and almost a century later Rutgers was still thought by many to be an Ivy League school, which it is not. Saying I was a student at Rutgers, therefore, impressed a number of people unaware of that fact. I intentionally did not mention that I attended its Newark division because at the time Rutgers, whose main campus was in New Brunswick, did not really have a campus in New Jersey's largest city. The university consisted of classrooms spread randomly across downtown. Some were located in a former bank, others in the one-time headquarters of a local brewery, as well as in temporary structures erected specifically for the short term as Rutgers moved to construct an actual urban campus. When it rained I had to negotiate my way through mud puddles at campus construction sites to get to classes. Newark's proximity to Manhattan, however, compensated for all that and encouraged me and other undergraduates to venture into the city from time to time. That proximity also drew some of the area's finest professors to commute from New York to teach at Rutgers Newark.

While I saved my parents money by studying at Rutgers as a commuting student, mother was tasked with more shopping, cleaning, laundry, and typing term papers that some might characterize as exploitation. Mother, however, was an excellent typist going back to her days as a secretary at the German-Bulgarian Student Association in Berlin and did so willingly, or so she said. She amazed me as a child being able to type blindfolded. Just a few years later in a seventh-grade typing class it quickly became apparent to me that being able to do so was not the miracle I once thought it was. Not wanting to be a freeloader, I held part-time jobs during the academic year and was employed full-time during my three summers at home.

In my senior year at Rutgers, Walter Weiker, a professor of mine and one of America's most prominent modern Turkish scholars, recommended me to the Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies [SAIS] in Washington, DC. He considered it one of the finest institutions for graduate studies for someone interested in pursuing a career in international affairs. I was very gratified to be accepted for graduate studies there just as the U.S. was increasing the deployment of American soldiers to Vietnam by hundreds of thousands, most of whom were young draftees.

By 1965, when I graduated from Rutgers, I had already been called up twice by my draft board in Irvington, New Jersey for physical exams, but I received academic deferments to continue my studies rather than be drafted into the U.S. Army. At SAIS, my courses centered on East Europe and the Soviet Union, and I studied Russian to fulfill my foreign language requirement for a degree. With this background, public service for my future career was virtually destined. What form it would take was shaped in part by my family's origins and experiences. Already in high school I was aware that one way to become involved in the conduct of U.S. foreign relations was government service overseas. Several significant events occurred before I pursued that ambition, among them was meeting Sylvia Johnstone while I was at SAIS.

Working in the library I encountered her at the check out desk on several occasions. Eventually I bumped into her unexpectedly one morning on Massachusetts Avenue, a

block from the school. After a brief chat, I asked her to join me for a walk across Dupont Circle to Peoples Drug Store (now CVS Pharmacy) where I was headed to buy some soap. I later asked her for a date to attend a performance of Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* at the Arena Stage, Washington's recently opened theater in the round. She told me later she was impressed by my invitation to see a play and not just a film.

Before the play, we had supper, not dinner, at a Hot Shoppe eatery that was a Marriott operation before the firm became an international giant in the hospitality industry. I remember ordering a slice of strawberry pie for dessert, one of my favorite items on the Hot Shoppe menu along with Mighty Mos. Their equivalents at McDonald's are Big Macs, which may have constituted a violation of intellectual property rights by one or the other depending on whether a two-patty hamburger with a slice of bun between them can be considered intellectual property. In any event, I did not order a Mighty Mo on my first date with Sylvia; I dined on a roast beef sandwich.

Skipping the unnecessary details, she and I were married in Athens, Georgia on June 10, 1967, after I completed my studies at SAIS. She had completed her studies there a year earlier having spent her first year at the SAIS Bologna Center in Italy. She earned her master's in 1966 and became what is now known as a Presidential Management Intern working at the Pentagon on international security issues in the Office of the Secretary of Defense [OSD]. At that time, Vietnam was the major issue of the day.

Sylvia's father was born in Georgetown, South Carolina, the son of a rice plantation owner. He earned his PhD in horticulture and was a professor at the University of Georgia in Athens. He was also the founder and first director of the University of Georgia (now State) Botanical Garden. Her mother, the daughter of a newspaper publisher in central Louisiana had been a school teacher, but via the academic environment of the university she became very well plugged into Athens society. When I traveled there by rail on the Silver Comet in 1966 and met Sylvia's family for the first time, I was introduced to a way of life very different from that of suburban New Jersey.

At a dinner hosted by my in-laws, I made a remark about how much I enjoyed a southern specialty served for dessert as guests rose from the table. Moments later one of them gruffly beckoned me aside. With my back to the wall and his hands on my shoulders, he sternly told me, "Son, you're in the South now; you're going to have to learn to get some things straight. Down here a pecan as in the pie you said you so much enjoyed is pronounced peh-KHAN; a pee can is something you keep under your bed at night." He and the others around us broke out laughing. I smiled sheepishly as I regained my composure. It was a cultural awareness lesson I haven't forgotten.

While at SAIS, I worked part time at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington in the summer of 1966. In the fall of 1967 I continued my academic studies for a PhD in government at Georgetown University. In 1969, the draft lottery was introduced and my birthday was so far down the line that it was unlikely that I would ever be called up for military service. Once I entered the Foreign Service in 1970 as a United States Information Agency [USIA] Foreign Service information officer [FSIO], however, I put

the quest for a doctorate behind me. I did give some half-hearted thought to doing a dissertation on media content analysis after I was assigned to the U.S. embassy in Warsaw, Poland drawing on Polish media for my case study, but I never pursued it further.

While I was most interested in serving in the Balkans, I was not bent on doing that in my first Foreign Service overseas assignment. As things turned out, however, I became only the second first-tour FSIO assigned to a Warsaw Pact nation. In retrospect, I find it somewhat ironic that I never served in Bulgaria during my thirty year Foreign Service career. Bulgaria, however, was not a significant player in Cold War politics. Truth be told the country was a Balkan backwater. A major manufacturer and exporter of fork lift vehicles, it also produced tons of attar of rose, a component in fashionable scents from Chanel No. 5 to the concoctions of virtually every other significant perfumery. There never was much more to bring Bulgaria to international attention although its location on the Black Sea made it a potentially interesting tourist destination.

Every so often the Soviets nudged their Warsaw Pact pawn, Bulgaria, to raise concerns with Yugoslavia over the legitimacy of the latter's claims to the Republic of Macedonia, which they did just to let Yugoslav President Josip Tito know Big Brother was watching. While Tito's regime was communist, Yugoslavia maintained its independence between East and West and never became a Warsaw Pact member. The Soviets found its non-aligned status not to their liking and encouraged the Bulgarians to claim that the Macedonian language and a good chunk of its territory was really Bulgarian. The Soviets only took that tack so far, however, and never crossed the line to pose a real threat to Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. Push, thus, never really came to shove in the wake of Bulgaria's challenges to Tito over Macedonia. It is interesting to note that after the fall of the iron curtain, Bulgaria did not renew the claims it was compelled to make under Soviet prodding.

Father ceaselessly reminded me and almost everybody else he met that the Cyrillic alphabet used in all Slavic languages except Croatian, was developed in the fifth century AD by Cyril and Methodius, two brothers who were Bulgarian Orthodox monks. That fact, he contended, was another thing that made Bulgaria worthy of international attention. That is worth knowing, but when you think about it, was the combination of Greek and Latin letters with a few distinct symbols to designate distinctly Slavic consonant clusters necessary? It is a bit late to ask that question, but it takes a lot of study before it becomes clear that USSR in English is CCCP in Russian.

Despite coming of age in the mid-sixties, I was not drawn to the flower-child counter culture even though I was very skeptical about U.S. policy in Vietnam. I did not march on the Pentagon in the fall of 1968 because I was tied up all morning in a three-hour German language exam at Georgetown University. I would not have engaged in the protest in any case. Sylvia worked at the Pentagon as a Vietnam analyst for one thing, and my brother Mike wound up doing two tours with the army in Vietnam, which nearly drove my mother to total exasperation. She could not forgive him for volunteering for the second tour which he did because he found being stationed at Fort Sill in Oklahoma after

his first tour a bore. Ultimately, we never doubted that the fundamental values of our society would prevail and the nation would adhere to them. As a young man I did not take an active interest in domestic politics.

My primary interest was the Cold War, the dominant factor in global international relations over the previous two decades. By the mid-1960s, most students of international relations largely believed the twenty-year confrontation between East and West would remain a constant factor in international politics long beyond the foreseeable future. Under the doctrine of mutually assured destruction [MAD], the massive nuclear weapons stockpiles of both the U.S. and Soviet Union ensured an unstable but indefinite stalemate assuming neither side would take action that could trigger a nuclear exchange that would leave both in ruins. In that context, none of us at SAIS between 1965 and 1967 could imagine a scenario in which less than a quarter century later the iron curtain was torn down, the Berlin Wall no longer stood, and the Soviet Union was dismantled into sixteen independent nations.

After completion of my studies at SAIS, I worked the following two summers and part time during the rest of the year in the Europe and Soviet Union Branch of the Foreign Regional Analysis Division at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The branch reviewed weekly crop estimates based on reports filed by its agricultural attachés at U.S. embassies while at the same time monitoring translated local media reports of crop data. We compiled reports to provide up-to-date information to America's farmers and agricultural producers about export prospects.

I reviewed data for East Europe that shed significant light on the shortcomings of the communist collective farming system that turned peasant farmers into day laborers for large-scale socialist economic enterprises. For some crops, the enterprises' total production hardly exceeded what peasants were able to harvest on the small half-acre private plots they were allocated for personal use. Without the yields from private plots there would have been massive starvation behind the iron curtain or else all of its limited foreign exchange would have gone for the purchase of food imports from other countries, primarily the U.S.

At Agriculture, I was a contributor to a publication the department issued only once entitled "Agricultural Statistics of East Europe and the Soviet Union 1950–1966," a compilation of official data from those countries that served as a valuable resource for researchers. That work, for which I was credited among others as an author, opened my eyes to a wide range of other political and economic developments across the region and stimulated my interest further in pursuing a Foreign Service career to contain Soviet influence around the world.

ENTERING THE FOREIGN SERVICE

The Foreign Service entry process was fairly straightforward more than forty-four years ago. The first step was to take the Foreign Service written examination that was offered nationally once or twice a year. It was then a three-hour multiple choice test similar to the

Graduate Record Examination [GRE] universities used in admissions to postgraduate studies. I think the same firm produced both examinations. Having jumped that hurdle successfully, I moved on to the oral examination, a somewhat more intimidating obstacle, but in comparison with the longer process candidates must endure these days, it was far less exhausting.

I appeared before a panel of three mid-career Foreign Service officers who interviewed me for about half an hour. The common wisdom at SAIS was that reading the *New York Times* every day in the month before the exam was the best way to prepare for it. The assumption was that recent news items or Scotty Reston's foreign affairs columns in the paper were items that the panelists also were likely to read and would trigger their inquiries in the interview. Looking back, however, I don't recall whether that advice was valid or not, nor do I remember a single question asked or how I responded.

After the interview, I sat uncomfortably in a chair outside the exam room waiting anxiously to learn the result. Just a few minutes later I was caught off guard when one of the examiners came out, shook my hand and told me that I would receive an invitation to move on to the next hurdles in the entry process, namely a medical exam and a background screening for a security clearance. At that point I had to specify that I was interested in serving in the USIA. The written and oral entry exams were the same for both USIA and the State Department. Even though I was born abroad to foreign parents who lived in Nazi Germany, less than four and a half months after passing the oral exam I was granted a security clearance and sworn in as an FSIO by USIA Director Frank Shakespeare on January 5, 1970. A highlight of that event was the presence of the late William F. Buckley, the prominent author and editor of the *National Review*, America's leading monthly conservative political journal. His views on foreign policy were well-known within the Foreign Service and my class was honored by his presence even though we were not sure why he was there with a group of about half a dozen others who were unknown to me. What I still remember most about that event was the dandruff sprinkled rather densely down both lapels and across the back of the blazer Buckley was wearing.

Because the work of public diplomacy—the conduct of U.S. government cultural, information, and academic exchange programs that reached out to foreign citizens and not governments—appealed to me, I entered USIA rather than the State Department. Those activities had the potential to generate public reactions that could have an impact on how leaders abroad, particularly those of Warsaw Pact nations, perceived and reacted to U.S. government foreign policies.

While still at SAIS I sought out Phillip Arnold, the policy officer in USIA's East European division, to inquire whether there were opportunities for officers to serve behind the Iron Curtain on a first assignment were I to clear all the hurdles and make it to the finish line. The assistant dean at SAIS, a friend of his, referred me to him. After I was sworn in, I called upon Phil again to let him know that I had just come on board. He remembered our earlier conversation and said, "Let's see what we can do about that."

After our swearing in, the members of my freshly-minted FSIO class, the ninety-first as I recall, then reported to the Foreign Service Institute [FSI] across the Potomac River in Arlington, Virginia where we joined newly-minted State Department FSOs (FSIOs without the "I") in the six-week A-100 basic officer course. It provided an introduction to how the Foreign Service operates. The State officer class was considerably larger than USIA's and in the weeks we were together in the course we all got to know each other fairly well including our aspirations, geographic interests, and career objectives. A-100 offered a good overview of the functions of U.S. government agencies involved in foreign affairs and the mechanics of our agencies' personnel operations, performance evaluations and reviews, promotions, payroll, leave, retirement systems, and a range of other administrative nuts and bolts. In retrospect, there was nothing particularly memorable about the course except for the personal interactions with other colleagues while we all went through it.

What has stuck in my mind through all the years after sitting through the A-100 course was the common wisdom at the time that diplomats abroad socialized by playing bridge. Several of us got together for dinners followed by attempts to master the intricacies of the game in order not to embarrass ourselves later overseas. After Sylvia and I played a couple of hands with A-100 colleagues, however, I tossed in the towel wondering whether my indifference to the game might jeopardize my career. As it turned out, no one I served with ever expressed even the slightest interest in the game.

On the other hand, some officers' wives (there were no male spouses in 1970) who had virtually no employment opportunities overseas back then played bridge with each other repeatedly at mid-afternoon sessions during which some consumed enough alcohol to come close to passing out by five pm. That created significant problems for a number of them. Anyway, the most important thing about A-100 was that we all were informed of our first Foreign Service postings on the last day of the course.

WARSAW, POLAND 1970–1973

My first assignment was Warsaw, Poland. No other USIA or State officers in my class were assigned to iron curtain countries, and several colleagues erroneously concluded that I really worked for another agency. Prior to departing I had seven months of intense Polish language training (six hours a day) that got me to the 2+/2+ level in speaking and reading ability respectively on the FSI scale of 0–5. (A rating of 0 indicated no knowledge of the language; a rating of 5 reflected native fluency.) I did fairly well in Polish partly because I am an excellent mimic, if I may say so. Most importantly I was not intimidated by the process of learning a language. Many of my colleagues regarded it as just another academic course to pass, and since they had always excelled academically, they found it very stressful not to be able to speak the foreign language they were studying without repeatedly making mistakes despite reviewing the material in the textbook the night before class.

Learning a language, however, is not at all like studying for a final exam in nuclear physics or Greco-Roman mythology. Attaining minimal fluency requires virtually endless

repetition to overcome errors you make repeatedly until new and complex patterns and grammatical structures fall into place. The stress that generated could be a real impediment to making progress for some officers who excelled in their academic studies. Making mistakes as I studied Polish and speaking broken Polish until I was able to internalize proper responses did not faze me, however. There is no other way to learn language after early childhood. It takes time, but after lots of trial and error you get it.

I also thought of my own reactions to broken English. I made the necessary adjustments in trying to comprehend what I heard, unscrambling poor pronunciation, inverted word order, and improper use of tense and prepositions. If those efforts were unsuccessful, I simply asked the speaker to repeat what he said and took another stab at it. I assumed that Poles who heard me utter broken Polish would make the same efforts to comprehend me. As it turned out, I learned from some Poles that they considered my errors "charming" and gently corrected me, which I regarded as contributions to improving my ability. Of course embassy officers always spoke English and used embassy translators in on-the-record meetings with Polish officials.

Mother, who highly valued the ability to speak foreign languages, found it almost unbelievable that I had a job that paid me to learn them. Not all colleagues felt that way, but in order to serve a full a Foreign Service career, you had to get off language probation by attaining minimal professional proficiency in speaking and reading of at least one foreign language during your career, which was at the 3/3 level for Latin-based languages or 2/2 for others. After the A-100 course we were all tested for language proficiency and by scoring a 3/3 in German, I never had to worry about that issue again. After serving with USIS in Warsaw, which was referred to as the P&C section [Press and Culture] in embassies behind the iron curtain and in Yugoslavia, I was retested in Polish and rated at the 3+/3+ level of proficiency.

In the early 1970s, Poland, a communist country, was a very interesting assignment unlike some others in the world. Sylvia and I decided to drive to Warsaw from Munich where we picked up a new 2002 model BMW from the factory. The vehicle then cost $2,700 more or less. After a few days in Munich we drove to Stuttgart to visit a graduate school roommate who joined the Foreign Service after graduation and was assigned to the small consulate there. We experienced immediately one of the major benefits of Foreign Service life in the pleasant sizable apartment my friend and his wife occupied. Housing provided by embassies for staff serving abroad seemed like a gift to us, a young recently married couple that sometimes found rental expenses a strain on our limited budget.

From Stuttgart we drove to Vienna and were tourists there for several days. We then crossed the Danube River into Czechoslovakia on August 22, the second anniversary of the Soviet invasion of the country that occurred after the Prague Spring of 1968. The potential increase in the freedom of expression Prague Spring promised was harshly put down overnight when Soviet tanks stormed into the city to reinstall a repressive regime. We detoured into Olomouc where my family lived twenty-five years earlier, hoping to find the building in which their apartment was located but were unable to locate it. It was

extremely depressing to see people we stopped to ask for directions turn their heads down and away from us afraid of being seen talking to foreigners; nothing could be more foreign than a brand new BMW with West German temporary license plates. We finally arrived in Krakow, Poland later that evening glad to have left the oppressive atmosphere of Czechoslovakia behind us.

Our first night behind the iron curtain was quite uncomfortable. Every sound in the corridor and from the street below startled us for the first hour or so in a rather downtrodden hotel that would not be on anyone's list as a comfortable place to stay. The next day we arrived in Warsaw, which even a quarter of a century after World War II ended struck us as war torn. After checking in at the embassy, we drove to the building that would be our home for the next three and a half years. It had a comfortably furnished two bedroom apartment on the third floor. In our youth we survived without an elevator.

Almost immediately we learned another benefit of life in the Foreign Service, or at least in Warsaw: the availability of low-cost skilled household helpers, cooks, and in-home daycare providers, often the same person. Just a day after our arrival, there was an unexpected knock on the door of our apartment. I opened it to a kindly middle-aged woman who informed us that we had been recommended to her to work as our cook and housekeeper. We think she simply materialized at our apartment because she worked for the previous tenant there. After checking with the embassy administrative section, we brought her on board, and Pani Regina remained with us for our entire tour. She worked five days a week and was available for overtime when we needed her assistance for dinners, receptions, and baby-sitting.

Shortly after Sylvia and I arrived, Poland hosted the quadrennial International Chopin Piano Competition that, surprisingly, had four American participants that year. The embassy cultural attaché, however, downplayed the event. He considered it unlikely a quarter of a century into the Cold War that an American would take the prize, the precedent of Van Cliburn's win at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Completion in 1958 notwithstanding. That left the embassy caught flat-footed when twenty-one-year-old American Garrick Ohlsson unexpectedly won first prize. More than forty years later Garrick is still a major soloist appearing in concert with leading symphonies around the globe. We heard him perform with the Alexandria Virginia Symphony in 2011. After the concert, I reminded him that Sylvia and I served as his embassy escorts for his victory lap of concerts in four cities around Poland after taking the prize. He smiled warmly at the recollection of the time he was greeted everywhere like a rock star with teenage girls scrambling hysterically to get his autograph.

American Eugen Indjic, who years later served as a judge for the competition, came in fourth in 1970. Emmanuel Ax, who also has had a stellar career as a soloist since then, ranked seventh. Jeffrey Swann's career was also launched that fall in Warsaw; he was voted the popular favorite in the competition. I don't think any other Americans have had that good a year in the Chopin competitions held since then.

In December 1970 I was in Krakow, Poland at a major USIA traveling exhibition entitled "Architecture USA." Within a day or two of my arrival, I noticed an unusually high level of activity on the streets of Poland's second largest city. The exhibit's Polish-American guides, who had their fingers on the pulse of whatever was happening through their extensive contacts with Polish visitors, told me the palpable public stress and tension I noticed was generated by recent unannounced price increases for basic foods. Polish workers considered that a slap in the face by an indifferent, out-of-touch communist leadership. Coming just before Christmas, when they wanted to use the little they had on gifts for family and friends, it was the straw that almost broke the camel's back.

I passed my observations about this to the embassy by phone and learned later that I was the first officer to cite food price increases as a source of public unrest and potential protests against the government. Several days later riots broke out in the north, particularly in the port city of Gdansk where security forces killed several protesters. That sequence of events almost stopped communist Poland dead in its tracks. Communist controlled media simply did not mention events the party could not control. Recorded classical music replaced live news broadcasts as communist functionaries scrambled to sweep the public disorder undercover with the hope that the public would simply ignore the realities around them.

Because the public did not ignore the realities around them, state TV announced that the first secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party would address the nation about the crisis it had generated. Wladyslaw Gomulka, who had been in power since the violent anti-communist uprising in 1956, was considered effective in limiting expressions of Polish nationalism. The first secretary who appeared on the screen that night, however, wasn't Gomulka, but Edvard Gierek. With no reference to Gomulka or his elevation to first secretary, Gierek addressed the nation, catching Poles and foreign observers alike totally off guard. Totalitarian governments can get away with things like that; transparency, accountability, and responsibility are not required. Authoritarians just do whatever has to be done to keep themselves in power. Few knew Gomulka's fate, and even fewer cared about it. He was unceremoniously shunted to the sidelines, faded into obscurity, and died unheralded twelve years later. Some hoped the leadership change in Poland at the end of 1970 would offer the prospect for improvements in U.S.-Polish bilateral relations, but that turned out not to be the case in any substantive way.

When I arrived in Warsaw the ambassador was Walter Stoessel, one of America's most senior and highly respected American diplomats. He later served in that capacity in Moscow and retired as the under secretary for political affairs, the number three ranking position in the State Department. Perhaps because of his stature, Washington designated the U.S. embassy in Warsaw as the sole channel for U.S. diplomatic contact with representatives of the government of the Peoples' Republic of China. That made Warsaw a much coveted assignment for ambitious State Department political officers at the time. This communication channel led to President Nixon flying to Beijing in February 1972, a visit first contemplated through the U.S.-China channel in Warsaw, which threw wide open the door to expanding U.S.-Chinese bilateral relations and thereafter almost anybody anywhere could talk to Chinese officials. Even so, I recall some long song and

dance at the embassy over who would be authorized to talk to Chinese diplomats at the upcoming Polish National Day celebrations and how it might be best if no one said anything to any of them because who knew which way the winds might be blowing at that moment.

At the time of the China trip an official presidential visit to the Soviet Union and Poland in 1972 was also already in the works. We only learned about it, however, after Sylvia and I were well along in planning visits to our families during our first home leave set to begin June 1. I remember being told I could not be away from post on June 1, but not the reason why. The president's trip was still on "close hold" within the embassy, but my boss, the public affairs officer [PAO] clued me in under assurances that I would not say anything about it to other colleagues. The magnitude of logistics for presidential travel is overwhelming. There were close to four hundred Americans either with the advance team for the visit or accompanying the presidential party on the trip. The White House, of course, wanted to be the source of any information released about presidential travel.

The ambassador required all hands on deck for the visit and each embassy staff member had a designated assignment. In my first experience with presidential travel, I was responsible for the White House documentary film crew. I made arrangements to provide transportation and access to all sites on the president's agenda. That gave me an excellent opportunity to get a glimpse of all of them. The film crew was actually a group of half a dozen contract employees hired by the Republican National Committee to provide footage for a film that was to be shown later at the 1972 Republican national convention in Miami. I found it exhilarating to ride into town from the airport with the crew on a flatbed truck in the presidential motorcade on a warm spring day and observe first hand the heartfelt welcome the Polish public gave the president. It was a great personal experience.

Just a little over two weeks later while we were on home leave we saw the first news report of the Watergate break-in in *The Washington Post* that ultimately doomed the second Nixon Administration a little more than two years later. Incidentally, as far as I know, none of the footage the documentary film crew shot in Warsaw made the cut for inclusion in the documentary shown at the convention.

U.S.-Polish relations during the Cold War were conducted within the context of Soviet control over Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union had imposed communist governments and socialist economic systems on all the nations it occupied after World War II. There was no latitude for them to conduct foreign policies based on their own national interests. Soviet domination over East Europe seemed very unlikely to unravel despite the popular anti-communist uprisings in Poland and Hungary in 1956. Those events revealed that there were sources of anti-Soviet unrest rooted not too deeply below the surface, which undermined the myth that peoples under Soviet domination were united by adherence to universal Marxist principles. One of the first things made clear to newly arrived American diplomats in Warsaw was that no love was lost between Poles and Russians, a sentiment voiced openly in private conversations.

The Roman Catholic Church in Poland remained a dominant social force under an atheist regime throughout the Cold War and provided Poles a countervailing force to the Polish Communist Party. Ninety percent of the Polish population was Roman Catholic, a factor that played a role in implementation of Communist Party policies. An indication of the indomitable strength of the Church was reflected in the stories we heard about Communist Party officials spiriting their infants far off the beaten path to be baptized in isolated out-of-the-way rural sanctuaries. Their rationale for doing that made good sense. While the party calls the shots now, the Roman Catholic Church will be around forever, so they considered it wise to hedge their bets.

Gomulka fully understood the latent strength of the Church; he argued that Poland had to disregard the communist ideology of atheism to some extent to provide the Communist Party some latitude in dealing with it. Without such latitude, there was an increased risk of direct confrontation between the most powerful institutions in Polish society with unforeseeable consequences. Thus under Gomulka's leadership the authority of the Church was not acknowledged but never openly undermined. Under the wings of the Roman Catholic Church, however, opponents of communism felt emboldened to express dissatisfaction with the Soviet-imposed status quo, as they did at the end of 1970.

While observers of politics in Poland may have sensed the potential for unrest that a strong Catholic Church in Poland posed, I doubt that any of them concluded it constituted a substantive threat to the fundamental integrity of the Warsaw Pact, certainly not over the "near term." In hindsight, the near term lasted less than a decade longer; *Solidarnosc* [Solidarity Trade Union] was founded in 1980, and that proved to be the beginning of the end of communism in Poland and ultimately all nations of the Warsaw Pact.

We learned how strong the adherence of Poles to the teachings of the Catholic Church was when our Pani Regina announced her daughter's marriage. She told us it would be conducted before civil authorities so that it would be recognized as legal, but added the marriage would be consummated only after the bride and groom took their vows before a priest in a Roman Catholic wedding. That statement made clear the vast gap between communist state authority and on-the-ground truth in Poland.

In my first year in Warsaw, I became the embassy's hand holder for American Fulbright faculty and students in Poland. That meant meeting and greeting them upon arrival at Warsaw's airport to demonstrate the embassy's interest in and awareness of their presence. While I was at it, the PAO concluded I might just as well be the embassy's meeter and greeter for virtually any Americans passing through Warsaw for whatever reason. In the early 1970s, most of them were not tourists. I found that eying the footwear of debarking passengers at the airport was the best clue to identifying the Americans on incoming flights. Without personally knowing who was arriving and having no photos of them, I banked on my belief that Americans simply were unlikely to wear odd looking worn out shoes when traveling abroad. So I confidently reached out my hand to welcome whoever I was sent to greet on that basis and was right about 95 percent of the time. It should now be abundantly clear that during my first year in Warsaw I was, unsurprisingly, engaged in entry-level work as a JOT [Junior Officer Trainee].

Back then, USIA JOTs typically served only one year at their first posts. I could have sought a transfer in 1971, but I was off to a good start. I liked Poland and, most importantly, the embassy's leadership wanted me to stay on. I gladly extended my tour and spent three and a half years on my first assignment in Warsaw. When we left in December 1973, it was long after all the good assignments for the summer of 1974 had been filled. A year earlier, however, I gave little thought to what impact the decision to extend my tour in Warsaw would have on my next assignment.

One of my most significant achievements in Poland grew out of a routine, pedestrian activity that was turned over to me by the assistant cultural attaché. He gave Voice of America [VOA] popular music tapes to local university student DJs, which he considered a marginal contribution to fulfilling Warsaw P&C country plan objectives. Encapsulating USIA's global objectives was the slogan "Telling America's story to the world," which USIA's leadership cited whenever they traveled up to Capitol Hill for their annual budget hearings. Not much more elaboration was required than that slogan to justify agency requests for additional resources. Many USIA professionals, however, contended that the slogan diminished the agency's mission and the work of its officers. Telling a story, after all, is simply one-way communication.

What I was able to do with the VOA tapes in the fall of 1971 demonstrates that the substantive work of FSIOs involves two way communication to obtain feedback about the impression the story we tell makes on audiences we want to reach. Edward R. Murrow, one of America's most distinguished international journalists, became USIA's most prominent and influential director in the Kennedy Administration. He contended that the crucial link in international communication was the last three feet, the distance bridged in conversations between two people an arms-length apart. It was seven-inch reels of audio tapes that bridged the last three feet with Polish university students during the dozen or so occasions when I was invited to meet them in socialist youth clubs on campus.

My subject was American rock and roll, but the message I delivered was that the music represented a synthesis of predominantly black and white forms of cultural expression and gave it a previously unheard dynamism and allure that attracted youth around the world. The synthesis of predominantly Caucasian and African-American forms of music contributed to breaking barriers between social groups divided by generations of misunderstanding, prejudice, and antipathy toward each other.

VOA music tapes opened doors to me that previously had been closed to all official Americans in communist Poland. The student disc jockeys [DJs] to whom I handed a half dozen or so tapes every month did not broadcast their programs over the air. Rather their programs reached only dorm rooms that were wired to their studios on campuses. The appeal of American pop music was very strong across Europe since the early days of rock 'n' roll going back to the mid-fifties, but most young people in Poland who wanted to hear it could do so only by tuning into international shortwave broadcasts. The audio quality varied greatly depending on the signal strength of the frequency. The good quality

of the sound students heard on speakers in their dorm rooms served therefore to increase the appeal of American rock 'n' roll in Poland.

Late in the summer of 1971, a DJ I worked with was accompanied by a student leader of one of the socialist youth clubs at Warsaw University. She loved the music and wanted to learn more, adding that other students would be interested as well. I volunteered to talk about that in some detail, and a few days later I was invited to do so at her club. Some of my colleagues doubted she could obtain whatever clearance would be required to allow a foreign diplomat, let alone an American, to appear before students on campus. Despite that, I roughed out an outline of a presentation, selected recordings to amplify my observations and worked with P&C's Polish cultural assistant to ensure that my remarks in Polish would be both coherent and appropriately informal.

The day finally came and I addressed about a hundred students including half a dozen or so from North Vietnam, a nation with which the U.S. was at war at the time. I was somewhat surprised by the enthusiastic reception for my presentation that evening. The talk was followed by a question and answer session about the music and the interests of Americans their age. I faced no hostility, although I anticipated a few planted barbs about U.S. foreign policy, the war in Vietnam and racism in America. That just did not happen, and I noted that the Vietnamese had not walked out during my talk. The outcome of this unique and unprecedented event was that I received invitation after invitation to repeat my presentation on other campuses across Poland. At the embassy staff meeting following my first talk, Ambassador Stoessel enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity I created for the embassy to communicate directly with Poland's successor generation.

Another American musical form, jazz, was also very popular in Poland and everywhere else behind the iron curtain. The annual Warsaw Autumn jazz festival brought internationally renowned jazz greats Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, and Dave Brubeck to Poland during my tour to perform for standing-room-only audiences in Warsaw's neo-gothic Stalinesque Palace of Culture and Science. The communists understood the appeal of American culture and tolerated it as part of a strategy to keep strains and tensions with the population within a manageable range.

Arguably, the most listened to VOA broadcast around the world in the 1970s was a program of jazz recordings hosted by the remarkable Willis Conover who became a household name everywhere behind the iron curtain. His program opened with Duke Ellington's instantly recognizable classic, "Take the A Train," and then Willis, with his smooth, relaxed, and eminently listenable baritone voice, introduced recordings of America's jazz greats for the following hour. In 1973 the organizers of the Warsaw jazz festival invited him to attend. I remember the standing ovation Poles gave him as he walked on stage. His weekly hour on the air had made him, virtually unknown in the U.S., a superstar in the communist world. Freedom of expression and the creativity that jazz represented, that was so arbitrarily restrained by insensitive authoritarians, was widely admired behind the iron curtain.

American music, understandably, was a major component of USIA cultural programming around the world. In May 1973, the agency offered us one of America's top popular music groups, the 5th Dimension. The PAO turned to me to develop a program for them in Poland. Only two days were available for concerts. One had to be held in Warsaw and I wanted to schedule the other in Poland's second largest city, Krakow, but no hall large enough was available for that date. A large fairly modern arena in nearby Katowice, an industrial and coal mining center that had grown rapidly since World War II, was available, however, and I decided to book the second concert there. The words "fifth" and "dimension" were enough to guarantee sellout crowds in both locations, and I felt Katowice merited a major U.S. cultural event because it was generally overshadowed by Krakow. Krakow was a charming city that thrived under Hapsburg domination after Poland was partitioned for the first time in 1772, among Russia, Prussia, and the Hapsburg Empire, and ceased to be anything but a geographic term for more than a hundred years thereafter.

The 5th Dimension had two number one hits in the late 1960s and early 1970s: "Up, Up and Away (in my beautiful balloon)" and a medley from the counterculture hit musical *Hair*, "The Age of Aquarius/Let the Sunshine in." Those recordings and about half a dozen other chart-topping hits between 1967 and 1972 made the group box office megastars. Their popularity and status as a top concert act, however, had already begun to fade. Taking a cue from the 1970 tour of Blood, Sweat and Tears in the Soviet Union that generated significant publicity for the group and helped it regain popularity in the U.S., manager Marc Gordon decided to volunteer the 5th Dimension for a tour behind the iron curtain waiving performance fees. He hoped this would help boost the quintet's concert ticket sales back home and propel the group back to the top once again. Gordon characterized the tour as a national public service in pursuit of peace. Our embassies in Bucharest, Prague, and Warsaw expressed interest in programming the 5th Dimension; the group was also available for a concert in Ankara, Turkey.

Marc Gordon made an advance trip to Poland to outline his expectations to the PAO and me at a meeting over dinner in our apartment. He and I proposed ideas for the group's visit against the ceaseless screaming of Alison, our six-month old daughter, whose first tooth was posing a bit of a problem for her. Gordon said he wanted to make a documentary film to chronicle the impact the group made on U.S.-Polish relations. I think the half-baked film director Gordon brought along to cover the tour did not achieve that goal. At least we never heard a word about the film after the tour.

Despite two full houses for their concerts and the staging of a series of activities contrived to demonstrate the five singers' interest in things Polish and interaction with Poles, the 5th Dimension's presence had little impact on U.S.-Polish relations and less on its own fortunes. While it was a kick for me to work with celebrities up close and personal, I would have enjoyed it more just sitting in the balcony for their performances. Lead singer Marilyn McCoo's sister, incidentally, became a USIA employee several years later.

In May 1973, that year's White House Fellows visited Warsaw because their itinerary to Moscow required routing them through Poland's capital. The program selected about fifteen promising mid-career federal bureaucrats to serve in the offices of cabinet secretaries of agencies other than their own. All had shown potential to rise to the top, and their trip abroad was to heighten their awareness of East-West relations. Once again, yours truly was control officer for the distinguished fellows. One made a lasting impression on me.

Fast forward to the White House in 1987. A U.S. Army general serving in the office of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger had just been named deputy to National Security Advisor Frank Carlucci. His name rang a bell. I searched through our Warsaw memorabilia and came up with a sheet of paper with the White House Fellows logo signed by all members of the group who passed through Warsaw fourteen years earlier with a note expressing thanks for my assistance with arrangements for their visit. There I found the signature of Colin Powell who eventually became secretary of state. I noticed that in 1973 he was also working with Caspar Weinberger who was then either the director of the Office of Management and Budget or secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Several CODELs [congressional delegations] visited Poland during my tour. Unfortunately I learned that not all members of Congress are on their best behavior when traveling abroad. The heavy drinking habits of some caused minor embarrassments, but usually did not threaten to undermine bilateral relations. Poland had more CODEL visits than many other posts primarily because their flights to Moscow were routed through Warsaw, and all Polish-American members of Congress were intent on visiting. Such visits offered little more than opportunities for CODEL members to repeat well-known U.S. government policy positions in meetings with Polish officials or at media events. Polish officials reciprocated, which meant that CODELs achieved little more than scratching the surface of critical issues in the bilateral relationship. They did, however, provide members and their spouses opportunities to shop for antiques and handicrafts at bargain prices given the favorable exchange rate for Polish currency provided by the U.S. embassy.

Sylvia had to give up her job at the Pentagon when I began my assignment in Warsaw, which in retrospect was all to the good. We were both very upset by U.S. incursions into Cambodia that began in the spring of 1970 while I was in Polish language training. My assignment to Poland required that she resign from her Defense Department job and put it behind her. We decided to use our time in Poland to increase the size of our family, which we successfully doubled. Both of our children were born while we were there, Alison in 1971 and Alexander in 1973. Actually, they were born as American citizens in U.S. military hospitals in Nuremberg and Wiesbaden, West Germany, respectively.

A month before her due date Sylvia had to fly to Germany because airlines then would not carry women beyond their eighth month. In addition, the State Department did not want Foreign Service staff and dependents to be hospitalized behind the iron curtain fearing that other than routine procedures might be employed, such as using sedatives to

obtain confidential information about embassy personnel and operations. In addition, conditions in Polish hospitals fell far short of American standards. Four days after their births our children flew to Warsaw with Sylvia bearing their U.S. diplomatic passports with photos of them taken just hours after they came into the world. With the arrival of the children, most of our personal time in Poland centered on the family.

Alison was born just months before Pampers, the first nationally available brand of disposable diapers, became available to consumers in the U.S. It was several more months before the monthly U.S. Army commissary support flight delivered them to the embassy in Warsaw. Prior to that godsend, parents in the U.S. could use a neighborhood cleaning service for cloth diapers. In Warsaw, no such service existed and the only way to clean them was to boil them in gallons of water laced with peroxide. Pani Regina somehow found a massive pot for that purpose. In the meantime, I became somewhat adept at changing diapers and only on several isolated occasions stuck the sharp end of a safety pin into tender flesh, which raised cries of anguish. People today have no idea how blessed they are to have disposable diapers.

We continued to host a number of official dinners, receptions, and showings of 16mm U.S. feature films that also arrived aboard the U.S. Army commissary support flights. The allure of viewing Hollywood movies months before they appeared on screens in Polish cinemas made them a sure draw for English-speaking Polish contacts who were invited to view them in the residences of embassy officers. Guests for our screenings were primarily younger Poles of the successor generation.

Fortunately P&C had several anamorphic lenses to produce widescreen images from square 16mm film frames. Without such lenses, the only way to show a widescreen film in a small room was to set up the projector in a corner. The image that appeared on the opposite wall or screen was higher at one end than at the other and in better focus on one side than the other, but at least the proportions of images on the screen appeared almost normal. Oh what we had to contend with thirty years before digital media became available.

Containers with three or four eighteen-inch reels of 16mm film weighed about twenty pounds, and 16mm projectors weighed up to forty pounds. They were noisy contraptions and threading films through them properly was a chore. Films sometimes jammed in the projector and tore apart. A splice kit was needed to mend the breaks. On top of that, to show films during daylight hours required closing the drapes so that it would be dark enough for the images to be clearly viewable. Finally, with feature films taking up three or four reels, each had to be rewound before threading the next. That generated lengthy gaps between action sequences, which were perhaps not as bad as having to endure four-minute commercials breaks during broadcasts of feature films on TV. Anyway, it was almost more trouble than it was worth.

One of the more interesting representational events in our two-bedroom apartment was the screening of “Woodstock” for about twenty Polish guests. That evening all was proceeding nicely until about midway through the second reel when the projector bulb

blew out. There was no spare one in the apartment. I drove to the embassy, roused up the marine guard to let me in (it was already after ten pm), scrounged through a supply cabinet in the film library to locate a spare bulb, and rushed back home. I just hoped the whole process did not extend the screening beyond midnight so our guests could catch the night's last trams or buses home. No guests left during my absence, however, because the Woodstock Festival of 1968 captured the imagination of the younger generation behind the iron curtain just as much as in the West. Sylvia managed to keep things going by serving dessert and coffee during my absence.

One of our guests for that screening, incidentally, was a young Polish student DJ, Andrzej Olechowski, to whom I provided VOA pop music tapes. About twenty years later I returned to Warsaw for the first time as a member of the White House press team for President Clinton's 1994 visit and encountered him again. He was then Poland's foreign minister in the cabinet of President Lech Walesa, the shipyard worker who became the leader of the Solidarity movement that undermined Poland's communist government more than a decade earlier. We had a chance to chat briefly before Clinton addressed the Polish Parliament, and recalled our informal association more than two decades earlier and how much things had changed since then.

Another benefit of a Foreign Service career was, in my case, an opportunity to visit Bulgaria and Yugoslavia while serving in Poland. USIA director Shakespeare authorized travel by junior officers who served behind the iron curtain to travel to other Warsaw Pact nations to provide them a broader understanding of the dynamics of communism elsewhere and the impact that had on USIS (P&C) activities in those countries. Thus I was able to fly to Bulgaria and transit through Belgrade, Yugoslavia on the way back.

In 1972, Bulgaria was very stultifying compared to Yugoslavia. I sensed a constant police presence on the streets and eavesdropping in my hotel room. Shady characters hung around the lobby posed to appear as if they were reading newspapers. Maybe they were and I was just being a bit paranoid, but I was always alert to being watched in iron curtain countries. As our diplomatic security people would always remind us, we had to assume the words and movements of American officials could be monitored by their intelligence services at any time.

I found the Stalinist hotel in the center of Sofia very uncomfortable and after recently having read Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* I imagined it as having been a Soviet KGB interrogation facility early in the Cold War. It was my impression that Bulgaria was somehow simply withering away at the time. The weather wasn't very pleasant either. I did get to meet a friend and a relative of my father; both were not happy under Soviet-imposed communism, and they let me know that. Soviet domination was simply grinding Bulgaria down, they said.

Routed back to Warsaw via Belgrade, I found that things were better in Yugoslavia. I also had an opportunity to fly to Zagreb for an overnight stay and the conviviality of the passengers on the flight left me with a very positive impression of the way of life in the country. The fact that the cabin was full of second hand smoke from the cigarettes almost

everybody lit up left a distinctly less positive impression, but that's the way it was in the Balkans. As things turned out, seven years later Sylvia and I found ourselves assigned to Belgrade.

I was able to pay another visit to Bulgaria in 1982 during our tour in Yugoslavia and noted that things had not improved much over the previous decade. On that trip, however, we drove along pan-European highway E75, a limited access divided four-lane road called the *autoput* (highway) in Serbia. Turkish guest workers in Germany had reputations as terrible drivers in Serbia. They also drove on E75 to get home from Germany and Serbs alleged that they placed bricks on their accelerators to transit without having to stop in Yugoslavia. Collective wisdom also held that over the years there had been a death per kilometer along the *autoput*. The wreckage of cars, buses, and trucks and markers where people had died were strewn along the road for years afterwards made it not all that hard to believe.

We were grateful to be bearers of diplomatic passports in driving from Belgrade to Sofia. Without them, the wait at the Yugoslav-Bulgaria border would have dragged on for hours. Turks were no more beloved in Bulgaria than in Yugoslavia. The Bulgarians wanted no Turk to doubt that they still resented the centuries-long occupation of their country by the Ottoman Empire that ended only with Word War I and held up Turks for hours before allowing them to cross through Bulgaria to get home.

I traveled to Bulgaria again in 1992, 2002, and most recently in 2006. Despite not having served at the U.S. embassy in Sofia, I did have opportunities to learn something about my father's homeland. Things have changed enormously in the two decades since the iron curtain came down, but Bulgaria, which had vast potential for developing as an open market economy, has been sidetracked by crime and corruption that has wilted its promise.

Sylvia and I found our experiences in Warsaw an auspicious beginning to what now appeared to be a promising career path for me and our family. We foresaw two and three year tours abroad with two or three years in Washington sprinkled somewhere between them and my moving uninterruptedly upward through the hierarchical Foreign Service structure as I progressed from junior officer to some unspecified but glorious height years later. Oh how little did I know. My career proved to be something other than a straight line between two points. Along the way, there were some sharp curves and near derailments. My onward assignment from Poland was a case in point.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM 1974–1975

Serving as a branch public affairs officer [BPAO] was not, in the bureaucratic scheme of things, a bad assignment for a second tour officer. Branch PAOs are, after all, managers of USIS operations. While they report to PAOs at embassies they nonetheless occupy leadership positions in offices in cities in which there are American consulates. Da Nang, however, was a hard-to-fill, less-desirable-than-most posting for obvious reasons. The U.S. was still heavily involved in Vietnam in 1974. It was the last place in the world I

wanted to be with my family. The Paris Peace Accords of January 1973 terminated military hostilities in Vietnam, U.S. armed forces withdrew from the country, and a government supported by the U.S. remained in power in the south. Unfortunately the agreement amounted to little more than a temporary ceasefire, but U.S. foreign affairs agencies blithely concluded thereafter that there were no longer reasons dependents could not accompany officers on assignments to Vietnam.

Sylvia, who worked in the Pentagon from 1966 to 1970 where she dealt with Vietnam policy issues daily and had an in-depth knowledge of realities on the ground across South Vietnam, concluded there was very little that made civilian service there safe. We attempted to argue against an assignment to Vietnam, but because I had extended my tour in Warsaw so that an incoming officer could continue language studies in Washington, I was out of the routine overseas assignment cycle.

Desperate to find a qualified candidate for an out of cycle job opening, my personnel officer or career manager (colleagues called them career manglers) insisted that I accept the assignment and told me the agency would accept my resignation if I did not. The only positive thing about it in my view was that it would provide early experience managing a USIS operation independently and supervising personnel. In the case of Da Nang, the post had a staff of six seasoned Vietnamese employees. Considering this against a range of other factors, personal safety first and foremost among them, we reluctantly agreed to go to Vietnam.

Before we traveled to Saigon I endured six hours a day of intense Vietnamese language training over the first seven months of 1974. Normally the course for tonal languages, of which Vietnamese is one, is one to two years to provide enough time for the learner to attain minimal professional proficiency. I recall that it took four hours to memorize dialogue number one in the FSI Vietnamese language textbook; there were only about twelve sentences in it. I reviewed it over and over again in my mind as I trudged from my sister-in-law's Georgetown apartment in Washington across Key Bridge to the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia on an icy day in January. Almost thirty-five years later I can still recite it verbatim. Ironically, there is little else I can say in Vietnamese today.

After we returned from Poland, Sylvia and the children stayed with my parents in New Jersey. Because Sylvia was anxious to get away from my mother, I was under pressure to get the family back together and hastily picked out a townhouse condo that was still under construction in the Washington suburb of Annandale, Virginia. Sylvia hurriedly flew down to check it out and we quickly signed a contract. The only good thing to say about the place was that it was a new home immediately available.

Teaching the southern dialect of Vietnamese to an officer assigned to Da Nang was a mistake. The city was located just sixty miles south of the demilitarized zone [DMZ] that then divided North and South Vietnam. Most people in Da Nang, many of whom fled south after the fall of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, spoke the northern dialect, almost a different language. I was at a significant disadvantage and a fish out of water from our

first day in Da Nang even though I tested out, barely, with a 2/2 rating in Vietnamese. Despite intensive training, I could not readily comprehend the language spoken by the people around me.

To be candid, excellent mimic though I may be, I was unable to master comfortably the tonal structure of a language that gives four different meanings to the syllable "ba," for example, depending on how it is pronounced. For someone who communicated so well in Polish that proved a real downer. Incidentally my barber in McLean, Virginia who is from Saigon told me that she recently visited Hanoi and could hardly comprehend anything people there were saying, which confirmed what I had discovered much to my dismay forty years ago.

We arrived in Saigon in September 1974 with nine suitcases, a Siamese cat, and two kids in diapers. We were exhausted after traveling almost forty-eight hours across the Pacific, including a layover in Tokyo. Fortunately, we were met planeside by an embassy vehicle and driven directly to our temporary apartment. South Vietnamese authorities apparently chose not to exert sovereignty over the arrivals of official Americans. We handed our passports to an embassy staffer who carried them into the terminal to be stamped. Dead tired, we were grateful to be whisked away from Than Son Nhut airport without having to encounter a single Vietnamese border or customs officials on the way out.

A week of orientation at the embassy followed. The Deputy Chief of Mission [DCM] warned us not to convey a sense of faltering U.S. resolve to the government of the Republic of South Vietnam in contact with its citizens. The remaining U.S. presence in Vietnam was a stabilizing factor and any expression of negativity would raise doubts about U.S. confidence in the ability of the Vietnamese government to prevail. The administration maintained that the Paris Peace Accords was intended to provide enough time to establish equilibrium between North and South Vietnam in order to prevent one side from imposing a military solution over the other. This meant we had to keep South Vietnamese President Thieu strong enough to withstand an invasion from the north.

The administration and the ambassador in particular also, for some reason, presumed that a way could be found to get the Soviets and the Chinese to pressure North Vietnam to reduce Ho Chi Minh's commitment to revolution. Assuming that a continued flow of U.S. military and development assistance would buy enough time for the south to build the strength to survive proved to be a groundless supposition. U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin seemed blind to the reality that these objectives were unachievable. His unwillingness to face this was a major factor that led ultimately to the flawed and chaotic evacuation of the U.S. embassy, unnecessarily risking the lives of several thousand Americans. In addition, more than one hundred thousand Vietnamese supporters of U.S. policy awaited the assistance of embassy staff members for evacuation but were left behind in Saigon. The Republic of South Vietnam fell on April 28, 1975, and the last helicopters carrying evacuees lifted off the roof of the U.S. embassy.

After our orientation at the embassy in Saigon, we flew to Da Nang on one of the two Vietnam Airlines jet planes that serviced the city. The day before we left, one of the

planes was hijacked and exploded after an emergency landing at the airport. It took some courage for us to board our flight but the trip was uneventful. In Da Nang, we found a house with twelve-feet ceilings surrounded by a high wall topped with concertina wire. We heard later that it may have once been a brothel. With no screens on the windows, three-inch long flying cockroaches occasionally passed through while I was listening to LPs [long playing twelve-inch vinyl recordings] under headphones in the living room in the evening with the lights turned off. Talk about unpleasant surprises.

At first we slept under mosquito nets, but we later had screens installed. We also lacked a washer and dryer and relied on household help to do the laundry. The small American store supplied by the embassy commissary in Saigon offered almost nothing, nor did the commissary itself when it came to the needs of families with small children (think Pampers). We had to scrounge through local markets for cuts of meat of unknown origin, and Sylvia had to be creative in her cooking, even making mayonnaise.

A nice offset for the substandard food markets were the *pho* (Vietnamese soup) vendors who plied the streets of Da Nang nightly. A boy passed through our neighborhood rhythmically clicking sticks a block ahead of a vendor to announce that one was nearby. When we beckoned the boy to the door he took our order for what we soon discovered was a delightful concoction of broth, peanuts, hot peppers, pork, onions, *nuoc mam* (fish sauce), and a variety of other tasty ingredients. He ran back with our order to where the *pho* vendor was ladling out portions to fill a previous order. Minutes later the boy would reappear delivering a large piping hot container of *pho* to our door. It was not pizza, but it was home delivery.

Fortunately, fresh seafood was also widely available and good. Single male colleagues did not have to agonize over menu planning when they hosted dinner parties. They just contacted vendors to line up their carts in the back yard and offer *pho* and other delicacies to their guests. We enjoyed several wonderful meals at the few such social functions we attended in Da Nang.

In fall 1974, ours was not the only American family at the consulate, and Sylvia quickly formed close bonds with several other unemployed mothers at post. In fact, despite the departure of U.S. armed forces the year before, there were still more than seven thousand Americans in country including civilian government and military personnel attached to the Defense Attaché Office [DAO], contractors, private company employees, and representatives of international non-governmental organizations [NGOs]; many of them had Vietnamese dependents. The lifestyle at the U.S. mission in South Vietnam back then differed considerably from that of suburban Washington, DC.

The men who dominated the American environment in Vietnam for almost the entire previous decade were generally unaccompanied by spouses who were either left behind in suburban Washington or resided in safer nearby countries. They did not greet the few families that arrived in Vietnam after the Paris Peace Accords with the most open of arms. Not surprisingly, many had Vietnamese girlfriends they did not want their wives to learn about through leaks along the social grapevine that new families were now being

plugged into. There were awkward moments when we encountered them at movie screenings in the consulate accompanied by their Vietnamese lady friends. They saw us as intruders on their territory.

Some Americans, of course, had married Vietnamese women and started families in Vietnam. As the evacuation approached, they faced real problems scrambling to obtain necessary documentation for their Vietnamese dependents to qualify for entry to the U.S. The ambassador made no move to address that situation until late in the day causing unnecessary stress and tension as people moved with increasing urgency to get out of Vietnam.

Our surface shipment of personal effects from the U.S. arrived a couple of months after we did but it was held in Saigon, which, as things turned out, was all to the good. It meant, however, we would have no items to decorate the house for the Christmas holidays. Fortunately the children were still too young to know much about the holiday and Christmas 1974 in the Bazala household was modest indeed. At a small shop catering to Da Nang's Roman Catholic population, Sylvia purchased a shiny somewhat garish four-foot, some-assembly-required, aluminum Christmas tree, the last one in the establishment. We set it up every year for the next two decades as a reminder of our experiences in Da Nang.

One day there was a massive explosion at a major arms depot that caused people to wonder for a while whether the war had resumed. It hadn't, but helicopter gunships flew over the house every night and armed guards patrolled the residences of all U.S. officials twenty-four hours a day. Da Nang was in the northernmost section of the four tactical zones the U.S. military had divided South Vietnam into. The city was the capital of Military Region [MR] 1 that bordered the DMZ dividing North and South Vietnam. The four military regions (MR 1 through 4) were also known as Corps, cited with roman numerals I through IV (with I being pronounced not as the number 1, but as the word eye). Only the U.S. Army can tell you why. Vietnamese forces had begun positioning themselves in the central highlands for an offense planned for 1975 after the rainy season, but there was no conflict anywhere near Da Nang during the four months we were there.

I had a consular commission for Da Nang even though I knew little about consular work and had performed none in Poland. FSIOs rarely, if ever, performed any consular work whatsoever during their entire careers. The only consular function I performed in my career was in Da Nang. A young American who died in the U.S. specified that he wanted his ashes strewn among banyan trees near a school close to the base where he served while in the army in Vietnam. He wrote that the voices of children he heard daily at play there set his mind at ease. Local Vietnamese authorities were sympathetic to his request and prepared to assist in fulfilling it. After all, where you choose to spend eternity is a critical decision. They provided a military helicopter to transport his cremated remains to the site he selected and I, in the absence of any other consular officer in Da Nang that day, accompanied the ashes to witness their release according to his wishes and submitted a report to the State Department confirming the event.

The flight into the central highlands began in a light early morning rain. Two South Vietnamese army machine gunners were positioned at the open doors on both sides of the helicopter with automatic weapons at the ready as we moved over areas of questionable security near the central highlands. The chopper flew at a low altitude that gave me a rare glimpse of rural Vietnam. The rice paddies below resembled an abstract assembly of stained glass windows in varying shades of green spreading out mile after mile. After we landed there was a brief ceremony before the release of the ashes and we flew back to Da Nang before lunch. That brief, unique, and spectacular experience made an indelible impression.

Sylvia took the Foreign Service entrance exam in Da Nang in early December. It was offered annually at all Foreign Service posts and I urged her to take it knowing that with her academic background and professional work at the Pentagon it was unlikely she would find it at all satisfying remaining a dependent spouse once the children started school. Only two applicants took the exam in Da Nang. Sylvia learned in February 1975 that she passed. Women's lib had come belatedly to the State Department, however; it was only two years earlier that the department agreed to admit married women into the officer corps. Until then, female Foreign Service officers were compelled to resign when they married.

My role as branch PAO in Da Nang was not much more than babysitting a declining number of USIA information, cultural and exchange programs. My office was in a detached building set back from the street on a nicely landscaped lot only several blocks from the consulate. It contained small book and film libraries and was staffed by six capable, bilingual, experienced Vietnamese employees. I also administered programs for a few academic grantees at Da Nang University. I don't recall any American students there in the fall and winter of 1974, but I believe there were several American professors who passed through on short term research grants.

As BPAO I was also the chairman of the Da Nang branch of the Vietnamese-American Association [VAA], a binational voluntary organization that in Da Nang was primarily engaged in teaching English, mostly to dependents of South Vietnamese military officers. VAA board members coaxed me to become an instructor, something I had absolutely no desire to do, but as nominal VAA leader, what were my options? It turned out not to be all that bad. My class in the evening consisted of youngsters in their mid-teens who were a bit cocky and not very highly motivated. I had a good text, and running students through drills was not all that unpleasant or demanding a task. I was also getting to know other instructors and the parents of some of the students in my class.

By late 1974, there were few American or foreign journalists passing through Da Nang. Ambassador Martin prevented USIS Saigon PAO Alan Carter and branch PAOs from briefing the press, although were we able to we could have provided them useful background information they would not have gotten from the ambassador's designated press spokesman. Carter had a real problem in Saigon; he was not a hand-picked Martin man and unlike the ambassador he did not regard the press as an "enemy." On the contrary, it was USIA policy to be open and candid with the media regarding unclassified

information. That was an important element of the job, and how effectively PAOs communicated with host-country and U.S. media abroad was a critical factor in performance evaluations. Given the ambassador's policy of limited interaction with media, I felt USIS Da Nang was cooking on only three burners.

Ultimately there was no way to conceal the decline in American public support for continued involvement with South Vietnam. An early indication of how that was playing out in American politics was a cut in the 1975 USIA budget for Vietnam. To absorb the cut USIS Saigon concluded it would have to close its three branches at consulates and consolidate operations in the capital. Only one Vietnamese employee was to be kept on at each branch to assist with the few programs USIS would continue to conduct outside Saigon, academic and professional exchanges being the most significant. After closing down our posts, the other two BPAOs and I transferred to Saigon.

In January 1975, we left Da Nang for Saigon and the peaceful interlude that began with the Paris Peace Accords almost two years earlier came to a hurried and catastrophic conclusion. Early in the month, we hosted a farewell reception at our home in Da Nang. It was a bittersweet occasion. Our Vietnamese government, media, and academic guests regarded the reduction in USIA's footprint in South Vietnam as a bad omen. They viewed the closing of the branch as a decrease in U.S. government confidence in the future of South Vietnam. That was a reality that simply could not be concealed as the second anniversary of the Paris Peace Accords approached.

Looking back, however, closing the branches when we did was a good move. The situation in Da Nang began to unravel critically in early March 1975 when the total breakdown of the South Vietnamese military in the northern half of the country generated panic and chaos. Almost two million people fled into the city, an environment simply unable to accommodate them. People acted out of sheer desperation in attempts to get out of town once the embassy authorized the evacuation of the remaining U.S. Da Nang personnel at the end of March.

As Americans in Da Nang packed to go, they were surrounded instantly by throngs of Vietnamese grappling for positions that would enable them to tag along. Lives were lost as they clung to the wings of aircraft; others were crushed to death clinging to landing gear when they were raised after take off from the airport in Da Nang. Barges in Da Nang Harbor also evacuated personnel, and many Vietnamese lost their lives trying to jump aboard after they pulled away from the dock, falling in the water and drowning. We heard horror story after horror story from people we knew in Da Nang after their evacuation to Saigon, some with only the clothes on their backs. Two colleagues said they had to fire weapons to defend themselves, not knowing what damage they inflicted. One, however, was distraught because he was convinced that a shot he fired had killed someone.

One reason for the breakdown in MR1/I Corps was a decision to reposition South Vietnamese defense forces to the south under the "light at the top, heavy on the bottom" strategy that acknowledged North Vietnamese forces in the central highlands were capable of overcoming South Vietnam's. Unfortunately Vietnam's political leaders did

not share that strategy widely and military leaders were incapable of implementing the strategy quickly in an orderly fashion. Most officers, many with families living on base, fled in panic when the strategy was announced. The shift in the position of defense forces degenerated into total disorganization. In short, the army of the Republic of Vietnam disintegrated by the end of March.

More than two years after the Paris Peace Accords South Vietnam began to unravel, and only three months later the situation degenerated into a chaotic evacuation of American citizens and their dependents from the country as the government collapsed. The way the ambassador and the deputy chief of mission coped with events at the end was disastrous and characterized by the absence of transparency and accountability. It threatened the safety of dependents and the lives of hundreds of Vietnamese U.S. government employees and thousands of high value Vietnamese contacts without whose efforts the embassy would have been unable to operate throughout the war.

All this became clear only in retrospect. In January 1975, we were settling into a home in Saigon that was a great improvement over the one in Da Nang. It was a duplex that had an enormous banyan tree in the garden we shared with our neighbors. We received the shipment of personal possessions that had not been delivered to us in Da Nang. Alison entered the international nursery and made new friends quickly. Looking back, Saigon could have become one of our favorite postings were it not for the war. The city had its charms, and much of the French influence in architecture and cuisine remained.

We quickly fell into a routine in Saigon. Following local custom, the work day was eight am to noon and two pm to six pm. The long midday break gave us time to lunch with friends and colleagues, shop, swim at the embassy pool and even take a nap. We visited local markets on Saturday and took the kids to the embassy pool on Sunday mornings followed by hot dogs and burgers at the embassy club where we met up with other families with children and began to make new friends.

I was chief of program development at USIS Saigon. Even at the height of the war we were able to conduct a wide range of substantive activities in the capital. But in the last three months before South Vietnam fell and the embassy was evacuated I had little to do other than provide support to a VAA that was far larger in Saigon than in Da Nang. In addition to a few brave souls who came in as short term guest speakers, the major program in the planning stage was an exhibition of the works of distinguished American artist Alexander Calder, best known for his mobiles, a form of abstract art.

After the fall of Da Nang at the end of March, we knew that circumstances on the ground would make it impossible to host the exhibition. The ambassador insisted, however, that USIA not cancel it because doing so would indicate to our Vietnamese staff that we no longer considered the environment in country stable or secure enough to mount it. Once they knew, they would leak that information to friends and family and before you knew it everybody else would know what everybody else except the ambassador already knew, namely that the gig was just about up.

As a result we gave the go ahead to have the exhibit shipped to Saigon even after all signs pointed to the eventual evacuation of the embassy. That left USIA holding the bag. At the last moment, the exhibit was diverted to another destination by the shipping line because commercial sea routes into South Vietnam faced closure, and USIA evaded the prospect of losing invaluable art work and having to face the consequences. The damage to the agency's reputation for safe and secure handling of valuable works of art would have limited its ability to present American art programs anywhere abroad in the future.

Against this background of uncertainty and tension, about two months after we arrived in Saigon we took a vacation trip to Thailand between March 9 and 20. We visited both exotic Bangkok and the beachfront resort of Penang where a monkey bit son Alex and he learned how to climb out of his crib. Reading the English language paper published in Thailand, we learned of the fall of Ban Me Thuot, a major city in the center of South Vietnam on March 8 and attacks on other locations in the central highlands about which we knew little because Armed Forces Radio and TV news in Saigon was censored and Saigon's English language paper was sponsored by the CIA.

The attacks, Sylvia knew from her work at the Pentagon, did not fit the usual pattern of enemy activity. She saw them as the final push by the north to take the south, something embassy leadership refused to acknowledge until the bitter end just six weeks later. This head-in-the-sand attitude hampered evacuation planning and endangered the safety and security of Americans in country. When evacuation was finally ordered on April 28 all hell broke loose and thousands of deserving Vietnamese embassy employees and their families were simply abandoned in places American embassy officials told them to gather for evacuation. The Americans waiting with them were summoned to board the last helicopters without any arrangements having been made to ensure the safe departure of the Vietnamese who trusted the good faith of their American supervisors and colleagues to the exclusion of other evacuation options.

During our trip to Bangkok Sylvia and I thought about having her and the children stay on there while I returned to Saigon, but ultimately we all returned to Vietnam together. From then on Sylvia worried endlessly about the safety of our family. The ambassador was simply unconcerned about that except in the most perfunctory manner. He authorized an update to the standard emergency evacuation plan that every embassy is required to prepare, but did so without regard to what was required to implement it on short notice or to ensure the orderly departure of more than four thousand Americans and their dependents who were still in Vietnam in late April. Nor did he designate personnel to start mapping out a multi-stage process to get them out of the country until just days before the plug was pulled. The U.S. government paid a heavy price for the improvisatory and haphazard nature of the actual evacuation from Vietnam.

Ambassador Martin feared that the leak of any information about the embassy planning for evacuation would send the message to South Vietnamese leadership that the U.S. resolve to support the government was weakening. Instead he worked unrealistically to find an opportunity for some sort of accommodation that would leave South Vietnam intact. Martin's last weeks as U.S. ambassador to Saigon were a disaster. He simply

failed to take responsibility for his most important obligation, the protection and safe departure of all Americans and the orderly evacuation of more than one hundred thousand Vietnamese who had linked their destinies to U.S. government policy objectives in their country over the past decade.

Since very little information was shared with embassy staff about what was really happening, we relied on rumors and unofficial information in our final weeks in Saigon. Our first clue that official Americans were taking seriously the deteriorating security situation was the absence of our children's playmates and their parents at the embassy swimming pool the Sunday after our return from Thailand. Inquiring as to their whereabouts, we were told they were on R&R [rest and recreation leave] in the Philippines or on a shopping trip to Bangkok. That all of them, mostly families of DAO or intelligence agency employees, split the scene within days of each other seemed an unlikely coincidence. A few days later the international nursery closed, indicating that many families, both American and foreign, were preparing to leave the country.

Our visit to a local veterinarian unexpectedly provided additional information about the approach of the final reckoning. We took our cat in for shots and the Vietnamese veterinarian told us that the wife of DCM Wolfgang Lehman had just stopped by to get certificates of health for their dogs because they planned to ship them out. That jolted us somewhat and maybe the vet as well who obviously hoped to learn more about that from us. It was a clear indication the DCM's family anticipated leaving soon for as attached as they were to their pets it was unlikely they would ship them out unless they also planned to depart. By late March, it was clear that officials at the top of the embassy hierarchy were preparing to pull their staff out of Vietnam regardless of Ambassador Martin's stalling on plans for an evacuation.

Finally, at the end of March, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger ordered the ambassador to authorize the departure of American dependents from Vietnam, but Martin told his section heads they could grant departure orders only for married individuals who requested them on a case by case basis. USIS PAO Alan Carter and heads of other agencies ignored that caveat and announced to their entire staffs that any dependents seeking to depart would be able to do so with embassy travel orders issued not for evacuation but for resettlement in the U.S. under "separate maintenance." Such orders provided for round trip transportation under the assumption that dependents would eventually return to post when circumstances warranted it. Everybody knew, however, that no one would be cashing in those orders for return tickets to Saigon. The authorized departures indicated Washington was aware the days of the U.S. in Saigon were numbered as were those of the government of the Republic of South Vietnam.

Before all this we entertained the notion of Sylvia leaving as an escort on a recently authorized "Operation Babylift" flight to expedite the transit of more than two thousand Vietnamese orphans that Americans had expressed interest in adopting. That way she could travel home at no cost to us to take the Foreign Service oral exam. Seats for escorts would enable dozens of female military employees and dependent spouses from other agencies to depart without evacuation orders and lessen the burden to DAO in dealing

with remaining dependents. As an escort, she would be permitted to travel with our children. In the end, she did not take advantage of that option because USIS authorized her separate maintenance orders. She and the kids departed April 4 on one of the last Pan Am [Pan American World Airways] flights out of Saigon.

The first Operation Babylift flight departed via a reconfigured Air Force C-5 Galaxy, the largest cargo craft in the world, the same day Sylvia left on Pan Am. A cargo door blew off twelve minutes after take off depressurizing the cabin and severing several flight control cables. The plane crashed short of the runway after the pilot circled back to Saigon's Than Son Nhut airport. Some 138 people were killed including dozens of DAO spouses. Sylvia did not hear anything about the disaster during the four days she spent crossing the Pacific. Equipment failure on the Pan Am plane resulted in a two-day layover in Guam and an overnight layover in Hawaii. She did not want to burden her mother with the problems Pan Am was having and therefore made no attempts to contact her en route.

Someone from the State Department, however, called her mother to let her know Sylvia had departed on April 4 without mentioning that she was flying Pan Am. Needless to say her mother panicked thinking Sylvia was aboard the Babylift flight. She became frantic when she heard nothing from Sylvia the next day. My father finally called Pan Am, got confirmation that she was a passenger and learned of the mechanical difficulties that had held up the flight so long.

Of the fifty-two pets on board confined to the cargo hold for four days, only two were alive on the baggage carousel in San Francisco, one of them being Princess, the Siamese cat we acquired five years earlier in Warsaw. The other animals died of dehydration because no one paid any attention to their needs during the delays despite assurances from Pan Am personnel. Princess lived with us for twelve more years; she died in 1986.

Knowing that Sylvia and the children were safe in the United States eased my mind considerably, but conditions in Saigon were deteriorating. Things surely would have gotten worse faster had Vietnamese police not been able to enforce limited entry into Saigon to only registered residents. That prevented a reoccurrence of the situation in Da Nang and created a period of relative tranquility that prevailed until just before the final evacuation less than three weeks later.

That tranquility, however, was dramatically shattered on April 8 when at 8:20 am a low flying, fast moving fighter jet roared over USIS headquarters and headed straight for the presidential palace less than a mile away. A minute later it roared over again and a massive explosion seconds later was followed by several rapid bursts of automatic weapon fire. USIS employees hit the floor and crawled under desks. Fortunately no one was injured because the windows had been sealed with Mylar, a synthetic material that prevented the glass from shattering inward. The mission warden closed the gates, and we prepared for the worst. Nothing followed, however. Little more than an hour later, the government announced a curfew. Damage caused by the bomb dropped on the palace was minimal, and no one was injured. President Thieu was elsewhere at the time.

Everybody started scrambling to get home. Traffic immediately became snarled, detours were set up everywhere, and the streets were patrolled by soldiers in black jackets. Motor scooters drove on sidewalks disregarding frazzled pedestrians whose safety they threatened. I had the thankless task of patrolling the USIS annex a block from the embassy. Fortunately, a colleague was there, and we chatted until the curfew was lifted at about three pm after which another colleague dropped by with sandwiches for the three of us.

The bombing hastened the downsizing of the USIS American staff from sixteen to five. With no more programs to develop and no farewell functions arranged for my Vietnamese USIS staff or household help, I left April 18 on the last Cathay Pacific flight out of Saigon to Hong Kong with another former BPAO colleague. After decompressing there for three days, I flew to Athens, Georgia where Sylvia and the children were staying with her parents. A fellow faculty member of Sylvia's father at the University of Georgia asked to meet me after I arrived there. Sylvia's mother arranged a lunch for us in her home and I "briefed" professor of law Dean Rusk, who wanted to hear what I knew of developments in Vietnam. He was secretary of state during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations and along with Defense Secretary Robert McNamara largely shaped the policies that ultimately required the presence of four hundred thousand American soldiers in South Vietnam. Our meeting occurred several days after I arrived from Saigon. There was little I could relate to him about events since my departure, but he expressed gratitude for the opportunity to hear from someone who had been on the ground in Saigon so recently; I think our meeting saddened him. Nothing I said offered hope for optimism.

Upon returning to Washington, I worked briefly as a member of the State Department task force assigned to relocate up to 130,000 Vietnamese President Ford authorized to enter the United States in the event of an evacuation. I do not know how many ultimately made it to the U.S. but the numbers were large. The work was fast-paced and stressful as the task force escalated rapidly into a multi-agency operation. I recall lengthy involvement in determining that the National Guard Training Center at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; Eglin Air Force Base in Florida; and Marine Corps Camp Pendleton in California would be the locations for Vietnamese refugee welcome centers. That was followed by exhaustive meetings to mobilize and organize U.S. agencies and NGOs to provide support required there.

I also recall lengthy conversations with a number of mayors from small towns in the Mid- and Northwest who called to say they were prepared to assist with the relocation of refugees. Most touching were their pleas for us to identify Vietnamese physicians who, their residents hoped, would be willing to settle in their out-of-the-way communities to compensate for the glaring lack of medical services around them characteristic of so many American rural areas. My tenure on the Vietnamese refugee task force and my involvement with U.S. policy regarding Vietnam concluded when I began a hundred hours of Hindi language training to prepare for an onward assignment to New Delhi, India in July.

NEW DELHI, INDIA 1975–1978

Although I ended up in Vietnam because I was bidding out of cycle, that worked to my advantage in seeking a transfer in the spring of 1975. USIA had just approved the establishment of a new position to the staff of USIS New Delhi's North India Branch. Assignments for the summer had already been made, and few officers with appropriate backgrounds were still available. A good word from several senior colleagues resulted in my assignment to become the deputy PAO of the branch. We planned to arrive in New Delhi in August.

I knew very little about India prior to my assignment there, but very much looked forward to serving in New Delhi where the North India Branch was located in the new four-story USIS headquarters building. It had a staff of three FSIOs and more than forty Indian employees who conducted programs in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and the Indian-government controlled area of Jammu and Kashmir. The branch housed the largest USIA library overseas and had a two hundred seat auditorium with state of the art audio and visual equipment. Three percent of India's then six hundred million people, or about eighteen million spoke English. Many had higher education. The libraries of USIS India's four branches were fully occupied every day. The number of our program activities was also among the largest in the world.

Indira Gandhi, the daughter of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, was prime minister when we arrived in August 1975. Several months earlier she had declared a national emergency, and almost overnight about a quarter of a million of her political "opponents" were arrested, most without charges. Some schools were converted into prisons to create enough cells to jail them all. The key question was whether the world's largest democracy would transition to a one-party dictatorship. In the context of the Cold War that divided the globe between East and West, the critical issue was whether Mrs. Gandhi's emergency would move India toward the Soviet camp.

Prior to transferring to New Delhi, I took a hundred hours of Hindi language training; it wasn't much, but it served as a useful introduction to several key elements of Indian culture. USIA had contracts with several private language teaching firms to delink the timing of USIA personnel transfers from FSI's rigid language training schedule. Thus I was able to fit in some Hindi training between my assignments without regard to FSI's calendar.

My instructor at the private language school I attended near Dupont Circle in Washington was a young Indian graduate student at Georgetown University who taught part time. That she was not your run-of-the-mill foreign exchange student became abundantly clear one day after class when I saw her leave the building as I rounded the corner and drove by in front of it. As she moved toward a black Cadillac stretch limousine double-parked at the entrance, a liveried driver opened the rear passenger door and bowed as my instructor entered the vehicle.

The following morning I mentioned that I had witnessed her departure the previous day and was totally taken by surprise when she invited Sylvia and me to join her and her husband for dinner at their home where we would learn more about her background. Her address was in the heart of an area known as Embassy Row in Washington. She added that her father also lived there. When we arrived at the residence we learned that her father just happened to be the Indian ambassador to the United States. After cocktails we were directed to the dining room where the four of us gathered at the end of a table that the following evening would be set for thirty-two guests. Language training rarely results in events as unusual as this one.

Over a wonderful Indian meal we learned much about what we could expect when we got to New Delhi, and our hosts offered candid observations on contemporary India. Some issues were brushed over lightly such as the emergency and India's relations with China, the Soviet Union, and Pakistan. Unsurprisingly, my instructor summarized Indo-American relations as mutually beneficial. The dinner at the Indian ambassador's residence helped me better understand India's growing strategic importance even though in the mid-1970s, many considered the subcontinent an economic basket case that had the potential to degenerate into a humanitarian disaster on an unprecedented scale.

The term "failed state" had not yet been coined, but many observers, among them Lester Brown, an American ecological expert who gained global renown with his writing on India, projected massive starvation in the future as India's rapid population growth would soon outstrip the capacity of the nation's agriculture to meet its needs for food. Fortunately that scenario did not come to pass. By the late 1960s, India had already started importing high yield, disease resistant, rapidly maturing varieties of rice that yielded up to three harvests a year. It was also implementing policies to mechanize agriculture, expand irrigation, and increase fertilizer and pesticide applications to crops. Consequently, despite the growth of its population by more than four hundred million over the next four decades, India has experienced no large-scale starvation, although a sizable proportion of the population continues to be significantly undernourished.

America also sold agricultural produce, primarily grains, to India under Public Law 480 [PL 480] that was intended to promote sustained U.S. agricultural exports. Also known as "Food for Peace," the law, in the words of President Kennedy, provided for the sale of food, "To help people around the world whose friendship and good will we want." PL 480 also provided a significant benefit to Americans serving in India who could buy the rupees the Indian government paid for American agricultural commodities at the U.S. embassy rate of sixty-five for one U.S. dollar, far higher than the official exchange rate. That enabled us all to become consumers of a broad range of India's fine handicrafts and art; the most sought were hand-woven silk and wool carpets. The extremely favorable exchange rate also made it possible for us to afford a domestic staff of five full and part time employees whose earnings supported a total of thirty-seven including their dependents.

The declaration of emergency on June 26, 1975, however, generated concerns in Washington about whether India would continue to function as a democratic

parliamentary government. The emergency restricted the extent to which Indians could voice their views on a great number of subjects. So while USIS was able to bring in a large number of guest speakers to address influential Indians on topics related to governance and economics, we had to warn them that what they said could be interpreted by Indian officials as interference in internal Indian affairs. Despite such concerns, we still had opportunities to conduct substantive programs and communicate with influential Indian audiences. USIS faced no real barriers to the conduct of its program activities during the emergency.

I think Mrs. Gandhi believed the emergency would enable her to overcome opposition to policies she wanted to pursue but was unable to gain the parliamentary majority required to make them the law of the land. Under the emergency, Mrs. Gandhi ruled by decree, but she did not want to take authoritarian governance to extremes. She was very conscious of the image of India as a democratic nation. Rather than attempting to establish a one party dictatorship, she called for parliamentary elections in March 1977, less than two years after she declared her emergency. She did so under the misguided conviction that the result would serve to endorse her policies.

When her Minister of Agriculture Jagjivan Ram, the most prominent "untouchable" politician in the nation announced his break with the Congress Party she headed, Indians across the nation concluded that Indira Gandhi had already lost the election. He aligned himself with the newly formed Janata coalition party that her political opponents pulled together from their jail cells. I was having dinner with Indian contacts in Jaipur, Rajasthan when news of his resignation broke on the radio. That set the entire neighborhood abuzz, and I could hear the exuberant reactions to it of people on the street below. Ram commanded the votes of the bulk of the nation's eighty-eight million "untouchables" (casteless Hindus). In following him, they contributed overwhelmingly to Gandhi's ouster.

Imprisonment had galvanized Gandhi's opposition. Politicians who did not communicate very well with each other in Parliament discovered behind bars they had enough in common to form an unprecedented coalition. Almost as soon as the opposition was released from jail to mount their election campaigns, however, the coalition they had formed began to fragment, and it did not survive much beyond the 1977 election that brought it briefly to power.

We experienced our second presidential visit when Jimmy Carter arrived in India on New Years Day 1978. It was less than a year after the election ended the emergency, and he welcomed India's adherence to its democratic roots. The language of the official communiqué issued at the conclusion of his visit contained much boilerplate and little of substance. Its opening line, "The President and the Prime Minister held extensive and useful talks in the spirit of mutual confidence, candor and friendship," bland as it was, indicated that U.S.-Indian relations were back on track, which was enough to make an otherwise uneventful and routine visit a U.S. foreign policy success.

While short on substance, arrangements for President Carter's visit had the entire embassy jumping. There was major tension between a member of the White House advance team and an Indian government official over plans for the movement of vehicles in the presidential motorcade. That resulted in the embassy administrative officer barring the non-government advance team member from playing any role in arrangements for the visit. For all presidential travel overseas, many advance team members, all ardent supporters of the administration, volunteered their services to assist with arrangements for those trips to experience in some way something of their drama. I felt sorry for the ostracized guy, but he really had no clue how to get the job done without offending Indian officials whose cooperation the embassy needed to make the visit a success.

My task was to develop the first lady's public schedule and work with her staff to select an appropriate school to receive Mrs. Carter's gift of a stereo record player and speakers following a speech she delivered about the welfare of children and refugees. My parents were visiting us at the time, and I was able to arrange for a photo of them with her when she stopped at a local market to get a hint of life on the streets of New Delhi. Later she was gracious enough to autograph it for them.

India's payment of its PL 480 debt in rupees provided USIS New Delhi enough rupees to cover a wide range of in-country program costs. They included airfare and first-class accommodations in five-star hotels for Indian participants in the two- or three-day seminars we hosted in their conference facilities. During the U.S. bicentennial celebrations in 1976, for example, we conducted several seminars on American history and democracy. In support of those events, USIS India acquired the rights to such distinguished works as Daniel Boorstin's nicely boxed trilogy, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, and had several thousand copies reprinted in India for distribution to seminar participants and all Indian university and public libraries across the nation. We also reprinted a number of other academic works about the United States and its history, culture, arts, and science in support of our country plan objectives. PL 480 rupees provided resources to develop programs far exceeding USIA's limited dollar budget for them and allowed us to mount activities on a scale simply unimaginable to USIS posts elsewhere.

Support for American Studies was a core element of USIS programming in India for years. The programs contributed significantly to an expansion of Indian interest in our society, and the American Studies experts we recruited to conduct them were among the most capable and competent in the U.S. It is important to recall that Mrs. Gandhi's emergency only lasted eighteen months. After the elections of March 1977, the political situation in the country quickly returned to pre-emergency democratic norms, and once again India became a very fluid environment of intellectual give and take.

USIS India's budget allowed the North India Branch to schedule programs for between sixty to seventy American academic, professional, political, business, and cultural experts annually. We programmed in Delhi and in other major cities in North India including Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, Srinagar, Chandigarh, Amritsar, and Simla because we considered it important to establish a broad USIS

presence in India to reach the ethnically, spiritually, economically, and politically diverse leadership of all regions in North India.

There were always a few Indian participants in our seminar and lecture programs who displayed a certain intellectual arrogance. At the same time, there were clear-thinking Indians who understood the nature of the problems of their society and knew that ideological posturing was insufficient for solving them. I will never forget an education seminar in which a participant asserted that in order to attain literacy for the entire population the government would have to establish a school for two hundred students every ten minutes through the end of the century. The enormous magnitude of that task highlighted dramatically the scope of the economic and social development challenges India faced. Thirty five years later, despite enormous progress toward that objective, universal literacy remains a distant goal although one or two states in India have actually achieved it recently.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, whose assignment as U.S. ambassador to India ended in 1975, noted that there was a subset of India's population about the size of the population of France that had the income and education levels of the French. He was convinced that there was significant potential for economic growth in India as long as that segment of the population had opportunities to apply their skills and resources to expanding the nation's productivity. In the years since Moynihan expressed that view, the nation's economic output has mushroomed. In spring 2011, I returned to India for the first time in thirty-two years with Sylvia who was a member of the Office of Inspector General [OIG] team that inspected embassy operations in India. We were both overwhelmed by the contrasts between the Indian economies of 1976 and 2011 and the enormous tangible growth that occurred over the intervening years, a strong echo of Moynihan's assertion.

William B. Saxbe, who succeeded Moynihan, was ambassador when we arrived in New Delhi. He was typical of political appointee ambassadors. A former Ohio Republican senator, he served as President Nixon's attorney general during the last days of the Watergate scandal and was named ambassador to India by President Ford after that. He held the post for little more than a year and a half. After the announcement of Gandhi's emergency he became frustrated by the deterioration in the U.S. relationship with India over trade and political issues. Saxbe said he particularly enjoyed hunting and trout fishing in Kashmir during his brief tour. He brought little more to the job than experience from a brief trip to India while he served in the Senate.

Robert Goheen, a political appointee nominated by President Carter to be ambassador to India, succeeded Saxbe. He, however, was of a distinctly different order. Born in India, the son of American missionaries serving there, Goheen became a welcome figure across the country and a strong counter to the image many Indian intellectuals had of America as crassly materialistic. Indians generally regarded him as someone who had a deeper understanding of India than the non-Foreign Service officer that President Carter might otherwise have nominated to the post. Such an ambassador most likely would have been someone similar to Saxbe, or a politician who lost a recent election or was a major contributor to the president's election campaign. Goheen was a former president of

Princeton University and he found several members of the Indian cabinet were Princeton alumni.

USIS programming in the late 1970s was largely targeted to the population Moynihan cited as the source of its economic advancement. We endeavored to implement a modified version of the two-step communication flow theory to reach as broad a segment of that population as possible. The theory posits that the impact of a message is amplified when it is delivered to "message multipliers" who are opinion leaders regarded as influential by others. Our objective was to include Indian message multipliers as participants in USIS programs. We frequently saw the messages we communicated to program participants echoed more widely in newspaper and journal commentaries, media interviews, academic publications, and briefing memoranda they prepared for their audiences whose numbers sometimes were incalculable multiples of the participants our programs reached directly. General disagreement with our messages could have the opposite effect of course, but at least that opened the door to us considering refinements to subsequent program activities touching on those subjects.

USIA was able to recruit fine speakers for all our programs because many of them had strong personal interest in India. A number of them placed travel to India among their top personal priorities and the invitations to become USIA speakers gave them the opportunity to fulfill that objective. Most were also aware that they could not talk condescendingly to Indians whose own academic and intellectual achievements were comparable to theirs in many cases. Generally, our speakers proved to be effective in communicating with Indians both through our programs and socially.

One event that facilitated greater communication with our Indian audiences was the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1975. It cleared the air for us to some extent. We no longer had to address that matter in every question and answer session following an American speaker's presentation, for example, or in the ambassador's meetings with the press. I think that applied to USIS operations around the globe. Justifying America's Vietnam policy was excess baggage that posts everywhere were glad to shed.

Our programs exposed leading government and academic economists to a range of development models that could help India achieve rapid growth. Economic speakers often cited Brazil as a relevant example of the country most likely to end its status in the third world. Even though Brazil did not achieve that goal much before the turn of this century, our programs underscored ways India could harness its potential more fully based on market economics, abandonment of import substitution, barring limits to the freedom of expression, and implementing programs to expand higher education.

During the Cold War, a top global priority of USIA was to undermine the ideological appeal of communism. Centrally planned economies that abolished free enterprise and authoritarian governments that restricted political expression and violated basic human rights were anathemas. Communism and Indian democracy proved not to be a good fit, and the danger that the Soviets would score significant political gains in India did not materialize. To some extent, the Indians had a strategy of threatening to shift their foreign

and economic policies toward the East as a way to foster changes in U.S. policies toward India.

It was India's Nehru, along with Nasser of Egypt, Tito of Yugoslavia, Nkrumah of Nigeria, and Sukarno of Indonesia who founded the Non-Aligned Movement [NAM] in 1961. Their objective was to provide developing nations leverage in negotiating their way between East and West. That sometimes involved playing the two sides against each other to avoid being lodged in either camp. Ultimately, however, the deck was stacked against the East. The Soviet Union really did not have much more to offer India and other third world countries than military equipment, and it was largely the export of U.S. agricultural commodities that kept India afloat during most the 1960s and 1970s. I don't know the extent to which India was then thinking about its future relationship with China, but after the Sino-Soviet split in the mid-1960s, it could anticipate it would no longer be dealing with a government that marched in lockstep with the Soviets on international affairs.

During the emergency, Indira Gandhi's younger son Sanjay found authoritarianism appealing. Some Indians claimed it was he who really called the shots during the emergency although he held no official or elected position. As his mother's advisor, however, he was able to exercise power arbitrarily. He called for the cleansing of New Delhi slums that led to the forced resettlement of a quarter of a million people. He also initiated a widespread family planning program to limit population growth. Forced vasectomies of impoverished illiterate unmarried men to meet arbitrary quotas generated extensive popular opposition to Indira Gandhi's Congress Party. Some attributed her defeat in the 1977 election to men who "voted with their balls" to sweep her out of office. Sanjay also proved inept as a businessman. He came up with the idea to manufacture a people's car, the widely heralded Maruti, but not one ever rolled off the assembly line. He died in 1980 at the age of thirty-three when he lost control of the small aircraft he was piloting; it crashed over his mother's residence six months after she returned to power.

Sanjay's death turned the spotlight on his older brother Rajiv as his mother's successor. A pilot for Indian Airlines, the nation's domestic carrier, Rajiv remained aloof from politics until the death of his brother. He was the pilot of the turbo-prop Indian Airlines aircraft I was aboard several times on the Delhi–Jaipur–Jodhpur–Udaipur route to conduct USIS program events in those Rajasthan cities. Unless there was a plain-clothes air marshal on board, no security detail accompanied the son of India's most powerful woman. I was impressed by his lack of pretense as he entered the cockpit or walked through the terminal after landing, just another man in the crowd seemingly unconcerned about the people around him.

I met Rajiv once during the emergency at a gospel concert USIS programmed in New Delhi. A staffer at the West German embassy called my office to request permission to record the concert from backstage. I checked with the singers who had no objection and conveyed that back to the German embassy. I assumed it was the German I would encounter as the auditorium filled for the concert. He was there alright, but to my surprise sitting under headphones at the controls of a professional twelve-inch, reel-to-reel tape

recorder was an Indian who had set up microphones and was testing their audio quality. The German introduced him as Rajiv Gandhi.

Rajiv spent the entire concert in front of the recorder playing the role of audio engineer. Once again, he was unaccompanied by security personnel. After the concert, he packed up his gear, thanked me for the opportunity to record it for his private use, climbed into the German's open jeep and drove off into the night with only the German as an escort. I found his modesty impressive indeed. After his mother was assassinated in 1984, he succeeded her until 1989. In 1991, he, too, was assassinated as he campaigned to be re-elected prime minister. Rajiv's wife Sonja, an Italian by birth, is now head of India's leading Congress Party, and there is speculation that Rajiv and Sonja's son will eventually take a place on the nation's political stage.

Many of our Indian program participants held points of view that differed sharply from those expressed by our speakers, but a larger number, among them graduates of U.S. universities, shared their views. In fact, several speakers had been their professors. Consequently, while there may have been sharp intellectual counterpoints to the positions our speakers articulated, their views often contributed to the opening of serious dialogue about the substantive issues of U.S.-Indian bilateral relations. India's relationship with Pakistan and U.S. attitudes toward and support for both countries during their 1971 war did come up regularly in question and answer sessions following our programs. I think Indians were well aware of the differences between American attitudes and approaches toward both countries, but that never became a focal issue in our programs while we were in India.

As far as Kashmir is concerned, there was a lull in tensions generated by overlapping Indian and Pakistani territorial claims in the region during our tours. The North India Branch of USIS exploited that lull to conduct programs in Srinagar, the heart of India's Jammu and Kashmir state. We also had some wonderful personal experiences there as well. Srinagar is a lovely city located a mile above sea level and a great place to escape to in the summer when daytime temperatures in New Delhi reach 115 fahrenheit and drop to a "cool" ninety-two fahrenheit at night. In Kashmir, pre-monsoon temperatures rarely rose above the mid-eighties.

Arranging New Delhi's large number of programs required the assistance of a highly educated Indian staff that had strong linkages to the academic and government leadership of the nation. When I arrived at post, the program management staff was headed by Sohinder Singh Rana, who I consider the finest host-country USIS employee with whom I worked in my career. Assisting him were three other outstanding managers, Vinay Shukla, M.L. Kapoor, and K.K. Anand, all middle-aged men. Their classmates were among the most prominent people in Indian society, including current secretaries of government ministries and heads of university faculties. Such contacts enabled them to marshal appropriate audiences across Indian society to engage in discussions with our expert speakers.

Two newly hired program managers were university graduates in their early twenties. Tony Jesudasan was a laid back, personable ball of energy ready to set the world on fire. Prabhi Guptara was the first woman professional on the North India Branch staff. Branch PAO Ed Shulick hired them to help broaden the focus of USIS programming and to reach out to the successor generation that we believed was waiting for opportunities to move the nation in new directions. My job was also a new position that reflected the planned expansion of North India Branch operations. The senior program managers were most comfortable and effective in reaching out to influential senior and mid-career professionals in government and the private sector. Both Tony and Prabhi had the skills, energy, and outlook required to expand the reach of USIS programs to new and younger audiences.

We had the good fortune of meeting Prabhi several times after our tours in India, and I remember her telling us about her aspiration to become an FSO. We had no doubt she could achieve that goal given how effective she became as a USIS program manager and how well we worked together for three eventful years. She was a competent professional who moved comfortably between her society and ours. Prabhi met Howard Kavaler, a junior State Department FSO who arrived in New Delhi in 1978. They married in 1980, and after she became a U.S. citizen she passed the U.S. Foreign Service exams in 1990 and became an FSO. Following several overseas assignments as a tandem couple, Prabhi, Howard, and their two daughters arrived in Nairobi, Kenya in August 1998, just weeks before the terrorist bombing that destroyed the U.S. embassy there. Prabhi was one of the eleven Americans who lost their lives in that attack; her death was a great loss to the Foreign Service community.

Our family enjoyed our tour in India immensely. Everything about it contrasted with our experiences in the U.S. The sights, sounds, colors, smells, music, arts, and the vast array of handicrafts all proved eye-opening and heightened our awareness of the richness and variety of human expression. The food was out of this world. Our three years in India provided a range of unique experiences. For example, we saw the Taj Mahal a number of times, as monsoon rains fell, under a full moon at midnight, and at various times of day when differing illumination revealed contrasts in the structure that we had not previously noticed.

We drove through the Rajasthan desert with embassy colleagues to attend the annual Pushkar Camel Fair in November. Ajmer, the city in which it is held, is also a major Hindu religious pilgrimage site. We observed the trading of thousands of camels and were awakened by their haunting bleats during the night, as well as the sale and purchase of much other livestock. Parents, counseled by tribal elders, arranged the marriages of prepubescent girls. We consumed easy to chew slices of cane sugar chopped from canes longer than six feet. The streets of Ajmer were carpeted in white during the fair; sad to say, but after the thousands of visitors swallowed the sugar water in the inch-thick cane slices purchased as snacks, they expectorated the remaining fibers as they walked through the town. A number of embassy wives were cajoled into participating in a tug-of-war with local women who easily outmatched them. Driving back to New Delhi from Ajmer we passed clusters of vultures lurking in trees along the highway waiting to feast on the

next road-kill or whatever else in the area was soon to expire. The anticipation of death and remains being ravenously devoured by those creatures made for a somewhat unsettling ride through the next fifty miles of isolated Rajasthan countryside.

Another interesting experience was our three-hour trip on the narrow-gauge railway from Kalka to Simla (now Shimla), the summer capital of the British Empire in the late nineteenth century. Most administrative agencies and the headquarters of the British Indian Army relocated there to "find an agreeable refuge from the burning plain of Hindoostan" at an altitude of seventy-two hundred feet in the eastern Himalayas. The ride up the mountain offered grand views of landscape dominated by pine forests and rhododendron. The colonial city that replaced the small Indian village at the top boasted many buildings of the imperial era that are now a major tourist attraction. The neo-gothic Viceregal Lodge of the Indian Institute for Advanced Study was the venue for several USIS programs while I served in India. The town was cool in the blistering pre-monsoon heat and picturesque when covered by light snow in winter.

Early in January 1978 after President Carter left India, we along with my parents found ourselves on the beach in Goa, a former colony on the west coast near Bombay that the Indian army invaded in December 1961 to liberate it from Portuguese rule and annex it to India. It was favored by international winter tourists, among them nudists and marijuana smokers. With two kids and my parents in tow, we avoided them without having to go far out of our way to do so. Several five-star hotels had opened recently, and we enjoyed the luxury they offered on the beautiful beaches stretched out before them.

The Bombay newspapers we read over breakfast on a sunlit patio with temperatures in the mid-seventies reported that a massive snowfall had covered the American northeast. Father was grateful that shoveling snow a foot deep in New Jersey would not be on his agenda for the next week. We basked in the pleasure of being in subtropical India while America was in the depth of winter.

One of our family's most pleasant experiences in India was spending a week on a houseboat on Srinagar's Dal Lake. The houseboat was seventy feet long and entirely made of wood. Boats in name only, they were actually floating homes docked along the lakeshore away from the city with permanent links to plumbing and electricity. They could be accessed only by small taxi boats from the urban end of the lake, all of which bore names on plaques. I recall that one we used on several occasions was "The Happy Rose of Japan," which struck me as amusingly incongruous.

In 1976 our daughter was approaching five years of age and our son had just turned three. They loved being on the boat. Airfare was reasonable so we brought our *ayah* (a nursemaid) along to take care of them while Sylvia and I ventured out and about. The Mughal Gardens were nearby and worth several visits. There were no public demonstrations or open hostilities and no gun fire anywhere in the region at that time, unlike in recent years. USIS held several seminars at Srinagar's Lake Palace Hotel and flew participants up to escape the insufferable heat of the lowlands in summer. We had

no difficulty gathering participants for our activities in Kashmir between June and September.

One of the most important events of our lives was Sylvia's entry into the Foreign Service as a State Department consular officer in the middle of my tour in New Delhi. Fortunately, her first assignment was New Delhi. Without an available open position there, she would have been assigned elsewhere. That would have disrupted our lives in a major way and made us a "split tandem." Married FSOs both assigned to the same post are called a "tandem" couple. If both serve at different posts, they are a split tandem, a situation we hoped to avoid but could not several times later in our careers.

Sylvia flew back to Washington to take the six week A-100 course in June 1976. A few days before she departed a mosquito bit me on the top of my left foot as I lay on my back on the couch in the living room reading a book. When it started to itch, I rubbed it distractedly with the heel of my right foot opening a sore as I continued reading. Several days later it became infected, probably from something in the water of the embassy swimming pool. I went to the embassy nurse who gave me erythromycin tablets to counter it. After several days, the infection appeared to have cleared up and I did not take all the prescribed pills, a major mistake.

A few days later, I flew to Srinagar to manage a seminar we conducted there. The evening I arrived, I noted a black spot on my right calf. Looking in the mirror before I went to bed that night, I found some pus in the corners of my eyes. The following morning there were red blotches on both legs up to my hips. As I flew back to Delhi that day, a Sunday, I became apprehensive. The black spot on my calf had enlarged significantly. I arrived at our apartment in mid-afternoon and checked myself out. I also exposed my leg to our illiterate cook and asked him what he thought. He replied, "I think you ought to see a doctor, sahib," a conclusion I ought to have reached myself. I wondered, however, whether a doctor was available on a Sunday afternoon. I called the British embassy and its doctor, a Sikh physician married to an Irish woman, was in the office. He said I could come in and see him.

Unable to maintain a passive expression when he examined me, he told me to check into the British embassy dispensary immediately. Fortunately, we had an *ayah* to look after the children, or I don't know how I would have managed without Sylvia there. I entered the clinic within an hour and spent the following five waiting to see what effect triple doses of erythromycin would have on my condition. Fortunately I responded well and was discharged without any further complications at the end of the fifth day.

Just weeks later, the children and I flew to Washington for home leave and to reunite with Sylvia who after the A-100 course was completing consular training. We traveled on July 4, the bicentenary of American Independence, and with Washington ten hours behind time in New Delhi, arrived early enough to have dinner with Sylvia at her sister's apartment in Georgetown before heading to the [National] Mall to watch the massive fireworks display to mark the anniversary. Sylvia knew nothing of my medical condition before I arrived, however. I was still recovering and the trip exhausted me. Regretfully I

told her I was too tired to attend the display. Much to Sylvia's disappointment, our travel over almost five thousand miles got us there in time to see it, but we missed out on a grand ceremony to mark two hundred years of American independence.

Fortunately Sylvia did not have much competition for the only position available in New Delhi and began her Foreign Service career as a rotational officer at the embassy. State Department junior officers served several months of their first years at an embassy in the political, economic, consular, and administrative sections of the embassy to give them a broad overview of embassy operations.

Our home leave that followed was a series of pleasant stays with Sylvia's parents in Athens, Georgia; a week on the beach in Pawleys Island, South Carolina; and a stay with my parents in Maplewood, New Jersey. Months later after returning to New Delhi I encountered the British embassy physician who treated my infected leg at a social function. We exchanged pleasantries for several moments and he then let me know that had I not responded as well as I did, he was two days away from recommending that my leg be amputated at the knee. That left me with my mouth hanging open; another guest extended him a greeting and he turned away to acknowledge it.

In addition to issuing visas, consular officers also deal with Americans abroad who may encounter a countless range of problems that require the services of the consulate while they are traveling. A certain segment of the American population was turned on by images of India generated by pop culture icons that may have visited the country but didn't really have much of a clue. A number of drug-tripping Americans sought enlightenment from Indian gurus, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi among them, who English rock band, the Beatles, almost made a household name in the 1970s during their encounter with transcendental meditation. There were also adventure-seekers on magical, mystery tours that did things they thought they would be free to do in India that turned out to be against the law even there. The problems they got into took much of Sylvia's time during her assignment in New Delhi and made for some very interesting conversations over dinner.

As much as we enjoyed serving in India, things could be exasperating. The country is the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River and had a population of more than six hundred million in 1975. You could say almost with certitude that there were only a few places in India at an altitude under five thousand feet where you were not within sight of another human being. That was particularly annoying when you had to pull off the road after not encountering a gas station with a restroom anywhere along the previous hundred miles and sought privacy to respond to the call of nature. Within moments after you alighted from your vehicle, half a dozen or more people would pop into view just as you prepared to do the needful (an Indian English colloquialism). It was as surprising as it was inevitable.

Livestock on public arteries, primarily cattle on streets, and roads anywhere in the country, was another bane of our existence. You simply do not mess around with sacred cows no matter where they are, including at the bus stop in front of the USIS building in

the heart of downtown New Delhi. The beasts paid absolutely no heed to anything, motorized vehicles included. At least they made no effort to board buses as far as I know. Every time we drove out of town we had to be alert for cows that wandered around aimlessly and could almost be counted upon to step out onto the open road in front of us as we approached them at fifty miles per hour or more.

But that was not all. As in England, Indians drive on the left side of the road, which made negotiating your way at "roundabouts" (traffic circles) challenging, as was crossing the street and having to look to the right rather than the left to see if anyone was bearing down on you. You also had to worry about motor scooters with families of five or six as passengers, motor scooter taxis, and bicycle rickshaws (pedi-cabs). They would pull out into intersections with no thought of slowing down, let alone stopping or even looking right or left. Why bother? It's a question of fate; either you make it or you don't. We were just grateful not to be fated to take one out in a traffic accident while driving in India.

Moving through traffic with the inevitable three-wheeled scooters or pedi-cabs, of which there are still hundreds of thousands in India, was also challenging. The growth of traffic has been exponential over the past thirty years. There are now lane markers on major roads, but they have absolutely no bearing on the way Indian traffic moves. Traffic patterns resemble the flows of schools of fish in the sea. Vehicles not only tailgate each other, but they also "sidegate," transforming a four-lane road into five or six. That everyone generally gets to where they are going without scrapes, dents, or bodily injury may be considered nothing less than miraculous.

Heavy pollution in winter was largely generated by burning dried cow "patties" or dung that was the common source of fuel for heat and cooking. They issued great quantities of smoke and unpleasant odors and were for us one of the most unpleasant things about India. In March 2011 I got the impression that cow dung is no longer commonly burned for heating, at least not in major urban areas, although since the temperatures were already in the mid-eighties I cannot say with certitude that is the case. Fortunately we were able to make the adjustments necessary to survive on-the-ground reality in New Delhi and elsewhere across north India in the mid-1970s.

As you can see, life in the Foreign Service overseas is a mixed bag and that makes this a good place to review some of the practical advantages of overseas assignments for Foreign Service officers that add to the variety and richness of professional and personal experiences life abroad can offer. First of all, embassies provide mission personnel furnished housing. Only one of the residences we occupied in our careers—in Jamaica with a one-acre lot and swimming pool—came close to matching the home we bought in McLean, Virginia in 1978, however. In general, a brick, two-story, four-bedroom, three-bathroom house with a two-car garage on a quarter acre lot in almost any suburb in the U.S. is more appealing than most quarters leased by the embassy General Services office in almost any country in the world.

At some posts, the availability of property approaching U.S. standards was limited; in others, costs for such housing far exceeded embassy funds available for housing. Officers could find their own housing at some posts if the properties met embassy-mandated security standards and did not exceed the post's housing allowance. In communist Poland and Yugoslavia, the flats and houses embassy staff occupied were acquired through negotiations between the embassy administrative sections and the foreign ministries.

Second, officers who own homes in the U.S. can rent them out while serving abroad. We did so with our Annandale condo while we were in India and our house in McLean during our later tours in Yugoslavia and Jamaica. We also rented out our house during Sylvia's tour as deputy chief of mission in Sarajevo, Bosnia while I served as regional PAO in USIA's European division.

Third, the department covers the costs of secondary education of dependent children whose parents are posted in countries that do not have international schools or do not offer a secondary education curricula geared to prepare them for college education in the U.S. Our son Alex had just completed his high school sophomore year when Sylvia joined me in Jamaica a year after my tour there began. Because its British-based education system did not meet the college prep requirement, we enrolled him in a boarding school in Connecticut that was well regarded by Foreign Service families. Had we desired, we could have placed him in an international school abroad and covered out of pocket any expenses that exceeded the State Department's education allowance.

After Alex finished high school and entered Emory University in Atlanta he remarked that his prep school had filled its mission; he observed that it prepared him better for college than public schools did for many of his classmates, which compensated us somewhat for the unwelcome absences of our son spanning two of our years in Kingston. And we compensated him with flights to Kingston for every break in the school year, especially at Christmas when temperatures in Jamaica were in the mid-eighties and the surf in the Caribbean was just right.

Another practical advantage of Foreign Service life was the possible sale of personally owned vehicles prior to departing an overseas post. In our experience, depending on the country, you had the option of selling to other diplomats or third-country citizens in communist Poland and Yugoslavia and selling to any potential buyer at market price elsewhere. With far more cars available around the world today than thirty or forty years ago, market prices for previously owned vehicles abroad may no longer differ significantly from those domestically. Back in the day, however, there were tales of used American cars going for several times their purchase price primarily because import duties were that high or other restrictions limited the availability of personally owned vehicles in the countries in which they were sold. Over the years during my career, however, department regulations placed increasing limits on the sales of personally owned vehicles abroad at the end of overseas tours. We were satisfied to break even with the sales of three of our cars overseas.

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA 1979–1982

Sylvia and I were both assigned to Belgrade, Yugoslavia after our tour in India ended. The transfer in 1978 to the position of director of the American Center was my first during the summer reassignment cycle. Sylvia became head of the consular visa section of the embassy. Prior to traveling to post Sylvia and I took the full eleven month Serbo-Croatian language course at the Foreign Service Institute. Incidentally, on early post-retirement résumés I cited Serbo-Croatian as one of the languages I spoke. After the fall of Yugoslavia, I changed that to Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian impressively increasing my language skills without a moment's effort. In truth, while each language subsequently became internationally recognized as unique, they are very similar to each other and no speaker of any of the three needs an interpreter to communicate with a speaker of either of the others.

Our tours in Belgrade were just the first of several encounters with the country and its remnants after the death of Yugoslavia. I returned to Washington from Belgrade to become the country affairs officer at USIA for the Balkan nations in 1982 and 1983, and later served in the State Department as country affairs officer for Yugoslavia between 1985 and 1987. During the Balkan wars I served again as USIA's Balkan country affairs officer (1992–1994). During that assignment I replaced the PAO in Skopje, Macedonia for four month. At the end of the war in Bosnia I served as embassy PAO in Sarajevo in 1995 and 1996 and was spokesperson and media advisor to the deputy high representative in Brcko, Bosnia in 1997. In 1998, I was named to the new position of regional PAO to be available to fill in at any of the Balkan and former Soviet Union countries staffed with only one USIA officer. In that capacity I served in Moldova, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Kosovo. Sylvia also served in Bosnia as deputy chief of mission at the embassy in Sarajevo from 1998 to 2000. It seems as if we could not get the Balkans out of our systems.

The key event during our first tours in Belgrade was the death of the founder of Yugoslavia, Marshal Josip Broz Tito in May 1980. The U.S. government issued the first in a series of "After Tito What?" intelligence analyses in 1952. Tito had proposed the establishment of a broader Yugoslavia when he came to power at the end of World War II without Soviet assistance that would have included Albania and parts of Greek Macedonia and Bulgaria, territories over which he had ambitions, asserting that the area would be united by "a" model of socialist government, not "the" (Stalinist) model. The idea, which included the notion of workers self-management, was an anathema to the Soviet dictator. The Yugoslav model was a "leftist deviation" for which Stalin expelled Yugoslavia from the Cominform [Communist Information Bureau] that the Soviet Union founded in 1947 as the official postwar forum of the international communist movement. For the next thirty-three years Soviet attitudes toward and probable involvement with Yugoslavia remained an issue of concern to America's foreign policy makers.

The Cold War had already begun, and Tito won immediate support from non-communist European governments and the U.S. after his expulsion from Cominform. This support enabled him to stay in power despite being banished by Stalin. Yugoslavia thus was able to avoid being folded into the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet defense alliance composed of

nations that the Soviets dominated after World War II, the antithesis of the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO].

While Tito successfully avoided having Yugoslavia engulfed within the Warsaw Pact, the Soviets continually attempted to rein him in as closely as possible. By the 1960s, however, the Non-Aligned Movement (Tito was a founder) provided Yugoslavia and third world nations across the globe some wiggle room to withstand the Cold War foreign policy maneuverings of East and West. It also provided a rationale for Tito to strut around the world for years espousing non-alignment long after the movement became increasingly insignificant in the third world. The headlines his travels garnered served little more than to boost his ego in his last years as domestic problems in Yugoslavia mounted.

The U.S. took great interest in Yugoslavia's overt desire to remain independent of the Warsaw Pact, which kept intelligence analysts and policy makers busy for almost four decades monitoring the slightest shifts in the conduct of its relations with the Soviet Union. The other nations of Europe shared that interest and implemented policies that treated Yugoslavia favorably and demonstrated respect for Tito. While the Cold War established limits to restructuring the scope and nature in the relationship between the U.S. and Yugoslavia, there remained some flexibility for adjustments at the margins.

As the years went by, the country became a relatively open society, certainly in comparison to the other Warsaw Pact member states. In hosting the 1984 Winter Olympics, Yugoslavia appeared to have enormous potential for adopting aspects of western European modernism. It came to be regarded as the acceptable face of communism as the Yugoslav tourism industry rapidly expanded to draw in hoards of hard-currency spending middle class Europeans looking for low-cost holidays along the nation's gorgeous Adriatic coastline.

Tito had some rather clever ways of reducing domestic political and economic stresses and tensions that increased the appeal of Yugoslavia in the non-communist world. At a time of stagnant economic development in the early 1960s, for example, he made passports available to virtually all citizens on demand, a policy that no other communist nation ever considered implementing. In so doing, he was able to export domestic unemployment and reduce doubts about the effectiveness of his economic policies.

Tens of thousands of Yugoslavs looking for work resettled in West Europe and easily found jobs amid labor shortages there which made it possible for them to send home remittances to family members left behind. That eased internal tensions and pressures on the government dramatically into the early 1980s. The construction of private housing increased exponentially as a result, but because tax rates were higher for completed houses than for those under construction, many remained unfinished, which created somewhat shabby images of relatively prosperous neighborhoods in towns and villages across the country.

Tito also opened Yugoslavia to imports of European and American consumer goods; Marlboro cigarettes, *Playboy* and *Time* magazines, and the daily *Paris Herald Tribune* were sold at virtually every kiosk in the country's larger cities. Many American films subtitled in Serbo-Croatian were screened in cinemas nationwide and the American television series "Dallas" almost brought the nation to a standstill when it was on the air. In real ways, non-ideological flexibility generated considerable popular political support that cemented Tito's control over the levers of public policy and all but eliminated public discontent. A strong secret police force to track down anyone who may have wanted to step out of line also helped.

The fact that Lawrence Eagleburger was the ambassador during our tours was another draw to serving in Belgrade. He was Henry Kissinger's deputy national security advisor during the first term of the Nixon Administration. Earlier he had become somewhat of a hero in Yugoslavia while serving at the U.S. embassy in Belgrade when a major earthquake struck Skopje, Macedonia in 1963. The role he played in distributing U.S. recovery assistance earned him the appellation "Lawrence of Macedonia," words that appear on a brass plaque above the entrance to the embassy elevator shaft near the ambassador's office.

I anticipated an active and exciting tour in Yugoslavia, but it did not begin all that auspiciously. The first house we occupied in Diplomatska Kolonija, a small enclave of about twenty diplomatic residences, was the one we liked least during our careers. I think a number of people believe American diplomats overseas live in glamorous settings based on whatever images they have of ambassadors' residences, which are generally impressive because they are venues for gatherings with leading political, professional, academic, and cultural luminaries.

Officers among the rank and file, however, sometimes occupy substandard housing. I wrote a letter to my predecessor asking about his house, which I assumed we would occupy after his departure. He replied that among other features it had "the room where Frankenstein's monster was born." I took that as a feeble attempt at humor, but when I first looked down the steps into the large basement with an eleven or twelve foot ceiling that had an oversize boiler and a strangely convoluted arrangement of pipes and plumbing fixtures, I could envisage the birth occurring there on a dark and stormy night amid flashing bolts of lightning and crashes of thunder.

But what bothered both of us most were the sagging floors in every room. They dropped several inches just a pace or so from all four walls. Bookcases along the walls would have fallen forward without being attached to them. Without blocks under the back legs of our bed frames we would have slept with our heads elevated six inches above our feet. On top of that, the grounds around the house were wildly overgrown. My predecessor obviously had no interest in landscaping. I took cleaning things up into my own hands as kind of a hobby during the year that we lived in it and I got the grounds into good shape by the time we moved out. The exercise helped defuse my dissatisfaction with our situation. Fortunately, a larger, marginally more pleasant house in the colony with level

floors became available thereafter, and we occupied it for the last two years of our assignments in Belgrade.

The American Center of which I was the director had a fairly extensive library that was visited weekly by hundreds of Yugoslavs, primarily Serbian university students. Its location was on Knez Mihailova, a major downtown boulevard linking Republic Square with Kalemegdan, the impressive Middle Ages Ottoman fortress at the confluence of the Danube and Sava Rivers half a mile away. It was a prime piece of real estate on a triangular lot and resembled, somewhat vaguely, New York's classic Flat Iron building, but on a far smaller scale.

I regretted that we were unable to emblazon "AMERICKI CENTAR" on the two-foot wide marquee across the front of the building. My senior colleagues would not consider it, convinced that was not the way to go politically. I had hoped we could mount something other than the book-sized brass plaque at eye level on the left side of the entry door to highlight the presence of an American facility in so prominent a location. I doubt that would have undermined Yugoslavia's delicate East-West balancing act, which is what my colleagues saw was at stake.

That is not to say that residents of Belgrade were unaware of the existence of the American Center. It was located near Belgrade University, and the British Council, Alliance Française, and the Goethe Haus were also in the neighborhood conducting information, cultural, and academic exchange programs for the U.K., France, and West Germany, respectively. The National Museum and the Belgrade Opera House were also within shouting distance on Republic Square.

My job as director of the American Center in Belgrade paralleled my position in New Delhi but on a smaller scale. Director is a nice title, but in Belgrade its key components were largely bureaucratic and administrative, offering fewer challenges than my job in Delhi. The staff ran the center effectively with me having little more to do than approve selections of books and films to be added to its collections. Furthermore P&C had established American Centers in the capital cities of each Yugoslav republic by 1980, so my turf was rather confined. I had the advantage of being located in the capital city and was in the embassy every day which provided greater input in developing P&C programs than my colleagues had in the outlying centers. But other than the prestige that derived from serving in a strategically important European nation, being the American Center director in Belgrade did not match the appeal or challenge of serving in New Delhi.

I was able to carve out a niche for myself, however, by being the only officer in the embassy at the time who took an interest in developments in Kosovo. As director of the American Center in Belgrade, I was, in effect, the branch PAO for all of Serbia including Kosovo and Vojvodina, which were designated socialist autonomous provinces of Serbia under the constitution Tito promulgated in 1974. It also made Albanian an official language of the country reflecting the fact that Kosovo had a large Albanian population. The term Kosovar was applied to Yugoslavs of Albanian background resident in the province. I wanted to assess whether it was worth expanding USIA's outreach to

Kosovars in that overlooked area of Yugoslavia now that its status in Yugoslavia's national politics had been elevated. I hoped the messages we communicated in Kosovo could reach Albania. Our government had no diplomatic contact with the country since World War II.

I had a personal interest in learning something about Albania through Kosovo. As a hermetically-sealed, rigidly-authoritarian dictatorship, Albania was far off the U.S. foreign policy radar screen. The U.S. did not recognize the government and the country and its people were largely unknown to Americans. I hoped travel to Kosovo would provide me some insight into the dynamics of Albanian society and culture.

On my first trip to Kosovo in late 1979 I drove into Pristina, the province capital, and passed by several blocks of bleak and bland commercial, office, and apartment buildings with poorly maintained exteriors. The dreary impression concealed what I was stunned to find in the city center, the distinctive and prominent modern Boro i Ramiz Cultural Center with an auditorium, indoor stadium, and shopping mall. It was located a few blocks from the Grand Hotel, a hastily constructed emblem of Kosovo's modernization where I spent the night. They and other recently completed structures, signaled that Kosovo was rapidly transitioning from third world dreary to European modern. Kosovar, as distinct from Albanian, nationalism was visibly arising in Pristina.

I jumped out of the car and walked quickly into the Boro i Ramiz Center. While self-consciously modern, none of the shops were very appealing to a Western consumer. One establishment, an art gallery with generous enough studio space for several artists to work in simultaneously drew my attention. Some of the most interesting people I encountered anywhere in Yugoslavia were three artists having coffee in the gallery that rainy afternoon. They beckoned me in and I found their work on display very avant garde, expressing widely differing artistic styles and techniques.

The gallery impressed me deeply. What triggered the inventive and contemporary output of local artists in Pristina, a city considered by many largely a third world backwater? As soon as that thought came to mind, I paused to reconsider the meaning of that term. After several subsequent visits to Pristina, with the gallery always being my first stop, it became clear to me that it no longer applied to artists in the city. I had no way to estimate, however, how true that was elsewhere in the province.

The 1974 Yugoslav constitution, among other provisions, allowed Pristina University to teach courses in the language. (A mildly interesting historical factoid is that the Yugoslav constitution with 405 articles had more than any other at the time. Today, India's, with only 395, leads the pack.) More significantly, the university quickly became a focal point for expression of Kosovar nationalism. Academic exchange programs were established between Pristina and Tirana universities that enabled Kosovars to travel to Albania and Albanians to Pristina. The contacts we developed among Pristina faculty provided valuable firsthand information about developments in Albania that was previously unavailable. While I was interested in learning more about Albania through Kosovo,

Albanians were more interested in learning what was happening in Kosovo, and Kosovo's influence among educated Albanians grew rapidly.

Albanians could watch TV broadcasts from Kosovo. State TV in Pristina dubbed "Dallas" and a variety of other programs both domestic and foreign in Albanian when the only other foreign source of information available to Albanians may have been Chinese Communist Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book* [full title, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*]. Kosovo served in a number of ways to break the hermetic seal Albania's communist government built to prevent its population from exposure to outside influences.

The opening of links between Kosovo and Albania also made it possible for me to sample Skenderbeg, a fine Albanian brandy that was not available in the U.S. The Kosovars I met were generous in offering it to me in their homes when there was no trade between the U.S. and Albania. The country was *terra incognita* (unknown territory) to all but a handful of Americans, and I felt quite privileged sipping it knowing that the number of those who had consumed it in the U.S. may not have exceeded the fingers of two hands.

Provisions of the 1974 constitution contributed to unleashing expressions of Kosovar nationalism in both positive and negative ways. It certainly made federal management of the province more difficult, but most significantly, increased autonomy for Kosovo led less than a decade later to outright rebellion against both local Serbian and national authorities in Belgrade in the spring of 1982. During my tour in Yugoslavia I wrote up my observations to provide the embassy some insight into the dynamics of change in Kosovo. This was at a critical time when almost no one else paid attention to developments there. When Kosovo claimed a right to self-determination within Yugoslavia less than three years later, everybody tuned in.

During my three years in Yugoslavia, Albanian nationalist sentiment remained largely subdued. It was neither totally suppressed nor openly expressed. Until 1982, Kosovars were still cautious in expressing a desire for self-determination. A major reason for that was Serb emotional attachment to Kosovo. After the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389, the region became considered the heartland of Serbia, a notion passed from generation to generation ever since. Serbs feared that Kosovars would destroy symbols of Serbian culture if Kosovars were to govern the province independently. The three most prominent Serbian orthodox monasteries, primary symbols of Serbian nationhood dating back to the fourteenth century, are located there, but the monasteries have not been touched since Kosovo declared its independence in 2006.

The real irony in my view is that while Serbs adhered to the myth of Kosovo as the center or origin of Serbian civilization, by the time I first visited there in 1979, Kosovars were 80 percent of the population; the vast majority of Serbs had never set foot in the province. In fact, the growth rate of the Albanian population was three or four times higher than that of any other Yugoslav ethnicity, and the highest in all of Europe, which generated considerable concern among authorities in all of its republics.

This rapidly evolving population dynamic would soon have had an impact on the shape of the nation's political structures. My observations in 1979 indicated that a dynamic had already come into play to change further the status of Kosovo within Yugoslavia. After the fall of Yugoslavia, it evolved into a call for Kosovo's independence from Serbia, which the Serbs claimed was a desire for union with Albania and served to justify the brutal repression of Kosovo that reached its peak in 1998 and 1999 under the leadership of Yugoslavia's last president, radical Serb nationalist Slobodan Milosevic.

Tito's *Bratsvo i Jedinstvo* (Brotherhood and Unity) was the rallying cry for social cohesion of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia. That concept, never inculcated into the consciousness of the vast majority of the nation's population, was considered little more than an empty slogan in Kosovo. The myth of Boro, a Serb and Ramiz, a Kosovar, that emerged from tales told of the heroics of Tito's Partisan forces held that one of them, I don't know who, saved the other during a battle in World War II. While they may, in fact, never have actually existed, the tale of a heroic Serb and a valiant Albanian fighting side by side against the Nazis provided some substance to "Brotherhood and Unity," the implementation of which was intended to bridge hostilities among the nation's ethnicities. Boro and Ramiz had nothing but each other's best interests at heart, so why couldn't all Yugoslavs just sit down together and get along?

By the mid-1970s, that myth was literally made concrete in Pristina with the construction of the Boro i Ramiz Cultural Center, a sports arena, auditorium, and shopping mall. Some say its swooping roof line resembled raised hands clasped in prayer. It was, in fact, a rather impressive facility at the time. After Tito died, and certainly by the mid-1990s, Serbian nationalists had unceremoniously jettisoned the Boro i Ramiz myth; Kosovars did the same. The complex is now named the Palace of Youth and Sports. Some myths, it seems, have short shelf lives.

I also conducted USIA programs in Novi Sad, the capital of Vojvodina, Serbia's other autonomous province, which was little more than an hour's drive north of Belgrade. P&C had established a presence there in earlier years, but budget cuts led to the closing of the American Center we had opened there several years before I arrived in Yugoslavia. The city remained an important cultural center with socially and politically active Slovak, Hungarian and Romanian minorities. The province also had a lively so-called naïve or primitive art community in which artists predominantly of Slovak background produced lively and colorful works depicting life in rural Vojvodina. Some of them achieved international acclaim. Sylvia and I and other embassy colleagues occasionally drove out to Vojvodina villages, primarily Kovacica, Zrenjanin, and Pancevo in search of good examples of regional art. We acquired, among others, works by Martin Janos whose figures with huge forearms and calves reflected the hard physical labor of Slovaks who emigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

I considered my tour in Yugoslavia a return to my roots. I wanted to meet members of my grandfather's family in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. Unfortunately, I was not treated open-heartedly when I first visited them in 1971. They were happy to meet a distant American relative, but were somewhat suspicious about my living and working in

Belgrade. They considered it somehow made me pro-Serb. I think my relatives concluded I had abandoned my Croatian heritage, which I cannot deny, having given little more than perfunctory thought to it during my life. My Croatian grandfather in his younger days promoted the idea of a south Slav federation, but he eventually settled in Bulgaria. The rest of his family and their offspring had absolutely no interest in a federation under Tito's rule, an attitude shared by many of their fellow ethnics. I believe they were also skeptical of my father who identified himself Bulgarian and not Croatian.

Father, nonetheless, was very proud of several of his relatives who became prominent in Croatian society. His uncle, Alexander Bazala, wrote the first history of Greek philosophy in the Croatian language, which earned him distinguished status in Croatian academe. His book was also cited as one Tito read while he was in prison in the 1930s in his biography in the official Yugoslav national encyclopedia. It asserts that Tito referred to it as one of the most influential works in shaping his own political philosophy. I came across Alexander's book in an antique bookstore in Belgrade fifty years after its publication, and on a visit to Sarajevo I found it still listed in the university library catalog. A copy remains among the books in our library at home.

While obviously not openly expressed under Tito's rule, Croatian antipathy toward Serbs had strongly been expressed before then. Croatians always felt threatened by what they considered Serbia's intent to be the dominant party in their relationship. Croatian nationalists also felt inferior to their Serbian counterparts because they were unable to establish an independent state of Croatia. They generally feared subordination under Serbia, which they experienced in the 1920s. The years of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes heightened interethnic stress, fear, and antipathy. Those sentiments were suppressed under Tito's "Brotherhood and Unity" ideology but always floated just below the surface. They sprang up in full force, however, after Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1992.

Tito's death in May 1980, just days before his eighty-eighth birthday, set the stage for the death of Yugoslavia. During the almost four months he was hospitalized in Ljubljana at the end of his life, he had a leg amputated to prevent a gangrene infection and suffered from a range of other ailments as his health steadily declined. He may have wondered in his waning days who was capable of succeeding him, the father of his nation (and a quasi-deity to boot). The music played at noon on state radio day after day during his hospitalization hinted that the end was approaching; it was increasingly dirge-like in the last weeks of his life.

Tito's deification was a lifelong endeavor. Perhaps the annual running of the *Stafeta Mladosti* (Youth Torch) around the country exemplified it most openly. Like the running of the Olympic torch prior to the opening of the quadrennial games, the Youth Torch run lasted weeks. It passed from hand to hand across every region of the country culminating in *Dan Mladosti* (Youth Day) that fell on the day also celebrated as Tito's birthday. The extensive run covered by all media, served to demonstrate the successor generation's reaffirmation of Brotherhood and Unity and its adoration of the nation's leader.

In totalitarian nations, images of the leaders are generally on display everywhere. Unlike the Soviet Union under Stalin or the People's Republic of China under Mao, however, where a single outsized grandiose graphic image adorned public places everywhere, in Tito's Yugoslavia there were hundreds of different photos or graphics depicting him in as many different settings across the country. At the National Theater, for example, there was photo of him surrounded by ballerinas in the director's office; at the School of Drama he was at a student rehearsal; at universities he was in conversation with rectors and faculty; in factories he was with workers on the shop floor; and at military facilities he was at the center of a group of officers and soldiers.

Tito self-consciously built and maintained the myth for thirty-five years that he was a popularly anointed leader and widely revered throughout Yugoslavia's multi-ethnic society. It was no surprise that he came to consider himself irreplaceable and consequently gave little thought to the question of succession. The constitution of 1974 which, except for national security and defense matters, decentralized governance to the republics, elevated him to the status of ultimate ruler. He became the final authority; only he could resolve policy disputes among them. After he died, the seven-member collective leadership group of first secretaries of each republic's Communist Party that succeeded him became the ultimate power. It proved to be an unwieldy and ultimately unworkable way to run a multi-ethnic nation with divergent interests and different rates of economic growth among the republics.

I read that Tito's funeral was the largest in the world up to that time. Numerous heads of state, government leaders, and royalty attended the event in Belgrade on May 8. Ambassador Eagleburger reminded the entire embassy staff just days before he died that any of us planning travel out of the country had better be back in Belgrade within thirty-six hours after the announcement of his death. Aware of that requirement, we drove off to Venice with no idea when that would happen. Thus while our children endlessly chased pigeons around St. Mark's Square, we scanned the front pages of tabloids and kept our ears open to Italian radio news sound bites, not that we could comprehend anything more than menu-vocabulary Italian. Fortunately, no announcements were made during our rather stressful trip to Italy.

The U.S government delegation to the funeral consisted of Vice President Walter Mondale, President Carter's mother, Miss Lillian, distinguished democratic politician and diplomat Averill Harriman, and Secretary of the Treasury G. William Miller. I happened to hear a snatch of discussion in the ambassador's office about how to cope with the presence of Miss Lillian, an outspoken, independent, and feisty loose cannon who, it was clear, neither the ambassador nor the DCM felt comfortable having to host. Her colorful public persona was unlike that of the dignitaries they were used to encountering.

I spontaneously suggested that Sylvia might be able to assist. Growing up in the south she had met many Miss Lillian-types and would do her best to put the president's mother at ease during her stay in Belgrade. Sylvia got the nod and all went well except for the meeting between Miss Lillian and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The president's mother requested the appointment because in her seventies she had served in India as a

Peace Corp volunteer and wanted to meet the nation's leader. Sylvia was roped into serving as her escort officer. Mrs. Gandhi, however, had no interest whatsoever in meeting Miss Lillian, which became clear as soon as they sat down together for tea. It was an awkward occasion that luckily had no negative impact on U.S.-Indian relations.

Bilateral U.S.-Yugoslav diplomatic relations continued on an even keel during the rest of our assignments in Belgrade after Tito left the global stage. We learned to ski on the slopes of Kranjska Gora in Slovenia where we also spent time at Lake Bled, a geographic jewel you could walk around in little more than an hour. We stayed several times in a small Austro-Hungarian era hotel with rooms that looked out onto an island with a picturesque church built at some point in the nineteenth century. The area was gorgeous after a snowfall. Lake Bohinj along the Southern Alps was also a wonderful place to visit in Slovenia, Yugoslavia's second smallest but most prosperous republic.

Travel to Croatia took us to the Plitvice Lakes National Park, the oldest in southeast Europe that is now a UNESCO world heritage center. Created by water flowing over limestone deposits at different altitudes over countless millennia, the twenty lakes in the park are joined by wooden walkways. A stroll along them offered numerous visually splendid vistas that made our visits there memorable experiences. As Yugoslavia was torn apart in the 1990s, unfortunately the area around the lakes was mined. I drove through the park not long afterwards. Yellow tape marked areas where undetonated explosive devices (land mines) were still located and warned those passing through the area of the dangers. This was a major travesty of the conflict.

No stay in Yugoslavia was complete without travel to Croatia's magnificent Adriatic coastline and stops at any of its thousand picturesque islands. The city of Dubrovnik is perhaps the most dramatic site. We walked to the top of the wall that surrounds its medieval center, climbed its steeply sloping streets to find charming secluded seafood restaurants, and strolled on its main streets sampling the wares of vendors offering everything from trinkets to fine art. We also purchased several prints by the internationally known local artist Jovan Obican who we met briefly in the city. He was a capable entrepreneur who opened a shop near Miami, Florida where he found an active market for his work; some of the most popular depicted scenes of Jewish weddings.

The visit of noted Hollywood director Sidney Lumet to East Europe in the fall of 1980 on an exchange grant that also took him to Budapest, Warsaw, and East Berlin was a highlight of my tour in Yugoslavia. In Belgrade he participated in the annual film festival. His most recent film, *Serpico*, starring Al Pacino, was about police corruption in New York City. It generated great attention in the U.S. and Europe and demonstrated to Yugoslavs that freedom of expression in our society allowed film makers great latitude to address any issues they wanted to examine.

My parents were visiting at the time and by chance my father and I encountered Lumet at a local restaurant one evening. We were beckoned to his table and during our conversation he volunteered that my father's face was the handsomest he had ever seen. Partly in jest, I suggested my father keep an eye open for a letter offering him an

opportunity to appear in Lumet's next film. Needless to say, that did not happen, but Lumet's remark is one I will never forget.

Allen Ginsberg's visit to Yugoslavia was another memorable experience. Noted Serbian poet Vasko Popa invited him to his home, and I traveled with him to the village of Vrsac (VER-shots) in Vojvodina just miles from the Romanian border. Several other American poets who had just participated in the annual Struga poetry festival in Macedonia joined us for the ride to dinner with Yugoslavia's virtual poet laureate. He was widely known and admired in U.S. poetry circles after translations of his work appeared in English.

As we approached the village police officers waved us down. This irritated the anti-authoritarian American poets who made it clear they wanted nothing to do with cops. I exercised my diplomatic skills in an attempt to assure them that the police intended only to provide an honor guard for the guests of an internationally esteemed local resident. Several of the American poets were ready to express openly their utter disdain for police authority, which they might have been able to get away with in the U.S. The idea of a police escort in their honor was a concept difficult for some of them to grasp. In the U.S. they said it certainly wouldn't be to honor them. I succeeded in cooling them all down, and our two car convoy was finally escorted to Popa's house with police sirens blaring and red lights flashing.

The dinner in the yard of Popa's modest home was very pleasant on a warm summer evening with lots of local red wine and grilled lamb. Local musicians dropped by and played folk music. Poets read several of their works; Ginsburg spoke spontaneously characterizing the evening in words that may have been regarded as a poem by literary critics. Since they were unrecorded, they have been lost to mankind including his reference to yours truly as a "functionary" who just happened to be at the table. I found that somewhat unflattering, but then, in the eyes of a beat poet, what else would a Foreign Service officer be?

Shortly before our departure from Belgrade in 1982, several American movie actors came to Yugoslavia to appear in a feature film about the 1943 movement of Tito's Partisan fighters from Vojvodina to Bosnia. Entitled *Veliki Transport* (Massive Transport), it was the last film produced in Yugoslavia about Tito's role in World War II. We hoped to see it later on the screen in Washington, but it was never released in the U.S. Outside of Yugoslavia it was shown commercially only in Spain for some reason.

Why American actors were cast as Yugoslavs in a Yugoslav film I do not know, but some of us at the embassy found that intriguing and we drove out to the location to observe a scene being shot. We discovered that the American actors were Robert Vaughn, perhaps best known for his leading role almost two decades earlier in the hit TV series "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," and James Franciscus, who starred in several widely seen TV series and appeared in a number of feature films as a supporting actor.

We watched several takes and had an opportunity to chat with both men during a break in the filming. We left business cards with them and I was surprised several days later when

they both unexpectedly appeared at the American Center. They told me they were interested in the work of the embassy and wanted to know more about cultural and academic exchanges saying it was their first visit to a U.S. diplomatic facility. I gave them a brief tour of the premises and told them about the scope and nature of USIS activities in Yugoslavia. They thanked me for the orientation and after little more than half an hour returned to their filming. “B list” celebrities though they may have been, I was flattered by their attention nonetheless. They expressed serious interest in U.S. public diplomacy activities, and I enjoyed having the opportunity to talk with them about USIA activities in Yugoslavia. The event merited a toast and I just happened to have a bottle of slivovitz and several shot glasses handy and we drank to each other's good health.

We left Yugoslavia in the summer of 1982, just months after the outbreak of open hostilities in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. Elements of the Yugoslav army had been deployed there to maintain order, which was an unprecedented event in Yugoslav history. The army had never before been called upon for that purpose anywhere in the country. But by that time the idea of the rallying cry in Kosovo had become “Kosovo Republica,” a call to elevate Kosovo’s status from an autonomous province of Serbia to an independent republic. In my last visit to Pristina before our departure, I saw soldiers camped out in the large undeveloped lot around the Boro and Ramiz Cultural Center with their laundry hanging off balconies of nearby apartment buildings; armed vehicles patrolled the streets. The sight was very unsettling but the stress and tension between Serbs and Albanians was tightly reined in for the next five years. When I returned in 1998, it was a markedly different story.

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND 1982–1988

The rule of thumb when I came into the Foreign Service was that you had to spend at least three of your first fifteen years in Washington. When I left Yugoslavia I had spent the first twelve years of my career abroad. Although in early 1982 I was offered another assignment overseas we definitely wanted to return to the U.S. Our children—Alison, who was ten years old at that time, and Alexander, who was nine—had no experiences in the United States except for brief visits during home leaves and language training at FSI. It was time to return to acquaint our children with American culture and society.

Another reason for a return to the U.S. was that our parents had little contact with us while we were abroad. Of course our parents visited us in Poland, India, and Yugoslavia, and we wrote to them and received numerous lengthy handwritten letters in response, including reams of press clippings about virtually anything under the sun from Sylvia’s mother. But in retrospect I felt bad about being remote, detached, and inaccessible most of the time we were out of the country. International phone calls were so expensive then that we spoke very briefly when we dialed them. Now with internet phone services available for only pennies per minute anywhere in the world, you can prattle on for hours and exchange video images of the family taking in the sites anywhere around the globe as if you were no further than an arm’s length apart.

Considering all these factors, I accepted a Washington assignment as country affairs officer for Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania in USIA's Eastern Europe division and Sylvia worked in the Refugee Bureau at State. I wound up spending the next six years with assignments in DC, but worked abroad for more than a year during that period, which had unanticipated career consequences for me. My experiences were varied and interesting but I paid little attention to seeking what are known as career enhancing opportunities although I mistakenly thought one or two of them might have been.

One event in the early months following our return to the U.S. underscored quite clearly why we needed to be stateside at that time. On a day late that fall, Alex came home from school and quizzically inquired, "Who are the Redskins? Everybody in school is talking about them." As almost every human being in and around the nation's capital knows the Redskins are Washington sports icons and were Super Bowl-bound in 1982. Alex, born in Germany and having lived only two of his nine years in the U.S., knew nothing about American football and the Redskins. Interestingly enough, one of his classmates was the daughter of Joe Theismann, the Redskins quarterback at the time. Anyway, we immediately concluded that he urgently needed some cultural awareness training. We provided it by parking him in front of the TV the following Sunday and explained to him as best we could what we knew about American football. Thank goodness for John Madden, whose commentary during the television broadcast of the Redskins next game shed exponentially more light on the sport than we could. Madden helped clue Alex into a core element of this part of American culture and put him on par with his fellow fourth graders.

With the Americanization of our children well underway, I moved easily into the country affairs job. It was natural for me and appropriate for officers at my level as a first domestic assignment. I was in that job just over a year, however, when I stopped by the office of Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Richard Burt at the State Department one day following an East European affairs meeting I attended there every week. President Ronald Reagan named him to the job early in 1983 to replace Ambassador Larry Eagleburger who became under secretary of state for political affairs. Burt, the first speaker I programmed just weeks after my arrival in New Delhi six years earlier, had already served as assistant secretary for the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs. He was a very impressive young scholar associated with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London when we first met in India.

I wanted to offer Burt my congratulations on his being named to the European Bureau [Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs] job. He was not otherwise occupied when I stopped by and we chatted briefly about our few days together in India. He mentioned there would soon be a vacancy in the European Bureau press and public affairs office, a position then filled by a USIA colleague who had entered the Foreign Service with my class. I responded positively to his asking if I would be interested in it.

As it turned out several USIA colleagues told me they thought it not wise for me to move into that position. In fact, my supervisor, the deputy chief of USIA's Eastern Europe division, who was also my supervisor as deputy PAO in Belgrade, opposed the move,

which I found hard to comprehend. I believed the feedback anyone in that position could provide both his office and that of USIA's program planning and development offices with regard to State Department foreign policy would contribute to keeping agency information programs at the cutting edge and avoid having to make adjustments after the fact. After some back and forth, I was named to the job and held it for two years.

STATE DEPARTMENT EUROPEAN BUREAU PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The prime responsibility of the job was to provide press guidance for use by the State Department's spokesperson in the daily noon media briefing. He (hereafter "he" may refer to "she" to avoid the awkward he/she formulation) has it relatively easy these days flipping through the pages of prepared guidance until he finds the answer and reads it. Or he could respond, as President Nixon's Press Secretary Ron Ziegler did when asked about Watergate by saying, "I have nothing for you on that at this time." Mid-careerists such as I provided the language the spokesperson uttered, which was widely vetted and fully approved at all levels of the bureaucracy. Those words were formulated to appear in print without inducing apoplexy among senior administration officials who read them in the *Washington Post* the following morning.

Until the Kennedy Administration, the assistant secretary for public affairs met every morning with the geographic bureaus' assistant secretaries. The briefing facilitated the development of responses to inquiries he anticipated would arise in that day's noon press briefing. Since then preparation for the daily press briefing has evolved into a small industry. Now a number of Civil Service staffers scan foreign affairs coverage both in domestic and foreign media overnight and request that press and public affairs offices of geographic and functional bureaus provide responses to all the foreign policy issues covered that day. They make no assumptions about which are likely to raise questions in the daily media briefing at noon. Their job is to request guidance and they do so by six-thirty in the morning.

My job consisted largely of obtaining the guidance requested on U.S. European foreign policy. I first tasked European Bureau country affairs officers to draft responses to the requests and obtain the necessary "clearance" (concurrence) from other bureaus in the department that had an interest in or were involved with issues raised in the guidance requests. My day began at seven-thirty daily when I reviewed press office requests on my computer; they generally numbered half a dozen and often more. Minutes later I called or left e-mail messages for the country affairs officers whose countries made the news overnight, and asked for draft responses to guidance requests no later than ten am.

Bearing cleared guidance responses, by eleven-thirty am I ran up three flights to the seventh floor office of the spokesman located literally a block away (the D Street rather than the C Street side of the building). He reviewed the texts provided him with bureau public affairs officers gathered around his desk. We remained with him until he was comfortable with the responses and confident that he understood the issues the guidance addressed. If not, it was back to the drawing board and further changes might be made up to the minute before the spokesman walked into the briefing room; that is why the noon

meeting often begins much later. The spokesman sometimes exercised the option of calling assistant secretaries directly to obtain further clarifications or changes to text responses, which at times delayed the start of the press briefing up to an hour or even more.

My problems often began before eight-thirty. A country affairs officer I called might claim he faced a deadline on a more critical matter and would be unable to respond to my request. That was when diplomatic skills acquired overseas came in handy. Rather than calling by phone, I would often stop by a country affairs officer's desk to make the request personally to convey the necessary level of urgency it required and sought to gauge the level of his responsiveness or lack thereof. I sometimes volunteered to take a crack at drafting a response based on my less than full understanding of an issue involving, say, Finland or Portugal. I would dutifully march the text down to him; if he concurred with the language, that would take care of the matter. If not, he was compelled to break away from whatever else he was coping with to amend it. I sometimes gained points that way and undoubtedly also lost a few.

When Secretary of State George Shultz named Bernard Kalb as department press spokesman in 1984 my problems increased. Kalb, a career journalist with NBC-TV news for twenty or so years, had no understanding of the obscure intricacies of State Department bureaucracy. On one of his first days on the job, he looked at one of the European Bureau's responses to a possible press inquiry, turned to me, and grumbled, "I can't say that. It makes no sense! It doesn't answer the question asked." I informed him that sometimes a non-response was the best you would get from the department. That did not make him happy. He gagged slightly but recovered and managed as best he could until his sudden retirement two years later. Getting him up to speed on issues covered only on the back pages could sometimes be uncomfortable and time consuming.

Not all prepared press guidance was needed for the spokesperson's press briefing. I, however, made all European Bureau guidance available to all European embassies for use by embassy spokespersons if the need arose locally; other bureau press officers did the same. If the State Department was to sing with one voice it made sense to have singers sing from the same sheet of music. The daily guidance also provided useful current updates for other officials in the U.S. or abroad who had media interviews on their schedules; it prevented them from appearing as if they were behind the curve.

I drew on press guidance when a journalist staked me out in Little Rock, Arkansas in front of a university building I was about to enter to address a class on East European affairs. It was a stop on a three-day tour arranged by State Department's public affairs office that sent mid-level Foreign Service officers on the road to speak to organizations around the country interested in U.S. foreign policy. Service clubs such as Rotary or Kiwanis, university classes, and local media were not likely to draw the secretary, his deputy, under secretaries or assistant secretaries as speakers. My responses to his inquiries included language prepared for use by Secretary Shultz to respond to media inquiries about arm control and U.S.-Soviet relations. Nothing could have made them more authoritative than that. Plagiarism in hierarchical bureaucracies is a virtue.

Back in the department, my day did not end with the noon press briefing. After lunch I would prepare memos to the assistant secretary and deputy secretaries in response to numerous requests for press interviews or TV appearances with senior department officials. Getting Rick Burt to agree to appear on ABC's "Nightline" or NBC's "Meet the Press" posed no difficulty. In fact a memo was often just a pro forma follow up to a request I had made earlier by phone. I very much appreciated his media savvy and readiness to address complex issues such as U.S.-Soviet arms control and disarmament policies. Press guidance can only take you so far and he had in depth knowledge of policy nuances that allowed him to answer follow up questions authoritatively for the Reagan Administration.

More difficult was getting other senior officials to meet with foreign media. From my USIA perspective such interviews would demonstrate administration responsiveness to concerns about U.S. foreign policies in Europe and to the extent possible, openness and transparency regarding their implementation abroad. At times, of course, busy schedules prevented me from lining up media appearances or interviews with senior officials. I was also repeatedly besieged by phone calls from network television production assistants trying to line up an A-list guest for their talk and panel shows. CBS priorities and deadlines, however, were not as important to the European Bureau as its own; I did my best not to let CBS know that.

STATE DEPARTMENT YUGOSLAV COUNTRY AFFAIRS OFFICER

I anticipated that I would return to USIA at the end of my public affairs tour at the State Department in the summer of 1985. One day, however, I encountered Shaun Byrnes, a State Department colleague with whom I served in Belgrade. He told me he thought the department would want me to stay on as the country affairs officer for Yugoslavia. I was flattered that a rising FSO considered me a good candidate for the assignment. He was instrumental in having the European Bureau tag me for the position and worked to obtain USIA approval for me to serve in that capacity. While I had selected public diplomacy as my career track, I always had an interest in State's foreign policy functions and responsibilities; a country affairs job in the department, far more than a public diplomacy job at USIA, offered the opportunity to be involved more closely in the formulation of foreign policy.

While some of my USIA colleagues advised me against taking a country affairs job at State, once again I persisted and moved into the position in early fall that year. The main lesson I learned was that the prime responsibility of country affairs officers is to be ambassadors' hand holders and to help them chart their ways through the maze of Washington's myriad foreign policy character actors. One may think of ambassadors as anointed personalities and ultimate authorities, but most of them rose through the ranks and did not fully understand or appreciate the intricacies of the Washington operations of other federal agencies with stakes in the implementation of U.S. foreign policies. And in reality few career ambassadors and not many politically appointed ambassadors had any personal contact with the president; they could wind up floating belly up in the whirlpool

of internecine interagency turf battles were it not for intrepid country affairs officers saving the day.

Ambassadors rely on country affairs officers to identify appropriate contacts within the administration to get a fair hearing for their concerns about the conduct of bilateral relations between their capital and Washington and to gain an understanding of how the operations of other U.S. agencies can advance or hinder the advancement of the administration's diplomatic objectives in their countries. My most interesting experience as country affairs officer was not defusing a Soviet threat against Yugoslavia but ironing out a dispute between the ambassador to Yugoslavia and the U.S. Department of the Navy over a freedom of navigation exercise scheduled to transit waters of the Adriatic Sea that Yugoslavia claimed as territorial.

The U.S. for years had conducted freedom of navigation exercises to challenge territorial waters claims the U.S. considered excessive. The U.S. insisted that all nations obey the 1982 UN Law of the Sea Convention that the U.S. itself, however, had not yet formally ratified. The convention defines the right of innocent passage through territorial waters; it is innocent if not prejudicial to the peace, good order, and security of the coastal state involved. It also defines as prejudicial passage that poses a threat to the territorial integrity or political independence of coastal states. And that is where push came to shove between the embassy and the navy.

I do not know exactly when the interagency dispute began, but the U.S. Navy must have provided significant advance warning that it intended to exercise freedom of navigation in the Adriatic Sea because several days were required to hammer out a solution acceptable both to the embassy and the navy. Whether the navy informed the Yugoslav Ministry of Defense of its intent I do not recall. But when the ambassador learned that the ministry opposed the exercise and would mobilize the Yugoslav air force to demonstrate its opposition to the U.S. Navy entering waters it claimed as territorial, things started hopping fast.

The very agitated DCM called me to say the ambassador wanted the navy to call off the exercise lest it become the source of increased tension between the U.S. and Yugoslavia. How would the navy respond were Yugoslav aircraft to fire at its ships? We hoped not to have to find out. It took me a while to identify someone in the Pentagon with responsibility for the navy's freedom of navigation exercises. That individual informed me that as far as he was concerned, the exercise in the Adriatic would proceed as scheduled. It was, after all, no more than innocent passage through territorial waters. When I said that according to our embassy in Belgrade the Yugoslav government didn't see it that way, he was indifferent. A fishing boat transiting those waters was one thing; U.S. warships with missile launching capabilities was another even though the navy intended no threat. U.S. intent and Yugoslav perceptions were two distinctly different things.

Pushing the matter off the front burners was not easy. I informed my office director of the embassy's concerns, let him know of the reaction of a working level navy official, and

suggested that the department weigh in at a higher level. Before that happened, we requested that the navy send appropriate personnel to the department to discuss the matter with us further at the country affairs officer level. That discussion, which lasted several hours, was in fact an interagency negotiation. We argued that regardless of the navy's intent, Embassy Belgrade feared undetermined negative consequences should the exercise proceed. The navy personnel with whom we met retorted that the principle of freedom of navigation was at stake and that the threat of a Yugoslav show of force in opposition would not deter the navy from proceeding as it intended.

I do not remember how much higher up the food chain the argument went, but in the end the navy yielded to the State Department in recognition of another principle, that of the predominance of State in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The fact that the navy was able to put the embassy in so tight a bind, however, demonstrated on a small scale that resolving interagency disputes is as much an element of diplomacy as intergovernmental negotiations. That was all in a country affairs officer's day's work. I do not remember the outcome of this episode; perhaps the navy vessels wound up paying a call on a Yugoslav port which would have defused the issue nicely.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO WHITE HOUSE COUNSELOR FOR IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIRS

Midway through my assignment as Yugoslav country affairs officer, I once again wound up moving in an unconventional direction for an FSIO, but this time not at my initiative. In early 1987 the Iran-Contra scandal that media labeled "arms for hostages" was brewing. Congress wanted to learn what President Reagan knew about the matter and when did he know it. To defuse the situation the president pulled David Abshire out of his assignment as U.S. ambassador to NATO in Brussels and named him Special Counselor for Iran-Contra Affairs with Cabinet rank to assist him to cope with the consequences of the scandal. Not unexpectedly, the first thing Abshire did was to pull together a staff of his own to assist him with the task.

Abshire called Stan Burnett, who had been his PAO at NATO before returning to Washington to become counselor of USIA, the third ranking position in the agency's hierarchy, and asked him to identify someone to handle public affairs for his office and serve as his spokesperson. Stan called me at the State Department and informed me he told Abshire I would call him to schedule an interview as soon as possible. I felt there was no way I could turn down the counselor's request. Had I done so, he may just have moved down to the next name on his list and that would be that. But my ego told me he wanted me for the assignment, and I was tempted by an opportunity to work in the White House. In my interview, Abshire told me his objective was to ensure that the first two-term American president in a quarter of a century would not face impeachment.

Abshire was an impressive foreign policy insider who founded the distinguished Center for Strategic and International Affairs [CSIS] and had a solid reputation on Capitol Hill. Following my interview, I walked back to my office at the department. Within minutes the phone on my desk rang; Burnett informed me Abshire wanted me on board the

following day. That opened a can of worms; I had no option but to inform the office director to whom I had said nothing about this. I assumed I was one of several people Abshire would interview and would have a day or two to come up with a way of breaking the news to him if I were selected. Not happy that he wasn't informed in advance he told me, "We simply are not going to let you go." My two-year assignment as desk officer was scheduled to end in the summer of 1987 and it was going to be difficult to find a substitute before then, which would leave the office with a gap that other busy country affairs officers would have to step in to fill.

I called Burnett back immediately and let him know the office director's reaction. Half an hour after that, however, I learned that Burnett spoke to USIA Director Charles Z. Wick and suggested he call then Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Roz Ridgway, and the deal was done. Early the next morning, however, President Reagan's spokesman Marlin Fitzwater made it clear to Abshire and me that there was only one spokesman at the White House and we were looking at him. That eliminated the core of a position description that had yet to be written.

For the next ninety days I handled media requests for interviews with Abshire and scheduled his on-the-air appearances with network media. That left me plenty of time to track activities of the special counselor's office. Several weeks later he requested I write up my notes as a narrative about the functions of the office but after our episode at the White House concluded, he chose not to publish it. I cannot today find a copy of it among my memorabilia, and I am reasonably sure no one would rush to publish it now anyway. The text is on a seven-inch floppy computer disc that was no longer used elsewhere in the government. I found it surprising that the White House, which provided its own computing system, was behind the cutting edge of information technology.

Abshire's office was a three-room suite on the 17th Street side of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building known then as the Old Executive Office Building [OEOB] directly west of the White House. It was built in the 1880s as the State, War, and Navy Building. While some said its flamboyant style may have symbolized post-Civil War optimism, several notable Americans, Mark Twain among them, considered it the ugliest building in the country. Considered impractical in the 1950s, it was slated to be torn down but has survived to this day.

Although not a fancier of French Second Empire architecture, I found the OEOB a fascinating structure. The ceilings were eighteen-feet high and all suites had fireplaces with mantels that rose seven feet above the floor. Unfortunately, in the early stages of the computer age in the mid-1980s, the building was probably more impractical then than it was thirty years earlier. Wires linking computers just hung from the ceilings and ran along the walls throughout the entire building. Constructed over seventeen years and completed just as typewriters were coming into use, the building had no space between its ceilings and the floors above. Contemporary structures all have dropped ceilings so that wiring for computers and other devices can be concealed above them. As a result, the overall impact that modern communications technology made on the OEOB was

undecorative, but it nonetheless remained impressive to someone who had already grown weary of modern architecture, especially in government buildings.

What impressed me even more was that someone as low ranking as a major a century ago might have been the sole occupant of a massive office in that building. By the time I worked there, you had to be a senior administration official to claim such a space. Staffers in threes or fours were clustered in adjoining rooms of a suite. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building was completely renovated and restored after my brief stint in 1987. Several years ago I attended a meeting there and found all of its architectural peculiarities nicely highlighted, bringing the grandeur of the structure once again to the fore.

Unfortunately, Abshire's position in the White House did not provide his staffers with any access to the president or cabinet officers who were involved in dealing with the consequences of the Iran-Contra affair. We did have some interesting contacts with senior officials, however, Attorney General Edwin Meese among them. He dropped by one day to talk with Abshire, but the ambassador did not share the substance of their discussion with us.

In walking the halls of OEOB or having lunch in the White House cafeteria, you never knew who you might encounter. I literally bumped into Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger and Vice President Bush on different days running up the stairs in the West Wing as they were coming down. It was interesting that they apologized to me for our bumpy encounters. I wondered why. They were senior administration officials and I merely a short-term staffer. The why is really quite obvious. At the White House, cordiality is the order of the day because you never know; the just "anybody" you bumped into today might tomorrow be a "somebody."

In retrospect, others on Abshire's staff and I were really not much more than flies on the wall, privy to an interesting fragment in the history of Executive-Congressional relations linked to the conduct of U.S. foreign affairs. I found it interesting, for example, to be in his office when Abshire called CIA Deputy Director Robert Gates late one afternoon after he returned from meetings on Capitol Hill. He persuasively advised Gates to provide Congress all the data he heard the Hill requested from CIA about Iran-Contra matters. To withhold it longer, Abshire contended, could stall his nomination to succeed William Casey as CIA director. Gates got the message and the next morning trucks loaded with CIA documents drove up to Capitol Hill.

Abshire understood Washington political dynamics inside and out and knew which buttons to press. Unlike Attorney General Meese, who simply wanted to circle the wagons around the White House and rely on executive privilege to defend the president just as Nixon did in dealing with Watergate, Abshire took the opposite tack. He argued that the only way out was for the administration to be open, above board, and transparent with Congress and thus with the American public. Nixon's approach would be disastrous if repeated. In sum, working with Abshire provided significant insights into presidential-congressional relations. It was an enlightening, if not career enhancing, experience.

Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a Security Council staffer, who once carried a cake baked in the shape of a key on an official visit to Iran, for what purpose I do not know, triggered the Iran-Contra Affair. The White House domestic staff was totally bewildered by his behavior. He had already vacated his office by the time I started working with Abshire, and it had been marked off with yellow tape to indicate that it was off limits. That did not prevent curious White House staffers from stopping by and trying to imagine what transpired there as he and his secretary Fawn Hill fed classified documents into a shredder. It was she who later testified that it is sometimes necessary to go above the law in justifying their actions. Many White House staffers who did not deal with classified information could not comprehend what Oliver North was all about.

I think National Security Counselor Robert McFarland simply could not rein in the swashbuckling lieutenant colonel who considered himself an Errol Flynn-like mover and shaker in international affairs but who was fundamentally clueless. North, as I understand it, volunteered to fall on his sword to protect the president were he to be questioned about transferring arms to Iran to secure the release of six Americans who were being held hostage there and using funds from the sale to support the Contras who were anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua. McFarland allegedly said something like, "You can gut yourself, Oliver, but it's not about you." North was simply in over his head, but that did not prevent him from doing very well as a conservative radio commentator after his congressional testimony made him appear a victimized hero to the right. In my humble opinion, North's involvement with Iran-Contra just confirmed to me that he had not read the book *Diplomacy for Dummies*.

In the end, the president survived the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) of Iran-Contra. The Tower Commission that he appointed to review the matter and an independent counsel found that, while specific individuals acted inappropriately, the law was not broken. I have no idea how many thousands of person-hours were spent in reaching that conclusion, but as a result Reagan faced no further risk to serving two full terms in the White House.

When it was all over the president invited Abshire and staff into the Oval Office. Abshire arranged the opportunity as a way to thank his seven-member staff and members of the White House legal staff who had worked twelve to fifteen hours a day to put the best blush on the scandal. The president greeted each of us at the door and positioned us for individual handshake photos with him, which I found an interesting gesture on his part. Reagan said something to the effect that, "This is your moment; let's line you up for a good photo with both of us looking at the camera." They were autographed by his auto-pen signature with best wishes.

When we gathered behind his desk for a group photo with him the first thing he said was, "Thank you for finding me not guilty of a crime that wasn't committed," which I found an interesting way for the president to put it. The president also told us you always want to stand on the left side of the front line in a group photo because if it appears in the press, the caption will cite your name first; who is going to read or remember the other

names cited? Reagan was a very engaging man who made those around him feel as if they were at the center of his attention. I later met President Clinton on several occasions and he also had a very useful gift for politicians, which is to make you feel you are at the center of his attention in the few nanoseconds you are in direct contact with him.

The most interesting insight I gained out of my experience in the OEOB was the significance of the role Nancy Reagan played to protect her husband. That became crystal clear one day when we watched the president on television as he spoke with a visiting dignitary on the south lawn. At exactly that moment Mrs. Reagan was on the phone with Ambassador Abshire describing a meeting she had at a reception the previous evening with Robert Strauss, a key Democratic political strategist at the time. He had told her of attitudes on the Hill regarding the Iran-Contra issue and she told Abshire she had to inform the president. She was very alert to political attitudes around the White House and understood how events shaped public perceptions of her husband's handling of the presidency. She proved that she was a role player, not just the symbolic first lady presented to the public by the media.

An unusual event occurred a few weeks before Abshire's team disbanded. Don Regan, President Reagan's chief of staff, simply walked off the job one afternoon. He left his office, got into his car, and drove away saying he wouldn't be coming back, and just like that ended his tenure at the White House. For about three or four days it appeared possible that the president might pick Abshire to replace him. His name in fact had been mentioned for the job by several pundits and some others considered to be in the know.

All of us on Abshire's staff thought being on the special counselor's staff opened the prospect of our continuing to work with him were he to be named White House chief of staff. In fact, I had already scoped out the best spot on West Executive Avenue between the White House West Wing and the OEOB to park my car when reality came crashing down. The White House announced that the president had designated former Tennessee senator Howard Baker for the job. Abshire may, in fact, not have been considered for it, and in any event he was ready to move on. He told us earlier that after his involvement with Iran-Contra he was intent on devoting his energy to finding endowments to fund CSIS over the long term. In the meantime, several State Department people I knew asked if I would put in a good word for them with Abshire, which I found both surprising and a reconfirmation that it's all in who you know. Anyway, the last days of Team Abshire offered an exciting chance to think about what might have been. And for all I know, the White House might not have assigned me the parking spot I wanted anyway.

USIA PUBLIC DIPLOMACY WORKING GROUP FOR VENICE ECONOMIC SUMMIT

My brief White House gig was followed by another, but this was an inside operation. Counselor Burnett named me to serve as a member of USIA's Public Diplomacy Working Group [PDWG] to support the president's participation in the Venice Economic Summit and his appearance on June 12 at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. In his speech

there Reagan called on First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the wall that had divided the city since 1961.

I take credit for the inclusion of that sentence in the president's statement there although I cannot prove that my DNA can be found on the insertion of those words that I made into an early draft that was being circulated around government agencies and made its way to the PDWG in its out-of-the-way office in the New Executive Office Building across Pennsylvania Avenue. I believe it was President Kennedy who once said, "Success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan." In 2012, on the twentieth anniversary of the wall coming down, I read that several other Reagan Administration foreign policy officials also claimed authorship of the sentence. I claim to be among the fathers on this one.

My thought was that Gorbachev's recently announced policy of *perestroika* (restructuring) applied directly to the wall. That divider originated in the summer of 1961 as uncoiled loops of barbed wire strung around West Berlin just a meter back from its borders and only waist high. By 1987 it had evolved into a three hundred yard-wide monstrous girdle with automated unmanned machine gun stations, vicious patrol dogs, floodlights, and glass fragments across the top of the wall to prevent anyone from even thinking of leaving the so-called German Democratic Republic by crossing into West Berlin. Calling for the wall to come down would offer concrete evidence that Gorbachev's perestroika policy, already shown to be substantive domestically, also applied to restructuring East-West relations.

The four-member PDWG traveled to Venice as appendages of the White House press office to do whatever we could to provide foreign media the impression that the White House press office, which was totally preoccupied with stroking domestic media, considered them also worthy of attention. That was never an easy task to accomplish. USIA, however, considered it a critical element in the conduct of effective public diplomacy. We took inquiries from the foreign press and provided them background drawing on the guidance prepared for the White House press secretary. To the extent possible we got prominent journalists into the White House press office to talk directly with the press secretary, or to get a briefing from a senior administration official in the presidential party, and if possible, to have a senior official preside over a Q&A [question and answer] with foreign media.

No information conveyed to foreign media could be offered as an exclusive, which all media crave; when it came to exclusives, the White House only considered domestic media. How the president's overseas visits played in domestic media was always the administration's primary concern; USIA's objectives were secondary. That heightened the utility of having USIA Foreign Service officers attached to the White House press office when the president traveled abroad. We did our best to enable foreign media to get current, detailed, and authoritative background information on U.S. foreign policy objectives to address concerns about them in the countries he visited.

After the Venice Summit, I flew back to Washington on the Boeing 747 the White House press corps chartered via Berlin for the commemoration of the 750th anniversary of the

city's founding. That event provided the backdrop for the major presidential address delivered standing before the Brandenburg Gate. Bused to the Gate with White House correspondents, I heard him say, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." I was stunned to hear those words because even though I had inserted them in an early draft of his statement I had not seen the text as prepared for delivery. Along with everyone else present, I joined the gathered throng in applauding the president's remark.

I worked with the White House press office in a similar capacity several other times during my career. In 1992, I traveled to Bermuda from Kingston, Jamaica, where I was embassy PAO, for the unheralded "Easter Summit," a meeting between President George H.W. Bush and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. My chief memory of the event was the PM turning over a spade of dirt to plant some symbolic sapling with considerably more energy than Bush applied to the task. In 1994, I was in Warsaw with President Clinton when he visited for the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising more than half a century earlier.

In the middle of my ninety-day detour with Ambassador Abshire at the White House, I applied for the job of cultural attaché at the embassy in Moscow. Although USIA would have supported my bid, the ambassador had another candidate in mind for the job. Before the door closed on that opportunity, I had already accompanied my daughter to interviews at boarding schools to select one she would attend in anticipation of our going to Moscow in 1988 following language training. Sylvia had to break her assignment to the embassy as a result.

One day not long afterward I passed by the office of USIA's deputy director of the Latin America division. He saw me coming and asked me to step into his office. He offered me the position of PAO at our embassy in Jamaica that would open in the summer of 1988. I had not previously expressed an interest in the post or in serving anywhere in South America, but he may not have known that and cared even less. While totally unexpected, the offer was very welcome. After my Moscow misadventure I had missed out on the assignment cycle for other jobs in the summer of 1988.

USIA SENIOR POLICY OFFICER, POLICY GUIDANCE STAFF

In the meantime, Burnett arranged for me to be assigned as a senior policy officer in USIA's Office of Policy and Plans [IOP] to tide me over until I departed for Jamaica a year later. The policy guidance office was created for USIA Director Charles Z. Wick, who had been named to the job largely because his wife was a close personal friend of Nancy Reagan or so the buzz in USIA's corridors had it. My Foreign Service colleagues considered him a political hack and way over his head in the job. Dark clouds, however, are said to have silver linings. In this case, his access to the president meant money for the agency's budget so we just grinned and bore it.

The establishment of the office of policy guidance reflected the fact that Wick and his senior career Foreign Service area directors, whose responsibilities included providing policy advice to the director, frequently did not always read off the same page. The office

addressed his uncertainties in dealing with them, and it successfully, although unnecessarily, bridged the gap between him and the area and program division directors, but it really was just another layer of bureaucracy needlessly added to agency operations. At the same time senior staff was happy because the arrangement placed a structure created by the director between them and him. The personnel on its staff, after all, were closely plugged in with the geographic area and program offices having just been transferred from them to serve on the policy guidance staff.

So intimidated were senior USIA Foreign Service personnel by Wick that the area directors encouraged him to establish the position of counselor, the number three position in the agency. It was headed by the agency's most senior Foreign Service officer whose primary responsibility was to run interference between them and Wick. That gimmick, in my view, revealed how easy it was for outsiders close to the White House to intimidate career professionals. In fairness to the career professionals, being in Wick's line of fire could be a humiliating experience and potentially career-damaging as well.

As a senior policy officer, I once attended a meeting I had arranged for a visiting Balkan dignitary with Wick. At one point in their conversation he made a statement that Wick halted by raising his hand. "Hold that thought; you've just said something that is profound. I'd like to record it," he said and got up, pulled a small tape deck out of his desk, fiddled with the controls, found that it was not working, and threw it across his office where it landed on a couch on the other side. Without further reference to the remark he claimed to find so interesting, Wick moved the conversation to another subject. So much for profundity, I thought. But that, in a nutshell, was USIA Director Charles Z. Wick, perhaps best known outside the agency as the producer of the film, *Snow White and the Three Stooges*.

PAO KINGSTON, JAMAICA 1988–1992

I left the policy guidance staff in August 1988. The ambassador to Jamaica was then Michael Sotirhos, a Greco-American who as chairman of the National Republican Heritage Groups Council successfully mobilized donations by ethnic groups to the Reagan reelection campaign in 1984. His real objective was to be the U.S. ambassador to Greece and when the elder President Bush named him to the job he became one of the rare politically-appointed ambassadors to serve twice in that capacity. Only USIA's former director Frank Shakespeare comes to mind as another political appointee who served as ambassador in two assignments.

Sotirhos was a public affairs activist, which had both up and down sides for his public diplomacy staff. He appeared less interested in promoting support for U.S. policy objectives toward the Caribbean area and Jamaica than doing whatever it took to make sure every Jamaican on the island knew he was there. He did some interesting things, though, to achieve that objective, which kept his PAO hoping to ensure that Jamaican media covered his every public move. As an active member of the Greek Orthodox Church he soon discovered that Jamaica with 95 percent of its population of African heritage and largely Protestant had no Greek Orthodox churches. Consequently, during

his four year tour, he made a point of attending a different church almost every Sunday. That got him all around the island, frequently to places where other foreign ambassadors did not set foot. As a result, he became the most familiar and popular American in the country and soon became a welcome presence wherever he went. I thought that was a real feather in his cap even if there was nothing more substantive to it than sitting in a pew during a worship service.

Less than two weeks after I arrived in Jamaica, the island was hit hard by Hurricane Gilbert, a class three storm when it crossed over the island that evolved into the first class five storm in the Caribbean. It was referred to locally as Wild Gilbert. A very popular song of that title released immediately after the storm had the lyric, "My satellite dish took off without a visa," reflective of problems many Jamaicans faced in trying to visit the U.S. I was a newcomer to the island and still somewhat of a stranger at the embassy at that point. I was home alone because Sylvia had not yet been assigned to Jamaica. Our daughter Alison was a high school senior and Sylvia stayed in a domestic assignment to be with her for her final year.

The eye of Gilbert came right over Kingston. Having one pass over you puts you in a fool's paradise, an unbelievable experience. One minute torrents of rain slash against the house driven by gusts of wind of more than 120 miles per hour. The next minute the sun appears and the wind dies down to stillness in seconds. Then twenty minutes later the back end of the storm strikes even harder. That made things nasty in my residence. The windows were plantation shutters without glass. Who needs glass when it is warm all the time? I think the lowest temperature we experienced in the four years I was there was seventy-six degrees. The problem is that shutters cannot be closed tightly enough to prevent rain water from seeping, or rather gushing, into the house.

All U.S. embassy residences had guards on duty twenty-four hours a day. Rather than have the guard at my house sit outside through this storm I invited him in. It was a good thing I did. We wound up wringing out large towels full of water into thirty-three-gallon plastic garbage cans as fast as we could. When they were full we poured them out at the front door. Soon, however, water was coming in faster than we could bail it out. And that wasn't the worst problem. The guard looked out the window on several occasions and said, "Look, Mr. Bazala, there goes another roof!" Oh lord, would mine be next, I wondered. Fortunately the house was built to standards; the roof tiles were indeed fastened to the rafters and thus the roof was not wafted away into the Blue Mountains. No water dripped through it either, which meant that none of the ceilings collapsed and all my clothes and furnishing remained dry. But almost everybody else on the island experienced some damage to their roofs and other personal possessions. Surviving Gilbert taught me that I never want to be in the eye of a hurricane ever again.

In 1988, television satellite dishes that today are hardly larger than a small umbrella were huge. Television via satellite communication was new at the time and USIA Director Charles Z. Wick, cracking the whip, put the agency on the cutting edge of information technology by investing heavily in it to create Worldnet as a tool for telling America's story to the world in a new way. When I arrived in Kingston, there was already a dish

fourteen feet in diameter on the rooftop of the embassy building. I dutifully tied it down with some rope as Gilbert approached which was all that I could do to protect it. To some extent the size of the dish reflected the fact that Jamaica was close to the edge of the satellite footprint USIA was attached to. After Gilbert was gone, I found the dish totally mangled by the force of 120 miles per hour gusts of wind. Over twelve hours they severed the ropes and whipped the dish back and forth against its mooring.

While I wasn't held personally responsible for that loss, I sensed that some colleagues felt otherwise. I think they assumed I was pleased not having to conduct programs via Worldnet; many colleagues considered it a marginal enterprise. In the late 1980s, panel discussions transmitted over Worldnet probably did not reach viewers much beyond those in international chain hotel rooms; they were not our target audience and guests probably weren't watching anyway. The expense of the satellite system at embassies around the world diverted needed resources from other more productive agency activities in the view of most of my Foreign Service colleagues who were compelled to generate evidence of effectiveness reports about Worldnet for director Wick to read. Portions of their content were fabricated to keep him off their backs.

In the early days, credulity sometimes had to be stretched pretty thin to justify the investment in Worldnet. In retrospect, however, Wick was right to employ satellite technology to communicate America's story to the world; the judgment of most senior FSIOs was dead wrong regarding the issue. As the State Department subsequently discovered, to have a chance of reaching and influencing target foreign audiences with its messages it is important to be at the cutting edge of communications technology and stay there. For what it's worth, there was also a fourteen-foot dish in my backyard that somehow survived the storm undamaged. As I told friends back home, I could watch Johnny Carson in four time zones with access to cable channels across North America, not that I ever did.

In the aftermath of hurricane Gilbert, the U.S. responded by donating tons of USAID-supplied aluminum sheeting, among other items, to replace the roofs of thousands of homes across the island. It was my job to ensure that media were on site whenever relief supplies arrived and got video, photos, and texts for stories featuring Ambassador Sotirhos presiding over their delivery at Kingston Airport. I also arranged press briefings for every congressional delegation that came down to survey the damage and U.S. government relief efforts and assisted with media arrangements for visitors such as the Reverend Jesse Jackson whose presence was likely to make headlines in the U.S. I recall one press session at which he claimed Gilbert was so devastating a storm that entire species of living organisms had been totally obliterated on the island. He cited honey bees as an example. I have no idea who or what gave him an idea so outrageous and unfounded. For what it is worth, honey bees continued to buzz around in Jamaica after Gilbert.

Because the ambassador liked to play favorites with the officers on his staff he had me riding in his limousine for a few weeks after the hurricane as a sign of his satisfaction with my efforts to make sure U.S. recovery assistance and his involvement with it was

well covered by media. In fact, at the time there was nothing he could have done not to look good, but because I was the person on his staff designated to ensure such outcomes, he bestowed on me the blessing of riding with him in his limousine, mostly on drives out to the airport and back. Once Gilbert moved off the front pages and no longer made TV nightly news the ambassador found other officers to invite for rides in his vehicle.

There were a number of other issues waiting to keep the public diplomacy staff of three American FSIOs and seven Jamaican employees busy in Jamaica after Gilbert. The recently announced Caribbean Basin Initiative [CBI] to facilitate U.S. agricultural and textile imports from those island nations was one of them. Another top priority for the post was engagement in efforts to reduce demand for drugs in Jamaica. Marijuana was a crop grown in wild profusion and smuggled into the U.S. It was the cause of a major crime wave by Jamaicans at home and in the U.S. The Drug Enforcement Agency [DEA] attaché undertook eradication efforts to cut down the supply of marijuana. I supervised the conduct of a number of seminars and other public affairs programs dealing with the downside of drug consumption to encourage a reduction in demand, and this kept me busy throughout my tour in Jamaica. A number of Jamaicans with whom we communicated were committed to the effort, but we had no data to confirm whether any of the programs we conducted contributed substantively to achieving that objective.

Sylvia arrived in Kingston after I was there a year. With Jamaica being the third or fourth largest visa issuing embassy in the world, she never doubted that there would be an opening for her in the consular section in 1989 after we moved Alison to Boston to study cello performance at the New England Conservatory of Music. We enrolled our son Alex, who was entering his junior year of high school in the Loomis Chaffee School in North Windsor, Connecticut. Sylvia's assignment as head of the nonimmigrant visa section of the consulate had her directing a staff of fourteen officers.

Most people would be thrilled to have the expenses of sending a child to a distinguished boarding school paid for. USIA covered the cost because the British-based education system in Jamaica did not adequately prepare Foreign Service dependents for undergraduate study in the U.S. We certainly were pleased that two years of boarding school for Alex would not be an out of pocket expense for us. It meant, however, that he had to leave the Thomas Jefferson School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia, which remains one of the most outstanding public high schools for gifted and talented students in the United States. While we served in Jamaica, both our children joined us during all their breaks during the school year and over the summers.

The swimming pool at our residence was a major attraction for us. I think that not long after our Jamaican tours new regulations barred FSOs from occupying residences with swimming pools, a privilege that I think may now be reserved solely for ambassadors. In any case, we had one and I learned quickly how wonderful it was to jump in the pool after work. A dry martini, a scotch (two fingers neat), a vodka tonic, a rum and ginger, or a mug of Jamaica's Red Stripe beer in the cup holder on the float as I lay back watching the sun set over the Blue Mountains was all I needed to set aside the stresses and strains of a busy day at the office. Slowly savoring my libation, I thought about hapless

commuters stranded on the DC beltway and elsewhere in rush hour traffic snarls and how nice it was not to be among them.

The government of Jamaica when I arrived in Kingston was headed by conservative Edward Seaga, who succeeded leftist Michael Manley several years earlier. Manley was perceived by many in the U.S. government as a proto-communist much enamored of Cuban socialism and someone who hobnobbed too easily with Fidel Castro and other Cuban communist officials. Seaga, a rightist of Lebanese extraction, was very favorably regarded by the Reagan Administration. Manley's decision to run again to succeed Seaga as prime minister therefore raised considerable anxiety in the administration, but despite its wishes he defeated Seaga handily in the parliamentary elections of 1989.

The White House watched the run up to the election very closely. But in the embassy we knew things were going to be all right when Prime Minister Manley appeared for his first post-election press conference attired in a blue blazer and striped tie and not a bush jacket characteristic of what he wore during his first administration. He had hired a leading Washington public relations firm to develop his approach to the U.S. government for his second administration. The firm counseled him that his choice of attire could send a signal to the White House that things were going to be different the second time around, and they were. His second administration came to be very favorably viewed by Washington. He did the right things economically by jettisoning the socialist approaches of his first administration and advocating market economics and the growth of private enterprise as engines of economic growth during his second.

Manley was a charismatic, highly-intelligent man from an elite background. His father had been chief minister and his mother was an internationally-noted artist. Despite his education at the London School of Economics and service in the Canadian air force, his later labor union background allowed him to build a lasting relationship with Jamaica's poor majority that enabled him to be twice elected as the island's prime minister identifying himself as a democratic socialist. Manley was also the author of several books, *A History of Cricket in the West Indies* among them. I found the volume both a metaphor for the utility of establishing a federation among Caribbean island nations as well as a reflection of his love of the sport. The book centered on the story of the region's dominance of the cricket world in the 1980s.

Ultimately, however, cricket as a metaphor for a Caribbean federation centered on Jamaica did not go over well. Other Caribbean nations regarded Jamaica as the big bad boy on the block and resisted gathering under the overarching wings of the largest Caribbean island other than Cuba. It appears as if they still avoid the prospect of Jamaica assuming a leadership position among them for whatever purpose. In any event, the second Manley Administration was considered an effective partner by Washington policy makers. He worked to advance U.S. CBI objectives and he cooperated with DEA to combat marijuana cultivation and shipment to the U.S.

But Jamaicans had already become established as major suppliers of marijuana in America and many became involved in some very violent drug gangs that radically

undercut the notion that the island was a tropical paradise characterized by the consumption of rum punch and coconut water under swaying palm trees with dancers moving to the rhythms of reggae and salsa music. The violence that characterized Jamaican criminal behavior in the U.S. also prevailed on the island and was the main reason armed guards were posted at all residences of American embassy staff members. Armed robberies often involved shooting deaths of unarmed victims. In fact, a French embassy diplomat and the French military attaché were shot and killed during a robbery at the home where they and their wives were playing bridge one night after dinner. They apparently heard the robbers removing items from the house and went into the next room to investigate, but rather than simply running off, the robbers fired shots and killed them both.

We also had what is known as a rape gate at the entry to our bedroom. It was a bolt-locked wrought iron door that reputedly could effectively secure the room from forced entry for twenty minutes. The downside of that was that our homes also had wrought iron window grates, which made it almost impossible to get out of the house if the rape gate was locked. Ours was never used.

The embassy security officer and a representative of the firm that provided the guard staff would visit every residence daily and often at night to make sure the guards were on duty and awake, which sometimes was not the case. Coming home after a late evening event, we would sometimes find our guard asleep and utterly useless as a deterrent to crime. But you could understand why. At three am, expected to remain unseen and unheard, guards could not listen to the radio or watch TV; it is hard to read in the dark. And who knows what kind of hours they kept when they were off duty. Not surprisingly, they sometimes simply dozed off at times during the night.

While this was sometimes reported and resulted in guards being fired, we were also confident that when they were on duty and alert during daytime hours they would do whatever was necessary to protect us. Consequently American staffers were generally willing to cut them some slack when they were found asleep. One night, however, we were awakened when our guard, who was located directly under the bedroom of our elevated house, accidentally shot himself in the foot. Needless to say, he was dismissed immediately.

And while we may have expressed confidence in our guards, we really knew nothing about their skills and capabilities. They were instructed always to restrict access to residences by keeping the gates closed and remaining on the property behind them. One of our guards, however, fancied himself a ladies man. He loved to stroll out onto the street leaving the gates open thinking he could impress those passing by with the weapon holstered at his side. He, too, lost his job because he failed to act responsibly. But generally the American community got along well with the uniformed guard staff. They were informed to be unobtrusive but alert to any security threat and we respected their service.

In my first year when I was alone in Kingston, I lived in a residence owned by the publisher of Jamaica's overwhelmingly dominant newspaper, *The Daily Gleaner*, which had achieved some international stature over the previous decades. I recall references to its editorials from time to time in the Sunday *New York Times* Week in Review section. There are those who might wonder whether it was appropriate for the U.S. embassy public affairs officer and spokesperson to be a tenant in the home of the publisher of the island's only major daily, but the lease was signed by the embassy administrative officer for my predecessor and had drawn no public attention. In any case, the fact that he received rent from the embassy did not affect what he chose to publish in the paper.

Several other daily newspapers were launched over the years in Kingston, but none gained significant enough readership to endure. Several regional weekly newspapers were published in other cities on the island. There was also state radio and about half a dozen private stations, and, of course, state TV. Until the internet age, however, the media environment was rather confined in Jamaica. Very few foreign journalists were based in Kingston; several swept across the Caribbean either bi-monthly or quarterly; and others were dropped in to cover breaking stories such as a hurricane in the region. Serving as both PAO and press spokesman at the U.S. embassy in Kingston was thus quite manageable.

But Jamaican media and Jamaicans generally were very upset by the lack of U.S. support for the liberation of Nelson Mandela in South Africa. That was a key issue, and U.S. neutrality regarding the matter was always held against us as reflecting American racism. Jamaicans saw the U.S. as a power that talked big about human rights, but could not always be relied upon to weigh in on behalf of what was right. That harsh judgment was difficult to counter because, despite sanctions levied against South Africa, the U.S. did not express support for freeing Mandela from prison.

Mandela was freed in 1990 and he visited Jamaica shortly thereafter. He said Jamaica has made a major contribution to global culture through its music, reggae in particular, and cited the lyrics of Bob Marley ("Get up, stand up; stand up for your rights," for example) as having raised his spirits while he was in jail. Many Jamaicans were deeply moved when they heard that. The global cultural influence that a small island nation of only two and a half million people had become, enhanced Jamaica's appeal to me as an interesting place to serve. I even learned how to dance to the rhythm of reggae, perhaps a bit awkwardly, about thirty years after mastering the twist as an undergraduate.

While not a significant player in global affairs, Jamaica merited a visit by Vice President Dan Quayle in January 1990 to give Michael Manley a pat on the back for not reverting to wearing bush jackets and calling on Castro after his second election. Quayle recently had been beaten up badly by U.S. media when, while presiding over a spelling bee, he suggested to one contestant that potato includes an "e" at the end. I found it bewildering that U.S. media could overplay so slight an incident to redefine a man's character and cast him as a fool in the eyes of the American public. In my tangential contact with him during his brief stop over, he impressed me as a very genial, easy going, and engaging person, even if he couldn't spell potato, in stark contrast to the image of him American

media so gleefully and thoughtlessly presented to the American public after the spelling bee incident.

In his bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Manley, however, Manley called the U.S. invasion of Panama to oust dictator Noriega a violation of international law, something the Bush Administration did not expect to hear from him and was not pleased to see in news reports of the vice president's visit to Jamaica. I was not present at that meeting but I was at the site because Quayle and Manley were going to make public statements afterwards. Waiting for that to happen, I met Manley's security detail, a single female police officer. We had a very pleasant chat prior to the end of the meeting. I thought later about the massive White House Secret Service and other staff details exceeding four hundred people that accompanied the president when I was in Poland, India, and Yugoslavia. They were entirely justifiable of course, but so striking in contrast to Michael Manley's. Since he faced no physical threats in Jamaica, a one-person detail was enough to ensure his security.

One thing I found interesting while I was in Jamaica was how little interest African-Americans had in the Caribbean. Slavery was abolished in Jamaica in 1838 and the former slaves very quickly developed a sense of nationhood, established indigenous organs of government and a private business community, and made the British administrative framework work for them. That contributed to the emergence of a largely self-confident civil society that I found admirable. The two and half million Jamaicans were 97 percent black; Libyan, Syrian, Egyptian Copts, and Asian minorities made up the remaining population along with a smattering of Caucasians, mostly those with ties to the United Kingdom who stayed on after Jamaica became independent in 1962 and were able to find a place in the distinct culture of the island.

With a few major exceptions, blacks largely dominated the nation's social hierarchy. Many were very well educated and prepared to move into leadership positions across a broad range of professions including business and government administration. It was my view that some African Americans may have sensed that in some ways Jamaicans were a step or two ahead of the curve on a playing field that is not level across the Americas. This may explain why they constituted only a small fragment of the massive flow of foreign visitors drawn to the island.

In contrast, I found Colin Powell a prime example of a Jamaican who immigrated to the United States and had become successful. He and his wife Alma visited the country several times while I was there and made headlines each time. I reminded him of the fact that I first met him in Warsaw, Poland in 1972 when he was a member of a group of visiting White House Fellows. He was assigned to one of the two agencies in which Casper Weinberger was either director or cabinet secretary. It is interesting that sixteen years later Weinberger was President Reagan's defense secretary, which may have been a factor in Powell's becoming the first African American chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, another example of being in the right place at the right time. General Powell was deputy advisor for National Security when he visited Jamaica shortly after Hurricane Gilbert crashed across the island. I subsequently sent him a photograph of the two of us at

the press briefing I arranged for him at Kingston Airport to discuss U.S. recovery assistance prior to his return to Washington. He graciously autographed it and sent it back to me with a brief note. The Powells remain widely admired in their homeland.

In addition to tourism, which generates half the island's income and provides a quarter of all jobs in Jamaica, mining bauxite ore is the island's second largest industry. Annual export earnings from bauxite exceeded half a billion dollars during the years I served there. It was, and today still is, the fourth or fifth largest bauxite producing nation in the world and ranks fourth or fifth in total known reserves of the ore. Those two sectors of the economy are the overwhelmingly dominant components of its gross domestic product. Bauxite, however, looms large in my mind for a reason that has nothing to do with economics and a lot to do with the 1960 film *Dr. No*, the first to introduce Ian Fleming's James Bond, agent 007, to moviegoers.

I saw the film for the first time while still in high school and sat spellbound through two back-to-back screenings. Much of the movie, I learned thirty years later, was filmed in Jamaica. Ian Fleming had a house on Jamaica's north coast between Ocho Rios and Montego Bay, near Noel Coward's residence. We visited both of their fairly modest homes on a tour of the north coast that did not include the homes of singer Johnny Cash and KFC founder Col. Harlan Sanders who also spent considerable time on the island.

It may have been Fleming himself who suggested that the large and rather unsightly bauxite plant located further east along the north coast could serve to depict the exterior of Dr. No's laboratory. It appeared in the film as an ominously imposing structure rather than the eyesore it really is in broad daylight. In another scene, Bond pulls aside a woman who is snapping pictures of him at a party and claims to be a press photographer. He gruffly asks her, "Who do you work for?" Seeing the film again after almost thirty years in Jamaica, the first words that popped into my head were, *The Daily Gleaner*. And that is exactly what she said. Where else would a press photographer in Jamaica possibly have worked back then? Cartons of Red Stripe beer, a popular Jamaican brew in the U.S. appear in another scene and the highly visible and well known residence of the nation's governor general is in yet another, but for me the key link between *Dr. No* and Jamaica will always be bauxite.

In all, we greatly enjoyed serving and living in Jamaica and we also enjoyed the company of the Jamaicans we encountered. We hosted a number of representational functions at our home with dozens of writers, artists, academicians, government officials, and business people, one of whom was the head of an insurance company who had season tickets for the Miami Dolphins professional football team in the National Football League. He would just fly up on Sunday mornings, attend the games in the afternoon or at night, spend the nights in Miami, and jet home on Mondays. He was well enough off to be able to do that year after year.

We also found rewarding that our diplomatic status allowed us to pay the island rate for tourist accommodations at most of Jamaica's coastal resorts. With the island only 250 miles in length and hardly fifty miles at its widest, we could toss bags into the car and

easily drive to the main tourist destinations of Port Antonio, Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, and Negril, all no more than a ninety-minute to three-hour drive from our house. There we checked into all-inclusive hotels for about fifty U.S. dollars per person per day. That covered almost everything including accommodations, meals, drinks, entertainment, snacks, Ms. Pac Man video games, and water activities such as snorkeling and parasailing. It was a rare weekend when we were not out and around somewhere along the coast. If not at an all-inclusive, groups of us would rent ocean-front homes that offered staff, including cooks who prepared great dinners. Life for an American Foreign Service officer in Jamaica was not bad.

After Ambassador Sotirhos left for Greece, he was replaced by another political appointee, insurance magnate Glen Holden, a California multi-millionaire who—no surprise—was a major contributor to Republican candidates for local and national office. At one time he revealed that the assets of the Holden Group exceeded those of all eleven Jamaican insurance companies combined. I did not know enough to judge whether that was significant or not, but it sounded impressive. He had also made a name for himself as a polo player and he transported several of his horses to Jamaica for matches against teams on the island. Needless to say, no one else in the U.S. embassy brought horses along with them to post and none engaged in the sport. All of us were clearly out of his league, mere hourly wage earners from his perspective. I was just glad that he did not seek press coverage for his matches.

Holden was a good ambassador to work with, however. He appreciated the skills and talents the staff had and sought our assistance to master the nuances of U.S.-Jamaica diplomatic relations about which he knew little when he arrived in country. He quickly mastered the economic aspects of the relationship, and that led to a dispute with the FSO he selected to be his DCM. In a real clash of egos, Holden regarded him as someone whose views about economic matters undermined his own perceptions. He shared that assessment with the team from the State Department's Office of Inspector General that was in Kingston to inspect embassy operations. The team leader suggested the assistant secretary for Latin American Affairs visit Kingston. The DCM's assignment was subsequently curtailed, but I recall the ambassador did not want it revealed that he sought the termination. A bit of a know-it-all, but otherwise a competent officer, the DCM's career was sidelined as a result of the curtailment.

I learned about all this from the assistant secretary of state for Latin American Affairs who I first met when I entered the Foreign Service. She had a stellar career in USIA starting out as a Civil Service employee, but I doubt she had ever been called upon to drop the hatchet on a colleague. Soon after her arrival in Jamaica she asked if we could meet privately and revealed the reason for her visit. I spent more than an hour with her considering the ways that her unenviable task could best be handled and she asked that I not share our conversation with others.

When a day or two later the DCM announced that he had decided to curtail his assignment at a reception held at the ambassador's residence, other guests were stunned. He explained he was doing so reluctantly in light of some personal reasons. The

ambassador then thanked him for his good service, said he understood why he reached his decision and added that he would be much missed at the embassy. In retrospect, I must admit that I did not regret his departure and I doubt anyone else really missed him all that much. The lesson I learned from that episode is that life in the Foreign Service can come close to replicating Donald Trump's television show "The Apprentice." Ambassadors, however, do not shout out, "You're fired!" Dismissals are handled somewhat more discreetly than that, but the result is the same.

One of the more unusual functions I performed as PAO in Kingston was to play Santa Claus for three years while Holden was our ambassador. That happened because he wanted me to serve as president of the Jamaica-America Society, a group that had been in and out of existence several times over previous decades. My official obligations as PAO kept me busy enough. There was no way I could turn the ambassador down. And it was clear to me that ultimately I could remake the organization into something that was more than a social club for members of Jamaica's elite to hobnob with embassy officials.

I gathered some hard-core members from its earlier incarnations and we cobbled together a productive agenda for the organization that included an annual event to provide some of the poorest children in Kingston with small gifts at Christmas. Joining me as a new member of the society's board was New Yorker Ken Sherwood who had been a member of the New York Athletic Commission that controlled professional boxing in the state. A Harlem businessman, he settled in Jamaica several years earlier and held the Burger King franchises for the island; he owned two restaurants and planned to open a third. Ken was a hard charger, full of ideas and ready to make them realities. Sad to say, he was murdered in the living room of his home in Kingston at the end of July in 1989 by his gardener who strangled him with a hose after an argument over an unauthorized drive in Ken's Mercedes-Benz.

Before that occurred, we had come up with plans for an event that would have Santa Claus drop in at the governor general's residence by helicopter and distribute gifts the society had collected from donors to several hundred children gathered there from orphanages in the city. It was quite a dramatic event and Santa just loved making his grand entrance at so prominent a venue in so dramatic a manner. Santa, joined by Ambassador Holden and Jamaican Governor General Sir Florizel Glasspole, Queen Elizabeth's representative in Jamaica; the nation was a member of the British Commonwealth. A photo of the three of us subsequently appeared on the front page of *The Daily Gleaner* and television covered the event each year.

In 1989, after Oliver Clarke's wife informed us that she planned to remodel and occupy the home we lived in after our lease expired that summer, we had to scramble to find another. I believe she dropped that on us at a reception we hosted in the house. Before her marriage to Oliver, she was an American Foreign Service officer. After her resignation she remained in the U.S. for some time and was not living in Jamaica when I arrived. I was thus surprised to meet her months later shortly after she relocated to Kingston. Until then I thought Oliver was a bachelor. It was unfortunate for us but completely understandable why she wanted our house as her own. Located at the upper end of

Millsborough Crescent, the house was on a well-secluded one-acre lot on a hill above the city. I recently learned that the Clarkes still live in what they must have made a truly impressive residence. The renovation had not been completed by the time we left Jamaica so we did not see what changes they made to our home.

For seventy-seven days after Hurricane Gilbert, however, my entire street was without electric power. Millsborough, in fact, was the last street in Kingston to have power restored. In the interim, the embassy installed a generator that provided power eight hours a day from six to ten am and from six to ten pm. I was thus able to survive fairly well over more than two and a half months. Temperatures at night in the fall were quite tolerable without air conditioning. Unfortunately, without air conditioner noise, the barking of dozens of dogs whose owners relied on them for personal security resonated throughout the neighborhood night after night. Listening to them for hours on end was unsettling and provided no answers to the question, "Why do dogs bark?"

I learned early on that Jamaicans like to party with Red Stripe beer, rum punch, and reggae or salsa music blaring forth from ten-feet-high stacks of speakers set up on the lawn or patio. Parties generally got going around eleven at night and continued without a pause in the music until between three and four am the following morning. I must admit that we enjoyed such parties from time to time and do not recall suffering greatly from a lack of sleep because of the noise. I guess at some point we were able to tune out the dogs and the reggae when we were tired enough and just dropped off to sleep.

Sylvia and I looked for another house in early fall of 1989. After an extended search, we wound up leasing Ken Sherwood's home, the one in which he was murdered. Stepping for the first time into the dining room where his body had lain on the floor sent a chill through us, but ultimately what happened there did not dampen our interest in what otherwise was a very fine home. The four-bedroom house was on a nicely landscaped one-acre lot with a number of fruit trees and a swimming pool thirteen feet deep at the end with the diving board.

After our tours in Jamaica we returned to Washington in the fall of 1992. Looking back at my assignment in Jamaica, I assessed it as being a great place to serve, but the time was wrong. How I managed to get through four years there without USIA's office of inspections coming down to take a look at my operation I do not know. With posts generally inspected every three years, I guess I was just lucky. But I had to ask myself, what was I doing in Kingston on a balmy evening in October 1990 watching the reunification of Germany on a large screen TV at a reception in the garden of the German ambassador's residence? While I thoroughly enjoyed my tour in Jamaica, I would much rather have been immersed in East European affairs than observing one of the culminating events of the Cold War on TV as I sipped rum punch under swaying palm trees on a semi-tropical island in the Caribbean seemingly half a world away.

Just six months after my arrival in Jamaica, developments in Yugoslavia began to command attention. Its government, under the leadership of Serb nationalist Slobodan Milosevic, forcibly stripped Kosovo of its autonomy in March 1989. That event ended

the Titoist vision of Yugoslavia as home for all its peoples, a lesson that was not lost on the other republics of the nation. With the fall of the Berlin Wall that November and the collapse of the Soviet Union shortly thereafter, Yugoslavia rapidly disintegrated as nationalists in its republics cited Serbia as a threat to their status as national republics. Croatia and Slovenia declared themselves independent in late 1990, which was followed by the outbreak of armed hostilities between what remained of the Yugoslav National Army [JNA] dominated by Serb forces and forces loyal to Croatia and Slovenia in June 1991.

The end of Yugoslavia occurred when the European Union recognized the independence of Croatia and Slovenia in January 1992 and the UN Protective Force [UNPROFOR] entered Croatia in March to enforce a peace agreement concluded in January. In April, however, Serb forces entered Bosnia to ensure that the republic would not break away from what remained of Yugoslavia and over the next three years laid much of the republic to waste. With the spread of the war to Bosnia, UNPROFOR expanded to about thirty thousand personnel in the former Yugoslavia to maintain peace and feed the population. It proved to be ineffective in maintaining peace, however, and the war in Bosnia continued for more than three years.

The time had come to bid Jamaica farewell. Three years after the fall of the iron curtain, I was once again hoping to implement USIA program objectives in East Europe and the former Soviet Union to help reshape the post-communist politics, governance, and economies of those nations and the ones that emerged after the death of Yugoslavia.

WASHINGTON, 1992–1994

Months before we left Jamaica, the Latin America division offered me the opportunity to serve as PAO in Ecuador. On the plus side, it was another leadership position, but Ecuador, a small nation straddling the equator on the west coast of the continent, had little geopolitical significance. I also had no interest in becoming a Latin America hand at that stage in my career, and I did not have Spanish, which is essential in Latin America. My career manager insisted that I remain abroad for my next assignment, but there were no posts that had openings appropriate for both Sylvia and me anywhere in Europe at the time.

Developments in Eastern Europe after 1989 triggered dramatic changes in USIA program activity in the region. The Bush Administration's Support for East European Democracies [SEED] program made several hundred million dollars available for program activities to support the emergence of governance under the rule of law, independent media, tolerance and respect for human rights, and academic and professional exchange programs. Just weeks before I left Jamaica I was offered the job of deputy director of the office USIA established to manage and disperse SEED funds to USIS posts in former communist countries.

The director of the office, who was on the NSC staff at the White House during the Iran-Contra affair and previously worked with the Reagan Administration's counter-

propaganda program Project Truth implemented by USIA to combat Soviet disinformation efforts, was assigned to oversee the Agency's disbursement of SEED funds. Senior USIA Foreign Service officials were not pleased with his previous links to intelligence work and his lack of experience with public diplomacy and had that responsibility turned over to the European division. The man resigned the office so I returned to Washington without an assignment.

USIA COUNTRY AFFAIRS OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE UNION REPRESENTATIVE

I initially became the country affairs officer in the same position I held a decade earlier, but under markedly different circumstances. A key challenge was to monitor how USIA's program offices responded to field posts' proposals for the use of SEED funds as post-Cold War situations around them shifted. PAOs in the field turned to me for assistance to ensure that new proposals were not road blocked by program offices unprepared to do things differently in response to altered circumstances.

I did not find my second tour as a country affairs officer much of a challenge after having served as a PAO myself. I was thus receptive to the suggestion that I consider becoming the USIA representative on the American Foreign Service Association [AFSA] board of directors. Several months earlier while I was still in Jamaica, AFSA won the election to determine which federal employee union would represent FSIOs in labor-management relations. As an AFSA member in good standing my entire career, I had cast a ballot in the election from Kingston.

Late in 1992 in a corridor at USIA headquarters I encountered Bud Hensgen who entered the Foreign Service as a member of my class in 1970. It was he who spearheaded the election effort at USIA, not because he was much concerned about labor-management issues, but because a State Department friend of his convinced him that AFSA, which represented FSOs at the State Department, should represent FSIOs at USIA. The election results made clear that by then a majority of USIA's FSIOs considered that American Federation of Government Employees [AFGE] with its focus on the interests Civil Service employees, inadequate to continue to represent FSIOs' concerns with management.

Having successfully presided over the election Bud decided to retire and leave concerns about the future of AFSA at USIA to someone else. When we met, just days before his retirement, he encouraged me to become the one to address them. Looking back, I am not sure why I felt that was a responsibility I should undertake. I had not previously done more than pay my AFSA dues. And I considered labor-management relations the work of trade unionists, of which I was not one. But AFSA's victory demonstrated that there were real divisions between USIA's FSIOs and its Civil Service staff.

Bud assured me that there was a core group of FSIOs who worked with him on the election that would bring me up to speed on issues they considered important for AFSA to address. Few, however, had any intention of becoming more actively involved in

setting up the AFSA office at USIA afterward. That left the task largely to me and an AFSA staff member from the office at State who was reluctant to be loaned to USIA. Not much thought had been given to the help needed to get the AFSA office up and running at USIA. There were maybe half a dozen officers who were ready to pitch in whenever they found some slack in their schedules, but that was about all.

After negotiations with management, I was allowed to claim twenty hours a week for union work. If I had been able to serve full time as AFSA representative I could have had Foreign Service time-in-class limits waived for the period I worked in that capacity. The Foreign Service culture, however, is one of full time engagement in the advancement of U.S. foreign policy objectives. Part-time involvement does not cut it, which effectively took me out of the running for promotion for two years. Furthermore, USIA management regarded me as a trade union activist and initially dealt with me as if I were an adversary, which made me very uncomfortable. And I must admit that I was not all that impressed with the office of personnel staff who dealt with employee unions either. As time went on, however, each side gained a more complete understanding of the other and we got along well at a critical juncture in the agency's history.

The Clinton Administration under the leadership of Vice President Al Gore had just launched the National Performance Review [NPR], a program intended "to make government work better and cost less," a catchy slogan for an effort that proved to be no more than marginal at best. All federal agencies were invited to propose new ideas on how best to get their jobs done and encourage employees to think outside the box with regard to altering existing administrative regulations that served as barriers to achieving that objective. They were given broad latitude to propose sweeping modifications if the changes contributed to that goal.

USIA Director Joe Duffey declared that reinvention at the agency would be spearheaded by AFSA and AFGE. The employee organizations would serve as the channel through which proposals for change were delivered to his office, and decisions for changes would be reached through compromise between the two organizations and agency leadership. USIA employees quickly demonstrated commitment to reinvention objectives and developed pioneering ideas that eliminated hierarchy based on personal grade and rank and structured existing hierarchical organization units as partnership teams. That approach was ultimately applied only to USIA's International Information Programs [IIP] division. It was implemented with varying degrees of success until USIA was consolidated into the State Department in 1999 and for a few years thereafter. While FSIOs and Civil Service personnel clashed frequently over proposals for change, AFGE and AFSA at USIA were able to hammer out compromises acceptable to both sides.

Except for senior geographic and program office directors, my AFGE counterpart and I probably met with Joe Duffey and his deputy, Penn Kemble, more frequently than any other personnel in the agency over a six month period during the reinvention process. I came to realize at that time that the director was not committed to advancing the goals of the agency after the end of the Cold War because he considered its budget a resource that could be better applied domestically to the education of inner city youth, for example.

Duffey was not alone in considering USIA a Cold War relic. Many in Congress and several prominent media commentators also shared that view telling us, in effect, "You won the Cold War. Here's your gold watch; now get the hell out of here." Unfortunately there was no gold watch, just budget cuts and proposals either to abolish the agency or consolidate it with the State Department. I was not alone in finding that somewhat ironic as we worked toward increasing the effectiveness of agency public diplomacy programs in reshaping the former Soviet Union and recently liberated Warsaw Pact and former Yugoslav nations. As early as 1993, the eventual termination of USIA as an independent federal agency already appeared to me to be inevitable.

Al Gore awarded a silver hammer to USIA to hang on the wall in the hall outside the newly created IIP division as evidence of effective reinvention. It was one of about fourteen hundred handed to government units considered to have made the most effective contribution to government reinvention. As is turned out, however, the U.S. government was not reinvented. Much of what passed for reinvention was subsequently undone and NPR did not survive much beyond the first Clinton Administration, which claimed that NPR had saved taxpayers billions of dollars. At USIA, however, the commitment of federal employees to the objectives of reinvention was real, and the employee unions played key roles in making the process result in substantive changes that lasted several years.

In my union capacity between 1993 and 1995, I was actively involved both in the development of IIP and later I became the first leader of its Democracy and Human Rights Programs team [IIP/DHR]. The development of IIP and the negotiations that involved the employee unions and agency leadership were, looking back, not worth the time and effort they took to achieve. And the team concept, as wonderful as it was in principle, heightened, to some extent, prevailing tensions between the Foreign Service and the Civil Service.

As to government reinvention, I discovered through discussions at several conferences with union representatives and senior administrators from other agencies that there wasn't really much commitment elsewhere in the federal government to changing the way things worked. Careerists paid lip service to the objectives of NPR but the prevailing attitude was, "Our bureaucratic operations aren't broken so let's not rush into trying to change things." Promoting change, while doing virtually nothing to implement change became the prevailing tendency across the government.

USIA was a little more receptive to change because Duffey, who was the director of the State Department Cultural Affairs office when it was incorporated into USIA in the Carter Administration, did not appear to care much for the U.S. Information Agency's mission. He saw it as a costly and largely unproductive appendage to U.S. foreign policy. In fact, Duffey spoke to me in private about having Foreign Service officers serve in domestic assignments as teachers in inner city schools, which would be a better use of their skills and talents than developing public diplomacy activities in post-communist

societies. It was because he held the role and function of USIA in low regard that he was willing to entertain ideas about restructuring the organization.

During the reinvention process, it became clear to me that State Department and USIA Foreign Service officers generally had a sense of being anointed and that Civil Service employees, who were graduated from the same colleges and universities they were, who lived in the same neighborhoods they did, and sent their children to the same schools were in some vague indefinable way less worthy than FSIOs. What set them apart was that the entry process for the Foreign Service is highly competitive and officers are available for service anywhere around the globe in a wide variety of assignments, many of them in dangerous places, whereas Civil Service employees often spent an entire career essentially in the same job working only in Washington and its suburbs. A good number of Foreign Service officers had no reservation in sharing the view that this distinction made them superior to their Civil Service colleagues. Admittedly some Civil Service employees were rigidly bureaucratic and focused on their narrow slivers of responsibilities as if the fate of the republic hinged on their actions, which at times frustrated those standing in line for their attention.

FSIOs that faced difficulties serving overseas because of medical or other problems were able to transfer into Civil Service jobs without difficulty and continue their employment with the State Department or USIA in domestic assignments. Yet there was considerable antagonism among FSOs when Civil Service personnel, some of whom worked in similar challenging and rewarding jobs, sought to serve in a Foreign Service assignment overseas. I found troubling the uneasy relationship in Washington between Civil and Foreign Service personnel which was heightened by the result of the election that authorized AFSA to represent the Foreign Service in labor-management relations. In a small way, I used my AFSA leadership position to try and change Civil Service perceptions of the Foreign Service by endorsing the applications of several Civil Service employees seeking FSIO assignments. I hoped that would lessen the sense of separation between the two groups although I think my effort was not seen as making much of a difference in their attitudes.

I did have one brief break during my time as a country affairs officer and union representative when I traveled to Warsaw, Poland as a member of USIA's foreign media support team that was appended to the White House press office for President Clinton's visit there in April 1994. The four-day trip was my first return to Warsaw since I left in 1973, and I found the changes in the four years since the fall of the iron curtain were simply enormous. The severe drabness of life under communism was lifted away with the refurbishing of existing buildings all across town and the construction of numerous new ones and by an exponential increase in vehicular traffic. In the mid-1970s, horse carts still rumbled through the center of the city; they were ancient history two decades later.

PAO, SKOPJE, MACEDONIA 1994

Just days after I got back to the office after the Warsaw interlude the Macedonia country affairs officer who occupied the office next to mine asked me in passing whether I would

be interested in a brief assignment in Macedonia. She did not give me a hint why she asked and I off-handedly said I would, not foreseeing circumstances that made the prospect likely over the near term. A few days later she informed me that the European division intended to curtail the current PAO's assignment early for inadequate performance. I was asked to replace her until her successor completed language training four months later.

The PAO's inability to manage a USIS operation needlessly demoralized her fully competent staff, which undermined the effectiveness of post programs and their implementation. It was a sad ending, but several years later personnel assigned the same FSIO to another PAO posting with similar consequences unfortunately. With my previous service in Yugoslavia, interest in the job and the enthusiasm of the chief of mission in Skopje about my availability, the decision to pull her out was a foregone conclusion. That I did not speak Macedonian was not a problem; during the Tito era Serbo-Croatian was taught in all schools and almost everyone in Macedonia was familiar with the language.

I had almost no time to consider the pluses and minuses of the job and only a general orientation to circumstances on the ground. I dealt daily with posts and USIA programs in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia, but knew very little about current developments in Macedonia. I did, however, know the chief of mission who had been assigned there just a few months earlier and was impressed with him. We had served together on an interagency task force that he chaired in the State Department Operations Center regarding trade policy with and sanctions against Serbia.

Days later I was on a jet bound for Macedonia. I found serving as PAO Skopje to be a very challenging, interesting, and rewarding interim assignment. Taking the job meant that my service as USIA's AFSA representative was interrupted, but by then a full-time professional AFSA staffer was based at USIA to take care of administrative issues, and several other members offered to fill in for me on the AFSA board during my overseas absence.

Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, and the U.S. recognized it as an independent state early in 1994. The name of the country, however, raised hackles in Greece, an ally of the U.S. as a member of NATO. The Greeks consider Macedonia a part of Greece and object to another nation calling itself by that name. They proposed a compromise suggesting the nation be called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or FYROM, an awkward designation to which Macedonia objected. The issue has more or less been resolved now that the F and Y have been dropped leaving ROM as the Republic of Macedonia. The early contention over its name explains to some extent why the U.S. diplomatic presence in Skopje initially was deemed a mission and not an embassy during my tenure.

The temporary quarters of the U.S. mission occupied two floors of a rather unimpressive modern four- or five-story office building near the center of the capital. USIS was in the same facility the Skopje branch operation of P&C Belgrade occupied during the Tito era.

It was located in a ground level office suite in one of the contemporary high-rise structures built after the 1963 earthquake. Their semi-circular arrangement symbolized the wall around the original center of the city. In addition to the PAO, the staff numbered seven Macedonian employees, most of them veterans from the Tito era. During my Belgrade tour more than a decade earlier, I had met them briefly during stopovers in Skopje.

One of the most uncomfortable experiences in my career was the week of overlap prior to the departure of the PAO I was replacing. Coping with her tears and denials of any mal-, mis- or nonfeasance was a tedious and almost unbearable chore. Listening to her rationale for her leadership shortcomings was embarrassing. It was immediately clear that my primary task was to do whatever was necessary to restore the self-confidence of the post's professional staff that she had driven out of them. I was able to do that because I was aware of the skills and talents they brought to their jobs and demonstrated respect for those capabilities.

I was friendly, informal, and related comfortably with each of them. They soon learned that I was easy to approach and I sought their views about how to attain the goals and objectives of the USIS country plan. That was a document prepared by all posts annually to provide Washington a listing of specific activities they intended to implement and the tools required to do the job, including grants for academic exchanges, visits by American experts to address country plan themes, and publications, video, and audio products to be added to the library. The plans also served as the basis for determining the level of funding the agency would provide for posts' budgets.

I was pleased that my leadership restored morale and stimulated an increase in staff productivity almost immediately after I assumed responsibility for running the post. In particular, I encouraged the recently hired media assistant and IT professional to unleash their talents to apply cutting edge—as of twenty years ago—digital communication technology to post activities. That included delivery via email of the USIA daily press summary to all media in the country, leading government officials and mission staff, and development of a web site for the U.S. mission. Just a few years earlier, the summary was called the Wireless File transmitted to posts via out-dated teletype machines on spools of paper. Selected items had to be cut into page-length segments, photo-copied, and delivered by the USIS staff driver to the limited number of sites he could reach before noon. Bad weather sometimes caused the transmission to be garbled generating useless random strings of letters, numerals, and symbols.

I spent a considerable amount of time working with the chief of mission to encourage VOA to establish a Macedonian language division. Interestingly enough, the post's press assistant, who married an American he met while she was serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Macedonia, wound up in Washington and was hired as the first director of VOA's Macedonian language service several years later.

The USIS staff and I worked well together conducting programs to use all the resources the agency had available for post-communist redevelopment, primarily SEED money. I

researched numerous proposals for grants and provided resources to a number of institutions dealing with media, academic exchanges, professional exchanges, speaker programs, governance under the rule of law, and the promotion of civic education. I thrived on being PAO in Skopje, brief as the experience was. It allowed me to demonstrate that I could walk in on short notice and turn an East European country's USIS program around.

I thoroughly enjoyed my four months in Skopje although rattling around the four-bedroom PAO residence as winter approached put me in the mood to wrap things up and get back home. Before then I had a number of opportunities to travel around Macedonia. One allowed me to visit towns close to the capital while serving as a monitor for the nation's parliamentary elections. As I prepared to depart, the chief of mission asked if I would be interested in becoming his deputy when the mission in Skopje was designated an embassy. My response was positive of course, but he was assigned elsewhere before that happened.

USIA, LEADER OF IIP DEMOCRACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM

Returning to Washington toward the end of November 1994 I became the first leader of the democracy and human rights team in USIA's newly created IIP division that was designated a team-based structure. It abandoned rigid bureaucratic hierarchy in an attempt to streamline coordination and improve the provision of support to overseas posts that depended on Washington to gather the expert speakers and develop support materials required to fulfill country plan objectives. Team members were empowered to function independently with overseas posts to a previously unknown extent.

I was leader of the team, but other members could communicate directly with field offices seeking program assistance related to the democratization of governance and support for human rights. There was no need to clear things through the hierarchy as in the traditional structure of USIA and State, which led to certain difficulties. While I think that it was not a bad idea to reduce bureaucratic rigidity, I was not enthralled by the job or having to cope with the nuances of team culture that allowed team members to act without my knowledge. I admit they were pretty good about letting me know after the fact, but that sometimes put me in the position of having to modify or undo what they did, which was not the most effective way to use time and energy and did not help team morale. After USIA was consolidated into the State Department the team approach prevailed for several more years but then it was replaced by the traditional way of doing things.

USIA, PAO SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Less than a year after being named IIP team chief, my work there and my involvement with AFSA ended when the European division sought me out to become PAO in Bosnia. The administration was anticipating negotiations to end four years of conflict, the worst Europe had experienced since World War II. Even though a venue for the negotiations had not yet been found and the talks not yet scheduled, Assistant Secretary of State for

European Affairs Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who spearheaded the effort to launch them, requested that USIA have someone on the ground in Sarajevo as soon as possible. He wanted efforts to be made to increase public receptivity to democratic governance under the rule of law and promote tolerance, freedom of movement, and the development of market economics. In his view, a peace accord acceptable to the U.S. would require Bosnia's postwar leaders to take actions necessary to implement those objectives.

The UN, with more than thirty thousand peacekeepers deployed in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia, was unable to end the Balkans conflict after four years of open hostilities during which more than a hundred thousand people perished and several hundred thousand refugees fled to Western Europe, the U.S., and elsewhere. By mid-1995, however, following the massacre in Srebrenica where forces of Serb General Ratko Mladic killed eight thousand men and boys overnight, all parties on the ground had had enough. Holbrooke stepped forward at that juncture and organized the U.S. effort to bring the conflict to an end. He succeeded by arranging for the warring parties and an array of U.S. government agencies and interested international organizations to gather for peace negotiations.

The talks took place at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio over a three-week period during which the parties cobbled together an agreement that all sides ultimately accepted. The site of the negotiations was the Hope Center, named not for a desire accompanied by the expectation of fulfillment, but for the internationally known comedian Bob. It housed innumerable objects related to his career, mostly captioned photos. Prior to my departure for Sarajevo I traveled to Dayton for the opening of discussions with U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia John Menzies, one of the few FSIOs elevated to that distinguished rank. The eight-hour drive from Washington to Dayton in Menzies' car with him behind the wheel for the entire trip gave us all the time we needed to consider the changes the administration anticipated would follow in Bosnia after the talks and how USIA programs could contribute to achieving them. I volunteered to drive, but he insisted on remaining at the wheel for the entire trip saying he needed a break from his life in a clamshell at the embassy where he slept on a cot next to his desk and was surrounded by four automatic weapons-bearing security guards who accompanied him whenever he left the building.

Soon after we arrived in Dayton, I learned there was no plan for a formal opening of the talks. Organizers scrambled to find an announcer to introduce the participants in the negotiations. They turned to me under their assumption that my language ability would have the names of Slobodan Milosevic, Alija Izetbegovic, Franjo Tudjman, and Wolfgang Ischinger, among others, roll trippingly off my tongue. CNN and other international media were on site to cover the event, and the following day after I flew back to Washington, colleagues and friends told me they were impressed when they heard my voice introducing participants as they walked into the room and took their places at the negotiation table. That event may have constituted the fifteen minutes of the fame Andy Warhol said everybody would have at some point during their lives. I played no further role in Dayton.

I left for Sarajevo a few days later having had brief opportunities to meet all of the key administration participants in Dayton. Dropping into Sarajevo in November 1995 was like stepping into a hell hole. A very charming nineteenth-century city that prospered after the Austro-Hungarian Empire drove out the Ottomans in 1878, it was almost totally devastated. Water was largely unavailable and entire neighborhoods were without electricity for months at a time. With the approach of winter, there was only enough gas to heat half the city every other night. The effects of the war were visible everywhere.

Bullet pockmarks marred the facades of buildings all across town. Most of them also had the glass blown out of their windows. While ground floor display windows of commercial establishments were replaced with plywood, windows of office buildings and apartment houses were covered with several million dollars worth of blue plastic supplied by and labeled with the UN High Commission for Refugees logo. There was no illumination on the streets at night. Every several yards Sarajevo Roses were embedded in streets and sidewalks marking sites where mortar shells randomly dropped in by Serbs from the hills above the city had detonated and sometimes killed people on the street. Characteristic patterns of the holes made by the detonation were filled with red resin and could be found on streets and sidewalks everywhere in town.

The Holiday Inn, which appeared in media photos around the globe, was almost totally devastated, but had a few undamaged rooms and it remained open during and after the conflict. I felt bad having visitors check into the inn after dark on a snowy winter evening. The generators provided little light and plywood covered large areas in the lobby that were damaged by rocket and mortar rounds. It was a rather eerie experience for first time visitors, some of whom I am sure would have preferred to head back out to the airport rather than spend the night in town except for the fact that the airport terminal was totally unusable and surrounded by sandbags. Armed blue helmeted UN peacekeepers controlled air arrivals and departures from positions out in the open on the tarmac but only during daylight hours. The eight-story *Oslobodjenje* (Liberation) newspaper building on the road out to the airport was reduced to rubble around its central elevator core and other large buildings along the route were heavily damaged.

I arrived from Zagreb on a cargo plane loaned to the UN by the Ukrainian air force that earlier had been a Soviet military aircraft. Everyone except me was wearing a flak jacket. As we descended all passengers took them off and sat on them in anticipation of Serbian snipers firing at the plane from below as its altitude decreased over Serb dominated territory on the approach to the runway. That did not happen, but the question that repeatedly crossed my mind was, “What have you gotten yourself into?” I also thought about asking where I could get a flak jacket but never did.

Getting out of Bosnia was not an easy task either. The UN operated a service between Zagreb, Croatia, and Sarajevo sardonically referred to by the international community as Maybe Airlines, because maybe you would have a seat on its flights or maybe you would not. You might be told that you were number forty-seven on the waiting list for tomorrow’s flight, but when you got to the airport the passengers waiting to board would not have filled the plane. Consequently, regardless of how far down your name was on

the waiting list, you went out to the airport. Needless to say there were also times when you would be left at the gate as the flight lifted off for Zagreb, which happened to me on one occasion.

The embassy was in a large private home that belonged to a senior Communist Party official less than a decade earlier. It was staffed by seven American Foreign Service officers and a larger number of Bosnians. Until I arrived, all of the Americans lived in the embassy and slept on cots in their offices. The cessation of hostilities that was in force when negotiations in Dayton started continued so the security officer authorized me to become the first American assigned to Sarajevo to reside off the compound. I moved into a local rooming house the day of my arrival where I occupied one of the three beds in the room; a number of international journalists and NGO staffers rotating through town slept in the other ones. That was home for three weeks until Thanksgiving when I returned to Washington for a week.

In addition, I was even authorized to walk to work while embassy vehicles transported local staff to and from their homes. I was warned to watch out for landmines in the park I crossed on my way to the embassy. It had been the remnant of a primeval forest just three years earlier, but all the trees in the park had been cut down for firewood, and it had become an urban vegetable garden with nothing growing in it in November but clumps of unappealing cabbages.

A few days after I arrived in Sarajevo, I went to Mostar with the ambassador for a meeting with Croatian authorities to assess their thoughts on the still ongoing Dayton peace talks. Mostar, with a population that exceeded a hundred thousand, was the Croatian population center of Bosnia, and it was even more destroyed than Sarajevo. The famous pedestrian bridge across the Neretva River constructed by the Ottomans in the mid-seventeenth century crashed into the river following explosions at both ends set off, according to the *New York Times*, by Croatian militia. Disturbing images of the event were broadcast on TV around the world. The UN replaced it with a temporary bridge, but it did not reduce the divide between the Bosniak and Croatian communities. I found that quite disheartening and wondered how things would work out on the ground even if the Dayton peace talks concluded successfully.

We learned on November 21 that agreement was reached among the negotiating parties. The Dayton Accords were to be formally signed in Paris several weeks later, and in my first weeks in country, I spent much time trying to convince media and leaders in civil society that full implementation of the provisions of the accords would bring permanent peace to Bosnia.

The USIS staff when I arrived consisted of two absolutely wonderful women who worked for the embassy while enduring numerous personal hardships throughout the war, but that did not prevent them from keeping their fingers on the pulse of Bosnian society. They knew personally many of the people who had been or would emerge as key players in Bosnia's media and political, cultural, and academic life. Their coolly rational and balanced assessments of developments around them provided me with invaluable

guidance in developing ideas about programs that I hoped would change views and attitudes of people who were considered potential leaders of civil society. Their perceptions of on-the-ground reality helped me prioritize the program activities USIS would implement in post-war Bosnia.

I flew back to Washington for Thanksgiving at home. In return for that brief break, however, I was called upon to head back to Sarajevo just a few days later, and wound up spending Christmas and New Years there. I moved into the apartment I leased from the sister of the husband of one of my staff members who owned and operated the Majestic, one of the better restaurants in town. Even now, hearing recordings by the Gypsy Kings which were played every night in the Majestic brings back memories of some wonderful meals under sometimes very strained and melancholic circumstances. Behind it stood a garage with a lovely apartment above it that was nicely furnished with contemporary leather couches and chairs by another brother. It had been vacant since he departed for Italy following the outbreak of the war. The brother became comfortably ensconced there and wrote that he did not intend to return, which made it possible for me to become its next tenant.

Located five minutes walking distances from the embassy, the apartment could not have been more convenient. Unfortunately, the stacks of attractive pullover sweaters he left behind were not my size and took up the space where I could have stored my suitcases. What was inconvenient, however, was bathing. Every other day when gas was piped into the half of the city the apartment was located in, I heated a pot of water on the stove and emptied it into a larger plastic tub and added an equal amount of cold tap water. That amounted to a few inches of lukewarm water, enough for a “sitz” bath. Squatting down in the tub, I scrubbed and rinsed off by tossing a pot of tap water over my shivering, hunkering self. On the days when gas was pumped to the other half of the city, the thermometer read forty-eight degrees in my apartment, which was also somewhat inconvenient. Reminding myself that if 150,000 other souls in Sarajevo could endure far more difficult circumstances over the past four years, I just gritted my teeth and went with the flow. Warmer weather was just a few months away and by April or May the supply of gas to the city was fully restored, a significant indication that things were getting back to normal. Not long afterward I was complaining about hot weather and no air conditioning, but reminded myself that you can’t have everything.

The director of USIA’s public opinion research office flew into Sarajevo with me after Thanksgiving. She was armed with an interagency-designed questionnaire that would be used to provide a snapshot survey of public attitudes toward the Dayton Agreement. It was intended to give the State Department and the administration some idea about current attitudes toward interethnic relations and public receptivity to changes in governance that the terms of the Dayton Peace Accords would mandate. Despite war-torn conditions across the country, we located an adequate number of university-educated public opinion researchers to help us. They had worked throughout the war providing public opinion data to international non-governmental organizations.

We were able to contract with them for a quick door-to-door, face-to-face series of interviews with several hundred Muslims (also called Bosniaks), Serbs, and Croats (the term Bosnian referred to the population of the country as a whole). We focused on people in key Bosnian cities, with a number large enough to constitute a credible statistical sample of the entire population. With damaged roads, bombed out bridges, uncertain telephone service, snowy winter weather, and less than certain personal security for pollsters, gathering, obtaining, and collating all the information was a major undertaking requiring long, circuitous drives into Sarajevo from outlying areas at all hours of the day.

The effort paid off nicely, however. The results of the poll were issued just a day or two before the signing in Paris of the Dayton Accords on December 14, 1995. I understand that they provided Ambassador Holbrooke and others in the Clinton Administration with an increased sense of confidence about the deployment to Bosnia of an international force of as many as sixty thousand military personnel. The poll indicated foreign soldiers would not encounter significant resistance anywhere in the country. That dramatically increased the prospect for the peaceful implementation of the reforms required by the Dayton agreement. Participants who fought inconclusively for almost four years had had enough and laid down their arms. As soon as the international force, composed of NATO-members' and other nations' militaries, began deployment to Bosnia the day after Christmas, not a single shot was fired against them on Bosnian soil.

Enough was enough. All involved were fed up with the war and its horrible consequences. People had literally burned park benches and the books off their shelves to keep warm in winter. Public parks became vegetable gardens. People went out with canteens to get water from central pumps because there was none flowing in their homes. I remember one of my staff members telling me how she came home one day and was very saddened to find a bullet hole in a container she was carrying on her back. Moments later she realized the sniper's bullet was meant for her.

In effect, then, to some extent all Bosnians were prepared to buy into the Dayton Peace Accords. On Christmas Eve, I attended midnight mass in Sarajevo's relatively modest Roman Catholic cathedral conducted by a Croatian bishop. His message encouraged tolerance, engagement in rebuilding, and acceptance of the fact that, as elsewhere around the world, there are different views and different religions in Bosnian society. He concluded that the resolution of conflicts among citizens should not be sought through violence. Leaders of the key religions in Bosnia echoed that message over the following days but not all their adherents were convinced.

There was considerable international media coverage of the service. As I was seated in the front pew, I found myself in a photo on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times* the following day. Was this perhaps my second shot at fifteen minutes of fame? It certainly did not feel that way. Spending Christmas away from home and family in a war-torn city was depressing and an experience I never intend to repeat. The ambassador asked me to join him for a ride out to the French PX [Post Exchange] to restock his liquor supply but that certainly did not compensate. With nothing else to do that Christmas I tagged along. For all I know, he may have been just as depressed as I was that day.

The Serbian Orthodox church was the strongest element of Serb nationalism and I think it has never diverged far from the notion that Islam constituted a threat both to the church and nation. At one point in the war a Serbian propaganda poster depicted a map of Europe with all nations colored green to convey the message that Serbia was a force standing against the Islamization of Europe. The Roman Catholic Church in Bosnia took its cues from the Vatican and its adherence to ideas of tolerance and acceptance of the fact that people of other ethnicities were fellow citizens.

At the same time, Middle Eastern Islamists were on the move in Bosnia and independent Bosnia's first president, Alija Izetbegovic, demonstrated that he was to some extent an Islamist. Nations of the Middle East, Saudi Arabia in particular, provided funding to arm Bosniaks during the war while most of Europe and the U.S. stood on the sidelines. After the conflict they also funded the construction of several large mosques in the country, which were intended more as monuments to their involvement in the war than as sanctuaries. What role religious institutions would play in the implementation of the Dayton Accords was therefore of some concern to the international community.

More immediately the presence of a number of Middle Eastern mujahideen who fought with Bosniaks also raised concerns. Some of them married Bosniak women with the intent of remaining in the country. Zenica, a city in central Bosnia, became home to a core of radical middle easterners trying to develop a foothold in the society. Several years later a number of them, some suspected of engaging in acts of terrorism, were deported. I am not sure what the situation is today, but in 1996 their presence posed a potential domestic political threat. Fortunately it did not become one of any real substance. While all the mujahideen had firearms, they never formed a militia and proved unable to become a political force in Bosnia.

The overarching core issue immediately after the signing ceremony in Paris was whether the Dayton Accords had any chance of minimizing interethnic hatreds in Bosnia, which it was impossible to eliminate, to a level at which institutions of civil society could be re-established and prevail. To that end, one of the first things I was involved in was developing a civic education program for Bosnian high schools at the request of Bosnian teachers who realized the country was on the cusp of major political and economic changes but had little comprehension of what that entailed.

They all knew about the conduct of elections, of course, but nothing about the substance of the electoral process, which in Yugoslavia was employed over four decades only to reaffirm communist authority. So the teachers were interested in learning about what was required to establish an environment in which election results did not degenerate into armed hostility against the parties elected form a government, but rather motivated unsuccessful parties to prepare to campaign for the next election as in Great Britain or the U.S. for example. To reach that point after what Bosnia had just endured would require much hard work. The mindset of an entire generation would have to be radically readjusted.

To advance that cause, USIA offered me the assistance of the Center for Civic Education [CCE] in Calabasas, California which had conducted civic education programs in American schools over the past several decades and was prepared to assist in promoting democratic norms through civics courses in Bosnia's secondary schools. Our objective was to teach teachers to teach the courses rather than trying to conduct civic education classes ourselves. In February 1996 CCE had a group of ten American teachers come out to train a group of Bosnian secondary school teachers from various regions of the country that we had hand picked. They focused on teaching principles of democratic governance, the rule of law and tolerance.

That initial small-scale program was enormously successful. It was not easy to arrange, however, when intercity communication in Bosnia was still very tenuous. You couldn't make phone calls between cities. Without cell phones or Internet widely available we had to venture out into the country and meet people face to face. We spent much time just touching base with people on the ground and this put a significant segment of the Bosnian population, its educators, into direct contact with American civilians, which I think was very useful and important in the immediate post-war period. I consider that the American teachers were real heroes, making pioneering efforts to deal with challenging circumstances in Bosnia's early post-war days.

The CCE program started with five American two-teacher teams working with Bosnian teachers from five cities. We tried to get Serbs involved and eventually were able to encourage two to join us in Sarajevo. They received a warm round of applause from the Sarajevo Bosniaks when they entered the training room several minutes after the program began. Getting into Sarajevo was a significant challenge for them early in 1996. After week-long training sessions our teams of trainers followed the teachers back into their classrooms where we found student receptivity to the ideas that their teachers were presenting just overwhelming. Their open-mindedness made the American teachers and me very optimistic about the prospects for introducing democratic governance in Bosnian politics right away. The kids got the point about a democratic electoral process involving tolerance of the view of others.

I anticipated back then that if every Bosnian secondary student learned about the basics of democratic governance under the rule of law, politics in Bosnia might look much different a decade later. Unfortunately, that proved not to be the case even though CCE continued to conduct an increasing number of civic education seminars across the country for the next several years including in the Serb Republic. It became clear that the electorate continued to vote for candidates on the basis of ethnicity rather than their commitment to governing Bosnia as a unified society. While I found that deeply disappointing, I was not naïve enough to regard that outcome as unexpected. There are forces in any society that motivate voting behavior more strongly than a few civics courses in high school. I just hope the substance of CCE's program remains part of the educational system in Bosnia. Someday a large enough segment of the electorate may get the message and vote accordingly.

Because we had such an active program and were expected to do so much, the agency provided me with two additional Foreign Service officers in February and later two contract employees to assist with arrangements for our rapidly expanding civic education activities across the nation. To get the staff out and about, we required additional transportation. The embassy had a motor pool that included a car USIA provided for the PAO's use. While at that time most agencies at the embassy acquired cars for the exclusive use of their representatives in the field, Sarajevo cars were community property. Just after I arrived in Sarajevo, a diplomatic security officer one day simply took the key to the USIS car off a hook on the pegboard in the embassy garage and drove a senior visiting State Department official to the airport in Zagreb; there were no commercial flights out of Bosnia then. Unfortunately the driver totaled the vehicle on the way back.

With the USIS car no longer part of the equation I sometimes found no key hanging on the board when I needed one. That frequently threw me off schedule and the situation was becoming very uncomfortable. In February 1996, the U.S. European Command in Stuttgart, Germany informed embassies that with the Cold War now history, the U.S. Army was reducing its presence in Germany and was seeking to liquidate excess supplies including dozens of camouflage-painted 1986 two-door Chevy Blazers, small two-door SUVs, that had been garaged most of the previous decade. They were now available to any government agency that wanted them for only seven hundred dollars each. I convinced Washington that USIS Sarajevo could not survive without two of them. By the way, the army also had base libraries it sought to liquidate and several USIS posts in East Europe, Sarajevo included, acquired collections with some excellent titles for donations to local libraries at no cost.

I could not have the cars delivered to Sarajevo by a commercial service; it was still too soon after the war to do so. That meant someone would have to pick them up in Bonn and drive them back. One of the other FSIOs and I traveling separately teamed up there for that purpose. I first went to Vienna to meet Sylvia who I had not seen since Thanksgiving. We were able to fulfill the wish we made as we passed through the city on our drive to Warsaw a quarter of a century earlier to attend a Vienna State Opera performance. Now able to afford the price of tickets, we attended a marvelous production of Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* on a snowy evening in February. We then spent several days skiing in the Salzburg area and after a week I flew to Frankfurt. Sylvia returned to Washington from there and I took the train to Bonn where my colleague and his wife, who flew out from Washington to join him, were waiting.

Armed with handheld radios so we could talk to each other while on the road, he and his wife in one car and I in the other hurriedly drove back to Sarajevo in two rather beat up standard transmission Chevy Blazers with rubber and vinyl interiors and not a single accessory to provide any comfort. The drive along the Adriatic coast in Croatia, however, gave us an opportunity to pause at the water's edge. The day was sunny and the temperature was in the low seventies in mid-February and the picturesque village on the bay provided a dramatically stark contrast to the destruction in Sarajevo and the

maddening bustle of Frankfurt. For an hour we were able to lay back and relax in Adriatic sunshine without thinking about the consequences of the Balkan war.

At the Bosnian border, an embassy security detail was waiting for us to provide the convoy that was still required for auto travel outside Sarajevo. Shortly after we got back I had one car painted fire engine red and the other one blue. Just days later the station chief pulled me aside and said, "Bazala, you're the most visible and recognized embassy official in this country. You better watch out driving around in that red car." That sobering statement diminished my enthusiasm for tooling around in a car that I wanted to be as a stark contrast as possible to the official black, military camouflage and otherwise indistinguishable vehicles on the streets of Sarajevo in late winter 1996.

In addition to democratic governance under the rule of law, U.S. policy objectives dictated that USIA develop programs to influence public attitudes towards tolerance and freedom of expression. Among the first things I did was meet with as many media editors and reporters as I could and selected from among them individuals who I thought would be the most promising participants in the International Visitors Program that would take them to the U.S. for between three and six weeks. We hoped they would return with fresh ideas and enhanced skills to reshape media production and content in Bosnia.

USIA media exchange programs in all post-communist European nations involved people with no previous journalistic experience who were being hired by newly formed newspapers, radio, and television stations across the region. We also developed programs for visiting American media experts to Sarajevo, some of whom remained in the field for several months, to provide media personnel technical knowledge and an understanding of the functions of independent media in a democratic society.

USIA also used SEED funds to provide grants to people interested in establishing independent radio and television outlets. Across Eastern Europe there emerged a good mix of non-nationalist stations that aired programs similar to broadcasting on public media in the U.S. At the same time, it was interesting to see how rapidly advocacy media emerged in these countries. A number of media outlets represented the views of specific political groups, promoted their agendas, and sought to enlist public support for their views and ideas among like-minded people. While they were technically free and independent, their coverage of internal events was not objective and they could not be considered reliable providers of unbiased public information. We understood that local equivalents of the *Times of London* or the *New York Times* would not spring up overnight. For one thing, championing media independence and objectivity were not the top priorities of the firms that advertised with them. Government media of course supported the agendas of the political leadership which colored their coverage. Attempting to reshape post–communist media was a major challenge and the transition was difficult.

In encouraging the emergence of freedom of expression in Bosnia I let editors and producers know that USIA's objective was not to restrict the content they produced. If I provided a grant to media that did not adhere to a few general standards, unbiased

reporting covering all sides of a story, for example, I could terminate what generally were one-year grants that did not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars. It was not USIA's objective, however, to have media it funded tow a U.S. government policy line. Certainly PAOs and information officers in the field could convey concerns about the scope and nature of coverage to the media organizations USIA funded. Just reminding them that USIA resources were limited and that I had other priorities generally was all that was necessary to keep grantees from wandering too far off the reservation.

During my tenure as PAO in 1995–1996 USIS operated only out of Sarajevo. There were no branch posts elsewhere in the country. It would have been useful to have USIS officers based in Mostar and Banja Luka, the key cities of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs, respectively, but two local staffers and I initially constituted the USIS staff in Bosnia. By the time I left in September 1996, however, the staff had grown to three Americans and seven Bosnian employees. A number of other USIA personnel passed through Bosnia for short-term duty to assist us in the conduct of a wide range of other programs in support of democratic development of the nation's political system.

A personal highlight of my tour in Sarajevo occurred in March 1996. I had recently called upon the director of the Sarajevo Winter Festival, which originated with the 1984 Winter Olympics and became an annual event afterwards. It drew performers from around the world, but mostly from other countries in Europe. He bemoaned the fact that no American had appeared in the festival since 1990 and that no one had been contracted to appear at the 1996 festival. Speaking as a proud father, I casually volunteered my daughter Alison for a performance.

Alison was a student in the master's degree program at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York at the time, and she was already an accomplished cellist. The festival director, perhaps somewhat skeptically, accepted my offer. I then had to talk to Alison, who was reluctant to visit war-damaged Sarajevo. When she informed her professor, distinguished cellist Paul Katz, a founding member of the internationally renowned Cleveland Quartet, about her plan, she also asked him for a recommendation for an accompanist. Katz suggested she contact Dr. Jean Barr, who was the head of Eastman's Collaborative Piano and Chamber Music program. Intimidated by her stature at Eastman, but willing to give it a try, she contacted Barr and was pleasantly surprised to learn that she was enthusiastic about participating. Katz then went the extra mile and convinced Eastman to pick up their travel costs and Alison and Jean were soon Sarajevo bound arriving on a C-130 cargo jet.

After a day and half of rest and rehearsal, Alison and Jean performed before a full house at Sarajevo's National Theater. The audience included senior officials of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, members of the diplomatic corps, the international NGO community, Bosnian cultural luminaries, and other Sarajevo music lovers. She and Jean performed brilliantly the Brahms Sonata for Cello No. 1 and several other compositions for cello and piano. The event was a wonderful success and I was very proud of our daughter, who Ambassador Menzies asked to meet the following day. He told her he

found her performance uplifting, a remark that Alison recalls to this day and says summarized in one word why she is a musician.

Two years later, during Sylvia's tour as deputy chief of mission in Sarajevo, I arranged cello recitals for Alison in the Banja Luka opera house and in the Pavarotti Center in Mostar. She was by then a cello instructor at Michigan State University in Lansing, and she was joined by pianist Chris Hahn. We covered Alison's expenses and Chris, enthusiastic about the trip, paid his own way. Media in both cities offered glowing reviews of the concerts

Needless to say, the Bosnian landscape was littered with dozens of representatives of international NGOs who streamed into Bosnia almost as quickly as the military force that entered the country beginning the day after Christmas. They all came with good intentions. Some had greater capabilities than others; some conducted effective programs that contributed to promoting the reemergence of civil society in Bosnia. The American Bar Association, for example, had an excellent program to promote the rule of law by providing training opportunities to judges in Bosnia.

On the other hand, some U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] subcontractors came in with half-baked scope of work papers that had no bearing on realities on the ground. But USAID itself is often half baked in my view. It was an agency that had lots of money and was ready to bestow it on almost anybody, even those inexperienced and uninformed about the history of Bosnia or its social, political, and economic dynamics.

USIA was always closer in touch with ground truth in Bosnia than USAID. We personally met and got to know all the people we engaged with in exchange programs and those to whom we provided grants. We discussed their objectives, their strategies, and broke done almost on a dollar-by-dollar basis what their needs were, and how we could best fulfill them with relatively small amounts of money. I am convinced that the work USIA did in support of developing civil society in Bosnia succeeded to a greater extent than many of USAID's programs.

With Ambassador Holbrooke looking over his shoulder twenty-four hours a day, Menzies had a lot of competition in establishing and maintaining himself as the lead voice of the U.S. government in Bosnia. The embassy was inundated every week with administration VIPs, including, in addition to Holbrooke, flag-rank military officers, visiting grantees, working level federal agency staffers, international journalists, and NGO executives. Menzies later told me that at one time there were more assistant secretaries of state in Bosnia than back in the department in Washington. Add to them the forty to fifty other federal employees who gathered daily at the State Department for briefings and exchanges of information, all of whom considered themselves key players in shaping American policy in Bosnia, and you can imagine the steady flow of American bureaucrats who descended on the small U.S. embassy in Sarajevo; they also clogged our few phone lines. Everybody wanted to see what was happening in post-war Bosnia up close and personal.

To accommodate them all, the embassy staff worked constantly to develop complex schedules of activities including events that were often not much more than ceremonial, especially for the congressional delegations. CODELS, as they are known in State Department argot, literally dropped in by the busload. Our DCM over time had pulled together a nicely scripted briefing that he recited on every windshield tour the embassy provided CODELs. He amended his text as things along the route changed to keep his patter current. The number of visitors we had, some very welcome, others less so, were a major factor in the workload that ranged from between twelve to sixteen hours a day for most of us seven days a week. A wisecracking colleague came up with a new meaning for the acronym TGIF [Thank God It's Friday]. He said at the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo it meant, "Only two more working days till Monday!"

Embassy officials sometimes traveled to the war-time capital of the RS, the small village of Pale, a half hour drive northwest of Sarajevo where arch Serb nationalist Radovan Karadzic hung his hat. I learned from a Bosniak contact that Karadzic used to play poker very convivially with a bunch of guys in Sarajevo, including several Bosniaks. After Dayton he went into hiding. He was arrested twelve years later and transferred to The Hague where he was tried, in part, for genocide in the massacre of more than eight thousand Bosniak men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995. The Serbs eventually moved their capital to the more prominent city of Banja Luka.

The embassy later opened an office in Banja Luka and posted an FSO there; it was not a consulate and issued no visas. Working with the office staff I was able to engage Serbs in exchange activities and involve them as participants in speaker programs, seminar discussions, and civic education training. The staff conducted a range of other mission-critical activities including political reporting, but their assistance in identifying contacts appropriate for participation in our programs expanded the reach of USIS significantly. The embassy also opened a similar office in Mostar, the major city in the Croatian area of the Federation, and we received the same kind of assistance there.

I flew home from Sarajevo on April 1. That was coincidentally the same day that U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown was scheduled to return to Washington from Tuzla (where the U.S. military base in Bosnia was located) with a U.S. business delegation to promote investment in Bosnia. I wasn't in Tuzla because my leave had already been scheduled, and I had assigned another officer to handle media requirements for his visit. The next morning I awoke to the news that Brown's plane had crashed in Croatia, killing all aboard the flight as it approached the Dubrovnik airport during a severe storm. Some colleagues assumed Ambassador Menzies and I might have been among them. The ambassador, however, flew back to Sarajevo from Tuzla. Ron Brown was very close to the president and his loss was felt broadly across the administration. I removed any doubts about my fate when I walked into the USIA European division offices the next day.

After consultation and a few days leave, I returned to Sarajevo for a major round of teacher training for civic education, the establishment of a Bosnian TV network and the

first democratic elections in the country that September. With no evidence of ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, or ballots cast more than once, the international community judged the conduct of the elections to be free and fair. The results, however, indicated little commitment to the emergence of a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ethnic divisions would continue to dominate the politics of the nation for the indefinite future.

I considered the establishment of a national television network another activity that could promote the emergence of a unified Bosnian state and devoted considerable attention to that objective beginning during my first days in Sarajevo in November 1995. I discussed a range of ways it might be achieved with media representatives across the country eventually including one in Banja Luka. Government TV was not the answer. During the war, the facilities of Yugoslavia's state radio and television network fell under the control of local authorities in Sarajevo and virtually no Serbs tuned in. Furthermore, Serb shelling had knocked out most of its transmission towers, limiting the reach of its signal.

A month after implementation of the Dayton Accords began, it was impossible to think of a single national television network covering the entire country with a simultaneous signal available to affiliates in cities around the country. My initial idea was to encourage the private television broadcasters that had popped up in Tuzla, Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka in the RS [Republika Srpska] to consider airing a portion of each others' local productions to give viewers current and accurate images of developments elsewhere in the country. In the early post-war period my idea of a network involved little more than carrying videotapes from one station to the next with the idea of providing Bosnians a broader picture of events across the country.

The idea did not take hold, however, largely because private broadcasters in the major cities knew very little about each other and had very limited production capabilities. By the end of that winter my thinking changed as the situation on the ground evolved rapidly. Things had moved far beyond the primitive notion of a network based on videotapes bicycled among independent broadcasters. USIA's International Visitor Program had already taken a number of radio and TV production personnel from different broadcasters who happened to participate in the same programs to the U.S. This increased professional capabilities at several stations and helped establish links among them.

In early spring, leveling the playing field among them became my top priority. I proposed that SEED funds be used to provide grants that would offer five stations equal packages of contemporary audio and video equipment, which I thought would make them willing to commit to interaction and the sharing of video productions. Washington experts proposed a modest fifty thousand dollar package of equipment suitable for each station. On a lovely warm and sunny Sunday in May at a restaurant overlooking the Neretva River in Mostar, owners of the five stations and I gathered over lunch to conclude an agreement committing them to cooperate in the production of programs that they all would air in return for the grants of equipment I provided them. The owners, all with differing views, perceptions, and attitudes on how to go about this, agreed on a basic document within a couple of hours, but by the time I got back to Sarajevo to put it in final

form, it had already become a source of contention among them. While all the equipment my grants provided was immediately put to good use, there was little subsequent evidence that the stations were cooperating in program production.

The idea of a network held, however, and eventually the Office of the High Representative [OHR], the *ad hoc* international institution that to this day (2014) serves as ultimate civilian government authority in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, picked up on the idea and expanded it into something called the Open Broadcast Network [OBN] that reached across the entire country. It was privatized in 2000. I was just pleased to have played a substantive role in getting the ball rolling toward that objective.

I departed Bosnia after the September 1996 elections and returned to Washington a "hero," according to my performance evaluation. Hero though I may have been, the title did not immediately facilitate getting an onward assignment. While the director of the European division promised me I could have whatever assignment I wanted, assignments had already been made to posts I was interested in. With Sylvia in the middle of a domestic assignment at State, I decided to wait things out at home until the next overseas assignment cycle. Just a little over six months later, however, I was Brcko bound.

MEDIA ADVISOR AND SPOKESPERSON, OHR SUPERVISOR FOR BRCKO

In the interim I served in USIA's Equal Employment Opportunity [EEO] Office as a member of a panel reviewing a complaint by African-American male candidates who claimed that they were denied entry into the Foreign Service as FSIOs on the basis of their race. A class action suit was going to come to trial at some yet undetermined date. Perhaps because of my earlier experiences with AFSA, I became the Foreign Service member of the team to review it. I considered the complaint to be unfounded and the work did not interest me much. When in early 1997 the European division requested my release to serve temporarily on an inter-agency team to consider support for the development of a private radio network in Serbia, I was not sad to leave EEO office behind.

The proposed network was centered on Belgrade's independent radio station B92 that became a responsible and internationally respected opposition voice during the war with Bosnia; Serbian government supported media was rabidly nationalistic. Pending the availability of funds, B92 was prepared to become the hub of a network of twelve to fifteen local stations previously part of the Yugoslav government's network of local radio stations spread around the Republic of Serbia. Interested stations hoped to acquire state of the art broadcast and transmission equipment in return for participating in the network.

Local radio stations created under Tito's communist government no longer had links to centralized government media after Yugoslavia fell apart. While funding for their continued operation was uncertain, they remained genuinely committed to offering listeners more information about developments elsewhere in the country, the Balkans, and the world but lacked access to resources. Their participation in the proposed B92 network would resolve that problem.

I traveled to Belgrade as the USIA member of an interagency team headed by USAID to review the B92 radio network proposal. We were ready to back it with SEED funds if our assessment indicated the expense was warranted. We visited all of the cities and towns with radio stations interested in joining the network and discovered that several were in the hands of level-headed, clear-thinking professionals not driven by myths of nationalist supremacy and did not see Serbia as a nation victimized by a world that hated it. All wanted very much to have state of the art broadcast equipment including transmission towers and access to international and domestic news unavailable to them in Serbia's fragmented media environment.

A provision of the agreement to fund the network was that member stations would rebroadcast both Serbian language VOA and RFE news feeds. Our efforts culminated in the formation of Serbia's Association of Independent Electronic Media [ANEM] under B92's leadership. ANEM served to expand the reach of independent broadcasting in Serbia at a critical time between the launch of NATO airstrikes to counter Serbian aggression against Kosovo in March 1998 and the transfer of Slobodan Milosevic to the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague in 2001. As many as thirty broadcasters have been members of the Association, which still existed in 2014.

While I was in Belgrade working on the radio network gig, I received a phone call from Ambassador Robert William (Bill) Farrand late on a dark, cold, dreary, and rainy afternoon in February 1997. Bill was an old colleague from the days of my first tour as a country affairs officer fifteen years earlier. At that time, he was director of the State Department's East European Affairs office and chaired a weekly interagency regional meeting that I attended regularly. He was calling from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where he was head of the inspector-general team reviewing operations of the embassy there.

Bill told me he had just been designated by the Office of the High Representative [OHR] for Bosnia as deputy high representative and supervisor for Brcko and would assume those responsibilities in April, less than two months later. As he was an old Soviet and East European hand, that designation made good sense. Because of my own recent experiences in Bosnia he turned to me to help him with his public affairs and media outreach strategy. I said I was interested but had another assignment I would return to upon getting back to Washington. He responded by saying, "Let me see what can be done about that." By the time I got home, my assignment to the equal opportunity office was curtailed and I traveled to Brcko late in April 1997 just a few weeks after he arrived there.

The most frequently asked questions about Brcko are: one, how do you pronounce it, and, two, why did it matter? The first question is easy to answer; Brcko is pronounced BERCH-ko. The second requires some elaboration. The Peace Implementation Council [PIC] composed of nations and international organizations that participated in the peace negotiations at Dayton, or subsequently supported the peace process in Bosnia, established an *ad hoc* international institution, the OHR, to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords. The objective of the OHR is to ensure

that Bosnia and Herzegovina evolves into a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The PIC authorized the OHR to adopt binding decisions when local parties seem unable or unwilling to act and to remove from office political officials who violate legal agreements of the Dayton Peace Accords. The High Representative is appointed by the PIC with the approval of the UN Security Council; he is responsible only to the PIC and is the final civil authority in Bosnia.

The PIC regarded the sole unresolved matter of the peace negotiations in Dayton, the location of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line [IEBL] in the Brcko district, an issue that could undermine the ability of the OHR to implement other civilian provisions of the accords if not addressed in a manner perceived as equitable and unbiased by the nation's Serbian, Croatian, and Bosniak ethnicities. One of the preconditions set by the international community prior to the start of the talks was insistence that Bosnia would consist of only two political entities. That required bending arms to get Bosniak and Croats to agree to jointly govern one (the Federation) with Serbs governing the other (Republika Srpska or RS). The Serbs insisted, however, they would not enter talks unless they were guaranteed 49 percent of Bosnia's territory, which was a considerably larger portion than their share of the nation's total population. The international community, however, agreed to the 51/49 percent territorial split to get the Serbs to the table.

Several earlier proposals involved divisions of Bosnia's territory into nine or ten regional enclaves, an idea quickly rejected because their boundaries would immediately become sources of discontent and tension that could undermine implementation of a peace agreement. To eliminate any further consideration of enclaves, the international community laid down another condition at the start of peace negotiations. Only a single line, not to be referred to as a border, would delineate the division of territory between the Federation and the RS. A computer program had been developed to divide Bosnia's territory into any number of 51/49 divisions delineated by a single line; it could not, of course, determine the exact placement of that line. Those around the negotiation table in Dayton could not either. And there was the rub.

The Brcko municipality on the north-east border of Bosnia was an area about twenty-five miles long stretching along the Sava River border with Croatia and hardly three miles wide at its narrowest point. The Serbs were deeply concerned about where the IEBL would run across Brcko knowing its narrow strip of territory would be the only link connecting the two so-called saddlebags of RS territory together. When the location of the IEBL in Brcko threatened to upset negotiations in Dayton, in order to conclude the talks with a settlement, it was decided to delay further consideration of the Brcko question for a year and then deal with it through an arbitration process.

That postponement exceeded a year because the man designated as the principal arbitrator for Brcko, American judge Roberts Owen, said in 1997 he lacked information about the extent to which Dayton provisions were being implemented by both entities in the Brcko municipality. He therefore requested OHR to name a supervisor for Brcko who would have a year, until March 1998, to encourage both entities to fully implement the provisions of the Dayton Accords in Brcko municipality. At that time a report prepared

by the supervisor assessing the progress made toward that end would provide the arbiter with enough information on the basis of which he could recommend where the IEBL in the Brcko municipality should be located. The supervisor would be responsible for implementing the arbiter's decision.

I understood well the difficulties Farrand would face in the role of OHR supervisor for Brcko. I witnessed the evacuation of Serbs from Sarajevo in March 1996. The Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic who represented the RS in Dayton, could not insist that a section of the city of Sarajevo be maintained as a Serb district or neighborhood. To do so would have violated the Dayton Accords provision that the IEBL be a single line. I found it amazing that the entire Serb population of the city literally just packed up and moved out over a one week period in a series of seemingly endless convoys of heavily-laden cars, buses, and trucks headed off in the snow.

One day, just out of curiosity, my two FSIO colleagues and I drove across the Miljacka River into what had been Serb Sarajevo in the war to observe the process. It was truly bizarre to witness Serbs rip out the entire infrastructure of the apartments they were now abandoning, including light switches, light fixtures such as sconces, ceiling lamps, and bulbs, electric power plugs, all kitchen and bathroom plumbing fixtures, and even the rubber or vinyl baseboards along the floor. The same process was repeated floor by floor, building by building across the neighborhood. Perhaps somewhat undiplomatically, I smiled, waved, and wished several evacuating grim-faced Serbs the equivalent of *bon voyage* in their language. My colleagues later said I was lucky not to have been assaulted by one or more of them, but the whole episode struck me as utterly surreal.

We did not know at the time how significant the Serb evacuation would be. As it turned out, most of them were headed for Brcko where they occupied abandoned, partially destroyed Bosniak and Croatian homes at the border and southward as a way to strengthen the RS claim to as wide a corridor as possible through Brcko in the arbitration process. To keep a lid on the stress and strains that such a mass relocation could generate, the U.S. component of IFOR established a base, Camp McGovern, that straddled the IEBL just a few miles outside of Brcko with a force of several hundred soldiers armed with tanks and heavy artillery.

Farrand was going to have a hard time in Brcko. Most Serbs in the municipality were people who had exiled or expelled themselves from Sarajevo. They were politically alert and had a very strong sense of themselves and their rights and privileges. Cheek by jowl with them were many Croats whose homeland, Croatia, lay just across the bordering Sava River. Much of the Bosniak population that was driven out during the war was intent upon returning to the municipality. The supervisor had to get local leaders and authorities to accommodate each other's views and perspectives if there was to be any hope of implementing democratic norms and restoring stability in the community. Farrand's approach to the job was to walk the walk, get out and around, and personally size up the situation on the ground by meeting with local leaders in their neighborhoods and make himself a known quantity they could approach freely.

There were two major problems in Brcko that the supervisor had to address immediately. First, areas of the municipality that were densely populated before the war had been extensively mined during hostilities which posed a major barrier to the resettlement of areas abandoned by Bosniak and Croat families. Second, freedom of movement had to be restored. The supervisor presided over a large-scale de-mining effort to ensure that the reconstruction of several thousand single family homes could be undertaken without people being maimed or killed in the process. Because there would be questions about who would wind up occupying them there was much tension throughout the municipality over the fate of their small pieces of Bosnian real estate.

Adding to that tension was limited freedom of movement across the IEBL, which was demonstrated early in my stay in Brcko. Just a few weeks after I arrived, a group of Bosniaks from Sarajevo, several of whom I had met previously, decided to test freedom of movement by chartering buses and driving up to Brcko to look at homes they occupied before the war. I saw firsthand the ugly tensions between ethnic groups in Bosnia. The Bosniaks had let authorities in Brcko know their plans and word got out rapidly to the Serb community.

Thuggish Serbs gathered at key intersections along the likely path the buses from Sarajevo would take through the municipality. At each was a pile of cobblestone-sized rocks to toss at the buses to let passengers know just how they felt about their intrusion onto what they considered their turf. Farrand's deputies and I along with another group of OHR staffers walked out to see what would happen as the buses passed by. At some locations, our presence was enough to get Serb thugs back off, but we could not monitor the entire route the buses would take.

I could not believe what I saw as the buses approached. Unarmed passengers sitting calmly in their seats and looking out the windows were barraged with stones and bricks as if they constituted a force of hostile enemies. Every window was smashed. Thank God no firearms were involved. I joined up with the buses as they approached the Brcko municipal center and boarded one as soon as it arrived. Almost every passenger had suffered some injury, fortunately none of them serious. If repeated, such episodes would prevent the full implementation of Dayton provisions regarding freedom of movement in Bosnia. Needless to say, no members of the predominantly Serb police force were anywhere in sight.

And that was problem number three. The attack on the buses hammered home the point that civil society and tolerance would not prevail in Brcko if the police force was dominated by Serbs. Farrand was fortunate to have an effective American as leader of the International Police Training Force [IPTF] in Brcko who was able over time to make enormous strides to convert Brcko's police into a multi-ethnic force.

IFOR soldiers initially deployed early in 1996 had already torn down dozens of roadblocks all over Bosnia that were thrown up during the war and IFOR patrolled the IEBL regularly to prevent roadblocks being set up anywhere along its path. Unfortunately that did not ensure that Bosnian citizens could move freely through what previously were

ethnic strongholds, and this put a real crimp in refugee returns that could have undermined further commitment to the implementation of other Dayton provisions. What could have proven to be a major setback proved to be very easy to resolve, however.

During the war, Serbs, Bosniak, and Croats added small insignia to their auto license tags to indicate their ethnicity, which in the post-war period worked against building a unified nation. An international organization official proposed creating a single national license tag by using letters common to both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets (such as A, K, M, and T that represented the same sounds in Serbian, Croatians, and Bosniak, and B, C, H, and P that represented one sound in Serbian but another in Croatian). Put any single one of those letters between two groups of three numerals colored black on a plain white background and you had tags with no indication of ethnicity. Just after I left Brcko, those license tags were introduced and almost immediately made it possible for anyone to travel anywhere in the country without facing hostile reactions on the road. Serbs benefited greatly. They no longer had to take circuitous routes to get from one saddle bag of the RS to the other; they could cut, more or less, straight across.

Within days of arriving in Brcko, I found a very pleasant apartment in a two-story house on a dead-end street lined with rather large homes. It was about fifteen-minutes walking distance to the office and close to the Brcko railroad station and a small bus depot I passed en route; neither had operated over the past five or six years. Cows ate the grass that grew between railroad ties and empty freight cars stood like sentinels on tracks in the freight yard. While close to a residential neighborhood, the rail area seemed desolate and forlorn, underscoring how far things had to go before they could be said to be normal in Brcko. The street I walked down leading directly to the OHR building had three or four decent eateries that prospered nicely after the supervisor and staff moved in. They all served marvelous crepes, called *palachinki* in the Balkans that some colleagues consumed more than once daily gaining unwanted pounds in the process. But that could not be helped. Everybody was looking for something good out of the Brcko experience and there wasn't much else besides beer and *cevapcici* (grilled dish of minced meat).

I walked through the open-air Brcko market that offered the first ripened fruits of spring including strawberries and cherries just after moving into my apartment. As I approached it I heard a recording from a speaker nearby of "Don't Speak," a song by the American rock group No Doubt, a big hit in the U.S. just a few months earlier. To this day, the song immediately awakens memories whenever I hear it of that rather mundane experience on a pleasant day in an environment otherwise fraught with ethnic tensions.

Only a few OHR staffers in Brcko had private cars. As at the embassy in Sarajevo there was a pegboard in the OHR garage with car keys. When I needed transportation there was generally one available. OHR cars could also be used for private travel on weekends and a German colleague and I drove to Belgrade, less than two hours away, several times to spend weekends there staying at the recently constructed Hyatt hotel in New Belgrade, an area of town that was becoming increasingly prosperous. For about a year in 2000 one floor of the hotel served as the U.S. embassy. There was even a McDonald's within walking distance. I spoiled myself with ninety-minute massages in the hotel's gym, a

marvelous way to relieve Brcko-induced stress. We attended a concert by American blues guitarist B.B. King at the Sava Center, a two thousand seat auditorium built more than thirty years earlier in the last years of the Tito era. It remained an impressive modern structure at the turn of the century and offered a sharp contrast to structures in Brcko whose dated architecture was undistinguished.

Farrand and I stayed one weekend in what had earlier been the residence of the U.S. ambassador to Belgrade. Richard Miles, a friend of his and an acquaintance of mine, was serving as chief of the U.S. mission there; it was not an embassy at the time. Bill was trying to get a better grasp of the motives behind the political behavior of Serbs in Brcko and anticipated Miles could shed some light on that. We were invited to spend a weekend with him for that purpose. I attended a number of receptions at the residence when it was the home of Ambassador Larry Eagleburger during our tour in Belgrade more than fifteen years earlier, but neither I nor any of the other officers in the embassy had any reason to venture to the private area of the home above the ground floor. Yet here I was sleeping in a bed Henry Kissinger may have occupied when he was the ambassador's guest in 1981. Or maybe it was an entirely different bed slept in only by lesser luminaries or mere family members. It did not matter. I just wished there were others besides Sylvia to reveal this to, but she said probably no one else would care.

It was my objective to get the messages Farrand communicated in local gatherings to the population as a whole. Doubts and skepticism about the role of the supervisor made that difficult at first. Brcko city did not have a television station; also broadcasts from Sarajevo could not be seen in Brcko but TV Belgrade came through loud and clear. Several marginal radio and television stations with small broadcast footprints had been established elsewhere in the municipality, however, since Dayton implementation. There was a small Bosniak television studio in a barn that had holes in the roof; someone held an umbrella over its sole camera to prevent water damage when it rained.

I ventured forth to identify and locate all existing local media outlets and in the early days I had to negotiate their acceptance of an appearance by Farrand. The Serb community was particularly hostile to him initially. Later on he regularly received invitations to appear for interviews about his work and objectives. My efforts to make him familiar to Brcko's residents through media appearances were successful and made his job less difficult. He rapidly became a known quantity, almost a household name, which was what he wanted. That made his agenda widely known and the public perceived him as playing a balanced role in his dealings with Bosniak, Croatian, and Serbian authorities.

To provide Farrand a regular opportunity to address media, I arranged biweekly press conferences at the OHR Brcko building, which drew local, national, and sometimes even international reporters from *Stars and Stripes*, a U.S. Defense Department authorized independent newspaper for the U.S. military community, and VOA for example. Those events provided him a wide stage on which he could get his messages out. I also briefed local press on numerous occasions about OHR activities.

My moment in the spotlight was participation in a half-hour weekly interview on Radio *Mir* (Peace), the U.S. Army station set up at Camp McGovern. What made it more work than I needed was that I had to script the questions the army interviewer posed to me. He had no experience as a journalist and was without a clue about events beyond the base perimeter. Maybe I should just have been grateful that prevented him from tossing me any curveball questions that might have left me speechless, not that it would have mattered all that much because I doubt that more than a handful of people ever heard the interviews. Driving on roads near the base I could never pick up Radio Mir's signal as I scrolled back and forth across the am dial on the dashboard radio. So it seems that the spotlight may not have been all that bright. At least the scripts I prepared provided good talking points for upcoming press briefings so it was not a total waste of time.

On the plus side Camp McGovern had a little PX with consumer items such as Jif peanut butter, Right Guard deodorant, Crest toothpaste, and Wrigley chewing gum to name a few that were unavailable locally except at the open air Arizona Market. An American army officer at Camp McGovern came up with the idea to develop an open-air private market north of the IEBL where anybody could open a stall. With making money being at the top of everybody's priorities, he believed that concerns about ethnicity would be at the bottom and such a market therefore would contribute to the breakdown of ethnic tension in Brcko municipality. It was no surprise that he was proven right. Anybody who wanted to buy or sell just about anything was welcome. In a few short months one could find among other things tin cups, pirated CDs and DVDs, Turkish clothing, imported packaged foods, toiletries, plumbing supplies, games, and toys in vast array, not to mention internationally known brand name items such as those available at the PX.

When I first visited Arizona Market in early May, so named because it was located on a road that the U.S. Army called Arizona highway, the atmosphere was electric. Dense mixed crowds crossed the grounds to makeshift stalls seeking things that could not be found elsewhere in Bosnia. It was almost like shopping at a Walmart without a roof or floor. Consequently there was mud when it rained and balls of dust when the sun came out and the wind rose. The key thing that kept it going was the availability of stuff, lots of stuff. By the time I left Brcko half a year later, however, Arizona Market was already degenerating into corruption and later it became a focal point for prostitution, illegal transactions, and money laundering. Less than two years later, OHR clamped a lid on market operations and tightly regulated the process of licensing its enterprises to keep things under control.

My office also monitored local media output for accuracy in reporting about OHR and the activities of the supervisor. On several occasions, I had to remind editors and producers, sometimes in a less than cordial manner, that they could not publish or broadcast lies about the activities or functions of the supervisor. In fact, I threatened the Serb municipal radio station in Brcko with closure if it continued broadcasting hostile and inflammatory commentary about the supervisor claiming he was biased against the Serbian community. The Dayton Accords specified that OHR decisions are binding and they all got the message.

My office was one of the larger rooms in the OHR building and soon two public affairs staffers, Serbian and English women who did not get along all that well together but got their jobs done, moved in. A Serbian OHR staff translator also spent much of her day working with my office. She shared an apartment in Brcko with another colleague and drove home to Belgrade on weekends. The Serbian press staffer was a hard-nosed, level-headed energetic war correspondent during the conflict who had suffered abuse from all parties. Her presence on the staff increased the perception that Serbian interests were accurately represented in the OHR Brcko press office. She sometimes brought a Walkman cassette player to the office with her and introduced me to the sounds of Guns N' Roses, whose "Sweet Child of Mine" I found both melancholic and somehow lulling; it reminded me of just how far away I was from home.

In August, I took leave in the U.S. Sylvia and I spent a week in Pawleys Island, South Carolina before driving back to our home in McLean, Virginia, to find our lower floor under several inches of water. While at home we watched CNN on a TV set upstairs and learned that the English princess Diana had been killed in an auto accident in Paris. Her untimely death dominated headlines around the world for days afterwards and on returning to Brcko I found several staff members still mourning the tragic event.

Fall was approaching and my Serbian landlord, who kept beehives along the back wall of his house and harvested honey without using a mask or anything else to avoid being stung (he must have been immune), invited me to join him and some friends of his, "good ol' boys" of Brcko, to harvest plums that would be fermented into a Balkan specialty alcohol known as *slivovitz* (SHLEE-vo-vitz) widely fermented across all Slavic Europe. Father longed to have some for years after moving to the U.S. but found it unavailable anywhere. I must have been a teen when he finally acquired a bottle because he offered me a shot and I remember that I did not like the taste. Throughout my Foreign Service career, however, I raised shot glass after shot glass of the stuff in innumerable toasts across the Balkans, sometimes as early as eight in the morning. Every hour is happy hour in the Balkans.

My landlord and I drove out at dusk to an orchard of plum trees, gathered the fruit in large baskets, and as they boiled we rotated them through a grinder that removed their seeds and turned them into juice giving rise to a sweet perfume as dusk turned to darkness. Ribald tales, one after another, followed for several hours while we consumed plums fermented the year before and continued to grind and boil this year's batch. It was a once in a lifetime experience of fellowship with half a dozen local men I did not know and probably would have disliked under different circumstances just a few years earlier.

Once again I was becoming weary of being alone overseas and while I thoroughly enjoyed playing George Stephanopoulos to Bill, the job was really another sidetrack to my career, a good portion of which had been spent in non-USIA postings. I had wandered off the beaten track more often than I should have. Most significantly, Bill had media under his control by then. He knew where and how to gain camera time whenever he wanted. Junior staffers could grind out his press releases and translate media reaction reports into English for his edification. By mid-November it was time to head back home.

At a small OHR farewell function, I received a painting by the father of the OHR translator that I had admired earlier in his apartment in Belgrade It was a watercolor of the main gate to the Ottoman Kalemegdan fortress in Belgrade located at the mouth of the Sava and Danube rivers just half a mile from the American Center I served in fifteen years earlier. After a few hugs, handshakes, and kisses on the cheek, and, yes, toasts with shot glasses of slivovitz (just a few), I left for home. This ended an unusual experience that did much to expand my understanding of post-conflict recovery and reform.

The final arbitration award in 1999 made Brcko a federal district jointly governed by national and entity authorities. That deferred indefinitely the question of where of the IEBL should be located in the municipality. If that arrangement holds, there may be no need for a demarcation line in the future.

USIA, EUROPEAN DIVISION REGIONAL PAO

Shortly after I returned to Washington in November 1997, I was designated the first and only regional public affairs officer in the entire history of USIA. After the Cold War ended, sixteen independent states emerged as the Soviet Union collapsed. Six republics of Yugoslavia became independent when the country split up, and Warsaw Pact nations shed their communist governments. The U.S. government moved quickly to establish embassies in each of the newly independent states. Other than posts in Russia, Serbia, and Croatia that were already staffed by more than one officer, USIA staffed the rest with single FSIOs starting in 1992. Almost six year later the USIA presence at most of those embassies was still one officer. To backstop their operations, the European division created the position of regional PAO. The incumbent would be available to step in at any of them and run the USIS operation in the event of a lengthy absence of the PAO.

The division considered me the most capable and best-prepared officer to serve in that job. I found the challenge appealing and especially looked forward to the prospect of service in the -stans, the five Central Asia nations that had been republics of the Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. During the Cold War, my Soviet studies centered on Russia and Moscow as the nerve center of the Soviet Empire. Many of its republics were largely *terra incognita* even to the most learned of Western Soviet scholars. I hoped to have opportunities to learn something about the distinctive features of their cultures and societies, influence their emergence from the shadow of Soviet domination, and become aware of the roles that Islam might play in their political evolution. As fate would have it, my experience with former Soviet states was limited to Moldova. My other assignments as Regional PAO were in nations of former Yugoslavia with which I was already quite familiar.

One has to remember that in the early 1990s the newly independent former republics of Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union were starting from ground zero. Their institutions of governance replicated the structures of the central governments in Moscow and Belgrade. Their citizens were more than ready to transition away from communism, however. Initially the conventional wisdom held that it was just a matter of pointing

people in the right direction and providing them opportunities to observe first-hand American government, economics, culture, and society in action, as if that would be enough to enable them to make the necessary reforms and fine tune implementation in their fields when they returned home.

In the Yugoslav states exchange programs increased exponentially after Yugoslavia broke up. During the Tito era the average total number of Yugoslavs our budget allowed us to send to the U.S. as International Visitors in any fiscal year was no more than thirty-five. I sent sixty-six Montenegrins alone to the United States in fiscal year 2001, with numbers relatively just as high from the other nations of former Yugoslavia. The magnitude of that and similar programs across formerly communist Europe also mushroomed but it is difficult to quantify the impact they had on participants. In this final assignment of my career, I dropped into different countries for stints lasting between several weeks to a couple of months and did my best to advance U.S. government public diplomacy objectives while I was there in accordance with plans each post had developed to achieve them.

Sylvia, in the meantime, became DCM in Sarajevo. Together we packed belongings in our home in McLean for storage. Sylvia flew off to Bosnia and I to Hungary where the embassy in Budapest was to be my base of operation. My temporary residence was on the Buda bank of the Danube River opposite the enormous, elaborate, and very impressive Hungarian Parliament building. Unfortunately, it was half a flight below street level; looking out my living room windows the first thing I saw was the footwear of passersby and the wheels of cars parked on the street out front.

Budapest is a great city and I would have enjoyed living there when I wasn't on the road, but with Sylvia elsewhere in the region and having experienced several separations already, I argued that my base could just as easily be Sarajevo. It took several months before USIA accepted my argument that it would save the cost of a two-year lease for the recently renovated detached house that was to be my residence in Budapest.

Being based in Sarajevo eliminated one downside of being regional PAO, which was being a fifth wheel in Budapest. Since I was not assigned to USIS Budapest, I did not occupy a slot in the post's staffing pattern. I was like a guest who wears out his welcome after three days, and moved into an out-of-the-way space in the staff break room. I got to know all of them quite well as they passed through daily and our chats were always pleasant and convivial, but my presence contributed nothing to the work they were doing. I was a captain without a ship and had little to do except to explore endlessly fascinating Budapest until my first call to duty. Thereafter I spent my down time in Sarajevo where I was also a fifth wheel but got away with it by being the spouse of the DCM and costing the embassy nothing.

The first call to duty came from Ljubljana, Slovenia; others followed from Chisinau, Moldova; Skopje, Macedonia; Belgrade, Serbia; and Pristina, Kosovo. It was great to spend late summer 1998 in Slovenia. The country had emerged rather smoothly from the carcass of Yugoslavia. Free from its submersion as a socialist federal republic under Tito

the small nation quickly grew prosperous. The USIS operation there, originally a branch of P&C Belgrade, was up and running with a well-trained staff and a well-developed country plan. My job was primarily to hold hands and provide the ambassador with evidence that things would continue smoothly while her PAO was away. The brief assignment, though largely uneventful, was an enjoyable experience in a relaxed environment. Uneventfulness, as it turned out, was another downside to the regional PAO assignment.

Moldova, however, was *terra incognita* to me and the assignment there proved to be personally rewarding. All I knew about the country was that eighteenth century Russian poet Pushkin was exiled there and that today it is the poorest in Europe by far. Todd Stewart, an FSO member of the AFSA board on which I served five years earlier was named the first U.S. ambassador to Moldova. I thought sardonically, "What a great way to end a Foreign Service career; at least it's an ambassadorship." Knowing now what I did not know then, I came to realize it probably was a very good assignment. But I, as most viewers of cable and TV network news, and probably a good number of Soviet experts (along with almost everybody else in the State Department) rarely heard or read anything about Moldova; the obscure Soviet republic abutting Romania just did not make the headlines. Its Transnistria problem was not then the subject of power lunch or cocktail party chatter either, nor is it today, though it still remains a problem.

Until moving into the PAO residence in Chisinau I stayed in a new hotel near the embassy, each room of which had a private telephone line, something I never encountered before. You could bet there would be a call every evening from some enterprising female entrepreneur suggesting you take advantage of the fine services she offered for your enjoyment that would be delivered right to your door; there was no need to leave the comfort of your room. The calls provided evidence that market economics was well and at work in the former Soviet republic.

I was sent to Chisinau to replace a PAO who was curtailed suddenly from her assignment and over the next year was to serve there in three stints each roughly a month or two long. Between them I would be available to drop in elsewhere as needed. I loved Moldova from the day I arrived in country. I learned it was also the First Secretary of the Communist Party Leonid Brezhnev's favorite spot in the Soviet Union. Moldova benefited from his admiration by getting a new airport, a major four-lane thoroughfare from the airport to the center of town beautifully illuminated at night and other facilities built for his convenience whenever he passed through the republic.

One fascinating thing about Moldova is the miles of underground passages linking cellars where tens of thousands of cases of some of the finest wines in the world, or so it is said, are stored. That made dinners at its quirky, trendy restaurants events to savor. Tours of the underground treasure trove had to be scheduled months in advance, which prevented me from driving through what I understand are close to a hundred miles of tunnels linking wine production and storage caves; some are more than two hundred feet underground. The country has more than a quarter of a million acres of vineyards and has for decades, and maybe even centuries, been Russia's largest source of wine.

I found Moldovans, most of whom are either of Russian or Romanian background, very easy to get along with and the country fascinating. As in Ljubljana, however, the job was not terribly demanding. The local staff of four professional women had been working for several years and was quite competent and resourceful. I sometimes found it a challenge to stay ahead of the curve with them. They had all program components functioning effectively and the ambassador was pleased with the results.

A highlight of my experience in Moldova was the reception I hosted in the PAO residence for former Moldovan USIA grantees, none of whom I had met. I always regarded it as important that embassies maintain contact with participants in USIA programs who had been selected, to some extent, based on their potential to become future leaders in their societies. All invitees attended and several embassy colleagues later told me they enjoyed my function more than any they had attended in Chisinau because of the wide variety of the guests' backgrounds. Most diplomatic receptions, truth be told, are a bore; their guests are mostly other diplomats.

The reception was funded out of the USIS budget as a representational event, a social function related to the public diplomacy objectives of the post hosted by an officer at post eligible to claim reimbursement for its costs. The name of the game in the Federal Government budgetary process is "use it or lose it." The critical factor was to obligate the post's representational funds before the end of the fiscal year. Had I not suggested hosting such an event it was very likely the following year's budget for representational events would be cut back significantly and limit the post's unofficial interactions with important contacts, which would be a considerable disadvantage to the new PAO.

As I prepared for my third planned stay in Chisinau at the end of February 1999, however, I was asked to delay my return. Talks between the government of Serbia and representatives of the Kosovo population led by NATO on a proposed peace agreement between the parties were taking place near Paris at the Rambouillet Chateau. The Serbian government launched a campaign of aggression against Kosovo in 1998 by which time it was overwhelmingly clear that Kosovo remaining a province of Serbia was untenable for its overwhelmingly Albanian majority population. Serbia, however, had resisted what many Serbs considered the heartland of their society attempting to break away. The Rambouillet peace proposal was intended to end armed hostilities by Serbia in Kosovo.

With no agreement reached by the February 23 deadline for the talks, they were extended another month and I was asked to stand by in Sarajevo and be ready to assist the public affairs operation at Rambouillet if called upon to do so. The Serbian rejection at the end of that month justified the start of the Kosovo war. Late at night on March 24 Sylvia and I saw from our living room window the bright orange exhausts of the first U.S. Air Force jets headed south from bases in Italy to bomb military sites in Serbia and Kosovo. They launched the beginning of NATO's campaign to halt Serbian aggression in Kosovo.

I was then redirected to Skopje, Macedonia where pro-Serb demonstrators attempted to break into the U.S. embassy the next morning to protest the NATO bombings. With no

direct air link between Sarajevo and Skopje, several days later an embassy car drove me to Zagreb. From there I flew to Thessaloniki, Greece where an embassy vehicle from Skopje picked me up. The driver informed me that a contingent of U.S. Marines that arrived a day earlier ended the threat of a break-in. Fortunately the embassy had relocated from the privately owned downtown office building of which it occupied two floors when I was last there in 1994 to the campus of a former boarding school surrounded by a stone wall that made it easier to secure from within.

Serbia then began expelling Kosovo Albanians into Macedonia and Albania. The European division asked me to stay on and assist a capable but inexperienced PAO to cope with the public affairs consequences of the developing humanitarian crisis that drew much international media attention. Serbia quickly drove out several hundred thousand Kosovars which posed a significant public relations problem for our government. I became the embassy's monitor of the international community's response to the consequences of a problem generated by the NATO bombings. My job was to help set the stage so that international media coverage presented images of an effective coordinated response to the refugee crisis.

Video images of the expulsion of Kosovars brought to mind film clips from sixty years earlier of Nazis rounding up Jews and forcing them into rail freight cars for a one-way journey to death camps. Although Kosovars were expelled not in freight cars but in railroad coaches and simply off-loaded across the border with only the personal possessions they could carry with them, the expulsions were still by force and fiat. And once they were unceremoniously dropped off they did not know what their fate would be.

It was British troops deployed to Macedonia as part of NATO forces in the Kosovo war who established a camp midway between Skopje and its border with Kosovo just twelve miles to the north. Within a few weeks it housed as many as thirty thousand refugees. British military personnel knew exactly what had to be done and quickly set up minimal sewage and plumbing facilities, kitchens, registration centers, and playing fields for kids. The UN and international NGOs later provided forms of entertainment, primarily the screening of films, and made every effort to help reunify families. This international humanitarian assistance was quickly replicated in half a dozen other similar facilities elsewhere in Macedonia and Albania and prevented what otherwise would have been a major human catastrophe. It was fortunate that a number of Kosovo refugees had families and friends in Macedonia and Albania who took in an unknown number of them into their homes and reduced the pressure on the refugee camps considerably. Were the crisis to continue for a number of months, however, the location and status of refugees not in camps could have raised another series of problems involving welfare claims, and pressure on Macedonia's education and health services.

I arranged numerous media visits to the sites and the embassy appreciated the positive impact that made on its public affairs problems over the handling of the refugee crisis in Macedonia. We had several visits by CODELs, and President Clinton and Hollywood leading man Richard Gere also stopped by. I met Gere at the camp he visited and was surprised by his stature. Perhaps I shouldn't have been; aren't most movie stars less than

five and half feet tall on average? He impressed me as serious and natural and not there as a celebrity seeking publicity. Personally interested in the fate of Tibetans in Chinese refugee camps, he was curious about problems Kosovo refugees faced and asked one whether he considered food and water supplies adequate. The response was that mud in the camp was its most serious problem; it was almost a positive note on the situation and drew a smile from Gere.

NATO airstrikes against sites in Serbia and Kosovo ceased on June 10 and Serbian forces withdrew from Kosovo and several hundred thousand refugees were free to return to their homes almost overnight. Fortunately, most found their properties largely intact and undamaged during the relatively short time they were in refugee status. I was at Skopje airport with a British NATO general and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that day when the order was issued for NATO troops to transit from Macedonia through Kosovo. UNMIK, a force established by UN Security Council resolution 1244 passed that day, quickly deployed an international civil and security presence to maintain order and establish regional stability in the Western Balkans. Days later I drove from Skopje to Pristina with the State Department administrative and security team that was sent out to identify and acquire space for diplomatic offices that would function under the authority of the embassy in Belgrade.

The excitement on the streets of Pristina was like New Year's Eve in New York all day long for several days. The refugee's exhilaration was palpable. Incidentally, the bare midriffs and short skirts displayed by young women as they sipped cocktails in reopened bars and taverns gave no hint that the bulk of the population was nominally Muslim.

An inflamed Serbian nationalism held for centuries that Kosovo was the core of Serbia's essence. That countered calls for an independent Kosovo that were first voiced in 1982. Serb strong man Slobodan Milosevic fanned the flames of Serbian nationalism to great intensity on June 28, 1989, the six hundredth anniversary of Vidovdan, which commemorates the battle of Kosovo Polje. Despite the fact that Serbia lost the battle against the Ottoman Empire, Serbs argued that if Kosovo became independent, its historical treasures such as three fourteenth century Orthodox monasteries would be destroyed by rampaging Muslim Kosovo nationalists. This has not happened as of late 2013. The Pec Patriarchate, Decani, and Gracanica monasteries, three monuments of Serbian culture, remain undisturbed.

If Kosovo Polje was considered the wellspring of Serbian nationhood, it certainly was not reflected in the monument to the battle when I visited the site in the last days of the Tito era. There was only an insignificant historical marker on the shoulder of a two-lane road nearby. Milosevic erected a large structure there for the six hundredth anniversary and used the occasion to deliver his nationalist speech on the history of the event. He made it clear that he was divorcing modern Yugoslavia from its Titoist past, and that the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would be led by a reemerging nationalist Serbia. The event marked the beginning of the end of Yugoslavia. His speech ultimately unleashed nationalist elements in each of the Republics. Serbian dominance under Milosevic was unacceptable to them; the deal that pulled them together into a unified nation half a

century earlier was broken. Yugoslavia as a single federation of seven republics came to an end two year later.

RETIREMENT AND RECALL

I retired September 30, 1999, the last day of USIA's existence as an independent agency of the U.S. foreign affairs community, but I was unretired the following day. Several weeks earlier, USIA Director of Foreign Service Personnel Jan Brambilla authorized a recall appointment that brought me into the State Department as an active duty Foreign Service officer for another year beginning October 1. Recall appointments were not always made openly or transparently; they were a closely held Foreign Service personnel gimmick that not many knew about or benefited from. I could not complain, however. Being unretired by recall proved beneficial; the additional year of active service nicely increased my pension.

To a considerable extent, I was a fish out of water in my first days on recall status. My beloved USIA was no more and the State Department into which it was "consolidated" did not really have firm ideas about what it was going to do with its remnants. The easiest thing was to plant USIA's geographic divisions into State Department geographic bureaus' Office of Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy [PDPA]. The program divisions of USIA remained at 301 4th Street, SW in what was the agency's headquarters building and designated as State Annex 43. I considered that an insulting downgrade for an institution earlier housed at 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue, the second most impressive address in the nation's capital. Annex 43 symbolically put public diplomacy at the bottom of the barrel, and as time went on, symbolism gradually transitioned to substance.

After my brief stint in Macedonia and Kosovo, I returned to Sarajevo for several months and served as PAO. Sylvia and I planned to spend Christmas with my parents in Maplewood, NJ. On December 12, 1999, I called mother to let her know our travel plans. A strange voice answered the phone. I asked if I could speak with mother and the phone was handed to my brother who told me she had died in her sleep just a few hours earlier; an EMS crew was removing her body from the house as we spoke. He said later witnessing her final departure that way stunned him for days. While she had been in declining health due to Crohn's disease, her passing at that time was unexpected. I regretted that as a son in the Foreign Service I was not at her side in her last days; she lived to be eighty-eight years of age.

I flew to my parents' home the next day and Sylvia and the children joined me a day or two later. We conducted a memorial service there before Christmas. Father accompanied Alison to perform Faure's "Elegy" and he then played piano compositions mother enjoyed hearing most. It was a deeply moving occasion for us. My brother, who lived just a few miles away, assured me that father would be well taken care of.

A week after New Year's Day I returned to Sarajevo. Sylvia had to return before then, however, because she was required to be at the embassy in anticipation of unknown consequences that might follow the onset of Y2K [Year 2000 problem] after midnight on

December 31. Father, our children, and I watched TV as the ball descended on the *New York Times* tower awaiting the same consequences, but the stroke of midnight heralded no more than the beginning of another year. The Y2K millennium bug that some anticipated would cause utilities and other critical infrastructure to fail around the globe because computer software only had two digits to represent years did not unleash global chaos at the onset of a new millennium when they both showed up as zeroes.

STATE DEPARTMENT, PAO PRISTINA, KOSOVO

I spent the first half of the first year of the new millennium as PAO in Pristina. The four member local staff that worked in the USIS operation of the embassy office in 1998 were still on board. I worked with them for a few months that year as regional PAO after the onset of Serbian aggression against separatism in Kosovo. In the summer of 1999 an interim PAO quickly renewed information, culture, and exchange programs disrupted by the Kosovo refugee crisis. He wisely got out of the way as winter approached knowing perhaps there was no heat in the building the PDPA offices occupied. The electric space heaters the staff acquired did little to keep things warm more than a foot or two around our desks. Winter was miserably cold that year and I had a hard time coming to work every day until April.

The State Department team I accompanied to Pristina after the Kosovo war ended to identify and acquire space for the expanded U.S. government presence decided on establishing it in private homes along a single street above the center of town rather than in a downtown office building. There was much competition for space by the UN and other international NGOs that made purchasing houses a more appealing and cost effective prospect than negotiating leases for space in buildings the U.S. offices might not fully occupy. The location was just a few blocks below a NATO facility with a helipad that made access to the office easy for Washington visitors in a city the center of which had become gridlocked by massive day long traffic jams.

It is interesting that a house that became a residence for American staff was on the same one-way street where the PAO had the entire second floor as his apartment. I occupied it for several months in 1998. In 2000 my living quarter in the building was just a single room. Five other people lived in the apartment that was converted into six bedrooms; we all shared the single bathroom on the floor. It was an uncomfortable arrangement; the fact my commute to work was only a walk across the street provided only partial compensation. But by acquiring all the houses, embassy security was able to set up patrolled barriers at both ends of the street that provided enhanced security to the embassy operation and provided guaranteed parking spaces for all official vehicles.

A Schedule C employee volunteered to join me in Kosovo and arrived in Pristina several days before I did. While pleased to have an assistant, the fact she was a non-career appointee with no previous overseas public diplomacy experience concerned me somewhat. Schedule C's are exempted from Civil Service competition for their job and their appointments are generally political favors granted to supporters of senior administration officials. The one assigned to me was young, bright, and alert, but ready to

march to her own drummer. There were times when we did not see eye to eye on issues I regarded as secondary. Ultimately, we coexisted and she turned out to be an asset to a public diplomacy operation that was growing quickly. With a new administration coming in after the 2000 presidential election, I assumed her appointment ended shortly thereafter. Years later, however, I learned that she had passed the test to enter the Foreign Service and was serving at a consulate in India. Perhaps her experiences in Kosovo convinced her she really wanted to be a Foreign Service officer.

Kosovo's road to independence was a complicated matter. It has little in the way of natural resources which placed a serious limit on industrialization. It had an aged and decaying infrastructure and the highest population growth rate in Europe. This was a major factor that increased Serbian-Albanian tensions in the early 1980s. The use of soft coal both for heating and electrical power generation resulted in heavy air pollution across most of Kosovo during much of the year. One of the least appealing aspects of life in Pristina for me was the effect of air pollution on snow changing it from white to a urine-colored tint.

The Serbian attitude toward Kosovo remains hostile. Though Kosovo declared its independence in 2008 and is recognized by a hundred governments as independent, five years after the fact Serbia still refuses to do so. Nationalist Serbian opposition remains strong in Kosovska Mitrovica, the only part of Kosovo with a significant Serb population. In 2000, we were prohibited from entering Kosovska Mitrovica, a city close to the border of Serbia that is one of only three municipalities in Kosovo with a significant Serb population. The bridge into town was patrolled by both Albanian and Serb armed nationalist elements, and residents were more or less confined to one side of town or the other based on their ethnicity.

Other Americans who were part of the UN Mission in Kosovo [UNMIK] were free to move in and out of Mitrovica as necessary. Among them was U.S. Army General Richard Nash, who had served in Bosnia after Dayton. He was the UN civilian administrator in Mitrovica after his retirement. His mission, among other things, was to defuse tensions there. I recall him boldly asserting that he would get the Serbs to shape up and toe the line, but I also recall he was largely unsuccessful in that endeavor. The two guns he displayed on his desk when I called on him were hollow reflections of a man who wanted to be considered the toughest guy around.

Serbians were very hell bent to carve a mini-republic out of Mitrovica within Kosovo or have it secede and unite with Serbia. The Kosovars are adamantly opposed to either option. Unfortunately, Mitrovica has very little going for it. The Trepca mines, a major industrial complex nearby employed more than twenty thousand under Tito, have been closed since the late 1990s and are unlikely ever to reopen for mining lead, zinc, and silver. That is one reason why unemployment in Mitrovica exceeds 70 percent and remains a major source of instability and tension in that corner of Kosovo.

Kosovars greatly appreciated all the assistance the U.S. provided in its drive for independence beginning in 1998. In 2009 they renamed Marshal Tito Boulevard, the

city's major avenue through its center, for President Clinton and erected a fourteen-foot statue of him in a square that bears his name. Kosovars also renamed another boulevard after George W. Bush who was in office when the U.S. recognized Kosovo's independence in 2008. While I was there in 2000, I worked once again with the Center for Civic Education to increase the awareness and understanding of democratic governance among its young people, made grants to media, nominated participants for the International Visitors and academic exchange programs. I was also able to reestablish social contact with people I first met twenty years earlier during my tour as American Center director in Belgrade.

STATE DEPARTMENT, WAE STATUS

After half a year in Pristina I returned to Washington as my recall appointment approached an end; a further extension was unlikely to occur. Following final retirement, State's Bureau for European Affairs asked me to register as a WAE employee with the bureau. WAE means "when actually employed" and the term applies to retirees who are rehired as hourly wage earners. They are limited to earning in a calendar year no more than the difference between the average of the salaries in their final three years of service and the amount of their annual pension. That limits the time retirees can work as WAEs to no more than between three and six months a year depending on their pension amount. There is also a limit on the number of hours WAEs can work in a year.

Retired military personnel face no such impediment. They can start working full time as civil servants the day after retirement. They also have the option of working full time as Defense Department contractors the day after retirement from the military. FSOs retirees, however, are required to wait a year before being brought back as contractors. One reason FSOs were generally opposed to having retirees return as full-time Civil Service personnel is because they believed they would hold up promotions of active duty officers. They may have come to regret that position given the fact that for a number of years in the first decade of this century, State was unable to bring in the number of new FSO required to fill all Foreign Service vacancies.

While I am sympathetic to those opposed to providing post-retirement employment to less than stellar performers, I also realized, as most of my colleagues came to realize, that experience has value and in the years immediately following consolidation, the department's public diplomacy operations would have benefited considerably were more old hands kept around. After all, old hand and deadwood are not synonymous; the latter term has frequently been thoughtlessly applied to retirees, however.

WAE PAO, PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO

Shaun Byrnes, who encouraged me fifteen years earlier to become State's country affairs officer for Yugoslavia and was chief of the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission in 1998 and 1999, transferred to Montenegro in 2000. Nominally operating under the embassy in Belgrade, he provided Montenegrin leaders with direct liaison to the State Department. When he learned of my availability in the PDPA office of the European Bureau, he

requested I work with him in Podgorica, its capital, to conduct the U.S. public diplomacy program there.

Montenegro, the smallest Yugoslav republic, remained linked to Serbia after the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia collapsed in an entity called the Federation of Yugoslavia. Moves were already afoot in 1998, however, to gain independence from Serbia and to create a Montenegrin state. Those efforts came to fruition in 2006. Over the previous decade both republics had fairly much gone their own ways, with Federation President Slobodan Milosevic's Serb nationalist policies generating considerable opposition in Montenegro. Montenegrin nationalist leader Milo Djukanovic opposed Serb hostilities toward Kosovo in 1998, and his efforts to limit expressions of Serb nationalist extremism in the republic gained him favor in the eyes of the U.S. and European leaders.

Podgorica, named Titograd in the Tito era, was a very low key operation. When I first arrived there the U.S. office was in the garage of the house in which Byrnes rented the third floor apartment. I was able to occupy the apartment on the second floor. My commute to work was a walk down two flights of stairs. By time I left the office had relocated twice, however, as the embassy operation expanded to include space for a USAID office.

Byrnes had wisely decided to keep on board an employee who previously worked in the P&C section of the embassy in Belgrade and later at the American Center in Titograd when P&C opened there during my tour in Belgrade twenty years earlier. Her assistance to me was invaluable. By the end of fiscal 2001 in September, she helped me identify sixty-six nominees to participate in more than a dozen group International Visitor group programs to take full advantage of the resources made available to the post for that purpose. She knew well the movers and shakers of Montenegro and I developed contacts with representatives of international NGO and U.S. government grantees who also provided me with good suggestions of nominees for group IVs. I kept her so busy that embassy Belgrade agreed to hire a local employee to assist her.

Many in Montenegro saw themselves as victims of Serbian nationalism during the 1991–1995 Balkan wars. Others, however, were involved in the shelling of Dubrovnik, the Croatian walled city on the Adriatic coast that was a major tourist destination. They also openly pillaged homes and businesses in the city. An eighteenth or nineteenth century graphic depicting a Montenegrin exiting a home down a ladder with a sack on his back filled with pillaged items was updated in the 1990s to include a TV set sticking out at the top of the sack. The image was a clever comment on the nasty behavior of pro-Serbian Montenegrins who may in fact have been Serbs.

Montenegro had strong U.S. support after the 1998 Kosovo hostilities and Byrnes' assignment to Podgorica established a U.S. diplomatic presence in Montenegro thereafter. Its population at the turn of the century was seven hundred thousand, far less than that of Virginia's Fairfax County in the Washington suburbs. But there was a strong nationalist sentiment in Montenegro that was distinct and separate from Serbian nationalism even though the language of all Montenegrins is Serbian. Montenegrin

nationhood can be traced to the mid-nineteenth century when Montenegro was a kingdom and its ruler married off his progeny to members of other European royal families as a way of gaining the support needed to maintain its integrity. *The Merry Widow* operetta by Fritz Lehar is a fictionalized version of Montenegro's situation in the late nineteenth century, but in fact one Montenegrin princess married the king of Italy and another was in the Russian Czar's entourage. The drive to the diminutive royal castle in Cetinje, then Montenegro's capital, from the Adriatic coast is breathtaking and dangerous, as the road makes a heart-stopping climb from the Adriatic coast to the mountaintop where the picturesque town of Cetinje is located. The road has an almost endless chain of hairpin turns that leave you gaping at the dramatic drops of several thousand feet with every turn.

While I was there, some thought was given recently to reestablishing Cetinje, a town with less than twenty thousand inhabitants, as a symbolic capital of the nation where ambassadors would present their credentials and the government would host formal international receptions. The modern administrative capital, however, has been Podgorica since the end of World War II. The word means "at the foot of the mountains" in Serbian. Because all residents of Montenegro speak Serbian there is no way of determining accurately whether ethnic Montenegrins constitute a majority of the population or not. I assume the results of the independence referendum in 2006 offered an authoritative answer to the question.

The chain of command had the U.S. office in Podgorica nominally attached to the embassy in Belgrade, which provided me several opportunities to fly there to coordinate State Department public diplomacy activities in Serbia and Montenegro, and on one occasion to act as PAO for several weeks. The ambassador a decade earlier had offered me the job of DCM in Sofia after he was named ambassador to Bulgaria. I was sorry that didn't pan out because it would have been a great opportunity to attain my "Roots" experience in the land of my father.

I even underwent a double hernia operation because Sylvia reminded me that the State Department might not provide me a medical clearance to serve in Bulgaria without it. When several months passed with no further word from him about the assignment, I called him just minutes before we departed for the Kennedy Center to attend a performance of *The Phantom of the Opera*. He blithely informed me that he had changed his mind and selected someone else for the position. That ruined the evening for me although I do not think I would have enjoyed the performance more even if the news was good. *Phantom* was less than Andrew Lloyd Webber's best work in my view.

Observing this same ambassador a decade later as he strutted his stuff before the embassy Belgrade staff, I knew immediately that working for him in Sofia could have been a disaster. He was somewhat arrogant, irritatingly smug, and condescending; I found him to be less than my cup of tea. As a colleague in Montenegro once observed, "Bazala, you do not take well to B.S." In Belgrade we stayed out of each other's way, and managed to be professionally courteous with each other.

A highlight of my stay in Belgrade at that time was witnessing the handover of former Yugoslav President Milosevic for transfer to The Hague to face trial before the International Court of Justice for war crimes, the most notorious of which was the mass murder of Bosniak men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995. The U.S. was not very popular with Serbs following the NATO precision bombings that leveled specific targets all over the city including the Ministry of Defense just two blocks from the embassy. Belgrade residents were terrified by the airstrikes that occurred night after night for more than two months and many remained in shock long after the final attack in 1999.

At the same time, there were many Serbs with links to the United States. Many who did not openly express opposition to Milosevic's nationalist policies certainly did not favor them. Even though the nationalist segment of the population was very strongly behind him, his apprehension and departure did not generate protests in the streets against the government for handing him over or against the U.S. embassy. Serbs I met were still very interested in acquiring visas to study in the United States, visit relatives or tour the country. In 1998 there had been several minor attacks on the embassy and the American Center in Belgrade was damaged by fire. In 2001, however, I felt secure in the embassy even though the entrance was less than twenty-five feet back from the curb of a major downtown boulevard on which it was located.

Summing up my remaining time as a WAE employee overseas, there would have been little or even no public diplomacy activity in Montenegro in the spring and summer of 2001 without my presence there. One of the major public diplomacy activities I conducted was a seminar in the coastal city of Herceg Novi for writers and editors of recently established publications on internet applications to media. The event was eye opening for them and assisted in moving them to the cutting edge of communications technology. With my WAE eligible hours running low, I returned to Washington in the fall; I was still in Podgorica on 9/11 and watched live coverage of the flight into the second World Trade Center building on a TV in the USAID office. That was all I needed to decide I had better return to Washington as soon as possible.

WAE IN P/MAT

I met Steven Geis, an old colleague with whom I served in Belgrade more than two decades earlier, in the State Department cafeteria one day after my return from Podgorica. He came down to Pristina with me one time where we participated in an event that I imagine does not occur all that frequently. It was only after we arrived in town that the brother of one of my Kosovar artist friends who was married to a Serbian woman, an infrequent occurrence in and of itself, asked us to join him at a lunch at the prison in Pristina hosted by the warden who was a friend of his. We were told that a prisoner would serve guests the meal. That was somewhat surprising but what really shocked us was learning that he was serving life in prison for murder. My friend's brother explained that the murderer took the life of a man who attempted to marry a daughter of his extended family against the family's will. Because the act shamed the family, the killing committed by the young man who the family had designated to exact revenge was justified as a legitimate way to compensate for the dishonor against it.

The convict waiter was a pleasant young Kosovar in his early twenties; his presence was warmly acknowledged by all other guests at the lunch. He had a ready smile and exchanged pleasantries with them as he served their meals. The event was intended to provide us an insight into Albanian social culture. The young man acted in accordance with the moral code of his forebearers and was treated with respect by fellow ethnics. His conviction and imprisonment was imposed by the justice system of Yugoslavia that considered his act a crime. That, however, did not undermine or destroy his stature in or value to his society. I wonder today whether those convicted under Yugoslav law for what Kosovars regard as honor killings are still serving time in prison or have been released. We gained some cultural awareness that day in a unique fashion.

Steve said he was working in the Political and Military Affairs Bureau [Pol/Mil] and informed me that in the aftermath of the events of the 9/11 (2001) attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the bureau had established a counterterrorism unit that worked twenty-four hours a day seven days a week in anticipation of increased U.S. government counterterrorism operations abroad. Many of its staff members were WAEs who were available to work the late day and graveyard shifts, and there were still a number of openings available.

In 2002 I joined what is called the Pol/Mil Action Team or P/MAT in State Department argot. Among other things, it monitored for the department's leadership, particularly Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage, the military build-up to conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and kept the department apprised of events that might involve the State Department. P/MAT summarized in terse, brief paragraphs daily developments about ongoing matters compiled from screening many hundreds of documents that came from embassies around the world and Department of Defense communications regarding, for example, the establishment of a U.S. military base in Manas, Kyrgyzstan that could have diplomatic consequences. We were, in effect, generating a blog twice a day on the build up to the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and subsequently events in those countries following the onset of hostilities.

P/MAT prepared two daily Situation Reports [Sitreps]. I started work on the team as a contributor to the Sitrep, scanning hundreds of communications both classified and unclassified related to the implementation of defense and foreign policies and summarizing from whatever sources I could find, key issues and/or events in no more than a paragraph or two for a document limited to no more than two pages. P/MAT reports came to be highly valued by Armitage personally and over time were read daily by other principals at State, Defense Department, and embassies overseas.

While in P/MAT, I found that the Pentagon kept State out of the loop on many things that were being planned for implementation in Iraq, particularly the operation of the Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA] under Ambassador L. Paul (Jerry) Bremer III. His performance was regarded by many who were in Iraq with him as pretty much of a failure, even though President Bush later awarded him a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Someone very close to Bremer in Iraq with whom I had lunch in Washington following Bremer's departure from Baghdad said, "Everything the man did as coordinator of civilian authority was a mistake." That may be unkind, since in the run-up to his elevation to that position, there were a bunch of half-baked U.S. government officials who had virtually no experience in the region or awareness of its cultures, hanging out around swimming pools in Kuwaiti luxury hotels planning how the U.S. government was going to establish a civilian government in Iraq. The provisional authority reported, not to the State Department whose secretary previously served as defense secretary, but to the Defense Department. They set the stage for Bremer without any input from him. He was just dropped in as an afterthought, perhaps just to provide the appearance that the State Department had some involvement in administering the coalition government.

It was disheartening to read while on duty in P/MAT some of the reports about what was happening with efforts to establish civilian authority in Iraq in 2003. Someone with more recent and relevant experience on the ground would have fared considerably better as coordinator than Bremer. As a retired ambassador he certainly would have benefited from some coordination with the State Department regarding plans to restore civilian governance in Iraq. In short, his whole operation was not handled as well as it should or could have been.

P/MAT had no decision making responsibility. I was fundamentally a reporter and editor who summarized masses of data that often required sifting through minutiae. I eventually became a P/MAT shift coordinator who determined the content of the Sitrep. A team of eight or ten other staffers, including Defense and Defense contract personnel, worked around a large table preparing material for inclusion in the report. We were also responsible for providing Armitage daily updates on U.S. casualties, something that concerned him deeply. Early in the conflict that information was not widely reported, but as time went on statistics on deaths and injuries made the press daily.

I learned one interesting thing working in P/MAT. Anybody in the military can create acronyms; they spring up everywhere like dandelions. To keep track of them, some with the same letters but with several meanings, informal alphabetized compilations are available on several websites. While SNAFU and FUBAR are widely known, BOGSAT was one that drew my attention. It's a "Bunch of Guys Sitting around a Table." That characterizes, for example, an informal gathering over a brown bag lunch of military officers for a pre-decision review of policy recommendations as well as chewing the fat over last Sunday's Redskins game or subject matter less gentlemanly than that.

P/MAT's twenty-four-hour a day operation required three shifts: seven am to three pm; three to eleven pm; and eleven pm to seven am. The adjustments to a swing shift schedule were cumbersome. I never got used to it, but in some ways working each of the three shifts wasn't all that bad. Getting out of the department at seven in the morning and zipping home as everyone else stormed into town allowed me to dodge rush hour. And finding a prime spot in a largely empty State Department garage an hour before midnight was simply marvelous. But that aside, working different shifts disrupted the normal patterns of daily life.

Least liked by almost all of us was the graveyard shift. Stepping out of the office and wandering down hallways to the vending machines tucked away in numerous nooks and crannies throughout the main State building to buy a Coke or a crunchy snack and observing a cantaloupe-sized rat scurrying down a hall on the other side of the building at two-thirty in the morning was a real bummer. My first thought was, Where does that guy hang out between nine and five? After all I experienced in my Foreign Service career, observing that *Guinness Book of World Records* candidate as the largest rat loping around casually in the corridors of power was a very discomforting jolt at that hour. When you think about it, however, there is really a lot of stuff rats can find to feed on to get that big in large government office buildings even as august as the headquarters of the U.S. Department of State in the Harry S. Truman building.

CHUGACH ALASKA CORPORATION IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACT

At the end of 2003, an Alaska native corporation hired a USIA Civil Service staff member who worked with VOA until he retired to administer an Iraq reconstruction project for the Pentagon. He called P/MAT Director David Pierce, an old contact of his, to inquire whether he knew anyone who might be interested in working on the project. Dave suggested I might be interested which led to the offer of an interview after which I was hired immediately. The job had the advantage of being a full-time position and it paid well. In accepting it, I entered the private sector for the first time in almost thirty-five years. My employer was Chugach McKinley, a subsidiary of the Alaska native regional contracting company Chugach Alaska Corporation.

Ted Stevens, the former senator from Alaska, was largely responsible for generating the Alaskan native corporation concept. It was intended to provide the state's native tribal populations livelihoods and avoid the negative aspects of the territorial reservations established in the nineteenth century to deal rather haphazardly with native Indian populations in the continental United States. Stevens proposed that Alaskan tribes form companies that could bid non-competitively for federal contracts costing less than three million dollars offering potentially significant benefits for them. Federal agencies welcomed not having to jump through hoops to seek and review multiple bids for low cost contracts. Being able to corner such contracts ensured that native Alaskan firms would have incomes that provided some economic benefits to tribe members.

Over time, however, the three million dollar limit was waived and the Alaskan firms could align with large contract companies as sub-contractors. That fiction soon became a sham resulting in deals not always in the best interests of taxpayers. Another problem was that some non-native executives hired by the native firms earned seven figure annual incomes while distributions to members of the tribes may not have exceeded a few thousand dollars each.

Chugach McKinley landed a Defense Department contract proposed by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. In his travels around the country following the deployment of

U.S. forces in Iraq, he addressed the issue of post-war reconstruction. His presentations generated feedback indicating that Iraqi-Americans were interested in playing a role in the process. Wolfowitz thought it would be a good idea to enable them to participate. Chugach McKinley was awarded a contract to interview interested Iraqi-American applicants and evaluate their professional skills in twenty professional fields. My job on the six-employee staff pulled together for that task was to handle logistics and evaluations.

I reviewed the résumés of several thousand Iraqi-Americans from across the nation who expressed interest in the project. I then identified American subject matter experts [SMEs] in Chicago, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Diego, Atlanta, and Dearborn, cities with large numbers of applicants. I booked interview sites and negotiated both SME and applicant reimbursement levels. Washington area interviews were conducted in our office in the Crystal City neighborhood of Arlington, Virginia just blocks from the Pentagon. I had to do all this for as low a cost as possible. My days were very busy, but all was for naught.

Chugach Alaska had no interest in sending staff to Iraq because its executives regarded the situation on the ground in 2004 as too dangerous for them to administer the program there. More serious was that Wolfowitz did nothing else to make Iraqi-American involvement in Iraq reconstruction a reality. The Defense Department established no framework for such an effort because the problems involved in ensuring the security of American civilian contractors working across Iraq were insurmountable at the time. Al Qaeda had executed several foreigners who worked in Iraq and videos of them pleading for their lives were aired repeatedly on network and cable news programs.

Against that background the Chugach McKinley team assessed the skills of more than five hundred people. Some were stellar candidates in the fields of medicine, education, engineering, and chemistry, just to mention a few of the twenty fields for which applicants were sought. We worked more than six months to fulfill the objective. I knew, almost from the beginning, however, that there was no likelihood our contract would be extended beyond its September 14, 2004, termination date. No panel within Defense was established to move the process beyond the skills assessments we provided. Ultimately Chugach McKinley presided over a project that was dead before arrival. I left the firm when the contract expired.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Days later I called Dave Pierce, and asked to be rehired at P/MAT. He responded positively. Back at P/MAT, early one evening after a few months on the job, Jan Brambilla, USIA's former director of Foreign Service personnel, called me at work. It was she who brought me back on recall after I first retired. Now working in the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, she said the office faced a problem she thought I might be able to help solve. They were desperately seeking an interim executive director for the President's Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy to replace one who had just been fired. It was a full time position tied directly

to the career that engaged me for more than thirty years. Before saying yes, however, I contacted a retired USIA colleague who was the executive director for more than twenty years to discuss the job with him. He convinced me it would be an interesting opportunity to help enlighten the administration about the conduct of public diplomacy. We were both aware that public diplomacy had almost slipped off the radar scope at the White House and was only half-heartedly and somewhat inadequately conducted by the State Department in the aftermath of the consolidation of USIA within it.

During the four months I served as its executive director, however, the advisory commission had no contact with the White House, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had no interest in meeting with its chairman, Barbara Barrett, a prominent Arizona businesswoman. Several memos I sent to the secretary's office requesting she meet with the commissioners were ignored by her staff. I was pleased, however, to introduce commissioners to senior members of the Defense Department Science Review Board task force on strategic communication. Their report issued in September 2004 asserted that it was necessary to improve the ability of the U.S. to "communicate with and thereby influence worldwide audiences," adding that "to win in the global battle of ideas, a global strategy for communicating those ideas is essential." The report highlighted the importance of what earlier had been USIA's mission. But neither the advisory board nor the State Department expressed much interest in it. The department later complained, however, that strategic communications were in fact public diplomacy activities, and that it had the authority to conduct them, but lacked the resources necessary to do so.

I felt it was important to make advisory commission members aware of the extent to which the Defense Department intended to intrude into the State Department's public diplomacy turf, both to alert them to that fact and to inform them of how Defense planned to influence worldwide audiences. Just three years later, in 2007, Defense was able to marshal half a billion dollars for its geographic commands to create public diplomacy websites over a five year period to achieve its strategic communications objectives. Had the commission had any influence with the White House or the secretary of state, Defense forays into public diplomacy might have been modified or restrained. But by 2013 Defense had eradicated the term strategic communication from its argot and replaced it with something like international information operations. Nonetheless it is still engaged in the conduct of public diplomacy activities. It is my impression the military is not very inclined to coordinate them with State Department objectives, which is not the most productive way to implement U.S. government public diplomacy policies.

I then informed the chairperson that because my salary was paid out of the commission's limited operations budget (I was not a salaried employee of the State Department), it would have almost no resources for the second half of the fiscal year were I to stay on board. That was enough to bring to an end my brief stint as executive director of the commission quite suddenly. With my WAE eligible hours for 2005 running low, it would have ended suddenly anyway. Late in March I bid commission members farewell and headed back to the private sector.

EUROPEAN COMMAND, WEB SITES CONTENT MANAGER

I was hired by Anteon, a prominent local defense contract agency in the DC area, later acquired by General Dynamics, in April 2005. Until 2008 I was the content manager for two strategic communications websites sponsored by the U.S. European Command both at the Anteon office in Rockville, Maryland and at the Command's Plans and Operations Center at its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. The sites promote stability, cooperation, and prosperity in the Balkans and North Africa to contribute to the overarching objective of enhancing force protection wherever U.S. military force is deployed. The work of USIA was intended to achieve similar objectives following the fall of the iron curtain and the death of Yugoslavia.

The idea behind the establishment of the web sites was to identify trends, solutions, and successes that can serve as models across the Balkans and North Africa. The site would inform Bulgarians, for example, about developments regarding border control in Croatia, or let Croatians learn about the application of labor laws to youth in Bulgaria and to stimulate consideration of ideas to address similar issues domestically in the other countries of the region.

It was my responsibility to vet every proposal for articles by our independent contributors to the web sites Southeast European Times (setimes.com) and Magharebia (magharebia.com) that were aimed at North African audiences in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Until 2008, the African continent was included under the European Command. I communicated with them by e-mail or telephone and sometimes commissioned articles I believed would offer information not available elsewhere. On occasion, SETimes articles were reprinted in local publications or posted on other web sites thereby amplifying their impact. I also had the opportunity to meet with writers in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Croatia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania and recruit replacements as they moved to advance their careers elsewhere.

We paid contributors by the word at a rate that provided them a small supplemental income at best. Of course, some younger writers welcomed the forum in which their work appeared online. The company also funded gatherings of writers to exchange ideas and learn more about it and the U.S. European Command. I organized two such events, one for SETimes contributors in Belgrade, and one for Magharebia contributors in Paris, which served to heighten their interest in and commitment to producing content for the sites.

Although I found a nicely furnished apartment in Stuttgart, the separation from Sylvia was difficult. She visited me several times, once with daughter Alison and her husband. I returned home for holidays, and once just for just forty-eight hours to attend a wedding. In Germany we spent weekends in Garmisch-Partenkirchen; hosted a Christmas party for EUCOM Information Operation colleagues; and toured the sixty-five kilometers Alsatian wine road from Strasbourg, France (only an hour and half drive out of Stuttgart) through villages and landscapes just oozing charm from every window flower box and hillside vineyard. In 2007 we drove through the former East Germany visiting Leipzig, Dresden, and Berlin. These were enthralling and eye-opening contrasts of past and future. We also

drove to Hamburg and south to the Fulda Gap, the valley through which Soviet forces would have advanced on Frankfurt were the Cold War to have degenerated into armed conflict. Now it's just gently rolling farmland with no geopolitical significance whatsoever.

I also traveled to Le Mans, France for the internationally renowned Grand Prix, a twenty-four hour race for four classes of vehicles over an eight mile course. I first heard about it as a kid. When a colleague at EUCOM told me he planned on attending with his father, I asked if I could tag along. Take my word for it, once at Le Mans is more than enough unless you are a racing enthusiast and can afford helicopter transport to get you to a decent hotel outside a twenty mile radius of the village. We spent the night in our rental car inside the track, which was no fun. It rained much of the time and ultimately not knowing anything about the cars or drivers in the race, I really didn't care who the winners were. I had no real interest in the event; it somehow just wound up on my bucket list.

CENTRAL COMMAND, WEB SITES CONTENT MANAGER

In 2007, the lieutenant colonel with whom I worked in Stuttgart was transferred to Central Command Headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida where he continued to work in information operations and was developing web sites similar to the ones he helped establish for the European Command. One was to be aimed at audiences in Central Asia (the -stans) and the other at audiences in the Arabian peninsula. He met a retired USIA colleague of mine who was the project manager of the firm that had the contract to produce the sites and mentioned my name. She told him she knew me. He then suggested she might want to hire me to handle the web sites in Tampa since I had done so well at a similar job in Germany where we worked together. She contacted me after my return from Stuttgart and we worked out a deal.

I left Stuttgart at the end of April 2008 after completing my commitment to work for Anteon/General Dynamics for three years. By early September, I was at work in Tampa, Florida as an employee of MPRI, a subsidiary of L-3 Communications. The work I did with the Central Command's Information Operations web sites was similar to my job in Stuttgart but not the same. Unfortunately, MPRI had no idea how to produce public diplomacy web sites. Because the firm proved ineffective in managing the sites, it lost the contract to produce them in December 2009 to General Dynamics. Because I was a known quantity, General Dynamics offered to keep me on board in the same position, but by the end of 2009 I had had enough.

Once again, I was separated from Sylvia who helped me relocate to Tampa, but at least we were in the same time zone and air fares were a lot cheaper. She identified a lovely apartment for me in the stylish Hyde Park area of the city near Bayshore Boulevard along Hillsboro Bay. Sylvia flew down on several occasions and I flew home for holidays. We visited Saratoga and the Ringling mansion and circus museum. A retired USIA colleague, who worked for the Special Operations Command also located at MacDill, and I attended several games played by the Tampa Lightning hockey team games, so named because

Tampa, known as the lightning capital of the U.S., is allegedly struck by lightning more often than any other locality.

Those events in no way could compensate for the absence of Sylvia. Nor did the chicken wings I consumed weekly at Wings Gone Wild with two fellow USIA retirees also employed as Defense Department contractors, but at the Special Operations Command that is also located at MacDill. My absence was not easy for her either although she had several WAE assignments with the State Department's Office of Inspector General that kept her busy.

On December 19, 2009, the day the MPRI contract terminated, I retired and for the first time faced unemployment after forty years of full time work. As my flight to Reagan National Airport touched down at around eight-thirty in the evening, the first flakes of snow in Washington that winter floated gently to the ground. Twelve hours later, I was outside in subfreezing weather shoveling eighteen inches off the driveway. What reward was that to mark the culmination of a long life of exciting, productive, and challenging work both overseas and at home? Since then I have served as a Fairfax County election officer, earning $175 for a seventeen-hour day that begins with the alarm clock sounding at four am. We have also kept busy with grandchildren, travel, our second vacation home, and Sylvia and I are both writing autobiographies.

While I was still in Stuttgart, we purchased a lot in Pawleys Island, a low country coastal community in South Carolina. I like to say it is just several stones throw from shore of the Grand Strand, midway between Charleston and Myrtle Beach. We built a four-bedroom, four-bath house overlooking a lovely small lake in the Bays at Litchfield. That is where we thought we would spend most of the time of our remaining years although that has yet to happen. Sylvia continued working WAE in the Office of Inspector General several months a year through 2014 and that gave me opportunities to tag along with her to Copenhagen, Stockholm, Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Brasilia, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. We also discovered we liked river cruising when in 2012 we took a trip from St. Petersburg to Moscow in Russia. In 2013 we booked on a cruise from Paris to Normandy and are planning a trip to China in 2014.

With our grandchildren now numbering four, the house in Pawleys Island is the venue for twice a year gatherings of the clan. Alex has two sons, James and Daniel; Alison has a daughter, Elena Claire, and recently gave birth to a son in June 2013 who is named Maximilian after my father's father.

I look forward to hanging up the snow shoveling one of these days and putting away my gloves, hat, and scarf forever.

End of interview