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

SYLVIA BAZALA

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 3, 2014, with Sylvia Bazala. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Sylvia, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

BAZALA: I was born in Virginia in Portsmouth. My father was in the U.S. Navy at the time.

Q: Okay, let's talk about your father's side first. What do you know about the family?

BAZALA: I know quite a bit because my father was very interested in his own genealogy, and I inherited most of his papers. He also wrote an autobiography.

He was born in Georgetown County, South Carolina in 1911. He came from a family of rice planters that owned several plantations over the years. My father traced the family all the way back to Scotland before they migrated to South Carolina in the eighteenth century. The family became prominent in the nineteenth century when rice growing was at its peak in South Carolina. Dad grew up on a plantation called Belle Isle.

When rice production declined after the Civil War, plantation owners turned to alternative ways of earning income. My grandfather, for example, hosted hunters who came from the north and paid to go duck hunting every year on the plantation, and he established a public garden for paying visitors known as Belle Isle Garden. During World War II President Roosevelt toured Belle Isle during a visit to South Carolina. Unfortunately, the decline in rice production in South Carolina, a destructive hurricane, the depression, and a fire that destroyed the family home in 1942 eventually forced the sale of most of the family's property in the 1950s.

When my father was just a teenager he joined the U.S. Navy as a reserve soldier/sailor. Then he went to Clemson [University] and majored in agriculture so he could go back to the plantation and raise crops and help with the garden. Dad went on to get a master's degree from Louisiana State University and a PhD from Cornell in horticulture. That would have been in the 1930s. He had just started a job in Auburn, Alabama as a college teacher when World War II intervened. Because he was in the naval reserve, he was called up in 1941 and ordered to Virginia. I was born in 1941 right after Pearl Harbor.

Q: What was the family name?

BAZALA: Johnstone, with an "e" on the end.

Q: Well, let's talk about the Civil War.

BAZALA: Okay. I'm not entirely sure, but I think there was one member of the family who was an aide to a general fighting on the southern side. But it was also important to grow crops for the cause, primarily rice. Belle Isle hosts a Civil War historical site. Battery White was established as a defense installation with cannons that overlooked Winyah Bay in Georgetown County. Its purpose was to defend against any union ships that attempted to enter the bay.

Q: What did your father do during World War II?

BAZALA: He was a naval officer. At first he was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia and assigned to the USS *Delta*, a new cargo ship. After trips to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda, the ship was assigned to convoy duty to carry supplies and equipment to Iceland for the allied war effort. He made about five trips to Iceland in 1941–1942, but it was very dangerous because of the German submarines operating in the North Atlantic.

He didn't see me for the first couple of months of my life until he got back to Norfolk. In July 1942 he was transferred to the west coast and stationed initially in Washington state and later in California. He was a gunnery officer and executive officer on several ships that were transporting troops and airplanes to the battle areas in the Pacific. His ships participated in some major battles including Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Kwajalein, and Okinawa. He was all over the Pacific delivering men, equipment, and aircraft. He also set foot in the Philippines and Japan at the end. So he was right in the thick of it during the whole thing.

Q: Oh, he certainly was.

BAZALA: I have almost all the letters my mother and father wrote to each other during the war, and they are quite interesting, at least to me. I put them all together chronologically. Dad stayed in the naval reserve for several years after the war and retired as a captain.

Q: What is the background of your mother and her family?

BAZALA: My mother was from north Louisiana. Her father owned a printing plant and was a publisher of a weekly newspaper. She was the second of five children. She had a couple of years of college and was teaching school when she met my father. It was the [Great] Depression era, and my father's best chance of finding employment at that time was through his status as a naval reserve officer. His unit was assigned to work with the CCC.

Q: Civilian Conservation Corps.

BAZALA: Right. He was sent to a CCC camp in the north woods of Louisiana. Even though he was in the navy, he was sent to inland Louisiana to set up a camp to provide employment for young men. My parents met because my mother was working for her father on the newspaper during the summer months, and he sent her out to the camp to interview the camp leaders for a story about the camp, which was named after the family. It was Camp Colvin.

Q: Where did you grow up?

BAZALA: The first five years of my life my mother and father were moving back and forth across the country and up and down the California coast. My mother tried to make her home wherever my father was stationed. When I was five years old, my father was finally discharged from the navy, and he resumed his job teaching horticulture at Auburn University, a position he had before the war started. So we returned there. That's where my sister was born.

Q: Did you grow up as a kid in Auburn?

BAZALA: We didn't stay there very long because my father went to work for a cottonseed oil company in Dallas, Texas. He didn't like that, so he went back into academia and found a position at Ohio State University. From there he went on to become head of the Department of Horticulture at the University of Georgia. That's really where I grew up—from about the age of nine.

Q: How were the elementary schools that you went to?

BAZALA: Switching around was difficult because there were different curricula in different places. I remember in Ohio I was having trouble reading, so I was put in the lowest reading group in third grade. I was so insulted by that, I managed to be in the top group by the end of the year. I also remember being taught Ohio history, which didn't mean much to me later. When I moved to Georgia I had not yet learned multiplication tables, which they were already teaching there. So I had to learn them quickly. There was no consistency in the curriculum. Each state was doing its own thing. Eventually I caught up with everything by the time I entered Athens High School in Athens, Georgia.

Q: You were at Athens High School from when to when?

BAZALA: There was no junior high, so I started in eighth grade. I graduated in 1959.

Q: So it would have been a five-year high school?

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: Going back just a bit, were you much of a reader?

BAZALA: Oh yes, a voracious reader. No TV. That came in in the 1950s and my parents were rather slow to adopt the technology. I joined the local public library, and that's what I did all summer when I wasn't at a camp. I read books.

Q: Can you think of any books that you read on your own that really stirred you or were fun to read or stuck with you?

BAZALA: Probably the same things I still like to read, which are history and biography and some fiction.

Q: What sort of history did you like?

BAZALA: When I went to college I majored in European history and political science. Modern European history was my focus, and still is. I am still very interested in that subject.

Q: Was high school segregated at the time?

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: Did you feel the change coming or not, or was it pretty well set?

BAZALA: You could feel it, but I felt it more the first year of college. At that time in the deep south we grew up with certain assumed norms about things. I can clearly remember the separate water fountains at the public library. In addition to the unfairness of it all, I thought that it was very impractical having two separate fountains.

Q: Yes.

BAZALA: My first year of college I attended Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. I was very much a minority up there as a southerner. I was something of a curiosity.

Q: You have a strong southern accent?

BAZALA: I did. People would come up to me and they would have the strangest ideas, like, "Do you all have TV down there?" or "How do you like wearing shoes now?" There was all this teasing. One time somebody came up to me and said, "How many fingers am I holding up?" I thought he was thinking I was dumb, being from the south. So I said, "*Fowah (four).*" But he just wanted to hear me say "four" in my southern accent.

Q: (laughs)

BAZALA: So that's the kind of thing that went on and made me feel inferior. Also, I was in school with a lot of people who had been to prep schools up north. I was less prepared. I did okay, especially in English, but my preparation for Dickinson was uneven.

Q: I've talked to many people and I've seen studies where for the most part people who went to a prep school during the first two years of college would trounce essentially the public high school students. But by the end—this goes all the way up to Harvard—the high school students were often doing better or at least pulling even.

BAZALA: I sensed there was some catching up. But I only spent one year at Dickinson and then I transferred to the University of Georgia [UGA] where I finished.

Q: Did you leave because you felt uncomfortable at Dickinson?

BAZALA: No, I grew to love it there. However, my parents decided to pull me out because my father had signed a contract to go to Cambodia to work. They wanted me back home where friends could be close by to help me if there was a problem.

My father was also unhappy with Dickinson as a result of a project I did for a social studies class. We had to do a research paper on some subject where we prepared a questionnaire and went out and talked to people, compiled the data, and wrote it up. It was practical research. My subject was to determine the difference in student attitudes between the north and the south about integration. I interviewed people at Dickinson and during a school break I interviewed people in one of the dorms at the University of Georgia, with my little questionnaire in hand. I came to the conclusion that there wasn't a lot of difference in attitude and that prejudice was exhibited by both groups. There were some other things I wrote in this paper that were probably controversial. Well, my dad read the paper. And he, being a very dyed-in-the-wool southerner at the time, did not agree with my conclusions. I think he decided I was getting into a little bit too liberal frame of mind. So he was not unhappy to have me transfer, and the move to Cambodia was a good reason for me to transfer. Plus, Dickinson was a good bit more expensive than Georgia.

Q: Did you find yourself moving to one party or the other?

BAZALA: I began to be a newspaper reader (*The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*), and I began to think about things. The very first presidential election I remember was Eisenhower and Stevenson. In those days all southerners were Democrats. You just were.

There was no choice really. You were told that. But I must admit I remember thinking very positively about Eisenhower. Stevenson seemed like a nice guy, but he didn't excite, you know? He didn't have the charisma.

Q: Well, what religion were you?

BAZALA: Episcopalian.

Q: Was this a strong theme, or did it just come with the territory?

BAZALA: I went to church. I taught Sunday school. I played the piano for the Sunday school. I went to church camp. It wasn't the dominant thing in my life, but we went to church like everybody else went to church.

Q: How about high school, extracurricular things?

BAZALA: I joined some after school clubs, as most kids did, but no sports. Mostly I was studying. I was pretty much at the top of my class. In those days there was not quite the emphasis on having a lot of extracurricular activities on your resume as there is now.

Q: Did you feel in this environment that there was much of an opportunity for a woman to have a career, or was it pretty much the expectation to eventually get married and raise a family?

BAZALA: Definitely the latter. My parents thought they were being quite modern to emphasize to me that I would be going to college. So it never dawned on me there was a choice until I was a senior in high school and some of my classmates said they weren't going to college. I said, "You're *not?* Everybody has to go to college." I just assumed college was the next step. Since Athens was a college town, it was possible and cheaper to go to school at the University of Georgia and live at home. My parents' ambition was to prepare me to be a teacher or a secretary or something of that nature. Ultimately they wanted me to marry into a good family to a guy with a good job and raise a couple of grandchildren.

I had no brothers, which actually benefited me because my parents probably focused more on me than they might have. My mother was a little more ambitious for me. She would pick up on my latest interest and say, "Well, maybe you want to be an astronomer," or whatever was interesting to me at the time.

Q: Were you a newspaper reader?

BAZALA: Absolutely, still am. I worked on my high school newspaper, and in college I was an editor of the UGA yearbook. I really liked that kind of work, the publishing business.

Q: You were in college from when to when?

BAZALA: I took a year off between my sophomore and junior years to go to Cambodia. I started college in 1959 and I graduated in 1964.

Q: How about the election of President Kennedy? Did this affect you? For your generation it was often a turning point.

BAZALA: Oh yes. Kennedy was really quite talked about, quite popular actually. I vividly remember when he died. I was coming out of an art history class at UGA. We had been watching slides in the dark. I came outside into the bright sunlight, and I couldn't see too well because my eyes were adjusting. It was deadly silent all over the campus except for a car radio. People had stopped their cars and were listening to the radio about what happened to Kennedy in Dallas. Everyone was totally shocked and saddened by that.

Q: What was happening with integration, was it hitting you?

BAZALA: Integration issues came to the fore in my sophomore year after I transferred to the University of Georgia. My parents had already gone to Cambodia where they spent two years. I went there for their second year; that's why I took a year off from college. But their first year abroad I was staying in the dorm. In January there were two who came to be the vanguard of the integration movement at UGA. One was Charlayne Hunter, who later became a famous journalist.

There were incidents of violence and demonstrations. The dorms were in a quadrangle. Luckily I was not in the dorm next to the street where the demonstrations were taking place. On the other hand, I could not see what was going on, and we were in lockdown mode. I later learned there was so much going on in the street that the police were shooting teargas to control the protesters and demonstrators in front. I was living on the top floor of my dorm, and the teargas wafted up over the top of the dorm between my dorm and the street. It came under the window into our room, so my roommate and I were affected. It was scary especially because we weren't sure what was going on.

Q: Did you have any particular feeling for what was happening, or was this just happening?

BAZALA: I thought it was time. I'm trying to think whether we were integrated at Dickinson. We may have been, I just don't recall. I was exposed to some different ideas there, and I remember thinking, "Well, this is only fair. Integration is coming, and we might as well get with the program at UGA and move on."

Q: As I recall the Governor of Georgia, Lester Maddox, was making quite a fuss.

BAZALA: He was governor from 1967–1971. He became famous about 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was passed, for resisting integration in a very public way.

Q: Was this pretty much the town versus the country thing?

BAZALA: I don't think so. I don't have the sense that it was. The university is very dominant in Athens. It's right downtown for one thing. And there were something like forty thousand students at the time. So when the university was in session, it was completely a college town. There wasn't much else going on. There was a Naval Supply Corps School where the U.S. Navy trained people on logistics and so on. My father and mother had some interaction with them because of my father's previous service. But I also think because it was a college town that people were a little more open minded than if it had been a rural town that didn't have an institution of higher learning.

Q: Let's take your excursion to Cambodia, which is quite something. How did this come about?

BAZALA: The forerunner of USAID [United States Agency for International Development]—and I can't even remember what it was called at the time, but it was basically USAID—planned to set up an agricultural teachers college in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. They contracted with the University of Georgia, which has a big agricultural college, to send a group of professors to Cambodia to teach teachers for the college in Phnom Penh. They asked my father to consider doing this. When this first came up—I have to laugh—we had no idea where Cambodia was. I think everybody knows where Cambodia is now, but at the time we thought, "Well, is this place in Africa, or where?" Like Cameroon or something. So of course we got out a map and we checked it out, but there was not a lot we could find out. Without Google in those days our research options were limited.

Q: Well, it wasn't on the front page until the Khmer Rouge came in a little later.

BAZALA: Right. My mother was waffling back and forth about whether to go. She felt this would be a great opportunity to travel, which she had always wanted to do. And she wanted her daughters to have that experience as well. But should we just drop everything and go? My mother was an adventurous type, however. After all, she decided to leave Louisiana and go wander around the United States with my father during the war years. What did the trick in the end was a cocktail party in Athens where she was introduced to somebody, and she said, "Oh, and what do you do?" And he said, "Well, I work at the State Department. I have the Cambodia desk." She immediately started plying him with questions, and he was very encouraging. When she came home that night, she said, "I think we should go." They were in Cambodia from 1960–1962.

Q: How did you find it?

BAZALA: It was fascinating. After I finished my sophomore year at UGA I flew out by myself via Hawaii. I met my mother and sister in Hong Kong, and after some shopping we went on to Cambodia. I taught English as a second language to Cambodians, and I signed up with a *lycée*, a French speaking very prominent high school in Phnom Penh, to audit classes even though I was beyond high school age. I was doing it to improve my

French. I retook subjects like chemistry where I knew the subject matter, but I was just listening for the language. I don't know how much good it did me, but it couldn't have hurt. I also took language classes at the embassy.

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

BAZALA: William Trimble.

Q: How did you find the Cambodians you met?

BAZALA: Lovely people. I never in a million years expected them to do what they did later, as they were very sweet and docile, polite, quiet. It was a rice producing and exporting country at the time, so there was no problem with food. They seemed to have a nice life. They had a popular leader, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who was considered a benevolent dictator. He used to fly in a helicopter over the city to the poor areas and dump out bolts of cloth to give to the people, that kind of thing.

We were invited to some of the local festivals and other events. I was asked to teach two of Sihanouk's daughters English. They showed up at my apartment house in his limo. I can't remember exactly how old they were, perhaps twelve or fourteen. Of course they spoke fluent French and they had had some English. They were very sweet. I think ultimately one of them went off to France and studied pharmacy. Sihanouk had numerous children because he had more than one wife.

Q: Was Cambodia pretty peaceful at the time?

BAZALA: Oh yes. There were rumblings from neighboring Vietnam and there was a Vietnamese minority in Cambodia. There was a lot of prejudice against the Vietnamese in Cambodia and they usually held low status jobs. Our maid was Vietnamese, as were most of the maids.

In addition to the college they were building, the aid agency constructed a road to the sea, to the port.

Fishing was an important source of food and plentiful because of the lake (Tonlé Sap) and there were ducks and other birds. I went duck hunting on the lake with my father once. We also traveled by car to Siem Reap where the ancient Angkor complex is. It is now a popular tourist destination, but in those days it was relatively unvisited. I still have slides and pictures that my father took from those days.

Q: What did this do for you? Did it whet an appetite for something?

BAZALA: Oh definitely. Because here's this little Georgia girl who suddenly ended up in a place like Cambodia, and it was at exactly the time of my life when I was opening up to all kinds of experiences. I had had two years of college and was studying for a history degree. Then this experience of living and traveling abroad turned me around. When I

returned to UGA I took a lot of classes in political science, especially international relations. On the trip back to the U.S. from Cambodia my parents arranged for an around the world trip with several stops. My mother had always had the idea that all fairly well-off southern children should have a year abroad or a tour of Europe to broaden their education, but my parents couldn't afford it. This was a great opportunity to fulfill that ambition. We went to India, Egypt, Lebanon, Greece, Italy, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Q: While you were in Cambodia, did you have any contact with the embassy?

BAZALA: Yes. I was taking French classes there. And there was a group of young officers working with the mission. There was also a volunteer organization, a forerunner of the Peace Corps. It wasn't a big embassy, so the younger set all knew each other. There was a theater group with Brits and Americans, and I helped with that. We also organized trips and parties.

Interestingly enough, a few years ago I met a retired ambassador who was there at the same time I was. He was working in OIG [Office of Inspector General], which is where I ended up at the end of my career. I don't know how it came about, but we were comparing notes and we found out we had both been in Cambodia at the same time. He was a junior officer then. I don't really remember him from that time, and I don't think he remembered me, but we must have met.

Q: Did this develop an interest in the Foreign Service?

BAZALA: I certainly developed an interest in international relations and travel. At that time I wasn't really aware of what the Foreign Service was. I knew people went overseas and did things like work in embassies and work in USAID, but I wasn't paying a whole lot of attention to what that was. My focus was college at that point. When I went back to UGA I started taking classes to understand more the context of where I had traveled and world affairs. I would say the Cambodia experience was what definitely led me into this profession.

Q: You came back just at the time we were really getting involved in Vietnam, didn't you?

BAZALA: Yes. There were early signs of conflict in Vietnam while we were in Cambodia. The commissary shipment from Saigon to Phnom Penh was delayed from time to time because it was too dangerous on the road for the trucks to come through. Although we flew to Saigon from Phnom Penh once while I was there, we had to check with the embassy to make sure it was safe.

Q: Did you become sort of "Miss Cambodia" for information when you got back to Georgia?

BAZALA: People weren't really interested. When it was mentioned, I heard: "Oh, that must have been interesting. Have you heard about so and so's baby?" Or whatever was the latest bit of local news.

Q: We've all been through that.

BAZALA: It was a struggle. It still is sometimes difficult to explain what it is you do.

Q: What year did you graduate from college?

BAZALA: Nineteen sixty-four, because I took a year out to live in Cambodia.

Q: What was your major?

BAZALA: I double majored in history and political science.

Q: What were you planning on doing?

BAZALA: I had no plans. I wasn't raised to have plans or ambitions beyond preparing for marriage.

Q: Your M.R.S. degree.

BAZALA: It wasn't just my family. That was the way it was at the University of Georgia. We were supposed to acquire social skills, get a decent education, and meet suitable guys. I was in a sorority (Delta Delta Delta), which my parents were willing to pay for because they thought I'd have better opportunities to meet the right guy.

In those days the university was on the quarter system, rather than on the semester system. I had taken so many classes (I took extra courses on a couple of occasions) that I finished my coursework in March. But that was the one quarter when you couldn't graduate. There were graduation ceremonies after all the others. So I had to wait until June to graduate. Since I didn't have anything else to do and I had already been admitted to the UGA graduate school, I went ahead and took a couple of classes as a graduate student. Some of the classes would have both undergraduates and graduates, but the graduate students had more requirements. I was writing a paper for the graduate class in the study room of the sorority house, and one of my friends, who was in the same class, said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "I'm writing a paper for such and such class."

She said, *(gasps)* "Do we have to write a paper?"

And I said, "Well, you're an undergraduate; you don't need to."

And she said, "You mean you're in graduate school?"

And I said, “Yes.”

And she said, “But you’re not even engaged yet!” (laughs) It meant I had failed because I had finished college, and I didn’t have my life set up with a partner.

Q: Well, let’s talk a little about social life. What was dating like in those days?

BAZALA: The key to an active social life at UGA was to join a fraternity or sorority. However, I really did not like the fraternity party scene, you know—drunks in the basement drinking beer in paper cups—it didn’t turn me on at all. But at the time I thought there was something wrong with me because everybody else seemed to like it. So although I dated some, I never had a serious boyfriend at UGA.

Q: Were you feeling what’s wrong with me or something like that?

BAZALA: I knew I didn’t enjoy the things that most of my sorority sisters seemed to enjoy. I didn’t have the same ambitions that they seemed to have. I was very interested in my studies. I graduated with honors and Phi Beta Kappa. I didn’t want to go the typical route for nice southern girls. I wanted to do something different, something more exciting. Especially because I had been in Cambodia, I knew there was something more interesting out there in the world.

Q: Did you get a master’s degree?

BAZALA: I went on to get a master’s degree. To back up a moment, I had a professor at UGA who taught a couple of my classes in international relations, and he took an interest in me. He’s the one who told me about the Foreign Service. He said, “This would be good for you.” He knew my background because he knew my parents. It’s a small society in Athens. So he suggested I apply to graduate schools that focused on international relations. In fact he told me he was not going to give me an A if I didn’t apply to graduate school. So I applied to one, SAIS [School of Advanced International Studies] at Johns Hopkins, to make him happy but without any expectation that I would get in, much less get financial aid to pay for it. I also applied to the University of Georgia because I had just been named co-editor of the university yearbook. That was something I was very interested in. So one way or the other I was probably going to get a master’s degree, whether at Georgia or at SAIS. SAIS waitlisted me initially, plus it was very expensive, so I planned to stay on at Georgia.

Q: SAIS is the School of Advanced International Studies located in Washington, but it’s part of Johns Hopkins University. It’s an extremely fine place.

BAZALA: Yes.

That summer, however, life took a different turn. My mother had some connections in New York, and since she knew I was interested in publishing she got me introductions in

New York to some publishers, hoping I could get a job there. I went to New York and landed a job with Time Life Books in Rockefeller Center, thinking this would be just for the summer. I was a typist and receptionist, but I thought they would train me as a researcher eventually if I stayed there. About the end of July, all of a sudden SAIS informed me that I was at the top of their waitlist and I was going to be accepted. Plus, they would offer me a full fellowship to study the first year in Bologna, Italy. Needless to say I dropped everything, went home, packed up, and headed to Italy.

Q: How did your family feel about this?

BAZALA: Well, so long as somebody else was paying for it and I wanted to go, they agreed. In addition my sister was about to start college and they had to put her through school. My mother was all for it and she helped me a lot. She rented my room at home to a student and sent me the money. I also worked in Bologna typing for pocket money.

Q: You were in Italy from when to when?

BAZALA: 1964–1965.

Q: Things were beginning to heat up regarding our involvement in Vietnam. Was it reflected at all in Italy?

BAZALA: Not really. We did have two Foreign Service officers there. FSI [Foreign Service Institute] sponsored a year of graduate study for them. I think one of the guys had some military background, but he was older and married and just wasn't in the same social circle I was in. We were in Europe and our study focus was Europe. Vietnam didn't really come into focus for me at that point.

Q: Did you study Italian politics?

BAZALA: A bit. We all took two weeks of Italian before we started school, just for survival. (laughs) I took one class on the Italian economy. The Italian professor who taught the class was very good. SAIS brought in professors from all over Europe. I really enjoyed the whole experience.

Q: Did you have any feel about "the communist menace?"

BAZALA: In Italy?

Q: In Italy.

BAZALA: Oh definitely, because Bologna was at the center of it. There was an election, and there was a lot of concern about how well the communists would do. Living in the city we didn't notice much other than observing flags occasionally. Bologna is a nice city to live in with really good food. We had school-sponsored trips. We went to Sicily during the election. At that time all soldiers had to go home to vote, making travel so crowded

and difficult I literally stood up in the aisle of the train or sat on my suitcase all the way to Sicily.

Q: What did you take away from this Bologna experience?

BAZALA: A lot of good friends, very stimulating professors, and interesting travel experiences.

Q. Who was the head of the Bologna Center then?

The name of the director of the Bologna Center at that time was C. Grove Haines.

Q: How did you find living in Italy?

BAZALA: I loved it. There was an apartment complex for students with four to each two-bedroom apartment. Only about a quarter of us were women, so that was a nice thing. My roommates were from Sweden, Italy, and the U.S.

Italian money in those days came in big sheets that would never fit in your wallet. I remember once going to the bank to get the monthly distribution of my stipend from the Italian government. The cashier began laying out these big sheets of lira and I thought, "What am I going to do with this?"

Q: Did you have any plans for what you were going to do later?

BAZALA: Still not. I just somehow never could think into the future. Men are always brought up to have some kind of a career goal and to make money, but I wasn't. The Europeans tended to be a little older when they came to Bologna, and many already had law degrees or other advanced degrees and were ready to enter the job market. Most had ambitions to go into their own diplomatic service, international organizations, law, or banking.

Q: Well, in my experience, in the European system so much relied on connections. And if you had connections through your family with the people in their respective countries' Foreign Service, that would be a pretty good indicator that you'd get in.

BAZALA: Right. We had trips sponsored by the school. We went to Paris and Brussels. At that time NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe] were located near Paris. We met with many people who were part of those organizations and others. I remember the European students were always chatting these people up afterwards trying to make connections because perhaps they had ambitions to be in the international arena at the time. Of course the European students all spoke multiple languages as most Europeans who are educated do. So they had a clear view of their goals. The Americans talked about the Foreign Service or international organizations or international business. That was sort of the general

thinking. But since most of us were first-year students, we weren't really focused on careers at that point.

Q: So Bologna was one year?

BAZALA: Bologna was one year followed by a second year at SAIS Washington to finish the degree.

I should mention that during the summer following my academic year in Bologna, seven of us (all Americans) arranged a camping trip through East Europe and the Soviet Union, traveling in two small cars and sleeping in pup tents. We traveled for six weeks and had all sorts of adventures. The Russians were friendly up to a point and helpful when we had car problems. The food was awful, the showers cold, and the gas stations few and far between. We had to stay on specific routes designated by Intourist, the Russian travel agency, but we went from the Crimea to Moscow to Leningrad (today's St. Petersburg) to Kiev. We also had stops in Trieste, Hungary, and Romania, and we passed through East Germany. When we ended the trip in Munich, we all went our separate ways. I spent the second half of the summer in Lausanne, Switzerland taking a summer course in French.

Q: So did you continue on at SAIS Washington?

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: What area were you concentrating on?

BAZALA: European area studies.

Q: I imagine that by this time you were fairly familiar with the Foreign Service, or at least had a pretty good idea what it was about.

BAZALA: Some. I knew you had to take a test and you got sent overseas. I didn't know the individual components really.

Q: Having been in Cambodia and all and having more experience than most American students would have had, did you have any particular feel for what was happening in Vietnam?

BAZALA: I remember writing a paper in undergraduate school for my professor, the one who encouraged me to go on to graduate school, about the "domino theory." This was the hypothesis that if one of the countries of the region went communist, then all of Indochina would ultimately do so. I had some experience in the area, and I certainly knew where all these countries were and little about them.

When we were in Cambodia, we visited Saigon. At the time there was a very strong French influence and feel—a very charming ambiance. French and Vietnamese were spoken and almost nothing else. All the streets had French names. In the little restaurants

and sidewalk cafes all the menus were in French, and they all served French onion soup. The best schools were modeled after French *lycées*, and anybody who was educated spoke French. I rarely heard a word of English. That's what I remember about Vietnam in 1961. When I went back in 1969 when I worked in the Pentagon, it had completely changed, and English dominated and later Vietnamese. If you dug deeply enough you found the French, but all the street names had been changed. Later on they reverted back to Vietnamese, but first they were in English.

Q: At SAIS were they pushing any particular job fields?

BAZALA: Not really. I think many students were planning to try for the Foreign Service, including one of my roommates who made it. This was not an option for me, because my future husband, Razvigor Bazala, and I met at SAIS Washington and decided to get married. At that time married women could not be in the Foreign Service. So I didn't consider taking the test at that point. I did later, but that just wasn't an option in 1966.

So I took the Civil Service exam instead. There was a component of it at that time, a management intern exam, which has now morphed into the Presidential Management Intern program. I was very lucky because federal agencies were hiring in those days. I received multiple letters encouraging me to interview or send a resume. I had two offers, one from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and one from DOD [Department of Defense]. The CIA took so long with the security clearance process that I ultimately threw up my hands and took the DOD offer, which was, in any case, at a higher grade level with better pay. I joined DOD as a GS-9 [General Service] in the Office of the Secretary of Defense [OSD] as a management intern.

Q: Had you gotten married at this point?

BAZALA: I married a year after I started at DOD.

Q: We've done an oral history with your husband so we can refer back and forth. Was he in the Foreign Service at the time?

BAZALA: No, he was studying for a doctorate at Georgetown. When he came to the end of his course work, he took the Foreign Service exam for USIA. When he passed, we decided that was our future.

One reason I took the DOD job in OSD was that it had some overseas components. The big thing at the time was Vietnam. After rotating through a couple of short assignments, I landed in Southeast Asia Programs, which, of course, was all about Vietnam. We were doing research and analyzing data and preparing briefing points, memos, and articles all based on material coming in from Vietnam. That fit in with my interest in Southeast Asia and my background in international studies.

Q: Well, how did you feel about these reports? I mean all sorts of statistical games that were being played with Vietnam and much of it was highly suspect.

BAZALA: Right. Were you there?

Q: I was a consul general in Saigon in 1969–1970. I was talking to people who were doing this sort of thing. Were you a bit suspicious of what you were dealing with?

BAZALA: We kind of knew. In my particular office there was a Civil Service office director, three civilian employees, and three military officers. All three officers had recently come back from combat in Vietnam so we had first hand accounts of what was going on. We received all the data coming in from the field, but much was suspect. For example, the newly arrived second lieutenants would go into the hamlets in their assigned area, and they would report, "The church is functioning" or "Vietcong are in the village at night," or whatever the situation was. They gave each hamlet a letter score, like A, B, C, D. All that information was reported back to us monthly. Viet Cong body counts were another suspect number.

My particular portfolio was enemy activity. Every attack and incident of sabotage or terrorism or harassment was reported. It was my job to take that data, analyze it, and try to make sense out of it, using a timeline and statistical analysis to try to determine patterns and predict future activity. It was always possible to correlate the monsoon season with the activity, for example. We produced a monthly report called the "Southeast Asia Analysis Report." I wrote dozens of articles for it using data charts and graphs to illustrate the information.

Robert McNamara was the secretary of defense, and he was very interested in this kind of information. About two hundred of us in OSD were nicknamed McNamara's "whiz kids." Only two were women. Most of the civilian men came out of top colleges. The plus for them was a draft deferment for the duration of their Pentagon service.

Occasionally some of the charts we produced would end up being briefed to the press. One time it was something I produced. We also were on the cutting edge of using computers, which was in retrospect, very interesting. I had, for example, a contract computer programmer assigned to me. I would tell him I wanted to see the data compiled in a particular way. And he'd go away, do his thing, and come back with a big stack of printouts. And I'd say, "Well, I need this reduced to something more manageable," and we worked back and forth to come up with something usable.

The Pentagon had one of the first flatbed printers produced by Hewlett Packard. It was bigger than this table, a huge thing. It had pens of different colors that were programmed to drop down to write text or make marks or symbols on large sheets of paper. It could draw a big map of Vietnam and make various colored marks reflecting the programmed data. For example, some of the maps showed the hamlets in different stages of pacification or the concentrations and types of enemy activity. That was very cool to see.

Q: Were people interested in what you were doing or was it so classified you couldn't talk about it?

BAZALA: Well, no, we could say we worked on Vietnam, and I don't think I ever dealt with anything higher than secret. The monthly report we produced was classified secret, but each article would have a different classification. My boss and his boss were both civilians, which was actually a good thing for me. They taught me a lot, including how to write clearly. When you come into any job out of college the tendency is to write like we wrote papers in college. When you get into government they want short and sweet, none of this filler stuff. It was painful sometimes, but very helpful. Another colleague taught a small group of us statistics after hours. I did that job for four years.

Q: I think you're pointing to one of the things civilians don't have. In a way everybody has pressure, but they don't have quite the same pressure that a military man or woman would have in writing about something. With the military, you're supposed to accomplish something.

BAZALA: That's true and here is an example. We could always tell when a new person arrived in Vietnam to take over as an advisor to a particular hamlet, usually about once a year. As soon as they arrived that hamlet's grade would drop. Maybe previously it was a B and then all of a sudden it became a C or D, but by the end of that guy's tour it was a B again. So we tried to correct for that kind of thing.

Q: McNamara was renowned for being a bean counter and was really into figures and all. He was applying this to Vietnam.

BAZALA: Yes, but Vietnam didn't lend itself so easily to his methods.

Q: They weren't automobiles he was reporting on.

BAZALA: Right, and we sensed that. We got a little cynical about it, too, especially after talking to our military colleagues who'd been over there.

Q: Did you go to Vietnam at all during that time?

BAZALA: I did.

Q: Where were you located and what were you doing there?

BAZALA: I went to Saigon for consultations with people in MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam], which was the headquarters for U.S. military activities in Vietnam. Another one of my OSD responsibilities was the Chieu Hoi program, which was a program to take in defectors from the Viet Cong. We were trying to measure what types of people we were getting. I went out to one of the camps on the outskirts of Saigon where they kept them. I was in Saigon about a week. This was in June 1969.

Q: After the Tet Offensive?

BAZALA: Correct, that was in 1968.

Q: How did the Tet Offensive affect your office and the group you were working with? I mean was this unexpected?

BAZALA: You could see the indicators, especially in retrospect. It was a big deal, and it certainly affected my analysis work. There was a sense after that of thinking the unthinkable, that we might not win this war.

I may be reading more into it than I thought at the time. The thing that affected me more than anything though was when the U.S. went into Cambodia in April 1970. Having lived in Cambodia, the thought of drawing that country into this conflict really turned me off. Up until that time Cambodia hadn't really been drawn into the war. If we weren't leaving soon for Raz's first Foreign Service assignment, I believe I would have quit. That was the last straw for me.

Q: I was there in Saigon, and maybe I was too close to it. I kind of thought it was a good thing at the time only because the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese were using Cambodia as a base. I thought, "Let's go after it."

BAZALA: From a military standpoint I understand that completely. I was coming at it from a more emotional standpoint because I knew Cambodia and I knew how it was going to tear up the country.

Q: As is so often the case, these interventions stir up things. In Cambodia it stirred up the Khmer Rouge.

BAZALA: It was so tragic. I guess I sensed something was going to be coming that would be very unpleasant. At that point Raz was in Polish language training, and we were going to be leaving for Poland anyway. I resigned from DOD in the summer, and we left in August for Warsaw. By then the anti-war movement was in full gear, and events were happening on campuses and elsewhere. You can't help but be affected by that.

Q: No, absolutely not. My wife was going to the University of Maryland when I was in Vietnam, and she was getting a feeling for the opposition. I was, you know, a supporter of the war and all that. But it was a different time.

So then your husband was assigned to Warsaw. Were you taking Polish?

BAZALA: I had about six weeks of what was then called the "wives' course." In Warsaw in those days few people spoke English, especially those I'd be dealing with in the stores and so forth. I also took Polish classes while I was there. They offered language classes to spouses at the embassy. I actually came out with a 1+ when I was tested later on.

Q: You were in Poland from when to when?

BAZALA: August 1970 to New Year's Day 1974.

Q: What was your impression of Warsaw at the time?

BAZALA: We were clearly living in a communist country. We sensed control over everything. I had no fear of crime or anything like that because the police were very much in control. The one thing about communist countries was they were pretty good at keeping the lid on. In that sense I felt personally pretty secure. On the other hand, the police followed us and listened to the telephone. We knew they were there.

But the Polish people as a whole were wonderful. If they weren't scared to talk to us, they were just terrific. We would host events like movie showings where we'd invite a group of young people to watch a film that was not shown in Poland. And they would come. They came in with their flowers (a Polish tradition) and they were very gracious, very nice. There was a cultural tradition of opera and ballet and films and jazz. So we really liked Poland. I think you always have a special feeling for your first post anyway.

It was a good post for us. Raz had specialized in East Europe so he was thrilled to be there. His language skills were really good, and that helped a lot. I worked part time and then our two children were born while we were there.

Q: Were you at all used as a resource by people at the embassy or elsewhere about Vietnam?

BAZALA: Not at all. It was as if I never had a prior life. We wives were categorized, pigeonholed as "spouses" and entirely defined by our husbands' positions. As Raz was the most junior officer there at the time, you can imagine where that put me.

This was before the under secretary for management sent out a memo in 1972 or 1973 saying that wives would no longer be evaluated on their husband's efficiency reports for their entertaining abilities and other suitable good works. The policy about no married women in the Foreign Service also changed, and several who had been forced to resign after marriage were reinstated.

Q: I used to write efficiency reports of other people's wives, and my wife was rated by my rating officers.

BAZALA: Being the most junior wife, I got the worst assignments. It really grated. I would very proudly tell people that I worked in the Pentagon in a professional job, and I was a GS-13 when I left. It absolutely cut no ice with anybody. Your status was linked to what your husband did. That's who you were. People were nice in a patronizing way, and there were other young wives there, so I had friends.

Q: There's a hierarchy.

BAZALA: It's there. It's not always explicitly stated, but you knew it. I really had a hard time with that.

Q: I can imagine.

BAZALA: Fortunately, at that point we were focused on starting a family. I had both of my children during our time in Poland. I think that helped me put aside my professional aspirations temporarily.

Q: Did you find any particular elements within Polish society favoring more of the artsy type or something that was not particularly wedded to the system?

BAZALA: I think people got away with what they could, and they were always very interested in anything to do with America. They listened to Radio Free Europe and VOA [Voice of America]. Jazz was really big. Raz was assistant cultural affairs officer with USIA [United States Information Agency]. He had programs coming in all the time such as exhibits and cultural groups. That is what USIA used to do. These programs were all well attended. Raz also had a lot of contacts with students. As long as people did things in groups it apparently was a little easier for them than to have an individual contact. People came to our apartment to watch a movie, but you had to invite twenty of them just to help them say, "I went in the group." Supposedly they were reporting on each other if they got into some deep conversation. I think it was less restrictive than in the Soviet Union at the time.

Q: Did you find that you could have contact with a group of Polish women?

BAZALA: I don't recall that really. Part of the problem was my lack of a good command of the language. I had a lovely older woman as a maid and babysitter and I managed to communicate with her to some extent. Once she invited us to her apartment for dinner with her family. We were watching TV there when, in a surprise move, Edward Gierek replaced the long-time First Secretary of the Communist Party Wladyslaw Gomulka in December 1970. The reaction was one of glee because Gierek was seen as somewhat more progressive than his predecessor, and there was considerable dissatisfaction in the country over food shortages and other issues.

Q: Did you get called upon to produce sandwiches or preside at tea at the embassy?

BAZALA: Oh yes. At one outdoor Fourth of July event Mary Ann Stoessel (wife of Ambassador Walter Stoessel) had us painting rocks red, white, and blue to weigh down the napkins for an outdoor event. She was so upset when Under Secretary William Macomber's memo came out in 1973. It said that spouses could not be ordered to help with entertaining, among other things.

Mrs. Stoessel was furious. I knew her well because I worked for her part time as her social secretary, which meant writing out menu cards and inviting people to functions. She was a very nice person really; don't get me wrong. I admired the way she performed

her role, and I learned a lot of lessons watching her function as the ambassador's spouse. She was very traditional. She said to me, "I've been in this business for twenty-five years, and now it's my turn to call on the rest of the embassy to help me out, and they pulled the rug out from under me." I heard that she wrote Under Secretary Macomber a letter because she was so upset about it. I could understand her feelings even though I was personally pleased about the Macomber memo.

Q: The point is that the wives of that era were a great contribution to the operation. We *used to laugh and call them two-fers, two for the price of one. I mean these were professional ladies and they had a hard job and they did it well.*

BAZALA: That was the expectation.

My mother was so excited when Raz joined the Foreign Service. She said, "Oh, this is wonderful. You can entertain a lot." She was very extroverted and she loved to entertain. She did it beautifully. She was a wonderful cook, and she could arrange flowers and she won prizes for her creations. She would have been a great diplomat's wife. I thought when I grew up, "Okay, I'll do all that stuff, and I will like it." Well, of course I've learned how to do it. But it's not my favorite thing in life to do. I was looking into the future, seeing years of this kind of thing and thinking, "This is not my strength; this is not my focus in life." However, I was so caught up with the children as babies at that time that I put off thinking about it while we were in Warsaw. But the crunch was coming.

Q: Did you have any contact with Poles talking about the Russians?

BAZALA: Not so much, but there were some interesting things I observed. For example, they all knew Russian because they had to study it in school. They would find out, for example, that Raz spoke German, and if they were above a certain age, they all spoke some German. So they would much prefer to speak German if you didn't speak Polish. Or if you spoke Russian to them, they would choose to speak German. They wanted to flip that Russification business aside if they could.

Q: This would be your first time living within a structured sort of society with the embassy and all. Did you feel comfortable, did you adjust to it, or how did you find it?

BAZALA: I adjusted to it, but it was more confining than most places, just because we were in a communist country. We had to mind our Ps and Qs because of that. There were a couple of scandals even so. It was like a small village and everybody knew everybody else's business. If my neighbor here in McLean, Virginia had an affair, I would have no idea. But it went on in Warsaw, and everybody knew.

It was life in a fishbowl. There were so many rules. For example, there was a preference to assign only married officers to Warsaw. It's one reason Raz got the job. He was one of the few in his entering class who were married, and he specifically wanted an assignment in East Europe. The rules were not terribly successful at preventing problems, but anyway, that was the theory.

Living in Poland was also confining because we could not easily drive out to the West. East Germany was closed off to us then. When we first traveled to Warsaw, we drove in through Czechoslovakia from West Germany, a two-day trip. We could take an overnight train to Vienna as we did our first Christmas, or catch the return commissary flight back to its base in Frankfurt or England.

Q: I was married and had three kids when I was in Belgrade. I kept waiting for that beautiful blonde spy to assault me, but it never happened. (laughs)

BAZALA: We did have some incidents like that. There's a very well-known piano competition that takes place every five years in Warsaw, the Chopin piano competition. We were there for the 1970 competition, and it was very exciting. An American, Garrick Ohlsson, won, and it was a big sensation at that time. We were assigned to escort him and his mother on his victory concert tour around Poland to Krakow and other places, which was really fun for us. I remember being in our hotel room a couple of times when there'd be a knock on the door, and an attractive young lady stood there. So I made a point of answering the door. (laughs)

Q: Whoops!

BAZALA: Whoops, yes, exactly. There were stories of men traveling alone who were approached—it was pretty open, pretty blatant.

Q: It was an interesting era.

BAZALA: Very. It was a little disconcerting knowing they were listening to us. But I kept telling Raz, "Well, it must be the most boring job in the world because all they're hearing from us are babies crying and baby talk."

Q: Did you have any sort of harassment by the Polish Secret Service?

BAZALA: Not really except that they kept tabs on us whenever we went anywhere. We did a tour with a moon rock for exhibition, for example.

Q: These are rocks taken from our—

BAZALA: Our first landing on the moon. It was in a plexiglas container, like a big bubble, and we carried it in a diplomatic pouch. We delivered the rock to various museums to exhibit for a certain number of days. As we headed out in the car with this thing in the trunk, we'd get to a fork in the road where we could go in either direction. At the fork we would see two milicija (police) standing there with their little signs—we called them popsicles. There was a phone booth beside the road and as soon as we took whichever fork it was, in the rear view mirror we saw one of them heading to the phone booth to report, "Okay, they're headed on the Krakow road (or whatever)." Also, as soon as we returned home, within half an hour the phone rang, and I'd pick up and nobody

would be there. After several times I became somewhat cynical and when I picked up the phone I said, "Yes, we're back. Thank you very much," and then hang up.

They also were listening in on the calls at the ambassador's residence. When I worked for Mrs. Stoessel, I had a small office with a phone in the residence where I could make calls. One time I picked up the phone to call another embassy, and I heard a radio in the background. So I said, "Please turn off the radio. I can't have a conversation with that going on." Click. So we knew they were listening, but they were not very sophisticated about it. We just laughed about it. That's all you could do.

Q: All right. Today is February 11, 2014, with Sylvia Bazala. You left Warsaw in 1974, I think?

BAZALA: Right, New Years Day, 1974. I remember, because we arrived in New York and had to go through customs that night, and the agents at Kennedy Airport were not in the best of moods, and I was struggling with two tired and cranky infants.

Q: Where did you go next?

BAZALA: We returned to Washington for Vietnamese language training because Raz was assigned to Vietnam. In those days almost everybody sooner or later ended up in Vietnam.

Q: I did too. (laughs)

BAZALA: Raz was going to be branch public affairs officer [BPAO] in Da Nang. He didn't have enough time to get the full language course, but he got about seven or eight months of training. We bought a townhouse in Annandale, and I stayed home with the children while he went off to FSI every day.

Q: This period of language training was from when to when?

BAZALA: January to September 1974.

Q: How did you feel about Vietnam at the time?

BAZALA: I knew a lot about it because of my work in the Pentagon for four years when I worked on Vietnam. I wasn't too thrilled about the assignment, because I was pessimistic about the outcome of the war. Plus, up to that time no family members went to Vietnam, so we were going to be among the first. We tried not to go, but the word came back that we didn't have any choice. Raz pointed out to the assignments officer that he had a wife and two small children. The response was, "Secretary Kissinger said the war is over, and therefore it's okay for families to go." So we were in the vanguard. We bit the bullet and went ahead. We arrived in Vietnam around the first week of September 1974.

We started with orientation in Saigon for about a week and then flew up to Da Nang.

Q: The week in Saigon, how did you find the spirit there at the time?

BAZALA: I don't really remember too much because only Raz had orientation. Keep in mind I had my hands full with the two babies, a three-year-old and an eighteen-month-old. So I was caught up with going to the PX [Post Exchange] to see what they had on hand and getting my IDs and other basic things.

The real story was getting on an Air Vietnam commercial flight for Da Nang. There were only two airplanes that regularly flew back and forth between Saigon and Da Nang. Somebody blew up one of the planes the day before we flew. We had to get on the remaining plane the next day. It took some courage to do that, I must say. It was not that safe.

Q: When you say things weren't safe, was it military activity, guerilla activity, or what?

BAZALA: Terrorism activity. We had other incidents in Da Nang. In fact it really was not safe for us to be there, despite what everybody was saying, i.e., the war is over and you'll be okay, et cetera, et cetera.

Q: Where did you settle in Da Nang?

BAZALA: We had a house close to the center of the city, not too far from the consulate, a rather large house. Raz was in charge of the USIS [United States Information Service] operation there. He could tell you more; there were maybe six people involved.

Q: Who was the consul general [CG]?

BAZALA: Al Francis and Terry Tull were the two CGs while we were there. I never saw the consulate staff that much, even though it was a small consulate. We were only there four months altogether.

Q: What was life like in Da Nang?

BAZALA: I tried to make a normal life for the family. That was my role at the time. But there were a lot of restrictions. You could go to the beach sometimes. The consulate had a house on China Beach where staff and families went for recreation. But from time to time we were told we couldn't go, because it wasn't safe. Then there were the sea snakes that curbed our enthusiasm for swimming in the sea. The monsoon season was coming, and we were hit once by a pretty heavy typhoon.

It was dangerous to go into the markets because of crowds and theft, and I was robbed once. Somebody slit open my purse from behind when I was walking in a crowded area and took out my money. Fortunately, I had taken only money. I lost about forty dollars in local currency. The servants usually did the daily market run. I couldn't get along without

them, but I didn't have any Vietnamese language training, so we communicated with difficulty. Also, I discovered that if I took the baby with me to the local market or the PX or any other public place, the Vietnamese crowded around and tried to pinch him and pull his hair because they had never seen a blond, blue-eyed child before, and they were curious to see if it was real.

We didn't get our shipment of surface effects; they were never forwarded to Da Nang from Saigon because of the deteriorating situation. We had to exist only on our airfreight shipment. It was fortunate the children were very young, because all the Christmas presents were in the surface shipment, and Christmas was coming. There was a small PX/commissary in Da Nang, but of course it was not geared up for children or spouses. It was stocked with military stuff, booze, and cigarettes—that kind of thing. I looked around thinking, "What on earth am I going to do for Santa Claus?" Because the Vietnamese were mostly Buddhists, there were only a few Christian institutions, so this was a real challenge. I bought the children poker chips and band-aides at the commissary. They were thrilled. They thought these were great toys. (laughs) We scrounged for a few other things. I found a small Catholic shop in the city where I bought a silver aluminum Christmas tree about four feet high. We made some decorations and found some paper items in the market. We set up that tree every Christmas for about twenty years after as a reminder of our Da Nang experiences.

In January the security situation was getting very dicey. We had a couple of nerve-wracking incidents. There was an outdoor terrace on the second level of our house. I was standing out there with my baby boy and the maid. My daughter was in a Vietnamese nursery school at the time. There was a tremendous explosion that literally knocked us to the ground and broke the windows in my daughter's bedroom. (There was no mylar on the windows.) Of course when you're experiencing something like that you have no idea what's going on. There were no phones, nothing to communicate with. I could hear the radio chatter from the guards who were on the consulate's radio circuit, and I tried to find out what was going on. I didn't know whether this explosion was at the consulate or what. It turned out that an ammunition dump near the airport blew up. That was pretty scary. There were other instances we heard about, but that was one I directly experienced.

Q: Were you beginning to say maybe it's time for me to get the hell out of here?

BAZALA: That came a little later. By January we were told we would be leaving Da Nang. USIS decided to close its operations outside of Saigon. Raz was being transferred to Saigon. We had to tell our Vietnamese friends and contacts. They saw it as the writing on the wall. Indeed it was pretty clear the U.S. was leaving Vietnam even though we tried to maintain a good face on the whole situation. It was tough saying goodbye to people who had worked with us throughout the war period and beyond. We left Da Nang on January 15 and moved to Saigon.

I would have liked staying in Saigon; it was a welcome change after the difficulties of living in Da Nang. The only problem with Saigon was that I was not permitted to drive a car. Spouses could not drive. We didn't have cars anyway, because nobody could bring a

private car to Vietnam at the time. So I had to call on the embassy motor pool for a ride, but dependents were at the end of the priority list for transportation. I could take local taxis and cyclos, but they were not the safest things in the world.

Q: Were people talking about "boy, we've got to get out of here," or not?

BAZALA: There was a lot of tension, yes. And it got worse over the three months we were there. We took R&R [rest and relaxation] travel in March and went to the beach at Panang, Thailand. While we were in Bangkok, I read the English language press in Thailand about Vietnam. News reports indicated the Vietnamese highlands were being taken over by the North Vietnamese and military units that were traveling down the Ho Chi Minh trail. I knew from my previous experience working at the Pentagon that that was a bad sign, because it wasn't the normal time of year for them to be moving. Raz and I talked quite a bit at that point about my not going back to Vietnam from our R&R in Bangkok. But that was going to be pretty complicated to arrange and we didn't have authorization to travel, so I did go back. The next month was pretty tense, to say the least.

Q: Was there fighting around Saigon at the time?

BAZALA: No. That occurred toward the end of April. The worst thing was not getting any current news. We had Armed Forces Network news. There would be a broadcast and I would hear, "Live and direct from the United States." Well, after you listened to it about three or four or five times, you realized they were repeating exactly the first one that you had heard, word for word. So it wasn't live and direct. We were not getting the most up-to-date information. And it's really scary when you're not told what's going on.

The ambassador at the time was Graham Martin. It seemed to us that he had his head in the sand, especially when it came to dependents. He was concerned about what signal it would send if he allowed dependents to leave. We heard that toward the end he had to be ordered by Secretary Kissinger to allow dependents to leave. The story Raz tells was that the public affairs officer [PAO], who was Alan Carter at the time, called the USIS staff together and said, "I've been told by Graham Martin that if your wives ask about leaving, you can get authorization (travel orders) to let them go. But you're not to tell them unless they ask." And Carter, to his credit, said, "I'm telling you to get your families out of here."

Then Raz and I started making plans for me and the children to leave. This was around the time that Da Nang fell to the enemy. That would have been about 28 of March. Of course we knew people from Da Nang, and they were arriving in Saigon. The stories they told about their departure experiences were just horrible. I don't know if you've heard from any of the people who had those experiences.

Q: Not really. What were some of the things you were hearing?

BAZALA: There were U.S. Navy ships off the coast of Da Nang to help with the evacuation, and there were barges loading people at the docks to take them out to the

ships. It was chaos, and people were so panicked they were throwing their children to friends on the barges, and some dropped into the water and drowned. At the airport a plane took off with people clinging to the wings and wheels—you probably saw pictures of that.

A friend of mine who stayed on in Da Nang later than we did said a contact told her he saw looters dragging her clothes and possessions out of her house onto the street, and people were fighting over her things and shooting each other for the loot. She said she had had to walk out of her house leaving everything just as it was. Her dog had to be left behind. At the last minute everybody had to leave everything. We were lucky we got out when we did. There was one guy I ran across in Saigon who said he had had to shoot at somebody because his life was in danger, just to make the evacuation flight or the boat. I don't remember which. He was shaking because he said, "I've never been a soldier, and I have never been in a situation like that." There was a lot of what we would now call post-traumatic stress syndrome evident.

The embassy was trying to move the Da Nang evacuees out of Vietnam back to the U.S. We also made plans to go. I left with the children (and our cat) on April 5. Saigon fell on the thirtieth.

Raz was left behind to help close down USIS operations and manage the pack out of our personal effects. In the end, we lost an airfreight shipment that was blown up at the airport. We were more fortunate with our surface shipment. We heard that only about half of the embassy staff's boxes made it onto a departing freighter, ours among them. Months later our surface shipment arrived in New Delhi, our next post, intact.

To back up a bit, while I was in Da Nang, I took the Foreign Service written exam, which was offered in December. Much to the annoyance of a junior officer who had to come in and proctor the thing, there were only two taking the exam, and the first guy walked out after about half an hour. I stuck it out for the whole three hours, ruining the JO's Saturday. Raz encouraged me to do it. He said, "Why not? You have nothing to lose and they changed the rules to allow married women in the Foreign Service. Now you can take the exam." He also pointed out that I had the same education he did, so I had a good chance of passing. I thought, "Okay, well nobody will ever know if I don't pass."

I found out in February, after we moved to Saigon, that I passed the written test. I was trying to figure out a way to get home to take the oral part of the exam, because you could only take it in Washington or Chicago or someplace where they offered it in the U.S. That was hanging over me while I was going through the whole evacuation process.

Raz finally got us on a Pan Am flight out of Saigon. It happened to be the same day—and maybe you remember hearing about this—that a C5A transport plane went down in a rice paddy after takeoff, killing more than a 150 passengers and crew and leaving Vietnam with a large group of orphaned Vietnamese children that were in the process of being adopted by Americans. This was part of Operation Babylift ordered by President Ford to evacuate the orphans. A number of people from the embassy were on the plane, too,

along with the military mission escorting them. It took off and immediately pancaked down into the rice fields.

I had written to my mother that I was going to try to get on one of these orphan flights to the U.S. in order to take the Foreign Service oral exam. That was my plan. Well, I never told her that plans had changed because of the evacuation and because I was leaving that same day anyway. I thought, I'll call them when I get out, because you never know how that's going to go. So they didn't know my actual departure plans from me.

In the meantime, unbeknownst to me, some helpful person in the Department of State called my mother and said, "I'm happy to tell you that your daughter and her children left Saigon on April 5." That was the very day that the orphan flight went down. It was big news at home. My mother put two and two together and for several days my parents were frantic with worry because they did not know what had happened to us.

As it turned out I was on what I believe was the last commercial Pan Am flight out of Saigon, and it left before the C5A crash so I was not aware of it for quite a while. The Pan Am flight was held up twice on our journey, once in Guam for two days and once in Honolulu for a day. I thought it best not to try to contact my parents and worry them about the problems Pan Am was having with the engines on the plane. Meanwhile my parents did not know anything. They kept calling people. Finally my father-in-law thought to call Pan Am and found out that in fact there had been a Pan Am flight that had engine trouble. So when they didn't hear anything bad, they started thinking, Well, okay, maybe I'm on that flight. But it was four days before I got to San Francisco when I was able to call them and tell them, "Here I am, we're okay."

I had my difficulties with the two babies, and on top of that I had a cat traveling with me. I heard there were some fifty pets on that Pan Am flight that people were shipping out of Saigon. Because Guam and Honolulu were both quarantine places, the plane sat on the tarmac in the heat with the pets for days while Pan Am fixed the engine trouble. Most of the pets did not survive. But my cat did, bless her heart. That was pretty traumatic. Meantime, of course, Raz was still back in Saigon.

Q: What was he thinking? I mean I've interviewed him, but do you recall? What were your joint private thoughts? It's all over?

BAZALA: Oh, I think everybody knew it was all over.

Q: Except for the ambassador.

BAZALA: Except for the ambassador, who had his head in the sand. I had two clues that things were coming to an end (even though no one would tell us that outright). I went to the vet to get a health certificate for our cat prior to leaving. The vet said the DCM's wife [Deputy Chief of Mission] had been there with their dogs, and she told him she was shipping them out. I said to myself, "Hm. The DCM's very attached to these animals. They wouldn't be shipping them out if something wasn't going on."

The other real clue for me was at the embassy swimming pool. We used to go there regularly on Sundays because there would be other families there with their children. You could have hotdogs for lunch and it was just a thing we did. We showed up one Sunday, and there were no wives and no children. We were the only ones. I started going round to the fellows asking, "Where's so and so?"

"Oh, my wife decided to go to Bangkok to shop."

"Oh, my wife went to the Philippines for a visit."

All of these were other agency and military spouses. This was a real worry. They obviously knew something we didn't know. I thought, "What am I doing here*?"* Then my daughter's nursery school closed. It was an international nursery school, and they shut down. Some of the other non-American expats were also leaving. There was quite an exodus going on that we became aware of. I almost didn't get on the plane because it was overbooked. Somebody from the embassy helped bully me onto the plane.

When we landed in San Francisco, Pan Am held us on the plane because there were eighteen orphans on that flight who were being evacuated. The president had given an order to get as many orphans as possible out of Vietnam before the end. These eighteen were a fortunate few (babies mostly) who were not on the plane that crashed. So the press met the plane and wanted to take pictures of people carrying the orphans off the plane. I was sitting there saying to myself, "I've got these two kids and I've been on a plane for days. Let me out of here." I made a fuss. You know, you reach a point where you have just had it. So they finally let me off the plane. We had friends in San Francisco that I stayed with, and I called my parents from there. Needless to say they were very relieved to hear from me.

Q: How'd your kids come out of this? I mean in particular your daughter?

BAZALA: Well, she was only three.

Q: Was she picking up any vibes, or was this just kind of fun or something?

BAZALA: She had been in a Montessori school in Annandale, Virginia when Raz was in language training, then a Baptist missionary school in Da Nang, and finally the Saigon international school. By the time we got to India, it was her fourth school and she simply refused to make friends. When her teacher and I talked, we realized that she was afraid to make friends because she thought we were going to yank her out of yet one more school. That was to me the biggest reaction she had to the whole thing.

My son turned two in June, so he was twenty-two months old when we left Vietnam. I'm glad they were as young as they were.

I got back to the U.S. in April and went home to my mother and dad in Athens, Georgia. I actually had more information there listening to the network news about what was going on in Saigon than I did when we were in Saigon. The presidential palace in Saigon was bombed on April 8, and Raz was there during that event; he's probably described that to you. That was worrying, because I knew he was in the vicinity of the palace. So the big question was when was he going to come home. It was about two weeks later. He left on the last Cathay Pacific flight out. But it was close enough to the end.

Q: Where did you take the oral exam?

BAZALA: In Washington. When Raz left Vietnam he came to Georgia and then we went up to Washington. We stayed at one of those hotels that have suites, Embassy Suites I think.

At first he was involved with the task force dealing with the refugees coming out of Vietnam. That went on for several weeks and then he was assigned to New Delhi. He took a fast course of Hindi language training for several weeks. He was doing that when I took the oral FS test in June.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions?

BAZALA: Oh yes. Who can ever forget that experience? In those days the format was an hour with three examiners who had different questions. The examiners were two women and a man. One of the women was a consular officer, and she was the chair. Another woman was a political officer. And the man was with USIA. Interestingly enough, I could sense that he was the one who was not too sure about me. The other two seemed more positive.

One question was, "You are in Egypt and you're a consular officer and an English speaking tourist drops dead at the pyramids. What do you do?" This was where my experience just being around the Foreign Service and hearing stories helped me, and I said, "You're dealing with the police so the first thing you ask is, do you have the passport? And sure enough it was a Canadian passport. Well, then you make sure the Canadians are informed to take care of their own citizen." That was one question.

Another question was, "Secretary Kissinger is going on a trip to Latin America and you have to prepare a paper that lists the major issues he's going to encounter in Latin America." That was the one area of the world that I really knew very little about. However, I had been reading the newspaper regularly because somebody had tipped me off that that was a good way to prepare for the test. So I started talking about a couple of things. I mentioned, for example, that there was a Peruvian fishing crisis at the time. They liked my answer, because they said, "Even though you said you didn't know anything, we thought you were well informed," or something like that.

You know there's always a question like this: "You're on a desert island and what books would you want with you?" Here was a variant of that. "You are at a cocktail party in

Bangladesh and a young student comes up to you who wants to study in the United States. Her field is art history. What books would you recommend to this person?" Okay? Blank. I mean total blank. And I finally said, "Well, in this case I think what I would actually do is recommend that she go by the USIS library and ask the reference librarian there to help her find the appropriate materials." Well, they really liked that answer because I was thinking on my feet.

So I passed. After I got the good news I had to go straight upstairs to be fingerprinted, the first step to get my security clearance. The man taking the fingerprints said to me, "It might be better to take off your ring so we can fingerprint you easier." I did, but I was still so shocked that I had actually passed the exam that I walked out the door and left my wedding ring there. Raz retrieved it the next day when he went to language class. I did all the necessary security and medical stuff, and then we went off to India.

Q: Well, what were they telling you? This was still fairly new for tandem couples. What was the environment that you were coming into?

BAZALA: This goes back to the test because the USIA guy said, "Well I'd be interested to know how you plan to handle full-time work and a family." You know this question would be inadmissible in this day and age.

So that was one thing. The other was that I was one of the first married women to come into the service through the regular exam process. In fact, I think I was in the first class where they took women who had not previously been in the Foreign Service. When they told me I'd passed the oral, they said, "We were impressed by the fact that after your experience in Vietnam you were still interested in a Foreign Service career." There were mixed feelings about tandem couples for quite a long time, even after several years.

Q: Did you run into any of the examiners later on?

BAZALA: I did. I ran into Sarah Nathness, who was the chair and a consular officer.

Q: Sarah and I were working together on the Board of Examiners. I left in 1977. I'm sure your examiner team was the crew I worked with a lot. We always made sure that we had a woman on the three-person team. The idea was to make sure that a woman, as one of the examiners, would be fairer to the woman, but we found sometimes the women were tougher than men.

BAZALA: Right. Well, the most sympathetic person to me was the woman who was a political officer. I was impressed with her because she had had a tough road just being in the political cone.

I knew I was going to do consular work. I was pretty certain that was where I was headed, as most women in the Foreign Service were consular officers at that time. That was okay. I wouldn't join USIA because Raz was in USIA. It was sort of a process of elimination, but I was happy enough doing consular work.

Q: So Raz was going off to India. Were they telling you to go to India too?

BAZALA: Nobody was promising anything. And besides, at that point I wasn't even on a list for an appointment yet. I still had to pass the security clearance process and the medical exam. That took a lot longer then than it does now. I went off to India with Raz as his dependent spouse with the two little kids in tow. We were very happy to go to India. It was a very good job for Raz and we liked New Delhi. I had once before visited New Delhi when I left Cambodia with my mother. That was a good thing for me, because I had positive memories of my visit there. India can be pretty intimidating if you haven't been there before. I knew people who came on assignment and turned around and left within a couple of days. They just couldn't take it. Culturally it was a challenge. I loved it in the end, but it does take getting used to.

Q: What sort of quarters did you get in New Delhi.

BAZALA: I liked our housing. We were fairly close to the embassy and within walking distance of the school. We were not in the compound behind the chancery, which still exists. A lot of people wanted to be on the compound. For one thing there were playmates for the kids and perhaps a better sense of security. But we weren't far away. Ours was a large house that had a downstairs flat and an upstairs flat. The landlord lived downstairs with his family, and they had access to the garden. We were upstairs with four bedrooms and four baths and access to the roof, which was a flat terrace. It was fenced, and part of it was covered and part was open. That was just fine, especially with the kids. My little boy was into riding his little trucks and he could ride them around safely there. We had separate servants' quarters behind the house and a driveway where we could park our car. The flat was spacious and open.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

BAZALA: William Saxbe, a former senator from Ohio and former U.S. attorney general. However, when I started working he had just left India, and Robert Goheen came to replace him after about a six-month gap. I didn't have much contact with Saxbe at all since I wasn't yet working.

Q: Did you do shopping outside, or did servants do this? I mean what contacts did you have with the Indian world?

BAZALA: Both. As far as shopping in the market for our daily food, I usually sent my cook because he could get a better deal. I had a wonderful guy, Sadari, who was our cook and sort of the major-domo of the house. Since the flat typically came with almost no appliances like a dishwasher or washer/dryer, we had servants instead. We had to. Sadari was great, a good cook, and careful about making sure our drinking water was boiled and filtered. I bought him a bicycle that he used to do the shopping. He was wonderful with our two-year-old son, and he always made non-spicy Indian dishes just for the children. I did other types of shopping. I'm pretty good at shopping, and I enjoyed that. There's a

New Delhi and an Old Delhi, and sometimes I had to gear myself up for the crowds and heat and smells in the older part of the city, but it was rewarding and fun.

Q: I was going to say, I've never been up against the full India type experience. This must have been pretty overwhelming, wasn't it?

BAZALA: It can be, yes. And driving was tricky. It's better now since the government has barred cows from central New Delhi. But in those days the cows were all over the place along with carts, bicycles, three-wheel taxi vehicles, motorcycles, motor scooters, and whatnot. Also, in the British tradition, Indians drive on the left. I learned, I drove. A lot of expats hired drivers, but I said, "I'll drive," even though it was really dangerous. The worst thing was that vehicles would come in from a side street without stopping or even looking. There was no such thing as a stop sign and not too many traffic lights. They would just zip in from the side. When I came back to the U.S. later on I once was driving down Route 50 and saw a car out of the corner of my eye coming down a side road to enter Route 50. Even though the driver had the stop sign, I slammed on my brakes because instinctively I thought, "Oh, she's going to come straight onto the street." Of course she stopped and looked at me kind of peculiarly. Another time my daughter stopped me from going around a traffic circle the wrong way.

I think the most serious concern living in India was our health. India's a pretty dangerous place for all kinds of microbes and things. We had all the shots and took all the precautions we could, but we still got stomach illnesses (Delhi belly) and various bugs. Raz probably told you the story how he almost had his leg amputated from an infected mosquito bite, for example. Once you get something, it really can take off.

There was a clinic at the embassy with an American doctor and nurse, and the Brits had a small hospital fortunately. There was a very capable Indian doctor who had trained at Duke who was also on call. He's the one who treated Raz. My daughter developed asthma from sleeping on a straw mattress. When kids are little they wet the bed, and eventually mold developed in the mattress. She started wheezing in reaction to it. We had her in the British hospital for a couple days and, of course, we changed her mattress.

For the most part we stayed healthy. Sadari was really good about boiling and filtering the water, and we trained the kids to use boiled water that we put in empty gin bottles to brush their teeth and not to suck on washrags in the bathtub.

Both of the children went to elementary school in New Delhi. Alexander was in preschool, and Alison started kindergarten. The very first day of school—and this was almost exactly the time I started working—my son came home with his *ayah*, a nursemaid, who took care of him. He had drawn a picture, and it was just green marks all over the paper. I said, "Oh, this is very interesting, tell me about it," because you never know what kids are thinking. And he said, "That's tall grass. I have to watch out for snakes in tall grass." That was his first lesson in school.

All the children had to wear hard shoes. They couldn't wear sandals or tennis shoes. The school kept twelve gardeners employed to keep the grass cut back and kill the snakes that climbed up on the rocks or sunned themselves on the sidewalk. One time the elementary school was evacuated. There was a rug in the center open space of the school where the kids gathered sometimes for singing or lessons. One day there was this hump in the middle of the carpet. After the children evacuated, school officials called in the gardeners to kill the poisonous snake that was under the carpet. So snakes were a real risk. For that reason I was really glad we didn't have the ground level apartment of our building, the one that had the garden attached. An occasional snake charmer dropped by to entertain the Indian children on the street in front of our house. I felt our children were much safer in the upstairs flat. On the other hand, rabies was a serious concern and endemic in India. Since we lived across the road from what was called a jungle area, sometimes monkeys appeared on our roof terrace swinging from the rattan shades. The children were taught to avoid them as well as any stray dogs on the streets.

Q: Did you get a chance to look at the consular operation as a potential consular officer?

BAZALA: No. I was in India for a year before I got my appointment. I did the usual things that spouses do: I entertained. I had my younger child in a playgroup. And when the children started school I got involved with that. Eventually I was on the school board, but that was later. We traveled, and I read a lot of books. I took a class on Indian culture at the museum.

We had a lot of excess rupees in those days.

Q: Oh yes, because of AID.

BAZALA: Yes. PL [Public Law] 480 money.

Q: If I recall, somebody said that the PL 480 accumulation was equivalent to the Indian budget for a year or so, and we basically gave it away.

BAZALA: Ambassador Daniel Moynihan gave away a large chunk of it. It was accumulating so fast the mission couldn't spend it fast enough to draw it down. But they tried. Raz used some to fund his USIS programs. There were science projects and any number of other things the embassy thought up. Also, everybody who arrived got to reupholster all their furniture and hang new curtains. I supervised a lot of that work for the apartment that we were in. The Indian fabrics are lovely, but they fade in the sun, so it is necessary to replace them frequently.

When I began work in the embassy, I had to participate in the unannounced audit of the funds. When it came to counting all the rupees, we did not have a machine with enough digits to register the total. We had to do it piecemeal and then add the subtotals by hand.

This was a good year for me just to be able to wind down from the Vietnam experience, and the servants I had allowed me to get out and about and do a few things. Still I was

waiting the whole time wondering what was going on with my security clearance. I didn't hear anything for a long time. At that point I was just a spouse. I would go to parties, and nobody was interested in talking to me because I wasn't professionally involved. Eventually, we called a friend of ours who was involved with HR [Human Resources] in the department and asked if he had heard anything. Was I on the list? Was I going to get an appointment, or should I just move on to something else.

And he said, "Oh, we're going to invite you to join the June class."

I thought, Well, let me know. I'm over here in India.

We worried whether the department would pay my way back from India so I could go through training and then would I get a job in New Delhi. I had been nosing around to see if there was any kind of position that might be appropriate for me, either consular or other. The political counselor, Paul Kreisberg, was quite sympathetic.

Q: He's a Vietnamese hand.

BAZALA: I very much appreciated it, because in those days women and tandems didn't get a whole lot of sympathy.

Q: You're absolutely right.

BAZALA: He knew I passed the test, and I said, "Look, should this come about, I might be in the June class, what do you think?"

He said, "Well, we do have a vacant position we haven't been able to fill, which is a rotational officer position." In those days that was a training assignment where you spent six months in political, six months in admin, six months in consular, and six months in econ.

I said, "Well, that would be perfect for me, I think."

He said, "We'll support you if that works out," which was wonderful. That was a pivotal thing for me. I believe he may have sent a message to HR on my behalf.

Sure enough the FS appointment came through, and I had about three weeks to prepare to leave and make sure my kids had something to do for the summer. I left over Memorial Day weekend to start A-100, the basic entry officer training. Raz was due for home leave, so he flew home with the kids when I finished consular training. If I got the New Delhi job, we would all go back to New Delhi together. That's exactly what happened. When I went to my career counselor, I said, "Well my family's in India and I really want an assignment there and I understand there's this job." He almost leapt over the desk and said, "Oh yes, great! We're looking for somebody for that job."

Q: How did you find A-100, the basic officer course?

BAZALA: There was a USIS contingent in the class as well as State. It was the 125th class. There were two married women, and we were the oldest. I was thirty-four at the time. We agreed that A-100 was easier for us because we had been FS spouses and had lived in the Foreign Service world. Much of the A-100 course is geared to the practicalities of living in the Foreign Service—getting insurance and getting your effects packed and all that kind of thing. There was a lot of administrative stuff. Most new JOs were worried about getting assignments. I was pretty fixed on where I was headed. What was more useful to me was learning about the other parts of the service like what political officers do and what econ officers do and how other agencies fit into the mission. Other than that I don't remember too much about it frankly. I remember it was busy.

Q: What was the attitude of the people who were leading the course and the personnel people about having married women coming into the FS?

BAZALA: I once pointed out to the course leader that there were only one or two women in the class who were in the political or econ cones. The rest, maybe twelve of us, were all headed for consular or admin. I said, "Doesn't that strike you as a little bit of an imbalance?"

"Oh no, no, no." Denial, you know. There was no deliberate attempt to do that, they said. But it was pretty clear to me that as long as I stuck with consular, the department would accept me. In any case I felt that consular was the right place for me so I didn't resent being pegged into it. Others might have. Later on, a couple of the women did move out of consular work.

Q: Well then, did you go straight back to New Delhi?

BAZALA: I went into consular training for about six weeks. That was just before FSI started ConGen Rosslyn [the Basic Consular Course], so I attended the very last of the lecture classes based on the FAM [*Foreign Affairs Manua*l].

Raz arrived in Washington with the children on July 4, 1976, which, of course, was the year of the bi-centennial celebration. I wanted to go down to the [National] Mall and see the fireworks, but Raz was totally exhausted from bringing two children halfway around the world. They were all sacked out and too tired to go anywhere. We stayed with my sister who lived in Georgetown then.

Later Raz took the children and went to visit his parents while I finished training, and then we all went to see my parents and to the beach for a vacation. Then we went back to India. I got off the plane, put both children in school, and went to work. The good thing was that having been in India for a year I had everything set up. The servants were trained, and I didn't have to do anything to the apartment or unpack effects. Furthermore, we were used to living in New Delhi. We knew where to find things. So that made it very easy. As far as the children were concerned, I don't think they really noticed that I was working because we had very good help, and both were in school. We lived close enough

to the embassy so I didn't have a long commute. It was about as easy a transition as I could have hoped for after six years not working.

Q: Where'd you start in the rotational process?

BAZALA: In the consular section.

Q: What were you doing?

BAZALA: Nonimmigrant visas. There were four people in the section at the time: a consul general, someone doing American Citizens Services, and two of us for nonimmigrant visas. The consul general did immigrant visas.

Q: Who was the consul general?

BAZALA: Ann Campbell. Ginny Carson Young was the American citizens services officer. She was wonderful. She mentored me a bit.

Q: What was the nonimmigrant applicant situation?

BAZALA: Well, I'll tell you, the workload has changed a lot. As I said, there were four of us then, and right now in India there are twenty-three officers in New Delhi. So the demand for visas has just exploded. I had a chance to visit New Delhi a year ago as an inspector, and it was very interesting to see the differences. But I would say the clientele hasn't changed a great deal, although there may be more people who qualify when they come in to apply because of an expanding middle class there. Indians have had a reputation among consular officers of being among the most persistent and insistent applicants. They always tried to use their contacts. If the applicant was a student, he or she or a family member would go to somebody in USIS, or the science attaché would try to weigh in on cases. Then there were just your ordinary applicants who thought getting a visa was a lottery and if they came in enough times they would get one. In those days there was no fee to pay to apply, so they would line up outside the consulate day after day.

The consular section in New Delhi now is in a separate building with a separate outside entrance. At the time I was there, the consular section occupied offices in the back of the chancery with an outside entrance. You didn't have people coming in the front door, but applicants, family members, and others lined up along the street and camped out all over the lawn. Touts and visa fixers exploited them, so it was a mess. There was a lot of fraud, and a lot of people simply lied outright to you.

The colleague who trained me on how to do NIV [nonimmigrant visa] interviews was a superb interviewer. He was a tall, handsome man who had had a brief acting career in the movies. He had this deep voice and he'd stand behind the counter (no secure windows then) and talk with the applicants: "And you're going to the states? That's wonderful. And what are you planning to do there?" And they would just open up and spill the

beans. “Oh, I’m going to work because I have an uncle in the states” or whatever indicated they intended to work on a tourist visa.

I mostly did visa interviews, but also I did some fraud investigations, which were fascinating.

Q: What kind of fraud investigating did you do?

BAZALA: Before I arrived there had been quite a scandal involving both the previous consul general and one of the immigrant visa clerks. They were approving immigrant visas for people who were not qualified. For example, applicants claimed to be nurses but did not in fact have the education or experience, and uneducated boys who operated tea stalls wanted visas to work as cooks in restaurants.

We had a full-time investigator who was a former Indian policeman. He and I traveled to the Punjab and went into the villages where they had never seen a westerner in their lives before, if you can imagine. INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] asked us to investigate some of the suspect applicants by checking their credentials. We had information about where the nurses ended up in the U.S. Most of them worked in nursing homes as aides, and not actually working as nurses in hospitals. But they had their visas and work permits which were based on their claims to be full-fledged nurses. We went to the schools where the “nurses” claimed to receive their diplomas, and found out that the head administrators had never heard of them. We spent four days traveling around, taking depositions, and checking things out. One place supposedly was where a cook had experience, but it turned out to be a big pile of bricks. I took pictures.

Another time I went to witness a trial of two Americans who were caught smuggling drugs. They put the drugs inside decorated wooden elephants about eight inches high and then exported them as craft items to the U.S. I still have one (without the drugs, of course) that I bought as a souvenir. The smugglers cut them in half, hollowed them out, put heroin or another illegal substance inside, glued them back together, decorated them, and sent them off. They were caught when one of their workers detected the difference in weight between the heroin filled elephants and the solid wooden ones.

This was a time when it was popular for a lot of Americans and other expats to come to India to become Hare Krishnas and perhaps join an ashram. The very first day I was on the job I was being introduced around, and walking down the hallway, we came across a guy sitting on the floor in the corridor doing his beads and chanting and whatnot. He was as yellow as this piece of paper with hepatitis. When asked what he wanted, he reached into his robe and pulled out an American passport. He said, “I need a doctor.” So they sent him off to a clinic. We had a number of welfare and whereabouts cases from families who wanted to know where their relatives were. If the missing sons or brothers joined an ashram, they usually took Indian names, and so it was hard to find them.

I was introduced that same first day to Frank Fernandez who was the senior ACS [American Citizens Services] FSN [foreign service national employee]. He had his own

office. His door was propped open with a large white box on the floor. As we sat down, I noticed that the box was rather unusual, and I said, "Oh, that's an interesting box," just to make conversation. Frank said, "Oh, that's Mr. McCann." It was the ashes of an American who had died and was cremated. Frank was trying to locate his relatives. In India, you have to cremate the dead within a very short period of time.

So that was my introduction on the first day of my first assignment. I thought then that this could be a very interesting job.

Q: You know, of course, I'm prejudiced. But consular work was my thing, and there were always new problems to try to solve and people to help. There were certainly a lot of personal connections. Within the embassy was consular work considered sort of drudge work by others?

BAZALA: It was always clear that some others thought of it that way, and consular work had second class status. The big change in my experience began when the department began charging a fee for an application for an NIV, and Consular Affairs was able to keep the money to fund consular operations. Then people were a little nicer to us, a little more respectful. The earlier attitude toward consular work was not a surprise to me from what I knew before I joined the Foreign Service. My attitude, however, was that I was thrilled to have a job. I had worked before and had professional credentials and a good education, and it was great to be back in the workforce.

The timing was also perfect. If I had been ten years older, there is no way it would have happened. I was just glad to have the job. It was good I started my rotational assignment in the consular section because it gave me a taste of what a consular career was going to be like. I was in the consular section in New Delhi initially for three or four months. It was supposed to be six, but after three months there was a need for someone to help out in the front office. Ambassador Saxbe had just left, and there was going to be a long gap before a new ambassador arrived. Ambassador Saxbe had had two political appointee assistants and a secretary, and they all departed with him. The chargé had no one who could pick up the functions of the assistants, so he asked me to come up to the front office and fill in. That turned out to be the best training I could have.

Q: I would imagine it would be. What would you be doing?

BAZALA: I coordinated a lot of the paperwork that came through the front office. I planned and implemented the *agrément* process when Ambassador Robert Goheen was named ambassador. At first I was sworn to secrecy because, although President Carter proposed Ambassador Goheen, the Indians had to agree to accept him.

Q: He was the president of Princeton.

BAZALA: That's correct. He was born in India as a child of missionaries and spent much of his early life there. He was a much more suitable appointment to my way of thinking than his predecessor. The very first order of business when I went up to the front office

was to get rid of the spittoons in the ambassador's office. Apparently this was Ambassador Saxbe's bad habit. Then I went through the whole *agrément* process for the new ambassador. The DCM who was then in charge of the mission was David Schneider. He wanted me to be the intermediary between the Indian protocol office and the embassy because he said, "You're so low level nobody will suspect something's going on." The Indian press is pretty aggressive, and had figured somebody was going to be named soon.

I went to the protocol office and worked with the Indians to get *agrément*. We planned the arrival of the new ambassador and the presentation of credentials. The Indians have a very formal protocol tradition, and they can be very bureaucratic. Everything was well organized. I was very impressed with how they did it. I was involved as the contact for all of the details—who would be invited to the ceremony and all that.

After the ambassador arrived and presented his credentials, there were a series of calls on other ambassadors and ministers to be arranged, and then all the calls were returned. I had to meet and greet each one. Edward Durell Stone designed the chancery building with a very large open grassy area in front with an entrance drive leading up to the front stairs and the main entrance. When you face the front of the building there's an enormous seal of the United States over the entrance, an openwork seal made of brass. My office was directly behind that seal. I could sit at my desk and see through the seal down the stairs and out to where the cars dropped off the visiting ambassadors or whoever else was calling. When I saw them coming, flags flying on the fenders of the cars, I would have just enough time to run down the stairs to greet them. Then I brought them up and took them in to meet with the ambassador.

Ambassador Goheen had never worked for the government before except when he was in the army. So, you can imagine what it is like the first time you face a department cable. He called me in and said, "What is all this routing stuff that is listed before the substance of the cable?" I had to walk him through it even though I had just learned it myself. Outgoing cables always have the ambassador's signature, but he was disturbed that his name was on something he hadn't seen. I said, "You don't really want to sign every cable that goes out of here." So I had to explain all that to him. He was very nice. I really liked him a lot, and he was a popular ambassador. I'm not sure if they had the ambassadorial seminar in those days or any kind of training for new ambassadors.

Q: I've seen pictures of the ceremony in India showing carriages with lancers and all arriving in front of the Red Palace.

BAZALA: Oh, they did the whole thing. It was quite fabulous.

Q: Did you find that you were Goheen's initial translator into the Foreign Service?

BAZALA: Yes, very much so along with the chargé, or DCM by then, David Schneider, who was very much a pro. And he was very good, too. Not only was he good with helping the ambassador, but he took it on himself to train me. This was before the

Foreign Affair Manual was changed to require that DCMs take entry-level officers under their wings. Usually the junior officers then were left to sink or swim.

Q: I know, that was my world.

BAZALA: You were lucky if you found anybody who was willing to give you the time of day or mentor you or anything. But David Schneider was really very good about it. He said, "Look, I'm going to be talking to," somebody or other who had come to visit him. He said, "I want you to come in and take notes and then write up a memorandum of conversation of what you heard." And he said, "Since I'm there don't worry if you miss something or don't understand something in the conversation." It would be about some issue that was under consideration then. For example, a big issue was India's effort to become a nuclear power.

I didn't have all the background I needed to understand the political nuances, but the DCM was really good about teaching me the mechanics of how you do reporting and how you communicate with the constituent consulates because he had to coordinate all their work and correspond with them. I'd run cables around for clearance so I learned quite a bit about the political situation there at the time, at least enough to know what were the major issues and who was concerned about them.

Q: Did you sense a certain, well, coldness in the relationship that's always seemed to exist between the United States and India where you would otherwise think this would be a rather warm relationship?

BAZALA: The relationship waxes hot and cold. Indira Gandhi was the prime minister then, and she had declared a state of emergency. Among other things she suspended civil liberties and postponed elections. Given that this country was supposed to be the world's largest democracy, the emergency went against the grain as far as the embassy was concerned. In 1977, when elections were finally held, Mrs. Gandhi was defeated. She became prime minister again in 1980, however.

The Indians welcomed Goheen because he had lived in India, and that really gave him the right cache to make some inroads in dealing with the issues between us.

Q: Yes, and also coming from the intellectual bastion of Princeton—

BAZALA: Absolutely. Yes.

Q: This played well in India.

BAZALA: Right, and he probably ran into some people who had attended Princeton, because many Indians do study in the United States. So I think that helped to break down some barriers. But you still had to deal with Mrs. Gandhi, and she was difficult. I met her a few years later, and I could understand the problem. There were tensions because the U.S. was not happy about the Indian nuclear program among other things. Also we were

watching very carefully the relationship between Pakistan and India, which is always a problem. Kashmir was an issue—still is. So it was an interesting time to be there.

Q: Well, then where else did you work in the embassy?

BAZALA: After I spent my six months in the front office and somebody came in to succeed me, I went to the political section. I lasted about three weeks. The political counselor then was Howard Schaeffer. I read the English language newspapers for biographic stuff; that's what you often give somebody who has just come into the section, and that was fine. But he did nothing to try to explain to me what was going on or why he did anything. He did not seem interested in mentoring me, which I didn't understand because his wife was an FSO.

Q: Teresita. And later an ambassador, too.

BAZALA: Right, and she was more sympathetic and helpful to me. Howie found out that I knew about something before he did and that I had been sworn to secrecy and couldn't talk about it. It was the proposed visit of President Carter to India. This happened right before I left the front office for the political section. A highly classified cable came in, and the only three officers who knew about it were the ambassador, the DCM, and me. Of course the communications clerk knew, but that was it. I was sworn to secrecy. So it was not my business to go blabbing this around, I don't care who it was, but Howie was furious with me because I knew this and didn't tell him. And when it came out, he asked me, "Did you know this?"

"Yes, I was in the front office when the cable came in."

"And you didn't tell me?"

I said, "Well, I was told not to tell anyone." But he just couldn't get over the fact that someone who was the lowest person in the political section knew about the visit and he didn't. So he and I agreed that I would leave the political section and move on to do one of my other rotations, which was just fine with me. I did a short stint with the administrative section, but if you haven't had any training such as GSO [general service officer] or any other management course, there's not a lot you can do.

Q: No.

BAZALA: They were nice enough, and I was there for a few weeks and tried to make myself useful. Then I went to the econ section. Nat Bellocchi was the head of the section. I stayed there for about five months. I sat in on negotiations over exporting hand-knotted rugs to the United States. I also did a big paper on the shrimping industry of India. I think Nat and his staff really made an effort to give me something substantive to do, which I appreciated, but at the end of five months I knew econ work was just not my cup of tea for a career. That was actually a good thing to know.

Q: So you would feel comfortable with yourself—

BAZALA: With my decision to be a consular officer.

Q: You tried the thing and you knew where you fit.

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: I had people keep telling me, Stu, you ought to be a political officer, and do such and such. But I just loved being a consular officer!

BAZALA: You have to be true to yourself. I've always found this so. I often get a chance to talk with officers just coming into the service. I tell them not to try to fit themselves, if they are a round peg, into a square hole, because they won't perform as well. The point is if you perform well in an assignment you like, even if you don't consider it career enhancing, your chances of promotion are just as good as if you do a less than stellar job in something that is not a good fit. But it's usually hard when you're at a junior level to see that.

Q: The conventional wisdom at the bottom, you might say, is, "Oh, you've got to do this," and all.

BAZALA: Yes. You have to punch this ticket, punch that ticket.

Q: These are somebody else's ambitions; they shouldn't be your ambitions.

BAZALA: It was generally assumed that if you wanted to be an ambassador or be promoted rapidly you had to serve in a particular place or position, work in the operations center, do a desk job, and so forth. The junior officers would desperately try for these slots—there'd be a lot of competition for jobs like that, because that's what they thought they had to do. I'm a perfect example of why that's not true. I had the strangest career path in the world.

After the econ section stint, I went back to the consular section for my final four months in India.

Q: Did you have much work in the way of citizenship services, people in jail, or problems of that nature?

BAZALA: Some. Ginny Young was doing much of the citizenship stuff, and she also did a lot with immigrant visa petitions. We had a number of naïve young women coming out to India as tourists. They were wooed by men working on houseboats in Kashmir or hanging around other tourist areas in an effort to find an American girl to marry and take them back to the States, at which point they would take off.

Ginny tried to counsel these girls who came in with stars in their eyes and said, "We're so in love," whether they really believed it or not.

Q: It's the hardest thing because it doesn't work. I was in Saudi Arabia, where we would get the opposite. The Saudis would go to the United States to college and then bring these starry-eyed young girls home and have children in Saudi Arabia. Then pretty soon the American wives decided they didn't particularly like being in purdah. They wanted to go home, but the men said, "Okay honey, you can go home, but leave the kids here." That caused a lot of problems.

BAZALA: I know. I witnessed a situation like that in graduate school. It woke me up to the problems of international marriages.

In India we had a lot of drug issues and arrests. I visited one couple in jail, and I attended their trial for drug smuggling.

There were welfare and whereabouts requests from families in the U.S. We tried to find the Hare Krishnas who came to India and simply disappeared. One guy brought his three-year-old child with him, and the mother was just frantic. They all changed their names so it was really hard to track down these people.

Occasionally a climber would fall off a mountain, and it was impossible to recover the body. There was always something going on in consular work.

Q: Did you get a feel in any one of these jobs about the relationship of the embassy to the consulates in the country?

BAZALA: The DCM was the coordinator for all the posts in India. He called the consuls general occasionally and had them come to New Delhi periodically. I think he also traveled to see them. At the time we had consulates in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras (now Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai, respectively). I had an opportunity to travel to Madras and Bombay. I went to a consular conference in Madras. At that time it was just a sleepy little fishing village and most of the consulate's work was visas. This was long before the area became the "Silicon Valley" of India.

Bombay was more commercial. I don't recall the names of the CGs.

Q: Did you have a sense that India was beginning to move into the technical age, or had that started yet?

BAZALA: No. I was impressed with the caliber of Indian intellectuals that we met, however. Raz, of course, was involved with a lot of them who were invited to participate in USIS programs. USIS organized seminars in Kashmir, for example, based on speakers from the United States. USIS paid the participants' way, and Raz always found these events very stimulating and interesting.

Q: Did you find that your intra-embassy life changed all of a sudden when you had a job, particularly when you were sitting at the ambassador's elbow.

BAZALA: Very interesting that you asked that question. Absolutely. As soon as I came back from A-100 and consular training and started working, people started talking to me, and asking about hey, what is going on back in Washington and that kind of thing. It was like all of a sudden I had acquired a brain along with my certificates and my badge. The change was really striking to me.

Q: Well, I'm sure you've noticed that Americans are hardwired when they meet somebody to ask, "What do you do?"

BAZALA: Exactly. As soon as I joined the consular section, because everybody's always interested in consular stories, I became one of the most popular people at lunch because it was assumed that I had something interesting to talk about. Maybe others couldn't talk about whatever it was that they did. I definitely noticed the sudden attention, but I was more amused by it than anything.

Q: I know. When you've been around for a while, you can sit back and be the observer of the culture.

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: Well, I'm just trying to think, there were no particular wars or anything like that going on—

BAZALA: There was always tension in the bi-lateral relationship. The big thing was Indira Gandhi's emergency that suspended a lot of rights.

Q: What was the reason for it?

BAZALA: There were social and economic problems and allegations of corruption. The emergency was a response to strikes and protests throughout the country. All this came about before I started working. Our landlord, who lived downstairs, was a member of the Congress Party. And I think he was in the Parliament, I'm not sure. He was a politician and he was affected. I know Raz talked to him a few times.

Q: So when did you leave India?

BAZALA: 1978.

Q: And where did you go?

BAZALA: To Serbo-Croatian language training.

Q: Ah! How did you like it?

BAZALA: Hated it. (laughs) That's exaggerating. I'm a multi-tasker, and it's very hard for me to sit still and do only one thing all day long. This was especially true learning a language, which I don't consider a fun thing to do. Attending full-day language classes for eleven months was hard. I got a 3/3 out of it, but it was like pulling teeth for me.

Q: Where were you going to be assigned with this?

BAZALA: Belgrade, Yugoslavia

Q: In my day there was just Serbo-Croatian. I was in Bosnia as an election observer and somebody said, "Oh, you speak Bosnian." I'd never heard of Bosnian before.

BAZALA: Now you can get credit for speaking three languages: Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian, but they are fundamentally the same.

Q: Okay, we'll talk a little bit about your Serbo-Croatian training and then we'll move on to your time in Belgrade.

BAZALA: Okay.

Q. Today is February 17, 2014, with Sylvia Bazala. Sylvia, when we left we were on our way to the beautiful city of Belgrade. What position were you going into Belgrade?

BAZALA: Consular officer.

Q: You took Serbo-Croatian for how long?

BAZALA: Eleven months, which was the standard amount of time for a hard language. There were nine of us in three different classes.

Q: How did they treat you? Was this a period when Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian were treated differently?

BAZALA: In language training, you mean?

Q: Yes.

BAZALA: We had two people in our class assigned to Zagreb. So they were interested in learning Croatian, and did not necessarily need to learn the Cyrillic alphabet that is used in Serb speaking areas. We had one teacher who was Croat; the others were Serbs. People laughed about it and it was sort of a joke because we had the two different nationalities there, but there was a little tension, you could tell. We were very aware of it.

Q. When did you go to Belgrade?

BAZALA: August 1979.

Q: And you were there from 1979 to when?

BAZALA: To 1982, three years.

Q: What was the situation in Belgrade in 1979—in Serbia?

BAZALA: Well, for everybody who had been assigned to Yugoslavia for the previous twenty years or so there was a watch on Tito. At the time we were there he was in his eighties. Everybody was expecting something to happen. The big question was, "What if?" What happens after Tito? Here is an artificially constructed country, and it had its obvious divisions. That was the main focus. Improving trade relations was another focus, probably because Ambassador Eagleburger was particularly interested in commercial issues.

Q: He was the ambassador when you were there?

BAZALA: Larry Eagleburger first and then David Anderson.

Q: Who was the DCM?

BAZALA: Jack Scanlan.

Q: Let's talk about the consular section. What were your main interests there?

BAZALA: There were three full-time consular officers and one part time. My boss was head of the section and the American citizen services officer. And he sat upstairs. It was a two-story building.

The embassy occupied three old buildings strung together, and the consular section was in the middle building. I thought it was a big firetrap with a stairway going up the middle of the building to the second floor. There was only one way in or out that wasn't locked or barred. We had a lot of paper files. I had to stop the staff from making coffee on a burner in the office because it was a fire hazard.

I was the visa chief. I was the supervisor of the nonimmigrant visa officers, and I did most of the immigrant visas. I also supervised all the FSN staff members who were on the main level.

Q: Were there any particular patterns to the immigrant visas?

BAZALA: We had a lot of Albanians from Kosovo and Montenegro (now separate countries but then a part of Yugoslavia). There had been a diaspora of Albanian nationals who had somehow landed in New York and Connecticut. They were starting to become

citizens and bring their extended families over to the U.S. In particular, the young Albanian-American men would return to the old country to find a bride.

These young men typically worked as waiters in New York pizza places or joined the family firm that cleaned office buildings. Once they got to a point where they were ready to marry and had saved up enough money, they came back to find a thirteen-year-old bride from their village of origin. Then they showed up in my office to file the petition for the bride's immigrant visa. When the bride came for her interview for the visa, she was always escorted by her brother or father or uncle or all three.

Q: Was membership in a communist organization a particular problem at that time—because it was kind of dying out when I was there.

BAZALA: Well, yes, we still had restrictions. They had to be vetted and, and we sent in cables for each applicant to get approval for us to issue the visa if everything else was in order. If they were immigrants, I had a particular set of questions I had to ask them. The main thing was whether or not they were just members of the party in a benign sense, or whether they had some official party responsibility. That was the dividing line.

Q: Well, if they did have an office, were there ways of getting around that?

BAZALA: Sometimes we could request a waiver. They may have had to resign their party membership or something like that. Those were very time consuming cases. That's what I remember about them.

Q: Tito was alive the whole time you were there?

BAZALA: No, he died in May 1980.

Q: What was the reaction?

BAZALA: Tito's illness leading up to his death was a very interesting time. He started to deteriorate, I would say around January before he died in May. Everybody who had any information (rumors, articles in the news, et cetera) reported it. Then our embassy doctor reviewed it, and he would say, "Well, that sounds like he's having urinary tract problems," or whatever it was. But nobody really knew exactly. We knew he was getting more seriously ill by the day. It took about four or five months. He had his legs amputated, and then he died of infection I believe.

I remember the funeral very well. For one thing it was the first sunny day we had had in weeks. There was a big delegation from the U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale was the delegation leader. Jimmy Carter was president at the time, and he sent his mother, Miss Lillian, along with Averill Harriman and a couple of congressmen. They stayed either at the ambassador's residence or the DCM's residence.

Of course the Yugoslavs had had time to prepare for this funeral, so it was really done very well, but in the end they had to put the final elements of the funeral together very quickly and accommodate large delegations. There were representatives from all the non-aligned countries because Tito was a big figure in that movement. Raz always said that Yugoslavs were really good at last-minute crash projects. They put the 1984 winter Olympics together when there were concerns about delays and not being ready, and they put this funeral together. They really did a good job, and everybody was complimentary about it.

Everyone in the mission had a role to play managing our delegation to the funeral. My assignment was to be escort for Miss Lillian. She was from Georgia, and so was I, so the DCM figured I was the one who could talk to her. She was an interesting character—very feisty, very much her own self. Indira Gandhi was prime minister of India at the time, and she came to the funeral. When Miss Lillian learned that Mrs. Gandhi was there, she said, "Oh! I must meet her. Jimmy would want me to." This had not been previously planned, but we scrambled and worked with protocol and arranged a tea. I took Miss Lillian over to meet Mrs. Gandhi, and it was just the three of us plus one of her aides. It was one of the most awkward situations I've ever been in. Indira Gandhi was not one for small talk. She was a very serious, substantive person, and she had her own agenda. Miss Lillian, on the other hand, was there just to be social. Jimmy would want her to be there. So it was a very awkward occasion. About ten or fifteen minutes into this tea, an American TV crew, I think it was NBC, barged into the meeting with cameras, taking pictures, and asking Miss Lillian and Mrs. Gandhi questions. This was not at all preapproved or anything, but I had a feeling, since Mrs. Gandhi was very relaxed about it, that she knew this was coming. I sure had no heads up about it. It wasn't a big deal, except that they asked Miss Lillian why Jimmy (the president) didn't come to the funeral. "Well, he couldn't come, and that's that," was the way she put it.

The day after the tea was the funeral, and this is another interesting Miss Lillian story. I was waiting for her at the DCM's residence where she was staying. She'd gone up to dress, and everybody else was already in their black suits or dark dresses and waiting to go to the funeral procession where they'd set up a diplomatic stand. Down the stairs came Miss Lillian dressed completely in white. Jack Scanlan's wife and I looked at each other and thought, Oh my goodness, you know, this is not exactly what everybody else is going to be wearing. But she carried it off. She said, "In India they wear white for funerals and that's what I decided to wear." I thought, "You're not in India." But you know, she was old enough that she could get away with it. She stood out like a bright light amongst all those black suits at the funeral. I didn't go to the funeral myself, but I saw a little bit of it on TV.

There was a lot of curiosity about Tito's wife. She just died recently. Her name was Jovanka. Nobody had seen her for years, but she participated in the funeral. I had a maid who watched the funeral on TV at my house, and she was very interested to see her.

People were pretty upset about Tito dying, because he was the only leadership figure they had known for many years.

Q: Yes, he was the key to holding Yugoslavia together.

BAZALA: Yes. Nobody knew what was going to happen. Tito didn't set up a viable succession system. He set up a collective presidency where the leaders of the republics took turns being its head. There was a lot of speculation about what would happen in the post-Tito era. That was the focus of the embassy after that.

In June President Carter came to Yugoslavia. This was pretty soon after the funeral so I think the message had gotten through that he needed to come and assess the situation. I'm sure Larry Eagleburger must have had something to do with persuading the president that this was an important thing to do.

We had one of those typical presidential visits with a cast of thousands. I helped manage everybody's arrival and departure. I have a great picture of Raz and me and Larry and Marlene Eagleburger standing at the airport waiting for the president's plane and the press plane. A photo of President Carter with our kids was published in *Polityka,* the Yugoslavian equivalent of *Time* magazine.

I have a few consular stories.

Q: I like consular stories.

BAZALA: I considered myself the embassy expert on Albanian culture by the time I left there because I met so many from Kosovo and other Albanian areas of Yugoslavia.

Q: Were they called Shqiptars in those days?

BAZALA: Yes, they used that term.

Q: I'm told that was a pejorative term. We used it without really having any feel for how it was viewed.

BAZALA: I don't recall that it was either good or bad. It just was used sometimes. Albanians were looked down on by everybody else in Yugoslavia.

Q: Well, I'll tell you a really quick story to give a feel for this. We had two Albanian men from Macedonia in our club at the embassy. I was head of the committee that ran the club, and we needed for them to have drivers' licenses. We were told, "You really should send them down to Skopje to get their licenses, because no Albanian is going to get a driver's license through the Belgrade police."

BAZALA: Interesting.

Q: I don't know if they were still around; they were called Happy and Smiley.

BAZALA: Yes. In fact, I think it was Smiley that was running the snack bar. I used him as an interpreter sometimes because some Albanians who came to the consulate couldn't speak Serbo-Croatian or English or anything anyone knew. I tried desperately at one point to hire a FSN [Foreign Service National] who spoke Albanian. I came close, but it was a woman and the family pulled her back because they didn't want her working for us. So that was a problem. But yes, Smiley helped me out a couple times. I mean his English wasn't good enough really to be a translator, but there would be some things he could sometimes help with. As I mentioned before, all the girls came in with men who were relatives. Most of the time one of the men would speak some Serbo-Croatian and sometimes English. But the girls never spoke English and almost no Serbo-Croatian. They averaged around thirteen-years-old, and they had minimal education.

I learned a lot about Albanian culture and this whole business of the clans and the practice of honor killings and so forth.

Q: These occurred if girls lost their virginity—

BAZALA: Exactly.

Q: —or were suspected of it, I mean they could be killed.

BAZALA: Oh yes. I had one case where it was the reverse situation, which was very unusual. The girl was a sixteen-year-old who had grown up in the U.S. in an Albanian family. The family kind of tricked her. They told her, "Oh, we're going to go on a trip to see the relatives in Yugoslavia." When they all got to Yugoslavia, they forced her into marriage with some local man so he could go to the U.S. She was terribly upset about it. When they all came in to file the petition, since she was perfectly fluent in English, I somehow persuaded the brother and father or whoever was there to escort her, to stand outside my office door while I interviewed her. The door had glass windows so they could see us—but not hear.

I said to them, "You can see, I'm a woman, we can talk."

For once I was able to have a real conversation with one of these girls. She absolutely did not want to be married to this guy, and she didn't want him to come to the U.S. I said, "Well, you don't have to file the petition or you can revoke the petition. You don't need to be involved in this process."

She said, "I can't. They will kill me."

Anyway, to make a long story short—we worked out an arrangement. She had to return to New York with her family while her husband had to stay behind in Yugoslavia to wait for his visa. As we agreed, she called me and revoked the petition. Then she told me that she planned to flee to a relative somewhere else in New York to hide from her brothers and father who were honor bound to punish her for preventing her husband from getting

his visa. I hope she made it, but she was really taking a chance. She knew it. I mean she understood that she might be killed, but she was determined—a brave girl.

We also had a very interesting situation with refugees who were coming into Yugoslavia from neighboring countries and wanted asylum. We had Czechs and Hungarians and Romanians and a Bulgarian once. It was relatively easier for them to get to Yugoslavia than western European countries; they could have limited passports to travel to Yugoslavia for vacation, for example. Once they arrived in Belgrade they came into the embassy and asked for refugee status for one reason or another, saying that they wanted to go to the U.S., but they'd been denied that opportunity. Some Romanians swam across the Danube River at the border and arrived without any documents. They were obviously in danger if they had to return. A number of the young men were draft dodgers from compulsory military service.

Fortunately, there was a UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] office in Belgrade. The Yugoslavs were pretty accommodating actually. If we could get the prospective refugees into UNHCR hands, the UNHCR could obtain permission for them to stay in Belgrade at a UNHCR facility while they scrambled around and tried to find a country to take them in. I heard that some of the refugees simply slipped across the border into Italy and the border guards looked the other way. But the Czechs usually came in their cars for vacation, and often they would bring their children. So they didn't want to risk that kind of crossing. Then they came to us and to the UNHCR for help.

With the ambassador's support I engaged in a long process of working with UNHCR and the department to find a solution. Whenever one of these people had some claim for the United States, such as a relative who sponsored them, or there was some other interested party, we would try to help them get into the U.S. And we did succeed several times. We went through all kinds of shenanigans that in this day and age probably would not be possible. But what happened was the UNHCR conjured up a travel document, which was a piece of paper cardboard that they put identification data and a photo on. It was completely unofficial. However, the Yugoslavs accepted it as a travel document and used the back of this *laissez passer* document to stamp an exit visa, and we issued a one-entry U.S. tourist visa. Then we notified INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] at the port of entry to intercept them and process them as refugees when they arrived.

We also worked with the International Committee on Migration that paid for the travel. All this took time, as you can imagine. There were only a couple of dozen people who we could actually help in the end, but we weren't the only embassy doing this. The Canadians, the Brits, and others were also involved. I know of a couple of cases when we had received information that someone was coming in to seek our help—they didn't make it. Romanians, for example, attempting to swim the river were sometimes spotted and shot by border guards.

The most interesting case I had was a Hungarian man who didn't speak anything but Hungarian and a few words of German. He was a nice looking fellow, quite nervous, and very insistent. He came in and handed me a piece of paper that was all in Hungarian. But

it was on embassy letterhead from Embassy Budapest. I could tell from the form that it was some kind of standard correspondence about an immigrant visa. Then he pulled out this picture of a very pretty girl and showed it to me. There was a phone number so I called the phone number. It was his wife, Susan, who was in California, eight months pregnant with their child. She had married him in Hungary. She was from a family that had left Hungary in 1956. On a trip to Hungary to visit relatives, fell in love with this guy, married him, and then he found he could not get a passport because he had not done his military service. He was pretty desperate so he crossed the border into Yugoslavia and came to see us. I called Budapest and had the file transferred to Belgrade, and so with Susan's help and the UNHCR's, we managed to get him to California.

Q: You were very fortunate to have the UNHCR there.

BAZALA: Absolutely. We couldn't have done it otherwise.

Q: —We didn't have it when I was there, and I would say, "We can't recommend you try to cross the borders, and I certainly wouldn't recommend you trying to cross the border to Greece. However, if you try for Italy—" and I'd sort of indicate on the map where the best place might be. (laughs)

BAZALA: Right. Trieste or somewhere near there.

Q: But it was still very iffy.

BAZALA: The Yugoslavs for some reason were pretty accommodating to all this.

Q: They wouldn't necessarily return them, but they just wouldn't help them get out.

BAZALA: They'd just turn their backs and eventually they'd get out. Otherwise their presence became a problem for them, and they didn't want a problem. They didn't want a problem with their neighbors either.

Q: I had guys on leave from NATO. They would get on a train or something, cross the border at Trieste and show their NATO documents. Fine, go ahead. And they would go through Yugoslavia to Greece and have a great time. Then on the way back at the Greek-Macedonian border, they wouldn't let them through. I remember going to the Foreign Ministry saying, "Look, please get your act in order. I mean are you going to let them in or not?" And we worked it out. But the Yugoslavs were basically accommodating.

BAZALA: I have no idea how many, who simply didn't come to our attention, got through. We heard border guards shot and killed some of the Romanians as they tried to swim the river. Another, who made the mistake of calling me to say he was on his way, never showed up. It was a very interesting time.

Q: Were there any manifestations that involved Serb nationalism versus Croat nationalism?

BAZALA: Yes. I'll give you a couple of examples. There were thousands of people returning from working in the U.S to Yugoslavia to retire and live on their U.S. social security checks. There was a federal benefits office at the consulate in Zagreb with two local employees, both Croatian. There were two Serb federal benefits employees in Belgrade that I supervised. My counterpart in Zagreb and I and the federal benefits officer resident in Athens thought it would be a good idea to have an exchange of staff for a week or two so that these employees would get a broader picture of the social security and other federal benefits clientele in Yugoslavia. They absolutely refused to do it. I asked one of mine, "What is the problem?"

And she said, "If I go to Zagreb, I'll be killed."

I said, "Really?"

She said, "Yes, they hate Serbs there." And she would not go.

Then one time I was in Macedonia for a prison visit, and I was trying to get a taxi to go out to the prison, which was out of town, to visit an American prisoner. There was a whole line of taxis at a taxi stand, and all were empty. I tried my best Serbian to get a taxi, but no one would respond or even look at me. I thought, "Well, boy, now my language has really failed me here." I was so mad I finally said something in English, just expressing my irritation. At this, one of the taxi drivers who understood English spoke up and said, "Oh, you're American."

And I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "Oh, we thought you were Serb." And, "Sure, I'll take you out there."

That was an example of the little things that would pop up, and you'd realize there were issues.

Q: What sort of prison business were you dealing with?

BAZALA: There were some drug problems. And one guy visiting from the U.S. got drunk in a bar and started making nasty comments about Tito that didn't sit well with the local police.

That reminds me—we had a number of young men either born in Yugoslavia or born to Yugoslav immigrants in the U.S. who were draft age, but they had never done their military service in Yugoslavia, which has compulsory service. When they traveled to Yugoslavia, even if they had U.S. citizenship, they'd enter using their Yugoslav passports because they didn't want to go to the trouble of getting a visa, a process that I believe required that they renounce their Yugoslav citizenship. If they came into Yugoslavia, however, and used a Yugoslav passport, as far as the Yugoslavs were concerned they were theirs. When these guys got drafted into the army, they came to us in great distress

and said, “You have got to do something; I’m an American citizen.” So those were tricky cases. Sometimes I think they managed to bribe their way out of it or something, but we mostly had our hands pretty well tied if they had not used their U.S. passport.

Q: Did you have any problems with visa fraud or that sort of thing?

BAZALA: Oh yes, indeed. Unfortunately, the worst problem we had was an internal scam. I was informed not too long after I got to Belgrade that there was an ongoing investigation of one of the consular section’s local employees. I couldn’t say anything or do anything about it, and this went on for months. It turned out to be a problem with our receptionist, a guy named Misko. As the receptionist he was the first to greet someone coming into the consular section. His job was also to take applicants’ passports and check and see if there had been a previous visa refusal. In those days we had paper files. If he found a record, it was his job to pull it out of the file and attach it to the passport and the application form so that the vice consul would know that this person had been previously refused and why. That was a factor in whether or not we were going to issue a visa.

Misko worked out some scam where he approached people who had been previously refused a visa and said, “I can help you for a price.” He advised them to get a new passport that had no notations that we had previously seen the passport. Passports of refused applicants were stamped, “application received” or had a handwritten notation indicating the date and three letter code of the embassy, in this case BLG. He pulled the refusal document out of the file and threw it away and then coached the applicant on what to say and do in the interview, what documents to bring, and so on. He sent them through the process again and received payment when they were successful. So that was his scam. We eventually fired him. That was about all that we could do. Months later I ran into him at the airport and he was working for JAT, the Yugoslav airline. I’m sure he put his knowledge of visas to good use in that job. So that was very unfortunate. The other types of fraud tended to be from the poor areas, like Kosovo, Macedonia, and Bosnia.

We saw a lot of visa fraud from individual applicants. Mostly people wanted to go to the U.S. to earn enough money to build a house back in their village or to work long enough to be entitled to U.S. social security for their retirement years. Many went to Germany or other European countries with the same purpose.

There was not as much document fraud as you might think, just a good bit of lying to us about the purpose of their trip.

Q: Did you have premonitions of what would happen later to Yugoslavia?

BAZALA: People often ask me if we saw signs that Yugoslavia was falling apart at the time we were there. And my answer was that we knew it could. After Tito died we didn’t see how the country was going to be able to stay together over the long term, but it was somewhat like watching the Titanic go down. You kind of knew it was going to happen, but it took a while.

Q: One of the things I find most difficult to believe is that in the late twentieth century there were death camps and rape camps and the atrocities that Serbs and Croats did to each other.

BAZALA: What had happened in World War II was still pretty fresh in a lot of people's minds. Many people were still alive who had lived through it. And they didn't forget.

Q: No, the battle of Kosovo came up all the time while I was there, and that was hundreds of years ago. Unfortunately, at least to my way of thinking, I think the Serbian orthodox priests were playing a strong role in this. I suspect in Zagreb, the Catholic priests kept these issues alive, too. The church is very influential

BAZALA: It was.

Q: Were you able to get out on many field trips?

BAZALA: Yes, I did travel some officially. I mentioned the trip to Macedonia. When both our families came over to visit us, we did personal trips as well.

I had another trip down south for federal benefits. There were several cases where an elderly beneficiary had a representative payee who took care of him or her and received the social security checks on their behalf. The representative payee was supposed to make sure the beneficiary had food, medical care, and so forth. The rep payee had to report in periodically that the beneficiary was still alive and to provide some kind of documentation to prove it. In one case this guy was pretty old and the federal benefits clerk was suspicious. She said, "I think we really ought to go check on this person because I haven't had contact with him in a while."

So we went into the village and said, "We're looking for Mr. So and So."

From a neighbor: "Oh! He died about four years ago."

"*Really?* But we are still getting these forms that he's signed."

Well, he didn't sign exactly, but his thumbprint was on them, witnessed by the representative payee. That was the way some illiterate people did things. What had happened was the representative payee had cut off his thumb and preserved it in formaldehyde. Every time they had to send in the form, the rep payee got it out, inked it, stamped the form with the fingerprint, and sent the form to us.

Q: Oh God.

BAZALA: Obviously the rep payee did this so the money would keep coming. These are dollars we're talking about—hard currency. This money would support a whole village sometimes, but the payments stopped when the payee died. That kind of case was pretty time consuming.

We also had occasional death cases of American citizens. Many were dual nationals such as the federal benefits recipients, and these were usually straightforward.

The road between Belgrade and Zagreb was very, very dangerous. There were a lot of Turks who were transiting through Yugoslavia to Germany to work, and the story was they put a brick on the accelerator and would just zip right through. You didn't want to be on that road. Ever. We usually took the car train to bypass it when we traveled north. The accident cases were very tragic, but I didn't get too involved because it was my boss' responsibility to deal with them. When he was on home leave I had one or two of those cases.

Q: How did you find the junior officers in your section responded? I mean people would come in and lie to them. Young people aren't used to being lied to.

BAZALA: It's true. The ones I had in the consular section were pretty good. I took it as an opportunity to train them. Usually they were brand new in the Foreign Service. We also usually had a part-time officer in addition to the full-time junior officer. Their assignments were staggered in such a way that one would train the other. But I was there in case complications came up. The only problem I ever had was when USIA rotated their officers through the consular section as part of their junior officer program, but these officers, in contrast to the State officers, had no consular training. One girl was clueless and not much help to us. She was nice enough, but consular work was not her thing. I mean some people really cannot say no. I think that's a great skill that all officers have to learn, and the consular service is the best opportunity.

Q: When you left Belgrade where did you go?

BAZALA: Back to Washington. As a tandem couple, getting joint assignments was rather tricky. And in those days, because USIA was a separate agency, there were separate assignment cycles so it was really hard to get coordination for any kind of a tandem assignment. It would have been better if we'd stayed overseas for another assignment, but we just couldn't work it out. So we thought the best thing would be to go back to Washington and from there make an effort to lobby people a little bit more effectively.

It was tough being a tandem in those days. I expect it is much better now. When I first got to Belgrade there was no CLO [community liaison officer], a person who is supposed to help people get settled. The administrative officer was unsympathetic. "You wanted to be in the Foreign Service; here you are, and I don't care if you have two kids at home. You are expected at work first thing Monday morning"—that kind of attitude. There was no help at all, and I had a struggle to get settled when I first got there, but it all worked out in the end. That was part of dealing with the whole tandem situation, which was very new then.

In Washington I followed up on my interest and involvement with refugees in Belgrade. I was assigned to the Bureau for Refugee Programs as a program officer. That's what RP was called then; it's now PRM [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration], but it was RP in those days. Raz went back to USIA.

I had two major responsibilities in RP: refugee assistance in Southeast Asia (Khmer, Vietnamese, and Lao) and in South Asia, primarily Afghans. At that time it was the Soviets who were in Afghanistan. When I left RP, they replaced me with two people and divided the job into South Asia and Southeast Asia refugee assistance.

In Southeast Asia there were still Vietnamese fleeing out of Vietnam, the Vietnamese "boat people." There were camps along the Thai border with Cambodia for Khmer fleeing from the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. And then there were Laotians, and there were camps along the northern border of Thailand for them. I made trips to both locations while I was in Thailand.

Q: Well, let's talk about the Afghan thing first. What were you seeing and what were we doing about it?

BAZALA: The Afghan refugees were coming into Pakistan so U.S. assistance was helping the Pakistanis provide for them. This took the form of food aid and help to the NGOs who were working in the camps. We also supported the international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC]. There were big tent cities in camps. RP had a refugee officer in Islamabad who was my main point of contact with the embassy. We went together to talk to the Pakistani official in charge of Pakistan's response to the refugee crisis, but the Pakistani would only talk to him and ignore me. Finally I was fed up and said to one official, "You realize I'm the person who decides how much money your government is going to get from the U.S. for these camps." Then the guy decided he'd talk to me. I didn't make it that blatant, but that's what I was telling him. I visited the camps and I was able to go into the women's tents with an interpreter. This was not something the men could do. I talked to them about the food rations, education, medical care, that kind of thing. Those discussions were very useful.

ICRC had a big operation in Peshawar. We were supporting one group affiliated with it that arranged for prosthetic devices for people who lost limbs because they stepped on mines, especially children. The Soviets dropped bomblets and mines that looked like toys, and the kids would pick them up and get an arm or leg blown off or other injury. These were just nasty devices.

Q: But I find it so difficult to think of civilized people doing that deliberately.

BAZALA: These bomblets were deliberately designed to look like something else, toys or something benign. So the ICRC had quite an operation going to help with medical treatment and artificial limbs.

A large part of what I did was to recommend who got funded and for what project. There were contracts with the World Food Program, NGOs, the Red Cross, and UNHCR. Quite a bit of U.S. money went to support them.

Q: During this time were you all in Washington concerned about extreme Islamic forces running these camps and running madrassas and the like?

BAZALA: I just don't recall that. I know education was a big issue because these kids were not getting educated. If there were schools, they may have been madrassas. I don't recall any specific education program that we supported then.

Q: Also it's a long time ago because the results weren't as apparent. We didn't have to fight the problem.

BAZALA: We were just supporting the Afghans and the Pakistanis who were helping the refugees.

Q: I'm catching somewhat the flavor. In other words, we weren't focusing on the training of what today is the Taliban who we've been fighting for some time.

BAZALA: No, I wasn't.

Q: They came out of these camps to a certain extent.

BAZALA: Right. Well, it was pretty dangerous in that general area of Pakistan even then. These camps were near Peshawar in the northwest, and that's where I stayed. We have a consulate there. On our way out to the camps we rode through some villages where there were small businesses manufacturing guns. It was pretty scary looking into open-air shops and seeing lots of weapons for sale. It was still possible at times to go up to the Khyber Pass, if a visitor wanted to take a look into Afghanistan. It was closed at the time I was there, so I couldn't go look.

Q: Outside of their obviously not being particularly interested in dealing with women, how did you find the Pakistani officials?

BAZALA: Officious. They weren't much different from some of the Indians I dealt with when I was in India. But they were more conservative as far as women were concerned. Otherwise, they had that same British heritage of government bureaucracy that you find in India. So that part was familiar to me.

Q: What were the politics or the issues back in Washington for your program?

BAZALA: The refugee program had a separate budget with a separate appropriation. So funding programs kind of depended on the flavor of the month. There was a lot of congressional interest in various programs. Some congressional staffers would take a personal interest in some of the programs, and we would hear from them. The money

wasn't a big issue in those days; it was more how can we spend all this money they're throwing at us for a particular program or group of refugees. RP and its successor PRM have given a lot of money to the UNHCR, to the UN agencies, the World Food Program, as well as to the major international organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross. Every year the United States pledges to support a certain percentage of their budgets or a fixed sum. The major NGOs are also well established and experienced, and they run the camps, distribute the food, provide security, manage health care clinics, and so forth.

Q: Let's talk about the Vietnamese and Cambodians

BAZALA: RP was supporting programs in camps on the Thai-Cambodian border to house Khmer that were fleeing from atrocities in Cambodia. We had a big operation in Thailand, and there was a refugee coordinator in Bangkok.

Some Vietnamese were able to leave Vietnam via a special orderly departure program if they qualified. Most of these Vietnamese were eventually resettled in the U.S. I was less involved in that program which was a resettlement program. I was more involved in the relief effort and supporting the camps. The assumption was that when the crisis was over, the refugees would return to their homes. This was the assumption in Pakistan at the time as well. The Thai camps were very crowded and they were operated similarly to those for the Afghans in Pakistan. We also supported the Thai government's efforts to help these people.

Many Vietnamese fled by boat out of Vietnam. If they survived, most ended up in Thailand. But they were often victims of piracy. This was a big issue. There were big headlines in the papers about boat people killed and raped, and many people in the U.S. were very, very concerned. Some congressmen were particularly interested. I received calls: "Why aren't you doing more? Why aren't you protecting these people?" They wanted to know why we couldn't patrol the oceans.

There were mercenaries with boats down in southern Thailand who took it upon themselves to patrol the Gulf of Siam and take out the pirate boats. It was a totally lawless situation. I think many of the mercenaries had fought in Vietnam and were very sympathetic to the Vietnamese. They wanted to do something to protect them. They couldn't see that the U.S. government or the Thais or anybody else was protecting the refugee boats that were coming out of Vietnam. A lot of those boats were not very seaworthy anyway. So they said, "Well, if you are not going to do it, we're going to go out, shoot the pirates, and rescue the refugees." And they did. I mean it was just the wild west out there in the middle of the ocean.

One congressman, Representative Stephen Solarz of New York, was really taken with this issue, and he inserted into the RP budget five million dollars specifically to assist this particular population. He said to RP, "Go spend it." We were really challenged because it was not that easy to spend five million dollars effectively in the time frame he had in mind. First of all, those who actually got to Thailand were arriving in the south of

Thailand and ended up at the naval base in Songkhla. If you look at the map, you can see where they were and how difficult it was to reach them. We helped set up camps to receive them and provided basic necessities, counseling for rape victims, and so forth. Once they got to Thailand we could try to help them. But helping them on the open ocean was a different story. We gave money to the Thai government to beef up their police and border patrol and coast guard, but the Thai were not overly sympathetic to the plight of the Vietnamese. Many of the boats were attacked outside the territorial waters of Thailand, and it was just a lawless situation. Some made it to Hong Kong and then they were stuck there because they couldn't get out of Hong Kong. There were camps in Hong Kong as well.

Q: Well, were we giving these irregular paramilitary forces arms and ammunition, or they took care of that?

BAZALA: No, they had their own. We knew who they were. I think we had some intelligence operations going on to help the Thais patrol the waters and assist the boat people. The Thais didn't like the pirates anymore than we did.

Q: They were obviously armed independent freelancers.

BAZALA: Right. We tried to get the Thais to seize their boats when they came into port, but they'd bribe the border police to avoid that.

Q: I think there would be a conflict of interest. I mean these guys were killing pirates.

BAZALA: But the Thai didn't want the Vietnamese either. So they didn't particularly support all of our efforts to bring the boat people into Thailand where they had to be supported. If they come, okay, but get them out as soon as possible. So there were a lot of resettlement efforts.

(points to the map) See, they were coming across the Gulf of Thailand and landing anywhere along the long coast of Thailand that stretches all the way down to Malaysia. We had some refugees land in Malaysia too.

Some Vietnamese boat refugees qualified for onward travel to the U.S. They went to Bangkok to be processed if they could prove that they had some connection with the United States. Some could be processed through the Orderly Departure Program [ODP]. We had a big ODP office in Bangkok to process those who left directly from Saigon, but others had access to the program as well.

Q: We had an ODP office in Ho Chi Minh City, didn't we?

BAZALA: Yes, and they were working with the ODP office in Bangkok. That was a lifeline for a number of people. Others who couldn't qualify for ODP or get permission to leave Vietnam were the ones who resorted to small boat*s* to cross the Gulf of Thailand.

Q: Did you get involved with former refugees? I mean we've got a lot of Vietnamese here in Washington, in the Washington area. But did these refugee groups play a role with your program?

BAZALA: What I was doing was working directly with the NGOs or the international organizations to transfer money to them for certain purposes and to make sure the contracts were written appropriately and that somebody was following up and monitoring how the money was spent.

I did help one family that we had known in Da Nang. They were our friends and our children played together. The wife was a former employee of Pan Am in Vietnam. When I was in Bangkok I checked on their ODP registration and ensured they were eligible to be repatriated. I heard later that they were successful in settling in Texas.

Q: What was your impression of the NGOs dealing with refugees?

BAZALA: They all had great motivation. Some of them were very, very good and really filled a niche. They were able to put people on the ground as needed. They built up a certain amount of expertise. They knew how to set up a tent city and distribution networks for food and other assistance. Other NGOs were a little bit fly-by-night. That was something we had to watch out for. They would come in with a proposal and say, "Well, we're going to propose to feed fifty thousand people at these camps and so on." You had to be sure that they had the logistical wherewithal and management experience to do it and that they would spend the money appropriately. That was the big issue. Some of them, I thought, had unusually generous administrative overhead expenses in their budgets, making up a large percentage of the budget. And I'd say, "Why do you need all these things?"

I remember when I was in Bangkok at a meeting in a building housing some of the NGOs, and somebody said to me, "Oh, look out in this courtyard. That's such and such NGO out there. Take a look at their vehicles." They were all Mercedes Benzes which gave me the impression that maybe they were spending more on their administrative expenses than they needed to.

So that was something to watch out for. But by and large we dealt with the larger well-established NGOs. Sometimes they, in turn, would subcontract with some others that were getting started and that filled a specific need such as maternal healthcare or something like that.

Q: Did you find the Thai government responsive?

BAZALA: They did pretty well under the circumstances. The GoT [government of Thailand] was glad to have us come in and feed these people because otherwise it would have been a huge burden to them. They welcomed the Khmer as guests, but they didn't want them to enter into the country any further than the border.

Q: Do you feel that the United States was responding pretty well to moving these refugees on eventually to other countries?

BAZALA: Well, you know, there are always resettlement programs for any of these refugee situations where a certain percentage want to give up their homeland and move on. But I think in the case of the Khmer, most of them really wanted to go back to Cambodia, but they couldn't because it was just too dangerous. They had left for all the horrendous reasons you've heard about.

Q: Were we monitoring the situation in Cambodia to see if things were getting better or not?

BAZALA: I'm sure there were people who were very keenly interested in talking to Cambodians who had just come out from various areas in the country to pick up information. I mean that's logical. A lot of the stories that were in the press at the time came from some of the refugees. But I think by and large when the worst was over, they went back. I left the job before that happened though.

Q: Well, then what did you do?

BAZALA: I was promoted to FS-2. I was the only one in the entire RP bureau who got promoted that year. The promotion opened up opportunities for bidding. Since I'd just gotten the promotion I didn't need a job then to enhance my chances for promotion to the next level. So I went to a training assignment—a congressional fellowship on the Hill for a year.

Q: Whom did you work for and what were you doing?

BAZALA: There were options. I chose to work one semester for a senator and one semester for a member of the House of Representatives. The senator was Dennis DeConcini who was from Arizona. He took an interest in immigration reform, which was a big issue in Congress at the time. On the House side I worked for Lee Hamilton from Indiana. He was a very highly respected congressman.

Q: Well, let's talk about Senator DeConcini. What was the status of immigration in the United States at the time?

BAZALA: Much of the discussion about immigration policy that you are no doubt hearing in the news right now is very familiar. There were many of the same issues being discussed. The most interesting part for me was that I had an opportunity to go to the hearings. Senator Ted Kennedy was a major proponent of immigration reform. The Judiciary Committee was handling it. My job was to go and take notes and report back to the senator, be up to date on what was being discussed, and provide some analysis. Some of the key issues were guest workers, border security, and employer responsibility for hiring only legally authorized immigrant workers.

The bill that ultimately passed was the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Some of its elements were watered down considerably from the original proposals. A system for employers to verify employment eligibility was called for, but it did not have any real reinforcement teeth. One problem was that the technology did not exist then to enforce the law effectively, and fraudulent documents were readily available. Since that time E-Verify has been put into place, but it has not been fully implemented. I thought at the time of the hearings that verifying eligibility to work legally in the U.S. had the best chance of getting a handle on the problem, since employment is the prime motive for illegal migration.

Q: Today there's practically virulent opposition to immigrants within particularly the Republican Party. Was that part of the situation then?

BAZALA: Today I have a sense we're in complete gridlock. But they were at least talking to each other back then. In the end they watered down a lot of things that would have been very helpful, like employer checks on immigrants' eligibility to work and better documentation, that kind of thing. A bill actually came out of all that. I got the sense that there was a more gentlemanly atmosphere than now prevails, and people weren't quite so nasty. There was a lot of respect, of course, for Ted Kennedy. So I think he helped keep things on track at the time.

Q: You know, I think of these senators and congressmen and staffers with great ambitions to get something done. I just met one who did turn it into something. Yesterday I went to a presentation by Peter Galbraith. He had been a staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at one time, and they used to complain because he took off and almost ran a policy, particularly towards the Kurds and Iraq. Did you find yourself with a bunch of very ambitious young people?

BAZALA: Yes. I was already in my mid-forties at the time, and I found myself among the oldest people working on staff on the Hill. I would say most staffers were interns or fairly recent graduates. If people found out I was a Foreign Service officer, there were two reactions: "Oh you've got to tell me about the exam. I'm going to take it next month," or others were very bitter towards the Foreign Service and the State Department. I would wonder if these guys failed the test or had some other beef.

Q: This is one of the things that I often wonder, because we do have some real enemies among staff and members.

BAZALA: Well, we don't help ourselves. For one thing I noticed when I was on the Hill that every military service had a liaison office there. So there was a point of contact, somebody staff could go to if there was an issue with a constituent soldier or family member. State didn't have anybody at all. So if someone on the Hill wanted anything out of the department, they had to find somebody to call. In recent years the department has established a liaison office on the Hill. I had an opportunity to visit it during a recent inspection and speak with some who are their clients, and all agreed it was most useful.

When I was working on the Hill I remember calling a particular office in the department because I needed some information about something I was working on. And I was getting the runaround, "Oh, you're from Senator DiConcini's office." And you could just sense the barrier was up, and they weren't going to tell me anything until finally I broke down and said, "Well, you know, I'm just up here for a year. I actually work for the department."

"Oh! Well, why didn't you tell me?" And then the information was forthcoming.

So that kind of obstacle doesn't create friends up there. Some on the Hill, however, have real chips on their shoulders about the State Department and the Foreign Service for various reasons. I have had to go up to the Hill several times in different capacities during my career, and it's always, oh goodness, what is this one going to be like when I get up there?

Q: What was the atmosphere from Lee Hamilton? Lee Hamilton has of course been proposed, or at least a lot of people suggested, that he would make a very good secretary of state. He runs the Wilson Center. He's got an extremely fine reputation.

BAZALA: Yes, people thought very highly of him then, and I heard it said, "Lee Hamilton is probably the best person who will never run for president." He apparently had no real interest. Initially I had a choice. I could have worked for his committee or I could have worked in his office. I chose to work in his office. I don't know if that was the better choice or not, but I had the sense that I would get a broader perspective of what he was interested in. There was a big African famine at the time and a lot of interest in famine relief and providing some assistance for that effort.

Q: How did you find his office delivered to his constituency?

BAZALA: Oh he was very good. Because most people in Indiana were more interested in local affairs than foreign affairs, which was his focus on the Hill. He would make a special effort to provide constituent services. He went back to Indiana periodically to meet with constituents. I could have gone with him on one of those trips, but it was one of those Februarys, like this one, where the weather just didn't cooperate. Hamilton had some very sharp people work for him, so that was great. I went to some of the hearings he conducted. It was a learning experience more than anything.

When I worked for DeConcini I did travel to Arizona. I went to the border to see some of the border crossing points and talk with border officers and other officials there. The department paid for the trip because it was part of my program.

Q: Did you get involved in preparing either of your principles for hearings? And if you looked up questions, was it after information or was it to put the person on the spot?

BAZALA: It was just research. Hamilton, for example, wanted some background material and he knew I had contacts in the department. He asked if I could find out about

what we've done in the past about famine relief in Africa, for example.

Also, I could go to hearings and listen intelligently if immigration was under discussion because I knew the terminology and general issues. I wrote summaries of who had what position and picked up any papers that were being distributed, that kind of thing. I thought it was a very interesting year, and I'm glad I had that chance.

Q: Okay. Well, after the year on the Hill, where did you go?

BAZALA: I went to CA/EX [Consular Affairs, Office of the Executive Director] as a management analyst. At the time there were three analysts. There are now twelve. That's how much the office has grown.

Q: By this time Consular Affairs was getting a lot of money from fees, wasn't it?

BAZALA: Not at that time; we could keep the money. This was pre-MRV [machine readable visa] and before we started charging a fee for a nonimmigrant visa application. I don't know if we got any passport money or not then, but that was always a very separate operation, in those days especially. The executive office was involved in budgeting and resources and assignments. CA controls all of its assignments except for the entry-level officers. So if you wanted a job as consul general somewhere, you had to make sure you were tied in to CA, especially CA/EX. It's still that way. I inspected CA/EX last year. That's why I know that the assignment process hasn't changed a lot, except that it is now much larger than it was.

Q: Well, what were you all—or you particularly—looking at as an analyst?

BAZALA: CA/EX had a director and a FS deputy director who was my immediate boss. The three analysts were all at the FS-2 level. There was a separate budget office and a resource office. They handled the money and made sure that the various consulates had what they needed in terms of supplies and controlled items.

The three analysts divided up the world. I had all of the consular sections in Europe as my responsibility. If someone in Paris or Ankara or someplace needed something, then I would get a cable or call. I was the point of contact when they didn't know where to go in the department for something. Then I would either send the matter off to the right place or respond. I was also responsible for the annual consular package; we were just starting to automate that process. Before that everybody filled out paper forms and tabulated all the required data such as the number of visa applicants, work hours, American citizen cases, and so forth. We were just starting to use computers.

Q: Note: The consular package is a very extensive management tool detailing what each post did during the year and what was envisioned for the next year. It has been considered a leading edge of the department's management tools.

BAZALA: It was a good tool for assessing whether our resources were in the right place,

whether a post needed more or less for its workload. Of course, things will change from year to year, and the consular package gave us a good snapshot of each post and the overall workload picture. Whenever an officer was preparing to go out to post, he or she would come by for consultations. If they were going to a European post, they would see me to get a chance to look at the consular package, and we could talk about specific issues for that post.

One of the things I had to do was manage the process of converting the consular package into a computer file. Contract programmers did the conversion, but I was the point of contact and adviser to the process. We had to reformat the consular package so that it would be compatible with a computer database.

My other responsibility was setting consular fees. Periodically CA conducts studies to determine whether changes are needed to the consular fee structure, e.g., how much to charge for a passport or a notarial service or whatever. That process took about a year. Once we had proposed a revised fee schedule, it was necessary to get it approved by everybody and published in the FAM and have the charts printed and sent to the posts.

There was a big push at the time to downgrade senior consular positions in Europe and close some posts to save money or move resources to posts in need. (Usually the European posts were well staffed.) The hue and cry about closing the posts that came out of Congress was quite amazing; there's always a constituency somewhere.

Q: Oh yes. When I was in Italy closing Turin, the Agnellis who ran Fiat didn't want the Turin consulate to shut down and they had lots of friends in Congress.

BAZALA: Turin, Nice, Düsseldorf, and three or four other consulates were proposed for closing. I think in the end we didn't close any of them then. Over time some have closed or become consular agencies or American presence posts.

The downgrading of senior positions was very demoralizing for the consular service. Other elements of the department said, "Well, you can't have a consul general who outranks a political counselor or is the same rank as the principal officer." HR took away the senior consular rank of the position of consul general in Frankfurt, for example and made it an FS-1. This was in spite of the fact that it was the largest passport issuing post in the world at that time.

Q: Oh my God. My first post.

BAZALA: They did this downgrading *en masse*. We tried to argue against it and got nowhere. I told Betty Swope, then the deputy director of CA/EX, "Okay, we're going to chip away at this one at a time." So when a newly assigned consular chief to a post with one of these downgrades came by, I explained the situation and suggested that he or she make a case to us about why this particular job should not be downgraded and send us data and a cable to back it up. So one by one we started getting the positions upgraded again.

Q: Was Congress more responsive to Consular Affairs do you feel, compared to Political Affairs or other?

BAZALA: Well, I can't say that. But in terms of constituent services, this was where CA's interface with Congress was. There is always congressional interest in cases for constituents and relatives of visa applicants. It was, "My son has been waiting for a visa for his wife to join him," kind of thing. Consular officers respond to a lot of congressional correspondence about visas. The political issues were different. It might be a particular committee rather than a congressman's office that took an interest in a subject that was in the department's bailiwick.

Q: I've always found congressional correspondence really quite helpful. As a supervisor it would bring cases to my attention and I'd say, "Why haven't we done something?" In other words, it brought a case to our attention so maybe we could do something more.

BAZALA: Right. Sometimes a congressional office provided helpful information. But at other times their inquiries and our responses would be very pro forma. It was to show their constituents that they made an effort on their behalf.

Sometimes I'd get a little annoyed because there were people illegally in the states who approached someone in Congress about a visa case and then we received a letter about it. We wrote back and provided the information, but we let him know that the inquirer was ineligible to vote or sponsor a visa applicant.

Q: Where did you go from CA/EX?

BAZALA: To the Operations Center.

Q: Today is March 6, 2014, with Sylvia Bazala.

BAZALA: I wanted a domestic assignment and a seventh year in Washington because I had a child who was going to be a senior in high school.

Q: You did that from when to when?

BAZALA: 1987 to 1989. The job was not part of the day-to-day, twenty-four-hour watch that everyone in the department is familiar with. I was the deputy director for Crisis Management Support [CMS]. At that time it was a lesser-known function of the Op Center.

Q: When all hell breaks loose you put together a team to deal with it?

BAZALA: Right. The director of the op center at the time was Joe Lake. I enjoyed working for him and we got along well. He had another deputy director who ran the twenty-four-hour watch. I was in charge of the crisis management support functions and

staff, which were outside the regular watch. Whenever something blew up in the world that was more than the regular watch could handle and they needed to bring in extra resources, there would be a decision to set up a task force, monitoring group, or working group, and that was where CMS came in.

Q: I would think there would be a problem, just a generic problem in the Middle East. There's always something happening in the Middle East that you couldn't handle and once you got these things going you couldn't dissolve them.

BAZALA: Sometimes the bureaus would take over a long running issue. I know that's what happened in Bosnia, for example. EUR [Bureau of European Affairs] established a separate group that functioned within the bureau to help manage Bosnia issues because it was dragging on for such a long period of time. Within the Op Center the task forces were meant to deal with an immediate problem. Once the critical phase of the crisis passed, we would see where to go from there. Either it was disbanded because the problem had been resolved or was no longer an immediate crisis, or as I said, it would be turned over to one of the bureaus to monitor and follow up.

Q: During this period what crises were you dealing with?

BAZALA: Quite a few. Let me expand on some of the management and structural things first. We were at that time reorganizing task force procedures. When I started in the Op Center, the department was constructing three new task force rooms and a conference room just outside and adjacent to the watch area. The rooms were set up with equipment, phones, computers, white boards, and secure communications. I took over managing that process, set up training, and oversaw writing manuals and procedures for people who were potential task force leaders and participants.

Q: Who were the potential task force managers?

BAZALA: Usually the overall managers were part of the relevant regional bureau such as office directors or deputy assistant secretaries. Not everyone was equipped to manage stuff like this though. It's different from being chief of a political section or running an office in the department. It wasn't just the managers who needed help. When we went into task force mode, it was usually a twenty-four-hour operation. So we needed people for each eight-hour shift, and they had to be taught how to hand over to the next shift, how to communicate effectively with the embassies overseas that were involved, and how and when to produce situation reports. We usually kept an open telephone line with the post, for example.

These events could morph into an even bigger situation, so rather than using one room we might have two task force rooms in use, and the second one would deal with the public if there was some event that caused an evacuation or serious danger to American citizens. So it just depended on the particular situation. It was our job to define exactly what was needed. We might bring in representatives from other agencies to help with the task force. AID was often part of it because they might be providing emergency assistance.

The executive secretary of the department formally decided whether or not we would set up a task force. But he would usually go along with our recommendation or the regional bureau's. Then we would spring into action and set up the rooms and call people in and give them quick training if they hadn't already gone through our task force training. So that was essentially my responsibility for task forces.

There was another responsibility I had that involved coordination with several other agencies. I'm sure after 9/11 all of it has changed quite a bit, but it took about a third of my time to deal with this interagency effort. No matter what the crisis was, there was generally another agency involved. We often had a military representative on a task force. In any case, there was always a military officer on the watch who was the liaison to the Pentagon. That person might bring in extra resources, if we needed help. There were other things that involved external exercises and training that I got involved with. So I wasn't just sitting around waiting for a crisis so I would have something to do. In between we were doing a lot of training and contingency planning for the worst type of crisis you could have.

Q: What was happening that caused us to have task forces?

BAZALA: There were a couple of big ones that I recall very clearly and others of less urgency. Sometimes we would have what we called a "monitoring group." We would see that something was developing, and the regional bureau or the executive secretary wanted just a daytime monitoring group. The watch would take over at night. Or, we might have a "working group" because, for example, a bureau just needed to get the details ironed out of how we were going to send assistance to some country. A "task force" was a full-blown twenty-four-hour operation, bringing in every resource that we felt was needed to handle the situation. Rarely did these go on more than a few days, but sometimes they went on for weeks. It just depended. We always had to be aware that we only had the three rooms at the time, and we had to be ready for the next crisis.

If two crises came along at the same time, they would be difficult to handle. Since my time there, there are other conference rooms and locations around the department designated to back up task forces. With modern communications and the internet you can do that, but in the late 1980s we didn't have the same tools that we have now.

My very first crisis was Hurricane Gilbert, a category five storm that hit the Caribbean and Mexico in September 1988. Until 2005 it held the record for the most intense and one of the largest observed in the Atlantic basin. It cost billions of dollars in damage, knocked out communications and air travel, and caused dozens of deaths. Coincidentally, my husband had just left for his assignment as PAO [public affairs officer] in Kingston, Jamaica. He had been down there just two weeks when Hurricane Gilbert started tracking through. It passed directly over the full length of Jamaica, and the eye passed right over Kingston. It was the most destructive hurricane in Jamaica's history.

So he was there, and I was in the Op Center worrying about the department's response and simultaneously worrying about his safety. We set up a task force to manage the U.S.

response because it was clear that the island was going to take a direct hit and that it would affect other islands and Mexico as well. The satellite communications that we had with Kingston at the time went down, and so we were out of communication with the embassy for about twenty-four hours. The department and AT&T coordinated to send in a plane with emergency communications equipment and set up a link to us in the Op Center. By then we had the task force operating. Raz was on the first phone call that came in. Communications for the mission was via the fourteen foot USIS satellite on the roof of the embassy, and it had "pancaked" (folded over) despite being tied down in the "birdbath" position to try to withstand the wind. The replacement was for that satellite, so Raz was responsible for it.

Parts of Kingston were without power for eleven weeks, so that just tells you how serious the situation was down there. The post and its personnel survived with generators. The task force enlisted the military and USAID to send assistance. This went on for some time as we helped get Jamaica back on its feet. That was my first introduction to Op Center crisis management.

There were two other major crises during my time there. One was Lockerbie, a terrorist incident that brought down a Pan Am 747 over Scotland. It was a huge news story for quite a while. And it still makes news sometimes. A big practical problem setting up for our response to that incident was that it occurred right before Christmas on December 21, 1988. At that time, many officers, who would otherwise be called on to manage the task force, had taken leave for the holidays. So when we set up the task force, at first we did not have enough senior people from EUR to come in and manage the task force. Some were second stringers who hadn't been trained. One office director said, "Oh, I'll stay as long as I'm needed." And twelve, eighteen hours later he was just dropping in his tracks. We would normally not allow that, and I said, "You've got to go home. You're no longer effective." And he said, "But there's no one else," which was probably true. Still I said, "You've got to find somebody else," but the replacement was also inexperienced.

Bureau of Consular Affairs was brought in to deal with the public, but it was the same situation. Many of their people were on leave also, and so they just scarfed up anybody they could find to answer the phones, because the public was calling, frantic to find out what happened to loved ones. I think there was a streaming banner on TV that said to call the State Department at such and such a number if you're concerned about a relative who died in the Lockerbie accident.

CA brought in people who were completely untrained and not suited for this kind of work. They answered the phone, and it would be somebody's mother who lost a child (there were a lot of students on the plane returning home for the holidays). You could overhear these conversations and it would just be awful. I'd cringe, you know, because the person on our end of the phone just didn't have the right skill set and training to be able to respond effectively to these grieving people effectively. CA came in for a lot of criticism because of this. Since then CA has gotten its act together and these things are much better handled now. I know this for a fact because I inspected the American Citizens Services program in CA not too long ago. They now have an ongoing task force

training effort, so that when something like this happens there are plenty of people to call on who have the right training.

During the Lockerbie aftermath, the department took a lot of criticism, primarily because the public was not getting the information or assistance it wanted. One of the problems was that Pan Am would not release the manifest to us of who was on that plane. I kept asking, "Why aren't they releasing this? We need to know who's on that flight." Pan Am insisted on handling notifications themselves. They wanted to be the ones to tell the relatives. But then they didn't know who the relatives were because all they had was the manifest. But the relatives were calling us, so this loop wasn't connected. The secretary was out of town during this time. I heard somewhere that the deputy secretary knew the head of Pan Am. I suggested that we get him to pick up the phone and call and say we had to have this list because of the calls we're getting. Finally we did get it. Then we were able to be a little more proactive, because we could track down through passport applications the relatives and contacts of those who were killed in the crash.

On the positive side, I think Embassy London handled the consular aspects of it in the UK very well. They sent people up to Scotland to be on site to coordinate with local authorities and deal with some of the relatives that showed up there. From the perspective of the Op Center, I think London's consular staff handled it quite well and kept us informed.

Q: I don't blame them, but for some reason the Lockerbie families were particularly proactive. I mean they really melded together, and they had some very aggressive lawyers or spokespeople who carried the fight on and kept the cause going, because there are other ramifications to dealing with Libya.

BAZALA: There was the whole political aspect involving Libya, and the fight against terrorism was really just beginning. You're right; they pushed the federal government to deal with these things more effectively in the future. Maybe because a lot of the victims were from the same area, it was easier for the families to come together.

Q: Well, they could get together. It was almost a chemical reaction and it worked very well. I give full credit, because I think they made us change. I'm a consular officer by profession, and Consular Affairs has made considerable changes in how it approaches a mass disaster.

BAZALA: Right, that's what I've been saying. This triggered it. At the time we had a political appointee as the assistant secretary for Consular Affairs, and she was completely out of her element. This is not a job that should go to somebody as a political favor. It is too critical and requires experience.

Q: She was from New Hampshire and a friend of President Reagan's chief of staff.

BAZALA: I remember that she came down to the task force and looked around without a clue what to do or even what questions to ask. She just didn't have the background she

needed for this job. So that was also a factor. Since then, as I said, CA has its act together, and these things are handled much better. My hat is off to CA for making those improvements. We learned a lot of lessons from this one, and after every task force we did a "lessons learned," an after action review, to see what we could have done better and what else was needed during task force operations to help with the job. We always tried to take those suggestions and act on them.

There was a crisis in Panama leading up to the invasion of Panama and the fall of President Manuel Noriega. That was a more politically focused task force, rather than a crisis that involved a lot of citizens.

The last major crisis I dealt with right before I left the Op Center was Tiananmen Square, the crisis that built up in China during the spring of 1989 when student-led demonstrations seeking government reforms ended with a government crackdown and deaths in June. There were many American students in China at the time. The events were all over the news and very alarming.

In coordination with the embassy, we were arranging evacuation flights, but many of the students didn't want to leave. The families called us saying, "We're very upset about this crisis in China and what we're seeing on the news, which looks pretty bad, and we want our son/daughter out of there." The embassy was trying to get in touch with the students to offer them an opportunity to leave. Many refused to go because they wanted to be there as witnesses to history or they didn't want to interrupt their studies. But the parents demanded that we get their kids out of China. Short of kidnapping them and putting them on the plane I don't know how it would be possible to get them to leave. Most of them were of age, so we gave them a message and warnings, and we offered them the service. The embassy was very, very busy with that. Also, there was the big political element involved, and the department followed developments closely. One hard part for us was maintaining an open telephone line with the embassy.

Q: How did you find the various elements of the State Department responding when you had a crisis?

BAZALA: Well, this is interesting. If it was a big consular type of crisis, a natural disaster for example, they really didn't want to be bothered with it. "Oh, let CA handle it." But CA's role was very specific. The regional bureaus had to get involved because there are always political aspects and economic ones, too, in any crisis. Inevitably, the head of the task force would be a DAS or office director from one of the regional bureaus who might not have much background for consular type work or AID type work. So even though that person would be rather narrowly focused, the coordination aspect of this work was extremely important. In the Jamaican case, for example, USAID brought in all kinds of support, emergency aid, emergency food, and so forth. Once activated, they set to very effectively. They were very well organized, but you needed to have that coordination factor because the embassy needed to be told, "Look, we're sending in X number of planes with this manifesto. You need to deal with the government on the ground so that they are prepared to receive this assistance." There was a lot of

coordination that needed to go on at both ends. And sometimes you had someone in charge of the task force who did not have the skill set to handle things of that sort, somebody used to dealing with political parties and legislatures but not operational matters. In those days almost everybody who was in an office director or a DAS was a political or econ cone officer and not necessarily somebody who had a lot of experience as a manager. That would be a problem. We tried to fill the deputy coordinator positions for the task force with somebody who had more managerial experience. Sometimes that worked out, but those were things that we had to watch out for because we didn't want anything dropping between the cracks. When there was a task force in operation, the CMS staff went on twenty-four-hour shifts so that one of us was present at all times to advise the task force managers and ensure nothing important was missed in the operation.

The embassies were very important in every case obviously. They would call us and say, "Why don't we have this support or we're not hearing about this or can you get in touch with so and so?" The concept of the task force was a good one; you just had to make it work.

Q: I would imagine that you had to really take the after-action reports very seriously, not just as a historical thing but how are we going to do this better next time?

BAZALA: Exactly right. Some good suggestions would come out of our "hot washes" that we conducted after the task force was disbanded. One was, and this was something new in those days, to set up an answering service or answering machine with an automated message tree. We hate it now when you don't get a live person, but at least the phone would get answered. "You've reached the State Department Task Force for X. We can't answer your call; can you leave a message?" At least we would know somebody called. Before callers were getting busy signals. We set up that phone when we didn't have enough lines or we wouldn't be able to respond immediately. Another suggestion was to set up a telephone booth in the task force room to make secure phone calls so that it was not necessary to leave the area to go back to the office to make a secure call. Things like that made the system work better. The CMS staff was not normally on a twenty-four-hour watch cycle except during a task force, but for two years I walked around with a pager. I never knew when I was going to have to drop everything and go into the department. With Raz in Jamaica and me dealing with two teenagers at home and always on duty with this job, I would say that it was probably the most stressful time of my career up to that point.

Q: I'm sure it was.

BAZALA: I made my daughter learn how to drive so she could bail me out if I had to go into the office. I wanted her to be able to take her brother to school or herself to her activities, if necessary.

Q: Where did you live?

BAZALA: In McLean, where we still live.

My teenagers were in two separate high schools. My daughter went to McLean High School; my son was in the Thomas Jefferson School for Science and Technology. So two different high schools made things even more complicated. Plus, it was Alison's senior year in high school so we were doing all those things you do to prepare for college applications, senior activities, graduation, and all that. Raz came up from Jamaica several times. I went down there once so I knew what his situation was. I was also lobbying for a job in Kingston so I could join him eventually.

Somehow we managed it all, and somehow my daughter got into college.

Q: Where did she go?

BAZALA: She is a musician, and so she traveled to several music schools to audition. I had to buy three plane tickets, one for me, one for her, and one for "Mr. A Cello." She's a cellist. Potential music majors can't just submit a written application. They have to meet the teachers and audition for them. Fortunately, she was very successful. She got into several conservatories, and she finally picked the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

At the same time I was also trying to get my son accepted to boarding school, because if I was successful in getting a job in Jamaica, there was no suitable school down there for him. He went his last two years to boarding school. Applying to boarding schools is almost the same process as college.

Q: Where did he go to boarding school?

BAZALA: He went to Loomis Chaffee in North Windsor, Connecticut. He picked Loomis Chaffee because it was closest to his grandparents in Maplewood, New Jersey. So we had Alison in Boston, Alex in Connecticut, grandparents in New Jersey, and a convenient train connection for all three. So that was how we did it. It all worked out, but I was a busy person that second year in the Op Center.

Q: How did you find the State Department? Or did it come into the equation as far as support goes?

BAZALA: The department supported me in the sense of granting me the seventh year in Washington so my daughter could finish her senior year of high school. That's in the regulations. USIA, however, would not give Raz the seventh year. So he had to take an overseas assignment. Kingston was a good job for him because it was the first time he was public affairs officer. Although we were not experienced in the region, still it's like seeking to be an ambassador. You go when they offer it to you.

So this commuting year was very difficult for us. Also, there was no guarantee I would get a job in Kingston. I was hopeful because it is such a huge consular operation. Being a consular officer I thought surely something would turn up. I didn't get a lot of

encouragement from the embassy, but in the end I made it work out, and I did get an assignment to Kingston.

Q: How'd you make it work out?

BAZALA: Well, I lobbied for it. That's what you have to do. I went down to Kingston. I talked to the chief of section and the DCM, and I talked to HR back in Washington. I argued, "Here's the situation. I'm going to go to Kingston one way or the other. I can be on leave without pay or you can make a productive officer out of me." Raz had a three-year assignment extended to four to accommodate my assignment. I became the head of the anti-fraud unit in Kingston for one year. It was a down stretch because by then I was an FS-1, and the job was an FS-2. Despite that, I was glad to be working and back doing overseas consular work.

Q: It is also a busy and not an inconsequential consular post.

BAZALA: And very interesting. Then my second year (Raz's third year) the head of the NIV [nonimmigrant visa] section was leaving, so I immediately put in a bid for his job, which was at my grade, and I got it. So it worked out fine, but as a tandem you have to really stretch yourself to make things work out. In those days it was even more so because Raz and I were moving up the ranks, and there weren't that many people at the higher levels who were tandems. The department was still coping with how all that was working. That first year, when Raz was in Jamaica and I was still in the department, was the only year we were actually separated while the children were still at home. Staying together as a family is the crucial thing when the children are still at home.

Q: What was Jamaica like then?

BAZALA: I was in Kingston from 1989 to 1992. As a consular post I don't think Jamaica has changed a lot. It's still a very high fraud post and a very busy post.

Q: I remember being in personnel dealing with Consular Affairs, and we practically had a couple of consular officers carried out of Kingston on stretchers.

BAZALA: It was tough. We had a number of junior officers assigned there. I think there were fourteen. The political situation was pretty volatile at the time, too. Michael Manley was the prime minister. The opposition leader and previous prime minister was Edward Seaga. He used to call me up and say, "This is Edward *See-ya-ga.* And I'm sure you will be happy to know that I have someone who is certainly deserving of a visa." And he would go on in this vein as if I was just a functionary, a flunky, and I was going to do what he told me to do because he was such an important person. Then I had to be very diplomatic and tactful and tell him, "No, that's not the way it works; this person is *not* deserving of a visa." It's a small island and people know each other. It was hard to escape the multitudes of attempts to influence our visa decisions.

Q: Let's talk about fraud in Jamaica. What was it like in your time?

BAZALA: Everyone wanted and felt entitled to a visa to the United States. For a certain element of the society, it was a rite of passage. You turned eighteen, Dad gave you a BMW, and you came in and got your visa. On his own merits this person didn't necessarily qualify because it might be just some footloose kid. On the other hand, if they had the financial resources and were from a well-established family or were enrolled in school, they were probably safe bets for a visa. We had a lot of those. But that was just a small portion of society.

The rest of our applicants saw the United States as the land of opportunity and they knew people who had found jobs in the U.S. whether legally or illegally. There are a lot of Jamaicans in Florida particularly. Many wanted to take advantage of Uncle Sam and get a visa so they could earn a little money and improve their lives. The motivation was understandable, but it was still not legal to work on a tourist visa.

Of more concern to us were the criminal elements in Jamaican society. There were big criminal gangs called posses in Jamaica that had been operating for many years. Few people dared to venture into some parts of Kingston, not even the police, without getting permission from the posse elements that controlled those areas. It was all mixed up with drugs. Our biggest bilateral issue with Jamaica was drug smuggling. And drugs usually lead to violence.

The Shower Posse was the most notorious gang. It got its name because they were known to "shower" their victims with bullets. Reportedly this posse murdered more than a thousand people in its heyday. During my time in Kingston the leader was Lester Coke. He and his family became very wealthy from smuggling activity. They were in operation for over twenty-five years. Despite the crime, violence, and intimidation, the posses won local support by providing social services that the government could not or would not provide. In 1990 Lester Coke was finally arrested and, as I recall, died in prison in a mysterious fire. Other family members had also met violent deaths, but the youngest son, Christopher Coke, took over the business. After a long effort to gain extradition on U.S. charges, he was returned to the U.S. to stand trial. He is now in a prison in New York.

Kingston had a particularly violent criminal element. If you were mugged, your throat might be slit at the same time. The posses had people in the United States and branches in Canada and in the United Kingdom (where they were called yardies), and they wanted to travel freely to manage their huge drug business and whatever else they were doing. They needed passports and visas, but if we knew who they were, obviously we would not give them a visa. Often, if they had a criminal background, they came in with false identities. It was very easy to get a fake birth certificate, or even a real one using someone else's identity, or bribe someone at the passport office for a passport in a different name. If they had been refused a visa previously, they could come in with a clean passport and a credible story and maybe get a visa.

You have to keep in mind that in those days the only immediate asset we had for checking whether a person had any kind of record in the United States was the

department's CLASS [Consular Lookout and Support System]. If a person had been previously refused a visa or they were in the system as a person to look out for, we would know it by checking our system. But this was pre-9/11, before Congress directed federal agencies to come together and establish a system to cross check agency files and databases for derogatory information on visa applicants.

So we had to do many personal investigations. I had a staff in the anti-fraud unit [AFU] consisting of a unit chief, a rotating junior officer (every six months), and four FSN investigators. A large part of what they did was to go out to the villages where somebody claimed he came from, if the officers flagged a document they thought was fake. The AFU staff went to the village, visited the registrar, and looked at the handwritten registry books to confirm whether the visa applicant was actually who he or she claimed to be. Many times they could not find any record of a particular person. An applicant who had a fake birth certificate could go into the passport office and get a new passport, no questions asked. There were also attempts to forge the visas. Before we had the machine-readable visa, photo substitutions were common. We had something called "the Bangkok method" as an attempt to prevent that. Have you ever heard of it?

Q: No.

BAZALA: Obviously Bangkok's consular section was the one that came up with this. We placed the printed visa on the passport page, and on the back of the page with the visa we pasted a photo of the applicant, and then stamped the impression seal over it. It was just one more effort to prevent forgeries. It was a messy, time-consuming process, but we thought it helped.

I had one bit of help from the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agent who did a circuit ride through Jamaica every two months or so. We could, in exceptional circumstances, ask for an FBI check on a nonimmigrant visa applicant, but we didn't normally do it in those days because it was a lot of trouble and delayed the visa decision. Also the department paid for it. We asked for the FBI checks for immigrant visa applicants but not normally for NIVs. This meant it wasn't easy to check whether or not an NIV applicant had a record or was wanted by the FBI in the United States. Our FBI agent said, "Look, I'm not supposed to do this. But here's a printout." It was about three inches thick and contained a list of all the Jamaicans that the FBI currently had in its system who were wanted for crimes or convicted of crimes in the U.S. That was a tremendous help, because we could check and see if the applicant was wanted in the states or had been convicted of a crime there. Quite a few turned out to have felony charges or other records we would not have known about otherwise.

Unfortunately, many times these people came in with fake documents, and we would not know their true identities. Then we had to rely on our own resources, interviews, investigations, and intuition. We were always on the lookout for documents provided by the mother-daughter team of Mavis and Diana Anglin. The Anglins charged thousands of dollars for a document package "guaranteed" to get a U.S. visa. One photo-subbed U.S.

passport was used ten times by a former deportee to travel back and forth to New York before an alert INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] agent caught up with him.

Q: Were you able to do anything with fingerprints or anything like that?

BAZALA: Only if we asked the FBI for it. But as I said, they charged us, and it would take forever. Nowadays, of course, we have instant response. I think the tools that we have now for consular work are just light-years better than what we had in those days. They clearly prevent most identity fraud for visa purposes. If you have somebody's fingerprints then you have real identification. But at that time it was a constant effort to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys in order to prevent people from coming to the U.S. who had criminal intentions and criminal records.

I have to tell you about one major case when I was head of the fraud unit that really to this day is one of those things you never forget. Everybody has had them. It was an adoption fraud case. Jamaica was a source of orphan adoptions then, and there was a U.S. adoption agency, and also a Canadian agency, working in Jamaica. The Jamaican adoption board head was a local government official who approved the adoptions. We processed the immigrant visas for these babies. In the course of processing one of these visas, one of our FSNs noticed that a baby had the exact same name and date of birth as another baby they had just processed a month before or so. It was a very unusual name; it was not like Joe Brown or something.

She brought it to my attention. I asked, "How can it be, that these children with obviously different photos have the same name, same birthday, same everything." That started us off on an investigation, and it turned out that there were six similar cases. The head of the adoption board and the U.S. adoption agency were in cahoots. The adoption board head obtained babies in illegitimate ways such as telling the mother in the hospital after the birth that the baby had died. Or in one case the baby was a child of incest. In another case the father was known, but he had not relinquished his rights to the child. The adoption board official would get a legitimate baby's data and information and use it twice, once for the real child and the second time for an imposter. He would then send that second baby to Canada. Or he would take the legitimate credentials for one going to Canada and use the same documentation for a baby that he had obtained illegally to go to the United States. What tripped him up was when he made a mistake and used the same documentation for two babies who were both headed for the United States. That's how we caught him.

I informed my Canadian consular colleagues, and they were legitimately upset about this. The department was too. I investigated the six cases we were able to identify—took depositions from either the mother or somebody else who was involved such as a hospital official. I was very lucky that the natural parents, when I found them, agreed to the adoptions as all the babies were already in the U.S. We were able to stop the fraud from that point on, and I think the Jamaicans ultimately charged the guy who was head of the adoption board. I believe the department took action against the adoption agency. We made the adoption board official permanently ineligible for a visa and ceased any further

dealings with him, but that was about all we could do to him. Those were emotionally difficult cases for all of us.

Q: In those days telephones enabled close contact with interested parties. You must have had a lot of telephone calls from the states.

BAZALA: We got calls from all over—lawyers, congressional staff, petitioners, and relatives. Since Jamaica was in the Eastern Standard Time [EST] zone, that made it easier for them. There was a lot of pressure on us all. One of the problems for me personally was that Raz was the public affairs officer, so he was constantly being interviewed, photographed, and quoted in the press. We also entertained officially a good bit. I told him not to tell anybody what I did, if he could help it. If they asked, he was just to say, "Oh, she works at the embassy." Nobody ever really probed, and I never volunteered anything. If the media was after Raz for something at a function, I would go hide behind the potted palms. It was very difficult not only for me, but for anybody who worked at the embassy. Everybody was approached about visas. I don't care who it was. Even the cleaning lady in a resort where we were staying approached me. Edward Seaga, the chief of the opposition, would call me. I got calls from the Jamaican consul in Miami arguing a case, "I *really* don't see how you can turn down this visa." Jamaicans can be very hoity-toity. If someone knew you were in any way connected with the embassy, much less involved with visas, it could make your life very difficult. So our staff learned not to say anything. We set certain hours for answering the phone, and the FSNs did not use their real names.

When I became head of the NIV section, we set up an appointment system for visa interviews. We had not had one up to that time, and CA was just beginning to encourage sections to do this. The appointment system helped a lot. The ambassador objected greatly to the long lines of visa applicants in front of the consular section even though we were in a separate building from the rest of the embassy. Of course vendors would be out there selling documents and soft drinks and so forth to people in line. So it helped to set up the appointment system. On the other hand, it also brought in another possibility for soliciting a favor, like getting an early appointment. The referral system, which is in the regulations, enables embassy officials to refer legitimate visa cases to us that were in U.S. interest, such as somebody in the government or a prominent individual. It was constantly being undercut. We had to try to be firm, but we weren't always successful. Now there are penalties for improper use of the referral system.

Q: This must have put you in conflict to a certain extent with, in particular, the political and economic sections, didn't it?

BAZALA: It was more of a problem with the other agencies at post. They don't necessarily understand visas. They thought that just by asking they could get a visa for somebody. Occasionally we had to help the Drug Enforcement Agency [DEA] take a person to the U.S. to be a witness for a trial. Although the person was not normally eligible for a visa, we had special procedures to get permission for someone to travel for

legitimate law enforcement purposes. I worked closely with DEA on these cases, but fortunately there weren't many.

Frankly the DCM was more of a problem about referrals than anybody. And this was a particular problem for me because he was in my chain of command as my reviewing officer. It makes it very difficult when the DCM calls up and says, "Well, I don't understand," because somebody had gotten to him about a visa refusal or whatever. I looked at the record and usually found a mile-long reason as to why a visa had been refused. On a couple of occasions I had to write a long memo with the documentation attached to explain why the person did not get a visa.

In some ways it helped him because he could say to the inquirer that he reviewed it and it's not legitimate, and no, we're not going to issue a visa. But it was time consuming. Nowadays that whole business about referrals is very rigorously enforced. And it's one of the things that the inspectors look at very carefully to make sure that the rules are being followed. When people go through DCM school and "charm" school, a seminar for ambassadorial appointees, somebody gets to them and tells them, "You are not to get involved with visas, *ever.*" By and large, I think the system is working a lot better. But in those days it wasn't.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

BAZALA: Before I got there it was Michael Sotirhos, a political appointee. Sotirhos was Raz's ambassador the first year he was there; he later became ambassador to Greece. I inspected Athens after he left there, so I know his reputation there as well. His claim to fame in Jamaica was that he used to go to a different church in Jamaica every Sunday. That was his way of getting to know the Jamaicans. Church is a big deal in Jamaica, so that maybe was a pretty good way of getting out and about. He was also involved in receiving all the U.S. aid sent to Jamaica after Hurricane Gilbert. It was Raz's job to make sure he got publicity for every planeload of aid that came in from the United States and to keep scrapbooks of press clippings for him. When Sotirhos left, Glen Holden, a multimillionaire from California arrived. His background was in insurance. He was a very nice person, and we all liked him. To this day I still get Christmas cards from him. He lives in Los Angeles.

Unfortunately, when Holden arrived he hadn't a clue about embassy functions and its budget. He was just in a different world. People who have a lot of money don't realize that people like us don't have the same resources. Within his first two months I heard that he spent the entire annual travel budget for the embassy. Finally somebody told him that the embassy didn't have any more money for him to helicopter up to Montego Bay to play polo with his friends there. After somebody had the guts to talk to him about it, he immediately started paying for his travel personally. He also renovated the ambassadorial residence at his own expense. I don't believe there were any more problems, and he made a solid effort to do a good job. You don't mind a political appointee who cares about embassy staff and is educable. If he's willing to learn the ropes and take the job seriously, you can work with somebody like that. This is how I would describe Holden. He had

good professional people working for him in the embassy, and he listened too, so that was one of the better experiences with a political appointee.

Q: Did you have any relations or professional dealings with Michael Manley? He was sort of a thorn in the side there for a while.

BAZALA: Well he kind of mellowed in his later years. Raz had a lot more to do with him.

Q: I'm sure he did. I'm sure we covered that. Did he reach down to the consular section?

BAZALA: We heard from his office from time to time. But he had his contacts with the ambassador, DCM, political officer, and so on. I just remember phone calls from opposition leader Seaga, who was out of office.

In the consular section we had most of the junior officers at post. They rotated through the different units of the consular section, and sometimes they did a short stint in the embassy as well. I usually had at least six JOs on the NIV line at any one time doing the visa interviews and adjudicating applications for renewals.

The big thing for us was putting in the machine-readable visa operation. Kingston was the first post in the world to install it after it had been tested in Santo Domingo. So we didn't have a lot of experience and knowledge to go on. So here's the equipment, here's what you're supposed to do with it, and make it work. You could sense there was a lot of resistance worldwide to this new system. Anytime you introduce anything new you're going to get resistance.

The staff said, "I don't think this is going to work, there's too much work. I can't learn this thing." It also involved physical reconstruction of the consular section, because instead of just a window to stand at to interview people and look at their documents, there had to be a computer terminal right there. We had to widen the windows and then install the equipment. So we had a construction project to manage and new equipment to integrate with our systems and make sure it was compatible and worked. CA sent people from the department to train us on how to use it. It was quite an effort. But it was of such importance that the under secretary for management came to see how it was working in Kingston. Much to our annoyance he picked a Saturday to do that, so we had to open up visa operations for the day.

We had our bumps in the road trying to make the MRV work. One time the CLASS system went down for a week, and we discovered that our uninterrupted power source was not connected to the embassy's electrical system. But we persevered. Since the department was very interested, we provided feedback as to how it was working and what we could do better. We made it work. I was very proud that we could do that. It was the major achievement of my tenure there.

There are a couple of American Citizens Services [ACS] cases that I was involved in. I was in charge of the consular section on a Friday. I'll never forget it. It was four in the afternoon. It seemed that things always happen just before a weekend. There appeared in our lobby a group of American tourists. Well, they weren't all American citizens; I'll get to that in a minute. The group was from a cruise ship that stopped in Ocho Rios on the north coast to give passengers a day off the boat in Jamaica to do some of the usual tourist things.

We had a consular agent in Montego Bay who was usually quite helpful because the major tourist spots were primarily on the north coast of Jamaica. It's a two-hour trip to get across the island from there to Kingston where the embassy is. The consular agent usually handled tourist problems. But if he couldn't, then we would see them in Kingston or we would take a trip up to the north coast. In this case, he sent them to Kingston.

This group had heard so much about crime in Jamaica and the risk of being robbed that they left all their documents and most of their money and credit cards on the boat. They got off the cruise ship in their bathing suits and flip-flops and hats and sunscreen and that's about all. Something got screwed up or they forgot the time, and the cruise ship left without them.

It was a big family reunion trip, so they were all related in some way to each other. Unfortunately, several of them were Mexican citizens; the rest were American citizens. The ones who were not Americans were green card holders or had legitimate U.S. visas because their next stop was Miami where they had to have documentation to enter.

But what do you do? Here are these people, and they had absolutely nothing. No clothes, practically no money, nothing. We did what we could. We contacted the cruise ship and found a way to put them up in a hotel in Kingston for the night. I called the Mexican consul, and I said, "You and I have a problem, and I need your help." He contacted the Mexican consul in Miami and I called INS in Miami to try to get them paroled into the U.S. so they could get back on the cruise ship and retrieve their documents and belongings. The ship faxed us copies of their passports and visas. After an overnight stay we put them on a plane to Miami, the next port of call for the ship, and persuaded the airline to accept them without their original documents. It was quite an effort to get all that done.

Q: I always think of Jamaica and drugs, as you mentioned before. Did you have much of a problem with American kids getting involved with drugs?

BAZALA: Yes, and it was not just young people. At one point somebody told me we had more American citizens in jail in Jamaica than any other country in the world, and most were drug related.

Q: That's a wonderful statistic.

BAZALA: I'm not sure whether that was true, but we certainly had a lot. Visitors came to Jamaica thinking marijuana was legal or at least not illegal, that it was a wide-open society, and/or that it didn't matter because the police would ignore it. That was true sometimes. There was the big Rastafarian movement with practitioners and the reggae singers who were notorious for smoking ganja (marijuana).

It was a bit of a loosy-goosy society. Jamaica wanted to encourage tourism, which was a major moneymaker. So they didn't crack down too hard on the drug culture, and people traveled there thinking they could use drugs as part of their vacation experiences. It was just a constant problem. In many cases the Jamaican authorities would just ignore the issue. We lobbied the airport authorities to put a sign up in the airport arrival area to say, "You are entering Jamaica. Please know that it is illegal to use drugs, sell drugs, or buy drugs in Jamaica," which was true. Okay, they did put up the sign. It was about as big as a piece of letter sized paper. But as passengers came from the airplane into the terminal lobby, they couldn't see the sign unless they turned around; it was posted on the back of a column. So yes, they posted the sign, but they didn't make it very visible for arriving passengers. We tried to warn the public, and we posted notices in the consular section. But you never get to everybody.

What some of the organized drug smugglers would do—and this is all part of the posse business—would be to find some poor person in New York City or some other place; a woman on welfare, for example, who needed money. They offered to send the person to Jamaica on holiday for a week, and all they had to do in return was bring back a "small package." These were the "mules."

They were desperate people. Somebody comes along and offers you a week in Jamaica? Sure. Why not, you know? They were very often women, and they sometimes brought children with them. Then they tried to smuggle the package of cocaine or other drugs onto the plane, and they got caught. One woman was caught with a package in her baby's diaper as she was going up the stairs to the plane, and she was arrested. Sometimes the police would be bribed to overlook this smuggling activity, and then they would arrest them anyway. Of course these people didn't have the resources to defend themselves when they got caught, so they were thrown in jail. They wouldn't be able to pay the fine, so they ended up serving a sentence. If they had children with them, they would end up in a Jamaican welfare society home or with a charity service.

Q: How were the prisons?

BAZALA: I never personally went to any in Jamaica. I don't remember hearing any serious problems.

Q: The system was such that they kind of ran them through, fined them, got the money, and sent them on their way?

BAZALA: Yes, if they paid the fine, they could get out usually. Often they couldn't raise the money, and then they would be in jail for months. It was usually months rather than years.

I did have occasion to go and see a prison in the Cayman Islands, because that was part of our consular district. We had a consular agent in the Caymans.

Q: Who's responsible for the Cayman Islands? Who runs it, is it British?

BAZALA: It's British, but it was part of our consular district. I went there once to see an American prisoner convicted of a serious crime. In contrast to others I have seen, this was the Four Seasons of prisons. If you ever have to serve time in prison, the Cayman Islands is the place to be. I met with the warden. At one point he said, "Oh, here's our dinner menu," and he hands me a printed menu. So they were doing okay there.

Q: Well, what about high society? Did you have anything to do with them? I'm talking about Americans and people from Europe who go to Jamaica and live in enclaves and all that?

BAZALA: It's an island with many people in small communities. A number of expats have second homes there. Famous people over the years have had permanent or second homes there. The British author, Ian Fleming, who wrote the James Bond series of books, lived there. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell was a native son. He visited twice while we were there, and he always took time to greet the embassy staff.

We lived in two different houses while we were in Jamaica, both leased by the embassy. The owner of our first house was the publisher of *The Daily Gleaner*, the major newspaper in Jamaica. His wife was American. She did not live in Jamaica at the time, but after a year or so she returned and decided to reclaim their house, so we had to move. The only suitable house we could find to move to was owned by an American who had had the Burger King franchise in Jamaica. It was a nice house with a pool and large garden, but it was only available because nobody in Jamaica wanted to rent it. Some months earlier the owner's gardener murdered him inside the house. Jamaicans are quite superstitious about such things. I had to talk my maid into agreeing to work there, and one of the guards put a bottle of some blue liquid on the pool fence to ward off evil spirits.

I should say something about the security situation. If you visit Jamaica and stay at one of the all inclusive resorts on the north coast—Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, Runaway Bay—you get a package deal that includes, along with hotel, food, activities, and so forth, their own private security guards. Generally, in the tourist areas, the Jamaican authorities and resort managers gave a good deal of attention to keeping down the crime and protecting the tourists. After all, this is their bread and butter. They don't want to scare people away. The resorts are very aware of the dangers, and they don't want any incidents to happen on their property. Generally, they are safe.

Now, if you take it in your head to go off and see the "real Jamaica" or attend a reggae festival, you are taking your chances. And that's where problems would arise for us, as tourists are targets for pickpockets and armed robbery. Also, Jamaicans drive on the left side of the road. Tourists who rented motor scooters sometimes forgot that on the typically narrow two lane winding roads, and accidents happened.

Kingston, on the other hand, is not a tourist destination. It's a big city, and it has areas where nobody goes without some risk. There's a lot of crime, a lot of guns. Consular staff members were not allowed to walk from the consular section around the corner to the nearest hotel if we wanted to go for lunch there; we had to drive. We all lived in houses that were completely enclosed with metal grates, even the porches. Everything was open to the elements—windows, doors, porches—because it's a lovely climate with pleasant breezes, and there were no screens (except in the bedrooms). We locked ourselves in at night and had armed guards patrolling twenty-four hours a day with weapons and radios. Many people had dogs. All these precautions were really necessary even though the guards were not always attentive. We caught one on the night shift sleeping on a cot he had hidden away under our large banyan tree.

We lived near the military attaché at the French embassy who apparently did not have enough security. He and some friends were playing bridge when he heard a noise in the bedroom. When he went to check, he confronted thieves, and they killed him. So there was no question that we needed the extra protection. I had an embassy-supplied radio in my car. I couldn't drive from my house to the embassy without being on the circuit in case I got stopped or carjacked or involved in a traffic accident along the way. Security was pretty tight and very necessary. The police were of mixed competence I would say, but of course, we had to depend on them to help protect us.

Q: I saw reference to something called "going south," single women of a certain age going down to the beach and getting involved with beach boys (which in itself is no problem), but then I would imagine there would be a certain amount of trying to sponsor the beach boys for visas back to their hometown or something like that. Or did that raise any problems?

BAZALA: I don't really recall that so much. That happened in India, definitely. Reggae music was really big in Jamaica, and it attracted a lot of people to the festivals where the locals and tourists alike smoked marijuana and had a good time. It was just part of the culture and the attraction of the island.

Some of the reggae artists made big names for themselves and were invited to perform in the U.S. The consular section got to know some of these musicians pretty well because they usually had some kind of conviction for drugs. Every time they wanted a visa to go to the United States they had to come in to apply for a one-entry visa with a waiver of ineligibility. I got to know people like Rita Marley, who was Bob Marley's widow, and their children. One of their sons, Ziggy Marley, was a major performer then. Several others came in and were friendly and nice, "Well, I'm going up north. I have this contract to perform in Los Angeles," and so on. They knew the drill and we knew the drill, and

they got their visas usually. Most of them had stage names. One was Ninja Man. His real name was Desmond Valentine. I remember him particularly because we adopted a cat while we were in Jamaica, and we were trying to think of a name for him. One of the junior officers said I should name him Ninja Cat, because Ninja Man had just been in. So that's what we did.

Q: Speaking of junior officers, did you have a problem? I mean in a place like that with a high volume and typical circumstances, how did you find the junior officers worked under the conditions?

BAZALA: I had a good group, and I've encountered some of them in the years since. One of the best of them came to work for me in Bosnia years later. Another has become an ambassador. So some of them were very good. We had one or two that the Foreign Service was probably not the right place for. That's always the case. Also, for some people, consular work is just not what they were cut out to do.

The JOs bonded together because they were new in the service, and that brought a certain amount of camaraderie. We were big enough as a section that we could set up rotational tours for them so they could work six months in NIVs and six months in IVs or maybe ACS to get different consular experiences. We also tried to give them a month or two in some other section of the embassy, especially if they were in a different cone. If there was an election or visiting congressional delegation, we tried to free up an officer or two to help with those. I think that helped a lot, so the JOs weren't spending two years just on the visa line. Even within the NIV section we rotated the officers so that once a week one came off the line and did visa cases that did not require interviews. In those days we didn't have to interview everybody and these were usually renewals or referral cases. They trained each other, and I always appointed one who had been there a while as a line chief to give him or her a little managerial experience.

They liked being in Jamaica, of course, and enjoyed what the island had to offer outside of work. But one time some of them got together and rented a house on the north coast. It was not part of one of the resorts. They knew about the dangers and everything, but there was a guard, so they thought it was going to be okay. In the middle of the night somebody came in and robbed them. They were lucky nobody got hurt, but they were quite chagrined when they came to tell me about it.

Q: Well, it sounds like it certainly was a challenge, wasn't it?

BAZALA: I really got my consular and management chops there.

Q: Did your kids come down at all?

BAZALA: Oh yes, they came to Jamaica.

Q: How did they find it?

BAZALA: Well, hey, you're up in Boston or Connecticut in freezing winter and you can come home to Jamaica for Christmas? What's not to like? Plus, our house had a swimming pool. As residents of Jamaica, we were entitled to what was called "island price" for the resorts, and we took the family for weekend vacations at one of these from time to time. One of the resorts was "couples only," and we passed our teenagers off as a couple much to the amusement of the resort staff.

My daughter is a musician. She was studying in Boston. We presented her in several concerts in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands during her visits. We were lucky to find as her accompanist a very gifted Jamaican pianist, David Johns, who had studied in London. The two of them collaborated very well. The ambassador was very generous, and he sponsored her concerts. In Jamaica it's typical to have a sponsor for such events, whether that meant money or a person of some standing in the community or both. Ambassador Holden also held an event at his residence and invited the governor general. It was a great success except for the quality of the piano.

My son was able to find vacation work through the summer hire program. The embassy set it up to provide opportunities for teenage kids during the school breaks. He worked one summer for USAID and another in the consular section. Then he finished high school and entered college when we were there.

Q: Where was he at college?

BAZALA: He went to Emory University in Atlanta. It turned out to be a good choice for him.

Q: You left Jamaica when?

BAZALA: 1992. The big event of 1990 and 1991 was the Gulf War. I remember that specifically because my son turned eighteen, and he had to send in a card to register for the draft. Being a mother, I had to worry about the potential he would be called up. Of course, it didn't happen, but that's why I remember it.

Q: How did the Gulf War play in Jamaica?

BAZALA: It was far away, and Jamaica was not directly involved. The Gulf War wasn't drawn out, not like what we're going through now. I always followed the news, so I was interested. Some of the junior officers were concerned because potentially they might be involved in some way by being assigned to one of the posts in the Middle East. One guy was interested in anything to do with the Middle East. But he was so out of line that he wrote a letter to the editor of *The Miami Herald* expressing his views and signed his name and title without permission or without clearing anything he said. He had a certain view, which was out of sync with department policy. He got in trouble over that.

Q: Well, was there in place—there certainly wasn't in my time—a mentoring system?

BAZALA: The department has a centralized mentoring program for new officers. Within the embassy we always had sponsors when new people arrived. That would be more of a social mentor. But I guess, in a sense, I was the mentor for the ones who were working for me directly. I took that as my role, that I was a teacher. It was important to help them succeed. And of course I had to write their evaluations for when they would come up for tenure review. I also helped them with their onward assignments. I liked that aspect of the work.

Q: Well, in 1992 where did you go from Jamaica?

BAZALA: Back to Washington. It was probably not the best career choice for either Raz or me, but again, it was a situation where there was no obvious opportunity to be assigned together overseas. And at that point, with the children in two different locations, it would have been complicated. I went first to the Office of Inspector General as an inspector. I found it very fascinating work, but as I said, it wasn't the best career move. Nobody ever gets promoted out of an assignment as an inspector, but I liked the work and I liked the travel opportunities.

Q: Well, then you did that for how long?

BAZALA: Three years.

Q: What aspect did you have of inspections?

BAZALA: We did it then very much as we do it now. But now our scope is broader. In those days, USIA was not part of the State Department so we did not inspect public diplomacy. We did not incorporate security or information technology in our work as we do now. So it was executive direction, political, econ, admin, and consular, primarily. There might be other cats and dogs in there, but those were the main areas of focus. Every team had a leader who was an ambassador, a deputy, and at least one inspector for each one of the traditional functions.

My very first inspection was in Russia in the fall of 1992. It happened to be a time when great changes were taking place in Russia. The Soviet Union had recently collapsed. Economically the country was really having a struggle. We had to change rubles every day, for example, because the exchange rate was changing so fast. Many people would not accept rubles as payment especially if they recognized us as foreigners who probably had hard currency. We would get in a taxi and ask to go to the embassy or wherever we were headed, and the driver demanded five dollars before he would start the car. He wouldn't take rubles, because the rubles, if he held on to them, would be worth a lot less the next day. Of course, it was illegal for us to use dollars, so we were in a quandary until the inspector general came out to visit us and saw what the situation was. He said, "Well, obviously this isn't tenable, so do the best you can." Everything was changing dramatically in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution.

Q: Well, it must have been in a way both exhilarating and chaotic.

BAZALA: Yes. On the weekends we took the metro out to a place called Ismailova, which was a huge flea market on the outskirts of Moscow. People came from all over to sell rugs, tchotchkes, souvenirs, jewelry, and whatnot. It was just fun to go out there and find matryoshka dolls and other souvenirs. It was fall so we were all thinking ahead to Christmas and buying a few things for our kids. On the other hand, it was sad to see the old women in their headscarves lined up on the walkway to the market with their little treasures in their hands trying to sell a teapot or a samovar or a piece of porcelain or something else from their home, because the pensioners were the ones who were in the worst shape, losing all of their purchasing power because of the massive inflation. Some of the guys were interested in the Soviet medals and mementos and caps with red stars. We could go to the Bolshoi for pennies because they hadn't changed what they were charging in rubles for tickets.

I was the only consular inspector and a brand new one at that. Moscow's consular section was quite large. Nowadays we would always send at least two inspectors for a section that size. In addition, I had to go up to St. Petersburg to inspect consular operations there. It was a lot of work, and the leadership in the embassy at the time couldn't care less about consular work. So, the poor consul general had no support really.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

BAZALA: It was a political appointee, Robert Strauss, a prominent Democratic party strategist, but the DCM was the one who really should have been overseeing the consular operation.

Q: Was it Jim Collins?

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: But he didn't pay attention to them?

BAZALA: To be fair, he had a lot on his plate.

One poor officer in the consular section was mentioned in a Moscow newspaper and accused of being a CIA officer. He was not. But he came to me, and he was just terrified. He was sure his career was over before it really began, and he was really upset. Inspecting is not just making sure everyone is following the rules. We do a lot of counseling, especially for the new officers. That was one instance of that.

Q: Were there security problems there?

BAZALA: Oh yes. The department and the embassy were still dithering over what to do with the new embassy building. Construction had stopped because they found a number of listening devices in it. They showed us where the bugs were.

There had been a big fire in the embassy annex in the recent past that was of great concern. The annex was a real firetrap, and it was where the consular section was located. When we send an inspection team out, the mission has to come up with office space for us so we can work. We also had to have access to a space where we could work on sensitive stuff. We were working in the annex for the most part, and I was concerned about the security bars on all the windows. It was just a labyrinth to go in and out and no obvious way to get out of the building. I said, "This place is the biggest fire hazard I've ever seen. How do you get out the window if you need to? I have no idea how to get out of this building." So it was a big problem. That was the kind of thing we worried about—at least I did.

Security on the streets was an issue, as well. There was crime, both organized and petty. We traveled in groups and tried to stay away from certain risky areas and take basic precautions. There was one incident though that brought home to us the dangers of just walking around. To cross major boulevards in Moscow, there are underground pedestrian tunnels. When we descended the stairs to cross one, a group of gypsy children accosted us. They tried to pick our pockets, but didn't get more than a map. We started running through the tunnel to get away, and one of them tripped up one of the inspectors, and the others started throwing rocks at us. We got away, but we were somewhat shaken up by that.

Q: What were working conditions like in the consular section? Were they pretty ghastly, or not?

BAZALA: They were very crowded, and there were occasions when interviews took place in the stairwell. There was an outside waiting area under a shed and exposed to the elements, and the document intake windows opened to the outside because there was very limited waiting space inside. It was tough; the whole embassy was crowded because they desperately needed the new building that didn't get built at the time. People were literally working in closets, a really bad situation. One of the team's recommendations was to cut the size of the political section. It had way too many people. The mission didn't like that, but you know, we don't care. We call it as we see it, and then the mission has to follow through either to comply or make a compelling case why they shouldn't.

Q: Where did you go after Russia?

BAZALA: Jordan, Syria, and Cyprus.

I want to talk first a bit about how OIG operated and still operates with some changes. I've spent a total of about fourteen years in one capacity or the other with OIG. This was my major work at the end of my career and in retirement.

OIG works with cycles of inspections: fall, winter, spring, and, in former days, a summer cycle. Team leaders are ambassadors. Each team is assigned a country or set of countries or a domestic bureau to inspect each cycle. My first year I was with the same team the whole time, and we went to Moscow and St. Petersburg first. In the winter cycle (January

to March 1993) my team inspected Jordan, Syria, and Cyprus. Three countries is a heavy schedule and makes for a long trip, but in those days an inspection was not as comprehensive as now. That inspection was particularly interesting to me because I had never had an assignment in the Middle East before, and it was probably not an area I was ever going to serve in. I wouldn't have the language for one thing. But I was very keen to see something of it. So the opportunity to spend three weeks in Jordan and three weeks in Syria and a week in Cyprus was welcome. Things were pretty quiet at the time, especially when compared with what is going on in Syria now, for example.

The department had just completed a new embassy building for Amman. It was one of the new, more secure buildings. At the time it was situated on a bare hill out of town with little around it. I'm sure that's all changed. It was like a fortress surrounded by a wall with guard towers on the corners. The ambassador's residence was within the walls. The American flag was sticking up in the middle. Two semi-circular office buildings faced each other across a courtyard and there was a warehouse in back. The courtyard separated the consular and admin operations from the classified operations. It was probably the hardest inspection I've ever done for a lot of reasons. There were some real problems there that we had to address.

We have a policy of avoiding most social interaction with mission staff unless it is an official representational event; this is to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest or favoritism. So during weekends we normally arranged excursions for ourselves or worked in our offices in the embassy so we could meet our deadlines and leave the post on time. In Jordan on the weekend we hired a van and went down to Petra for a day. That was a great opportunity.

When we finished the inspection in Jordan, we drove to Damascus. Syria was much less secular than Jordan, so we women had to wear raincoats and scarves anytime we went out in public, especially if we went to the bazaar. The major inspection issue I recall there was the fact that the embassy was in a very exposed and vulnerable position and located right on the street. There were apartment buildings overlooking it. Nothing was moving the Syrian government to give us any relief from that situation, such as a new site to build a building.

Q: Well, let's do it chronologically. Let's do Jordan first. Who was the ambassador at the time?

BAZALA: Roger Harrison.

Q: What were the issues there?

BAZALA: Well, of course there were always the Arab-Israeli issues. Those were ongoing. I'm sure the team leader addressed the policy issues. My focus was the consular section where two part-timers were not always doing their consular work. Nowadays there are tighter rules about use of part-timers, but these officers were free-lancing.

Q: These part-timers, were these wives or—

BAZALA: They were officers. I tried to help the consul general manage the issue. In general the consul general was having a difficult time managing the section, and she was not well regarded by the post leadership.

There were also some problems of sexual harassment that we had to deal with, and some of the complainants were in the consular section. So it was a really difficult inspection. I have always said that you can tell when an inspection is going to go well or not by the way we are received on arrival. In Amman the embassy officers met us at the airplane with their arms folded and not smiling, so we knew we had our work cut out for us. I think they knew they had problems, and they were concerned about our finding them and addressing them. I was one of only two women on the team, and the greeters at the airport ignored us and shook hands with all the men. That should have been a tip off to the problems that we detected later.

Q: Okay, well let's take up that subject, because I think the cold reading of these things doesn't pick up what the definitions were at the time. Sexual harassment was something that since the 1980s has been on the front burner all the time. How did sexual harassment pertain to what you were dealing with? What type was this?

BAZALA: Some officers at the post complained to us in our interviews, and it turned up on the questionnaires we asked everyone at the embassy to fill out. We have several ways of receiving information. When a complaint indicates a problem, we interview the people who bring it up, and try to ferret out exactly what the cause is—and the effect on mission operations. We try to find ways to fix the problem. The complaints clearly indicated a pattern that we were concerned about. Sometimes things happen in embassies where one person does something and another person thinks, well, I can do that too. It was a certain attitude that was a concern. We had to address that issue, and it was not easy.

Q: But for somebody reading this, I'm sure the definition of sexual harassment takes many forms. What was happening?

BAZALA: There were verbal comments and teasing, patronizing attitudes, and not so subtle "suggestions," things of that nature. It's not easy for an American woman to be in a Muslim society anyway, although Jordan is easier than most, since the Queen of Jordan is very outgoing and active (and American born). Perhaps some element of the environment got picked up within the mission. The local employees were almost all men, and that didn't help. Some of the senior mission officers were either participants or didn't see a problem

Q: How did you deal with it?

BAZALA: Sometimes we make recommendations for sensitivity or EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] training or have the ambassador put out a notice, saying such and such is the policy and the mission will not tolerate violations. Once in a while, and I

don't remember this happening in Jordan, we recommend that someone who's really unhappy and concerned about the effect on their career be reassigned elsewhere. When something of this nature is published in the inspection report, it doesn't make the embassy look good.

Q: You were obviously concentrated on the consular side, but let's pick up the rest of the embassy. If I recall in talking to Roger, he was there during the First Gulf War.

BAZALA: Yes. That would have been going on about a year. It started the previous January I believe.

Q: When we essentially declared war on Saddam and moved into the initial phase of kicking him out of Kuwait, there were those in the State Department who were saying the king of Jordan isn't doing what we want him to do, and we should get rid of him. And the ambassador was, as he should have been, trying to deal with this pressure from Washington to make him destabilize the king and he was getting some instructions that he complied with and others that he didn't. I was wondering whether that was something that was looked into or not.

BAZALA: I am sure it was, because we always look at how an embassy is implementing foreign policy and managing the bi-lateral relationship. On each inspection team we have different specialties, so someone looked at the executive office and someone looked at the political section, econ section, and so on. They read the cable traffic and they talk to everybody at post. They get Washington's perspective as well. So if there were a discrepancy between Washington and the embassy in carrying out the policy, we would identify that.

Q: How did you find consular training? The consular section is an instrument of American policy. How good was the consular section there?

BAZALA: I would call it average at best. I don't think the section was well managed. I tried to counsel the chief of section, who was recently promoted to FS-2, and she had not run a section before and could have used some supervisory training. Then, of course, there was the trouble with the two part-timers who were running rings around her, and I don't think she had the backing of the front office to deal with it. Plus, she was isolated by the embassy layout of two separate half-crescent shaped buildings, physically separating the consular section from the front office. It made it difficult to leave the section and go talk to the ambassador or DCM, for example. It was not the best or most ideal situation in my opinion. It was nice to have a new embassy, but the local staff was very unhappy about moving because the old embassy facility had been downtown where they could walk outside to have lunch and find convenient transportation.

Q: Were you looking at visa issuance?

BAZALA: There are certain things we always look for: the referral system, for example, if the front office or somebody else was interfering with that. I talked about that a bit

when I talked about Jamaica. Now it's a much tighter system and much more difficult to interfere in the visa process. We had referral rules then, but how well they worked depended on the individuals running the consular section and the ambassador and DCM. We look to make sure internal controls are operating such as cashiering and handling of any controlled items like blank passports. We make sure they're keeping up to date with what they're supposed to do and require reports to the department. There's a checklist of things that we always look at, and we look at the internal relationships. If there are new officers we pay particular attention to them because almost all of them start out in a consular section. They always want to seek advice outside their chain of command. So I do a lot of counseling.

Q: By that time had the mentoring system taken root? In my time we never were specifically told to mentor or even told what mentoring meant.

BAZALA: I don't know when that started. I remember being solicited about it. I think I might have been CA/EX at the time, so I think it was maybe just getting off the ground then, but many people didn't understand what mentoring was. Sometimes, the mentor would be in Washington and the mentee would be overseas. Perhaps the personalities didn't gel or something. You really need a mentor in the embassy to help navigate the internal embassy unwritten rules, that kind of thing. In the past we always depended on supervisors to be the mentors if any mentoring was done at all. Then at some point the FAM was changed to make it a specific responsibility of the DCM to mentor the new officers. I had to do it when I was in Bosnia, and that's something inspectors look at every time we go out. We always get the junior officers together and try to identify if they have issues or problems. We let them raise anything they want to.

Q: Would you say the environment in Jordan was basically friendly?

BAZALA: Yes, I think so. As I said, the queen was very active. She had some charity things going on, and some of the spouses were involved. I had the sense that one could be quite comfortable living in Jordan and operating there, in contrast to Damascus.

Q: Let's talk about Damascus. First, were their arms folded when the team arrived?

BAZALA: No, they were in a cooperative mode. I think I mentioned that the difficult thing was the location and security of the embassy chancery. I inspected the consular section. In addition to Syrian residents, the section was also issuing visas at that time to Lebanese in the absence of a visa operation in Beirut. If people living in Lebanon wanted a visa, they had to apply in Damascus. The department temporarily included Lebanon in Syria's consular district. So I looked at how that was being handled. Many cases required special cables to Washington to vet the individuals applying to determine their eligibility for a visa and especially whether or not they were part of the Lebanese conflict or engaged in fomenting violence.

Q: Was there any particular problem?

BAZALA: Another thing that we look at generally is the gifts policy at post. It's very important that the consular section not be seen as, or perceived to be, amenable to gifts from visa applicants. I did find a bit of that, especially from the Lebanese. Even Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri, who was later killed, would try to give something to the consul. That presented an awkward situation.

Q: Yes, he was a very wealthy man.

BAZALA: He meant well. But you had to be quite firm about it. Another thing inspectors do is make sure the consular section has the resources they need to manage the workload. With the extra Lebanese applicants, I looked at whether they had a need for temporary additional help until Embassy Beirut reopened for visas. I think that was the case.

Q: Were we concerned with people later known as terrorists at the time?

BAZALA: Not like after 9/11. That event brought big changes in how consular sections operated. Before 9/11 the focus was on service, courtesy, and timeliness. The goal was in general to issue visas in one or two days. That said, we were not going to admit a terrorist or somebody who was otherwise unqualified for a visa. But at that time we did not have the benefit of ready access to databases at other agencies and the technology that we have now to detect these people. We didn't have the Visas Viper. Do you know what that is?

Q: No.

BAZALA: Visas Viper is a monthly report that every consular section has to send in. A committee, chaired by the DCM, includes other agencies. It has to report if there is anyone they believe should be added to a watch list database and why. A cable goes to Washington with the information or a statement that there were no Visas Viper additions that month. Before 9/11 even if another agency knew of a person of questionable history or someone who might be inclined to violence, there was no direct mechanism for getting that name into the department's database. After 9/11 the USG attempted to solve that problem in part by setting up this mechanism.

BAZALA: So shall we move onto Cyprus?

After Damascus my husband joined us in Cyprus. Spouses can travel with inspection teams as long as they do it on their own dime and are no burden to the embassy. We were only in Nicosia for a week or ten days because the mission was quite small.

This was another case of an embassy that was built for maximum security. After security screening outside, you came in the front entrance into a semicircular lobby area with elevators on each side and windows way up high on the wall. It felt to me like walking into a bank vault. It was very claustrophobic. Upstairs you could see that the walls were several inches thick. In the office assigned to the inspection team was a window of decent size, but then up in the corner was this little window just a few inches in height and width. I said, "What is that for? To shoot arrows out of?" I couldn't figure out why it was

there. We were told that there is a limit of so many square inches of window space in the room. There was some leftover window allotment, so they stuck this little window there. I don't know if that's a true story, but that's what they said. It was quite secure, that embassy, I must say.

Some of us went over to the Turkish side of the island. As you know, Nicosia is on the Greek side. The island has been divided for many years because of conflict between Greek and Turkish residents, and the border was manned then by UN Canadian forces. The embassy maintained a villa on the Turkish side that the ambassador used to host a lunch occasionally or other event for the Turkish leaders in Cyprus and to maintain contacts there. We always look at all the property that an embassy manages to determine if it serves a useful purpose and is maintained well. The border between the two sides was set up with barbed wire and barricades, and it had been like that for twenty years. It was looking dated and rusted then. Cyprus is beautiful, and it has beautiful beaches. On the Turkish side there were big high-rise hotels and apartments on the beaches, but there was nobody around. It was like Armageddon. But it was interesting to see. The consular operation in Nicosia was small, and it didn't really take a lot of time to inspect.

Q: I have talked to people about Cyprus when our ambassador was killed there. Was the Cyprus population hostile, or how did things stand there?

BAZALA: I didn't feel that, no. Since Raz was there, we drove around with a rental car, and there was no problem doing that.

Q: Did you sense tension between the Turkish and the Greek sides?

BAZALA: That was clear. But what was also clear was the Greek side was more prosperous relative to the Turkish side and more involved internationally. The Turkish side seemed to be a very quiet place.

Q: Then you went back to Washington?

BAZALA: Yes. Before we go out on an inspection trip, we send out a survey and talk to the desk officers and anybody else who has an interest in the countries we plan to visit. Then we travel to the posts and conduct the interviews and draft reports. We were on the Jordan, Syria, Cyprus trip over seven weeks altogether. When we return to Washington we debrief people who might be interested in our findings and then finalize the report. Quite a number of people look at the various drafts before a report gets published. All along the way they get to see what we're writing, so they can straighten us out if we're factually incorrect or they can argue another point of view. We don't always accept a request for a change though. We spend maybe six to eight weeks back in Washington and then start the next inspection cycle. In the spring we inspected Greece and Turkey.

Q: Were there disputes with the embassies? The ambassador might take great exception to a finding or recommendation.

BAZALA: That happens sometimes. In Jordan they weren't real happy with what we were saying about sexual harassment, because ultimately it is the ambassador's responsibility to make sure that his people are not being disadvantaged in some way.

Q: It's come up sometimes in our oral histories that there's been build-up over decades, if not a couple of centuries, of looking at the Foreign Service national [FSN] employees as part of a second class system.

BAZALA: This is definitely something inspectors look at. Our policy is to interview every direct hire American and as many others as we can, including other agency employees, contractors, spouses who are working in the mission, and the FSNs (we call them now locally employed staff). The FSNs often have an organization with elected officers, and we will meet with them and learn their concerns. We also survey them, and we ask them what they're thinking. We get the usual complaints that they are not paid enough or not getting health insurance or other benefits. Often part of the benefits problem is with the local government; that has been an issue with several posts over many years. I think the department has begun to set up some alternative programs for retirement and health benefits, but that was often a complaint that would come up. Occasionally we ran across an abuse issue such as an officer who was screaming at the staff or firing people arbitrarily. We look into anything like that.

Q: Who was ambassador in Syria?

BAZALA: Christopher Ross. I had met him in graduate school. He was quite effective in Syria. He was very plugged into the society there. We went to one restaurant where they were doing poetry readings, a big thing apparently in the society. He got up, and in perfect Arabic, as far as I could tell, read a poem.

Q: When you went back to Washington, how did you follow up on the inspection?

BAZALA: We draft the reports in the field and include all the recommendations that we agree on as a team. There's some descriptive material to set the scene. These reports all have a basic format with key judgments and a context section followed by a section on executive direction, which is usually about how well the ambassador and DCM are managing the embassy, promoting U.S. interests, and handling relations with the host country. We have sections on political and economic issues, consular operations, and then a long section on management, which includes GSO, budget, human resources, and all the different nuts and bolts that go into the support structure of the embassy. We have added sections on public diplomacy, security, and IT. We can add more sections if we need to. Examples would include coordination with constituent posts, political-military, management controls, quality of life at posts, et cetera. Domestic inspections have a different format, but are similarly comprehensive. There also can be a classified annex.

Q: What impression did you get from the Middle East?

BAZALA: Well, you know, it's colored by what's gone on since. At the time we didn't visually see or sense that there was more conflict approaching.

Q: Tell me about the consular section in Greece when you inspected Athens.

BAZALA: At the time of the inspection the consul general was Danny Root. Michael Sotirhos, a Greek-American and political appointee ambassador had just left post. He was ambassador to Jamaica before he went to Greece so even though I never met him, I knew his reputation. He left behind a number of problems and a very unhappy embassy. The embassy had had annexes outside the main chancery building, but he forced everybody to move into the chancery for security reasons even though it meant severe crowding. The staff didn't take to it very well, and it wasn't handled well. He put public diplomacy, the USIS operation, down in the basement next to the boiler room. You can imagine they weren't happy about that. So the mission was crowded and didn't like the ambassador, and I don't think they thought he was very effective. They were between ambassadors when we arrived to inspect.

There was a sizable consular section, and Root was a good, experienced officer. I was not finding many problems until one day somebody told me that there was an ongoing investigation of one of the FSN visa clerks, and that I should not interview him. I pointed out that it would look very strange if I didn't interview him, because I was interviewing everyone else. So I did. Ultimately they lured this guy back to the United States and charged him with visa fraud. I don't remember exactly how he was doing what he was doing, but it was a challenge to work around all that.

The other thing that happened then was that a communicator, who had been at the embassy for several years, was caught giving documents to the Greeks. This was a very famous case at the time—Steven Lalas was the name. He was charged with spying. We were there when the U.S. marshals came and took him away.

The former ambassador's secretary, who was still at post, was temporarily assigned to assist the inspection team. She was a Greek-American also, and in that sense she was helpful because she could translate for us and she knew her way around. But many in the embassy had something negative to say about her. When we were drafting our report, we had to refer to relations within the mission, and that was awkward. Because she spoke Greek, she had an entry into society that gave her a certain advantage, and this was resented. Many times these issues come down to personalities, and the problems go away when the person moves on. On the other hand, it happens too often in the Foreign Service that we pass on a difficult person to the next post that then has to deal with it.

Q: I know that. I was in personnel and discovered that an inordinate number of problem cases: drinking, abrasive personalities, you name it, were ending up in places like the London consular section or Canada. At a big English-speaking post they are sort of out of sight, out of mind. But if you put enough of them into a post, it becomes a critical mass and you've got major problems.

BAZALA: One thing the department has done in recent years is to emphasize leadership and management skills. In those days, however, you just had to be a good political officer, stay connected with a regional bureau, and you could get to be an ambassador or DCM. But that didn't mean you could actually run an embassy. Inspectors have emphasized over the years that the department has to give weight to leadership skills, because otherwise there are problems and frequently poor morale. Then the regional bureaus would call us and say, "Please can you go out and help us fix this problem?" Well, the problem would be that they had assigned the wrong people in the first place to these leadership positions.

I have found that there are three key people in post management: the ambassador, the DCM, and the management officer. One or two of those, if competent, can support or compensate for the third one, if that third one is weak or difficult. But that's not always the case. One of our teams found all three to be deficient at one post, and all three ended up leaving post on curtailment. Inspectors comment on post leadership, and we really push the department to do better in selecting and training ambassadors and DCMs.

Q: When there was a congressional change to our inspection system, the inspector general was named from outside the Foreign Service. I think more accountants were put into the system. There was a feeling then that the inspectors weren't there to help but were there to "get ya."

BAZALA: A lot depended on who was in charge. For many years (seven, I think) the IG was Sherman Funk who was an outside appointee. He recently died, but he was highly regarded during his tenure. He was IG during my first tour as an inspector.

Q: Where did you go after Greece?

BAZALA: I also inspected Thessaloniki because we always look at the constituent post or posts. In Turkey I inspected Ankara and Istanbul, and somebody else went to Adana and Izmir. We recommended closing Izmir. Sometimes we split up like that because it's not necessary for every inspector to go to every post. I went to Thessaloniki because there was a consular operation there. The big issue there was getting the consulate out of the apartment building it was in at the time because it wasn't safe.

In Turkey the consular section in Ankara was in trouble. Again, this was a leadership issue. The staff was very unhappy with the consul because she was always running off to ride horses at lunchtime and taking two-hour lunch breaks and so on. It was a small section, so she did not have the officers to back her up. That can be dangerous actually in the sense of who's minding the store. Also, the DCM was not paying attention.

Istanbul was a bigger consular operation, but as I recall it was doing okay. You know the consulate has, or had, a boat that operates on the Bosphorus. Mission staff could use it to take out VIPs [very important persons] for a ride, so they took us out. We always look into whether it is worth U.S. government money to have something like this. But in this

case the department didn't own the boat, although maybe we were paying for the pilot or maintenance.

The consulate building in Istanbul was a historical treasure, and there was some restoration going on. It was not in a safe location, however, and did not meet the new security standards. Since then, the department has built another fortress consulate up on a hill. The old building was very charming, and I believe it is being converted into a hotel.

Q: As you're looking at this new phenomenon of building these fortresses, as a consular officer did you think they are putting too many barriers between you and the people you were serving?

I understand safety and all that, but at the same time, you're throwing out a very big baby with the bathwater.

BAZALA: Security was driving everything. It overrode any other consideration. It wasn't just affecting consular operations; it was also inhibiting USIS and commercial operations where they needed to interact with people and bring them into the chancery. I would feel pretty intimidated if I, as a local citizen, had to try to run the security gauntlet to get into the embassy or consulate. But we do it everywhere now, and it's managed better. Also everyone understands the need for it, even if they are not comfortable with it. I was really appalled that some of the buildings have the appearance of fortresses. You can construct safe buildings without making them look like prisons, it seems to me. I think they do it better now, but the ones I saw at that time were among the first ones that were built.

I missed my daughter's graduation from college because we were in Istanbul. So that was sad.

Q: Talking about Adana and Izmir, did you want to close them?

BAZALA: We didn't recommend closing Adana, but we did recommend closing Izmir.

Q: There are some posts that serve our military.

BAZALA: That's Adana, because it's in the eastern part of the country and hosts Incirlik Air Base where several thousand U.S. servicemen are stationed. That's a very important place right now.

The team concluded that a consular agent could handle Izmir's consular needs. It didn't necessarily need a full-fledged consular operation. So the only justification for maintaining the post would be for reporting or commercial reasons. I didn't go to Izmir, but the inspectors who went felt that it was, at a minimum, questionable whether this post was needed. I think it's gone back and forth. We make recommendations, and sometimes they don't stick. This may have been one of those cases, but I don't remember exactly.

Q: All right, well back to Washington again.

BAZALA: Right. In those days, the summer inspection cycle would usually center on a bureau or office in Washington. The annual turnover of personnel and vacations made it difficult to schedule anything overseas during the summer. The summer cycle was necessary in order to fulfill the legal obligation to inspect every overseas post and every domestic unit every five years. But as the department has grown in recent years and added posts, it has exceeded OIG's capacity to meet this requirement. Therefore, OIG has to seek a waiver from Congress every year.

In the summer of 1993 I was deputy on a team to inspect some of the passport agencies. We split up to do this, and I led half the team, and the team leader led the other half. My sub-team visited the agencies in Boston, New York, Connecticut, and New Hampshire specifically. That was a different type of inspection, as you can imagine, because almost every employee of the passport agencies is a Civil Service employee. Many of them, because they are hired locally, hardly knew where the department was, or what it did. They didn't know who or what they were working for. I inspected the passport agencies again as a retiree inspector in 2009, and that situation hasn't changed a lot, although there is a lot more communication among the agencies and with Washington, thanks to the internet. One of the recommendations from this first ever inspection of the passport agencies was to review and upgrade some of the director positions. The position of the head of the New York passport agency, for example, was a GS-14, whereas a more senior rank was needed. So those affected by our recommendation were happy about that obviously, because it probably meant a promotion.

It was very interesting just to observe processing passport applications. In New York there were problems with lines of applicants on the sidewalks around Rockefeller Center waiting to get in the door to apply. Years later a big passport crisis occurred because of huge backlogs and waiting times, and the department came in for a lot of criticism. We made some suggestions for how to deal with the lines, but it was not enough to cope with the growth in demand over the long run.

When we went to New Hampshire, we watched the final processing and printing of the passports. Bar coding had just come into use, and this helped the staff to track where the passports were in the production process. This helped a great deal with public inquiries.

Q: Well, how did you find the passport operation? You know, at one time Francis Knight ran passports like her own fiefdom.

BAZALA: She didn't think she belonged to CA.

Q: No, she had her own foreign policy, which was very much in line with J. Edgar Hoover. It was pretty awful.

BAZALA: There were still vestiges of that attitude. That's what I was saying earlier about passport employees being unsure about their role in the Department of State. They felt like they didn't have anything to do with it. I think she fostered that attitude. "You

work for me, and these folks over here don't count, so don't pay attention to them." By this time, however, she had retired, and CA was trying to integrate the passport operation into the bureau more closely. They were still in that process when we inspected.

Again, I think a lot of it was because almost 100 percent of people who work in those agencies are Civil Service, and very few ever visited Washington. Nowadays, the agencies usually have one or two Foreign Service officers serving in a management capacity or perhaps as the anti-fraud officer at each agency. These are regular assignments. This offers some exposure to the Foreign Service, but basically all the issues that turned up in this inspection were Civil Service issues, union issues. There was also an effort to build up the anti-fraud programs and designate two or three people who did nothing but look at fraud cases and work with the local police to try to stamp out passport fraud.

My second year in OIG (1993–1994) I did compliance instead of being on a regular inspection team. This meant I followed up on an inspection that took place in the previous year to see if the post or bureau had complied with the recommendations and also to conduct a peer review of the quality of the inspection team's work.

Q: Did you go to the post?

BAZALA: Yes, twice I did. In Washington, the inspectors doing compliance work received the post and department responses to the inspection reports and evaluated whether or not they were in compliance with the inspection recommendations. Compliance inspectors who do the reviews were not from the original inspection team. We marked them one of three ways: closed, if the recommended action had been completed to our satisfaction; resolved, but still pending some final action; or unresolved. There was usually a dialogue back and forth until we could close a recommendation.

When we traveled to the post for a compliance review, we also were looking at how well the original team did its work. We would ask questions of the embassy such as, How did you find the inspection experience? Were the inspectors fair? Did inspectors talk to everybody? And so forth.

I participated on two overseas compliance trips. It was a small team of three inspectors because we were not repeating what the original team did but checking up on compliance with the specific recommendations. I went to Mexico City and Monterrey. There were some big issues in both places that the original team attempted to address. Housing was one in Mexico City. The problem there was an inexperienced general services officer who was not managing the housing program well.

My other compliance trip was to Hong Kong, Seoul, and Taipei. Seoul was particularly interesting because it was a huge operation at the time. The consular section was trying some innovative things that we took a look at. By the time we did the compliance review, there was a new consul general who was taking hold very well.

Q: How did you find the situation in Taipei?

In Taipei the issue I found in the consular section was about language training. The junior officers on the visa line had a year of Chinese language training before taking up their assignments, but it wasn't enough. They studied at night after their eight-hour workday to try to get to a 2/0 and off language probation. They theoretically had enough Chinese to do a visa interview, but almost all used interpreters. I said, "There's something wrong with this picture. You're training to speak Chinese in order to conduct an interview, but you still have to use an interpreter." They were not taught to read Chinese, the language used on the visa applications, and their oral language skills were, for the most part, not up to what they needed. We pointed this out to the department. In Korea, on the other hand, the officers had the same amount of language training and they were interviewing in Korean. Occasionally they called for an interpreter if they had something complicated, but they could do a basic visa interview. They also had the advantage that written Korean is easier to read than written Chinese.

Q: In Korea, did you sense tension over the situation in North Korea?

BAZALA: Well, it really hasn't changed much. The embassy took us up to Panmunjom on the border, and we saw the room where meetings between the two sides take place and the table that was divided into north and south. I have a picture of me standing on the North Korean side. There's a line, step over it, take your picture. It reminded me of divided Cyprus, something that's been going on for years and years without any real movement one way or the other. The concern then was tension over the presence of American military bases and our military personnel stationed near Seoul.

Q: In Korea, did you look at the consular fraud situation?

BAZALA: Yes. They had a good anti-fraud operation going. The anti-fraud officer didn't want to participate in the rotational program because he felt it was too difficult and not useful to bring the JOs up to speed and then have them rotate out.

One of the things that an OIG team looks at is what we used to call best practices. I think now the term is innovative practice. If we find some new process or procedure that the post discovered and implemented first and it was useful, we put it in the report as an "at-a-boy," a good thing that some other posts would benefit from copying. We like to encourage new ideas and procedures that we think work. Seoul had the officers and FSNs work in teams, and they rotated them from one function to another. CA is generally receptive to new ideas and tries to collect suggestions and encourage innovation.

Q: There are some good thoughts out there, and I wish I had had more. But I'm sure that somebody before my time felt some of the things that my cohort did were pretty good.

BAZALA: An example of this happened last year when I went to Brazil on an inspection. Several JOs told me that one of their colleagues came up with a great idea about doing something with the computer software that would allow them to process visas easier or

quicker or more efficiently. Not being particularly good with computers, I was not sure what was done exactly, but the IT folks at post were on board, and the JOs were enthusiastic. So then we asked the managers about it, and they said, "Oh yeah, that was a good idea." And I said, "Well, what have you done to publicize or report it? Maybe other people can use the idea." "Oh. Didn't think of that." So we suggested that the post report back to the department how this is working, because maybe other people can use this idea. So sometimes it's just a matter of us prodding them to do it.

That was my year in compliance. Toward the end I was looking for a new assignment, specifically a DCM position.

Q: Where stood your children at the end of your compliance year?

BAZALA: College.

Q: Where were they going to school?

BAZALA: My daughter finished in 1993 at the New England Conservatory.

Q: Ah yes, with Mr. Cello.

BAZALA: Mr. Cello. Then she and Mr. Cello went to Miami Beach and joined the New World Symphony for two years, which was pretty exciting for all of us. We visited Miami several times while we were in Jamaica and had the privilege of attending the first New World Symphony concert in the orchestra's new hall. I was tremendously impressed with the quality of the group, and extremely proud when Alison won an audition to become a member of the cello section.

My son was two years behind her at Emory, and he graduated in 1995, which is about the time I finished this particular assignment. He took a year off after that and did temp work and then ultimately he went back to school at Georgia Tech and got another degree—in computer science this time. Because they were in college at the time, it freed me up to do the inspection travel.

Raz was also traveling a lot then, so we were ships passing in the night sometimes. For example, I was in Canada when he was in Macedonia. So we were all scattered to different places. But you make it work. It's easier if you're based in Washington.

We had the house in McLean, and if the kids wanted to come home for a while, they were old enough for us to say you've got a key, but just be sure to turn down the heat when you leave.

After the compliance year, I extended in OIG (1994–1995) for a third year because I did not get the DCM position that I was trying for then. I joined an inspection team to do regular inspections full time. The fall inspection was in Canada. That was nine weeks of travel, and we split into two teams, the east team and the west team. We all started in

Ottawa, but then I went west and another consular officer went east. I inspected Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver. It was a great opportunity to get to know our northern neighbor, but it was uncomfortably cold, as Canada can be. We didn't finish until almost Thanksgiving. The major consular problem in Canada was coordination among the posts, because the consular coordinator was in Ottawa and had this far-flung group of consulates to oversee and try to ensure consular operations were in sync.

Q: Did you find the problems in Canada of an awful lot of not up-to-snuff consular officers put there because of personality, discipline problems, or something like that?

BAZALA: We found that in Toronto. There was also an issue of sexual harassment there.

Q: How did that manifest itself?

BAZALA: The senior leadership was hitting on the FSNs and at least one of the women officers. I had to hear about it because I was the one woman on the team at the time. And then the team leader got an earful. The very last thing we do at post after inspecting it is to go to the consul general or to the ambassador and present our findings in an oral briefing and have them take a look at the draft report to see what we found and what we were recommending. We have a policy of no surprises. Well, the exit briefing in Toronto was not a very pleasant meeting, I can assure you.

Q: Why would that be? Was the consul general a part of the problem?

BAZALA: Yes.

There was also a woman officer in the consular section who had a difficult time settling in. She had gone through a divorce and moved to Canada with her children, but she was whining about not having enough time to get her children in school and so forth. The other officers in Toronto were mostly single officers, and they weren't very sympathetic. Plus, she irritated them with the way she went about trying to resolve her problems. In Canada the posts expected you to take care of yourself because it is so much like the U.S. and not like an overseas post with language difficulties and cultural differences.

The head of the consular section and the CG didn't get along, and that didn't help matters. We suggested that the counselor for Consular Affairs [CCA] in Ottawa and the DCM pay more attention to Toronto. There were also physical plant problems because the workload had grown so much. You start out with a small consular operation, and years later you're bursting at the seams. We were also looking into consolidation of immigrant visas into one or two posts.

I found Calgary a much better operation, small but going okay. There were personality problems in Vancouver and weak overall leadership at the time.

Q: What were the personality problems?

BAZALA: An outgoing, aggressive female chief of section, and an uninterested consul general who didn't want to pay any attention to consular operations and had never even been downstairs where the consular section was. I told him, "This is a huge part of your operation. You need to go down there and walk around and let them know you're in charge instead of sitting up in this beautiful office with all the windows looking out on Vancouver Bay."

Q: I have to say that in Belgrade I think I got George Kennan down once to the consular section. He walked in the door and moved to an elevator. If he'd gone down I think five steps he would have been in the consular section.

BAZALA: Ambassadors never used to take an interest in consular operations. Now I think that has changed for the better. It is important to be seen as taking an interest, and I think more and more they do, they take that to heart.

Q: I'm sure they do. I was talking about "the Middle Ages."

BAZALA: (laughs) Yes, but it has taken time. You still find this attitude sometimes. In those days, when I asked if the ambassador had ever been to the section, or the DCM visited or observed the line, the answer might be, "No, but that's okay; we would just as soon not have him come in."

Most ambassadors and DCMs at that time had not done consular work, and they would not have known what they were looking at. I think they were intimidated a bit by that. In recent years everyone has been forced to do at least one assignment in a consular section at the beginning of an FS career. Now, since nearly every DCM has at least had some exposure to consular work, they manage it better. They also have specific duties related to visa review.

Q: When I came in it was an era when there was "substantive" and "non-substantive" work. You know where that put consular work. And to say consular work is not the substance of diplomacy—

BAZALA: —means ambassadors and DCMs did not think they needed to pay attention to it.

Q: It was a real class attitude.

BAZALA: Definitely. And whoever was writing their evaluations didn't care to comment on consular operations because the job was to manage the bilateral relationship. Unless there was a big brouhaha over a visa or something, the idea was just keep the lid on and do the job. But more and more there is a push for officers to be better managers. So we have seen improvement, but there are still problems. It comes up with political appointees sometimes.

Q: Was there anything more you want to say about Canada?

BAZALA: The major problems revolved around the fact that the counselor for Consular Affairs had to be located in Ottawa in the embassy and yet be responsible for providing guidance and direction to the six consulates. He or she had to make sure all the different consulates were marching in the same direction, that they understood what was going on in the bilateral relationship, and that all were aware of and implemented any new directions from Washington. Even though the CCA had to be a very senior person to act as consular coordinator, there were only three people in Ottawa's consular section, and all they did was handle diplomatic visas. Also, in those days, the consular section had to rely on the mission for travel funds and had to compete with the other sections for the money. Often they lost out unless they had to travel to visit an American prisoner. Now, with the collection of visa fees, CA has its own money and can provide the funds for travel.

I finished the Canada inspection in December 1993, and we started the winter cycle in January. My team prepared to inspect Madagascar, Tanzania, and Zaire (today's Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Q: Okay, could you describe what you saw in what's called the Big Red Island, isn't it?

BAZALA: One of our team members got sick and returned home soon after we arrived in Antananarivo, and we all had to take on extra work. So we just worked our way through the inspection and then left. The famous attractions in Madagascar are the lemurs. But we didn't have much time to get out and about. We only stay in a place like that maybe ten days at the most, and in this case we were working extra hours to finish in time to move on to the next post.

Q: Was the living there particularly difficult?

BAZALA: I don't think so. People at the post seemed reasonably content, which is a good thing.

Q: And then where did you go?

BAZALA: Then we went to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. This was several years before the terrorism incidents in East Africa that destroyed two embassies, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The main impression I had of the country was that it was *extremely* hot. We were there at a really hot time of the year I guess.

We stayed outside of the city in a resort area that had little grass huts for rooms—but comfortable. The embassy was doing quite well. We had a chance to go out to Zanzibar because the embassy owned a house on the beach at that time where staff could go for recreation. Since it was U.S. government property, we went to take a look.

Q: We had a post on Zanzibar at one time.

BAZALA: Yes. I believe the house we still owned there was once the consul's residence. We took a hydrofoil to get there. We also had to take our passports even though Zanzibar was joined with Tanganyika in 1964 to become the country of Tanzania. Many years ago Zanzibar was known as a center for the Middle East slave trade, and we saw where the market had been and got a lesson in the local history. Beyond that I don't think there was anything really outstanding about the inspection. I usually remember the really good things and the really bad things.

Q: Then where did you go?

BAZALA: We went on to Kinshasa, which was a post in crisis and the most difficult place I inspected on several levels the entire time I did this work. It was also one of the rare instances of an inspection team that did not function well as a whole. We had already lost one member to amoebic dysentery back in Antananarivo, which meant more work for the rest of us, and another member chose to operate independently.

Zaire was a rather lawless country at the time, and security was a major problem. The embassy had its own guard force that lived in a barracks behind the embassy, because the mission could not rely on the local militia or police or whatever law enforcement there was. It was quite risky even coming in from the airport or going out to the airport. We were very concerned because there was a school with American students including mission dependents. It was on the periphery of the relatively secure enclave in the city, which was a small area. We worried about something happening—crime, political violence, anything. It was pretty unsafe. USAID had already pulled out by and large, and they were in the process of dismantling their operation, selling equipment, getting rid of cars, and pulling people out because they just couldn't function.

Q: Was it becoming apparent that we wouldn't have relations with this country?

BAZALA: We looked into the embassy's evacuation plans. The ambassador's residence was right on the river. He had a dock and a whaleboat there. The evacuation plan was to take embassy staff and families across the river to Brazzaville by boat if they needed to get out. Typically we look at things like that and make sure the evacuation plans are up to date.

One of the biggest problems in Zaire at the time was inflation. Just to go out to dinner anywhere we had to carry big bags of money, because there was no currency bill larger than a five hundred note which was a small amount. Cell phones were just coming into use, and it was about the only means of communication, since the landlines did not function. I was also struck by the fact that there was an absence of any significant shipping traffic on the Congo River.

I had a close call with my health because I developed a very serious allergy with hives and had to have steroid treatments. We think it was a reaction to the malaria medicine, mefloquine. I was very fortunate because there was an American Peace Corps doctor who happened to be in town, and he treated me.

I was very relieved to get on a plane out of there. It was Sabena Airlines, and we had trouble just getting on the plane and getting our passports stamped so we could leave the country. When the plane arrived in Kinshasa to take on passengers, the crew only ventured out as far as the bottom of the stairs and set up a card table to check tickets and passports. They wouldn't even come into the terminal. That just shows how insecure everything was, and we felt pretty lucky the plane came in at all to get us.

In the spring cycle we inspected DRL [now Humanitarian Affairs], and in the summer we inspected ACDA, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Initially an independent agency, ACDA was later broken up into three or four bureaus and integrated into the department. Inspecting ACDA was difficult because there were a lot of technical issues involving arms control and nuclear power, and ACDA employed several scientists.

By August 1995 I was finished with my first tour with OIG. From there I went to the Bureau of Human Resources and Director General of the Foreign Service [HR] as office director for Employee Relations. HR used to be Personnel.

Q: Personnel. Now we're talking the same language. So what were your main concerns?

BAZALA: In ER [Employee Relations]?

Q: Yes.

BAZALA: Employee Relations has a lot of different responsibilities. If you didn't know where else it belonged in HR, chances were it was in Employee Relations. ER had four divisions. The main one, and the one people knew us for, was the conduct, suitability, and discipline unit. So if you got into trouble in the department, you probably came to my attention. Another unit was *State Magazine*, the in-house publication for employees of the department. The third unit was employee benefits such as health insurance, workers compensation, and things of that sort. We also had responsibility for the disability program where we hired interpreters for the deaf and provided assistance to blind employees and others with problems.

Q: Well, what was going on during this period? Iraq was still going strong, wasn't it?

BAZALA: No, this was the Bosnia era. My husband was in Bosnia for part of that time. I was more or less on my own at home. The kids were in college or working.

I think the thing I enjoyed the most working in ER was publishing *State Magazine*. It was during my time that we converted to color printing beginning with the first color cover. There was a big fight with someone on the Hill about changing over to color printing because he thought it cost too much. Well, in fact by then it was cheaper to print in color because very few publications were in black and white anymore. We finally overcame congressional reluctance. We switched to using Macs and Photoshop for all the bells and whistles of electronic publishing. Finally we were able to stop putting the magazine

together using cut and paste and galley proofs that were the old fashioned way. The catalyst for this changeover to color and electronic publishing was the retirement of the long-time former editor who was wedded to the old ways. I hired a new editor who was gung-ho to modernize, and he was a very good editor as well. We worked well together.

The other good thing we did during my time in ER was to open the department's first childcare center in the state annex in Columbia Plaza. Fortunately, we had someone on staff who was very knowledgeable about how to do this kind of thing because you need licensing, you need to hire people, and you need a safe physical space. Secretary Warren Christopher came to cut the ribbon for us at the opening ceremony. *State Magazine* staff took pictures, and we had a cover photo of the secretary with a big smile on his face as he gave remarks and cut the ribbon. I think it was the only picture I ever saw of him smiling. He talked about his grandchildren, and presented a human aspect that most department personnel hadn't really seen before. Diplotots, as the center is called, was a big success right from the beginning because for eleven years there had been efforts to get a childcare center, but despite the demand there had been just tremendous resistance from department managers. It was a money issue and a reluctance to accommodate childcare needs within the department.

Q: What have other departments done?

BAZALA: Well, some had already set up childcare centers, and the woman we hired to do it had experience with another federal agency. Then she went on to another federal agency to do the same thing. We felt very fortunate we had somebody with the right background.

Q: Was there a good response?

BAZALA: Oh yes, absolutely. Employees at the lower ranks of the Civil Service could get subsidies for their kids' tuition if they were able to qualify. It was so successful there was a wait list, and eventually another childcare center was set up out here at FSI. I think it's been a wonderful asset for families.

Q: Where was the one at the State Department placed?

BAZALA: Columbia Plaza in the low rise building on the side facing the Kennedy Center. It wasn't an ideal spot because there wasn't a lot of room for a playground. But they made it work.

The other big program that this same ER employee worked on was the disability program. At that time the department was being sued by people who had applied to join the Foreign Service or who had been in the Foreign Service and had disabilities and were denied tenure based on the fact they were not available for worldwide service which is a condition of employment when you are hired. They won the case, and we had to accommodate them.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] the department has to provide reasonable accommodations for people who need help in order to perform the functions of their job. In the case of a blind employee, we would hire a reader, someone who would stand next to him or her and read whatever the person needed. We also provided a very sophisticated piece of equipment that had a braille keyboard and could read email out loud. Now this technology is readily available but at that time it was pretty cutting-edge. We hired interpreters for the deaf so that whenever the secretary or somebody gave a speech or there was a meeting that the deaf individual needed to attend, there would be someone available to interpret. We had about six hearing impaired employees that we were supporting in that way.

Q: Well, did you get involved with applicants for entry into the Foreign Service?

BAZALA: Yes. There was also a lawsuit from a woman who was blind, as was her husband. She applied for the Foreign Service and passed the exam but was denied because of her inability to see. She sued and won, so she was offered an appointment at the level she would have been if she had entered the FS when she first applied. I think she ultimately turned it down, but we were all scratching our heads wondering how was this going to work.

Q: There have been a few not very successful blind employees. It usually boils down to the fact that the person who is their support is actually doing a significant amount of the work.

BAZALA: Well, it's difficult for an embassy to manage. It's difficult for the department to find a suitable assignment where the embassy can provide the right kind of assistance and meet the need for appropriate housing and other amenities.

ER also set up the drug-testing program for the department. As I said before, if you didn't know where else an HR program was, it was probably in ER. So we set it up, and it was highly unpopular and inconvenient for everyone because those selected at random for a test had to come over to State Annex 6 in Rosslyn where the ER offices were at that time. Later on I was able to persuade the medical unit that it was more appropriate for them to assume responsibility for drug testing. And so they did.

ER also processed worker's compensation claims and administered the department's leave and insurance benefits programs. In addition, ER managed the Combined Federal Campaign each year. I like jobs where I have a lot of different responsibilities. In ER the positive things like setting up the childcare center and *State Magazine* helped balance a lot of the negative stuff that came my way from the discipline unit.

Q: On discipline did you get involved?

BAZALA: Oh yes.

Q: From the perspective of HR was there much of a problem getting people to go to places that they didn't want to go? *Like Kinshasa.*

BAZALA: Technically you have to go where you're assigned, unless you have a medical reason not to go, or something else that would be a legitimate reason. I think there was always the threat that you could be forced to go where assigned. It's called a directed assignment, and everyone is supposed to be worldwide available. I don't think we ever had to discipline someone for refusing an assignment without a valid reason, but there was that possibility. HR tried to play it both ways. They had the stick of threatening a directed assignment. In other words, you go where you are assigned or get out of the service, as happened to Raz when he was assigned to Vietnam. But HR also extended a few carrots like danger pay, one-year assignments, extra R&R [rest and relaxation], preference for a follow-on assignment, extra brownie points for promotion purposes, that kind of thing. That's how they get people to go where they are reluctant to go. And it works. They have been pretty successful.

By the time I went to Bosnia in 1998, for example, we had some difficulty in finding people to fill positions in Sarajevo because family members were still not permitted to reside there. That was more of an impediment than any perception of danger. Still, even though the war was over, there were dangers. They weren't shooting at Americans, and by then they weren't shooting at each other anymore. But there was a lot of damage and there was danger from landmines. There was always the concern that some new conflict could flare up. We had that threat, especially if SFOR [Stabilisation Force] was looking for war criminals. So we had our moments in Bosnia when we didn't feel too safe.

Q: I went over to Bosnia twice during that period as an election observer.

BAZALA: You must have been there right after I arrived.

Q: I remember we were all told—especially the guys—if you've got to pee, stand in the middle of the road and don't go off to the side. (laughs)

BAZALA: Right, don't walk in the fields where there could be unexploded landmines. We used to give those warnings. I always felt uneasy that some people didn't really get the message. I had my military contacts out at the base. They had mine experts. I asked them to arrange a demonstration and a lecture on the various kinds of landmines. So the guys came to the embassy and they brought several examples that had been, of course, deactivated. They showed us a map where they were found. They were in places you might not think of at first, including many of the damaged and abandoned buildings in Sarajevo, cemeteries and parks, and on the hills surrounding the city. I sent around a notice and said, "Everybody's strongly encouraged to come to this lecture." And they did, and I think it really made an impression.

Q: We had a lecture on that, showing all those mines. It fixes one's attention.

BAZALA: Absolutely. We repeated it periodically for new people coming in. They wouldn't realize the danger because they thought demining made things safe. And it's not safe. I was told once that it was impossible to completely demine the country. Even the de-miners would not guarantee that the demining process found 100 percent of the mines. Over the course of time many mines planted in the countryside moved around, were swept downriver by flooding, or upended during spring growth. The first or second night I was in Sarajevo I heard two explosions in the hills above my house. It was later explained to me that the growth of tree roots and vegetation or animals could set them off.

Q: Getting back to your time in Personnel, there'd been all sorts of lawsuits about the recruitment process, about how you couldn't disqualify somebody because maybe they couldn't walk or something like that which really put an extra burden on our posts abroad because it was assumed the person really couldn't fully function or do their regular job unless somebody else helped out.

BAZALA: There is an apparent conflict between the Americans With Disabilities Act, which was guiding us in HR, and the Foreign Service Act, which requires worldwide availability for service. So sometimes that created problems. But we had to do our best, if employees could be accommodated and serve overseas. We had to try to help them. Each case was different, and they were evaluated on a case-by-case basis. I think for the most part people weed themselves out when they realize what they're up against serving overseas. But there would be the few who were very insistent they could do it. We had suits that were brought at the time I was there, so it was a big issue for the department. Implementing the Americans With Disabilities Act was fairly new at the time, and no one really knew how it was going to work out in terms of implementation. I believe, and I am not a 100 percent sure, that the CIA had an exemption for their Foreign Service, so that they didn't have to make accommodations for officers assigned overseas. I think we tried to point to that and say, "Look, we have the same issues." I'm not sure how that played out in the end.

Q: Maybe I'm wrong on my timing, but was this the period where sexual harassment was sort of the flavor of the month?

BAZALA: Initially there was a lot of confusion about the definition of sexual harassment and how to handle it. Employees did not understand what avenue to pursue, if they had a complaint about something that occurred in the office. They didn't know whether it was an EEO matter or a grievance. ER set up an alternative dispute resolution [ADR] process to try to get the parties together with a neutral person, who had had ADR training, to help them clarify the issues and see if something could be done to resolve the dispute before one party or the other filed a grievance or went to court. The biggest problem I had with the Foreign Service was that it was too easy to pass on a problem. Either the supervisor was leaving post and decided not to do anything about a problem employee, or that problem person moved on to the next assignment so the next supervisor had to deal with him or her.

Q: I've heard again and again in my career about somebody not doing the job, not really being capable, and then relying on the threat of a grievance to stay employed. Particularly Foreign Service officers who had to deal with these people tended to get them moved on somewhere else without dealing with the problem.

BAZALA: I'll tell you a story that relates to that. A regional bureau's deputy executive director called me up and described a problem that the office had with one of the office employees. He went on at some length describing what the problem was. And I said okay, that sounds like something we probably should look into. But I need a memo from you requesting our action, and the response was, "Oh no, I can't do that."

I said, "Well, why not?"

"I don't want a grievance. I don't want to have to deal with a grievance; I'm too busy."

I said, "Well, if you don't give me something as a starting place, something in writing or some evidence that we can base a proposal for discipline on, I'm stuck." He wouldn't do it.

So I called his boss, the executive director, and said, "I understand you have this problem and we need some reference from you."

"Oh well, we're telling you about it."

I told him that I needed something more concrete, if not a memo from them, perhaps copies of email exchanges between him and the individual that demonstrated what the problem was. And they refused to do it. This was a failure of supervisory responsibility; they weren't doing their bit.

Others referred cases to us and provided email exchanges that were evidence of the problem. That was in the early days of email, and many people then did not realize you can always find email, even if it has been deleted. A technician would retrieve the messages, and there it would be in black and white: screaming by email at the boss or making accusations or two people in the office having a spat. And you could document certain things like late arrival, cheating on leave, and improper use of the office computer. So that became evidence we could put into the mix to propose discipline for insubordination, failure to follow orders, abuse of leave, and so forth.

My responsibility in all this was to present the case as a proposal for discipline and to describe the evidence in a letter. Sometimes we had very substantial files. The proposal included a recommendation for a specific penalty based on the guidelines we had. There was very specific guidance and precedence from the department, the Department of Justice, the Merit System Protection Board, and the courts. The proposal went to a deputy assistant secretary in HR for a decision. So I did not actually have to make a final decision about whether the person was to be disciplined or not.

When it went to the deputy assistant secretary for HR, the person proposed for discipline could respond in writing and/or in person and choose to bring a union representative or AFSA [American Foreign Service Association] rep or a lawyer to a meeting with the deciding official, if they wanted. They had the opportunity to present their side. The deciding official could decide in favor of the individual and throw out the disciplinary action, or he or she could decide on a lesser punishment based on mitigating factors, or the individual could get the full penalty. It was, I think, a fair process, but I was glad I wasn't the final decision maker. Once the decision was made, the individual had appeal rights.

Q: Did you feel that the State Department was really trying to deal with the issues?

BAZALA: It depended on the units where problems were occurring. Very often people did not want to get caught up in an EEO complaint or have to respond to a grievance, as I mentioned before. Since my time, I believe that the department has made an effort to make supervisors more accountable for disciplinary matters, and in certain cases some bureaus have been delegated authority to deal with disciplinary matters.

Q: Well, when I'm a boss and I've got a secretary who's chronically late, then I should document adequately that so and so was late on such and such a date, and I've done the appropriate counseling.

BAZALA: That's what you should do. HR/ER provided guidance on how to go about correcting problems in an appropriate way, how to counsel, and how to document the issue. If it's a civil servant you might put the person on a performance improvement plan. You might suggest training if they appear to need it, and just see how things go. The whole goal of discipline is to correct behavior, not really to punish. You've hired this employee, you've invested in this employee, and you really want to make this person able to do the job.

I remember a GS-8 secretary, a pretty high level for a secretary. She was in an office in the department where things were not working well between her and her supervisor. There was a real problem, and we stepped in. To make a very long story short, we recommended that she be reassigned elsewhere in the department to see how she would perform with a different set of bosses, a different type of work, and so on. That was done, and she blossomed, and when we checked later we found she did brilliantly. So that was a much better solution than imposing some kind of discipline. So we always sought to find a resolution to a problem that would be helpful.

If a prior disciplinary action showed up in the vetting process for a Foreign Service officer who was nominated for an ambassadorship, it could derail the appointment, and it might be a concern during the congressional hearing process. Twice I went up to the Hill to discuss individual cases with Hill staff who raised questions. In both cases, the nominees went forward because the matter had been resolved satisfactorily, and there was no intentional malfeasance.

Q: You hear about cases of people who are trying to play the system. But looking at it from a practical point of view, did you find much of this?

BAZALA: Later, when I was in OIG again, I ran across a file on someone who had filed five or six complaints with EEO, and every time she was paid a sum of money in a settlement. That was clearly "gaming the system," but I presume if OIG had the file, they were checking out abuse of the system.

People want to succeed, but often things are personality driven. People clash or issues come up in the office. This is human nature, and you're going to get this kind of thing. Occasionally someone would have a big chip on the shoulder and there wasn't a lot you could do.

One time we had an employee who really was crazy, and I mean that in the exact sense of the term. It was so bad she barricaded herself in her office, and we had to send diplomatic security [DS] over there to get her out. Then we had to propose firing her for a long string of reasons. But she just would not cooperate, and she wouldn't even talk to us or anyone else. She went home, and we sent her a letter that said you've done X, Y, and Z, and you've failed to report for work. She wouldn't answer the mail, she wouldn't answer the phone, she wouldn't answer special deliveries. She just barricaded herself in her house. We sought out relatives who we thought could get to her, and we explained, "This woman is going to be fired and will lose her pension if she doesn't respond to this letter." We thought she could qualify for disability, if we could get her medical help. But I don't recall that we ever got an answer.

If somebody was in serious trouble—and this particularly applied to the Foreign Service––they often would choose to retire, if they had enough time in service to get a pension. Once they saw the handwriting on the wall, they would just retire.

We have had a couple of major consular cases, as you know. If you're convicted of a felony, that's automatic grounds for being fired. The worst case I had was a senior visa clerk at a post in Mexico who was caught facilitating visas, and she'd been doing it a long time. I think she might have been a dual national. By the time the matter came to our attention DS was involved, Legal was involved, the consul at the post was involved, and I got involved since my name was on the letter proposing to fire her, if she was convicted. So what did this woman do? She went to a lawyer in California and filed a RICO [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act] case against all of us for conspiring against her. The lawyer hired a process server who managed to get into the department to serve the department's lawyer who then tipped me off that the process server was coming to serve me. At that time my office was in Rosslyn, so he never found me. We were being sued for two million dollars. Eventually the visa clerk was convicted and sentenced to something like twenty years, a pretty serious case obviously. The courts threw out the suit against us, but let me tell you, that is the kind of thing you lie awake at night thinking about.

Q: Did you have any Foreign Service officers who got caught up in something?

BAZALA: Some.

Q: Did you look at their background? Was anybody taking a look and seeing what's wrong with our recruiting process, or was it just the temptation was too great, or what?

BAZALA: Usually these were one-of-a-kind things. I don't recall that I had any of those very rare cases that hit the newspapers about officers involved in some kind of a visa scam. We did have situations of employees cheating on vouchers or misusing government credit cards. One person claimed separate maintenance allowance when in fact the couple was already divorced. Sometimes these FSOs were allowed to pay the department back because they inadvertently violated the rules, or we couldn't establish that there was true intent to defraud the government. Occasionally someone got in trouble using an official vehicle inappropriately, and the penalty for it was set in law. So if you yourself, or you allowed somebody who was not authorized, used the ambassador's car, for example, you could get a thirty-day suspension, which is about the maximum suspension for any transgression.

Q: Did you get involved in cases of political ambassadors using an embassy residence inappropriately or that sort of thing?

BAZALA: OIG occasionally got involved in that kind of thing. That could be a bit tricky. Sometimes it resulted in a letter of admonishment pointing out the violation of the law or the regulations or what have you. Critical inspection reports citing ambassadorial failures have resulted in resignations. The team leader was responsible for counseling the ambassador. Once in while a spouse stepped over the line, and that was always a delicate matter to address.

Q: Well then, did the inspection teams turn up much crime?

BAZALA: Unfortunately inspectors turn up evidence of criminal matters from time to time. There's an investigations unit [INV] in OIG that can be called in to check out something the inspectors discover in the course of an inspection. Hot line complaints go to INV for review. For example, a department employee on duty overseas had been soliciting prostitutes and was taking pictures. This came to the attention of the embassy, and OIG got involved and went out and investigated. Once the investigation was finished, I received this big report with an appendix, and in the appendix were a number of these photographs. The employee was penalized for inappropriate behavior while on duty. We also sometimes learned about child abuse cases at posts overseas. DS gets involved in those cases.

ER got involved if an ambassador lost confidence in an employee and sent a cable into the department requesting curtailment of the assignment. Very often, when we pulled the employee's most recent evaluation, we found a glowing evaluation about how so and so did such a great job. Then two months later a cable came in from the ambassador asking for curtailment because he didn't think the employee was doing the job or had a problem.

You can't have it both ways. HR could pull the employee out of the post, but the employee is going to get passed on to somebody else or even promoted because the assignments panel or the review panel would not know that there were issues, since the performance record was favorable. You have to document the effect the problem has on the mission not only by cable but also in the performance evaluation, and I believe that HR is now insisting on both in order to approve a curtailment. Yet the post would often be reluctant because someone feared a grievance. I would say that often the issue was a failure to perform supervisory duties in regard to this kind of thing. It's not easy, and I appreciate that. I've been in a position where I've had to deal with problem employees, and it's not fun and it's very time consuming. So I can understand why people are reluctant to do it. But it is part of the job, if you are in a management position.

Q: Then you moved to Bosnia.

BAZALA: Yes.

Q: How did that come about, and when?

BAZALA: It was always my ambition to be a DCM. I thought that was probably where I fit best once I reached a certain level and had sufficient experience in the department. In particular I thought my inspection experience was helpful, and indeed it turned out to be the best training I could have had for the job. I also had the opportunity to observe quite a few DCMs both good and not so good.

It helped that I was in HR because I knew what DCM jobs were coming up, and I made it known that was what I wanted to do. There were several openings in Europe, especially in the Balkans. I served previously in Yugoslavia and I had learned Serbo-Croatian, so I put my hat in the ring for three or four jobs there, and I had several interviews. Initially I was picked for another post in the Balkans, but I ended up in Sarajevo. I think one reason was that it was still an unaccompanied post at the time I was assigned, and those posts are sometimes more difficult to fill, eliminating some of my competition. Also, I was willing to serve two years. Before that everybody was on a one-year assignment. I worked for Richard Kauzlarich who selected me to be his DCM. He was a very fine man, and I had a lot of respect for him. We worked very well together. His strength was as an economic officer. He had been an ambassador before—to Baku. He wanted a DCM who had managerial experience and a consular background, because Sarajevo was preparing to start consular operations. Those were two things that acted in my favor. He had never been a DCM himself, so he really wanted somebody who could bring those types of skills. So that's how I got the job.

By the time I arrived in Sarajevo, the post had loosened the rules about bringing adult dependents. And in fact, Ambassador Kauzlarich's wife was there. She was the first spouse to live at post, and by the time I arrived there were six spouses. But we had housing issues, so it was not easy to be there as a spouse. Employees still couldn't bring children.

Raz had an assignment as regional PAO based in Budapest. We eventually worked it out that he could be based in Sarajevo instead of Budapest. He could travel around the Balkans and former USSR posts out of Sarajevo almost as easily as out of Budapest, and it made perfect sense for the department not to have to rent a house for him in Budapest when he could live in mine. It took a while, however, to convince the department that this was the sensible approach.

So I started out on my own in Sarajevo. It didn't matter anyway, as I hardly had a minute of downtime. We worked seven days a week, twelve to fourteen hours a day. It was a grueling intense job, and when I first got there, people worked all the time. The only time off that Ambassador Kauzlarich took was on Sunday mornings when he took his wife for a walk around the block and then came into the office. Since he came into the embassy on weekends, everybody else came into the office, too. Also, there was very little else to do because at that point we had restrictions about where we could go, and we couldn't travel to the coast. There were very few recreational opportunities. We had none of the normal things that you would have at post because the mission was just emerging from its wartime status.

Q: What years were you there?

BAZALA: 1998 to 2000. The war was over, but the vestiges were evident. When I went into the embassy the very first day, I had to go in through a side door that was the main entrance. There was a guard booth with metal detectors and so forth and a barrel next to the outer door with sandbags around it. The barrel was half full of sand, and there was a sign over this barrel that said, "Discharge your weapon here." Then you walked on planks over mud to get into the embassy.

The embassy chancery was an old villa we had taken over. The department had just finished building a classified annex, and I benefited from that because it had a nice office for the ambassador, for me, and for some other folks.

The ambassador said to me, "I want you to make this place a real embassy." I said, "How about getting rid of that barrel of sand by the entrance for starters?" So I did.

Since there was an acute shortage of space, one agency had set up in a big trailer in the front yard, and there were several storage containers in the driveway. When I left we had a lovely garden in the front yard and all that other stuff was gone. It was a much more presentable facility even though space was still at a premium.

In five years the mission had grown from a handful of officers sleeping and working in the chancery to more than five hundred employees working at over seven locations and occupying more than one hundred housing units. The mission had two branch offices located in Banja Luka (Republika Srpska) and Mostar (the Federation). Understandably some of the amenities were left out in the race to catch up to the expanding workload.

Next door to the chancery was a building for SFOR use that was called the residency. SFOR was the Stabilization Force, a NATO-led multinational force established in 1996 to keep and enforce the peace in Bosnia. The residency was occupied by a contingent of NATO Turkish troops and an SFOR civic action group. This building was bigger than our chancery and had more land around it. I cast covetous eyes on it and began making inquiries whether we could eventually acquire it for the mission. Over the course of several months we negotiated with SFOR and the Bosnian government to take over this property, and we turned it into an unclassified facility for administrative functions.

Q: What was the situation in Bosnia when you got there?

BAZALA: They weren't shooting at each other anymore. You could drive down the main boulevard leading from the airport to the old town center. It was known during the war as "Sniper Alley." We no longer were in danger of getting shot at while driving on it. Landmines, however, were a very serious problem everywhere.

By then the embassy had leased a house for the DCM, so I did not have to live in the embassy. The original group of people who were in Sarajevo during the war lived in the embassy building; they just rolled out of the cots in their offices and went to work. By the time I arrived everyone was housed in town. Finding housing was difficult though because so much had been destroyed. I lived up on a hill in a townhouse. About the second night I was there I heard loud explosions behind my house, which of course was frightening. When I inquired, it was explained to me that at certain times of year growing vegetation can set off landmines. Also animals set them off. It was just an everyday occurrence; nobody thought anything about it.

So that was my introduction to Sarajevo. It is difficult when you encounter an embassy that has been on a war footing for so long and needs to go through a transition to normalcy. The attitude was, "We're at war, and the regulations don't mean anything under these circumstances; we have to get the job done." It was the assumption, the mentality that they could get away with ignoring some of the rules and regulations that would normally be guiding them. So it was a big challenge for me to normalize operations. I had one thing going for me: I knew Sarajevo was going to be inspected sometime in the next year or two. Knowing inspections as I did since I served in OIG, I used this as a motivator to say all right, now we need a motor pool policy or whatever. In fact, right after I left, the embassy had its first ever inspection. So I expect they were prepared.

Are you familiar with the system of designating embassies according to size and other criteria from class one to class five, five being your Paris or your London? Because of its initial small size Sarajevo was considered a special embassy post, or one of the smallest. I said, "We're not a special embassy post; we have almost six hundred employees with ten agencies here. We need to be re-designated, possibly to four." That would help us out in Washington. So we were able to do that and other things to improve our situation. We needed more space, and we got more space. I had to ensure that we had good relations with the military because they provided certain services to us and helped us out. What

was really tricky was that an awful lot of people in Washington were interested in, and had a stake in, what was going on in Bosnia. It was the flavor of the month until Kosovo came along. Sometimes there was a failure to coordinate back in Washington, and this caused us no end of trouble. We had a constant flow of visitors. One time I counted that we had nine U.S. ambassadors or former ambassadors in country at one time.

Q: Good God.

BAZALA: We, of course, had our bilateral ambassador at the embassy (Kauzlarich, who was followed by Tom Miller in my time there). Another ambassador, Jacques Klein, was deputy high representative at the Office of the High Representative [OHR], which was the de facto international governing body for Bosnia. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] with Ambassador Bob Barry helped monitor the elections. Ambassador Bob Gelbard's title was special representative for implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, and he must have come a dozen times when I was there. Ambassador Bill Farrand was the OHR deputy high representative for Brcko. Others came in and out who had specific responsibilities, like military train and equip. Everyone who had a particular niche came.

Keeping track of who these people were seeing and what was being said was a real challenge. The structure of the government set up by the Dayton Peace Accords included three presidents and two prime ministers, and everybody of any significance who came to Sarajevo wanted to see "the president" and other key Bosnian politicians. For political reasons, they couldn't just see one president; they had to see all three. Ambassador Kauzlarich, in order to keep track of what was going on, insisted that one of us, either he or I or somebody from the political section, accompany every visitor who went to see President Izetbegovic and the other two presidents and many of the other key players. We needed to know what messages they were giving them, or receiving, and keep track of that. Otherwise we might not have a clue. So you can imagine the time that was involved. And because Bosnia was so important at that time, we had loads of visitors. We counted fourteen hundred visitors in one year that we had to facilitate. This included everybody from the president, secretary of state, secretary of defense, and various and assorted representatives and senators on down, you name it. We had quite an experienced group of people in the mission who were able to deal with them. But it takes time and resources. One reason we had nearly six hundred employees was because we had to deal with all these people. It was busy.

Q: Were there security problems with the visitors?

BAZALA: Generally not. The embassy usually provided security, and we could count on SFOR if we needed special help. Very often the visitors scheduled a stop at Tuzla, location of the U.S. SFOR base in Bosnia.

There was one close call. Several organizations were involved in the demining effort. The Norwegian government had an active program, and there were international nongovernmental organizations involved as well. Every construction project had to have

a certification from a demining team before building could begin. Even then no one was willing to say it was completely safe. The old Jewish cemetery was a well-known and popular pre-war place to visit, but it became a sniper's nest during the fighting. When Secretary of Defense William Cohen planned a visit to Sarajevo, he learned that a Norwegian team had recently de-mined the cemetery and certified it safe for visitors. The secretary changed his planned itinerary to include a visit. He was much moved by the experience; he is Jewish. Afterwards, however, one of the ambassador's bodyguards, who had wartime experience as an explosives expert, reported that he found two mines in the cemetery. It served as a reminder to us all that a de-mining certification was not an assurance of safety.

Q: Did you feel there was much cooperation or coordination with Washington on all these people coming in, or were they all kind of special missions that they'd dreamed up themselves?

BAZALA: Coordination was always an issue. There was a special unit in Washington that dealt with nothing but Bosnia. I think it was in EUR. It was their job to try to keep tabs on who was coming out. But you know, with the military involved because we had U.S. troops in Bosnia as part of the NATO peacekeeping mission and an international community at OHR, it was hard to deconflict and keep track of what was going on. Everybody was there with one general purpose, which was to implement the Dayton Accords and make Bosnia into a functioning country. But there were just so many aspects to that.

I think Ambassador Kauzlarich was probably quite frustrated sometimes when people visited, like Ambassador Gelbard, and took over negotiations or made demarches that normally would be the purview of the bilateral ambassador. Gelbard could be pretty heavy-handed at times. I accompanied him to one meeting with the Croat president, Ante Jelavic, in which he chewed him out verbally about corruption, smuggling, and alleged "mafia" connections to the point the president threatened to resign. About the time Gelbard moved on to another post, Ambassador Tom Miller succeeded Ambassador Kauzlarich in 1999, and he seemed to have a freer rein to conduct policy implementation. It was like night and day in terms of personalities.

There were so many challenges to overcome, and any one of them would have been a major accomplishment for any embassy, if we could pull them off. There was a major refugee problem with a million people displaced by the war who were returning to Bosnia. We were trying to get them back into their homes, help find their lost relatives, or provide some sort of compensation. We had a program to help establish and control Bosnia's borders and set up a border patrol. There was an economic program to set up banking, a stock market, and a currency that was viable. There were just an overwhelming number of issues. Bosnia had been part of Yugoslavia, so what they depended on Belgrade for previously they had to create for themselves. Acting as a major counterforce were the hatreds that had been stirred up by the war, so getting them to work together was a constant challenge.

Q: Well, how about the Srebrenica incidents? Had that happened while you were there?

BAZALA: No, that was before my time—during the active hostilities in 1995. There was an ongoing issue of trying first to find the bodies of people who had been killed there and to develop evidence about the perpetrators. Someone was appointed (another Washington visitor) specifically to try to determine what happened to these people.

Srebrenica was a town in the heart of Republika Srpska [RS] that before the war was inhabited mostly by Bosnian Muslims. Because of its dangerous geographical location surrounded by hostile Serbs, Srebrenica was under a UN mandate during the war. This ultimately offered no protection, however, and Serb forces led by General Ratko Mladic invaded the town, pushed the Dutch peacekeepers aside, and proceeded to systematically deport thousands of residents and kill and bury eighty-three hundred in mass graves. This ethnic cleansing achieved notoriety as "the single greatest mass killing since World War II," and Mladic became known as the "Butcher of the Balkans."

The international community focused much attention on this town and its tragedy. We sought to return the refugees to their homes, restore infrastructure and housing, and determine the fate of those killed. For security reasons, since the town was in the heart of the most radical area of the RS, visitors were few and had to be well guarded. Shortly after Tom Miller's arrival as ambassador, he decided to visit Srebrenica on the anniversary of the tragedy to reinvigorate these efforts and keep the pressure on for reconciliation and restitution. Almost everyone recommended against this visit. SFOR said it could not guarantee his safety, and many feared it would simply stir up trouble in the RS. Ambassador Miller persevered, and when it became clear he would go to Srebrenica, NATO's General Wesley Clark flew down from Brussels to accompany him. The visit took place peacefully, and the accompanying publicity gave the Srebrenica efforts a welcome boost. The embassy had a photo of the ambassador and General Clark walking the streets of Srebrenica blown up to poster size, and he proudly displayed it in his office.

Q: Did you have somebody keeping a watch on war criminals?

BAZALA: Yes. SFOR sought a number of persons indicted for war crimes [PIFWCs], and every once in a while there was an SFOR operation to try to capture them when they had enough intelligence to try to go after one of these guys. There was so much danger in that whole process and a great worry that there would be violence and a reaction from the Serbs if they actually arrested someone. We were on standby to be evacuated a couple of times as a result. There were uncertainties about whether the military could or would protect us. We hunkered down to wait it out. We never did evacuate, but there were several times when I was talking to Washington about voluntary departure. Those were always risky events.

Q: What was your impression of the Bosnian government?

BAZALA: You mean trying to create a government out of disparate groups that never really had a government?

Q: Exactly.

BAZALA: Not only that, it was this three-headed monster with the three presidents, the two entities with prime ministers, and then assorted hangers-on. There was also a premier. Sometimes they wouldn't talk to each other or they might only talk through us or through the international community, but it was nearly impossible to get them all to work in harness. You should read the Dayton Peace Accords and the constitution that was part of the agreement that ended the war. That was about the first thing I did when I was assigned as DCM. I thought then that there is no way this was going to work. The only way it did work was because the international community enforced it through the Office of the High Representative. That's still going on. OHR had the ability to remove an official from office who was obstructing progress, and they used that authority, if necessary, to get cooperation.

These were all politicians, you know. It was power. If there was one who was particularly corrupt, we knew it. One of the senior politicians was involved in criminal smuggling across the border. There was such a thing as a Bosnian mafia, and he was part of it. We were quite sure about that. After I left he was removed from office. It was a bit of the wild west in places.

Q: Well, I recall particularly in the early days they were saying that corruption was incredible there.

BAZALA: It had been a problem for years. If you go back in their history, Bosnia had wave after wave of overseers so they were adept at figuring out how to work under various rulers—the Turks, the Austrians, the Yugoslav government in Belgrade. They had very effective ways of working around whoever their overseers were. There was a lot of money involved after the war, as you can imagine, because of the aid coming in from the United States, all of the EU, Japan, and international organizations. The refugee program was bringing in a lot of money. With that kind of money sloshing around you can imagine that there was definitely corruption. Bosnia didn't have the institutions and the justice system and governance under the rule of law that would at least put a brake on some of that. We tried to help set up a viable judicial system, and rule of law was a big theme when I was there. As you know, these things take time. You can't just snap your fingers and have a functioning, non-corrupt government overnight.

Q: How did you find the embassy's Bosnian employees? Were they helpful or were they sort of committed to their own ways of exploiting the situation?

BAZALA: We had very loyal, exceptional local employees. They were all new. None of them had been at the mission more than five or six years at that point because the mission itself was new. Some of the FSNs were very highly qualified, overqualified really. We had one person running our motor pool who had been the head of Bosnia's equivalent of

our Federal Aviation Administration. We hired guards with doctoral degrees. Jobs were very hard to come by in Bosnia, so we were very lucky to have a very good pool of applicants to draw from. When we hired and trained them, we were able to keep them, because we paid them regularly, provided them with benefits, and treated them well. I once interviewed eleven applicants for a new interpreter position. At least half had never been out of Bosnia, but all were fluent in English and superbly qualified. It was because of the skills and experience of our FSN staff that we were able to manage all the visitors.

I think it is safe to say that every locally employed staff member in the mission had a tragic story of suffering and hardship from the war. I had a driver who was just superb. He had a Croatian mother and Bosnian Muslim father, and he was recruited into the Bosnian army. He was seriously wounded three times during the war. Very often his unit was not paid except in cigarettes, and he lost so much weight that he was hardly recognizable from a photo he showed me. It also left him with an addiction to smoking.

Q: Was there a concern about young people leaving the country? I remember talking to my interpreter who said she could hardly wait to get out and get a job in Germany.

BAZALA: Many Bosnians from all sides of the war fled to Germany or other parts of Europe during the war. The old people had a hard time, because they lacked the education or the language skills needed to relocate easily. They had roots, some piece of property that made it hard for them to move unless it was destroyed during the war. But you're right. The younger people would seek outside work, especially if they had some education or skills. I was glad we were able to employ some at the embassy.

The mission did a lot through the UNHCR, USAID, and PRM to try to bring the refugees and displaced persons back to Bosnia and help them reclaim their property. When many started to come back, we were instrumental in helping them get their property back, reclaiming what was theirs, and reuniting families. So when you see people voting with their feet like that, then that's encouraging.

Q: Did you get inspected while you were there?

BAZALA: I left in August, and OIG inspected in October.

One of the major things that happened while I was in Bosnia was the Stability Pact Summit that occurred in the summer of 1999. I don't know if you've ever heard of it.

Q: The what?

BAZALA: The Stability Pact Summit was a major international conference that took place in Sarajevo on July 29-30, 1999, with sixty heads of state. I had only three weeks advance notice to prepare for our delegation including the president, secretary of state, and national security advisor, and to provide support to the summit organizers.

Q: Oh God.

BAZALA: It was quite an effort. The European Union was in charge with U.S. support and Bosnian participation, of course, and somehow we all pulled it off. The purpose of the summit was somewhat vague, and I believe the Bosnians thought it would be another donor conference that would bring in money for them.

Q: Where was the meeting?

BAZALA: In Sarajevo's Zetra ice arena, where Yugoslavia hosted the closing ceremony of the 1984 winter Olympics and where the ice skating competitions were held. It had been bombed to smithereens during the war. Only some of the basement area was intact, and it was used as temporary housing for NATO soldiers and also as a morgue during the war. Burials were in the former soccer field adjacent to the arena. Zetra was being rebuilt the whole time I was there with donations from the International Olympic Committee and others. I could see it from the upstairs window of my house, and I watched the progress. Just before the summit planning started, they had put on this beautiful copper roof. It was completely empty though, but the Bosnians were insistent that it should be the venue for the conference. In three weeks the summit planners brought in all the furniture, carpeting, communications equipment, catering, whatever was needed. And they hosted the conference in the ice arena.

Q: Did you have a problem getting Foreign Service officers to come help?

BAZALA: No, not really. The only problem was that the bombing of Yugoslavia and the whole Kosovo crisis happened in March that same year. This was another time when we were under an evacuation watch, by the way. U.S. aircraft from Aviano Air Force Base in Italy flew over Bosnia on their way to bomb Belgrade. I could literally look up and see our planes going overhead. We were all on alert for weeks. When the conflict started, some of our people in Bosnia were chewing at the bit to go to Kosovo where the action was. All of a sudden Bosnia wasn't cool anymore. It was all I could do to keep from too much hemorrhaging of personnel. One of the reasons the Stability Pact Summit came off was because the Bosnians wanted to bring attention back to Bosnia, so they were happy to have all the heads of state and other dignitaries come to Bosnia. They thought it was going to be a big donor pledging conference for Bosnia. That didn't really occur, but because they were hopeful about it, they made it happen.

Q: How about some of the personalities? Like was Peter Galbraith running around at the time you were there?

BAZALA: He was in Croatia. I never saw him in Bosnia.

Q: And Richard Holbrooke?

BAZALA: He came once during my second year. It was not a successful visit. He had not been there for two years, and by then he had moved on to other things. Tom Miller knew Holbrooke and invited him to come. He wanted Holbrooke to see the progress in Bosnia.

So Holbrooke did come, received an award from the Bosnians, and hobnobbed at a dinner we arranged, but not much was achieved otherwise. He and I didn't gel. He was very insulting to the FSNs I have to say. It was very unfortunate.

Q: What was that?

BAZALA: Ambassador Tom Miller, who had arrived just the week before in Sarajevo, asked him to speak to a gathering of the embassy staff and FSNs in the chancery garden, which I arranged. Instead of the usual niceties about how we all appreciate the mission staff's hard work and so forth, he started out by saying, "Here's your new ambassador. He's a hard worker. And if you don't match what he's doing, you know where the personnel office is," implying we could hire someone else to replace them. He suggested we all double our efforts, which led the USAID deputy director to whisper to Raz, "Well, that will only raise my time in the office to 120 hours a week." Here were all these people who had been working night and day because of Kosovo, because of the Stability Pact conference, and all the rest. Many worked extended hours seven days a week for long periods of time and gave up vacations and weekends. You could hear the murmurs in the crowd. It was just the wrong thing to say and the wrong moment. It didn't go over well.

Q: How did you find the Bosnians reacted to a woman with authority?

BAZALA: I didn't have any real problems. The head of the UN mission then was a woman, a former president of Finland. There were others. I had more problems initially in the embassy, because it was a very macho culture when I got there. The fellows would all go out on the terrace and smoke cigars together. So my arrival probably put a damper on the cigar smoking, gun-toting environment. The obvious negative vibes I got were from our military guys who were out at the SFOR base. One senior officer told me in no uncertain terms when I first arrived that he did not think it was appropriate to send a female to do my job. Then I found other military contacts I could work with, including this man's replacement. It's what I've been doing all my life. More women came to post on assignment, and several spouses joined their husbands. My counterpart at the British High Commission was a woman, and the political advisor [POLAD] to the U.S. commander at SFOR was a woman. So that issue wasn't by far the most serious one I had to deal with.

Q: What other issues were you dealing with?

BAZALA: I was caught up in several major events and projects right from day one. A list of issues demanding my attention during my first week in Sarajevo included:

- Preparing for Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's scheduled visit for the end of the month;
- A site visit and wreath laying on the anniversary of a tragic convoy accident on Igman Mountain where three U.S. diplomats were killed;
- A request to begin visa operations in Sarajevo;
- The Bosnian national elections scheduled for September;

- Paying calls on the Bosnian leaders, including one who refused to travel to the "other side" to meet with his counterparts;
- Rising tensions in Kosovo.

There were so many U.S. government players both in Bosnia and in Washington that we had a hard time just to keep up with what was going on. In addition to the usual State Department desk and the White House staff, State, the Defense Department, and the intelligence agencies all set up Bosnia working groups. Every other agency in Washington, it seemed, also had an interest—and money—at stake. The largest USAID mission in the world at the time was in Bosnia. NGOs, the department, and the international organizations were there to help refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes in Bosnia. Other mission activities included setting up, training, and equipping an integrated (Serb, Bosniak, Croat) police force for the country, creating a border and customs organization, supporting refugee returns, and many other important initiatives. All had to be done in coordination with SFOR and OHR.

We had to help Bosnia create an entire national financial and economic structure from scratch. The country had no banks, stock exchange, or credit institutions, for example. There were no ATMs, and credit cards could only be used at the Holiday Inn, which had an arrangement with a bank in Croatia to accept them. Cash was king. We had a million dollar bi-weekly payroll and vendors to pay. Through a special arrangement with a Turkish bank we obtained the Kmarks [Bosnian currency pegged to the German mark] in cash and transported them to the embassy to pay our bills.

Q: When did you leave Bosnia, and how did you feel about its future?

BAZALA: I left in August 2000. It has turned out more or less the way I thought it might. As long as the European community continued to be engaged, with the Office of the High Representative providing oversight to knock heads together and keep them moving forward, I thought Bosnia would proceed slowly and establish itself as a viable country. Bosnia has certain ambitions to become more a part of Europe, which is motivating them. At the same time all those tensions and problems and history from the war era are still there. The government is very unwieldy, but it would be very difficult to change the structure at this point. But they seem to have found ways to make things work, and I wish them luck.

Q: How did Bosnia react to the Kosovo crisis?

BAZALA: By the middle of February 1999, there were multiple and growing indications that the Kosovo situation was building up to a crisis for the second time. This time we were much better positioned to respond effectively. I had carefully cultivated better relations with SFOR, and I was gratified when I began to receive heads-up calls from the top brass to inform me that their preparations would include evacuation contingencies for civilians. We stepped up our internal emergency planning—revising warden notices, updating personnel rosters, exercising notification processes, et cetera. I was in touch with Belgrade, which was expecting a new drawdown authorization. For Bosnia, we

focused on where the danger points could be, especially in Republika Srpska. As my SFOR contact said, the real threat was the "local crazies" who were likely to focus on soft targets in certain localities where they were known to operate and where there had been incidents in the past.

Warnings went out by the third week in February, and this time the international community in Bosnia was fully on board with the need for planning and cooperation in the event of violence in Bosnia. Some embassies asked for increased local guard protection, pulled non-essential staff out of the RS, and restricted movements in Bosnia including non-duty travel to the RS. In Kosovo, international civilian and military groups began pulling out of the province in anticipation of military action. We held several meetings of the embassy's emergency action committee, continued to monitor local Bosnian news, and maintained close contacts with local authorities and the international community. I was particularly worried that our small post in Banja Luka in the capital of the RS could be a focal point for any anti-NATO or anti-American demonstrations. Only one American officer, Gabe Escobar, was there with a small local staff and guards. As later events proved, this was a well-founded concern.

In the meantime, a frantic effort to negotiate a resolution to the crisis was taking place in Rambouillet, France. NATO drafted a proposed peace agreement between Yugoslavia and a delegation representing the ethnic-Albanian majority population of Kosovo. In the end, Yugoslavia refused to accept it, saying it contained provisions for Kosovo's autonomy that went too far. The Serbs viewed it as a de facto secession of Kosovo from Serbia, and they also objected to any international role in the governance of Kosovo. The Albanians for their part were unwilling to accept a solution that would retain Kosovo as part of Serbia. In the end the Kosovars signed, but the Yugoslavs did not.

Q: What followed was NATO'S bombing campaign and the fallout in Bosnia?

BAZALA: As soon as the bombing campaign started on March 24, we received instructions from Washington to do everything we could to keep a lid on reactions in Bosnia. At first it was relatively quiet, but then we began to hear of isolated incidents: an attack on a police station, a vehicle destroyed, two grenades thrown, a letter bomb.

The quiet was shattered by violence directed at the international community. Demonstrators attacked the OHR office, the UNHCR and World Bank offices, and the British, German, and American offices in Banja Luka. Our branch office was in a large two-story villa with a garage and small yard on a busy street. One of our guards was caught outside the premises wall and badly beaten. With the help of SFOR, the office vehicles were moved to an SFOR base, but all the windows in the branch office building were knocked out, even those with shatter resistant film, and the anti-forced entry door was damaged, but held. Some time later I traveled to Banja Luka to inspect the damage, and it was worse than initially described. The intruders gained access from the roof through unprotected second story windows. They trashed and looted the premises, but did not get hold of anything of a confidential nature. The police could not or would not contain the demonstrators. Fortunately, no one else was hurt because it was after duty

hours. The next day I was in active discussions with Washington about further evacuation from the RS.

Q: Talk about refugees fleeing to Bosnia from Yugoslavia

BAZALA: When the war over Kosovo started in March 1999, Bosnia found itself the recipient of refugee flows. Over one million people fled Kosovo and Montenegro, most to neighboring countries during the seventy-eight days of war. In addition, some Serbs from Yugoslavia were moving temporarily to the RS. By the middle of April, UNHCR told us there were an estimated sixty-three thousand refugees from the former Yugoslavia. The RS estimated ten thousand Serbs from Serbia were there. Most were fleeing the NATO bombing and staying with relatives. UNHCR worked with municipalities to identify sites for camps. Buses and private cars brought about one thousand refugees a day across the border until the Yugoslav authorities stopped young men of military age, who were avoiding a mobilization order, from crossing, and then the numbers dropped. UNHCR increased its contingency planning figure to one hundred thousand. About half of the refugees returned home within three weeks of the cessation of hostilities, but the international community had its hands full assisting with the returns and helping those Kosovars remaining in camps. International organizations and NGOs stationed in Bosnia to help with the assistance program for Bosnian returnees and displaced persons pitched in to help.

Q: Was there a terrorist threat from within Bosnia?

BAZALA: A group of "*mujahideen*" or presumed Muslim radicals lived near Zenica, a town not too far from Sarajevo. They were the source of concern to the embassy. Most were from various Middle Eastern and North African countries who came during the war in order to fight alongside the Bosniaks. They stayed on, and most married Bosnian women and settled down. Nevertheless, we viewed them as a potential threat. Osama bin Laden was mentioned in connection with them, and we knew that there was financial backing from the Saudis and other sources. Reportedly some of the 9/11 hijackers fought in Bosnia before moving to Afghanistan to train with al Qaeda. Money to build mosques and Islamic schools flowed into Bosnia and were visible symbols of financial support from the Middle East.

On several occasions the embassy and high-level visitors, including the secretary of state, raised concerns about the *mujahideen* with the Bosnian leadership. We pushed the Bosnians to deport them to their home countries or anywhere else that would take them. The problem for the Bosnians was that these immigrants, having married Bosnian women, were now Bosnian citizens who could not easily be deported. Despite some success in individual cases, this group continued to worry us because of its potential to be the nucleus of terrorist activity in the Balkans, which could further destabilize the region.

Q: You mentioned Serb communities in Bosnia?

BAZALA: The most difficult group in Bosnia to deal with was the Serb population in the RS. They were not happy to be part of Bosnia and looked forward to the day they could reunite in a greater Serbia. Serb hardliners engaged in harassment and violence. War criminals such as the former RS President Radovan Karadzic and the former RS Army Chief of Staff General Ratko Mladic moved freely back and forth across the border with Yugoslavia and had the protection of the Yugoslav government and many individual supporters. For years SFOR sought to arrest them and their compatriots, but these key figures continued to elude them. Once the political climate shifted in Serbia years later because of its desire to become part of the European community, both Karadzic and Mladic were handed over to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Q: In these unstable conditions was there trafficking in persons?

BAZALA: Today trafficking in persons [TIP] is a major foreign policy and humanitarian concern. Illegal economic migration (think coyotes smuggling Mexicans across the U.S. border) has long been a recognized problem, but sex trafficking was under the radar until a few years ago. There is now a separate organizational unit in the department to assess each country's efforts to contain TIP and to encourage progress toward eliminating this scourge.

The problem surfaced in Bosnia in 2000 when a whistleblower reported that a group of American contractors were patronizing establishments where girls from Moldova and other countries were held and forced into prostitution. Local traffickers recruited the girls with promises of legitimate jobs and then took their passports and held them captive, forcing them to work in bars as prostitutes. SFOR first brought the situation to our attention but said that SFOR did not have the authority to detain or arrest the contractors or force them to remain in Bosnia to be prosecuted. Some in the local UN office spoke out about this criminal activity, but that did little to stop it.

There were efforts to rescue the girls and return them to their countries. The embassy assisted the International Organization on Migration in finding the funds to step in with offers of shelter and legal assistance and pay for their return home. The fact that some of the "clients" were Americans and that they were in Bosnia on a contract with the U.S. government was deeply embarrassing. The contractor acted quickly to send the employees home. There were no criminal charges that could be brought in the U.S., but six of the seven directly involved were fired and the other resigned.

Little was done about the Bosnian traffickers or other foreign nationals involved, probably because many, including the Bosnian police and employees of some of the NGOs and IOs, were also culpable. With a few exceptions, no one seemed to want to get involved then. This incident, however, ultimately was a catalyst for a worldwide movement to combat trafficking in all its forms. It was also the basis for a 2010 film entitled *The Whistleblower* which depicts a gruesome story of rape and torture in Bosnia.

Q: Did you find yourself explaining the situation in Bosnia to people back in Washington?

BAZALA: Well, people don't know what to ask. They saw all the pictures on TV during the war period, and the first reaction was that it must have been very dangerous to be there. So you have to try to explain, "Well, you know, they're not shooting at each other anymore, and they're trying to build a country and we're trying to help them." But the Kosovo crisis had taken over by the end of my tour. That was the latest crisis *du jour*, as it were. So that was where the focus was. The attention span in the U.S. is pretty short.

Q: Oh yes.

BAZALA: When it's no longer on the news, people tend to think, "Well, that's taken care of," and they don't need to worry about it anymore. They go on to the next crisis. So Kosovo was it at that time. We saw a lot of progress in Bosnia though. The embassy was on much more normal footing when I left Sarajevo, whereas when I got there it was very much on a war crisis footing. I oversaw that transition, and it was satisfying to be part of it.

Q: Have you had any sort of contact with Bosnian matters since you left?

BAZALA: After Bosnia and a year in the Senior Seminar, I went to PRM [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration], where I became office director for Europe and Latin America. As office director for Europe, I was very much involved with Bosnian refugee issues, because that's the office that provides funds to UNHCR and the NGOs and other organizations that help people either when fleeing or returning home. We put a good bit of money into helping the Bosnian refugees when I was in PRM.

Between Bosnia and PRM I was in the forty-third Senior Seminar.

Q: Was that almost the last Senior Seminar?

BAZALA: I think there were two more after that.

Q: How'd you find the Senior Seminar?

BAZALA: I loved it. I asked for it; that's what I wanted. I was promoted to the Senior Foreign Service while I was in Sarajevo, and I was offered another DCM assignment. I was also approached about an ambassadorship. But I was really burned out, and I felt like I needed recharging. So for a lot of reasons, including personal reasons, the best decision for me was to return to the U.S. The Senior Seminar seemed like a natural choice. And it was. It took me about two months to decompress from all that pressure and the hard work I put in in Bosnia.

Q: What significant trips did you take in your seminar year?

BAZALA: We had several. We organized ourselves, and we went to the four corners of the United States. In addition to the seventeen senior State Department officers, we had a

representative each from the CIA, Commerce, NSA, and USAID. Military officers also participated, one from each service.

The air force sent the pilot commander of the USAF fighter squadron that was flying missions over Yugoslavia out of Aviano Air Force Base in Italy during the Kosovo war. Much to his chagrin and concern for his future career, he was shot down by a surface-to-air missile while flying a mission over Belgrade. He spent a tense few hours evading capture before being rescued. Colonel Dave Goldfein was seated next to me at our initial seminar orientation, and needless to say, we discovered we had a lot to talk about. During the year, he arranged for the seminar group to visit an air force base in Florida where the search and rescue team that helicoptered into Serbia to rescue him was stationed. He treated them and us to beer and burgers, and there was much celebrating and storytelling. Despite his fears for his career, he is now a three star general.

The military seminar participants had resources they could draw on to support our visits to various bases. We went to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, and several of us went up in an AWACS [airborne warning and control system] aircraft to see how they operated. On another trip we went to Alaska and flew to Prudhoe Bay to see the northern end of the oil pipeline. At that time the question of whether the oil companies were going to get permission to drill for oil in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge was a very hot issue. We had briefings about oil drilling and environmental issues and saw the pipeline operation. Then we flew back along the pipeline all the way down to Valdez, its southern terminal. Another time we flew out to an aircraft carrier off the California coast at San Diego, spent the night on board, and watched flight operations at night. Everywhere we went, especially if it was a military trip, we got a PowerPoint briefing and a guided tour and maybe some special experience. At Fort Bragg we jumped off a platform with a zip line to practice parachuting. We spent three days on farms in Indiana, traveled the Natchez Trace in Mississippi, observed the stock market in New York, and visited the Supreme Court and Capitol Hill.

The whole point of the Senior Seminar was to reacquaint us with our own country and what were the major issues of the time. We went down to Key West and rode with the Coast Guard when they were tracking drug runners coming in from the Caribbean. We went to Chicago and had coffee with Oprah Winfrey. I arranged a trip to a juvenile court here in Fairfax County. We had a lot of reading to do and papers to write. My class still gets together for reunions, even though it's been thirteen years.

Q: I'm a graduate of the seventeenth Senior Seminar and I certainly appreciated it.

BAZALA: I did, too, not only for the friends I met and the things I learned, but just the opportunities that we might not ever have. When you spend so much time overseas, you can lose touch. We had a lecture about the future of online college education, for example, and the possibility to take online college courses. I thought then, "Wow, this is really futuristic stuff." Well, it's here now. Not only that, my nine-year-old grandson takes online math classes at home.

Q: Where did you go from the Senior Seminar?

BAZALA: I went to the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration as office director for Europe and Latin America. We had a couple of big issues there. One, of course, was the whole Bosnian refugee return issue. About a million people had come back to Bosnia and needed assistance. That was fairly well in hand because the NGOs and UNHCR were already established there. They had set up to deal with the exodus, and now they were helping the returnees.

The other major refugee problem, you may recall, was a large outflow of Haitian boat migrants in the early 1990s who ended up in Guantanamo, Cuba. A camp was built at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo to house Haitians, Cubans, and others caught trying to get to the U.S. by boat. Most were sent back to their home countries as they were deemed economic migrants and not true refugees, but they had a stay in Guantanamo first for processing. At the time I visited there were not very many boat people in residence, but there was always a concern that there could be another migration crisis. Since this was part of my PRM portfolio, I flew down to Guantanamo and visited this camp. At that time we were trying to place those who could not be returned to their home countries somewhere else in Latin America. I witnessed one group boarding a plane for El Salvador. There were a couple of organizations in Guantanamo to provide assistance to the boat people such as the ICRC.

This was just about the time the military was setting Guantanamo up to receive war prisoners from Afghanistan and Iraq. Initially they took over just a part of the refugee camp, but the question arose as to what would happen if there should be another major migrant influx of Haitians or others. What would they do? I talked with SOUTHCOM [United States Southern Command] in Miami about it, but I don't think they had any really good ideas. Nobody knew then how many of those who were captured during the Iraq/Afghanistan wars would end up in Guantanamo.

Q: What do you do about Haiti? It's practically not a nation. It's just a disorganized disaster.

BAZALA: What they were trying to do was keep the Haitians from leaving Haiti, period. I'm not really sure what programs were started, but that was key—to keep them in Haiti and prevent them from leaving, if they could. That's one reason there was such a major humanitarian effort in Haiti even before the earthquake. We wanted people to believe they were better off staying where they were than trying to risk crossing the Caribbean in unseaworthy boats.

Another PRM program was in Colombia. I went to Bogotá where we were financing some programs near the capitol to feed internally displaced persons [IDPs]. I visited colonies of IDPs just outside the capitol. Most of Colombia was very dangerous then because of the FARC [*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*—Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] activities in the countryside. My job was to make sure that U.S. government money was well spent, that it was spent for the purposes for which we

gave it. If the NGOs and others were asking for more money, it was necessary to determine whether or not they really needed it and what other issues were involved. It could get complicated.

I also had a trip to Russia to visit camps for Chechens who were fleeing the violence in Chechnya into the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. The refugee coordinator resident in Moscow and I flew to Ingushetia accompanied by a security officer from the embassy. We spent a couple of days conferring with the NGOs that were involved with health care and food assistance for the Chechens. We spoke with Chechens in the camps, and they were very welcoming. When we tried to board the plane to return to Moscow, however, the Russians (probably the FSB [Federal Security Service]) held us up for quite a while examining our passports. We never found out why there was a delay, but we did finally make it on board.

Bosnia's refugee crisis was winding down, and these other situations were in good hands. At the same time there was a brewing African crisis and one also the Middle East. So everybody's attention refocused. Since I felt like I had done what I set out to do in PRM, and the programs I was responsible for were managed as well as could be expected then, I was ready to move on.

I went to one of the ethics briefings that you have to go to every year. I happened to sit down next to Hal Fuller, an officer I knew who was with OIG, and had been with OIG when I had a tour there in 1992. I was on an inspection team with him. He asked me what I was doing, and I asked him what he was doing. I told him that I was looking to leave PRM because I didn't feel that I had much more to contribute there. He said he had a job I might be interested in. So one thing led to another, and I started with OIG in January of 2003 as deputy assistant inspector general for inspections [DAIG].

Q: What was the situation in OIG then?

BAZALA: When I arrived, Clark Kent Ervin was the inspector general, and Colin Powell was the secretary. Powell really believed in inspections. He came from a military background, and as you know, it is part of military culture to do inspections. The preceding inspector general, Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers, had been an auditor, and under her, the functions of the office of inspections diminished to the point that OIG was doing very few regular inspections, perhaps two a cycle which was far fewer than the requirement to inspect every post and every department entity every five years. OIG had to seek a waiver of this requirement from Congress each year.

My new boss was Bob Peterson. He was a Civil Service employee who had just been promoted to assistant inspector general for inspections [AIG], a new senior executive service position that was previously an FSO position. Bob had had the job that I stepped into as DAIG, but since he moved up, somebody had to replace him, and the front office felt that it needed to be a Foreign Service officer. The DAIG position was converted to Foreign Service, and I got the job. I had done inspections before so that was a major

factor in my favor. When I started, Bob said to me, "Okay, you remember how we used to do things (when I was there the first time)?"

I said, "Oh yes, of course."

He said, "Put it back together. We're going to go back to the way we did it before, with some improvements."

The first thing I had to do was get myself physically relocated to the floor where most of the inspection staff was. The previous IG's idea of breaking up the stove piping she found in OIG was to make everybody draw numbers in a lottery for an office or cube. There were three floors in State Annex 39 (our offices in Rosslyn). The result was that auditors and inspectors and others, including supervisors, were scattered all over. Interns got corner offices, and some senior staff had small cubes. This did nothing for morale or organizational efficiency. I found myself on the seventh floor, but most of the inspection staff was on the ninth floor. After about four months, I managed to move to the ninth floor to a corner office.

With Bob's help I was able to revitalize the inspection program and add a few more bells and whistles. This recreation of a viable inspection operation was my big accomplishment, I think. That was in early 2003. Ervin left very soon after I arrived, and then we had a series of acting IGs, one of whom was Ambassador Anne Patterson. She was very popular. Then in 2005 a political appointee, Howard Krongard, became the IG. Have you heard about Howard? He was very unpopular both with OIG and the department and developed a reputation as inflexible and a loose cannon. Some political appointees can be educated and they're willing to learn. Yes, they're going to make changes, and yes, they have ideas, and that's fine. But in the long run, after they've been there a while, they catch on to how we do business and we all find a happy medium. Well, this guy didn't learn *anything*. It just was very difficult and demoralizing. One of my jobs was recruiting new inspectors. I had a lot of trouble because of him. Nobody wanted to work for him.

Q: What were the changes you were dealing with?

BAZALA: One big change between the first time I was in OIG and the second time was the merger with USIA. OIG absorbed USIA's inspection responsibilities and personnel. OIG also became the inspector general for the BBG [Broadcasting Board of Governors]. So in addition to the normal inspection of executive direction, political, economic, consular, and management functions, we added public diplomacy.

A little later we added security inspections, because the security inspectors were going out separately, and the embassies were complaining about being inspected multiple times. So the security inspectors joined the regular inspection teams. Then IT inspectors were needed. Back in the old days when there were just cable traffic and telephones, communications was part of the admin inspectors' portfolio. Now with the internet and cyber security we had to have IT inspectors who were specialists because the rest of us

didn't know enough about advanced communications. With these additions the teams got bigger. In the old days there were maybe six or seven people on a team; now we often had ten or more. These were bigger teams, but at least we could tell the embassies that OIG was only coming out once, so they didn't have to put up with a series of inspections. Also, there are certain synergies and advantages in having everybody work together as a team to do an inspection.

Q: Well, did the same playbook work today that worked ten years before?

BAZALA: A lot of things were very similar. I found some old documents in a safe that indicated that we had been inspecting embassies and consulates for more than a hundred years. I read some of the old reports, and the focus wasn't a lot different from what we are doing now. We look at the same things. Is government money being well spent? Are people following correct procedures? Does somebody have his hand in the till? Is the ambassador an effective leader? Is the bilateral relationship with the host government good? The basic things were there.

What we've tried to do in recent years is modernize the way we do business. When I started as an inspector, it was almost all paper. We had to cart briefcases of documents and background material and inspection manuals with us as excess baggage. Later we put this stuff on CDs, and now we have SharePoint. So the inspectors take very little with them, because they can usually get access to OIG's SharePoint site at the posts. We do as much as we can electronically now.

Q: Were your personnel getting more and more professional?

BAZALA: Yes. We have placed emphasis on training. Most of the Foreign Service inspectors we recruit are on their last tour, or we get retirees who come in as WAEs [when actually employed], like I am. So it is necessary to update their skill sets, because things change. I just stopped working, and I won't go back until next year. Well things move on, there are new ways of doing things, new technologies and so on. So every time I go back I have to retrain to catch up and review the latest consular issues and regulations. I actually went back and audited the basic consular course at one point just so I would know what they're teaching the new officers. As a consular officer, I already know the basics, but there are constant changes, so we all try to keep our knowledge fresh.

Q: What types of officers are you looking for to be inspectors?

BAZALA: I did a lot of recruiting as DAIG. First of all, we want team players. You send a group out to be the inspection team and do the inspection, and they have to work together for a common purpose. We have ethical standards to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of favoritism or bias. You can't send somebody on an inspection, for example, if that person has or has had a close relationship with the ambassador or anyone you are directly inspecting. Inspections can be very stressful. We send people into war

zones or to very difficult environments in some parts of the world. So people need to be capable of working together under those conditions.

Inspectors also have to have the right skill sets. If we're looking for a consular inspector, that person has to have had that experience and seniority to have credibility. We would not take anyone from the Foreign Service less than an FS-1, and most were senior Foreign Service officers. All team leaders are ambassadors, or had had that title at one point, whether they were active duty or retired. You have to have an ambassador talking to an ambassador. If you don't have that, it could be very difficult to get buy-in to the inspection findings and recommendations, especially if the inspectors have to be critical. Sometimes our observations can be hard to take, and some of these people have big egos.

Q: Did you sense a difference in the outlook of the people you were dealing with as DAIG from your earlier years?

BAZALA: You mean attitude toward OIG?

Q: Yes.

BAZALA: I think everybody understands what we do. And most people appreciate it and view it as an opportunity to get some help from outsiders. Much of what we do is not written down in a report; it's counseling and management consulting. This can be particularly valuable to a new career ambassador or a political appointee ambassador. Otherwise who does he or she go to with a problem? They are stuck out there in God knows where. Our pre-inspection surveys enable us to provide feedback to post leadership relative to the average scores of other missions' leaders about their strengths and weaknesses in areas such as morale, communication, ethics, et cetera. These can be very eye-opening and provide the basis for a discussion of performance.

It's helpful to have someone come to post who has had experience, and the ambassador says, "Look, I've got this problem. I don't know how to deal with it." It gives him or her an opportunity to vent or seek advice or what have you. I used to do a lot of counseling with the entry level officers who were mostly in the consular section. Many were on their first assignment, and maybe they had run into a problem and had no idea if it was typical or unique to the post or how to deal with it. They had learned enough so they were all interested in the next assignment, their career, tenure, and so forth. So I did a lot of giving advice. If we found some egregious wrong, for example, some supervisor had it in for an officer and wrote a really negative EER [employee evaluation report]—they're rare, but they do exist—and if the team determined it was not deserved, we have the option to write a corrective evaluation, which then goes into the performance file.

Q: Absolutely.

BAZALA: We no longer do it, but we routinely used to write inspector evaluation reports [IER] on the ambassadors, DCMs, and principal officers. These can make or break careers, because the promotion boards have told us that they really value them because

they feel they're more honest than the ones that they see from the supervisors. In the last year, however, we stopped writing IERs on post leaders. Our new IG [inspector general] has decided not to. In my opinion that's really unfortunate.

Q: Why not do the IERs?

BAZALA: There's been a longstanding problem with the grievance board. They don't like it that we go out to post and in the space of two weeks, we make a determination about an ambassador's performance and then put it in writing. An IER, like the inspection report itself, doesn't always document a whole year of achievements or problems; it's a snapshot in time of what the team found during the inspection. Any time someone got a negative IER they would almost always grieve it, and if it gets to the grievance board they usually prevail, almost a 100 percent of the time. On the flip side, a good IER could boost a career. Ambassadors, DCMs, and principal officers who were confident of their successes welcomed the IER because they thought it would make them stand out in the performance review process.

But the IER got to be problematic. And so the new inspector general decided to stop doing IERs routinely. I presume it is still possible to do a corrective IER. It's really unfortunate because this was a big stick that we carried, but we were very careful with it. We followed the standard evaluation procedures as much as possible. A panel of three ambassador inspectors reviewed each one.

Q: It's a big stick, but it can save people, too.

BAZALA: Absolutely, and it has. It cuts both ways.

We would also write IERs on the political appointees. The general view was, "Well, what good does that do? They don't go before promotion boards." But the IERs were sent to the White House where they might have been ignored, but sometimes we know they affected whether a person got a second ambassadorship or another appointed position in the government. At least it was on file to inform whoever in the White House was making personnel decisions. So it had some value in that respect.

Q. What other changes are happening?

BAZALA: The report is becoming much more structured. We had more leeway in the past. The reports have always had to follow a certain format, but you could work within it to fit the circumstances of the inspection. To give you an example of recent changes, I just finished an inspection that required a new way of doing things. We had to go through every paragraph, every sentence to document it with an observation, analysis, memorandum of conversation, survey results, or other evidence. You can do it on the computer, but you have to cross-reference everything. We did this kind of referencing before but only for formal recommendations. Now every sentence in the report has to have an annotation. This is an auditing way of doing things, not traditional inspection

methodology. We were all struggling trying to learn a new way of working, and it takes a lot of extra time.

But most people like inspection work. Many extend their OIG assignments, and that tells me a lot. When people extend, you know that at least they're not unhappy. Most new inspectors are on their last tour as a full-time employee. Then they retire and often come back as WAEs. That's really good, because they have been trained and they had some experience. It gives OIG flexibility, because we call them in only when they are needed. We have had quite a few WAEs on the roster, including me. That's what I've been doing since 2006.

Q: Well, when you did inspections did you sense a new breed of young FSOs coming in?

BAZALA: Absolutely.

Q: How did they differ, would you say?

BAZALA: It's a different generation. They have different expectations. They're bright, well educated, eager, extremely ambitious, and a lot of them are egotistical.

Q: Well, we're noticing this with the interns we get here.

BAZALA: Really?

Q: I mean they're very good at going into our files and coming up with examples.

BAZALA: But they all think they can be an ambassador tomorrow. It's just a different expectation. When they join the FS, they don't expect that it's going to be a career, which is different from my generation of officers. They come in and think, "Well, I'll do this for a tour or two and then I'll move on."

Q: You know, I think that's the biggest trap. I've seen so many people who've said this. But then they have a job that's so much better than almost anything else they can have.

BAZALA: Their colleagues tell them that they should never stay in a job more than five years. So they come in with that in their minds. Or they're not sure they'll like it, and I can understand that. It's not for everybody. But you really do get a different outlook from the entry-level officers. They want what they're entitled to. For example, they're entitled to overtime, and they want their overtime. Well, back in the good old days we worked whatever hours we had to work. Now, if the entry level officers have to attend a Fourth of July reception, they want overtime for that, and sometimes they refuse to attend, even though it's understood that a formal representational event like that is pretty much compulsory. We wouldn't have thought of refusing to attend or asking for extra pay for the overtime hours. As commissioned officers, we were on duty as needed. Occasionally inspectors have to counsel post leadership about entry level officer [ELO] overtime, and

we get a lot of resentment over it because it is not the way they did it in the "good old days."

I always support the ELOs' request for overtime because it is in the regulations, and they are entitled to it. At the same time I tell the younger officers, "Look, there are two words in Foreign Service. There's foreign, which means you're expected to serve overseas. No, you can't have a FS career that's only in Washington. And service. You're out there to serve the needs of the American people; whatever your position is, that's your job. And you can be on duty twenty-four hours a day whether you realize it or not." They just don't have that in their heads, and sometimes they run afoul of some older supervisors who expect the new officers to be like they were. And they're not. So there can be these cultural differences that crop up from time to time. And I find myself in the middle sometimes. I have to explain to the older officers, "Yes, they are entitled to overtime. Just live with it, because this is part of the way they're doing things nowadays."

Q: What about danger? I think that the Foreign Service officer of today has a job that is much more dangerous than it used to be.

BAZALA: I would agree with you. An indicator is the fact that there are a lot more unaccompanied posts. The department is sending people without their families to places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and a number of other places, and theoretically everybody is a volunteer for those assignments. HR has threatened directed assignments to fill these positions, but I don't know of any case where they have actually done it. But they have made it real clear that if you want a career and you want to get promoted, you need to volunteer for a job in one of these places. That means there are many family separations, and they are a serious hardship and stressful on relationships. And people are killed in the line of duty. There was that young lady who was killed in Afghanistan not too long ago.

So it is a different world today. In selecting new officers I think the department is looking for more people who are operationally oriented, who want to get things done, as opposed to the intellectual who sits back and analyzes the political issues of the day. So there is a different mindset. But I will say I am tremendously impressed with the new officers, their backgrounds, their experiences, sharp as tacks, a lot of them. We're very lucky that people continue to seek out the Foreign Service. It's not for everybody, but when you get somebody that is a good fit, it's great. We do very well, generally speaking.

Q: Are you still doing inspections now?

BAZALA: Yes, I'm still a WAE. I retired in December of 2006. OIG was my last active duty assignment. I was appointed as a WAE in March 2007. WAEs are limited in the amount of salary they can earn in a year and the number of work hours in a calendar year. In my case I reach the salary cap first, so that's what I have to watch. It usually means I can only do one inspection a year. Some people can do more. When I first became a WAE, I was brought back to do my old job as DAIG for inspections because there was a gap until my successor arrived. Then I started doing inspections. The whole time I was the deputy assistant inspector general, I traveled only once. I was running the show,

making team assignments, keeping in communication with everybody, editing reports, making sure that the office was running well, and working on procedures and budgets. It was frustrating listening to the returning teams tell about their experiences and knowing I was office-bound.

Q: One reason you're in the inspection business is to travel.

BAZALA: Yes. My one trip in the three and a half years I was DAIG was to the Sinai and Rome to visit the Multinational Force and Observers [MLO] mission and headquarters. We had a team inspecting the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the time, and somehow this piece of it had not been included in that inspection or any other. So I went with one other inspector. We traveled to where the MLO is operating between Egypt and Israel out in the desert. Their mission is to monitor the 1978 Camp David Accords and keep the peace. Since it was Ramadan, the van driver we hired in Cairo had not eaten, and he was falling asleep the whole time. I thought we were going to end up stuck in the sand out there in the desert. We went from there to Rome where the headquarters of the MLO was located.

As a WAE I inspected several offices in HR, but that didn't involve travel. Later I inspected Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, and then Kosovo, Macedonia, and Albania. Albania was particularly interesting to me because when I was in Yugoslavia, it was completely closed; nobody could go to Albania. Now, of course, we have an embassy in Tirana. I was part of a very large inspection team to India, which now has five posts. I did what we call a compliance follow-up review in Germany. Sometimes we go back after an inspection six months or a year later and see if the post is complying with the recommendations. Last year I was in Brazil. So I have been traveling, but I also participated in domestic reviews of CA's Overseas Citizens Services, Executive Office, and Visa Office.

Q: When the inspectors make certain recommendations a post can say, "Yes, we did so and so," but they really didn't do a thing but shuffle the chairs around or something. Is there more of an attempt now to go back to see how much they really have done to make the changes?

BAZALA: You're talking about the compliance process. When we make a formal recommendation, we designate an action office (the embassy or a bureau in the department) and they have to reply to us and tell us what they did to comply with the recommendation. If we agree that their response is going to solve the problem, we say okay, that recommendation is closed. If we don't agree or more needs to be done, there can be a back and forth dialogue until we agree it is resolved. If worse comes to worse, an unresolved recommendation can go up to the under secretary for management. But that's very rare. Sometimes they say, "We're working on it and we'll get back to you when we finish," and we'll say okay, but give us another report of your progress in three months. Sometimes the issues are so important or we're not real confident that they're going to follow through, we will do an actual trip back to the post and check. A compliance team will go through each recommendation and make sure they've done it as agreed. We

haven't done enough of those because of past budget problems. But we do it enough so that people know that we may come back. My trip to Germany was a compliance inspection.

Q: I would think the differences, particularly administrative demands, between a Germany and a Nigeria, for example, would be in quality miles apart.

BAZALA: Every embassy is different, that's true. We check certain basic things, and the team size varies according to the size and scope of the mission. You have to inspect all the constituent posts. There are several in Germany, and that meant a lot of traveling by train around Germany to check on all these things. We tailor each inspection team to the issues and the size. If a post has a huge assistance mission or multiple agencies or a focus on a particular issue (security, trade, and refugee issues come to mind), you make sure that you've got somebody who's got that kind of background on the team. When we went to Brazil, we had four consular officers on the team because Brazil has one of the largest consular operations in the world. São Paulo is the largest nonimmigrant visa issuing post in the world. So you can imagine, we had to have plenty of help there.

There was a very large group of consular officers in Brazil, including some hired under a new hiring program that limited them to do just visa adjudications. It's called limited non-career appointment or LNA. All seventeen members of the inspection team traveled to Brasilia, and then we had sub-teams visit Rio, São Paulo, and Salvador de Bahia.

Brazil's consular operations had been on the front burner at the time because a huge visa application backlog had built up, and it eventually became a difficult political and bi-lateral problem. This prompted President Obama to issue an executive order to speed up the process so applicants in Brazil would not have to wait six months to get an interview. CA had to throw a lot of resources down there to enable the mission to catch up. They did it, too. It was really quite remarkable. CA has also agreed to provide funds to build and staff two new consulates to handle the visa demand, since the existing consulates are bursting at the seams. There is a similar visa demand problem in China, but no new consulates are likely.

Q: How did you find the staff in China? Now that we've had firm relations for more than twenty years I would think the staffing would be pretty good there.

BAZALA: I don't know exactly, I haven't been there. I think they do okay as far as I can tell. The real problem is they're expecting a huge increase in visa applicants out of China in the next few years. The predictions are pretty startling, and we don't have the physical capacity to handle it. This could be a big crisis. My most recent inspection was the visa office in CA. China's future visa demand is an issue that is really beginning to seize CA's attention. People in the United States are interested in creating jobs and expanding tourist opportunities because both Brazilians and Chinese spend quite a bit of money when they visit. Therefore the tourist industry wants as many visas as possible issued. So you have that kind of pressure. At the same time there is the countervailing pressure of preventing terrorists or other undesirables from entering the U.S. So every applicant (with some

limited exceptions) has to be interviewed, and everybody has to be checked through the databases.

CA has some real problems with their systems. OIG has delved into all that as well. It is a good thing that Consular Affairs is well funded. Otherwise CA could not hire the people to staff the existing consulates or provide the funds to build new consulates such as the one planned for Porto Alegre.

There is another issue on the horizon and that is the prospect of immigration reform. Although most people think it is primarily a Department of Homeland Security issue, it would have a huge effect on what CA does.

Q: Well then, so what are you going to be doing now?

BAZALA: I won't be working for at least the next six months, so I will spend time at our vacation house in South Carolina. My whole family's coming for vacation—kids and grandkids. Right after Labor Day, Raz and I are going to China for a river cruise. Since this is personal travel, the good news is that when I get off the plane, I don't have to go to work. (laughs) We can just be tourists. Raz and I have never been to China, so this was a bucket list item.

Q: What river are you going down?

BAZALA: The Yangtze. We start in Shanghai and fly to Wuhan where we get the boat. There are three internal flights. We did a river cruise in Russia from St. Petersburg to Moscow. But there you get on the boat in St. Petersburg and stay on the boat until Moscow—no internal flights. That's really nice because you unpack one time.

Q: How long did the St. Petersburg–Moscow trip last?

BAZALA: Almost two weeks. I'm glad we went then and not now with everything that's going on in Russia.

Q: Yes, we're going through a very bad patch.

BAZALA: I agree. I don't know what's going to happen.

Q: When you get the transcript for editing, please feel free to flesh out any areas we touched on, if you can.

BAZALA: It's been interesting. You have asked me some questions that made me think of things from a different perspective.

Q: We're trying to make this as valuable to people who are going back to it to understand what the issues have been over time, but also what some of the solutions were or what didn't work and what did work and that sort of thing.

BAZALA: I think people often don't appreciate the circumstances of the particular time, because they did not experience it.

Q: Absolutely.

BAZALA: I said to somebody the other day, "Well, you know, making a phone call from India was really difficult in 1976." And the response was, "Couldn't you use the internet?" And I said, (laughs) "No, there was no internet then." So people don't realize the situations we faced in those days, or what was or was not possible.

Q: Okay. Sylvia, it's been fun. I've really enjoyed this.

BAZALA: I've enjoyed it too. I appreciate the opportunity.

End of interview