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

AMBASSADOR AVIS THAYER BOHLEN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Bohlen.]

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with Ambassador Avis Bohlen . Today is the 28th of February, 2003. This interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Avis, could you tell me when and where you were born, and then let's talk a bit about your family.

BOHLEN: I was born on April 20, 1940, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. I was born there because my father was stationed in the Embassy in Tokyo at that time, and dependants were not permitted for obvious reasons at that particular moment. So my mother went to stay with her mother who lived near Philadelphia, and I was born in the Bryn Mawr Hospital. I lived there until I was about two years old.

Q: Your first name, Avis, what's its origin.?

BOHLEN: It was my mother's name. In her case it was a family name. She was the youngest of six children, and I think her parents were tired of calling them Mary and Elizabeth and conventional names, so they went back in the family tree, and they found the name Avis. And she named me Avis as well.

Q: Your father was a very distinguished Foreign Service Officer, but for this interview could you describe his background, family background, and your mother's background.

BOHLEN: My father came from a family that had its roots in Philadelphia. His mother had roots in Louisiana, and her father had been Ambassador to France under President Cleveland, as a political appointee. When I subsequently served in the embassy in Paris, one of the people there produced the portrait of my great-grandfather which was in my office. The granddaughter of the artist called me one day and said, "Do you by any chance know where the portrait of James B. Eustis is?" I said, "Well, I'm looking at it right now." So she came by and found it. So that was my sort of father's side of the family. And his father basically never worked in his life. He was an extremely intelligent man, but he was what was known as a gentleman of leisure, and they traveled a great deal. They lived in Boston. They lived in Aiken, South Carolina. They spent a lot of time in France which was a lifelong love for my father and my grandmother and my aunt, for that matter. He went to St. Paul's school up in New Hampshire, and from there he went to Harvard where he graduated in 1927.

Q: The name Bohlen I always think of one of the Krupps and of the Ruhr gun barons. Is it any relation?

BOHLEN: It's the same family. There were two brothers in the late 18th Century who came to America, and one of them stayed and, I regret to say, made a great deal of money off the slave trade. The other went back to Germany, and his descendent eventually married Bertha von Krupp. He was a diplomat in the Court of William II, I believe, named Taffy Bohlen, and he met Bertha von Krupp on the Kaiser's orders. That branch of the family is related but not closely to us.

Q: I hesitate to go too far into this, but you say your grandfather was a gentleman of leisure. Where did the money come from?

BOHLEN: From the slave trade. I assume not only, but that was the foundation of their fortune, and then they were involved in various businesses in Philadelphia as well. That's where the money came from.

Q: Where did your father meet your mother?

BOHLEN: My father met my mother, who was also from Philadelphia, in Moscow when he was serving in the embassy there under Ambassador Bill Bullitt. Ambassador Bullitt's aide was my uncle Charles Thayer who also joined the Foreign Service eventually. My mother and my grandmother and my aunt went to stay with my uncle and there met my father, although I think they had met before because another uncle was at school with my father, but they hadn't really known each other, and so that's where they met, and then he came back to the States not too long after that, and they saw a lot of each other and eventually were married in 1935.

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

BOHLEN: My mother's family also came from Philadelphia, and they had been there I think since the early 19th century. My grandmother's mother was a Quaker who left the meeting to marry an Episcopalian, my great-grandfather. My great grandmother's family had made a lot of money in textiles, and he was a businessman. Interestingly, my grandfather worked in a company called Cramp's Shipyard which was owned by Averell Harriman with whom my father was later to work a great deal, and for whom my uncle worked. My grandfather went to Russia a great deal before the revolution, and at one point he brought back a large series of engravings from 17th Century Russia which hung in my grandmother's house before I had ever set foot in Russia. I had these images of the Patriarch and the Czar and things like that. So there were various connections with Russia that crept on in early.

Q: Did your mother go to college?

BOHLEN: She went to Bryn Mawr for, I think, two years, but she didn't finish.

Q: Assigned to the Embassy in Tokyo, your father must have worked under Ambassador Grew?

BOHLEN: Yes, he was with Grew in Japan, and after Pearl Harbor they were interned for six months before they could be exchanged. He often described that Ambassador Grew loved to play poker, and so they played poker all day, every day. He loved to play poker, but Dad said after those six months he was ready for a little break.

Q: I understand they put in a little golf course there, too.

BOHLEN: Yes, I think that's right!

Q: You said you were in Philadelphia at the age of two. When did you begin to know where you were? Where did you go?

BOHLEN: We came back to Washington, and my father at that point was working as Roosevelt's interpreter and continued to do that throughout the war, so he was off to Tehran and Yalta and then Potsdam with Truman. My mother stayed there. She worked at the OSS (Office of Strategic Service), the only time she ever really had a job in her married life. We lived in Washington until about 1949, which would make me nine years old. My first memory is of watching Roosevelt's funeral in April 1945 out of the window of my father's office which was in the old executive office building.

Q: Let's pick it up until you got to be nine. Here you have your father who on the right hand of power and your mother was working at the OSS. Did this result in interesting table conversation? Were you observing?

BOHLEN: I think I was. I'd be hard pressed to say on what day it began to sink in, but we always had and, of course, in the wartime period there were some really extraordinary

people who were in Washington and who worked with my father. Talented Isaiah Berlin was in the British Embassy at the time. [Ed: Sir Isaiah Berlin is described as a Russian-born British social and political theorist, philosopher and historian of ideas. He worked for British Information Services in New York from 1940 to 1942, and for the British embassies in Washington, DC, and Moscow from then until 1946.]

He and my father developed an instant rapport with each other because they had the common love of Russia, and they both had a wonderful sense of humor. So he was a very early visitor, and then after the war I remember he used to come back, and he was very much the unkempt professor at that point before he married, but he used to stay with us. Another person who was sort of in and out was Nicolas Nabokov, the composer who was the cousin of the writer. He and my uncle later were very much involved in starting the Voice of America. I'm not sure of the details of that, but I know they were a part of that. Various British diplomats I remember and then, of course, many Washington people and especially in the early post-war period. Frank Wisner from the CIA was a very close friend of my parents. Journalist Joe Alsop lived just down the street from us and was in and out of the house.

We lived on Dumbarton Avenue in Georgetown. There was really a wonderful world then. I think it was a much smaller world. Joe Olson and Stuart Olson.

Q: Where were you going to school?

BOHLEN: I went to Beauvoir School which is up on Woodley Road which is part of the National Cathedral, St. Alban's complex of schools. I went there to nursery school and then kindergarten. I skipped the first grade and went to second and third grade there, and then from there I sent to Potomac School which was then still on California Street and eventually moved out to McLean.

Q: How long were you at Potomac School?

BOHLEN: I was there one year before we went over to France which was in 1949 when my father was assigned as Deputy Chief of Mission. The ambassador was David Bruce, and he was DCM. We lived in the house there that I was later to live in as DCM 40 years later or whatever it was. That was sort of fun. That was my first exposure to living abroad. My parents just kind of plopped me into a French school. Parents don't seem to have worried in those days about whether children would adapt or like it or whatever. I was just told this is where I was going. After three months I was pretty fluent in French for which I've been very grateful to them because I've never lost it. We traveled a lot. My mother was always a great believer in taking children places, so we'd go to the Chateau le Verdoyer and Shalt. We used to go to stay with some friends in England.

Q: How did you find French school?

BOHLEN: It was hard. Well, the language made things more complicated, obviously, and we did Latin. They were more advanced in Latin than I was. They had a different way of

doing math, and since I wasn't very good at math anyway, I think I was confused the whole time. I learned some French literature and made some friends. We're still friends to this day.

Q: You were there what, two years?

BOHLEN: Right. So in 1951 my father came back here. He was Counselor of the State Department at that point. [Ed: Charles Bohlen, served as Counselor of the State Department from July 1951 to March 1953. He earlier held the same position from August 1947 to August 1949.]

Q: Were you beginning to pick up from home talk about the Cold War? You came from a family that was immersed in Russia, and all of a sudden they've turned into the bad boys.

BOHLEN: I can't remember ever not knowing about the Soviet Union and the Cold War. It was just a dim consciousness at that point because I'd never been there. It was, of course, a great source of conversation in Paris, as in Washington.

Q: You came back in 1951. Where did you go to school?

BOHLEN: I went back to Potomac. I was there two more years after which my father went off as Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Q: While you were in Washington from 1951 and 1953, what about reading? Were you a reader? Any books that particularly struck you?

BOHLEN: We were all great readers in my family. My father was a great reader. We read voraciously. Of course, television was very much less part of our lives than it was for later generations. We didn't even have a television for part of those two years. I think we finally broke down and got one so we could watch the 1952 conventions. Really, it was not an automatic thing. We read a lot, and I used to go out to my grandmother's in the summer. She had a wonderful library of children's books. I read what I would say standard fare for kids at that time and at that age. Little Women, Sherlock Holmes.

I never liked Nancy Drew very much, but my niece is very keen on her. Robert Louis Stevenson, some Dickens. We read a lot, and I would be hard pressed to say what I read and when.

Q: Were you able to keep up with your French in school?

BOHLEN: I was. I didn't actually take French. I remember my mother struggling to make us talk French which I resisted because it marked me as somebody different. I didn't forget it. I didn't go back to live there until the 1960s, but I was still fluent. They say that when you learn to read and write in a language that that's what really fixes it. My brother who's seven years younger than I am spoke it better than he spoke English when

he left. He had a French nanny. He didn't remember it later because he hadn't learned to read or write.

Q: When your father became ambassador, did you go with him?

BOHLEN: I went not right away because he went just after Stalin died. I remember his being called in the middle of the night to be told that Stalin had died, and they wanted to get him out there as quickly as they could because George Kennan had already left so there was just a Chargé there. They went off, and I finished out the school year staying with a relative. Then I went off. The original plan was that I was to go to school in Switzerland. When I got there and we decided I should stay there, and I took something called the Calvert School.

Q: The home schooling system. A very good system from what I understand.

BOHLEN: Yes. It was quite good. It was not up to where I had been in some subjects, but it was generally very good. I did that, and I also had French. This I had forgotten about. The French embassy had about five or six children who were studying there with the kind of home schooling thing, so I did some things with them.

Q: You were in Moscow from 1953 until when?

BOHLEN: Until 1954. Then I did go to school in Switzerland for a year. Afterwards I came back to school here.

Q: When you were in the Soviet Union, I assume you came back from Switzerland and went back to Moscow, what are your impressions?

BOHLEN: I have wonderful memories of that period. The Western community was a very close knit community, and so people made very strong friendships. I think it was harder for my parents because they had been in Moscow in the 1930s when they could see many Russians. Then to come back to a different experience. One day they were in the theater, and they saw somebody whom they had known in the 1930s. She obviously recognized them, and saw that they recognized her, but she immediately turned on her heel and signaled, "I don't want you to speak to me." So that was hard because contacts were more limited. On the other hand I think they made some wonderful friends there. The Dutch ambassador was a great friend in particular. It was a very warm community, and we used to do things together. The embassy had a dacha in the country, and we would go out there and go cross-country skiing and generally enjoy things. With my friends from the French embassy we used to go off on expeditions. Russians liked children, so we were very well treated. We'd go to the observatory. Those are partly my memories. Other memories involved traveling. My parents did a great deal of traveling. Under Stalin the diplomats weren't allowed to go more than 40 kilometers outside of Moscow. This was all new [Ed: Stalin died May 5, 1953], so they went to a lot of places where they were the first foreigners the Russians had seen since the war.

Q: Did you get a feel for village life? Moscow is one thing, but a village is like being back three or four centuries.

BOHLEN: Indeed. The only village that we really saw at close range was the one that was near the dacha. People were still very wary of speaking to foreigners unless it was authorized, so there weren't a lot of spontaneous conversations. Everything I remember about Moscow was looking back and contrasting with now or even later periods, I think Russians were very poor, and life was very difficult right after the war. It was only eight years after the war, and there was nothing in the markets. In the winter you couldn't even get fresh eggs. You'd see one pathetic carrot and one cabbage. We used to import all our food. The ambassador had the use of a plane belonging to the Air Force in Berlin, and sometimes my father would make trips just so he could come in with the plane, and the plane could bring in fresh food for the whole embassy. Having fresh lettuce was a big excitement.

Q: What was Spaso House like in those days?

BOHLEN: Spaso House was wonderful, as it is today; but at that time the Soviet government would only renew the lease from year to year. FBO, that wonderful—Federal Buildings Operation, farsighted, generous organization—refused to do anything to fix it up, so it was rather shabby, certainly compared to what it is today , I think it was the Hartmans that… But it is just a wonderful house. We had all sorts of wonderful events there. There's a ballroom in the back where they fixed up a badminton court, and we used to have Russian folk dancing classes for the diplomatic community. That kind of thing was…

Q: Because everything was probably bugged, were there conversations over the dinner table about what was happening in the Soviet Union that you listened to?

BOHLEN: Yes. I think my father would always, because we had a lot of visitors, my father would always talk to the visitors about what was happening. Obviously anything that was super sensitive, they'd go inside the tank.

Q: When you left you were only what, about 15 years old, did you come away with a warm feeling for it?

BOHLEN: Very much. Both my parents, although they detested the Soviet regime, they loved Russians, and my father had a great affinity for Russians. He had read very deeply in Russian literature. In the 1930s he knew a lot of Russian writers, and he just enjoyed Russians. Obviously all that rubbed off on me, and I was predisposed to like Russians as a people and Russia as a country. I think I acquired my taste for it there.

Q: How about some of the other Russian experts like your father, there was Tommy Thompson and George Kennan. Did these people come and go? Were they part of your life?

BOHLEN: They were very much part of my life because they were friends of my father's, but I can't remember that they came and visited us in Moscow. Probably George Kennan would not have. He was declared *persona non grata*, and even if they had let him back in would have been quite awkward, I think. Thompson, I don't think he came in at that point. I remember we all went on a skiing vacation once.

Q: I was wondering whether there were Russian-hand children as you were a Russian-hand child. Were you like ships that passed in the night?

BOHLEN: We weren't ever the same age. We've all kind of stayed in touch. Grace Kennan in particular is back in the Ukraine running a program there, but they're scattered around the world. She's very much inherited her father's band. Then the two Thompson girls actually just called me the other day. They live out West somewhere.

Q: What about your uncle Charlie Thayer. This was about the time that he started running into difficulty with the McCarthy period.

BOHLEN: Not yet. It was later. He was Consul General in Munich.

Q: Was he part of the family group? Did you see much of him?

BOHLEN: We saw quite a lot of him. He and my mother were very close, and so often we would get together over vacation. Charlie wrote the book Bears and the Caviar about his exploits. [Ed: published in 1950, Lippincott]

When I came back I was probably 15, and I went off to boarding school. My parents were still in Moscow at that point.

Q: Where did you go to boarding school?

BOHLEN: I went to Milton Academy up in the Boston area. It was co-ed as we know it today. They had a boys' school and a girls' school. The concept was called "parallel education". We had some classes together, but not a whole lot.

Q: How did you find that?

BOHLEN: I loved it! The head mistress was a remarkable woman. Margot Johnson was herself the child of a Foreign Service Officer and certainly very attuned to different experiences. I made some good friends there, and it was very strong academically. I was able to get into Radcliff in 1957 when I was 17 years old.

Q: When you got up there, did you find yourself in your studies concentrating on something? I take it, not mathematics.

BOHLEN: Not mathematics, no! It was a pretty general curriculum. You didn't have a lot of a choice in those days. You could emphasize science and math or you could emphasize

classics. I took a lot of Latin and English, of course, and history. Those were required subjects.

Q: During this period—the McCarthy period—started about 1950, I think. did McCarthyism affect your family?

BOHLEN: Very much so, and I think I said something that was not correct. If I could go back a bit.

When we came back from Paris, my father was Counselor at the State Department and then Eisenhower was elected and John Foster Dulles came in. That started a very difficult period in the State Department. Scott McLeod was given the position of the head of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. He was responsible for

a lot of purging of the State Department, frankly. There was a lot of talk, I remember. My father who was a pretty irreverent guy used to talk about positive loyalty. The idea was that somehow the Foreign Service was not loyal, guilty until proven loyal. That was, indeed, the period that my uncle began to have some trouble because he had been married very briefly to a Russian woman who was an émigré, but she was an interpreter at the UN. She had gotten pregnant, so he married her then quickly divorced her. This was held against him that he had done this. That had been back in the late 1940s, and meantime he had married again. I think it was not the McCarthy people, but the Scott McLeod people who had dug this all up, and threatened to go public. Rather than have that happen, which he felt would upset my aunt, he retired from the Foreign Service.

Q: This must have been difficult for people in the Foreign Service families. It wasn't just the officers, it must have penetrated down to the families.

BOHLEN: My father came under attack, also, because he'd been associated with Yalta. He had a rather difficult confirmation, and a number of senators questioned the appropriateness of him as an appointment, as ambassador to Moscow. He never got on with John Foster Dulles very well, and they used to joke about Dulles a lot. "Dull, duller, Dullest." "Dulles, Dulles, do you take us for fools?"

Q: You're talking about positive loyalty. There is a very famous scene that was remembered by many people when Dean Acheson left. Everybody was very buoyed up by him. Then Dulles convened the same group and opened up by saying he would get positive loyalty. That just was a tremendous turnoff right from the beginning.

BOHLEN: Right. It was right from the beginning. It was. Then Dulles said to… You know what FBI files are like. There are always allegations in them. This is in my father's book [Ed: The reference may be to Witness to History 1929-1969, published in 1973]. There was an allegation of homosexuality which was completely not true, but somebody with a grudge put it forward. This was an issue during his confirmation hearings, and the senators wanted to see the raw FBI file and the usual nonsense. Two senators were allowed to see the file and said, "This is ridiculous. There's obviously nothing to it.´ He

was confirmed without any problem, but when they left for Moscow, Dulles said to my father, "It's really better if you travel with your wife," not to give rise to undue speculation.

Q: It's hard to recreate that period. I came in in 1955. We were nervous. We didn't trust Dulles. The feeling was the State Department won't back you up if you have a problem.

BOHLEN: Right. It was the period of John Patton Davies and all the China hands.

Q: Did Alger Hiss come across the …? Wasn't he involved with Yalta, too?

BOHLEN: He was. I think not in a very major role, but he certainly had access to things probably which in retrospect one wishes he hadn't. It was a subject that was constantly discussed. I think I'm right in saying my father always defended him, didn't think he had done anything wrong.

Q: I think there was a feeling that Alger Hiss let down our side, using the "old boys'" terminology. I felt that way.

BOHLEN: That whole period was extremely unpleasant. A lot of people came under suspicion who didn't deserve to.

Q: Did any of this get reflected on you at your school?

BOHLEN: No, no. In Washington we tended to have great support because everybody knew him and knew he was a very dedicated public servant. People were very critical of Eisenhower because he didn't stand up for General Marshall.

Q: This was not a great period in American politics.

BOHLEN: It's interesting. I have to say now I think that every year that's gone by since the Eisenhower presidency. Eisenhower as a president looks better and better: Better than most of the men that succeeded him, but it didn't seem to be so at the time. I think the sort of decisions about loyalty detracted at the time.

Q: You were at Radcliff from 1957 to 1961. How did you find Radcliff?

BOHLEN: It was a wonderful place. We had all our classes with Harvard, so that was a very rich fare to draw from, and I think it was there that I became really fascinated with Russia. I had a course with Jim Billington, who is now head of the Library of Congress, who was teaching Russian Intellectual History at the time, and he was a very dynamic lecturer. Very intriguing. I decided I wanted to learn more about that.

Q: Had he written his book <u>The Icon and the Axe</u>?

BOHLEN: <u>The Icon and the Axe</u>. Yes, he had. That was all fascinating.

Q: How about your Russian? Were you studying Russian?

BOHLEN: I studied Russian, and I was able to go into a second year Russian. Actually, one of my classmates was Jim Collins who was an ambassador to Russia. That was great fun to have that.

Q: Did the 1960 election between Nixon and Kennedy was one of those pivotal election years as far as young Americans were concerned. Many of them became engaged. Did that hit you at all, or your campus?

BOHLEN: I think a lot of us felt very excited and energized by Kennedy. I can't say that I became very actively involved in politics. It was also the time of the civil rights movement. There were people who chose to march in the civil rights. I think we were pretty much all for Kennedy. Maybe not all, but a lot of us were certainly very excited when he became President. That helped to influence me to come back and work for the government. We were still quite idealistic about working for the government in those days.

Q: At Radcliff with a Harvard education there, how would you characterize the classes?

BOHLEN: There were not wide divergences of opinion. We thought the Soviet Union as a pretty repressive place, that it was nice that we were beginning to see the exchanges. I remember those were some of the first. And Khrushchev, and we worried that the United States was falling behind, but we were all for more exchanges. The first exhibits were then. I think there were just not the divisions that there were later.

BOHLEN: I came down to Washington I guess in spring vacation in my senior year and thought, "What am I going to do?" I said, "I don't want to go work for the State Department because my father's there, and I'd like to go somewhere else." Somebody said, "Why don't you try the CIA?" So that's where I went, and I did their exams. Amazing how easy it was to get jobs in those days. I went to work in the office of Soviet Analysis which was a wonderful group of people, and I spent two years doing that.

Q: What sort of an atmosphere did you find this Soviet watching group?

BOHLEN: I think the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) has always had very good analysts, and they were seeing what was happening inside the Soviet Union, that there were some signs about loosening up. My task was to follow the writers and the intellectuals which was great fun. I remember ordering one of these novels that the dissidents had put out, and the person who was in charge of the budget said, "Are you really? Can you justify buying this novel?" I said, "Absolutely. It's a sign of the changing circumstances." There was a feeling that things were changing inside the Soviet Union even though it was post-Hungary, post-Poland. But still, things were beginning to loosen up as long as Khrushchev was there.

Q: How was Khrushchev viewed? It's hard to go back, but I was wondering.

BOHLEN: I think he was viewed as somebody who was a very dedicated Communist and very dedicated to the Soviet system and maintaining it, and not afraid to apply force when needed. Also, somebody who was going to run the Soviet Union with a more flexible hand.

Q: You were there from 1961 to 1963, during the two rather critical events. One was the Berlin Wall. Was this felt to be a real crisis or was this sort of a tidying up of a loose situation?

BOHLEN: I think the hemorrhage of East Germans through East Berlin was a big, big problem for the Soviet regime, and I think this was certainly recognized by the CIA. So while you can't say they exactly predicted the building of the Berlin Wall; I remember they said, 'Well, we predicted it. We foresaw it." I told this to my father, and he said it wasn't clear to anybody else that they were predicting it. The usual sort of thing. But I came in the week the wall went up, and it certainly did not come as a terrible surprise to the analysts. I think there was a general feeling that this was the situation that the regime just couldn't tolerate. It was losing everyone, so they'd have to do something.

Q: Looking at the Soviet writers. They've always been a very important element within Russian society going back as long as there have been writers, I guess. What were you thinking?

BOHLEN: More freedom, a little bit of lifting of the Stalinist repression. By today's standards, by later standards, it was very, very timid. But it was very exciting then. You had Ilya Ehrenburg writing his book One Day in the Life came out in 1962 or 1963. [Ed: Ehrenburg's memoirs were entitled People, Years, Life. The Interviewer and Interviewee may be thinking of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich is a novel written by Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, first published in November 1962.]

Q: This was felt to be an earth change.

BOHLEN: Yes. This was really good stuff. There were some other writers: Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Danil. They were just pushing the envelope. Then you had the crack downs. The Manege Exhibit in the Soviet Union when there was modern art. Khrushchev came and gave it his unvarnished opinion. So that was a big setback. I'm pretty sure that happened while I was there. I saw the full range. It was very exciting after the Stalinist years.

Q: Talking about exciting times, you were also there in October 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. How did that play where you were in the CIA?

BOHLEN: Yes. That was a very interesting thing. My father and mother had gone off to France. My father had been named Ambassador to France, and what I did not know until much later was that he had been very involved in the early stages of this, and it was

debated whether he should go ahead as planned. He said that "It'll really raise suspicious if I cancel my trip." At that moment, of course, secrecy was of the essence. So off he went, and they were on a boat during that whole week, and my mother said he was a nervous wreck the whole time. She said on the boat they got news of what was happening, but it wasn't as real as it was to us who had been left behind. I was in our house with my brother and my sister who were much younger than I, and I thought, "Oh, my God. What do I do if the balloon goes up?" We had a friend who had an underground shelter, so I thought I would go and ask him. As far as the agency was concerned, we were all watching for indicators. Not so much me or the area I worked in, but I remember we had a… He was a wonderful guy named Al Volpe who was our boss, and he said, "The only indicator we've got in this shop is when they start gassing the snakes in the Moscow zoo." We joked about how they started gassing the snakes. I think it was a pretty scary time, but after the ships didn't run the blockage, for most of us on the outside, that was the sign that it was going to be OK. What you know now from reading about what was going on in the inside was it was very much not OK for another period. It was still quite scary, but I think it was scarier for those on the inside than it was for those of us who were on the outside.

Q: You left the CIA in 1963.

BOHLEN: I wanted to go back to graduate school, so I went to Columbia for a year.

Studying East European History, which included Russia.

Q: Did Columbia have a particular slice of the Soviet studies/Russian studies pie?

BOHLEN: It had a very good Russian department. Columbia was noted for its regional studies programs, but I've forgotten when the Soviet Institute that was founded. I forgot what the other institutions were, but it had some really excellent people. Zbig Brzezinski was teaching Soviet politics, and he was then, as now, one of the preeminent Soviet specialists. There was a very good Russian history department. There were a lot of people who were involved in one aspect or another of Soviet Marxist thought. Mayo Hengson was another very well known professor. My particular professor was Mark Ryath who was a Russian historian of the 18th and 19th centuries. I was very happy with the instruction that I received there. I thought I wanted a change, having been at Ratcliff/Harvard, essentially for four years as an undergraduate. I thought it was smart to try some other institution. Off I went to Columbia intending to go for a PhD, and in the end I only went for the MA and didn't complete the PhD. Decided to do other things. It was a wonderful year, and I loved living in New York. I was more interested at that point in Russian history than I was in contemporary Soviet Union. I ended up writing my thesis on the diplomats of Peter the Great which was a very interesting subject, and I subsequently published an article about it which appeared in a French journal. That was really my focus.

Q: Did you see any reflections of Peter the Great's diplomacy in Soviet diplomacy later on?

BOHLEN: Oh, yes, very much, but even more Peter the Great, as in so many fields, westernized the practice of Russian diplomacy. Before they had never had diplomats stationed permanently overseas, and they would send special emissaries for whatever treaty or negotiations needed to be done. These diplomats had a terrible reputation because they stuck absolutely to their instructions, wouldn't yield another bit of information. These pre-Petrine diplomats were, in many respects, closer to the Soviet practice than the diplomats of Peter's era who began to be more like their Western European counterparts and to be part of that social world.

Q: Where did he recruit his diplomats?

BOHLEN: From the aristocracy. From the nobility. Western European languages was a problem, so he sent a lot of them abroad to study languages, to study generally. A group of them went to study ship building in Holland, and a few of those who went focused on naval issues, but some of them did become diplomats because they had learned a foreign language. By the end he had some really good diplomats.

Q: Actually, the Russian diplomatic spread throughout the world was rather impressive in the 19th Century.

BOHLEN: Yes. By the 18th Century they were like any other great power. They had diplomats everywhere. Even under Peter they sent one to China, and he had one in Iran. They were very widely dispersed.

Q: What had you turn away from the PhD path?

BOHLEN: By that time, as I mentioned in our earlier session, I had worked two years in the government. I had decided that I was more interested in going and working somewhere. I didn't at that point have great career ambitions, but I didn't really think I wanted to teach after all, which is what I thought when I left college. I was convinced I wanted to teach, but I changed my mind about that. Also, my parents had gone off to France at that point. My father was ambassador (October 1962 to February 1968), and there was a chance for me to go spend a couple of years there, which would have been incompatible with a PhD, but it was one more thing pushing me

Q: You were in France from when to when?

BOHLEN: This was already my second time, and I lived there from 1964 to 1969. I went over there, and I started working at a social sciences institute called the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* working for a man who was a very extraordinary figure who just died last year, Clemens Heller. He was an Austrian Jew who had immigrated to the United States before the war or at the beginning of the war and then had then gone back to France. He was very close to Margaret Meade and a number of American social scientists. He had gone back to France and did a great deal to modernize the study of Social Sciences. Before that he was the founder of the Salzburg Seminar which you may

remember was founded in the early post-war era. Then having founded it, he was told he was no longer welcome because he had too many friends who were communist or whatever. That's how people were rewarded in those days. He ended up then going to France and as I say becoming very involved in the social sciences world and was instrumental in getting money from the Ford Foundation to build a social sciences building called the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme*. It's now a very big institution within Paris. This is down the Boulevard Raspail, and it has a lot of different social sciences institutes and so on.

Q: What sort of piece of the social science world were you dealing with?

BOHLEN: I was just working as an assistant to him. I was not doing any sort of academic work, but he organized lots of conferences. I wrote his English language correspondence because he would write these very dramatic letters, and I put them into English. He knew the whole world in social sciences. The head of the place where he was the Deputy Director was Fernand Braudel, the historian. He is famous for his book The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, which is both a social history and the idea of how geography shaped what people did. And he was the dean all school of French historians who were very interesting. So it was really very much an eye opener for me, and then…

(Transcriptionist's note: The following contained a great deal of cross-talk and entire sentences or phrases could not be deciphered. The following is also is not inclusive of each party's individual statements.)

Q: From what I gather, the French really approach things in really quite a different way than, you might say, an American. It seems that there's always a theme behind things. There are forces out there that drive history, whereas Americans say, "Well, history happens." Did you find this?

BOHLEN: Yes. I think that any historian must have some conceptual framework for dealing with… I'm not sure that any historian would really say history just happens. It is not just one event after another. There are forces; but certainly the French have more of a philosophical bent, but this school of historians was very much focused on… What's the word? It wasn't exactly quantitative history, but they spent a lot of time looking at records of births and deaths…

They were more looking at how the little man was living, and what were the years of famines, and how did this influence larger events. While we might think of the post-war world as the age of the computer, but there were still very few computers in France.

Q: Were they looking at the history of the United States or was this pretty much toward Europe and Asia?

BOHLEN: These particular historians were looking very much at French and European history. The ones I knew. They weren't the whole of them. They were looking at pre-

revolutionary France. That was one of their big eras: The 19th Century. They were a very interesting bunch of people.

Q: During this time De Gaullism was quite strong. How were the historians looking at de Gaulle, for example? Were you picking up…

BOHLEN: I think they were not looking at him as historians but as a contemporary. Not as an historical phenomenon but a contemporary phenomenon. There was always enormous opposition to de Gaulle from the left, and these were university people, so they were mostly on the left, and they were not particularly Gaullists. They were certainly not pro-American either. This was the era of the Vietnam War, and that generated a lot of opposition in France. The whole problem with de Gaulle was very much a part of my stay in France because, of course, every time I saw my parents, this is what my father was dealing with. I think he certainly… this is not just my opinion, but he dealt with it as well as any diplomat could. De Gaulle, when he left in 1968, de Gaulle paid tribute to them and to his desire always to try to deal with things through diplomatic channels. The other problem was not a diplomatic one; it was how de Gaulle really saw the larger role of France.

Q: Did you get any feeling from your father back when you went with him about getting sort of in a way between de Gaulle and Lyndon Johnson? Was this a…

BOHLEN: Lyndon Johnson was pretty smart about dealing with de Gaulle. He understood that de Gaulle was not really interested in reaching any sort of an accommodation. This was not something that could be negotiated, that his whole existential *raison d'être* in a way was to stand as a pole that was somewhat distant from the United States or at least distinct from the United States. As has always been the case with the French, he was with us when the chips were down…

Q: Such as the Cuban missile crisis?

BOHLEN: There you go, the Cuban missile crisis. Did I tell the story about de Gaulle and the pictures?

This was before I got to France, but it was just after my father had gotten there, and he went with Kennedy's emissary to talk to de Gaulle and to show him the overhead photography. De Gaulle heard out the emissary—I've forgotten who it was, but somebody quite well known—and de Gaulle heard him out. Then the emissary said, "Well, I have the pictures that will prove the truth of what we're saying." De Gaulle said, "The word of a U. S. President is enough. I don't need to see the pictures." Then at the end the emissary said, "Thank you very much. That's a wonderful vote of confidence." As he was leaving, he said, "Mr. President, would you just out of curiosity like to see the pictures?" De Gaulle said, "Yes, actually yes, I would."

Q: As the daughter of not only the ambassador but an extremely well-known ambassador, did you find that you were getting any emanations from your academic colleagues?

BOHLEN: I think he was as you say an eminent figure, and he generally had a good reputation in France. The people he saw tended to be in government and business and not so much the academics.

Q: Did you get any feel for the French intellectuals and their influence at that time? Were these people around whom their pronouncements caused discussions and things like this?

BOHLEN: Absolutely. I mean how much influence they had, but certainly in coloring the intellectual atmosphere of the time. They had enormous resonance and, of course, at that time, they were on a whole, quite anti-American.

Q: From the academic community that you were in, how were they looking at the Soviet Union?

BOHLEN: At that time, I think it was the era of Khrushchev, and things were beginning to open up a little bit in the Soviet Union, and you had the de-Stalinization. I think they tended to be uncritical of the Soviet Union at that point. A decade later they then became the harshest critics of the Soviet Union.

Q: You were there during when, May, June of '68?

BOHLEN: No. I chose that moment to come home for my first visit in four years, so I missed it, but I was there for the beginning of it.

Q: Had there been rumblings of this? This was the student protest that gathered steam…

BOHLEN: There really had not been a lot of rumblings. The students always demonstrated in the spring, but I think nobody was prepared for this to turn into the huge outburst that it was. I remember very well. I was still in France when there was a battle between the police and the students on the Boulevard Saint Germain, they were throwing paving stones, and it was very, very rough. I remember the story of one friend of mine whose father Louis Jacques was a minister in de Gaulle's cabinet and had been a close friend of my father's. He was minister of the interior. She lived right on the street where the fighting was talking place, and she was calling up her father and begging him to call off the police. It was very dramatic, and I think there was a real split of generations. All the people of my age and even a bit younger of whatever class were going off to join the revolutionaries and sleeping in universities for three days on end.

Q: You were in the Vietnam generation. How did this affect you while you were in France?

BOHLEN: I think probably when I first went I was not so opposed to the war. That was 1964. Of course, it got worse and worse. [Ed: the Tonkin Gulf incident and congressional resolution was August 1964. The first U.S. Marines deployed in March 1965.] The worst was in a way later, but it was a very hot issue. The French were always telling us, "We've

been there, done that, and you're making a huge mistake." At that point I think I probably thought we weren't making a mistake. I wasn't ahead of my compatriots, my peers on Vietnam. So I didn't see it as…

Q: Was there a split in your family at home?

BOHLEN: My sister who is ten years younger than I and who was at college at the time, and she was absolutely and fiercely opposed to the war, but this was already after my father came back. This was post 1968 into the Nixon era when things became even nastier. She was very strongly opposed and went and marched and demonstrated. My father stayed rather aloof from it. He said, "This isn't my area of specialty".

Q: When you arrived there, and I'm hazy on my dates, had the Algerian problem been pretty well solved?

BOHLEN: That was pretty much solved. I think the Évian Accords were 1962 as I remember, so that was already over.

Q: Did you pick up any discussion about the Nazi occupation of France and who did what to whom?

BOHLEN: No. This was something that was still in the future.

Q: Were you conscious of people avoiding the subject or didn't they talk about it?

BOHLEN: They just really didn't talk about it. They really didn't talk about it. This was the period when de Gaulle and Adenauer were creating this Franco-German relationship. There was still a lot of anti-German feeling, but I think many people welcomed that. I think that was a very important move.

Q: After this time, you left in 1969, was it?

BOHLEN: I left in 1969. My parents had gone back a year earlier. Of course, de Gaulle also resigned in 1969 and went off to Ireland. It was a whole new era. You had Czechoslovakia. Things were changing.

Q: How did the fall of'68, the crushing of the Czechoslovak Spring affect your colleagues? Was this a pretty dramatic time?

BOHLEN: It was a pretty dramatic time. France was still very much living in the aftermath of the events of May, and there was still a great deal of upheaval at the university. It was a time when France was very focused on its own affairs as well as the Czech Republic. De Gaulle had taken France out of NATO by then.

Q: Was it still at this time popular among the left to join the communist party or vote communist or not, and find many people who were avowed communists?

BOHLEN: I think there were still many among the intellectuals. I think also there were many, I think in a way it had really peaked. That was an earlier period. I remember one person I knew who was an historian, and he had joined the communist party briefly, and he had seen how the party leadership tried to manipulate and to control the meetings. So he left very soon. You had a number of people who had had that experience.

Q: In 1969 what were you up to?

BOHLEN: In 1969 I had signed a contract to do a biography of Peter the Great with the British publisher George Reinfeld. I was working on that, and I came back to the States and worked on that for a couple of years and I'm sorry to say never got through with it because I had to go off and get a job. I guess that period really went on for five years. It seems an awfully long time, but it wasn't until 1974 that I went to work for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency ACDA).

Q: A major biography on Peter the Great came out around that time.

BOHLEN: That's right. Robert Massey's biography. In fact, he and his wife were living in Paris when I started on this, so that was a little bit discouraging. Anyway, that sort of occupied me for a time after I came back.

Q: What brought you to the Arms Control Agency?

BOHLEN: A friend of mine who was a writer—you probably know his name and maybe know him, John Newhouse—was then working for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Fred Iklé was the director of it. He said that Iklé was looking for someone who knew Russian to read Russian journals about strategic issues, and I had good Russian. So, I was hired. That was the beginning of my government career.

Dr. Iklé had been named the head of the ACDA. There had been a big purge after the signing of the SALT I agreement, and he was put in to satisfy the hardliners. Certainly John Newhouse was not a hardliner, so it was a rather eclectic group of people. I was put in an office that dealt with non-nuclear arms control. There was something going on in Vienna at that point called the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks (MBFR). I became involved in that very quickly. I did some things for this Soviet strategic business but really very quickly got more involved in the more operational things and got along very well with the people there. I went off to Vienna a couple of times. You typically would send people out there to man the delegation. Then the Deputy Head of the delegation Jacques Bean asked if I would like to come out there on a permanent basis. This was after I'd been in ACDA for two years. So I did that, and that was great. I had a wonderful time.

Q: When you came in to the Arms Control Agency, how did you find the hand of Mr. Iklé? He was one of the major figures in this field. How was his management style?

BOHLEN: He's rather an academic figure. He was very distant from my life, and I think he was not regarded as a terribly effective manager. He certainly was a very smart man and thoughtful man. ACDA from the start was an agency that never had any influence. It was very marginal. Probably its most influential period was when Gerard Smith was head of it, and he was also the Chief Negotiator in the SALT talks. I couldn't say what impact Iklé had. I think he tended to be rather more supportive of the Defense Department than of the State Department, but, of course, there was Kissinger there. That was a counterbalancing effort. There were a lot of interesting people there. Paul Wolfowitz, that's where I very first met Paul Wolfowitz who then as now was always the most courteous person that you could ever imagine. I'm sure there were all sorts of currents swirling around that I was not involved with. At that point I never dealt with Nuclear Arms Control, and the conventional arms control was not very controversial. But there were all sorts of wonderful people. Steve Hadley was over at the NSC. He was working Bill Highland over there.

Q: Was there a feeling in MBFR of a certain amount of marking time until…

BOHLEN: Absolutely. This was not a negotiation that was meant to go anywhere. It was started because there were huge pressures to bring U. S. forces from Europe home.

The administration was able to say we should do this before we've negotiated something with the Russians, and there's a huge Soviet preponderance in Eastern Europe, etc., etc. They started this negotiation, and the Russians agreed to it rather reluctantly. Our European allies were terrified that we were going to come to some deal with the Russians that would have lead to the withdrawal of American troops from Europe. I would say that there was only one person in that whole negotiation—maybe two—who weren't in on the secret that this was a negotiation that wasn't meant to go anywhere. And they were the negotiator Stan Reiser and the deputy negotiator John Dean. They tried very, very hard to get an agreement.

Q: What was the picture you were getting of the Soviet side? Were they interested in this at all?

BOHLEN: I don't think so. Our position was always that they should reduce their forces to equality with us. There was something called Option 3 which was we were getting rid of the Pershing missiles. These were various kinds of nuclear artillery, and one wonderful man in the Institute for Nuclear Research whose name was Bob Buroz used to call it a Nuclear Garage Sale. We tried to persuade the Russians that this would justify their reducing more than the NATO countries, but they weren't buying it, and rightly so. The talks sort of went on until they were eventually—15 years later—replaced by the Conventional Forces in Europe talks, but then we were sort of in a different era. But MBFR aroused the fear of the Europeans that we might somehow come to a deal with the Russians; we were doing a lot of other deals with the Russians. They sent some of their best diplomats there, and that was interesting for me. I became friends with many European diplomats there and people that I would run into later on. It was my first experience of a multi-lateral diplomacy. Looking back I think it was a very important

experience because every time we did a plenary statement, we had to clear it through the whole NATO caucus, so one saw the dynamics of how all that worked. The French, of course, weren't there. They weren't part of the talks at all. We spent a lot of time trying to reassure the Russians that this really didn't matter because they weren't….

Q: Were the French at least a silent a presence?

BOHLEN: No. They stayed. I think John Dean used to brief them on what was happening in the talks, which was strictly nothing, through their embassy in Vienna. But they didn't participate as they did in NATO. In the military committee they've had somebody there forever. They're not fully a part of it. That was an important lesson for me in sort of figuring out where everybody was coming from and understanding the politics of MBFR. I remember I wrote a paper on German views of MBFR which was much more a political paper. It had to do with this German fear of being singularized and singled out among the Western countries because that's what the Russians were always interested in, was limiting the Germans. So I wrote a paper under Jim Good, they said it's the best paper on Germany and MBFR that's been written on the policy. In fact, it's the only one! I discovered that what interested me was the politics and the alliance dynamics and the interaction with the Russians and not how many tanks we had.

Q: What was your next career move?

BOHLEN: From there I went into… The Foreign Service at that point set up a lateral entry program to try to compensate for what had been its previous policy of saying no to married women; now married women could be part of the service. So I came into the Foreign Service that way. I think that is, indeed, a good place to stop here.

Q: I assume there was a significant other at this time?

BOHLEN: I married David after I came back from Vienna. He was somebody I had known a long time in Washington.

David, when I met him here in Washington, was teaching at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and he was head of the European program. He had come, I think in around 1969. He first worked for Eugene Rostow who was then Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and after about a year he moved to SAIS. He did his graduate work at Yale; he taught there awhile. He taught at Brown. He had been an undergraduate at Yale. He'd also done a year at Oxford and a year in France while he was doing his graduate work. He had then as he continues to have to this day a very keen interest in international affairs in particular with U.S. /European relations. We were part of a large group of friends at that age, so that's how we met. We were friends for a long time without anything happening, but when I came back from Vienna, we decided to get married.

Q: In 1976 you joined the Foreign Service. How did you find the process? Obviously, you were a Foreign Service Brat. How did you find the process of melding you into the Foreign Service?

BOHLEN: Actually it was 1977; the start of the Carter Administration. I must have come in in the summer of 1977. That's right, because I got married in December of 1977, so I came in in the summer.

It really went remarkably well when I look back on it. I took an exam. I think I was the first person to take what I'll call the lateral entry exam for want of anything else. I went over to the Bureau of Examiners, and there were the Foreign Service Officers who were looking at the instruction booklet because they had never given an exam before for a lateral entry candidate. They were sort of feeling their way, and I was feeling my way. But I passed. It was just an oral exam. At one time in the past I had taken the Foreign Service exam and had passed both the written and the oral, although I opted not to go into the State Department at that point. At this time the lateral entry exam was only an oral exam. I passed that and then was taken into the Foreign Service.

Actually, my marriage affected my career right off the bat because the department was looking for a political military officer in the embassy in Moscow, and they were going to send me to that. Then I decided to get married, and it really didn't seem a good idea to commit to spend two years away from my husband since he wasn't going to go. So I went to the people on the Soviet desk and said I could commit to go for one year, but not really two, and would they consider that? At first they said yes, and then they came back and said, "No, it's very costly to send somebody, so we would rather offer you a slot on the Soviet desk." As I look back on it I think it was my great good fortune because I really think that even though I worked for the government and knew my way around the department not too badly, I would have been totally unprepared to do that job in Moscow. I think I would have floundered a good bit. It was much better to begin a job in a department where I was very directly supervised by somebody.

I was on the Soviet desk then for, I think, two and a half years, and it was a wonderful experience. I had a great group of people to work with. My office director was of the section chief was Gary Matthews; the office director was Mark Garrison and Sherrod McCall who were both wonderful people, and all of them very supportive. Among other people whom I worked with was Mark Paris who subsequently went on to great things and became our ambassador to Turkey. It was a very stimulating place. I was put in charge of sort of Arms Control and security issues. The period was a very difficult one. It was the Carter administration. If you remember, Mr. Vance was sent off by President Carter to Moscow in March 1977 with a new proposal on strategic arms limitations.

Q: Really with not much preparation as I recall it.

BOHLEN: I think there were certainly a lot of people in the bureaucracy who knew quite correctly what the reaction of the Soviets would be toward him. There was a big debate at that time going on in the United States about these agreements. Kissinger had come very

close to negotiating one in the 1975-1976 time period, but he could not get it through. This was during the Ford presidency. The presidency was not strong, and Ford was beginning to run scared because of the election. Kissinger was not able to get it through the bureaucracy and in particular not able to overcome the opposition of James Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense. No, sorry. Donald Rumsfeld [Ed: Rumsfeld was Secretary of Defense from November 1975 to January 1977].

I know Rumsfeld was involved, and he was very much opposing the Kissinger proposals. Which one was in office when Ford stopped being president? Anyway, both of them were opposed to what Kissinger was doing, and Rumsfeld in particular was very clever at blocking proposals. So the proposals were in trouble even before Carter took office, and the bureaucracy continued work much along the same lines that had been going on under Ford. But then the Carter people—(National Security Advisor Zbigniew) Brzezinski, the president and some of the others around him—said we need to take a different approach on this, and they adopted what were essentially the proposals that Senator Scoop Jackson and Richard Pearle were pushing which involved deep cuts and very disadvantageous to the Soviets. They sold the Carter administration on this and off Vance went to Moscow with his proposals which infuriated the Soviets and caused a big flap.

I came in after this, and I'm telling this for a reason because the flap was such that both sides decided to paper over this disagreement. It was the first trip to Moscow. So Gromyko and Vance decided to set up seven or eight arms control working groups. Those were things that I became very active with. One was to ban nuclear testing, one to do away with arms sales, one was on chemical weapons. They were all issues that were out there. The Strategic Arms Talks also resumed, pretty much along the same lines as before the March trip, and I became involved in those, too. I went off to Geneva a couple of times as part of the delegation. I was there when the treaty was finally signed in 1979. I also went off to Geneva for some of these other negotiations, so that was very much my bailiwick.

Q: When you got on board, what was the feeling in the Soviet bureau? Was this arms control thing was seen as something could happen, or was it considered an ongoing exercise in futility?

BOHLEN: No. I think there was some real hope that something could be achieved. Marshall Schulman was the Special Advisor to Cyrus Vance on Soviet Affairs, and he was a very strong advocate of arms control. He was somebody who very much favored the continuation of the dialogue with the Soviets and trying to keep things on an even keel. I think this got both Vance and ultimately Carter in trouble because the mood in the country at that time was building up very much in the opposite direction, and you had the…let me think…Rostow group…I'm drawing a blank now.

They were really beating the drums. They really swung into full gear when the SALT II Treaty was obviously going to reach some sort of agreement. They were denouncing Carter and Vance and the SALT II Treaty and the Soviets, and they said that the Soviets

had a master plan to intimidate us with their nuclear weapons and we would be scared to undertake any action anywhere. It was the time of Angola.

Q: And also in the Horn of Africa.

BOHLEN: Horn of Africa, and the discovery of the Soviet base in Cuba, which had been there all along, but which was now being dragged up. The Cuban Brigade.

So that was the background of all this. But I think Vance really felt that the SALT II agreement was absolutely critical to counterbalancing all these negative tendencies and to reducing the risk of nuclear war. He was a real believer. So he pressed on.

Q: Where did you fit within the Soviet Bureau?

BOHLEN: I was one of four officers. The Soviet Office consisted of four sections: One was Internal, Political, one was Economic, External, which was called the Multi-lateral Affairs Office. We covered all aspects of Soviet foreign policy including arms control. There were four of us, and then there was an officer in charge who was Gary Matthews. I was one of four, and one colleague I remember was covering the whole evolving Afghanistan issue, which later ended up with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.

Things were very much happening, and as I say, Vance was very committed to the SALT II treaty, and I think I really participated in that frame of mind. It seemed to me at the time very important. I worked very hard and was in Geneva when the treaty was finally signed, which was a very exciting moment. It was one last issue that had to be that we were waiting for instructions from Washington. It was 3:00 in the morning when we had the final plenary session. Even though the negotiator Ralph Earl had a very good sense of what difficulties awaited the treaties. Within the delegations it was a very happy and wonderful moment.

Q: When you arrived on the scene in the Soviet Bureau, were you getting good intelligence on Soviet intentions. We had obviously the military and the CIA and our embassy regularly reporting. What was the feel about where the Soviets were coming from?

BOHLEN: I think there was a debate about whether this was a push for world domination or whether they still had an interest in some kind of détente relationship with us. The evidence was not conclusive. There was the evidence of their actions. There was also intelligence, but it was really their actions one had to look at. Of course, there was the terrible split within the Carter administration between Vance and Brzezinski. Carter just vacillated between the two, and this was one of the reasons that he never was reelected because he had the worst of both worlds. He looked weak in the right in this country, and he looked weak to the Soviets because he never could really follow through, he gave these contradictory speeches, warned about the need for strength. Then you had episodes like the neutron bomb where this whole bureaucracy had decided to try to deploy it in

Germany, and we had expected an enormous amount of capital with our allies and particularly Helmut Schmidt, who never forgave Carter.

At the last minute, Carter refused to sign the order. He said, "I won't be party to creating a new nuclear weapon." It was just stunning. I remember one of my colleagues describing… He was stationed in Germany, and he had to go carry the President's letter to Helmut Schmidt who was on vacation in Hamburg or something. He said he arrived and produced the letter. He said it was just so awful what Carter had done, and Schmidt was completely speechless. Everybody was speechless. Couldn't believe it. Anyway, that's a digression, but we were involved in all of that.

Q: Were you feeling, I mean as one looks at this thing, a little bit uneasy about what your marching orders really were?

BOHLEN: No, because I think on the Soviet desk we were pretty much on the Vance line, the Vance-Shulman line, and we were there to try to counter some of this propaganda. I think Brzezinski was seen as the enemy. As so often happens, you get in your little cocoon, and you think you are fighting a good fight. That was clear. Also, I was really very junior, so I did what people told me. I would just say also on this period that I was a new Foreign Service Officer there, and I had arrived. I was a little uneasy that people would regard me as an interloper because I hadn't come up through the ranks. I hadn't done the consular bit, I hadn't stamped visas, and I wondered if people would regard me as illegitimate somehow. I was really taken in from the word "go," and that was very wonderful for me.

Q: It could work both ways. Your name Bohlen, you know. You came from one of the most distinguished American diplomats, particularly dealing in Soviet affairs. Sometimes that would work for you and sometimes against you.

BOHLEN: I think it worked for me in a sense that people were predisposed to think well of me. If I was Chip Bohlen's daughter, I must be smart, I must know something, and I was probably hard working. Until they saw evidence to the contrary, they were disposed to think well of me. Then it really worked out very well, and I don't think I ever felt that it obviated the necessity to work hard and to prove myself. It was nice the way people would say, "Well, we worked with your father". It made me feel like I was part of the family.

Q: Which you were.

BOHLEN: Which I was!

Q: You know, Foreign Service kids. It's they type of profession you can't help but include them. You're at the dinner table every day in a difficult country.

BOHLEN: Yes. So you imbibe a lot of stuff with your father's notes. That was a very nice thing. Everybody was very supportive. It was the beginning of the period when

people were…that the lateral entry program was part of that, but people were beginning to realize that women, and minorities, were way underrepresented.

Q: What were you doing? You arrived there, and you have arms control on your plate, but obviously you're just one part of a machine. What else was in your portfolio?

BOHLEN: Endless briefing papers for the Secretary, for Marshall Schulman, for George Vest who was the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, for Bill Luers who was our Deputy Assistant Secretary. That then, as today, occupied a great deal of one's time. And then there were endless meetings. The European Bureau was obviously not the originator of arms control proposals, but I went to all the other agency meetings. It was actually a good specialty to have because it brought me in touch with a lot of people from other bureaus and a lot of people from other agencies as well. I loved the Geneva experience. That was great fun.

Q: On the Washington side, what role did ACDA—Arms Control and Disarmament Agency—play at that time?

BOHLEN: Paul Warnke was head of it by that time. [Ed: Warnke succeeded Iklé and served from 1977 to 1978.] He was on it…I can't remember when it was that he was on it… He was head of some of the delegations that I went on, the SALT delegation to start with and also the chemical weapons and the Comprehensive Test Ban. He was a very powerful force within the State Department. He had Vance's ear. He was a very controversial figure, and he resigned…when did he resign?...I think when Carter reversed himself and decided to authorize the B-1 bomber. He was a wonderful man whether one agreed with him or not.

Q: Did you find that he used you? I realize you were relatively junior, but did he work well with the Soviet Bureau Office?

BOHLEN: He did. He didn't work directly with me except when I was on his delegation, but ACDA partly because I'd worked there before, so I knew all the people. I had very good relations with him. We were all committed to doing this treaty. Then we went out to Geneva and Paul was really a very inclusive as head of Delegation. ACDA has never really had a lot of clout. It was a body that was mandated, whose creation was mandated by Congress, and it had very strong support in Congress. Within the administration, it was never a player that could rival the Defense Department or the State Department. In a way the dynamics of the inter-agency consensus was that the Defense Department held up the far right and sometimes supported by the CIA and sometimes not. Then far left was ACDA, so the State Department could be in the middle. Once ACDA ceased to exist, then the State Department moved to the far left.

Q: With the Defense Department, were there many joint meetings with them?

BOHLEN: There were endless inter-agency meetings. I remember particularly I used to go to all of the NSC meetings which were chaired by Jim Thompson who is now head of

RAND, and this was sort of the working level. I remember Walt Slocum represented the Defense Department. I was one of two State Department people who used to go. There were endless discussions, and particularly towards the end when the criticism was mounting and the opposition was becoming old and very deciferous to the Defense Department was reflecting some of this to some degree. There were some very hard decisions to be taken, so that was interesting.

Q: I imagine that verification was the key issue.

BOHLEN: Not really, because we were talking about capping at that point—capping the number of missiles, capping different types of missiles, heavy missiles in particular. For that the national technical means was largely sufficient. It was only later that you needed an intrusive verification that you got in the START treaties. The most difficult issues had to do with the lack of… The Soviets were building their so-called Heavy missile, and all the treaty did was to cap the top level that these missiles could reach, but it was a level that was in the future. So, when people said we didn't cut any weapons; that was absolutely true. We even allowed an increase. They were an increase in the kind of weapons that….. They said that the Soviets would have such power to destroy us that we would be completely immobilized. So that was one issue, but there was nothing to be done about that. There was something called the "backfire bomber". Whether it was a long-range heavy bomber as we chose to contend or whether it was a long-range tactical bomber which is the kind that it was, it had a very long range. I think that was one of the most difficult ones. There were a lot, but it took a long time to negotiate that agreement, and I think that's one of the things that helped to sink it in the end, and Vance and Gromyko had to meet to solve these issues. They'd have to go to that high level, and they were meeting almost once a month at the end.

Q: Could you, sitting down with various groups, particularly the military, come to an agreement or did almost everything have to get pushed up?

BOHLEN: A lot had to get pushed up at the end. There were issues that could be worked out at the lower levels. The military…you always have to make distinctions between the uniformed military and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The uniformed military were always quite favorable to arms control because it gave them a predictable framework within which they could do their own planning. So that was the treaty, and that was one of the things that I was most involved with. Never really as a technical expert but as somebody who was supposed to understand the Soviet angle.

Q: Talking about this sort of the theory of MAD—Mutually Assured Destruction—sort of comes up. I mean, how much is enough or how much is too much when you're talking about the missiles which were already in place. It would seem that no matter what happened, we had reached the overkill proportion already. Was the feeling, "OK, well do this while we still have this overkill." But this is the first step in bringing it down, was that it?

BOHLEN: That was very much the view of those who supported the treaty. They recognized that it was an imperfect agreement. They saw it as the first of a progression of agreements that ultimately would lead to reductions. Of course, the right wing didn't see it that way.

Q: What was the role of Brzezinski? Was it the NSC (National Security council) or was just Brzezinski molding the NSC into a team, or was it almost Brzezinski doing his thing with Carter? How did you see that?

BOHLEN: It would be hard for me to say that because I wasn't really operating at that level. I would say it was very bitter, this competition between Vance and Brzezinski. Some of that, of course, was reflected at the working level because it can't be otherwise, but on the whole I would say there was quite good inter-agency cooperation is my recollection of it. But again, I was really at the bottom of the totem pole.

Q: Given your position, when were you in Geneva? When were these talks going on?

BOHLEN: They went on permanently. They would occasionally recess for a month or so, but they were in permanent session. After Warnke resigned, the head of the delegation was (ACDA Director) Ralph Earle [Ed: who served as Director from 1980 and 1981. From 1978 to 1979 he served as the United States' chief negotiator at the SALT II round of talks on nuclear disarmament]. The State Department would send somebody in rotation out there. They had a permanent representative, who was Herbert Okun, and then they had a junior person to support Herb, and that person came out in rotation. I went out I think three times, and somebody from the Political-Military Bureau went out, somebody from (EUR/)RPM (Office of Security and Political Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs) and EUR (Bureau of European Affairs). Various people. We would do reporting and help draft plenary statements and so on and so forth.

Q: What was your impression of the negotiations that you were observing, how the Soviets worked on this?

BOHLEN: It was a very formalized style of negotiations because the mistrust in Washington was so great, and I dare say the mistrust in Moscow. We had plenary statements, plenary meetings. We would sit on opposite sides at a long table, and Ralph Earle would read his statement, then Victor Karpov would read his statement. Victor Karpov was frequently drunk. He had a real alcohol problem, so sometimes he would get very wound up, and we would have these angry exchanges at the table which were done partly for home consumption. Androv would reply in time. And then you had the military people who would meet with the military people. Herb Okun had his counterpart who was the number two in the Soviet delegation. Ralph Earle and Karpov would go off and meet in separate groups, but these were also very stylized meetings. I think the real work got done when there was a decision to move on something. Then Ralph would meet with Karpov, but always with the note takers, so there would be a record of what he said. I think Ralph had no choice but to play it very straight and very up front. As I say. A lot of

the negotiating at the end was done at the Vance-Gromyko level. And that was the only thing that…

Q: Did a sense of camaraderie develop between the Soviet delegation and the American delegation?

BOHLEN: Not a whole lot. The KGB was always sort of watching. People had developed a relationship over the years, but it always was rather distant. We would do a reception and the Soviets would do a reception, and we'd all stand around and talk to each other. We'd fall into the same little groups. We would troll for nuggets, but there were very rarely any nuggets! The SALT I negations, which, of course, had been much earlier, there you had really interesting discussions because it was the first time. Nitze has written about this. His counterpart was Academician Shoopkin who came from a very Moscow intelligentsia background and felt free to discuss things in a much more free-wheeling way than was the case. Because the politics of these arms control agreements were so very vicious, there was considerable mistrust. I think the later negotiations became very formalized and really there was not much interplay, much intimacy. I remember, just as an anecdote, Ralph Earle had a very nice residence. It was on Lake Geneva. He decided he was going to give a barbeque for the Soviet delegation. He sent the invitations and said to dress informally. They didn't get the message, so all the ladies arrived in their best garden party dresses, and there we all were in blue jeans. It was an absolutely freezing cold day, just bitterly cold. And there we were…this could only be in June in Switzerland, in Europe. We wandered around. There was a Soviet admiral who went over and stood looking out on the grey waters of Lake Geneva and said, "Just like Murmansk!" No one really felt like drinking beer, and that's all there was. The chicken was frozen and wouldn't defrost. Finally Ralph went inside and fetched a few bottles of cognac which disappeared immediately! It was a very funny occasion. That was one sort of humorous occasion that I remember. But as I said earlier, when the time came to sign the treaty, there was really a lot of good will in that room. Everybody was happy to have done this. They felt that they had worked hard to…

Q: What happened to the SALT II Treaty?

BOHLEN: It was in trouble from the start. The President submitted it to the Senate, there were hearings, and it was supported, actually, by almost everybody who had testified including Kissinger and Ford who supported it because Carter, in the meantime, had increased the defense budget. He reversed himself and approved the B-1 bomber and the MX missile, so it was what I called the Law of Arms Control Agreements that they not only dealt limit arms but they lead to a ratcheting up of the defense budget. This was certainly the case. It was supported grudgingly by all these people in the hearings, but then of course the Nitze-Rostow group, the Coalition for… But they were mounting a huge campaign in the country against it. I think this was having an effect because the Soviets were continuing their unrestrained policies elsewhere in Angola, etc. In the middle of the summer you had the Cuban Brigade that we talked about earlier, and Frank Church, a senator from Idaho, said he couldn't support the treaty unless the Soviets withdrew these people. Then it turned out they had been there all along, and so

everybody looked ridiculous. It's a debate whether the treaty would have passed, but it was certainly in trouble. In December 1979 the Soviets went into Afghanistan.

This had been building up. I remember my colleague who followed Afghanistan was watching the situation, and when they finally openly invaded, he said, "There's nothing left to really call an invasion because their presence is already so extensive," that is, the fact that they were already *de facto* occupying Afghanistan. So then the President withdrew the treaty from Senate consideration, and there were a whole bunch of retaliatory measures that he took including the grain embargo. I remember that very well because we were asked to come in, all of us, over the Christmas holidays, and we were asked to put together a series of papers of how we should react to this. I was asked to do a paper about how could we maintain a mutual restraint in the treaty, a sort of mutual restraint in the treaty, sort of *de facto* observance, and were there pressures that would undo the treaty if it wasn't ratified and things coming in line. In fact, the treaty continued to be observed till 1985, if you remember.

Q: This happens sometimes. You have a treaty that doesn't get ratified but it becomes the frame of reference for actions.

BOHLEN: What was interesting was to fast forward a few years; Reagan came to office denouncing the SALT II treaty as unequal and dangerous for American security. He continued the policy that was called "The policy of not undercutting the treaty limits", and he continued that until 1985, I think much to the rage of the conservatives.

Q: While you were doing these negotiations, I think of two powers we represented, one, the allies, particularly the British, but the other NATO countries. Did they have observers there?

BOHLEN: Not at the negotiations. Ralph Earle would go after every session with the Russians and would debrief the NATO council. I think the Allies generally had a rather ambivalent attitude towards these negotiations. On the one hand, they were for everything that would allow them to continue their policy of détente that would not create tensions in Europe with the Soviet Union. On the other hand, they always felt nervous about the idea that we were going over their heads, negotiating directly with the Soviets about something on which that they didn't have any input in. So they were a bit ambivalent and of course the French at that time were very much opposed to the whole idea of arms control. I think officially they supported it, but there was this little undercurrent of reserve. They were not participants in it. We certainly didn't share everything with them.

Q: Did the Senate have an observer? Ever since the League of Nations, whenever we've got anything that has to be with the Senate's approval, there's been a tendency to put a senator in there.

BOHLEN: There was something called the Senate Arms Control Observer Group which would come and… I'm sorry, I don't think the Observer Group existed until the later negotiations. I would have to check that. But certainly there were individual senators who

came. The rule that was applied then and was followed later was that the head of the delegation would set up as many opportunities as they want to meet with the Soviet negotiators, would give them briefings in our bubble in the delegation, but they could not attend the actual negotiations. That remained the rule for senate observer groups up until the Bush administration. There haven't been any negotiations since.

Q: Did you have a Soviet counterpart or did the delegation go down to that level?

BOHLEN: They didn't go down that far. I mentioned that smaller groups that they broke into and I would go with Herb Okun. I can't remember who his counterpart was. I would take detailed notes. They were extremely boring conversations unless the Soviets had a message they wanted to pass or unless we had a message we wanted to pass.

Q: Did these negotiations take place, as so many do, that each side give their statement? It's the same statement that's been said again and again and again, and you're looking for a change.

BOHLEN: You're looking for the nuggets. Yes, and you know, so many of these issues are really very, very technical, and so when the Soviets would… I mean, every move was heralded in advance. One of these groups would get a hint that the Russians were going to have something new to say in the plenary and maybe even it would be adumbrated in a little more detail, usually Karpov. If it was a major thing Karpov would tell Ralph, and then there would be a plenary statement laying it out. I think the plenary statements *per se* didn't often produce surprises.

Q: Was there any feeling on our side looking at the Soviets that you're really looking at a faltering and aged regime in the Kremlin?

BOHLEN: Absolutely not at that point. This was the moment. It was sort of the last flash in the pan of the Soviets. In a way I would say, they felt in a way emboldened by the vacillations of the Carter regime, and they were feeling their oats in a lot of Third War spots as we discussed previously in Africa, the Horn of Africa, Angola. There was a great feeling in the United States, even in the world that the Soviets were somehow on the move and the U. S. was caught in these vacillations, there was the Iran hostage thing that already happened, and Carter was a very weak president. There was a huge debate going on. We looked very much on the defensive, and then ten years later you had a reversal because the Soviets were unable to sustain this advance at all, and it was really a last flash in the pan that disguised the terrible weaknesses that were going on. So no, you did not have the sense that you began to have… Maybe starting at the end of the Carter administration, but certainly into Reagan who was exactly the reverse, and then it seemed like the United States was on the move and the Soviets were run by this gerontocracy.

Q: Let's go back to the Soviet invasion…interference in Afghanistan. What was the bureau thinking? I've always been puzzled about exactly what the Soviets were after on this? What was the interpretation on what they were up to?

BOHLEN: I think that the interpretation was that they were, if you remember all the confused goings-on in Afghanistan before the invasion, that there had been a coup by the pro-Moscow party...

Q: *It was a communist coup against the communist government.*

BOHLEN: That's right, and they had overthrown the King whenever it was, and there were these two factions fighting, and Moscow's faction was overcome. In a sense they went in to protect their equities there, but also, we all concluded the Soviets felt they had nothing left to lose. A restraining factor in earlier months might have been that they… There was the SALT Treaty, there was the relationship with the United States, with the West, that would be jeopardized by doing this. I think by December of 1979 they probably had judged that there was nothing to be lost because the United States relationship couldn't go any lower, and the SALT II probably was not going to be resolved.

Q: Did you get any nuggets of how we could stick it to the Soviets while you were sitting there?

BOHLEN: I can't say that I did. Again, I think we were concerned not to totally jettison the benefits of the treaty, but I think my office—I personally didn't—but I think my office might have been the ones that came up with the idea of the grain embargo. We had been seeing this coming, and so the State Department loves to do contingency scenarios. We had been asked to look at some reprisal issues. Of course, the grain embargo was so ironic because it did hurt the Soviets, but it hurt U. S. farmers even more, and the first thing Ronald Reagan did was to lift it.

Q: Also, the Olympics thing enraged the Soviets, but got all our Allies mad because they wanted to go to the Olympics. In a way it politicized the Olympics more than it probably should have.

BOHLEN: Right.

Q: The invasion was in December of 1979. When did you leave for your next assignment?

BOHLEN: I left in March of 1980.

Q: What were you doing after Afghanistan and the treaty was obviously not going anywhere. Nothing was going to happen with the Soviets at least in the near future. What were you up to?

BOHLEN: What was I up to? Good question. I think I began to get involved in the INF (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces) debate. Remember, the prior administration decided it was going to show its toughness by deploying a new nuclear weapon in Europe.

Q: The Soviets had introduced the SS-20, and we were going to respond with a Pershing and the Cruise Missile.

BOHLEN: Cruise Missiles. In reality I think a lot of the motivation… We interpreted the SS-20 as being something that was aimed at the intimidation of Western Europe because it had that range. Schmidt had been the first one who said we needed to respond to it. He didn't say respond with the deployment of a new missile. The reality of the SS-20 I think was a lot more ambiguous. It was replacing an older missile, and the Soviets could not manage to make it bigger, more bang for the buck or so on and so forth. So that may not have been its original intention, but it was starting to be deployed, and the Carter administration was so much on the defensive everywhere that they said we really must stand up to this. With a lot of arm twisting they got the Allies to sign on to the deployment of the Pershings and the cruise missile. [Ed: For an academic treatment see: http://csis.org/files/publication/101221_Leonard_poni_essay.pdf .] With the proviso that the Allies insisted on that we also have an arms control track, so it was known as the Dual Decision. It took a huge amount of arm twisting. That was something that I became involved with. I really can't remember very specifically what I was. But in March I was asked to go to RPM, also in the European Bureau, which is the Office of Regional Political Military Affairs. That's where I was almost exclusively concerned with the INF decision.

Q: Now the media played up maps showing red arrows pointing through Iran, through Pakistan to warm water. It was a replay of Peter the Great practically. Was this taken seriously by the Soviet office?

BOHLEN: I don't think we really took it very seriously. Brzezinski took it very seriously. He wrote and spoke a lot about this and a "push to the south" and so on. I think to the best of my recollection, we always had a more limited view that the Soviet invasion was really rooted in their need to protect their equities. And, of course, it gave them an advantageous strategic position there. They were alive to that opportunity, but whether they had plans to go further, I think we were somewhat skeptical around the question of resources.

Q: Just to capture the mood. Was the Iran hostage, which didn't seem to be near any solution, a factor in U.S. thinking? Was this a feeling that we were showing our weakness?

BOHLEN: I think it was very much seen as a sign of weakness that we couldn't do anything about it, and the failed rescue effort which lead to Vance's resignation. And then, of course, you had Muskie who was there about two minutes, and who was not a strong secretary. So the State Department was sad.

It wasn't a good time, and everybody felt very depressed about it, by the events going on. It really was the end of an era. No question about that.

Q: Avis, in the spring of 1980 you were in RPM.

BOHLEN: My position was what was then called the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the unit that dealt with strategic affairs and arms control. I think they're not called offices anymore; they're all called Deputy Directors. Title inflation. There were three of us in RPM. I did the nuclear stuff, and our other arms control. The big issue at the time was what was called the Dual Track Decision that had been taken by NATO in December of 1979. The decision was to deploy, in a number of NATO countries, ground launch Cruise missiles, and Pershing II's, weapons that could reach the Soviet Union from European soil and that were seen as an answer to the Soviet SS-20 which had raised a certain amount of alarm in Europe. One track was the deployment, and the other track was the arms control track because the Europeans had not wanted to go along unless there was also an attempt to find a negotiated solution to the problem. This was a very, very controversial decision. It was opposed by publics in many European countries. The governments were very firm on the decision, but they had a big problem with public opinion. The worst thing was that we had three years before the first missile could be deployed, because they weren't sitting in a warehouse somewhere in the United States. They were still coming off the production line. You had to really maintain alliance cohesion and solidarity for this entire period. I came into RPM just as the decision had been taken; I think it was in March.

The idea of what negotiations we would have was just getting under way, and a group had been formed in NATO called the Special Consultative Group which was chaired by the U.S. official who was Reggie Bartholomew who was in the PM Bureau Assistant Secretary at that point. [Ed: Bartholomew, a career Foreign Service officer, served as PM Assistant Secretary from July 1979 to January 1981.] We were just getting going on what ideas might go into this. It was really a very exciting thing to be involved with, and I was a member of one of the U.S. delegations that would go to one these Special Consultative Group meetings, SCG as we called them. I worked really very closely with all the people in the Political Military Bureau, with Reggie Bartholomew, who was always a very fun person to work for. He was so bright and very active, and he really involved people. He loved nothing better than to have a meeting of all the people who might be involved with a particular issue. He would go through all the pros and cons. Some people used to complain that his meetings would go on too long, and we would endlessly rehash the same thing. I don't have that recollection. I think it was a productive way to work, and it certainly made all of us feel very involved in the effort at hand. I really have a very good memory of those years. I was the person from the European Bureau who was involved in this process. The Political Military Bureau ran it, and that had been a source of some unhappiness to certain in the EUR Bureau. By the time I got there, that had been decided.

The other two sections in RPM, apart from the section that I dealt with, dealt with political affairs, the running of NATO. We had then a very active institution which was called the QUAD, the political directors of Britain, France and Germany, and the Assistant Secretary for EUR would meet once a month or thereabouts to talk about the state of the world. It was a very, very productive and important instrument for dealing with issues and trying to come to an agreement among the four before we took the issue

to NATO. It was supposed to be a secret, but it was an open secret to the other members of NATO, and they were not very happy with it.

It was a very important instrument, and it's fallen into disrepair now which, I think, is a great mistake. I think a lot of things could have been avoided if we'd had it. But that was then and this is now. There was a third section in addition to the Political, the Strategic, there was one that dealt with defense issues. Conventional defense.

Q: But you were on the nuclear side.

BOHLEN: It was the Office of Strategic Affairs. I think I said earlier it was Strategic Affairs and Arms Control. I think that was the right title. And so, this was a very exciting time to be there.

Q: RPM has gone through various configurations, but wasn't this a period of time when RPM really had, you might say, the best and the brightest?

BOHLEN: It absolutely did. It was a very prestigious office. I think that and the Office of Soviet Affairs which I had dealt with, had been in before, as we discussed last time. They were the two most prestigious offices in the bureau. RPM in particular was a powerhouse of ideas. It was where the Assistant Secretary looked for bright ideas about how to handle a particular problem, and we wrote papers for the Secretary. I think it was just filled with the most wonderful people. It was a real privilege to serve there. I think our assignments were very much coveted, and I was very grateful to have been selected. I think the reason I was chosen was because of the RPM Office Director Charlie Thomas. He was a wonderful man, and I think he felt very strongly about bringing women along, so he was really very helpful to me a number of times. I think I was certainly the most…I don't think there were any other women at that time in RPM. He was DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) in Belgium, I guess, but later he was Ambassador to Hungary [Ed: Thomas, a career Foreign Service Officer, was ambassador to Hungary from July 1990 to January 1994 and has recorded his Oral History for ADST].

Q: You mentioned that there was a lot of opposition in Europe to just putting the missiles in. How was the dual track approach viewed within the Department and viewed by the Carter administration and then the Reagan administration? Did that have a lot of support?

BOHLEN: Within the Carter administration, I think it was recognized as the price that had to be paid to get the deployment through. Maybe I should say a few words about the deployment because I think looking back on it, it's very clear to me—much clearer than it was at the time—that this was a very political decision. There was concern in Europe as I mentioned about the SS-20 deployment. Helmut Schmidt had given a very famous speech in l975, but that seems to me too early. But anyway, at some point he gave a very famous speech at the IISS in London, the International Institute of Strategic Studies. He said there is great concern in Europe about this new Soviet weapon that is coming on line, the SS-20 which replaced an existing system, but it had three times as many warheads. It had

a triple warhead. It was bigger and more powerful and, therefore, alarming. Part of the cause of European unhappiness about this was that they felt—I think I described in our last session—the intensity of Vance's efforts to try and reach agreement with the Soviets on SALT. They saw all this going on, Vance meeting once a month with Gromyko trying to limit the intercontinental missiles but not doing anything about the missiles that were a threat to Europe. The Europeans as I'm sure you remember were always of two minds about the United States and the Soviet Union getting together and resolving things. They didn't want us to be in odds, but they didn't like us going over their heads, either. In the meantime, here were the SS-20's, and they would be totally unaffected by the SALT agreement. That was part of the concern.

I think many strategists felt there really was not much strategic justification for doing the deployments in the sense that the U. S. nuclear forces in the U. S. could always could and would be targeted on the SS-20. There was the argument that it was important to have something on the European soil that would be there to be used in the case that the SS-20 was used, and that was important for the Europeans in one way, but they also the fact that a new nuclear deployment on their soil was not wildly popular also. But I think what drove the decision to a very large degree was less the strategic rationale for it than the feeling that the Carter administration was kind of in retreat around the world and pushed around by the Soviets in Angola and Afghanistan. We needed to show resolve. That was the favorite Cold War word: Resolve. And this was one way of doing it, and I think the memoirs of the period really show this. Of course, it was designed to answer European anxieties, but it created as many problems, if not more, for the Europeans as it did to solve their anxieties. Schmidt later claimed he had never envisaged that there would be a new deployment. He supported the deployment, but there were a lot of second thoughts. In time, it became a test of the alliance solidarity.

Q: Europeans in general were afraid that if you just have missiles pointed at them, we can sit back and let them suffer. Then if we were coming up with this as an answer to that, why did they object?

BOHLEN: Because they were always very ambivalent about this. On one hand they worried that weapons in the United States would never be used to defend Europe because it would invite a retaliatory attack on the United States. On the other hand, having nuclear weapons in Europe made them even more of a target for Soviet nuclear weapons than they would have been otherwise; therefore, there would be the American temptation to fight a nuclear war on European soil. They were always afraid that we wouldn't use our nuclear weapons to defend them, and that's why in NATO you had this debate about nuclear doctrine. Europeans always wanted to have immediate release of nuclear weapons.

So you had endless decades of argument about nuclear doctrine and NATO and how quickly we would use nuclear weapons. In the end it was fudged. You had graduated response, flexible response, and so on to try to determine the point at which you would use nuclear weapons, and the Europeans would like us to have used it as soon as the Soviet troops came over the border.

Q: Were you involved in the negotiations on this, or were you mainly working the Washington side?

BOHLEN: I was mainly working the NATO side of it. I was very involved in the negotiations within NATO, and every time we put forward a position in NATO it had to be negotiated with the other allies because this was very, very controversial.

Q: Could you go through some major NATO allies and how they were responding at this time and how we dealt with it?

BOHLEN: The British as always were very… I would say all the governments were pretty stalwart. People compare this debate with the debate over Iraq, and they say, "Oh well." At the time of the INF deployments there was a huge public opinion against it, and that is true, just as there was in the run-up to the Iraq war. The difference was that the governments were with us because even though this created huge domestic problems for them, they felt it was very important to show alliance solidarity, because once we made this decision the Soviets started a huge peace offensive aimed at the peace groups in Europe, and they felt it was very important not to cave under Soviet pressure. Whatever, right or wrong, we had to stick together at that point. The governments were with us. The British were, I think, very instrumental, as always, in trying to shape the debate within NATO, to alert us to possible difficulties in trying to shape compromise positions, and to soften United States rhetoric a bit. There was a huge peace movement in Britain, the Green Uncommon Ladies, do you remember them? They camped out where we stored some of our nuclear weapons. They were very active and very vocal, so the British government was always sensitive to the need to deal with public opinion, to be seen to be negotiating, to be seen to sincerely be trying to reach some kind of accommodation with the Soviets.

The French were later to play a very important role, not at this juncture. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was still the president. They were maintaining their aloof position from NATO so they would quietly say to us, "We think it's very important to hold firm, but we can't get involved." As it turned out as we found out later, there was a very vigorous debate going on within the French government, people arguing that France was isolating itself by staying aloof from all these debates and denying itself a place at the table.

Germany was probably in a way the most exposed. There was a whole party that came into being basically over this whole issue: The Green Party. There were all these very colorful characters like Patrick Kelly who used to demonstrate. The Germans, even though there was always a lot of suspicion in Washington that the Germans were going to go soft, and they would cave, and they would not stick to it, but they were admirably firm and Helmut Schmidt never wavered in his support for this even when he was later replaced by Kohl. They, again, were under enormous pressure to be seen to be negotiating with the Soviets, to be seen to be trying to reach an agreement.

With Italy I think public opinion was not so much of a factor. Somehow, the farther south you went the more cynical people became. It was to some degree, but it wasn't the way it was in Germany. In Belgium and in the Netherlands which were both countries where the deployments were supposed to take place, this was a big, big problem. In the Netherlands particularly where, again, the government was absolutely with the Alliance, but the public opinion and a number of political parties were very insistent and persistent in pushing the arms control convention. From all these countries there was an endless stream of not very helpful suggestions about how we might reach an agreement with the Russians. We spent a lot of time dealing with this. I would say during the Carter administration to a degree…I remember there was only one session in Geneva because…I should be more…I should remember the dates better…but I'm trying to remember how many sessions we had in Geneva with the Soviets.

Q: Well, you were assigned to RPM in the spring of 1980 and Carter was out by January of 1981.

BOHLEN: Right. When I came in in March we were still working on the negotiating proposal at NATO. So we didn't actually have talks until the fall. I think in Washington and probably in some of the European capitols, it was always understood that this was going to be a waiting game because we were not very optimistic that the Soviets would come up with a proposal that we would find acceptable that would be important enough to give up the deployments which at that point were seen as an important political message. We were all rather pessimistic about the negotiations, and the issue was how to manage the alliance relationship, how to help allied governments manage their public opinion. So we put forward a proposal in Geneva, and I think that occurred in the fall just before the elections. The pressure was, I mean, everybody understood we were preparing for negotiations, and the deployments were several years off, so I would say this was not as much a time of pressure as it was to become under the Reagan administration which had a different dynamic.

Q: You're drawing an interesting difference between now under the Bush II Administration and then, when it was an absolute given that we had to bring our European allies along on this whole…

BHOLEN: Of course. How could we deploy nuclear weapons in their countries without their consent? And I think generally about the Cold War. The Cold War was about Europe, so it was a necessity even when people chaffed at it. And, of course, when we got to the Reagan administration, a lot of the people who are running our policy today were very impatient with the Europeans and had no use for the INF decision because they thought the Europeans would always be wobbly and would back down under Soviet pressure and so on. But even they didn't dispute the need to consult the allies. I also think there was much more of a habit. It wasn't that people would say, "Oh, those darned Europeans", but we've got to consult with them." I think it was just taken for granted. It was part of the morés of the time.

Q: You were in RPM at the transition to the new Administration, the Reagan Administration; did it impact on you, because those administrations were supposedly from different domestic spectrums? Or, was it, "OK, we want to look at all our options. Don't do anything…"

BOHLEN: You make it sound as though it wasn't much of a change, but it was a total sea change in the… Everything ground to a halt. There were a lot of ideologues around. Very quickly the transition team was…I can't remember the name of the person who was head of it, but it was one of the ideologues, and they kind of came in, and it was a hostile take-over. Nobody knew what was going to happen, but everything ground to a halt in the fall after the election of 1980. As it happened, Alexander Haig came in as Secretary of State, and he sent this transition team packing.

Q: I'm told he had a reception for the transition teams and said, "Thank you very much for your help. There's the door."

BOHLEN: Right. "And there's the door." There were a lot of the ideologues still around, in particular in the Defense Department and in the Arms Control Agency where Gene Rostow was head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I can't remember what the sequence was. But there were a number of very ideological people in there, in particular a man called Michael Pillsbury who worked for Orrin Hatch for a long time. We felt in the changes at State Department and particularly the whole Political Military Bureau team changed. Reggie Bartholomew was a career officer, but he was not being kept on in that position. The new people took a long time to come in. So those of us who were left felt we were aware of this huge expectation on the part of the Europeans our there, and in the meantime Washington was taking its time reviewing the issues, appointing new people, and so on.. So there was very great time pressure from the European side which was not being necessarily reflected in Washington. We would try and move things along, and finally I think there was an agreement to schedule on of these meetings of the special consultative group, I guess by this time the transition was over. I think it was naïve of us, of those of us who had been carried over, to think that we could go back to just doing business in the same way we had been under the Carter administration. We tried to write papers that reflected that position. We ran into a lot of flack from some of these ideologues, and I remember Michael Pillsbury made a loud complaint about me because he said the career people are running it and not taking account of the fact that we have a new administration.

The Reagan administration was very much opposed to arms control. He campaigned on an anti-arms control ticket, but Haig did something very clever. He got Reagan to reaffirm the double track decision of December 1979. It essentially removed from discussion the issue of whether we should have a new position, and there were certainly those in the Defense Department who wanted to have a look at it because they didn't think it was justified strategically, and they didn't think it was important strategically, and they were very distrustful of the arms control dimension. So people like Richard Pearle I think would have been just as happy to can the whole thing. Wiser heads prevailed. It would have been a terrible signal I think to our European friends. That issue

was never seriously…that possibility was never seriously considered, and Haig got the President to approve the double track decision. Then we went ahead with preparation for the meeting of the special consultative group. People were very, very wary, and I remember Larry Eagleburger who was Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European Affairs…he must have been confirmed as Assistant Secretary…no, he was Assistant Secretary Designate, and normally you're not allowed to go and represent the United States at meetings, but he somehow got dispensation from Congress to do this. [Ed: Eagleburger served as Assistant Secretary for EUR from May 14, 1981 to January 26, 1982.] It was a very, very tense meeting within the United States delegation because the talking points had been very strictly crafted, and the really ideological watchdogs were out there in force. Eagleburger, a senior prominent figure, had to read word for word these talking points, and he also had to read word for word the talking points on the SALT negotiations which the allies were wondering what was happening to. He was not supposed to even answer any questions.

I can't remember if it was that meeting. I think it was. David Gompert was Eagleburger's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Strategic Affairs, so he was in charge of the…I've forgotten the exact sequence, but it was either this meeting or another one where I remember we had a glitch on the transmission of a cable so a text that was supposed to get to the allies before the meeting in fact did not get there until the meeting was just beginning. Typically, we had been fighting until the last minute in Washington about the text of what we were going to say to the allies, and so it didn't get out until very late at night. And then there was a glitch in the wonderful State Department transmission system, and it failed in the effect we'd hoped for which was to provide a reassuring message to the Europeans. And then Larry Eagleburger started not feeling well. He had already a bad heart, at that point. I think this part must have been a later meeting. David Gompert had to chair a later meeting, and Larry was not feeling well, and he was resting in an inside room. Of course, the allies were very unhappy that it was David Gompert—Who is David Gompert?—and not a senior representative. That got things off on the wrong foot.

The most important thing that I remember was the fight within the United States delegation where Larry answered some questions about the state of the SALT ratification, the state of the SALT negotiations. Michael Pillsbury felt that Larry had exceeded his instructions, this carefully scripted talking point that he had. He said in full view of everybody, he reminded everybody Larry that his confirmation had not yet gone through and after he was perceived to have exceeded his instructions. He said, "Larry, your ass is grass." It was a very shocking experience for those of us who had to sit through this to see somebody like Larry who we all admired tremendously and who was a great figure being made to jump through hoops like this.

The other thing that happened was that we had a split cable going back which in my experience had never happened before or since. The reporting cable reported anxiety among the allied delegations about how soon we were going to get back to negotiating with the Russians and Mission Geneva urging us to do this, creating a certain amount of pressure, though they understood it was early in the administration. There is no question

that anxiety and that pressure was there. The OSD (Office of the Secretary of Defense) representative and the ACDA representative insisted on putting a dissent in the cable, their own version of events. They said there's no pressure from the allies. They're quite relaxed with our approach. They just put their own spin on events into the body of the cable. When I got back to Washington they said, "What on earth was going on out there that you had this split cable?" So that was sort of was an augury of things to come, but we'd had our meeting.

Then we kept on pursuing this double track, and the big fight in Washington was working out the United States negotiating position. But the allies said, "But we have a negotiating position. We agreed on that under the Carter administration, and it's an allied position. You can't just change it like that." So there was a lot of back and forth, and the Reagan Administration did not commit for a long time to a date for resuming negotiations. Reagan had reaffirmed the double track decision, but from there to actually sitting down in Geneva was quite a long time. We battled on over the summer, and with Richard Pearle. Rick Burt in the meantime had become the Assistant Secretary of the Political Military Bureau, and one of his Deputy Assistant Secretaries was Jim Dobbins [Ed: who has recorded his Oral history with ADST], who was an old EUR hand.

And so within the State Department the ideologues had been banished. Haig had no use for them particularly. So he had the moderate conservatives in charge in the State Department, Larry Eagleburger and David Gompert in the European Bureau and Rick Burt, Bob Blackwell, who was the Principal Deputy, and Jim Dobbins in the Political Military Bureau. We were, I think, very much on the same wavelength. There were not huge fights between the two bureaus. It was very much the sort of the State Department against the crazies in the Defense Department and in ACDA.

Q: Did Haig, being a former NATO commander, he's someone who should know the terrain—did he give much support? Did you find him a…

BOHLEN: Yes. He gave very strong support to the Europeanists, to the moderates, and he believed firmly that we had to have consultations. Of course, he knew all the Europeans. There was no doubt in his mind how we had to proceed on this issue. Whether we liked it or not, we were committed. That was the only way we were going to bring the Europeans along. There was a huge amount at stake for the United States. He never wavered on that point. Eventually we agreed to resume in the fall…I just went through this when I was writing my article… want to say in November of 1981…I think that's right. And this was when Richard Perle came up with what became the famous Zero Option which was the idea that we would agree not to deploy our missiles if the Russians would agree to go to zero in the SS-20, also the older systems, the 4s and 5s. It was so obviously a propaganda position that was bitterly resisted by the State Department because we felt that it would just be seen as a propaganda ploy and not a serious negotiating position. It was also not welcome by the allies for exactly that same reason. They thought it was not a serious position. There was a lot of discussion about it, but in the end the Pentagon, Richard Pearle carried the day. It had been his idea, and it appealed to Reagan who liked these black and white propositions, and who made the not incorrect

charge that arms control had not really caught any weapons and really just capped the arms race. We needed to have bold new steps. This appealed to him, and it was a brilliant ploy because Pearle had resisted the opening of negotiations for a long time, but clearly he knew the handwriting was on the wall. He couldn't get away with blocking the negotiations to which the United States government had committed. So this is what I called the "anti-arms control arms control" proposal because it has the effect of self-destructing. It makes it totally impossible to reach an agreement. He was to do later the same thing with the START negotiation. Anyway, we managed to sell it to the allies because they saw this was the only way we would get back to the negotiating table. It did have a certain propaganda value. Reagan gave his speech about the Zero Proposal. So there we were in Geneva and putting forward this proposal. We had Paul Nitze as our negotiator, and a very able bunch of people. What's interesting is that Nitze, who had been one of the most fervent critics of arms control under Carter, became one of the ones who pushed most fervently for trying to find an actual solution with the Russians once he was in office. And he came to be quite distrusted by all the hawks.

Q: In this atmosphere, what were the hawks after, just unlimited weapons? That's sort of a non-plan because the Soviets would meet us with everything they had.

BOHLEN: Their view was first of all we had to build up our badly depleted defenses which was complete nonsense. Carter had started to do that the last year of his administration. The Reagan administration was just building on a 9% increase that Carter had approved. I think, some of them believed that by building up, first of all we would give the Soviets pause, but also that we might be able to spend the Soviets into bankruptcy, more soberly put that maybe the Soviets would not be able to match us in a military budget race which I think was correct, but I think they were incorrect in ascribing the reason for the end of the Cold War to that. It certainly exacerbated the strains that the Russians had been feeling for some time in their economy.

Q: How long were you in EUR/RPM?

BOHLEN: I did this for… let's see. I went in in March of 1980, and I guess I left in the summer of 1982.

Q: As a wrap-up, by the time you left, how stood things?

BOHLEN: By the time I left we had grudgingly agreed to go negotiate in Geneva, and we were, therefore, with the Zero Option. Pretty soon we began to have pressures from the allies and, indeed, from the State Department to get off this propaganda position and to have a negotiating proposal that would be seen as serious to our allies and by their domestic constituencies in particular. Every time, we ran up against a stone wall because the President liked the Zero Option, and he wasn't about to change. Weinberger had enormous influence with the President. By this time I think Haig resigned and Shultz was in, he was much more effective in dealing with the…

Q: Were you all seeing any movement on the Soviet part to say, "Well, maybe we should go with this."?

BOHLEN: No. I think the Soviets seemed convinced up to the end that they could persuade Western publics to oppose this to such a degree that governments would back down. They had launched after December 1979 the most intense propaganda campaign, and day after day they would thunder away at these messages, and they courted the peace movement, and so on and so forth. I think this whole episode had a lot to do with Gorbachev who comes on the scene two years later because it was the classic Soviet method of blustering and bullying which just turned the whole world against them. It was the most counter productive method you could imagine because even those who might have been lukewarm about the decision said, "The Soviets make it impossible for us to contemplate any other position." They just isolated themselves further as a result of this campaign, and they weren't able to stop the deployment.

Q: Picking up your career in l982, where did you go?

BOHLEN: I went to Paris as the Deputy Political Counselor and I served for three years to 1985.

Q: What was the political situation in France at that time? Then we'll talk about relations.

BOHLEN: Francoise Mitterrand had been elected President I think the previous year, 1981, and the first two years of his mandate and the Socialist government that he brought in tried some highfalutin economic experiments that served only to prove that France's economy, like that of the other European countries, was no longer independent of its European neighbors. He essentially tried a "go it alone" policy that brought about a lot of inflation and a flight of capitol. I arrived right in the middle of this. There was to be a big and very significant turnaround in l983, but in 1982 the Socialist experiment was still very much going on, and the economy was not in good shape at all. He had two Communist ministers in the government, and when he announced his intention to do this, the Reagan administration was extremely concerned, and they sent George Bush who was then Vice-President to talk to Mitterrand to convey our concern [Ed: in June 1981 after the French elections]. Bush didn't get very far though he was received courteously, but was essentially told to mind his own business. In fact, Mitterrand, who is one of the wiliest politicians in the last 50 years in France, understood that by embracing the communists he would probably greatly diminish their influence which is what happened. The Communist party was a viable partner when he came into office with the Socialists in 1981, but by the time he left 14 years later, they were a vestige of their former selves and have not played a significant role in France since the late 1980s. So that was the political background, and maybe to fast forward here, in 1983 the economic policies that he pursued for the first two years became untenable, so there was a radical shift from having been very loose on all sorts of economic criteria, the Mitterrand government became one of the most stringent and conservative in the fiscal sense and did a lot of things that governments of the right had not been able to do. They kept the unions in line,

they managed to trim a little bit benefits, or at least hold the line on benefits. They held the line on the strong currency, and the franc from that day forward has been really as strong as the German deutschmark. They did a lot of other things that facilitated life for business. So it was a complete turn around, and they pursued very what would have traditionally been called rightist policies in economics.

Q: What was your in your portfolio?

BOHLEN: Actually, I said I went as Deputy Political Counselor, but the first year I that I was there… because the idea was that I would be the Deputy Political Counselor when the person who was then Counselor left, and I can't remember who that was. I was given a job looking after the Latin America portfolio which was very amusing because I never, ever had anything to do with Central America or Latin America. One of the big fights we had with the Mitterrand government was their support of the Sandinistas government.

There was some talk about the French government giving them arms which didn't happen because we yelled and screamed. Mitterrand, as we will get to, was a very hard-line anti-Soviet in his European policies in sort of a geo-political sense, but I think he saw Latin American as something where he could let his Socialist allies give them a free hand. He had a man called Regis Debray in the government at that time who certainly knew Che Guevara and who'd had a rather flamboyant career.

Q: Didn't we save his bacon at one point? Wasn't he arrested and we had to go and get him out of somewhere?

BOHLEN: We might have done somewhere in the rebel hands, but he was pretty sympathetic to the rebels and Leftist causes. He was in the Elysees Palace in the first couple of years of the Mitterrand administration. He was a real sore point in our dealings with the administration, with the Mitterrand administration. He never would see anyone from the American embassy. Anyway, that was my portfolio, and I spent most of my time dealing with the part of the Quai that did Latin America where there were some very Leftist elements who were totally opposed to American policy in Central America as many of us were. That was one case where people ask you in the Foreign Service, "What do you do if you have to defend a policy you don't agree with?" As often happens, the position taken, the viewpoint espoused by the people who oppose the policy is so completely ridiculous and outrageous that you have no trouble being opposed to their policy even if you're not 100% for it.

Q: How did you feel about our policy towards the Sandinistas?

BOHLEN: I thought it was kind of crazy. I thought the hyperbolic rhetoric about the threat to the United States…I think there was a lot of exaggeration. I don't hold any grief for the Sandinistas, and I think it was a classic case of people who'd come to power because the previous government has been so corrupt and impossible. I think we tend to become obsessed about these things, and they tend to play themselves out. And that's

really what happened. I don't think our intervention made a huge difference one way or the other. But anyway, this was a very hot issue.

Q: You say you couldn't see Debray.

BOHLEN: No.

Q: Was there any thought among people who knew it? Where was he coming from? Was it just ideologue or…

BOHLEN: I never figured out whether it was really he didn't want to see Americans or if he didn't think I was high ranking enough. He might have seen Jack Maresca who was the DCM at the time. Jack didn't think he should go to see him, so it was one of those set of situations. I met him in later years. He's an interesting person. It's too bad. That was how it was. So that was one issue. The other issue was…

Q: Before we leave that issue. How about the Quai d'Orsay? Whom were you dealing with, how would you characterize where they were coming from. Where they political appointees or career diplomatic service?

BOHLEN: They were career people. There was one man in particular called Remy _____ who seemed very ideological. He was actually… French diplomats are civil servants like everyone else. You know the system. It's your ranking when you come out of the National School of Administration whether you go into the Quai or the finance ministry or whatever. He had worked on the non-diplomatic side of the Quai, that is, more personnel and administration issues. I don't know how he became involved in the politics of the Socialist party, but he was a very committed Socialist, and he was named head of one of the sub-directorates that dealt with Central America. The Quai at the time, the political director was a wonderful man, career diplomat, called Jacques Andreani who ended up as ambassador here in the 1990s [Ed: 1989-1995]. He knew America very well and had a very good sense of what was what. At the end of the day on this issue, and that's why I said Mitterrand was giving some of the Leftist elements their head, but he knew and people like Andreani knew where France's interests lay, and it was not in Central America. They had no huge interest there. Their interest was in the United States in Europe. In fact, they turned out to be very helpful on the Euro missile issue. This was a little bit the plaything of the Left. Do you remember a figure called Jack Lang who was the Minister of Culture, and he used to go to Cuba…

Q: He came back as Minister of Education not too long ago.

BOHLEN: That's right.

Q: Still around. I saw him on TV the other night.

BOHLEN: Still around. A very charismatic figure. He had run one of the most successful and creative innovative theaters in Nancy in Northeastern France. He used to go to see

Castro, and they would eat lobster on the rocks! I remember that was something they did. So this was another source of irritation.

Q: Was anybody from our side from the Ambassador or Political Counselor or from the Desk saying, "Cool it! This really isn't a great issue, and let's makes our statements but not press it because this really doesn't make any difference what the French do.

BOHLEN: I think that was the view. I never saw it explicitly stated. There was a lot of irritation. It was very much felt that this was not an area of France's vital interest, so they were doing it just to be annoying. So there was irritation, but I don't think there was any illusion that they were going to… I don't think Mitterrand would ever have authorized the sale of weapons to the Sandinistas. It wouldn't make sense. They just had bigger fish to fry elsewhere. Indeed, the other big issue apart from Central America and the Sandinistas was the Falklands War. [Ed: The war occurred from April 2 to June 14, 1982.] Was Falklands before Haig left? I'm just trying to remember [Ed: Haig departed on July 5, 1982]. I remember some things happening when I was still in the Department and Haig had sent my boss who was David Gompert down to talk to the generals to no avail. I think the hostilities didn't actually start until I got to France. Then what happened was very interesting because the Directorate of the Americas in the Quai, the man who was head of it was a man called Betrand Belhan. He was not pro-American at all. The people who headed that directorate, even though the United States fell in their bailiwick, the relations with the United States were always handled elsewhere at the higher level by the political director or by the people that dealt with NATO or the people that dealt with security issues. They were not well disposed towards the Anglo-Saxons in general, and when the war came they were busily writing papers showing how Britain's misfortune could be France's good luck, an opportunity to really get in there and establish themselves with the Argentines where I don't think France had a huge presence probably compared to the Brits. They were looking for the window of opportunity, but this wasn't Mitterrand's view at all, and he was—and I heard this from British diplomats—he was the first to call up Mrs. Thatcher and to say, "You're quite right to respond to force. One must resist the use of force, and we are with you 100%." And apparently this completely changed Mrs. Thatcher's view of Mitterrand because she saw that he was a hard-headed thinker about strategic issues.

Q: The same way with de Gaulle. At a certain point…

BOHLEN: That's right. That's right. They're serious people, and Mitterrand was not somebody who ever let ideology cloud his thinking on this issue. In fact, they were much quicker to support Britain than we were. We were, if you remember, fiddling around trying to show balance. But, we helped the Brits a lot with stuff, with materiel, but publicly we were trying to balance it, and understandably so. I think that was an important moment for Franco-British relations which later played into the Euro missile debate.

Q: Did the French ARA (State Department Bureau of Inter-American Affairs)--or whatever you call it—did they have trouble shifting gears?

BOHLEN: Yes. They'd been busy writing all these policy papers about "This Is Our Great Chance!" and the President cut it out from under them. In fact, France was very supportive of Britain in the Security Council.

Q: During this Falklands crisis, did you make any approach at your level to the French on this, or were we showing our problems?

BOHLEN: I'm not sure that we dealt with the French on this. I can't remember that I did. I think if there'd been anything, it would have been at a higher level than me. Basically, (John J.) Jack Maresca, who had arrived just a few months before I did, was very much a hand-on DCM.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

BOHLEN: Evan Galbraith. That's another story. I can't really remember making a demarche of any significance. There might have been something about ships that were stuck in ports. Did we have an embargo?

There was a lot of dithering, but for understandable reasons. I think the sentiments of most Latin Americans were with the Argentineans. Not all, because they are not very popular in Latin America, and I think there was a feeling that they got what was coming to them. But not a very pro-British feeling, and so we didn't want to seem to be the big powers ganging up against Latin America. I think it was a real dilemma, but on the other hand, the use of force was what was compelling for Mitterrand.

Q: Did Cuba hit your radar at all while you were doing this?

BOHLEN: It was part of the Central American thing because France, like most European countries, had relations with Cuba, and as I say, people like Jack Lang kept going there and having long lunches with him. So this was part of the irritation that I think they had. I'm trying to remember now… There was something about… Mitterrand staked out a policy in which for different parts of the world in which different countries were going to be the long pole in the tent, and I think he made Nicaragua the long pole in the tent for the policy toward Central America. As I say, it was really more words than it was action. I think another thing that went down well in Washington even before the Euro missile issue came up, Mitterrand, the French Socialists have traditionally been quite close to the Israeli labor party, so they had better relations. He made it a point to have better relations with Israel than the government of the right did. There were certainly limits to this, but I think that was welcome in Washington.

Q: Were you able to get out and meet Socialist leaders?

BOHLEN: Oh, yes. That's one of the things that I did. As I said, Jack Maresca had brought me there with the idea of making me Deputy Political Counselor eventually, and so he very much encouraged me to go out and to meet people. I did that. The political

Counselor was a wonderful guy who really was on the point of retirement. His name was Francis DeTarr, and he just had a different style than Jack and Evan Galbraith. I can't remember who had the position before I did. It's so very strange. Anyway, Jack often used me if he's have lunches with interesting people. I became bit of the political section's connection to that sort of policy, intellectual policy, public policy world which was fascinating. I had a wonderful time.

Q: One of the themes I always like to explore because I've never run across it anywhere else is the intellectuals as a group and their influence on policy. Were these what you'd call "intellectual class" at that time, were they all more or less creatures of the left?

BOHLEN: It was very interesting because by the time I got there, and this starts a few years earlier, but it was sort of in full flower by the time I got there, and it really in a sense flowered because the Socialist government was in power. They were more anti-Soviet than any intellectual class in Europe at that time, whereas the Germans were still fussing about offending the Soviet Union, and the British left was equally soft-headed…

Q: The British labor group was still holding hands and singing "The Red Flag Forever".

BOHLEN: That's right. Really out of it! The French intellectual class, including large parts of people who were very leftist all their life, were turning very anti-Soviet. It starts with Solzhenitsyn as though anybody had to wait for Solzhenitsyn to find out there were gulags and that Stalin had turned on the Russian people.

Q: It always has been a puzzle to me that people would have anything good to say about the way the Soviets treated the people.

BOHLEN: That's right, but I think there was a very strong element of denial. We had that here, too. And, of course, there was the war and France's record during the war and so the left, the Communists, emerged with a very strong position after the war and there was a very strong Soviet sympathizer element in it.

Q: Do you suppose they truly sympathized with the Soviet Union or was it a way to stick it to the United States?

BOHLEN: I think it was both. I think people like Salt and Simone de Beauvoir they were not totally blind to the Soviet Union's faults, but they said this is going to be the wave of the future, and we just have to support the larger good. They were anti-American, and the two things fed into each other and very complex feelings about France's behavior during the war and the fact that they had been rescued by the Americans, and all this kind of stuff. It was very complicated, but by the late 1970s you have the emergence of a whole new generation of intellectuals, some of whom are still very active today and who have defended America in the face of the anti-American people like Beauvoir and others, many others, who were writing against the camps, against the Soviet Union. There was great concern at the time that I arrived about whether pacifism was taking over Germany.

I think in retrospect this was very misplaced because the people that were running Germany…

Q: There was the concern that with the SS-20 and the whole thing that this might… The Soviets might make a deal with the devil that they could unify as long as they made their soil free of NATO or something like that…

BOHLEN: That perennial concern, the particular concern of the Green Party and the Euro missiles. There was a totally different way of looking at the world. There was great concern about that. In all this I discovered in the course of my first year and thereafter in Paris, and it really made Paris a very congenial place as long as you weren't tooling on Central America because they were very supportive of our decisions on the missiles, and you know we're completely with the British on this. That's why I say that the Thatcher-Mitterrand understanding on the Falklands was encouraged and lead to the basis for what was often a common position on the missiles. This concern about Germany went right up to the top, I think, so one of my interlocutors was the Deputy Diplomatic Advisor to the French President who I used to go see regularly. It was such fun. I couldn't believe that people were actually paying me to go talk to these interesting people. The French are really probably the most intellectually stimulating of all our European allies because they never take a position without having thought it through. You may not agree with where they come out. You may not agree with their thinking, but they are serious people, and they look hard at issues, and they're not afraid to use force.

Q: I've never served in France, but I've heard people say that sometimes for an American, who will look and say, "What makes sense?" or "What's practical?" but the French will address an issue in a completely different framework.

BOHLEN: Well, I think that can be overstated. Sometimes their logic leads to some pretty incomprehensible positions, but for the most part I found among my interlocutors in this period, and I can't remember whether it began in this first year or later when I was the Deputy Political Counselor. I used to see the head of the policy planning staff who was extremely bright. I used to see the Deputy Diplomatic Advisor. I would go with Maresca to see Andreani, who was always very smart. I never found any of this… I found a very sharp analytical capacity, but it was not… I didn't find it intrinsically different from the way serious Americans would think about policy: trying to analyze the pros and the cons and where France's interests lay. It was always very stimulating especially because I had not expected to find this supportive atmosphere for standing up to the Soviets and the SS-20 and so on.

Q: Do you think by the time you got there the French had gotten more comfortable with Ronald Reagan?

BOHLEN: I think the Reagan style was not something the French ever got used to in a way, but Mitterrand's calculation at this point was that the United States after the Carter years and all the setbacks of the Carter years was weak, and he believed that France's role should be in the East-West confrontation was that if America got too strong, you

took a little distance, and if America got weak you just supported her to the hilt. That was his perception that he needed to support America. Even through there was Central America and a lot of fluff that maybe clouded this for some people. I think on basic East-West issues, on European issues, he was just inclined to be supportive wherever he could, and that was where he was coming from. On that issue I don't think he really had a hard sell with his people. Andreani was an old Soviet hand from way back, and he was quite tough on the Soviets. They never said, "We won't talk to them" as Reagan did his first term, but if you remember one of the things that that Mitterrand did was to…and again, I forget the year…he expelled a number of Soviet spies. [Ed: The New York Times reported April 6, 1983, "France expelled 47 Soviet diplomats, journalists and others today, accusing them of espionage. Soviet-French relations, which have worsened as a result of condemnations by President Francois Mitterrand of Soviet nuclear weapons policy and the intervention in Afghanistan, were expected to enter an even colder phase."]

And so in a way there was something in him that I think responded to Reagan's view of this, "We've got to stand up and be counted", and he got fed up with this sort of cosseting, the Soviet presence, and he got rid of them. That was wildly popular in Washington.

Q: In dealing with French intellectuals, did you find that you made extra preparation to go up against full-scale intellects—high power intellects—and have your arguments in line?

BOHLEN: Very much. You could not go with a sloppy sort of brief. A lot of the times I would go to see these people I might not have a particular item of business to do with them, but I would say, "I'm interested to get your view of how this or that looks." It was as much as discussion as it was an effort to sell a particular point of view, and that made it easier. Plus, in those days we had ample representation funds and the dollar was strong, so I got to do this in all these nice French restaurants there. I couldn't believe they were paying me to do this! It was really great. I think I enjoyed that as much as I enjoyed anything in my career when I look back on it now.

Q: Did you get involved in any visits of Secretaries of State or Presidential visits while you were there?

BOHLEN: Of course, we all got involved in the support element. We had this or that task. I think I was often the coordinator for one aspect or another of the visit. The biggest thing we had was Ronald Reagan's 40th anniversary of D-Day. I don't think he… he may not even have come to Paris. [Ed: This Presidential trip started in Ireland, June 1-4, then went to London June 4-10 as part of attending the Economic Summit Meeting of June 7-9. But on June 6, 1984 President Reagan joined other heads of state at Normandy.]

I think he might just have come off the boat or something. Shultz used to come with fair regularity, I think. Haig was pretty much gone by the time I got there, but Shultz used to come. He was a particular buddy of Raymond Barre who had been Prime Minister in an

earlier period and a very fine economist and, of course, Shultz is an economist, too, so they would have a fine old time. This continued right up until the 1990s. I remember whenever Shultz would come the ambassador would give a lunch for him, and he always wanted to see Raymond Barre.

Q: How did the SS-20/Pershing missile thing play out while you were in France?

BOHLEN: This was one of the interesting things. As I mentioned that the public opinion, or intellectual opinion, was shifting very much in a hardening in an anti-Soviet direction, and there was a lot of support for dissidents and human rights and so on like that which had never been before. The Mitterrand government, I didn't know till afterwards, but I was told by one of my French contacts that there was a debate going on inside of the French government because up until then, the way the heirs of Charles de Gaulle had interpreted his legacy was that they participated in NATO discussions, but they never participated in, of course, the military side. That included for them arms control. Basically, de Gaulle disapproved of arms control for many of the same reasons that conservatives disapprove of it. He had not signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and had not permitted his diplomats to participate in all these things. The French government had just continued this legacy. I think they might have participated in some things in Geneva, but basically they were not into arms control. There was a big debate inside the Foreign Ministry with people saying, "This is crazy. Here we have the Euro missile debate coming up." This is one of the biggest issues to come before the alliance in many years. Its outcome is not a matter of indifference to us. We think it's a very bad outcome if Soviet pressure forces the Germans to back down. So we need to stop this policy of withdrawing the hem of our garment from all of these things, and we need to engage. The person who told me about it who was head of the security division, and he was very great partisan of intervention of engagement, and he said, "We've making ourselves a Western Albania." Eventually I think those arguments won the day, whereas the Giscard government which had preceded the Mitterrand government had said, "We totally support the NATO decision. We want to see those deployments go ahead but, of course, we are constrained by our traditions from speaking out on the issue, and we can't speak out publicly." We had been trying to get them to do more because, of course, they had huge influence with the Germans. Starting with Mitterrand, they did become more engaged, they did become more outspoken, and they started participating in some of the things at NATO. They still didn't come into the Reggie Bartholomew special…by then it was Rick Burt…special consultative group because, of course, because that dealt with nuclear issues, and on the nuclear they are still faithful to the de Gaullist legacy. But they did find a way of becoming more involved in the discussions. I think they might have come into some of the arms control, and certainly becoming more involved and making clear to the Germans and to others that they supported the deployments, that they thought this was the right response to the Soviets. This culminated in Mitterrand's famous speech to the Bundestag which, I think, was March 1983, in which he said basically to the Germans, "You should deploy them." The pacifists are all on one side in this debate and gave a lot of cogent arguments why they should do it. The effect of that was electrifying. The German government very much welcomed it because France, I think, had a weight on this issue with public opinion that the United States didn't have and that Britain didn't

have because Britain was always seen as the power close to us whereas the French were Germany's great partner and they had also taken their distance from the United States traditionally. To have them say, "Come on, shape up" was quite important. I don't want to say that Germany would not have deployed without that, but it certainly was a very important event. Again, of course, Washington was pleased and Washington by this time was beginning to understand that Mitterrand was not a leftist in the traditional sense but had some hard-nosed geopolitical views. Then the deployments went forward and they went forward in Germany without incident.

Q: Did the French change their policy toward Israel because of Sharon's invasion of Lebanon? Did that cause problems?

BOHLEN: Yes. That caused huge problems, and I think the French who'd been more inclined to give some arms to Israel, if I'm not mistaken.

Q: I think they're sending frigates over there.

BOHLEN: Yes. Yes. And they were doing some stuff sort of sub rosa, but I think this caused them to pull back and…

Q: Did you run across any of the things that has come out in recent years that suggested cozy deals in Africa and maybe with Iran between the oil companies and all, a sort of political/business connection. Was that at all something we were looking at?

BOHLEN: I don't think we were particularly concerned about it. Another area where we have always worked very well with the French, and that's Africa where they felt that was an area of vital interest for them, and I think we accepted that and deferred to them. They have huge expertise in Africa. I think it was no secret. You remember the diamonds of Bokassa that Giscard d'Estaing got his hands on. The scandals that were coming out were all Giscard scandals, but I don't think anybody was under any illusions that the same sort of thing was going on with the Mitterrand government. The man who was Mitterrand's Africa advisor was a man named Ghee Penn. But he also who I think had been the dentist, he also had some knowledge of Africa, but he was not particularly an Africa hand. He was a friend of Mitterrand's. Africa policy more than anything else was run out of the Elysees, and one of the key people who was used was Mitterrand's son who was a very nice but not particularly impressive young man. Mitterrand was very alive to the effect that sending his son to an African country had. So he got wrung in a fair amount. They had very good people in the African Directorate in the Quai. I had a wonderful colleague, Marty Cheshes who did Africa. He was super active, and he knew everything, and was great. [Ed: Cheshes has an Oral History on file with ADST.]

Q: Some of my interviews with Africa-hands suggests in the early days of independence in the 1960s in Africa the French were looking on us with great suspicion, that we were fishing in their waters when actually we didn't give a damn.

BOHLEN: I think that's true. There always was that sentiment and particularly among the old Afrikaans in the Quai. I would say it was more of a concern in the field than it ever was in Paris. Of course, there were people…I mean and the then Foreign Minister used to carry on about this. But I think in the Elysees the grown-ups, it was understood that we were not there to try to take over Africa. On the contrary, and this was a message that was often said by people like Hank Cohen and people coming from Washington, we were very glad the French were there in Africa because, again, we think you're serious people. I don't think we perceived for the most part that we had interests that were significantly different from the French. We used to work even then and even more when I came back as DCM but there would be many evacuations where they used the United States military aircraft to get people out of there. We had the airplanes when the Europeans were still into tank armies.

Q: I wonder if you would talk about the Ambassador and how he operated because he's a controversial figure.

BOHLEN: He was a very controversial… Evan Galbraith. Yes. He was a very controversial figure. He and his wife were friends, so I would start by saying that. They've become friends over the years. That said, I think he was a very brash and outspoken ambassador on occasion, and he was one of those who disapproved totally about having communists in the government, and I don't think he really understood at that time the game that Mitterrand was playing. He thought it was bad news. He said something publicly once to a newspaper, and he was summoned out of the Marine Ball which took place that same night or the night after, and he received a summons from the Quai d'Orsay to come in and be rebuked for having spoken, interfered in internal affairs. It was very provocative to have said it publicly, and the French government, no government, could not let it stand. It was really quite outrageous to do that, plus I'm sure the communists put pressure on Mitterrand, too, to do this. But he thought this was just wonderful. He was a Reagan ambassador. He just thought this was exactly want Washington would want him to be doing. He was not somebody that took advice much. He made up his mind quite quickly about things. He and his wife had a lot of friends in Paris and really got around and still have a lot of contacts in France and in Paris. I think some people thought he was a good ambassador. Chirac was mayor of Paris and that time, and he got on with him very well. Others thought he was a disaster because he had this view of, "We should speak out", and so on. He did one thing that really, really upset the embassy, and that was he gave an interview to John Benicar who was still with the New York Times at that point which appeared on the front page of the Herald Tribune in which he talked about diplomacy and so on. Among other things, he said career diplomats, this is a charge that's been repeated by the right over and over again that career diplomats can never really be good instruments of a president's policy because they change governments every four years, and one year they espouse this line and the next year they espouse that line. So they cannot have the moral certitude that the rest of us have. Of course, in Benicar's hands, this came out as practically disloyal. He never used that word, but it was just a very unfortunate thing to have said to a journalist. We all got up on our high horse, and I asked to go see Jack Maresca who tended to be quite supportive of Van, and we said we're very concerned, and he later told me, he said,

"When I saw you coming, I knew this was really serious." He'd been inclined to dismiss some of the others. Anyway, that was sort of a stormy episode, and we had a meeting with the ambassador who did not apologize. He said he was sorry if his remarks caused any discomfort, but he was quite unrepentant.

Q: He wrote a book afterward, didn't he?

BOHLEN: He's written several books. But he was not very popular in the embassy.

Q: What was his background?

BOHLEN: He had been Bill Buckley's roommate at Yale.

Q: Bill Buckley being a right-wing, well known commentator/columnist…

BOHLEN: …who wrote God and Man and Yale and published the National Review. He had become involved in Republican politics, and he really wanted to be ambassador to Paris. He was quite young to be this, and he didn't have endless money, so it was really through his political connections that he got it and not through his money. That was one style of ambassador.

Q: In l985 you left Paris. Where did you go?

BOHLEN: I came back to the State Department in the spring of 1985 and was assigned the Policy Planning Staff (S/P)

Q: And you were there till when?

BOHLEN: I was there… This is where I always get my dates mixed up. I think I was there till the summer of 1986. I spent a year in the Policy Planning Staff and then I went to work for Ambassador Kampelman in Geneva. I was there for a year, and then I came back and was head of WE (Office of Western European Affairs) in the European Bureau, so that was 1985 to 1986, '86 to '87, '87 to '88, '88 to '89 I went as head of EUR/RPM, and then 1989 to 1991 I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European Bureau. So, that's correct. Sorry. It was a period when I always used to say I couldn't keep a job for more than a year! I kept changing.

Q: We'll come back to each of those, but let's take the Policy Planning. You started there when George Shultz was Secretary of the State. How did he use S/P?

BOHLEN: I think he and the head of the Policy Planning Staff who was Peter Rodman at that time got on pretty well, and he looked to Peter to help with a lot of speeches. I think that's how the Policy Planning Staff has been traditionally used. I don't know that he was a big ideas man. I think Kissinger was the absolute summation of the idea man.

Q: Rodman had served as Kissinger's drafter.

BOHLEN: That's right. He had. I was drafted to come on because a colleague called Phil Kaplan who was the Staff Director of the Policy Planning Staff. My area was strategic issues and Western Europe. I had a very good time. I can't remember too much of what I did, but it was the year of the INF deployments in Europe.

Q: …the response to the SS-20

BOHLEN: Right. The French had been very helpful on that, so the French were in good odor. A lot of times… I think it really helped to be a Foreign Service Officer on the Policy Planning Staff who'd had a lot of jobs in the State Department because the Policy Planning Staff typically is not very looped into the operational business, and it spends a lot of time running around trying to find out what the other bureaus are doing. The other bureaus really resent the direct access that the Policy Planning Staff has to the Secretary. The staff never has to clear their memos. So the bureaus are not very generous about sharing information. I had very good relations with the European Bureau which was my home bureau and my S/P portfolio, so I think we were able to do some good things. I remember we did a joint memo on France for the Secretary on the importance of the French nuclear deterrent. What were the political reasons why it was important to have another European power that was nuclear? I think that's mainly what I worked on. I went on a couple of trips. After a while Phil Kaplan left and took an assignment as DCM in the Philippines. When he left, Nelson Ledsky came on as the number two, and he was a very fun person to work for.

He led a couple of trips to Europe to have talks with our counterparts. We looked after our issues. I really can't remember… In a way it was less interesting than working in an operational bureau because there, the events define your portfolio.

Q: What was your reasoning that it was a good idea for the French to have the force du frappe, to have nuclear weapons; because they always stood aside in every type of negotiation we had.

BOHLEN: Well, they did, and they and the British made common cause in not being included in the strategic negotiations. They were very firm about that and are very firm about that. It seemed to us that leaving aside the military considerations, I think the view there was: it complicated the Soviets planning to have two other nuclear powers. We knew that the French would never turn their nuclear weapons against us, but I think it was also helpful particularly in this period in the 1980s when there was this tremendous nuclear neuralgia brought on in part by the INF decision, but also by the rhetoric of the Reagan administration. Reagan in his early days would walk around and talk about how we might fight a nuclear war confined to Europe. This didn't please people very much. So there was really a nuclear allergy, a resistance to the idea that you needed nuclear weapons at all. The fact that the French socialists stayed with the French nuclear arsenal, should be of interest because when Mitterrand was elected there was some concern that they might be anti-nuclear. They turned out to be, on the contrary, extremely pro-nuclear. It was useful to have a continental European power that was clearly not in the United

States' pocket that had nuclear weapons. It kind of legitimized it…I don't want to say "legitimized it" because I don't want to imply that it was illegitimate otherwise but it gave it an additional layer of legitimacy as far as continental Europeans were concerned, also made us less isolated. The French were all extremely concerned about pacifism in Germany. They were very hand-lined, just as Mitterrand's decision to go to the Bundestag had been very helpful on the INF decision when he told the Germans they shouldn't let themselves be intimidated by the Soviets. I actually went and told the French they should do this, and we were all flabbergasted.

Mitterrand went to the Bundestag. I thought we talked about that last time. I mentioned that the French had been shifting, and by the time I got there they were very anti-Soviet. In fact we knew later that Mitterrand was afraid that the United States was weak, *vis a vis* the Soviet Union and so he tilted even more toward the United States. He went to the German Bundestag in February or March of 1985 and made a speech there in which he said, "You know, you really have to deploy those things." It's always curious, but you'd think that people would get very upset at the French telling them what do, and they weren't about to deploy weapons. The German government appreciated it very much. It was very helpful because, again, it gave the idea that they had strong support from their most important European partner was a very important…

Q: You left S/P in 1986, where did you go after that?

BOHLEN: Then Peter Rodman left, and Dick Solomon became head of the Policy Planning Staff. Shortly thereafter or about the same time, Max Kampelman asked if I would like to come and work for him in Geneva as Executive Director of the delegation which was a position up until then Warren Zimmerman had had. I said yes, I would do it, so that put me back in the world of negotiation.

Q: So you are still in your job-a-year cycle?

BOHLEN: This is my job-a-year time. After a year with the Policy Planning, a little bit more than a year, I moved to Kampelman's shop, the U.S. Delegation for Nuclear and Space Talks in Geneva, and I was with him for a year. We spent two months in Washington and then two months in Geneva.

The Defense and Space talks had three parts to it: There were the INF negotiations. This was all after the… Remember when we deployed the missiles… In fact, I said earlier that 1985 was the year of the deployment, but that's not right. Some of them were deployed in 1983, but there were some countries that weren't deploying…

The deployment was in stages, but I think we were past the German deployment, past the Italian deployment, and it was the Dutch and the Belgians. At the time that the first missiles were deployed, the Soviets walked out of all the negotiations, out of INF, out of the strategic arms negotiations which were then called START instead of SALT, and the talks stayed suspended for over a year. But then, you remember, the run-up to the 1984 election Reagan started to be interested in having a relationship with the Russians and

eventually it was agreed that we would resume the negotiations. This was part of the deal. In the meantime, SDI—Strategic Defense Initiative—had reared its ugly head, and the Russians were quite concerned about the effect of missile defense, Reagan's global shield on their deterrent. So they were insisting that a pre-condition for the talks be that we renounce this and reaffirm our allegiance to the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. Reagan, if you remember, had this firm idea of how we were going to be protected by a global shield, would not hear of negotiating about it. We finally worked out a compromise that there would be, in addition to the INF and strategic weapons, that there would be a third part to the talks which would talk about strategic defense and missile defense. The Soviets agreed to that, and we were able to open the talks in January of 1985. That was a development that permitted these talks to start. Max Kampelman was named head of the whole delegation. Then, in addition, each separate set of talks has its own head. Max was double-headed as the chief negotiator and also the negotiator for the defense and space part. There we were. It was a huge operation in Geneva, and he had felt the need to have…because there were three separate delegations in effect…and the head of the other two delegations, the INF delegation and the START delegation were very, very jealous of Max's authority over them and were always protesting little minor things, Mike Glickman especially.

Looking at the other two delegations, Mike Glickman who was a career guy and a very good negotiator, and then Ron Lehman who was a Reagan person and who later became head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Max decided he needed an executive director to look after all of this and to pull all the bits together. That's what Warren Zimmerman had been the first to do, and then I did it after him. Again, I knew all the players, so it was…

Q: Were you spending an awful amount of time pacifying all these people to get them to work together? Was that your job description?

BOHLEN: Yes. Sorting out. Their work didn't overlap so much. It was always the issues like office space and cars and so on, but I have to say money was not a problem at that point. This was something that the White House attached a lot of importance to.

Q: How did you find Max Kampelman? He's a lawyer. Often lawyers aren't the best administrators or overseers. How did he operate from your perspective?

BOHLEN: I think he was very much above the fray. He is a very charming person, and he was always very courteous and charming with individuals, so that took some of the edges off. But at the same time there was deep suspicious on the part of certain delegations that he'd been named to come and strike a deal.

Q: To strike a deal from the perspective of some of the people on the teams would be essentially to get something rather than hold out for something better?

BOHLEN: There were some real ideologues around, and Ron was a bit on an ideologue. They were all afraid that in the course of cutting a deal that we would give up their

particular pet rocks and not be firm enough and so on. I think that attitude was there. They were also very jealous of the idea that Max Kampelman as head of the whole show had really was also the chief negotiator for all the rest of it. They really resisted that idea. In fact, he did focus mostly on the defense and space talks. There was resentment against him among the top flight of people or, at least, not so much resistance as not responding really to his initiatives.

Q: It sounds like it's one of those things where Kampelman was saying, "Well, let Avis do it."

BOHLEN: That's right. It was a curious schedule because we would go for two months. Max told the President that what he didn't want to do was be stuck over there for months again with nobody willing to let you come home because it looks as though you've given up…

Q: Did the Soviets come back to the table by this time?

BOHLEN: They had come back to the table, so there were talks going on. Whether it was a real negotiation I think not. Really not for a long time. It was not a very promising situation. But still, the interesting thing was that you had Gorbachev out there who was really very…

Q: Were you beginning to feel the change? Was that…

BOHLEN: Definitely, because Perestroika and the members of the Soviet delegation would make comments about how they were pressured to accept Perestroika and so on. So it was a very interesting period.

Q: I would think, because some of these negotiations had been going on for decades, that it would be very hard to keep people up to negotiating when you sit down, and each delegation would table the same thing they'd said before.

BOHLEN: It's endlessly repetitive. Not wanting to get stuck was why Max wanted to have two months on and two months off. He wanted to be able to come to Washington. He didn't want to lose touch with Washington. He was a very politically plugged in type of person, and he didn't want to lose that. Plus he thought it was pointless to just sit there for months on end unless, of course, you were very near an agreement, in which case you would be able to stay as long as you want. To set the schedule, but not just for the sake of repeating the same positions which is what we did for a long time. The Soviets initially showed no particular sign of budging, but these were the years of Gorbachev, so we had a lot of…and I forgot the sequence…but I think some of his surprise proposals were thrown at us like cutting nuclear weapons by a third and things that were propagandistic, of course, but they reflected I think his frustration at being stuck in this kind of frozen relationship, and he always wanted to throw the board up and throw the cards in the air.

Q: Were you getting the feeling that as these proposals were coming up that our people were sort of sitting on Ronald Reagan who also had the same tendency. "Let's get rid of all these weapons!" This was his gut instinct. Not a bad one, but the bureaucrats like ourselves were practical about this. Did you find yourself leaving that world?

BOHLEN: Not really. In fact, it's only in retrospect that I realize that they both had this nuclear aversion which is what led to the agreements. I think Reagan really hated nuclear weapons. There is one story that after he was finally briefed on the SIOP, SIOP being Strategic Integrated Operating Plan, our nuclear targeting plan, which didn't happen for a long time, that he was completely depressed for days because he had no idea that an exchange would——he had no idea if it ever came to a war that we were going to let loose thousands and thousands of nuclear weapons at the Soviet Union or similarly we would take similar amounts of weaponry. He became very depressed, and I really think from that moment on he really favored getting rid of as many as possible.

Anyway, there was not any real movement while I was there. There was movement later in the INF negotiations because Gorbachev kept… It's a very interesting dynamic, and I wrote about this in an article I did last year. Every time that we would reject a Soviet proposal, he would come up with something even more visionary and pie in the sky. I think Gorbachev didn't really have an idea of how to get from here to there, using his leverage to get…

Q: During the time you were there, did you sense an unease or annoyance on the part of the Soviet negotiators who had been doing this for so long that they must have said, "Our political masters don't know what they're talking about."

BOHLEN: I think everybody recognized that the deal was there. Everybody knew what the shape of the deal was. There were a couple of really tough issues, and it was going to be how those were decided. I think everybody recognized that if there was a political will to do it that it might happen but it certainly required political will. The political will usually manifested itself on the eve of a summit or whatever. I think this was an interesting difference between Gorbachev and Reagan. In retrospect I think Reagan didn't feel he needed to have an arms agreement. He really genuinely was prepared to live without it, and I think Gorbachev really had a much greater necessity to get some kind of agreement. He was under fire by conservatives at home.

Q: Speaking of conservatives, did you have the equivalent of watchdogs of the domestic American right or political parties sitting in on negotiations?

BOHLEN: We had a senate oversight committee which was called the Senate Arms Control Advisory Committee or whatever. They would come at least once a session and sit in on the tank when we briefed on the final negotiation and also there were social occasions when they met the Soviets. It was limited. They were never allowed to actually be in the negotiations. This is a restriction that applies to this day.

Q: How did you see these political minders? Were they people who were considered to be loyal or were going to pass everything on if they were unhappy with the process?

BOHLEN: I think there was a huge continuity in the negotiations that people who had been doing it had been doing it under several presidents, and so there was a very good technocratic kind of base. The senate observer committee was very engaged in these. I remember Al Gore was a member. He was usually the one who had read up the most on what was happening. He was very much engaged. And, of course, they represented both Republicans and Democrats, so they had different views about what needed to be done. There were huge ideological divides within the delegation, particularly the defense and space delegation. It was absolutely forbidden to question the rationality of the Strategic Defense Initiative. This was like the Holy Writ. It was absolutely even more forbidden to ever suggest that we might be able to negotiate on any part of it. In a way, this foreshadows what we've had under this administration. The conservatives hate the constraints of arms control, so the idea that we were going to have this wonderful new technology and bargain it away with the Soviets was something they found absolutely appalling.

Q: When you left there, where did you feel things were going?

BOHLEN: It was fairly clear that we were within reach of an INF agreement, less so that there was a chance of a START agreement. I think there was, but I think for a number of reasons it didn't really happen. I think INF was probably the one that everybody thought was actually going too take place. I forget all the dates now, but Gorbachev kept upping the ante by proposing these things. Whether that made a difference or not, I don't really know. There used to be these tremendous fights in the delegation about missile defense and the sanctity of missile defense. Somebody had suggested that we might "Bargain Away the SDI". This was the cry of the conservatives. In fact, there were some really nasty people on Max's delegation, and we used to have these arguments inside the tank all of the time. After I left I didn't see any of these people for a long time. It's really funny, when I went back to arms control when I was Assistant Secretary, I saw this man in the Senate Committee hearing room, and my stomach just turned like this. I couldn't remember his name. I don't think I even right away associated him with the defense in space talks, but I said this man is a bad man! He turned out to be somebody who had represented the Defense Department.

It was an interesting time, and because of Gorbachev, and you're not always able to analyze what you're seeing as it's happening, I think a lot of things were clear about Gorbachev that are not clear now. I think he was a generally radical figure, and he wanted to throw things up in the air and in that way, he and Reagan had this curious sort of relationship that it was a very odd couple. I think our tendency at that point, and I said I didn't remember what I did on the policy planning staff, but I do remember one of the things that we were very obsessed with was whether Gorbachev was for real or not! Obviously, this mattered a great deal. There were certainly plenty of people to say, "This guy's just a wolf in sheep's clothing" and "Don't believe any of it" and so on. I think he really was different. I think he very clearly perceived that the Soviet Union had

squandered any good will it might have had by its military buildup, that this hadn't given it one more iota of security. It had just made the rest of the world hate it and the rest of the world unify against it. Plus, it was bankrupting the Soviet Union, so I think he understood all that very well. He said, "I'd rather not give up the Soviet Army" but have something more useful than nuclear weapons.

Q: In 1987 you left Nuclear and Space Talks delegation, this Geneva administrative role. Where did you go?

BOHLEN: I became the head of the office of West European Affairs which is the office within the European Bureau (EUR/WE) that looks after what one former director used to call the "flesh pots": France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Malta, and the Vatican. Very agreeable countries to travel to, certainly. I was there for 1987 to 1988.

Q: Were there any particular issues at that time?

BOHLEN: Absolutely. The big issue, and thank God for it, because I think otherwise it might have been a little bit pallid, but we had this Spanish base negotiations, and they had been going on already for a time while I was there. When I got there, but they were completed during the year that I was there, and the basic issue was Felipe González, a Socialist, had come to power [October 1982] and after elected, he had been brought to support continued Spanish membership in NATO.

He was the first socialist who had held power in Spain for 50 years, I suppose. His platform was a bit wobbly for some peoples' taste, but one enough he was brought to see the reasons why Spain had to remain in NATO. Since this hadn't been his position before, he had to have his pound of flesh, and he said, "I will reclaim the base in Torrejon" which is where we had a base in the Madrid area which shared space with the civilian airport. You could come in to Torrejon on a civilian aircraft, and you would see all the American military aircraft there. This was a constant irritant for the Spanish, so Gonzalez said he was going to get rid of it. We started these negotiations. We had to renegotiate our base agreements with the Spanish over the years, even in the Franco era. There were always some difficult issues, but this was the most difficult negotiation I think we ever had with them because the Spanish were really dug in, and it wasn't even like the military against González. They didn't want… If there was going to be any military there, they wanted it to be theirs. They were not at all in favor of our staying there. It was a very pivotal issue, and the American Air Force absolutely refused to budge.

Weinberger, Secretary of Defense at the time, absolutely refused to budge. The Spanish said, "We will be very accommodating to you on the other bases. We will give you everything you want, but you have to get out of Torrejon." For about a period of two years, we absolutely stuck on that point, and it began… When I got there it was beginning to resemble the endless debates where nobody says anything and you endlessly repeat the same positions. The whole thing was becoming rather ritualistic. It seemed to be going nowhere. There was a kind of a deadline that meant we had to somehow do this,

and the Air Force just wouldn't budge. They kept saying there absolutely was no other base in Spain that absolutely fits the criteria, which was complete nonsense.

And the Spanish were, as I say, very prepared to be accommodating on the other bases and to give us very liberal terms. What finally broke the logjam was the Italians offer to take the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing, which was based at Torrejon and station it at Aviano Air Base, in the southern part of Italy. Italy was also one of my countries, so I remember it happened when (PM Giulio) Andreotti came to the United States and Secretary Shultz went to seem him at the Italian ambassador's residence. You know that big house, Villa de la Florence. I remember I had a note taker in the meeting, the Italian desk officer, and she came out, and said, "They've really stepped up to the plate! They've offered to take the 401st if we can find a suitable spot to put them in." Then we had to go through… I think they proposed one base or they had a list of bases, and we had one that we preferred, but in any case, it was a very welcome decision.

Q: Despite hammering Weinberger or the Air Force.

BOHLEN: I think it was just that they thought that if DoD just stood firm that the United States government would force the Spanish to back down, and Weinberger never gave up anything, so he actually had left by the time we were able to work out a deal.

Q: Was there a quid pro quo *for the Italians?*

BOHLEN: The *quid pro quo* was that they got us to fix up the base, because when we went there… This was quite hilarious, the whole process of making the base ready for the 401st TFW. We sent a team of Seabees (Navy construction battalion unit) or something to look at them, and they discovered that the base was in the most appalling condition. The Italians found a wonderful opportunity to get us to fix up the base. The air strip had grass growing through it, so that had to be entirely re-done. There were many wonderful stories about the fixing up of it. We did all the work, of course, or most of it, and we said, "Our laws require us to find multiple bidders for every piece of work. This was the southern-most, poorest part of…

Q: You're speaking to the former Consul General of Naples!

BOHLEN: OK! Well then you can imagine. I just momentarily had forgotten this. There was on hilarious moment when they said, "OK, we found lots of different bidders", but they all showed up in the same truck, and one of them was the brother-in-law of the guy who submitted the original bids!

Q: I'm sure they were all related to the Tamoras!

BOHLEN: That's right! It was not that side of Italy. It was the other side. It was Cannizzo. It was closer to Baria.

While Aviano wasn't the same for the Air Force as the outskirts of Madrid, it was clear the Spanish position was that the 401st had to leave Spain, as well as taking back Torrejon. This all happened, and the Italians were just the golden haired boys in town. Everybody was so grateful to them for having solved this problem.

Q: Were you getting hissed at by the Pentagon for having sold out our interests?

BOHLEN: No. They were delighted because we didn't propose this. Andreotti did, and Shultz immediately said, "This is a very statesman like act". They weren't thrilled, as you said, about going to Cannizzo. Cannizzo might have been the INF base, also in southern Italy. Another base that we fixed up with all sorts of…

Q: Southern Italy can use everything it can get. From the practical point of view, it meant employment, and anything that brought employment to southern Italy was a good deal.

BOHLEN: Was very welcome. On the other hand, it was not clear why we had to be providing this. There was a certain theatricality about the whole thing, I always felt. And then, of course, irony of ironies, no sooner was the base finished and the 401st moved in, and I think they had been there a couple of years, then the Cold War was over, and the Air Force decided to repatriate the 401st to the U. S. All of my colleagues who were ever involved with bases negotiations said that's so typical of the Air Force. They make you stick to a position till your knuckles are bleeding, and then they pull the rug out from under you at the last minute. Anyway, that was the main focus. Then the negotiations… and by that time Weinberger had left the Pentagon. He was very ill toward the end there. He left, and Carlucci came in, and you had Powell at the NSC, and Shultz, so the grown-ups were back in charge, and they realized we had to wrap the Spanish negotiation up. Then

At the last minute there was an issue about nuclear weapon, to which our long standing policy had been we "neither confirm nor deny." The Armed Forces generally never want to confirm whether we had nuclear weapons on a ship or whatever, but the Spanish said, "Sorry, but we have to get you to promise us you're not going to bring ships with nuclear weapons on them into port." All the people who had been saying, "Thank God we finally got the 401st settled and ridiculous Air Force, and so on. They all got very hard over about this issue including Shultz, including Powell, including Carlucci.

Q: We fought this battle over nuclear power and weapons with New Zealand before in the mid-1980s which ended with us ceasing our treaty relationship. Cast it into the outermost depths.

BOHLEN: Right. Yes. They had a much stronger anti-nuclear policy. The Spanish were not so anti-nuclear. After all, they were members of NATO. But there was also the incident in the 1950s in which we lost a couple of hydrogen bombs which fell in the waters off Spain.

Q: I've interviewed the staff aide to our ambassador who had to go swimming in the Mediterranean to show that it was safe to swim. Such is the job of staff aides! The ambassador went, too.

BOHLEN: Anyway, so there was a certain nuclear sensitivity, but it was as much a socialist party position. Anyway, we really stuck to our guns on that for a long time because the people I call the 'grown-ups" were just really not prepared to make any exceptions, and it's been an absolutely essential rule of ours since forever, but finally… At that point before they were quite finished, I moved on to my next job. During this period I worked very closely with Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew [Ed: ambassador to Spain from September 1986 to March 1989]. That was the first time… It wasn't quite the first time I worked under him. It was the second time, I think, and I really enjoyed that very much because the Spanish base negotiations, there just wasn't anybody who was following it much in the State Department, so he and I made this strategy…

Roz Ridgeway was the Assistant Secretary, and she said, "I trust you to do the right thing". That was very good, but then the outside world became involved over this nuclear issue. Reggie came back to the States and said, "Look. The Spanish aren't going to give in on this, and we have to find some way around it", so we did and, of course, within two years so many of these issues seem to… You think, "What were we…"

Q: How did you get around the issues?

BOHLEN: I can't really remember how that was solved because I was no longer head of that office. It happened after I left. Essentially we gave in to the Spanish. We found without violating our larger rule. We said, "We will notify you." I think that rule was becoming unsustainable anyway at that point.

At a time that we were already decreasing our nuclear presence in Europe and, of course, not on ships at that point, but it really was only… It was in 1991 that President Bush took his unilateral initiative, and he said, "I'm taking nuclear weapons off a great, huge category of ships." It was an amazing thing to do. People don't pay much attention to it, but it's how we unilaterally denuclearized the world. That was in a later chapter. What I mean is I think with the Cold War obviously winding down, it was more difficult to defend this than it had been when things were very tense.

Q: As office Director for Western Europe your office also covered France. Was anything happening there?

BOHLEN: I don't think there was any significant change. It was very curious and it's always been the case that bilateral relationship has never been very important or very difficult. There's lots of Lafayette and flowers and declarations of fidelity, but our difficulties with France always came in the context of our NATO relationship or the broader European relationship. Many of our negotiations with the French over this or that issue would take place in RPM which is where I went next.

Q: Staying with this time in Western Europe, what was the feeling within the European Bureau about at that time about the European Community? I'm thinking of the integration of Europe.

BOHLEN: That was not dealt with by my office, but I would say just as a general rule that for many, many years—I don't think it's the case anymore now—the whole phenomenon of the EU was completely marginalized in the European Bureau. NATO was the center of everybody's focus. That's how we dealt with our allies on important issues. It was only the people who followed the EU… For many years it was just an economic sort of community. It was regarded generally as a good thing, important certainly, but not anywhere as important as the NATO relationship. It was assumed that most Europeans felt the same way and, of course, they didn't. They valued both.

In the EUR Bureau, the RPM office was where really the cream of the crop went to work. It was a very prestigious office, and the EU office had good people but they were economic officers. They were not political officers. You could find in fact until very recently, American presidents giving speeches about our relationship with Europe in which they never once mentioned the EU. It was totally astonishing to Europeans that we can be so… That was the general thing. Of course, people who followed European affairs, George Vest went off to be ambassador to the EU. I'm trying to remember when that was. [Ed: After serving as Assistant Secretary to EUR from June 1977 to April 1981, Ambassador Vest was assigned to the EU from September 1981 to February 1985. ADST has recorded his Oral History.] It might have been under Bush I, so not yet. I don't think many people really understood the importance of it, and it was something where the French had more importance than they did in NATO and, therefore, it wasn't viewed particularly…

Q: How well did Washington understand forces for European integration? Was embassy reporting saying "This is for real" and our people back here, political masters, not picking up the signals?

BOHLEN: They weren't talking to the wrong people because, of course, the same people who were running the EU policy for a particular country were also running U.S. policy. At the top it all came together. I think we consistently underestimated the importance of the EU. To carry it forward, I think we never predicted that… we thought at best the Euro would kind of limp along, and I don't think we ever foresaw that it would do as well as it's done. People who dealt with trade issues always understood that the EU is very important because that's where it achieved its cohesion. That's where it first really became a cohesive block. In fact, I just had to give a talk on this yesterday, but I think people that dealt with agricultural policy were seen mainly as an economic thing. I think it was recognized that it had an ambition to have a political vocation, but it was assumed somehow that this wouldn't amount to much. Then, starting in the 1980ss, you've got the issue of a European security and defense identity, and that caused all sorts of upset in Washington. People just wouldn't believe it was going to happen. I saw this mindset so often. People would say, "Oh, well the French want it, but everybody else supports us." Then three years later the thing that we said nobody else wanted existed? People never

quite caught on to the fact that the smaller countries would tell us what we wanted to hear.

Q: There seems to be a selective ear; a reluctance to listen to the experts because it's so easy to think you know Europe.

BOHLEN: That's true. They often offer some rather skewed perspectives on it. We used to laugh at the working level because you'd go to Europe, you'd go to some meeting at NATO. Usually the circuit of consultations that you would do would take you to NATO and then to the capitals of the Big Three and Rome if you had time. It would be both multilateral and bilateral. At the working level in the European governments we would have people say to us, "My God, the position you are taking on such-and-such an issue is the most awful thing. You can't imagine what problems it's going to cause for us. You have to do something about it," and great hysterical protestations. We would come back and say, "You know, the Europeans are just absolutely not going to buy this position, and I think the Secretary should be aware, yada yah." Then the Foreign Minister would come and meet with the Secretary, and he wouldn't raise it at all! There is often a disconnect between the levels, and just as our people think they know Europe on the basis of a few meetings, anybody who comes with a list of things he wants to have happen, you have to choose priorities.

Q: We are now at l988, and we're beginning to enter a very interesting time. We have the transition from the Reagan Administration to Bush Administration and you take a new position as Director of the Office of Regional Political Military Affairs in EUR, an office you served in before.

BOHLEN: Very interesting because in 2988 I became was head of RPM for a year, and then I became Deputy Assistant Secretary in EUR. But something I think we should cover is CSCE, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the endgame on Human Rights.

Q: Why don't we talk about that?

BOHLEN: Yes. Because that was when I was an RPM. That was a very interesting episode. Moscow very much wanted to host a human rights conference which was sort of a sub-conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE. The OSCE was having one of its periodic review conferences in Vienna. Warren Zimmerman was our ambassador to the OSCE [Ed: Ambassador Zimmerman has recorded his Oral History with ADST]. We were using the leverage of Moscow wanting to chair the Human Rights Conference which obviously was a big step for a lot of people, and it would have been a public recognition for Moscow that they had really arrived; they had been accepted as a changed country. We and the other western countries, the Europeans, were using this as leverage to get all sorts of other things out of the Russians that we wanted. It got into a very exciting end game, and I forget the exact months that it was, but Warren Zimmerman and I were working very closely at that time to coordinate strategy because Warren had to manage the relations of the European allies and

especially with the Russians. I was managing in essence the end game back at the interagency process back in Washington. We used to talk every day by telephone practically over an open line. One day Warren said to me, "Do you think that it's a good idea that we're discussing strategy and tactics so openly over the open line?" I said, "That's exactly what I want to do! I want the Russians to know just how difficult this is to do back in Washington because, of course, the Cold War was not really over. We were into Gorbachev, but it wasn't over, and there were a lot of people in Washington for whom a human rights conference in Moscow was absolutely anathema. So they were very closely monitoring what was going on, and a lot of people were really pulling back.

Q: Can you talk a little about this domestic opposition group and how you dealt with them? Although the Reagan Administration was in its last months, the still was opposition from the right.

BOHLEN: Right. It was the period when what I call the "adults" were back in charge. Carlucci was Secretary of Defense. We had Shultz at the State Department. Of course, he had been there for some time, but he'd had to deal with Weinberger at the Defense Department. Then Carlucci came in, and we had Colin Powell at the NSC as National Security Advisor. It was a very good group, very seasoned veterans all of them, and they worked wonderfully well together. There were not a lot of egos out there. It was a very good period, I think, but I think even the most moderate people had raised eyebrows when you talked about this possibility and, of course, there was still a lot of the conservatives who were around. I think Powell was skeptical. I think Shultz was skeptical. They weren't outright opposing, but they said, "You've got to prove it."

There was a lot of skepticism still about Gorbachev and whether he was for real, and I think this included not only the died-in-the-wool conservatives, but it included a lot of the people who had been in favor of engagement, in favor of détente, in favor of giving some signs to Gorbachev. Who really didn't think… who was willing to have supper with the leopard but didn't think he'd really changed his spots underneath it all and, therefore, it was really just too cynical to have a human rights conference in Moscow.

Q: Some cynics could be saying it hadn't been too long before we'd had the détente thing with Brezhnev, and next time you knew they invaded Afghanistan.

BOHLEN: Well, that was almost ten years earlier. By this time we also had the INF treaty, we'd had pretty good relations… I mean we still didn't have the START agreement, but relations were not bad. Relations were pretty good. It's just that Gorbachev had released all the dissidents: Sakharov was released, and a lot of the others had laid off. It was certainly a changed relationship and a changed situation, but still, nobody really felt confident that it was going to be permanent. There was always the fear that Gorbachev would be overthrown or undermined or whatever. There was a lot of skepticism about it. We set come conditions and, of course, I can't remember what they were, but we set very stringent conditions, so the test was…

Q: Was there somebody in Washington that you felt was leading the team and saying, "This has got to work"? Who was the leader in pushing for this?

BOHLEN: I don't think anybody would say it would have to work at any cost. I think people would say better to say no to the Soviets than to give in on a point of principle. Of course, the demand we put forward were pretty stringent, and I don't think anybody thought we'd get all of them, and we didn't. But we really got an awful lot, much more than anybody would have thought at any other time. So it really came down to a classic end game and the decision. "Had the Russians given us enough", and let's squeeze them one more time, and we have to have this, and we have to have that, and we don't have to have that. This went on for several weeks, and I think Warren Zimmerman who wanted this to happen because really the whole success of it was dependant on him and Roz Ridgeway who was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs and who gave him very strong support. In the end we got it, and I remember as usual it came down to one phrase, one comma, somewhere in the text, and there was a text of instructions that was all ready to go. It was sitting in the Ops Center, and Powell looked at it with the others, and he said, "We need to have this one last change." So I called up Warren, and he got in touch with the Russians, and they got in touch with Moscow, and they agreed, and so that was done. Roz Ridgeway and I came in on New Year's Day, and we went to the situation room in the White House, and she talked to Colin Powell about it from there. That's how it happened. That was something that took a lot of my time.

Q: How did the meeting go?

BOHLEN: The meeting was uneventful as I remember. I think I had moved on by that point, but I think it was an anticlimax

Q: Was there anything else you wanted to say?

BOHLEN: It seems to me that this was the fall of 1988 so that possibly the (November presidential) election had already taken place, but Reagan was still in office. Then the next thing we had to deal with was… Yes, it was right after the election that we solved this problem. We had the arrival of the new Secretary of State and the transition and the usual problems. You know this as well as I do, but it's always a difficult time when you have a transition. You have so many things to be explained. Everything comes to a grinding halt. What was interesting about that, of course, we had Jim Baker come to the State Department and he brought in a lot of good people: Bob Kimmitt, Bob Zoellick, Margaret Tutwiler, Dennis Ross. It was immediately clear that he was going to have a very different style than Shultz. He had his tight little circle of people who were around them, and they shut people out. It was an awkward period because Roz Ridgeway was still in EUR, but she was not a member of the inner circle. She was waiting to hear whether they may give her another job. In the end they didn't or she decided not to take whatever it was they offered. We were a little bit in outer space there. Then we had another issue that was cooking with the Germans. As I remember having negotiated away the ground launch cruise missiles and the Pershings, we still had some short range nuclear forces that we wanted to deploy in Germany, and things were heating up for

another campaign like INF where we would be putting pressure on the Germans and the Germans would create conditions and demand an arms control pact and all the rest of it. This was a rather hot issue, and I know it was one that had hit the new team with full force, and they had no idea. What's interesting to remember is that the Bush people regarded Reagan as having gone soft on the Russians. Again, I think that people like Scowcroft who lived through the Cold War, weren't persuaded that it was for real. So there was a lot of skepticism with Gorbachev. Plus they commissioned a lot of papers and reviews which we all came to feel were ways of keeping us all tied down while they went off and made policy.

Q: This, of course, is a classic thing that Kissinger did.

BOHLEN: Right. There were a lot of ex-Kissingerites there, so that's how we spent the first months of the year. Then two things happened: First of all, on my personal situation I was asked to become the EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary handling the Security Affairs portfolio. The way it happened was not a very happy story.

Ray Seitz had been brought back from DCM in London to be the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs [Ed: entered on duty August 8, 1989]. He was not very happy to be there, but he came back, and he took the job, and he selected a slate of people including a candidate for Deputy Assistant Secretary of European Affairs for Security Affairs who was not me. Somebody he'd worked with in the past and liked. At the time the State Department was facing a class action suit [Ed: submitted by Allison Palmer] about the number of women in high positions. The seventh floor looked around and realized that out of 104 Deputy Assistant Secretaries, they had something like four who were women, and they said, "This doesn't look good." And they started scrambling around, and I was a likely candidate for this job, and I was certainly qualified. I would never have taken it otherwise. So, they disinvited my colleague and invited me to take it on.

I was very, very unhappy about this because it didn't seem to be right, and the person who had been chosen was a friend and a colleague, and I thought that he was being rather shabbily treated. I remember I would take refuge in the ladies room because they can't find me there to ask me this question that I knew was coming. I finally went to Roz Ridgeway and said, "I just don't know what to do." She said, "You should take it because if you say no, it won't mean that Ray will get it [the other person]. They will just go and find some other woman who is less qualified. It's very difficult, and it's not pleasant, but you should take it." So I did take it, with a great deal of reluctance. Anyway, as I say, I felt I was qualified for the job, so I didn't have… I tell that story because it's an indication that gender politics was beginning to rear its ugly head and this was sort of a first.

Q: One looks at the other thing where somebody is asking so-and-so to come and do this because he knows him or her. That's the "old boy" network, or "old girl." It just means you're picked not for any purpose other than 'hell, I know them', and they're competent, and I just as soon have them around. But that means there is a significant body of qualified people who are left out in the cold.

BOHLEN: Right. The old system wasn't fair. But in redressing situations that are unfair, they sometimes do things that… I mean, today the Assistant Secretary just as a matter of choice automatically make sure he or she has sufficient diversity. But it was not that way then. Anyway, in the fall of 1989 I became the Deputy Assistant Secretary, and I remained in that position for two years.

Q: You reported to Ray Seitz.

BOHLEN: I reported to Ray Seitz, and Jim Dobbins was the Principal Deputy, and we had Ralph Johnson covering the economic portfolio and Curt Kamman doing the Soviet Union. It was just a great bunch, and Ray was wonderful to work for, really, really enjoyable. Very quickly that summer, Eastern Europe started to fall apart. Remember in the Czech Republic people were coming for visas, and they besieged the embassy. Once that happened, I think this was in late July or August, things really started to go very fast until you were right away into this very exciting period when you were trying to… not control events but try not to be preempted by events. It was a very exciting period, and I was very happy to be in the European Bureau where my responsibilities were for NATO, for security issues, and for arms control.

Q: How were things going particularly in arms control at this point? Were things really beginning to open up?

BOHLEN: Things were beginning to open up, and one thing happened very quickly. One of the responsibilities I had was covering negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, which had started several years before. The idea was to try to find some way of reducing force levels in Central Europe. Not manpower at this point, but particular types of weapons: tanks, armored personnel carriers, various other types of things. They had been going nowhere because the Russians were not particularly keen to reduce their forces in Central Europe. We had such a huge disparity. The NATO forces were so much fewer than the Soviet forces that there was really very little hope of coming to an agreement. One of the things that Gorbachev changed, and I can't remember when his first proposal of this took place, but he agreed to the Western demand that there should be equality in types of weapons between the two groups of alliances. It was a block-to-block negotiation. That was quite electrifying, and the negotiation then became…, and you had the fall of the Berlin Wall [November 9, 1989] and the end of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe. You were into a very different ballgame, and I always saw the CFE negotiation as the negotiation that was just one jump ahead of the sheriff all the time because we kept having to revise our terms of reference, our mandate to take account of these new situations. We all felt that it was something that was very important.

Q: Was there an Asian angle, a Chinese angle to these negotiations?

BOHLEN: We were not talking about forces in Asia at all. This was only in Europe.

It went from the Atlantic to the Urals. That was the so-called reduction zone, the imitation zones. It excluded on the one hand the Asian part of the Soviet Union and included the territorial United States; in fact, any part of the United States. Many of these things had been discussed over the years, and they were already many things that were agreed. But there was no agreement on the central point. Then suddenly it became an attainable goal, and that was very, very exciting.

Q: How did the events starting in the summer of 1989 in Europe, what was happening in your bureau? Were you watching this? Could you see the end game, or was this a concern or what?

BOHLEN: Nobody really knew what was going to happen at first. Then you had Gorbachev not reacting. I think reacting with force was just not an option for him at that time. We were watching it happening and thinking indeed, it might be true that these countries are now out from under the Soviet power. I can remember watching on TV the fall of the Berlin Wall and thinking this is the easy part. What's really going to be hard is for these societies where people have been used to being given everything by the state, and they're now going to face the harsh realities of a free-market system.

Q: Have you seen the movie "Goodbye Lenin"?

BOHLEN: No, I'm going to see it next week! I hear it's very funny.

Q: Oh, it's very funny, and it really breaks this up! It is a German movie about the impact of this on an East Berlin family.

BOHLEN: I've heard it's wonderful so I'm going. I just set it up this morning. Anyway, it was a time of really great euphoria, but there was also a lot of concern. There was particular concern about Eastern Germany. I was not really a part of this, but there was a fear about… I mean, people saw that Germany was going to be next, the whole issue of German sovereignty and Germany reclaiming its eastern half, and how this was going to play out. Everything moved so fast, and what seemed at the outset, the German unification seemed preposterous. Nobody wanted that. Of course, that was very quickly on the table, and then Baker got together with the other four allies—the Germans, the French and the British and the Russians—and he set up something the Two Plus Four Talks which was the two Germanys plus the four allied powers. I think that was a very brilliant thing that he did in managing that, which has been extensively written about and was something quite exceptional. I remember when it happened, there was something called the Open Skies Initiative which was started by President Bush reviving the old Eisenhower idea.

He decided to launch this, then the Canadians said, "This is a great idea. We'll have a conference on it." So we all went trouping off to Ottawa, and there was this big conference. All this German stuff was going on, so Baker was meeting absolutely non-stop on the margins of the meeting with the Big Four. The conference became a vehicle allowing for this to happen as is often the case. I remember that there was a lot of

unhappiness among some of the Allies that they were being excluded from this, it was just the big boys. Genscher kept not showing up for meetings.

Q: Genscher being the German Foreign Minister.

BOHLEN: Genscher being the German Foreign Minister. Genscher kept not showing up for meetings where he was supposed to be. Finally he appeared at some meeting. I think it was a meeting on Open Skies or maybe it was on CFE, which came in for a fair amount of talk. Genscher appeared, and immediately the Italian Foreign Minister who was a great big guy called…I think it was Amato, but not Julio Amato…he was a Socialist politician from…Giorgio was his first name…and he came from Venice, and he was a very rather flamboyant figure. He started in on this long tirade about how alliance solidarity had been important over the years and we'd had our differences, but we always done everything together.

Sorry, I need to back up just one minute. The particular thing was that the Big Four and the Germans had decided on this Two Plus Four process which was to be very important for resolving the German problem in the months ahead. They had done this among themselves. There had not been a NATO consultation with all the NATO countries. There was unhappiness about this, as I said. Particularly unhappy were the Italians because there had been a group during the Cold War called the Quad which was the four occupying powers, and they used to meet periodically not just to talk about Berlin or things that had to do with their status as occupying powers, but they really were sort of inner group of Allies who met and coordinated on every sort of policy, and it was a very effective group. The Italians were not in it, and it was a source of deep unhappiness as they felt they were of a size and a weight that they should be included, and they had been very loyal Allies and, as I mentioned last time, they stepped up to the plate on the base that the Spanish were kicking us out of and offered us another possibility. They were particularly sensitive. So that was the background of the outburst of the Italian Foreign Minister.

He said, "We've always decided everything together and the Alliance during the Cold War, 40 years of solidarity." Genscher looked at him coldly and said, "You were not players," in front of everybody. There was a collective intake of breath, and the poor Foreign Minister just sort of shut up, and then we went on to discuss the thing… And I think later there actually was a NATO meeting to discuss this Two Plus Four arrangement which, of course, nobody had any substantive problem with. Everybody was very happy that it was being managed, but it was a reminder of how important consultation always was. To have a Foreign Ministers meeting to talk about the Open Skies negotiations was just a pretext for everybody to get together and talk about all the things that were on peoples' minds that were much more important than Open Skies, so we didn't spend a lot of time talking about Open Skies.

Q: Open Skies essentially being people could put satellites or airplanes over and take pictures so everybody knew what everybody else was doing.

BOHLEN: Right. That was the original idea and, of course, 40 years on it had to be something different, because we all had satellites, and we all knew a lot more about what was going on. But still. So there was a negotiation to say what kind of aircraft you would allow and the parameters. All that was going on but, if fact, it was just a pretext because everybody felt the need to consult very closely during this period. The German question was absolutely uppermost, but another issue was the CFE negotiations.

Q: On the German question: Within the European bureau, when the whole series of things unfolded in the fall of 1989, was there concern that things were moving in such a way that maybe Germany would unify out of NATO? In other words, this would be part of the deal?

BOHLEN: There certainly was, although this was just in the beginning because most of the action was in the following year in 1990 if I'm not mistaken. I think there was recognition that there was enormous potential for things to go wrong. I think a very strong concern in the Bush Administration was the fear that the Russians… Nobody was talking about reunification at that point. That was still several months off. But when that prospect did come to the Four, then there was great fear that the Russians would offer the Germans some sort of a deal in return for withdrawal from NATO or *de facto* neutrality that they would find too tempting to resist. This used to make the Germans mad as hell because they said, "You never trust us!" which was true! We didn't trust them during the INF debate, we didn't trust them during this, and I think we were wrong.

Q: At this point was Genscher a problem?

BOHLEN: Genscher was not a problem, no. He was not a problem. In effect we were able to avoid having the Germans have to make this kind of choice partly because of very skilled diplomacy on the part of Baker. I think that probably the suspicion was misplaced. Maybe, maybe not with Genscher.

Q: I note that later people who were dealing with the Yugoslav issue saw Genscher as exacerbating that problem.

BOHLEN: He certainly did, but that was much later.

But, he was always regarded as the guy who would be willing to make a deal with the Russians in order to advance German interests. I think there was underlying this sort of suspicion was the recognition that German interests might go in a slightly different direction than the interest of their allies on some of these issues. That was certainly a strong feeling I think why Baker and Bush moved so fast to create a process where they could have a lot of input.

Q: You were mentioning you felt you were one step ahead of the sheriff at this point. Things were happening so fast. What about the Baker Team which was a small team. Were they doing their own thing, or were they tasking the European bureau, and were you able to all work together?

BOHLEN: A lot of people who were in the State Department at that time really felt not that happy with the team because they had no contact with them. They were not part of the policy process. I was very lucky for two reasons: One, Ray Seitz had a very good relationship with all the top floor team which he worked very hard to establish, so they called on him quite a lot. The other reason was, and this was a result, was intensified by something that came out of the Open Skies conference. I was working… As I mentioned, one of my main things was the Conventional Forces in Europe talks, and arms control is quite technical. It's not really something that you can wing on your own. Kissinger made a lot of mistakes when he tried to do it with Dobrynin. The SALT I treaty didn't have to be so sloppily drafted, as it was, and it was because of the things that Kissinger agreed to. At this conference Baker, who had met with Shevardnadze, I think.

Well, anyway. Assuming it was Shevardnadze, Baker had a lot of meetings with him. They discussed pretty much everything, and they discussed the CFE talks. Baker with the help of Robert Zoellick cooked up a proposal, which he cleared with the White House, but which had not been vented by anybody with any expert level. He floated this with the Russians and then announced it publicly—and again, I forget the exact sequence—it was a proposal to include air power in the negotiations, which was okay. It was the kind of bold move that they like to do which was pretty good. They hadn't vetted the numbers with the uniformed military. They hadn't run it through the process. Had the Soviets accepted it, it would have been our… Our Air Force would have been extremely unhappy because their levels were really too low. Even though the President stuck loyally by this proposal and it was part of our negotiating position for the next year, everybody was quite clear that it had been a mistake. I think Baker learned from that, that he really needed to bring someone like Reggie Bartholomew who was the Under Secretary for Security Affairs and Arms control. He needed to bring him into that. Thereafter, we were brought in, but it was a costly mistake. Because of Ray and because of Reggie who…I didn't really report to him, but I worked with him very much… I did feel involved in things, and it was a very exciting time.

Q: Just to sum up, we've really gone through the 1989 period, and you talked about the Two Plus Four Talks, but we haven't talked about the NATO side of things as we move in the 1990s. What's NATO all about as things developed?

BOHLEN: There were a couple of things from the early months of the Bush administration that I would like to mention in case I forget again. One was the trip that Baker took to all the NATO capitols in the first months of the Bush administration, and the other was how he resolved the SNF problem, the Short Range Nuclear Forces.

One of the first things that happened in the Bush I administration was that Baker took a trip to all the NATO capitols. [Ed: In February 1989 Secretary Baker traveled to: Ottawa (February 10), Reykjavik (February 11), London (February 11-12), Bonn (February 12-14), Copenhagen (February 13), Oslo (February 13), Ankara (February 14), Athens (February 14), Rome (February 14-15), Madrid (February 15), Lisbon (February 15), Brussels (February 15-17), Luxembourg (February 16), The Hague (February 16, and

Paris (February 17).] This was a promise that Bush had made during the campaign because he was always very emphatic about working with allies. He thought Europe was important. He thought NATO was important.

I can't remember what problem it was that he wanted to fix by sending Baker to all these capitols, but I think he thought it would be a good thing to do and, indeed, it was certainly traditional in those days that the Secretary of State would make a very early trip to consult with allies. That was part of the drill. We forget that now because it's not the case anymore, but it very much was a part of the pattern, and Bush in a sense went one better by sending Baker to all the allied capitols. We set off on this odyssey that had achieved its purpose of giving Baker who was not very experienced in foreign affairs, of course he knew all the finance ministers from having been at Treasury, but he really didn't know the foreign affairs scene, and it gave him the chance to hear their concerns and to just get a feel. It's always different when you talk to Europeans, problems that you might describe on paper when you talk to them, I think you understand them much better. I think that was very important, and I think it was a very good and much appreciated signal that Bush had sent his Secretary of State.

The trip itself had some rather hilarious moments because we had to do 16 capitols in about five days. Baker took Roz Ridgeway who was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, and she chose me as the one other person who could go with them. I was the person who got to… A lot of these places we wouldn't even spend the night or we would just stay for a couple of hours, so I was the person who got to sit in the airport and be the Site Officer for the airport. I saw the inside of many airports in Europe where I never had been before. I remember in particular our first stop was Reykjavik, and the Secretary's plane landed in a blinding snowstorm. This is just one of these silly little personal details, but Pat Kennedy was the head of S/S-EX (Office of Administrative Affairs, Office of the Secretary of State), and he said, "Have you ever sit up in the cockpit of the Secretary's plane?" I said no, I hadn't. So he took me up, and I saw us landing in this extraordinarily difficult snowstorm. We really almost thought we wouldn't make it. It was quite scary.

Q: I would think it would be one of the things you would rather not see.

BOHLEN: It was exciting in retrospect! But it was an experience I remember. I think it was just one of many trips the Secretary took, obviously. It was a chance for me to know some of the Secretary's people. I should say right up that I think Baker was one of the ablest Secretaries of State I ever worked for in spite of his lack of foreign affairs expertise. Of course, he had a very good team: Bob Kimmitt, Bob Zoellick, Margaret Tutwiler, and Dennis Ross. That was really a great pleasure, and I remember that.

One of the issues I also said I wanted to talk about was the Short Range Nuclear Forces issue. That was an issue that was looming. We wanted to deploy some short range nuclear sources in Europe, and having just gone through the INF debate which was extremely bruising although it ended well, the Allies really were not really up for this. The Germans in particular, I think there was a huge sort of nuclear allergy, and the British were very keen to push the Germans on it. I suspect, but I've never read Baker's

book, so I don't know whether he talks about this much, but I suspect Baker got the sense early on that this was not going to be possible. On the one hand we didn't want to give in to the Soviet pressure, but on the other, I think Baker, being an intensely political man himself, he had a great sense if another Foreign Minister said, "Look, this is just too hard to do with respect to the domestic situation in my country." That was something he understood and would expect. He would never try to get a Foreign Minister to go against something that he said was just too difficult to do in terms of domestic public opinion. I think he got a sense of that. The other thing and this was a big issue in the early days of the Bush Administration was that he got a sense from the other allies that Gorbachev was for real, and that there were openings here that we should not be afraid to take advantage of.

Q: Was there back in Washington a significant group that was concerned that Gorbachev was just Stalin with a smiling face?

BOHLEN: Definitely, and I think all the Bush people at the outset including probably the President himself were very concerned that Reagan had gone soft on Gorbachev. They were more skeptical of Gorbachev at the beginning, and I think Brent Scowcroft was one of those who I think is one of the wisest and best men who has worked in public service. But he was very, very cautious. Cheney, of course, was less surprisingly not at all convinced and, indeed, was not convinced right up to the end. Bob Gates who was the Deputy National Security Advisor. There was the feeling that we had to put on the brakes a bit, that we needed to not go so fast in pursuit of Gorbachev, and that we couldn't let down our guard. I think in Europe Baker undoubtedly heard that we had to take advantage of this opening. I think that it was an important trip.

Q: What advantage could we take? Was this to press ahead on negotiations?

BOHLEN: To press ahead on negotiations. I think there was a feeling Reagan had come to…not just Reagan but Shultz and Carlucci and Powell, all of those in his very able group of advisors that he had at the end of his presidency. I think they all had come to feel that there were openings that we could exploit. So we had done the INF treaty and were moving forward on other things. There was lots of very positive rhetoric and I think that the idea was that we could press ahead.

Q: Before you went to your next assignment in Paris, Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, as a DAS in the EUR Bureau was your portfolio directly affected?

BOHLEN: We were not—at least I was not—very much involved as a member of the European Bureau in my particular job although others in the European Bureau were involved. Obviously, because we were trying to put together a coalition, which we did a great deal more successfully than we did in the second war against Iraq. There was a lot of diplomacy, but I was really not so much involved. It was something that consumed the attention of everybody in any position of authority in the United States government. I can't say that it affected my job very much.

Q: Your next assignment was Paris as DCM in August 1991. And you were there from when to when?

BOHLEN: I went out in August of 1991, and I stayed until August of 1995. So, four wonderful years. It's always challenging to work in France. I don't know if last time I told a story of a colleague of mine who served in both Paris and Bonn which was then the capitol, and he said, "If the embassy in Paris sends in a recommendation or an IDF or some initiative, it's regarded with intense suspicion in the State Department just because it comes from Paris. So no matter how good the idea, it tends to be discounted because of the origin, whereas if you send in something from the embassy in Bonn no matter how stupid the idea is, we'd get working because it comes from the embassy in Germany." We were presumed to reflect the ideas of our host to some degree.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you went out there?

BOHLEN: The ambassador when I went out there was Walter Curley who had been a friend of George Bush I's, and actually was a roommate of one of his brothers I think at Yale and had been a successful venture capitalist in New York. [Ed: Ambassador Curley served in Paris from July 6, 1989 to February 11, 1993.] A wonderful man, I very much enjoyed working for him. I think he had considerable doubts, and this was interesting about how the position of women has moved along in the State Department in this period. He was very dubious about having a woman as DCM, and I think it was nothing personal, but it was just his generation. The State Department was faced with a class action lawsuit from women at that point. They were very anxious to have me in the job because I was obviously qualified, and I was the first DCM in a Class I embassy. There had never been one!

Q: This is as late as 1991!

BOHLEN: This is 1991! Then very quickly after me there was Beth Johns in Germany. I think it had a lot to do with the fact that there were political ambassadors in most Class I posts, so the Department was not in the position to pressure them the way they can people who were career service and say, "This is what you've got to do," and "It's for the service." Ray Seitz who was my wonderful Assistant Secretary for European Affairs said, "We can order Walter Curley to take you. Probably he would mind that at the beginning, but then after awhile everything would settle down." I said, "I don't really want to be put in that position, so if he doesn't want me, I will take a position somewhere else because I don't want to be forced on anybody." He was very concerned, Ambassador Curley was. For example he said, "If she gives a dinner party, who sits at the other end of the table?" He was a very old-fashioned person. In the end he decided because lots of kind friends and colleagues weighed in on my behalf, and Eagleburger and so on were pushing it very hard and, I think, Mr. Baker himself. He finally called me up, and he said, "I'd like you to come and do the job," to the great disgruntlement, I may say, of a number of my colleagues who said they wanted to have the opportunity.

Q: "I'm all for women's equality, but in somebody else's backyard!"

BOHLEN: That's right! "But if Avis doesn't get it, what a shame. Maybe I'll have a shot at it!" I went, and we worked together very, very well. He was a wonderful human being, and we got on very well. He was very much an ambassador who had made a lot of friends in certain circles of French society. He didn't get too much into the business of running the embassy, but I think everybody liked him, and I always felt he made a lot of friends for America because he was such an engaging personality. He didn't speak French, so that was always a ...

Q: I would have thought he would have been a little bit dubious about having the daughter of a former and extremely well known ambassador come in, feeling, "She's got all these connections, and I don't speak French. Is she going to take my embassy away?"

BOHLEN: I don't really think that was a factor. He certainly never mentioned it as far as I was concerned. He was somebody who had every confidence in himself, and he was very well connected at certain levels of French society. I was well connected at another level of more political circles, and that was just fine with him. And I think if anything it was probably an advantage. He liked to be able to say I'm Chip's daughter.

Q: Why don't we talk about the embassy now before we talk about relations. An embassy in a house where every branch of government wants to put people. As for Paris, everybody who's anybody in the government tries to get a foot in the door. Some senator's daughter all of a sudden gets a job in Paris. How did you find the size and management of that embassy?

BOHLEN: Well, for one thing it's just huge. In addition to the embassy proper, which I think is 350 Americans, it had about a thousand employees in all. In addition to that, there were a number of organizations that are U. S. government agencies that were based in Paris going back to the 1940s when that seemed the obvious place to be. For example, in Paris there was something called RAMC (Regional Administrative Management Center), and they did all the payrolls financial accounting not just for Europe, but for Africa. They were totally separate from the embassy. They were quite a little financial operation over there. It was really fascinating. They nominally came under the Ambassador's purview. We didn't really supervise them directly, but obviously they were an official American presence, so this had a huge footprint. The mission paid for the Americans' housing. Most of the staff were local employees. We had to support the Americans who worked there who were not so numerous. They were part of the general picture in a different way. Then there was something called CoCom, an acronym for Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls, which was just winding up [Ed: March 1994].

Q: CoCom enforced exports controls to the Soviet block under the Arms Export Control Act which State Department supervised.

BOHLEN: That's right. Of sensitive technology and so on. So that was another element. We had withdrawn from UNESCO (United Nations Economic and Social Council) but

the time I was there, but we did have one person who was a representative. There was also the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) mission which as supported by the embassy in terms of housing and staff. It was really a huge operation. Plus every agency finds a reason why it has to be represented in Paris. A great many of them are legitimate. The 25 different agencies: The DEA, the Drug Enforcement Agency; the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They all have very close ties with their French counterparts and worked quite closely. And all the usual agencies: The CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the Defense Department, and all sorts of oddball things. I remember one of my predecessors telling me this was no longer true when I was there. Bob Blake—I don't know if you ever—and he said when he was doing the initial tour of the embassy after he arrived, he went into one office, and they said, "We're here to liquidate the residual issues of World War II." And he went a little further down the corridor, and there was a door in some recess, and he went in and flung aside the curtain and said, "Hello. We're here to liquidate the residual issues of World War I!!! But we're just about finished. We were winding up."

My favorite thing, there was a Army General who represented the Battle Monuments Commission and who looked after all the graves in Normandy. Once a month, we had what was called "the expanded country team meeting," and he would come and describe the different kinds of moss that was growing on the graves and his efforts to combat them, and he would go on in great length about these.

Then, of course, there was a huge USIA (United States Information Agency) operation. We were culturally very active. A political section that was ten people at that time which, when the inspectors came said that was excessively large. There was always something going on. For me becoming DCM, and I suspect this is true of most of us who had been political officers most of our career, it was really a quantum jump in responsibility because suddenly you were responsible for this huge range of agencies, and you had to get involved in commercial issues, transportation issues, and all the rest of it.

I remember practically the first evening I was there, and I think I've described about the coup. Did I describe about how I was woken up one morning? One of the first issues was there was some kind of travel advisory from the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) or something. There was a new guy in the FAA, and he was on duty, and I was new, and he brought this in to me, and we looked at each other. I said, "What do I do with this? I know we're not supposed to keep…" This was after all the fuss about the travel advisory after Pan Am 103, and it had been kept to the official community. I said, "I know we're not supposed to keep this to ourselves, but what do we do about getting it out?" Twenty-five phone calls later, we figured out what had to be done, but I had no idea what to do.

The DCM, as I'm sure you know, but probably most people don't, is the one who deals with all sorts of community issues; such as suspected cases of alcoholism or child abuse, and I had a child abuse case.

Q: Without naming names, how did something like this come to your attention? How was it handled?

BOHLEN: I think typically it was reported to somebody in the embassy, and there might be different channels they could go to. But in this case a neighbor witnessed the incident involving a family that lived on the compound. There was a compound which tended to be where those that had lower income brackets in the embassy, the secretaries and communicators lived. It was a bit of a goldfish bowl. I think it was a neighbor that reported on this incident. We had a regional psychiatrist in residence who was a fabulous person. She traveled a great deal, but she was always available by phone, and people came to her because she was a very warm and wonderful woman. It might have come to her, and then she told me about it and kept me informed. Somehow the admin counselor was involved, also. There were different ways it could come to people. We also had deal with issues of endless… This was the era of grievances. I think they still go on. Racial issues…

Q: That was at the time, and I don't mean to be facetious, but sexual harassment was in vogue, wasn't it? Was that coming up at all?

BOHLEN: That never occurred in France. I don't know why. That was not a problem that we had. We had just about everything else. Family issues. The DCM has the most incredible range of responsibilities. I was the ultimate top of the heap when it came to financial controls. When the inspectors came, they faulted me for having… We had a case of embezzlement in the consulate, and they faulted me for not having kept stricter controls over it. I said, "What am I supposed to do, go over to the consulate every day and supervise the cash count?" It's very hard to know what some of these responsibilities entailed. All of that takes up a huge amount of time. I worked very closely with the admin counselor, and you realize when you are in that sort of relationship what a huge empire admin counselors have in these big embassies. There were hundreds of people doing lifting, and shoveling, and digging, and building. In an embassy like Paris there are huge amounts of residual positions. We had somebody who did nothing but refinish furniture. We got rid of him before I left. That's sort of incredible.

Q: The competition between having someone on staff and farming out the task?.

BOHLEN: Right. Often it was found to be cheaper. Certainly they had a team of painters that would paint every embassy apartment between occupants, and that turned out to be cheaper than hiring people out on the market.

I always felt that if you're DCM, it's very easy to fall into the trap of just being an "inside" DCM and only worrying about these issues. That's not what I was trained for, so I worked overtime to give myself time to have outside contacts.

Q: Some argue that the political officer DCM sees himself as aide to the ambassador on political issues. This is what they know how to do, and they leave mission management stuff to the administrator office who doesn't have the power to bring them in together. What were you drawing on inwardly for dealing with all these problems that you'd never had to deal with before?

BOHLEN: I would say just good common sense. Whatever experience, we'd all had some management experience which involved mostly managing people rather than resources. I took FSI's DCM Course which was actually quite fun. They do all these exercises, people on a raft, how do you get them off, and this kind of thing. I learned some things there. They cautioned us again and again, don't be your own political counselor, and I took that very much to heart. I worked very well with the political counselor, who was (Miles) Tim Pendleton when I first got there and then Mark Bellamy after I'd been there a while. He was still there when I left. I gave the political section a lot of leeway.

Q: Did you run across any tension between Washington and the embassy over the size and staffing of the mission? Washington agencies wanting to be represented?

BOHLEN: No, and sometimes as it happened, neither of the political ambassadors that I worked for really challenged Washington very much on this point. Some ambassadors do. These things are negotiated in Washington usually between the Deputy Secretary and other agencies, and they negotiate the size of the mission and the numbers. What we do have, which most other governments don't necessarily have, is the ambassadors' authority is supreme over all these people. Walter Curley took this very seriously, his authority. You really can make it stick even with the agencies that are traditionally most autonomous and independent, for example the CIA and the Defense Department. As somebody once said to me, a station chief does not gain stature back at Langley if he gets in a fight with the ambassador. He's there to get along with the ambassador. Most of them try to cultivate a special relationship, a special direct relationship with the ambassador. I think the agency that's been the most trouble in recent years has been the law enforcement: The Department of Justice and especially the FBI. They didn't have representatives overseas when most agreements were concluded. They think of themselves as independent agents out there.

Q: Did you have any problems on these issues?

BOHLEN: I really didn't. We had some really good people who worked with embassies before. They were very cooperative. I said I can't possibly give any detail. I said I can't give you detailed supervision. There's no way. There's just one rule: I don't want any nasty surprises. So, if you're about to arrest somebody or if you're about to deport somebody, or do something fancy, I need to know about it so I can advise the ambassador. That worked pretty well. They were never working against it. The French also worked closely with them.

Q: Now on to bilateral relations, Mitterrand was the president, wasn't he?

BOHLEN: Mitterrand was the president when I got there.

Q: How would you describe the state of relations when you got there with France? Was Desert Storm an issue?

BOHLEN: Desert Storm was basically over. We were in the process of putting the Kuwaiti oil wells back into production. I think relations weren't bad. Mitterrand had been consistently quite supportive of the United States. I think going back to the first time I was there, he supported us on the deployments of Intermediate Nuclear Forces, the INF deployments. He felt that the U. S. needed support because the Russians were getting too big for their britches. That wasn't true by 1991, but he supported us in the end over Desert Storm. He caused Washington a lot of anxiety because he was always trying some new initiative to stop the pace, but in the end he was very much with us, although the French troops were in their own little corner separate from the other coalition forces. I remember something that was quoted to me along the lines: that when Maggie Thatcher went to see Bush right after the attack, she said, "Don't go wobbly." Bush is reported to have said, "Well, I worry about the Europeans and France. What will I do?" Maggie said, "Don't worry. Francoise will be with you when the boat sails." That's been so true about the French over the years with the exception of this last war. They were pretty cooperative. Everybody liked Bush. In Europe, everybody liked Bush I. I don't think there were any major problems.

Sorry—there was one major problem when I arrived. We were in the middle of trade negotiations, the Uruguay Round, the last of the old GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). We had big problems with the French over agriculture and over movies. This came to a head after Pamela Harriman arrived, but they were ongoing. The Bush Administration thought it would be able to separate the Germans from the French, which was a persistent delusion that Washington has, and it never works any more than the French can separate the Germans from us. I'm trying to think what the other issues were. Yugoslavia was starting to be a big issue.

Q: On the agricultural side, were we trying to knock out French subsidies?

BOHLEN: We were trying to cut way back on export subsidies in particular, so we don't care what you do internally. What is unacceptable is that you should be producing all this excess grain which you then have to export. You produce more than you consume, and you have subsidies to the exports.

Q: I want to ask how you resolved it. This has been going on… It's still going on. What was the movies problem?

BOHLEN: The movies problem was… and we also had the aerospace problem and the Airbus problem. The movies problem, and this didn't really come up. It came up rather unexpectedly as a last minute issue. This was already after Pamela was there. The first thing was that the Europeans had put a European content requirement into their television programs. They said there had to be 10% or 30% or whatever European contact. It couldn't all be just American shows. The American producers didn't like that. The American movie and TV industry didn't like that. Then the French subsidized their own filmmakers, which is reflected in the box office price. There's a tax on tickets that goes to… Even tickets to American movies have this tax, but they then go to subsidize the

French movie industry. The movie industry got very much up onto its high horse wanting to end this discrimination. They said if there are going to be subsidies, we should benefit from it too, because we're X% of the market in France, and you can't cut us out. The French got very emotional about both the agricultural issue and the movie issue, and the culture they really wanted to hold on to their way of doing things and they thought they were protecting French culture, European culture from American takeover. On the agriculture, talk about misleading images. The image in France was that the United States was out to destroy the little farms and the villages. The villages are dying. The fact is the farmers who export are the big commercial size farms in northern France around Paris and Neubois who our people always said would be totally competitive with American agriculture, but they were very happy to have the exports, to have the subsidy. But they were the ones that were exporting, and the other farms were dying anyway. They've been dying over a period of forty years. But this was the image in France, and people got very emotional about it, *la France pour ferme* was being attacked by the Americans. That was interesting. Then we got into the last big round of the aircraft fights was back in 1991 or 1992 when we went after Airbus for the subsidies. Also, there were fights about landing rights in Paris, and American airlines would every so often get very frosty and try to press for greater landing rights in Paris. This was something that was decided every spring, so it was a big sort of tension. This was part of the fun of being DCM, because I met all the heads of these airlines. People like Bob Crandall who was head of American Airlines. They were very fascinating people who I never would have met otherwise. We had a wonderful Economic Counselor, Janice Bay.

Q: Yes. I've interviewed Janice [so her Oral History is available from ADST].

BOHLEN: Oh, yes. She was an expert on the aircraft industry. She was fabulous. Those were the main economic problems. The GATT took more of my time in the first bit.

Q: Sometimes you're up against forces that are way beyond diplomacy, sort of ingrained into the soul of different countries. Did you feel while you were there anything was moved forward in either the aircraft or the agriculture or the…

BOHLEN: The one thing that I think we were able to do because in the end the French had to give a little bit. I think what we did through Pamela was to help others understand what the French problem was and why it was such an emotional problem, and the constraints that there were on any French government about making too many concessions. Stu Eizenstat was Ambassador to the EU (European Union), and he called a meeting to which all the ambassadors from the key countries came. Germany, Dick Holbrooke was there by then, and Pamela Harriman from Paris, and whoever was in London. They all sat down and discussed the issues. I remember we worked very hard on them, the papers that we prepared for Ambassador Harriman. She came back and she said, "Those papers were really fantastic, and I was able to show the others what the problem was." That was, I think, our contribution. Stu was key to helping negotiate the end of it. We had to compromise, and the French had to give a little bit and agree to basically a phase-out of the export subsidies.

Q: I have the impression that Washington doesn't treat suggestions from Embassy Paris with the seriousness it treats suggestions from Embassy Bonn. The problem is that when you explain what the constraints are, when somebody says, "The cultural constraint is so important in France," and I could see somebody back in Washington saying, "That's their problem. That doesn't answer this." Of course, instead of cultural constraints, we use Congress as our alibi for everything.

BOHLEN: Most of this I would never have put in a telegram or it would be in a much muted form. We can do it with Pamela and with ambassadors who were less crude. Those were all very interesting issues.

Q: Usually in Paris we have an Africa watcher, a Middle East watcher, and a Far East watcher. Is there a Latin American watcher too, or not?

BOHLEN: It varies from, I would say, period to period. In the Political Section we always have an Africa watcher, and I think we always have a Middle East watcher. Sometimes we have an Asia watcher, and sometimes we have a Latin American watcher, and sometimes we combine them into something else. I think we dropped having an Asia watcher, or we combined it with something else. The key dossiers were always the Middle East and Africa.

Q: These were usually politically officers from those regions sent to Paris to keep an eye on what's happening because the French play such a role particularly in Africa. How did you find their work within the embassy?

BOHLEN: Mostly very well. I remember our Middle East watcher was a very talented young woman. It was only her second assignment. She wasn't a seasoned Middle Eastern-type. I never had any problem with them. They fit in very much. I remember when I was there the first time and I was Deputy Political Counselor, we had an Africa watcher who was just a marvel because Africa policies are always run out of the Office of the President in France. He struck up a great relationship with the guy who was Mitterrand's Africa watcher and who had been his dentist! At the time that it was still problematic to get frequent access to the French officials. The Quai could be rather starchy, and Marty was just in and out of Villepin's office. They'd talk almost every day on the phone. It was great.

Q: During the time you were there, how did French foreign policy, not vis-à-vis *the*

United States, but the French foreign policy in Africa and the Middle East, were they doing anything that bothered us?

BOHLEN: Rather than Africa, there was one issue that was only a bone of contention, and that was the European defense issue. That had started even before I left Washington that the Europeans were trying to revive, a little bit, their idea of doing something in European defense. It's a very neuralgic issue in Washington, and unnecessarily so in my view. They were having this meeting and that meeting, and the Brits were joining in, and

then I think it was in the spring of 1991, just before I left Washington, we sent a really heavy-handed *demarche* around to all our capitals saying practically we regard this as disloyal. We brought down the sledgehammer. And it had an effect, particularly on the Brits, who don't like to be crosswise with us. Everybody was furious with us. I would say this was probably the most neuralgic issue between ourselves and the Europeans; this defense issue.

We also had the beginnings of Yugoslavian issues. One issue that happened the first year I was there, there was an issue about whether to recognize Croatia. The Europeans had been on the whole against it, and the Germans, I think because Genscher came under a lot of attack at home because of not recognizing Croatia, so they switched their position from one day to the next and said, "We're going to recognize Croatia, don't care whether the rest of the EU did it." The rest of the EU just sort of meekly went along. Belatedly, we came in and we said we didn't think this was a good idea, and where would it all end, and what were the implications for Bosnia? That was the fatal moment, and after that they… This is when Bosnia said, "We can't be left alone with all these Serbs." That's when the fighting started.

Q: I'm an old Yugoslav hand, and the one-two punch to the Serbs of the Germans who did nasty things in Yugoslavia and the Catholic Church which also did nasty things during World War II both recognizing Croatia could look like, to the Serbs who are paranoid anyway, as all our enemies getting together to pick on us.

BOHLEN: I think it went beyond the usual Serb paranoia because you did have Milosevic who had already been doing bad things to them. To the Kosovars, and was able to play on that. One of the big issues was that the Europeans… Well, this was after Clinton came in.

Q: Before we get to the Clinton Administration, how did we view the French/German alliance? Was France the leading force there that was able to lead Germany along the road to unification?

BOHLEN: Unification of Germany, the single currency and so on. I think we assumed that Germany was now going to be the big power in Europe. Both under Bush and under Clinton we made Germany the favored partner which I think was a huge misunderstanding of the state of European politics because you already have the EU playing a very important role. They don't operate without regard for the others. It's just not the way things work anymore. Of course, there was the relationship with France which was never more important than with Mitterrand and Kohl. Those two had bonded very closely, and they were working on the Maastricht Treaty which was France's price for not trying to oppose the unification of Germany. I think people recognize the force of the Franco-German relationship. There were times that it bothered us and times that we found it helpful. I think that we were not able to persuade the Germans to gang up with us on the French came as a shock to some people in Washington. I remember Bob Zoellick wrote a very emotional letter to his German counterpart which all got in the papers

saying, "How could you betray us like this?" I think there were some illusions not about how strong France was, but of how strong the tie was between the two.

Q: During this period, was there growing concern about the European Union? You had, obviously, trade disputes, that this would act as a counter-force to the United States? In a number of ways including its own defense organization?

BOHLEN: Apart from the issue of defense, I think we were not, particularly in contrast to now, we were not opposed to the union. We had always defended it, and we thought it was a good thing. We supported it, but we were very suspicious on the defense issue. We wanted it to go so far and no further. This was before the Euro and before a lot of things that have happened just in the past ten years or even the past five years. I think it was perceived as a good thing, the usual thing. "Well, it's France. It wants to take it in the wrong direction, and so we have to support the others."

Q: Was there the attitude that, no matter what we do, France is always going to be the burr under the American saddle? To the layman it seems like the French take a certain contrarian view. Was the feeling that this was done by reflex, or was this done by policy or what?

BOHLEN: Sometimes, and I think there's a deep ingrained suspicion of France which has been there since de Gaulle. On the one hand suspicious of what they do in the European arena of trying to define a common European position that will be closer to their views and to ours, sort of the opposite approach of the British. But also an appreciation that France is a serious power that's not afraid to use military power. We worked with them very closely in Africa. We were always airlifting people out of Africa, one coup ridden country after another, and we worked very closely with them. The fact that they'd supported us in the Gulf, even though they did so in their own way, which was sometimes ridiculed. It was really appreciated.

Q: As you explained the situation in Paris to Washington, do you think Washington or Washington visitors saw you as too close to France? The localitis charge?

BOHLEN: No. I was well known in the department as one of the leading…never wanting to bash the French and defenders of France. When people came to Washington I'd certainly learned over the years not to just passionately put forward what the French view of a particular issue was. It was always much more about how we could get them to do what we wanted and here are the red lines. People sought my advice about how to deal with the French, so I was regarded as somebody who knew the French.

Q: Moving to the arrival of the Clinton Administration in January 1993. First, how did the French view Clinton? Clinton was seen as, I imagine, sort of a country bumpkin up against this very sophisticated George Bush, Sr. who had been around and Clinton was from, for God's sake, Arkansas.

BOHLEN: I think they probably were all for Bush as I remember. Valery Giscard d'Estaing, the former president, said Arkansas is as big as Orban or has as many people in it as Orban. "Who was this guy?" When he came on his first trip which was June of 1993 he came to Paris, and I think he made a good impression on people. Their first encounter with the Clinton Administration was not positive because that was Secretary Christopher's mission to come and propose this crazy policy of Lift and Strike: You lift the arms embargo on the Bosnians and you strike at the Serbs on the surrounding hills. This was absolutely not seen as… This was not a positive trip, and Christopher was not a very forceful advocate of this position. Their first encounter was not good, and there were all those stories of the first years of the Clinton Administration, everything was so disorganized, and heads of state would be shut out of the White House, and nobody was ever on time. This was all rather distasteful. Then Clinton came, and he talked to a breakfast of business leaders, and he blew them away because he was so smart, and he knew so much, and he could talk on all these issues without any notes. That was a big plus, and they began to understand that this was a man of hearts.

Q: Let's return to talking about the ambassadors you worked for as DCM in Paris.

BOHLEN: I first worked for Walter Curley who was a Bush I appointee. He was connected to the Bush family. I think he'd been the roommate of President Bush's brother at Yale or Andover. He selected me for the DCM. I think I might have talked about that. Then Clinton was elected, and Pamela Harriman as named as the ambassador. There was a certain amount of speculation about whether she would want another woman in that job. There was actually an article in a syndicated newspaper column "Evans and Novak" saying that she wouldn't want to keep me on. She was so upset. She called up first my husband who was still here in Washington, and then she called me up and wanted to assure me that it wasn't true and that she wanted me to stay on. That was nice. She was one of the first Clinton ambassadors to be confirmed because she had a great many friends on the Hill, and they were able to move her nomination forward very rapidly. I think it was completely unopposed. She arrived in June 1993.

I remember it was closer to the 4th of July because she still hadn't presented her credentials. Anyway, she came, and I think that from the very start she was a very active ambassador. I think the French had been skeptical beforehand because she had a certain reputation, and she'd never been an ambassador before. In fact, this was her first paid job, so they were skeptical. She'd had a rather flamboyant life at certain points in her past, so they weren't sure at all. She totally captivated them, and she did so not only because she was a very…attractive doesn't begin to describe it…but a very lovely woman with a great power of… People just fell under her spell. Not only because of that but because she was extremely hard working, because she had a lot of political smarts, and she was well connected to the White House. She really could pick up the phone to President Clinton if need be and she spoke wonderful French. She was incredibly disciplined about how she went about it. She really studied issues unlike a lot of political ambassadors who don't really think they have much to learn. She felt that she did, so she would bone up on issues. She very quickly realized where she could work to best effect, and we had a very good division of labor. I had the traditional DCM role of running the embassy.

Q: When she arrived, what was the situation between France and the United States in 1993?

BOHLEN: In 1993 the war in the Balkans was beginning to be an issue already because the French and the British had put troops there, and under the aegis of the UN, UNPROFOR (UN Protection Force), and that was already proving inadequate, and they were beginning to get shot at. This was very difficult. (François) Mitterrand was president all through the time I was there [Ed: In the election of 10 May 1981, Mitterrand became the first socialist President of the Fifth Republic and served until May 1995]. In 1993 the Socialists lost in the legislative election, so there was a conservative trend. Also, Chirac was elected in May 1995 toward the end of my time in Paris. The legislative elections had put a right government in power, a center right government in power, and Edouard Balladur was the Prime Minister. He was already the Prime Minister when Pamela came.

Q: Did she come with an agenda from Washington of what she wanted to do?

BOHLEN: No, I don't think she had a particular agenda. I think the biggest probably issue between us was not the Balkans but the Uruguay Round, the trade talks where we were really heading up to quite a confrontation over agriculture, over intellectual property rights to some degree, but especially over agriculture. This was certainly the issue that dominated her first year, but so also did the Balkans. I should back up a bit and say that Secretary Christopher had come through on his famous tour before Pamela arrived, and he wanted to persuade the Europeans to…or at least hear their views…about the policy that we called Lift and Strike, which was to say lift the embargo and use aircraft for air strikes. The French and the British didn't like this at all because they had troops on the ground who were vulnerable, who were already being knocked off by the Serbs. They thought this was a bad idea, and the whole trip was a disaster.

Q: Let's stick to the Balkans first and then move to the Uruguay round. Were we trying to prod the Europeans who had boots on the ground to do something? It seems to me they were put there as sitting ducks, and it was a very passive nature.

BOHLEN: It was of a passive nature. The European politics were quite complicated. In 1992 when Croatia and Slovenia were already showing signs of wanting to break away from Serbia… No, that was 1991…

Q: That was when Genscher recognized…

BOHLEN: Yes, and that was my first year in Paris, and it was before Pamela got there. Everybody was opposed to recognizing the independence of Croatia and Slovenia, and the Germans were also opposed for a long time. Apparently Genscher went to a meeting with the Bundestag where he was roundly denounced for not wanting to recognize Croatia which, of course, has a lot of émigrés that live in Germany, and the Croatian lobby was very powerful. Germany very abruptly reversed course, which was not

appreciated by its other partners, but they in the end went along. It was a very brutal demonstration of Germany's new found power. There were already rifts within the European Union about what they should do there. As the Union was breaking up and the United States was very involved with the breakup of the Soviet Union, all of this was happening at the same time, and the Europeans said, "We can handle this." Eagleburger and Scowcroft and Baker said, "That's just fine. We're very happy to have you take it on. We don't need this problem." Also, Scowcroft and Eagleburger were both people who'd served in Serbia. They thought it was disastrous to get involved in these issues, and as long as they were in power which was through most of 1992, we really did nothing. We left it to the Europeans.

We did, when Croatia was moving toward separation; we did get involved diplomatically and tried to stop the recognition. I think we lobbied the Germans, but it was too late. It was too ineffective. So they went ahead, and that was the genesis of the Bosnian problem. Then we went through a period where we were doing nothing. The Europeans decided to deploy some troops there when the Serbs started shelling Sarajevo, but they were not there to fight. I think the view of both Paris and London at that time was that it was fatal to get involved in Balkan wars, that these were not worth Western lives, and it was a dangerous trap. It was very much an effort to contain the conflict. Various efforts were tried. There was the Owens-Vance mission to try to broker a deal on Bosnia. This goes into the Clinton Administration. All we did was to just kind of try to pull the rug out from under the Europeans. We didn't approve of the Vance-Owen plan, and the Bosnians had some doubts about it, so we encouraged the Bosnians to reject it. I think we played a very negative role because we didn't have anything to offer ourselves. But then the Clinton Administration decided to send Christopher to Europe. I think Madeleine Albright and others were very eager to become involved in the Balkans.

Q: She was the UN Ambassador.

BOHLEN: She was the UN Ambassador at that time, and she had a seat in the cabinet. There were others on the NSC staff that thought it was terrible that we weren't getting involved, and by this time people were being killed in Sarajevo, and there was ethnic cleansing going on, and it was a pretty awful period.

Q: Were we sensing anything at the time you were there about the French getting uncomfortable with its role of passivity while they were being shot at?

BOHLEN: I think when Chirac came to the presidency, he found it completely unacceptable that the French were sitting there and taking this, and he pushed back rather hard but not changing the parameters of the policy, which was still not to get involved in a big way. But he reacted more aggressively than the Mitterrand administration had. He found it offensive that French soldiers were being asked to take all this treatment. I think that even then--I will check my dates before we talk next time because I'm getting all mixed up about the sequence--but Alain Juppé who was the interim Foreign Minister was determined to get the United States involved, and Washington didn't want to be involved. There was a great deal of resistance on the part of Washington, and after Christopher

went back, the Europeans said, "We don't like your proposed policy," and so Christopher went back to Washington, and Washington threw up its hands in despair at this lack of a policy.

Q: Was Harriman going to Washington? Did she have her own thoughts on what to do when she arrived?

BOHLEN: Not particularly, no. I wouldn't say she came with an agenda on this. I think she was always concerned to help the president, to help the administration back in Washington. I think she shared the frustration of Washington with what was happening without any very good idea. She was quite active, but really our role at this point in Paris was coordinating with the French and staying on top of what they did.

Q: Turning to the Uruguay Round, the idea of trying to negotiate with the French and the Germans and even the Brits on the agriculture subsidies sounds like almost a hopeless task.

BOHLEN: Of course, the French were the biggest supporters of the CAP, the Common Agricultural Policy, and even though the EU was deciding at that time for their own internal reasons that you needed to end this system, which resulted in these huge surpluses, which then had to be exported. That's what really we were arguing about because we said, "OK, we don't care what you do inside. It seems a pretty stupid policy to us, but when you were exporting the results of this, then this really cuts into our exports, and we don't subsidize our exports." So that was the big game, and the Germans I would say were less hard over on this. That's always been the case. The French are at one extreme and the Germans under the Bush Administration. Bob Zoellick now to be Deputy Secretary thought he could split off the Germans from the French. This was an illusion that the Bush Administration had, the first Bush administration. They thought the Germans were going to be so grateful for our help in solving the unification of Germany that they would go along with our policies. Of course, France remains just as important to Germany as it ever had been, just as important as the United States. It was the anchor of its European policy. They would not go against the French. They pushed the French in their own way, but they certainly weren't going to line up with us against the French. I think this came as a surprise to the Bush Administration. By the time the Clinton Administration had come in, this was still a big issue, and you had Stu Eizenstat as Ambassador to the European Union, and he was working it very hard. It was a very complex issue because it rang all sorts of resonance for the French. Agriculture, during the lifetime of the EU and under the Common Agricultural Policy, has gone from employing 33% of the French working population to something like 6%. In a way, this whole thing of the CAP has been a program to ease the transition for France, the transition that has taken place in other countries as well. What this meant was as the farming population falls ever further that there are lots of little villages in the middle of France that are being depopulated. I think the French image of themselves is so much tied up with the image of the countryside and the village and the rural roots and so on. This was something that was emotionally very upsetting to the French. We were very much involved in the other side. I think the people understood you had to bring the French

along. You couldn't really isolate them. In the end we did. We also had a big fight with them about movies. About intellectual property rights. We were in agreement with them about much to do with intellectual property rights, which is the piracy that goes on in Asia and elsewhere. This was about whether the EU TV has a thing that stipulates that 50% of all TV programs should be local content, national content. The American movie producers have been fighting this. They were trying to end… The French subsidize their pictures by imposing a tax at the box office. The American distributors, who were extremely greedy lot in my opinion, were really opposed to this. They were in there lobbying very heavily. At the end there were several issues that needed to be solved. Not just the agricultural one. There was a grand bargain at the end which I think came in 1993.

Q: Did Harriman get involved in the negotiations?

BOHLEN: She did. We would spend endless sessions with her discussing all the issues. At one point Stu Eizenstat had a meeting with all of the ambassadors who were concerned. Holbrook was then Ambassador to Germany. Pamela Harriman. The Ambassador to Britain who I think was still Ray Seitz or maybe it was Admiral Crowe by then. Stu brought them all to Brussels for a sort of working weekend, and they all tried to think of how it might play out and what would be the acceptable bargains. Pamela was able to do a good job of explaining to people why this was such a neuralgic issue. It wasn't a French cussedness or wanting to have advantage, but it really had to do with a lot of emotional…

Q: I would argue that most western countries have this small, family farm image of themselves, when in fact those who receive the benefit of any of these small-farm subsidies are big agricultural companies.

BOHLEN: Exactly right. Our agricultural people used to see the French grain producers who are in the big central plain near Paris in the central part of France, they used to say that they were fully competitive with us, they didn't need this subsidy. Of course, it was nice to have it, but they said even if they phase out the subsidies, it still will be very tough to beat.

Q: Just to end up this session, did you work with Ambassador Harriman, or did she come her own way of winning over the French intellectual and diplomatic establishment?

BOHLEN: She was a very shrewd woman about people, so she quickly took the measure of people. One thing we did and that one always does with a new ambassador, we had to plan that she should meet the press and then various members of the intellectual establishment. We used to have lunches at the residence. Of course, she was always marvelous, and the residence was very elegant in her period, and the food was very good, and so people liked to come. She was a very politically astute woman. In fact, one of the things that happened when I was there was the 50th anniversary of the Normandy landing. Because she was Churchill's daughter-in-law, everybody wanted to interview her right and left. One of the people who wanted to interview her was a French historian named

Matt Cowell who ran a kind of history channel program on TV. He wanted to interview her. Because I knew him, he came to me and asked for my intercession to get her to agree, which she did.

As he was researching for the interview, he said, "In preparing, I have read some of Churchill's papers about the period." That was a period when she was living with Churchill and Mrs. Churchill and Mary Churchill at 10 Downing Street during the war. I suppose her husband Randolph was there, also. This guy Matt Cowell said that looking at the correspondence between Churchill and her he said, "She, Pamela, then in her 20's, was clearly the most astute political intelligence around that establishment." That was one reason that Churchill really enjoyed her company a great deal. She loved politics or she had always been very involved in politics, and she married Averell Harriman. This came very naturally to her, and she was very shrewd about politics. It was not just having lunch in an elegant residence with a very elegant and brilliant lady, it was…

Q: This is what I've heard from many others. You're up against a first class political mind.

BOHLEN: That's right. That's just what the French love. They really respect intelligence.

Q: Did you notice the intellectual community which is all so powerful in French politics swinging around to her and to America or not?

BOHLEN: It doesn't work that way. They don't just change their opinion of America. They are pretty lucid about the United States, and they see us with good sides and bad sides. Sometimes we can work with them, and sometimes we can't. Certainly as far as the embassy was concerned she won people over, and I think we made a very good team. I go back to Paris periodically, and people always tell you this, but they say, "We never had such a good embassy as when the two ladies were running it." I just loved working with her. She was great fun! She was a fun person to be around.

Q: Yugoslavia, how did we see the French looking at that prior to when we finally got in?

BOHLEN: Obviously, this was one of the first issues for the new Administration. The Bush Administration had made clear that it wasn't going to get involved. Rather belatedly it was still under the Bush Administration that the Germans decided to recognize Croatia and Slovenia. This came as a great surprise to everybody because until then the western community, both the Europeans and ourselves, had been saying, "We don't want Yugoslavia to break apart." I think this was probably an unrealistic position at the time. It was the position we'd taken because we hadn't really figured out what would be the alternative. The Germans came under intense domestic pressure to recognize Croatia. There are a lot of Croat émigrés in Germany. They are a very powerful constituency. Some of the press was very critical of the German position of not recognizing Croatia and Slovenia. Apparently Genscher went to a hearing before… he went to testify before the Commission on Foreign Affairs in the Bundestag and was beaten around the head and

shoulders so much, figuratively speaking, that he came back, and he said, "Never again." He had been holding the line against Kohl on this issue.

The Germans decided to go ahead and recognize the two republics without consulting with the other Europeans. The other Europeans rather meekly followed suit at their December EU Council meeting. We lobbied quite hard against it. We finally got involved, and we lobbied hard against this, but it didn't work. The Germans went ahead and then the Europeans followed, and eventually we followed. I think not right away. I don't remember the exact chronology. I just mention this because this was the sequence of events—it lead to a sequence of events—which some people had foreseen and which was one of the reasons that they didn't want to recognize the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Mainly, this left Bosnia which was completely alone face-to-face with the Serbs, and Bosnia was perhaps more than any other republic a multi-ethnic republic which had existed quite comfortably in the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia. It was a different story when the other main ethnicity, the Croats and the Slovenes, had left, and they were face-to-face with the Serbs in Bosnia and the Serbs sitting in Belgrade. They were in a pickle about what to do. There was a great deal of diplomatic activity back and forth, and ultimately they declared their independence, and it was that declaration that triggered the war. All this is well known, I'm just saying it as part of background. Then immediately the war started, and there was first the war in Croatia, but it was, of course, nothing compared to what came later. I just remember the siege of Vukovar and when that ended, the pictures were the first of the horrors. You saw people who had been under shelling for several months and emerging from their cellars. These were the first pictures we'd seen since World War II of this kind of thing, and it was a terrible shock. Then, of course, everything started in Bosnia, and that was worse and worse.

I have completely forgotten the dates of when the British and French started sending their contingents under UNPROFOR. That was a disaster. I think there was a lot of discussion among the Europeans about what they should do. I think the French were ready to send a small contingent. The British were more reluctant. Basically I think they both looked at the issue as something that had to be contained and which was going to be very difficult to solve. They sent troops under a UN mandate.

Q: When were you in Paris in this whole process?

BOHLEN: I was in Paris pretty much throughout this whole process. That's why I mention it. I remember it was in 1991 that the EU recognized Croatia and Slovenia. The winter of 1991.

Q: What was the French attitude at the beginning when the recognition process started? It was the Germans who kicked this off.

BOHLEN: The French were pretty upset with the Germans, but in the end… and they actually welcomed our rather belated diplomatic intervention. They said, "We're glad to see you're finally waking up to the problem of Yugoslavia." But it was too late. The

pressure on the Germans was such that they went ahead unilaterally, and the French were very much opposed to it, but in the end the whole EU ratified it. I think it was unrealistic to think you could do anything else. As I say, that's why everybody foresaw that this would lead to a Bosnian problem as it did. Various efforts were made to try to broker some kind of agreement. There was the Lisbon Cutileiro Plan, and again I've forgotten all the dated. They've kind of washed together. There was a period 1991 and 1992 when before Clinton was elected, when Bush was still in office, when the French, I think, when they sent the troops with UNPROFOR. They very quickly became sitting ducks for the Serb gunners. There was all these appalling scenes, the stories about the rapes and the atrocities, and so on.

Q: There was a point where maybe it was the Dutch Foreign Minister said, "We can handle it. This is a European problem." We were delighted to do that. Was that during your time?

BOHLEN: That was back in 1991, and the Dutch Foreign Minister said, "This is a European problem," and we said, "Fine." Now the Europeans, you remind them of that statement, and they say, "We weren't ready to do it as Europe." Secondly, nobody imagined that it was going to be the horror that it was. What they actually could have done at that point, I don't know. This is when the French said they would be willing to send some troops. The British were a little more reluctant, but I don't know that the French really wanted to become very much engaged in fighting the Serbs. Others have thought a lot more about this that I have about whether more forceful intervention at the beginning would have… I think once you had Croatia and Slovenia gone, then you had a Bosnian problem. I suppose that that moment, had we foreseen the full horror of everything, maybe we would have sent troops. It was just politically unimaginable at that point.

Q: Don't let me put words in your mouth, but were we sort of saying, "OK, they're doing this. This is still… We don't have a dog in this fight. This is a European problem." Were we sitting back, or were we playing any role?

BOHLEN: As you know, embassies don't play independent roles of their government, and our government policy was that we were not going to get involved. But I think it was increasingly apparent during 1991 and 1992 and through the first months of the Clinton administration that the Europeans were not capable of handling it, that it was becoming a full scale horror and that probably we were going to have to get involved. On the part of those in the embassy who were following this issue, all of us, me, the political section there was tremendous frustration at what they were seeing in Bosnia and the fact that nobody seemed to be doing anything to stop it. There were endless peace negotiations going on. You remember the day that Owen and Cyrus Vance negotiation and various other… That was the main one, I think. We would report on those. We would report on the view of the French. The French government was coming on a lot of criticism from think tanks as was true I think all over Europe that this is on Europe's doorstep, how can we permit these things that are worthy of the Nazis. I think the French intellectual opinion was really pushing the government to take a more active role. I think the French

government's attitude throughout this, and Mitterrand who was… the French tended to be pro-Serb because they were allies in the First World War and were in the Second World War, they were our Allies as well. I think there was another thing that many in the military--this included some of our military-- saw the Serbian military as kind of a recognizable entity whereas the Bosnians were harem-scarem Muslins, and there was a professional bias there. I cannot remember that the embassy really ever sent a telegram saying, "We need to get involved." Of course, it became very difficult because there was an election campaign going on, and then finally the Clinton Administration came in. The other element of this was that we had an embargo on arms to the Bosnians. We had an embargo on arms to everybody in the region. The Serbs had plenty of weapons, so this hurt the Bosnians. We had made an agreement when the Europeans sent their troops in, and this happened already under the Bush Administration. We made a promise to help extract them if they got into difficulties and had to be evacuated which was a pretty tall order, actually. Things went on in this bloody stalemate. I'm trying to remember when the bomb in the marketplace in Sarajevo… That was later.

Q: Prior to that there had been a rather nasty incident where the French were taking the Bosnian Vice President out in an armored personnel carrier. They were stopped, and whatever the actual thing happened, it appeared that the French allowed the Vice President… I mean, they didn't stop him from being killed when he was under their protection. Do you recall that, and was there a feeling that we were reporting that the French were saying, "Enough is enough. Either get the hell out, or we've got to come in big."

BOHLEN: No. I don't remember that incident. I'm sorry.

Q: This is one that sticks in my mind, but maybe…

BOHLEN: I just don't remember it. I should, but I think there was part and parcel of a feeling that the Europeans, the French and the British who, by the way, took rather large casualties. It was not any lack of courage or bravery on their part. It was the UNPROFOR, the decision to use force had to go back to New York. It was a totally untenable situation.

Obviously the UN could never do more than what its member states want to do. The fact was neither the British nor the French really wanted to get seriously involved in this fight. There was a general view… I remember by British colleague in Paris telling me that there was a feeling in London that fights in the Balkans are bottomless pits. This is something that has to be contained, and it's kind of hopeless to try and stop it. When the Clinton Administration came in, they had to address this problem. I would say one effect of this period when there was such tremendous frustration on the part of European public opinion, on the part of American public opinion, that it gave rise to the feeling in the United States that the Europeans are hopeless, and they are feckless. This is something that Dick Holbrooke, for example, firmly believes that Europeans are feckless. They're never going to do anything without the United States. I thing it goes back to this period.

It's the contempt for Europeans which is now typical of both Republicans and Democrats, and it goes back to the Balkans.

Q: I remember there was a dispute a little after this period between the Turks and the Greeks over an uninhabited island. They were marshalling their forces, and it was Holbrooke who said, "We stayed up all night working on it, and the Europeans went back and went to bed."

BOHLEN: I think it's very easy to carry this too far, and I don't think it is particularly useful. That's a whole other dispute, and I'm happy to talk about that, but I think that it sort of imagines that the only form of action is solving Greek-Turkish disputes over an island. I agree they should have done something, but I think at the same time they're been doing the huge task of taking the whole of Eastern Europe into the European Union. This is something that we would be incapable of doing, I think.

Q: It's a different era, too.

BOHLEN: It's a different era.

Q: At that time there was, you might say, the opportunity for Europe to do something, and it didn't.

BOHLEN: Right. I would have to say… I go back to the beginning. I don't think that anybody realized how horrible it was going to be or what horrors Milosevic was capable of and how bloody minded the Serbs were. Croats were no better.

Q: I lived there for five years. Quite frankly, I knew their animosities, but I couldn't believe… I thought after World War II and the holocaust, this just couldn't… I just couldn't believe it.

BOHLEN: No. It's what everybody thought. Anyway, so the Clinton Administration came in, and they spent a lot of time talking about what to do about the Balkans. Again, on our part there was no desire to get too involved, but there was a feeling that we needed to do something. The result was this policy called Lift and Strike which meant lifting the arms embargo against the combatants and also striking them with air power. Christopher came with a large delegation to Europe. He came to Paris, and I was Chargé at that point, so I sent officers around with him to all these discussions. The reaction of the British and the French both was totally negative. They said, "You're putting our forces at risk. We're opposed to both aspects of it, because if you strike the Serbs they will take it out on us."

Q: In other words, the British and French had essentially put themselves as hostages in the situation where they weren't able to control the situation which ended up protecting the Serbs from action by us, or at least that's how it was perceived.

BOHLEN: Yes. You can say things might have even been worse, even worse than Bosnia, if they weren't there. Yes, they were very much hostages in that situation, and

they had to put up with extraordinary arrogance and offensive behavior and worse on the part of the Serbs. They were not… after an initial period when the Serbs held back, and actually in the initial period people had some hope it might work. They ended up by absolutely becoming hostages. At this point I think Alain Juppé became the French Foreign Minister because you had a period and again, I forget the dates, I don't know why I'm suddenly so fuzzy about everything, but you had an election which had put a… Mitterrand was President, but the Parliamentary elections had returned the Conservative Party, Chirac's party. So you had a period of cohabitation which actually never worked very badly. Actually, it always worked quite well. So, you had Juppé as Foreign Minister, and he became convinced that they would never get anywhere with Milosevic unless the United States became involved. After Christopher had gone home and the results were of his trip were nil…were worse than nil…were negative, Juppé made it his goal in life to bring the United States into the conflict. In that sense you can't say he wasn't trying to do anything. I think the British were anxious for that to happen, too. The Clinton Administration until whenever it was… During this initial period before Holbrooke persuaded everybody that we really had to get involved, and I think that was tied to the bombing in Sarajevo. That was the galvanizing incident. The Clinton Administration had absolutely no answers to this. Christopher, I remember he would come to Paris but not want to meet with Juppé. There was one visit I remember when…Juppé would pursue him because he really wanted to press this agenda. They were very frustrated with what was happening. Christopher would come to Paris to meet with the Syrian Foreign Minister, the Chinese Foreign Minister, but he's say, "I really don't want to meet with Juppé," which was in itself rather odd to come to an allied capital and not have any meetings. He practically was hiding under the table from Juppé who was pursuing him. It was rather comic and rather pathetic as well.

We were very reluctant to do anything in this. You remember, back here there was great reluctance on the part of our military to get involved in this. General Powell (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) spoke out openly about it. The Clinton Administration was not doing any better than the Europeans at that point. This continued until several events happened. There was the cohabitation period in French politics, but Edouard Balladur was the Prime Minister because Chirac was running for election. There was a presidential election, and that must have been in perhaps 1994 [Ed: Chirac became President of France on May 17, 1995]. Chirac took a very different attitude than Mitterrand had about this conflict because he found it offensive that the French military were being pushed around by the Serbs in this way. He thought it was completely incompatible with the dignity of French soldiers. He was very angry that Admiral Lanxade who was the Chief of Staff was allowing this to happen. He was in favor, as (Prime Minister) Juppé had been, of a more active role.

I remember Pamela Harriman telling me there had been consultation with Chirac very early on in the Clinton Administration after his Presidency between…I forget whom…maybe his advisor and Sandy Berger [Ed: Samuel R. "Sandy" Berger, a longtime foreign policy adviser to Clinton who had been Deputy National Security Advisor since 1993, became National Security Adviser in March 1997] or Tony Lake [Ed: Lake was National Security Advisor during the first term of the Clinton Administration] or

whatever. Pamela got off the phone with Washington, and she said, "It's really wonderful. Washington feels that here's somebody we can really work with, and Chirac will be a great improvement over Mitterrand. I remember saying to her, "No doubt he will be good on this issue." This is what every American administration says about every new French president, and I would hold your judgment because in a couple of years we may be saying something different which turned out to be more than true.

On the issue of the Balkans, this is when things began to happen, and I think certainly Chirac was supportive of a more active role. I'm thinking 1995 was Dayton (Accords, a peace agreement concluded in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995), so 1994 had to be the year we were really starting to get involved. Holbrooke was in Germany the first part of the Clinton Administration then went back to be Assistant Secretary for European affairs.

Q: We started bombing. The beginning of the Lift and Strike thing. After the bombing of the marketplace, everybody said, "This is enough

BOHLEN: It was all the air strikes. And those persuaded Milosevic to enter into negotiations. I have this feeling that I had left in the summer of 1995, and Dayton was October of 1995. Things were already well engaged. I would say that a lot of the talk was directly with Washington, and there was a lot of high-level communication.

Q: You mentioned the coming of Chirac. At this point was there the feeling that Mitterrand was basically on his last legs because he was dying, but was there a feeling that the whole Socialist side of politics had done its thing, and were we seeing a resurgence of the Gaullists? Did we expect that at the time?

BOHLEN: Mitterrand was a pretty Gaullist president. He was a Socialist in name only, I would say. He started out… He presided over two disastrous years of Socialist economics, and it was such a disaster, and the franc was falling, and the capital flight and so on, that he had to reverse course after which he pursued a very economically correct course of a strong currency and keeping inflation down. They were impeccably orthodox, and he did a lot to liberalize the French economy. It was really Mitterrand who started all that which laid the groundwork for France being one of the most competitive economies in the EU. In terms of domestic policy, there was very little left of Socialism. As far as the presidency, he took like a duck to water, to the whole Gaullist model of presidency and surrounded himself with a certain amount of pomp and used the powers of the presidency to the full. Of course, these were the years when a lot of other things were going on. You were still coping with the end of Communism in Eastern Europe and trying to deal with these countries, what was the role of the EU in all this dispensation, and how were you going to deal with the Eastern European countries. I think Mitterrand devoted a lot of time to cementing the relationship with Helmut Kohl and did so very successfully. Mitterrand was an interesting person because I think he was at one level profoundly corrupt. I don't think he personally took money but in a deeply moral sense. Some of the people he surrounded himself with, and there were endless scandals, many of which did not come out until after he left.

Q: There was the oil scandal, the diamond scandal, you name it. The list went on and on and on.

BOHLEN: Yes, various scandals. At another level, I think he was a man of considerable strategic vision who understood about Europe and what shape Europe had to take, and the importance of Germany for France. He and Kohl, really it was more than just a political friendship. I think there was a very deep bond there. I think his view of the Balkans remained. One, that when all the smoke clears away and this is all over, we will want a strong relationship with the Serbs. He not stupidly saw them as the main power in the region which they still are. Secondly, that there was no percentage to be gained from getting involved in this fight, so he was willing to put up with this really messy stalemate. I think many people would say that the French and British troop participation was to answer public opinion. It was not something that was not done out of conviction. It was a minimalist thing. What's interesting is the French took over a thousand casualties in this period. Public opinion does not react in outrage the way they would in this country.

Q: There are many qualifications, but we were comfortable with Mitterrand as far as the embassy was concerned?

BOHLEN: Totally. When he was first elected back in 1981 and he brought Communists into the government which Washington just thought was anathema, and then Vice President Bush was sent to remonstrate with him. He defended his choice and, in fact, it was a way of killing the Communist party. That was the end of them as a serious force in French political life. I think that Bush got on with him quite well because he was an interesting man, and he did have a certain strategic vision, and Bush was somebody who loved foreign policy, so they got on pretty well. Mitterrand supported us in the Iraq war. Not without a lot of to-ing and fro-ing which he had to do for his public opinion, but he brought France along, as Mrs. Thatcher had prophesized when Bush was worried about whether Mitterrand would go along. She said, "Don't worry. Françoise will be with you when the boat sails." That certainly was true. He proved that he was a reliable ally, and I think Washington felt very comfortable with him. We certainly had our rubs with him. He denied us over flight rights--do you remember—for the Libya bombing [Ed: 15 April 1986]? That lead to a huge outcry in this country, but that had been 20 years earlier. We didn't especially like the Socialists because they were still some woolly people around, but as long as he was in charge of the party, they were not the kind of lunatics that…well, I won't say lunatics…but they have veered to the left since he died.

Q: Let's move to Africa. The Rwanda business, this was on Chirac's watch. Were we following this?

BOHLEN: Very much so. The French follow all that with keen interest, and they have been blamed, I think, for siding with the Hutus who were their traditional clients, and against the Tutsis who were the Belgians' or whatever. The French became alarmed after the President's plane was shot down [Ed: On April 6, 1994, an airplane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana and Burundian President Ntaryamira was shot down],

and they were very concerned by the lack of action to do anything. They established, if I remember correctly, a safe haven in Congo, which… it was not intended. It was intended to be an area where there was no fighting. What it became was a refuge for all the Hutu baddies, the Generals, the leaders of the movement, where they went when the tide began to turn against them. I remember a conversation with the French political director, and he said, "I think it was the right thing to do." He was talking about it as a humanitarian gesture, but it turned out to have totally the opposite effect. I think because the French had been associated with the Hutus, they did not come out well out of this. It was felt that they could have done something to restrain the Hutus, and they didn't. They were very concerned about it.

Q: Were we called upon to make a demarche *or do anything about this at the time?*

BOHLEN: I don't remember. If we did, it was not a *demarche* that involved me or the ambassador.

Q: In Africa in general the French kept units of quite effective troops in Djibouti and Chad and other places like that. At the time, was it self understood that the French have the troops and, if necessary, we will give the air support and think about flying people in and out

BOHLEN: We worked very closely in Africa with the French. Occasionally they would have little twinges that said, "Well, the Americans are getting too powerful, and we should resist it." In general we worked very closely together. The French at that time had very little airlift capacity, and so they would rely on us. We worked very closely on Chad together, and by the way Libya was an area where we worked very closely with the… You remember the Libyan bombings. There was the Pan Am 103 bombing, and then there had been one against the French as well. The person who was in charge of the investigation, Judge Bruguière actually forced the government to take a more aggressive stand on it, and that was something we worked very closely on politically. On these French interventions, the typical pattern would be the French would come to us and say, "We're going to send troops to so-and-so, and can you provide the airlift?" There were always evacuations in Africa and, again, we would supply the planes.

Q: Sometimes ships, too.

BOHLEN: Sometimes ships. And we would help evacuate French nationals. That was a very cooperative relationship.

Q: While you were there, what was the character of the French relationship with Israel, or was it not a particular issue?

BOHLEN: I don't think it was a particular issue. When Mitterrand came in, the French Socialists have traditionally been closer to the Israelis, especially to Shimon Peres and the labor movement that there was a warming of ties with Israel in the early 1980s. Then

their traditional French position, *vis-à-vis* the Arabs I think reasserted itself. I'm trying to think if there was any particular angle on that. No, I don't think there was.

Q: You mentioned the various scandals around Mitterrand, were we concerned, were any American outfits getting involved in this thing? Were we warning people away or anything of this nature?

BOHLEN: Warning people away?

Q: From getting too involved with the people who had these sticky fingers from the French government. Or was this just something we essentially observed.

BOHLEN: That's right.

Q: How about when Chirac came in. You say that we were saying, "Ah-h-h. This is a man we can work with," but apparently we had been working with Mitterrand for…

BOHLEN: Right, and with Chirac's foreign minister. Actually, Juppé left the foreign ministry and became prime minister which was a disaster.

Q: Until you left in 1995, were there any points with Chirac that weren't going too well from the American point of view?

BOHLEN: I think Bosnia was the big issue. We also in 1995 had the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Chirac made this an all-out thing, and Clinton came, and that was a very warm occasion. I was Mrs. Clinton's Control Officer, so I took her around.

Q: How did you find Mrs. Clinton?

BOHLEN: I should preface by saying I have enormous admiration for her and for what she's doing at present. I have to say that dealing with their advance people, which is always a tricky situation, was just horrible. This was the first foreign trip that Clinton had made, and we forget what the first years of Clinton were like on foreign policy, these horror stories of foreign leaders being denied access to the White House and so on. Politics was the only thing they knew. They knew nothing about foreign policy. They had no sense that one might need to tread carefully. So we spent hours looking for good settings for events for Mrs. Clinton and things that would play well on the evening news.

One of the things we came up was a visit to the Rodin Museum in Paris, which is lovely old 18th century house and a garden which houses most of Rodin's sculpture in Paris. They thought this was a nifty place for Mrs. Clinton to meet with a bunch of school children who were to be taken out of school and brought to meet her. This was before the Chirac election. It was Mitterrand who did this. This event was organized. Now the garden of the house is a maze of hedges. The staffers were positioned at various strategic points so that nobody could walk down these paths while Mrs. Clinton was being photographed with these children. Madame Chirac who was the wife of the Mayor of

Paris—she obviously wasn't the President's wife at that point or this wouldn't have arisen—but she came and because Mrs. Clinton said there's not time for a separate meeting with her, the scheduling was always very tight, and so she had come separately. She tried to go down one of these paths, and this little twit said, "No! You can't go there!" I said, "This is the wife of the Mayor of Paris." Actually, I was looking after Madam Chirac and engaging her in small talk and trying to soothe ruffled feathers.

Afterwards, I got in the car with Madame Chirac and her wonderful Chief of Staff who I think subsequently said, "I'm very grateful to you for having flagged all these problems." I said, "You should know Madame Chirac was there, and she was hoping for a chance to meet you but because of various things, it wasn't possible." I think she might have been a little…her nose out of joint. "Oh, what should we do? What should we do?" I said, "Why don't you write her a little note." That suggestion was gratefully received, and a note was written. In fairness to Mrs. Clinton she was quite consternated at what people were doing in her name.

Then there was a scene at the Paris opera where she saw a rehearsal for some event, and they tried to keep everybody out of the theater while this was going on. Since Pamela had said to me, "You look after Hillary. I'm not going to have time." This little staffer tried to stop me going in, and I said, "Excuse me, I'm here. I'm the Number 2 at the embassy. I'm representing the Ambassador, and we're not going to make a huge noise. It's not up to you tell me whether I can come in or out." I was really furious. Anyway, we've all been through these things with advanced people, but they were really the worst and only concerned for the picture, and foreigners' feelings didn't matter. This is a continuing problem in France.

Q: It's a theme that I've heard again and again in interviews with officers in all regions My sense is it happens usually on the first couple of foreign trips. After that, these are snotty little kids who usually either get with the program, or they're shucked after a while. How did you find Hillary and Bill Clinton? This was their first foreign trip. I hate to use the word interface. How did they get along with the French?

BOHLEN: The horror stories out of Washington had been so terrible for the first year and a half, and the complete disorganization, and all these stories about the policy sessions that would go on for hours like sophomore bull sessions. This was not very impressive. People were not very impressed about what they had heard. What people didn't realize until they heard him was that he's one of the smartest presidents that we've ever had, and one of the most thoughtful at an intellectual level, and well informed. He spoke to a breakfast about economic issues, and he wowed them because his grasp of the issues was so complete. He was never into just repeating sound bites like certain others who is about a million miles away.

Q: How did he and Ambassador Harriman get along?

BOHLEN: Oh, he loved Pamela! I think he really was very devoted to her. She probably made him President in one sense because she was the one who brought him to

Washington. She used to have these policy discussion sessions at her Georgetown house on N Street, and she had been very impressed by the young governor of Arkansas. So she brought him to one of these, and he tremendously impressed everybody talking about education or something like that. He was very fond of her, and they went back a long way, and every time she went to Washington, she would have access to him. She would almost always get to see him, and she never abused that. He spoke at her funeral. She was, as I say, a really fun person to be around. She was infinitely charming.

Q: Despite some of her past, she was probably one of the smartest ladies around.

BOHLEN: Absolutely. She was an excellent ambassador to France. Before she came when I was Chargé, people would say, "Oh, we don't know about Pamela Harriman. What kind of preparation does she have for this job? Look at her rather scandalous past" or whatever. There was a certain amount of skepticism before she came, but in three months she had charmed everybody. She spoke good French, she had lived in Paris before. She knew tons of people. She needed no introduction. She ran a marvelous residence, all the things that the French appreciate. Good food, good conversation. She was wonderful to work with. She was very conscious that she didn't know much about diplomacy. I was explaining something to her once, and I said, "We'll probably have to do a *demarche* on this, and she looked slightly alarmed and said, "I haven't done a *demarche* in my life!" I said, "It's the simplest thing in the world. You're given an instruction from Washington, and you go in, and you tell people you see what's on the piece of paper, and you might even give them the piece of paper. It's as simple as that. There's not a secret about it."

One of the things that we used to do with her, which were hugely successful, and we had a wonderful PAO there, a guy named (Robert) Bud Korengold who used to work for Newsweek, so he was really a very savvy news guy. He helped put together lunches with four or five journalists and four or five people from the embassy and they, of course, loved to come, and they were tremendously useful for the embassy. Pamela always charmed them, but she was substantive. She knew the issues, and she worked very hard. If she had to do a *demarche* she would inform herself about it.

Q: Was there any difference in how she got along with Mitterrand or Chirac?

BOHLEN: I think she got along better with Chirac. Chirac was totally charmed by her. We did at the beginning, we worked more closely with Chirac than we had with Mitterrand. Mitterrand was already quite ill by the time she got there even though nobody knew it. He didn't see ambassadors very often. Chirac did see her more often, I think, and when she died he gave her posthumously the Legion d'Honneur, the rank of Commander, which is rarely given to foreigners and gave a wonderful little ceremony in the Elysees and gave wonderful attention. I think that was indicative not just what he felt was due her but because he had a warm feeling for her personally.

Q: I think this covers the French side. You left Paris when? And what awaited you?

BOHLEN: I left Paris in I think August of 1995. I came back to Washington. I was the Department's nominee to be Ambassador to Bulgaria. I had the option of doing a year of language training in Washington which suited me because I'd been away for four years, so it was good to have a chance to come back and touch base.

Q: How did you find Bulgarian? I'm told if you're doing a survey of the Slavic languages for an American, anyway, it's the easiest one. How did you find it, though?

BOHLEN: Easiest, I'm not sure. I think they're all pretty daunting. I had Russian, so that made it a great deal easier particularly as regards the vocabulary. I had a big leg up on the vocabulary and certain things that all Slavic languages have in common like perfective and imperfective. You were in Yugoslavia, so you know about that.

Most of the grammar is more complicated. I found Bulgarian verbs worse than Russian verbs. It was not so challenging for me as for somebody who'd never had a Slavic language. In fact, I was put in a class by myself at the Foreign Service Institute because I'd had Russian. It went along quite well, and it was nice to be back in Washington, and I was also learning about Bulgaria, working with the desk, and my nomination went through without any difficulty. I remember Senator Lugar who was then not the Foreign Relations Committee Chair, but the Chairman of the European Sub-Committee, and he chaired my nomination, my hearing, and I think only one other senator turned up which was Senator Claiborne Powell, who had been a Foreign Service Officer and knew my father. As a very nice gesture, he showed up. I remember that there was some construction going on in the next room, so there was the sound of machinery throughout the hearing. It was uneventful.

I should say that when I went to Bulgaria and what I was learning about when I was back here, it was a country that really seemed at that point to have missed its opportunity. It had, like all the Eastern European countries, gotten rid of its Communist government, but it had been very slow, really, to make the transition. First, there was an internal coup in the Communist party so that (Todor) Zhivkov was thrown out and some modern elements took over. Then they were thrown out, and a center democratic government came in. They proved to be totally incompetent, plus they had the whole bureaucracy that was actively all the Secret Service that was working to undermine them. Those two things together: their incompetence and this sort of sabotage by the people who had been running the country for 50 years, ejected them from office. Then the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which was the old Communist party, came back in, and everybody said, "Well, at least they know how to run things." But that turned out to be false, also. This was where I started to plug in.

I was there from 1996 to 1999 [Ed: Ambassador Bohlen presented her credentials on September 5, 1996 and left post on August 13, 1999]. By way of background before I arrived, I think they were in very bad odor in Washington. I think economically for a long time the Bulgarians said, "Maybe we can find a third way. Maybe we don't have to do this difficult thing called Capitalism and Privatization." These were the hardest years, the

early 1990s. People had to do difficult things without any obvious payoff at the beginning. There was a lot of disillusionment because getting rid of state run economies hadn't brought instant prosperity. I think people all over Eastern Europe were very slow to realize that with State Capitalism went also a lot of the social safety net. This was a very difficult time. The Bulgarians were saying, "Well, we're not really up for this. We've had a pretty good life." They had in a way the best of the Communist world and of the Communist system they have endless subsidies from the Soviet Union. Most people were pretty well off. They tried to find a middle way which predictably was totally disastrous. A lot of Mafia elements came in and took over.

Q: Your talking about not the real Mafia of the Sicilian form, but gangster types.

BOHLEN: Organized crime. There were a lot of these in Bulgaria, and some of them had Russian connections, others didn't. It really was a mess, and I think inflation was very high during all this period. People were gloomy. They felt like, "We've tried everything, and we're not getting anywhere." There was a great deal of petty crime by the police of people stopping cars and exacting bribes and Americans being harassed. A particular target was the Evangelical missionaries.

Q: When you went out there, what were American interests, and did you have any particular items on your agenda that you thought you could do?

BOHLEN: I think the interest was in Bulgaria, and it was very minimal… only as a part of wanting to make sure that Europe, Eastern Europe, made this transition successfully to democracy. Bulgaria had democracy. It had free elections. It got a pretty clean report card from the observer organizations. Also, obviously, it had to make the economic transition, and there it was not doing very well.

At this time NATO expansion was just beginning. So I think the general view was that current Bulgarian government wasn't interested in it. There was a general sense that Bulgaria wasn't, under that government, really a friend to the United States. It still had closer ties to Russia. It certainly hadn't made the psychological turn toward the West. That was still to come. There was the issue of arms sales to different countries that we didn't approved of. Bulgaria had a big arms industry under the Communist system, and like all of them, its market suddenly collapsed. So the people who ran it, the people who often had connections with the State Security, which was the old Secret Police, under various organized crime figures, and there was this grey market of arms sales that was going on, some of which including to Iraq, which was then already under sanctions, so this was illegal. This was a source of great concern to Washington. This continued right up til…continues to this day as far as I know, but it was a continuing problem in our relations with Bulgaria right up to the eve of Bulgaria's accession to NATO.

You see how these issues can skew our U. S. foreign policy toward a country like Bulgaria because it sometimes seemed to be the dominant issue in our relationship. The broader issues like wanting Bulgaria to be part of a prosperous Eastern Europe and so on. That didn't get much policy attention, but these arms sales would get the attention not of

top policy makers but of that bureaucracy within the State Department, in the intelligence communities whose business it is to watch this. Sometimes this would color the whole nature of our relationship. Before I got there, they had managed to get themselves in to something called the "Wassenaar Agreement," which replaced the old COCOM and tried to limit conventional arms sales to certain countries of concern. It was not very well seen in Washington at that time, and there were some very good people in the government. The Deputy Prime Minister was a woman that I keep contact with to this day, Irina Bokova. She was the one who persuaded the bureaucracy in Bulgaria to do the necessary things, to get into the Wassenaar Agreement because she understood that this was something important for Bulgaria. It was a very difficult time, and I must say that when I went out there, I had the slight sinking feeling. I thought, "This is very far away from…" David was not able to accompany me. This is very far away from everything.

Q: Who was your DCM?

BOHLEN: My DCM was a wonderful woman named Rose Likins who had been there already for two years. She was more really a Latin American expert and subsequently became Ambassador to Costa Rica, but a very able and wonderful young woman. I was very lucky.

Q: How collectivized was Bulgaria? Was there any kernel of private enterprise there when you got there?

BOHLEN: Not really. The agriculture had been pretty well collectivized in its own Bulgarian way. Interestingly and in contrast to the Soviet Union, people were allowed to own their own house, so they didn't have collectivized housing. There were huge apartment blocks, but you were allowed to own it. Since there was not much else you could own, people put a lot of money into these houses, and this created a problem later on because the first winter I was there, the whole distribution system broke down for a time and people were really quite poor and remained poor for a couple of years. I think the EU, some agency mounted a program to help those at the lowest end of the scale. One of the criteria was if you owned a house, you didn't qualify. But Bulgarians owned houses but they often found themselves house poor after the changes.

Q: On the economic side, I know we flooded the former Soviet Union with economic experts for good or evil, from all the institutions you can think of. Had we done the same thing to Bulgaria?

BOHLEN: As I will tell in a minute, there was a huge change that went on soon after I got there. At the beginning in the early 1990s we sent experts all over the place, and we had Peace Corps volunteers, and USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) programs which, on the whole, were immensely successful, I think they certainly were in Bulgaria. But by the time I got there, people really had become quite discouraged about this giving of aid because it all went into peoples' pockets. The aid program in Bulgaria when I got there, they said, "We will not deal any more with the central government because they're either too obstructionist or too corrupt, and we would rather deal with

local governments." So they set up a wonderful program dealing with local governments in Bulgaria which became then a model for programs all over the region. They assisted municipal governments in trying to reform their accounting systems just to make this transition to a more liberal system. They brought a lot of the mayors together. Some of them were Red which in Bulgaria has the more traditional meaning of former Communists, and Blue were the right or center right parties and brought them together in an association, sent them all to this country on a trip which was very defining for them, and helped them to form an association which became a very powerful political organization of the Bulgarian mayors. That was a wonderful thing. They were not dealing, when I got there in August of 1996, they were not dealing with the central government hardly at all.

Q: The central government, particularly the cronies and everybody else, must have been screaming bloody murder.

BOHLEN: We never had that much money to give. They were much more interested in the EU money, and the EU money must be given to central governments, and then they don't have that option. But we only give about thirty million dollars a year which is really peanuts.

Q: But you felt it actually was well seeded there.

BOHLEN: Well, then what happened, because there was a change when I got there, the people were very pessimistic; people were very gloomy; the young people just wanted to leave. The system seemed completely broken. There was terrible inflation. The IMF and the World Bank… The IMF kept sending people. But it was quite discouraging. Then several things happened in the fall. First of all, there was an election for a new president. The president had been somebody called Zhelyu Zhelev who was one of those transitional figures like (Vaclav) Havel (President of Czechoslovakia) . He had been kind of on-the-outs with the government before the changes, and then he helped lead the first government through. There was another candidate who was also from the Center Right Party. The fear was that they were going to run against each other in the elections, and then the Communist candidate would win. The International Republican Institute persuaded them to do a primary. Zhelev lost, and Petar Stoyanov won who was a young and much more dynamic candidate. That was a very encouraging sign, and people were just thrilled that this had happened because it was a very important precursor of the changes. Throughout the rest of the fall, things got worse and worse. There was a terrible man who was Prime Minister, Zhan Videnov. There was this sort of revolt within the Communist party, and he had to resign at a party congress. All this time the Center Right was bringing people out on the streets to protest, and the tension was mounting. He gave in his resignation as head of the party and Prime Minister, and the Socialists tried to form a new government, but they really were not successful. They tried to bring in other parties, and the Center Right parties kept demonstrating. Then one night very dramatically there was an assault on the Parliament. Quite a lot of damage was done. Nobody was killed, but for Bulgaria which is not a violent country, there was a lot of

damage done, and some of the Socialists were kept hostage in the Parliament overnight. The police beat the students. It was really a very dramatic moment.

There were a significant student involvement, but not all the demonstrators were students. There were radio stations that were sitting in the hotel across the way and reporting the whole thing, reporting the police chasing the demonstrators away, the students away, about four o'clock in the morning, and there were a lot of black eyes and bumps on the head. It was all quite unpleasant. This was, I think, in December, and the government was still trying to hang on at that point. It's a very Soviet-style way of operating. They called in all the diplomatic corps and tried to persuade them that this was an act of barbarians, that they were in the right and that foreign governments should support them and not these other people, but we were strictly staying out of it. We were taken to the Parliament by the Speaker of the Parliament. It was quite eerie, I must say. There was a lot of broken glass all over the place. This was really a…the reason I'll telling this in such detail is it was a highlight of my time there. This is when you realize what being an ambassador is. There was nobody who could tell me what to do. I had to make up my mind myself. When I would arrive anywhere in my car, it was wonderful. With the flag people would cheer, and they were very pro-United States at that moment.

Q: Did you have your political officers and other officers going out and having much contact with various groups?

BOHLEN: I think we tried to stay away from the demonstrations. One thing we were afraid of is American Embassy elements would be found with the demonstrators, and then the opponents could cry "provocation." The tension mounted and mounted all these days. There was a steady stream of people to my office. Everybody, a lot of people came to see me. There was a man who ultimately played a very heroic role called Nikolay Dobrev who was the Minister of the Interior who had been given the mandate to form a new government. I would go and see them, and they would always receive me. I tried to keep all channels of communication open. The head of the party was the man who is now the President. It was really a very exciting time. In the meantime, the economy was continuing to plummet, and this was the winter where people were really sometimes without food because the whole distribution system had broken down. When I went to Bulgaria two years ago, we were received by the President, and he said to me, and I was really touched, "We will always remember the role that you played during these events." I don't think I really changed anything, but he said, "The fact that you were talking to everybody." It was really a bond to have lived through this period with Bulgaria. The crisis finally ended. I've gotten a little vague on the dates now, but Dobrev, the Interior Minister, now the Prime Minister Designate, was not able to attract anybody from any of the other parties,

He did what they call "gave back the mandate" to the President who had, by now, been installed. The next logical step which everybody was urging on him was that there should be new elections, so a caretaker government was appointed. The new elections were held in March, and that was a period when United States aid became critical, first of all because people were always calling us up and saying, "We need somebody in the Finance

Ministry to be an advisor." Then we would call up the Treasury and say, "We need somebody." It was targeted, expert advice. We were not in a position to give money, and we were not in a position… they desperately needed food aid at one point even though their country was once very rich agriculturally but had sort of broken down. We were not able to give it to them because it takes so long to organize this as you probably remember. It has to be put out for bids and so on.

The Poles sent them a train load of wheat which saved the day. It was really a very interesting time. I spent a lot of time with other diplomats at that time and, of course, we all were better connected. I spoke Bulgarian, so I was more able to watch the news than other diplomats, so they depended a lot on us. Because I knew most of the people who were now coming to power, I was confident that they would do a good job and that they were the right people for the situation. Whether they would do a good job or not remained to be seen, but they were the right people and people we should support. I came back to Washington at that point and went around to different agencies and said, "This government should not fail because we have failed to give it support." I must say that the initial response that I got, AID said, "Well, there's no more money. Gosh, how do we know about these people?" and so on. The person who finally came to my rescue was Dan Freed who was then doing Eastern Europe and the National Security Council, now Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. He came to a meeting, and he said, "This is ridiculous. Here something has happened that we've been pushing in Bulgaria for years, and it must not fail because we were not there to lend it a helping hand." So we were able to do things. As I say, we were never the big money givers, but the message of support was very important.

In March they had new elections, and the government that took office, the Prime Minister was called Ivan Kostov, and he had a very strong team of people who really performed a small miracle in the next two years. In the meantime, the IMF had decided to recommend a Currency Board, the same thing that Argentina has which stabilizes the economy. This went forward. They had been recommending it even for the old government, but I think we never would have supported it. They did support it for this government, so that immediately stabilized the economy. Inflation disappeared.

Q: How does a board like that work?

BOHLEN: It basically it takes away the independent powers of the Central Bank and establishes strong parameters for what it must do. Basically, the Central Bank operates under the tutelage of the IMF. It worked brilliantly for the Bulgarian economy. They still have it. It stopped inflation. It stabilized the currency. It got the macro economics right. Then they started looking at the reforms, at the privatization. There was still so much to be done. They had a wonderful woman called Nadezhda Mihaylova who was the Foreign Minister and Petar Stoyanov was the President. Together, they did a lot of traveling to Western Europe and to the United States. [Ed: President Stoyanov visited the U.S. in February and September 1998 and in April 1999.] They presented a new face of Bulgaria to the world.

Q: Was the arms sales theme running throughout this during all the changes of government?

BOHLEN: It went on still. One thing that happened was that there was an end to this kind of connivance between the local police and the criminal elements. The arms sales were still a problem to a large degree the people who ran the arms companies, they were off in their own little world, and they had connections with the Defense and the police. So yes, it was still a problem, but it took second place for awhile because for a few brief moments, Washington was focused on Bulgaria. Really for about two years this government worked together, and they really were very public spirited. They said, "This is what we have to do to get Bulgaria out of this despondency, and there are tough economic reforms. We want to get Bulgaria into NATO and the EU." It was amazing how within two years the whole image of Bulgaria in the West changed. Thanks to, first of all, what they were doing which was just sort of miraculous, and thanks also to, I give a lot of credit to Petar Stoyanov and Mihaylova for some brilliant diplomacy. Some brilliant PR (public relations). By the time I left there the reputation had totally changed, and that has continued since I left and, of course, now they are on the eve of being an EU member. In that spring we had the first round of NATO enlargement talks. Romania had just had an election, and they looked as if they had made a decisive turn toward the reforms. They were very much in evidence in Washington. They had a very brilliant ambassador. I remember saying again to Dan Freed, and people worried whether we should have taken Romania into the first round of enlargement. I said to Dan Freed, "Well, by the next round Bulgaria probably will have caught up with Romania." He said, "Oh, no, there's no way that could happen. They're just too backward." Of course, now the situation is totally reversed. It is Romania that has done far less than Bulgaria.

Q: When you first arrived, were you received with open arms with a chill? With this hard line, backward looking government, how did they…

BOHLEN: I just was very lucky. I think I hit it off with people on a personal level. My predecessor [Ed: Wayne Montgomery, a career Foreign Service officer who served from October 1993 to January 17 1996] had had a very bad experience because he said something in his Senate hearing which had been picked up by the press and really distorted and used against him. The Bulgarian press was sitting in the back of the room waiting to pounce. This was a different time, because the new government was looking for ways to discredit the Americans. I was hyper conscious about talking to the press. I was very, very careful always. I never had a problem, so I think that helped me. Not to blow my own horn, but people realized the embassy was doing a lot during this period when people were lacking needed humanitarian assistance. They were very grateful for that, and that helped me. As far as the government was concerned, I didn't have a problem. The relations were what they were at the beginning which was rather thin, but there weren't really any major issues except these arms issues which kept coming up from time to time, and mistreatment of missionaries.

Q: What about when you were there, where stood the Kosovo confrontation between the United States? That must have had repercussions.

BOHLEN: The last year I was there the war was going on. That was already a long way along.

Q: The Bulgarians have always had this tie to Macedonia, much to the annoyance of the Greeks.

BOHLEN: The Bulgarians basically think that Macedonia is not a separate nation. If I would digress a moment on that: Bulgaria was the first government to recognize the state of the Republic of Macedonia, and they didn't carry any flame for "Former Yugoslav Republic." They said Macedonia. They would not recognize the language as a separate language. So this blocked the signing of a number of agreements because agreements say "valid" in the language of each country. The Bulgarians wouldn't sign anything that implied Macedonian was a second language. Bulgaria really felt that after the final dissolution of the Turkish Empire in the Balkans that Macedonia should have been part of Bulgaria. Initially it was until the Congress of Berlin, under the Treaty of San Stefano. All through the 19th century and early 20th century there were terrorist organizations--the VMRO (the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary organization), you may remember--which were really irredentist organizations aimed at bringing Macedonia back in. In fact, Macedonian is closer to Bulgarian than to any, certainly than to Serb. There was a lot of history and a lot of baggage to this issue, and we were trying to support Macedonia and President Gligorov and so on. We would press the Bulgarians to overcome this language dispute. Eventually the government changed, and VMRO came in, and they were much closer to the Bulgarians, and they were able to work out some compromise. They still haven't recognized the language, but they found a way of signing the agreements. To back up a little bit on the war, Bulgaria was at that point an active candidate for NATO membership. It was part of the Membership Action Plan. When we started bombing Kosovo, they said, "We will support you. We support NATO." But it was without the slightest enthusiasm. The war was much too close to home.

Even though the Bulgarians and the Serbs were historic enemies, a lot of people had friends in Belgrade. Frankly, nobody liked the Albanians. As you know, nobody likes them. Because one of the Serbs had a radar post on their eastern border right next to Bulgaria, a couple of missiles overshot their mark and came into Bulgaria and landed in the equivalent of Chevy Chase (a Washington D.C. suburb in Maryland) and stove in a roof. Happily, no one was hurt. It was very close. The war was totally unpopular with the population, with the public opinion. The government was quite nervous about it. They hoped to sit this out without having to get involved, and nobody was asking to become involved militarily.

We had one unpleasant incident. Once the war started, there were all the refugees. Went into Macedonia. The Bulgarians were very worried about the fragility of Macedonia because, they said, with all these Albanians flooding in... They worried perpetually about the fragility of Macedonia and that's a continuing thing. We sent out an appeal to all the neighboring countries to please take some Albanian refugees, and the Bulgarians said no. They said, "We will support a camp inside Macedonia. We will run a camp, but we have

enough problems. We don't need a lot of Albanian refugees. Thank you very much." Washington was just incensed. Strobe Talbott came through, I remember, and he already was under a lot of stress from this war. He asked them to reconsider, and they told him no. He was absolutely furious. So we the doghouse for that for quite a while. The Bulgarians are very straight forward. They didn't want them, so they said no. The Romanians who also didn't want them said yes, but they then they never took a single refugee and, of course, the war was over quite quickly. Bulgaria was in the doghouse. It was a very unpleasant time because the Socialists had strongly opposed the war, and they staged demonstrations outside the embassy every day. There were only 20 people there at most, but every evening from six to seven, they would appear with their bullhorns and their slogans. It was not pleasant, and the press was totally against us. I remember going on the TV with my British counterpart trying to argue the case for the war. It was rough because nobody really supported it.

Then several things happened. I think the Bulgarians came to realize…Prime Minister, Mr. Kostov is an extremely smart man, and he realized it was absolutely vital that NATO win the war because otherwise the refugees would never go back to Kosovo, and they would be now in Macedonia permanently. This was a strong interest for the Bulgarians. He said, "We have to help NATO win." After this incident with the way they said no to the refugee camp, we got wind from Washington that we were going to ask the Bulgarians to let us use their air space so we could fly in planes from Turkey. By that time [Ed: summer 1997 transfer?] I had a new DCM, Chris Dell, and he had picked this up. I said, "Chris, we have to prepare ground for this because if we wait until Washington actually sends the *demarche*, it will be too late. I sent him around to see the president's diplomatic advisor who was a good friend of both of ours, to tell him this probably was going to be coming. They had better be prepared, and they better not say no because they were already in the doghouse over this refugee camp, and this was obviously much more serious. He took that on board, and they started consulting among themselves. I think it was a very smart thing we did. I bent the rules, but it allowed them to make their preparations. The president who is a wonderful man really kind of led the charge. The government picked itself up and organized itself, and there had to be a vote in Parliament to do this, and they had a majority, so it wasn't a problem. They wanted to get as big a majority as possible, not just their own party. This was not popular, by the way. Then there was a huge debate inside the Socialist party. Inside there was another party that had formed, kind of a splinter party from the Socialists, I guess they were. There were a lot of people in the embassy we used to see, that I would say the more thinking elements of the party, and they had a huge debate. I remember they in the end voted against the resolution which was a big disappointment. But anyway, it passed anyway, and we never had to use the air space because the war came to an end.

Q: Was there any question about Bulgarian air space for the Russians to send stuff in?

BOHLEN: Yes, actually there was although it was more Hungary. Remember when the Russians pulled a fast one, and the military wanted to send more troops to resupply, and they were refused overflight rights by Hungary and by Romania and by Bulgaria, I think, although they didn't really rely on Bulgaria.

Q: If I recall, the Russians sent a battalion or something running through Serbia and went to Prishke and grabbed an air field. Was this a rogue element? The point was that the Russians ended up with this unit sitting there unsupplied, and the British had to take care of them for a while..

BOHLEN: We had a big confrontation with the British, and it was a silly thing. The Bulgarians were really worried when they heard about this. I remember I was on a trip that had been organized by the Environment Minister, and we had gone to some distant part of Bulgaria. She wanted to show us some preserve. Then suddenly over the radio came this news about the Russians. Actually, I don't think we have to go back. I was on the phone a lot, and the Bulgarians were very apprehensive.

Q: What about the Russian role while you were there? There has always been this very close tie--Brother Slavs--more than anywhere else. How was that playing out while you were there?

BOHLEN: Actually, the stuff about the particular closeness to Russia turns out to be only half true. Of course, there are many ties. The Russians freed them from the Turks. What most people don't know about Bulgarian history is there was a period after their independence when the Russians were treating it as a kind of protectorate, and the Defense Minister of Bulgaria was a Russian. They had chosen their first king, Prince Alexander of Battenberg. He was the first king, and he was being obstreperous or not doing what the Russians wanted. The Russians got a bunch of Bulgarian officers to kidnap him and take him to Russia. There was this comic opera crisis. Eventually he was released and came back, but the king said, "This is not what I signed up for. I'm resigning." So he resigned the crown. A government took over and started a search for a new king, but in the meantime they broke off relations with the Russians, and they were without relations with the Russians for 10 years. I think the gratitude, the ties are there, but also the memory of heavy handed interference, not unique to Bulgaria, of course. When you look at Bulgaria between the two wars or, indeed, in the late 19th century, their ties to Germany were at least as important as their ties to Russia. Culturally, Sofia is a city that doesn't look Russian at all. It looks more like something out of the Austrian empire. And then, of course, they were very close, obviously, under the Soviet period, and they were…and Chelnokov [Ed: may be reference to Communist president in early 1950s, Vulko Velev Chervenkov?] just made it his policy to be as close to the Russians as he could be.

Q: As you pointed out, they were getting quite a bit out of this.

BOHLEN: They really milked the Soviets for all it was worth. They were very clever at doing this. It was a very close tie and then, of course, there were many ties that flowed from that. The historic closeness much to my surprise was less than I had assumed, and for people who opposed the regime, Russia was bad news. They had no use for Russia at all. It was an important post for the Russians. When I got there, the Russian ambassador was (Alexander) Avdeyev, who later went back to Moscow to become a Deputy Foreign

Minister, and then became Ambassador to France. [Ed: Avdeyev was Ambassador in Sofia from July 1992 to December 1996.] It was an important post for them as it was for Turkey which is an interesting sign. I think Bulgaria liked…as in so many European countries; in fact, in all of them…there was a precipitous decline in living standards after the end of Communism because there was huge inflation.

Q: Under the old system, the Soviets weren't just milking; they were supporting.

BOHLEN: That's right. There was at least minimal health care and stable currency, subsidized food, subsidized energy prices. This was one of the big things in Bulgaria. The gas they got from the Soviet Union was subsidized, was very cheap. Peoples' living standards went down, and this affected people at the lower end of the scale more than it did at the upper end of the scale. People were reclaiming collectivized property, which went forward reasonably well in Bulgaria. They tended to be very loyal, all the people who voted for the Socialist party, the workers. Agriculture was very Socialist.

Q: Wasn't there a very strong peasant's party?

BOHLEN: That was pretty much destroyed by the Communists, although the daughter of the leader of the party came back and became head of the party. There was also a splinter party that allied itself with the Communists so there were in fact two, but they're not a big factor. The villages tended to be very pro-Socialists and, therefore, feeling much more attached to Russia. I remember talking to a woman who said, "In the old days we grew fruits and vegetables for the Soviet Union, and we were busy all summer long. Now we have no jobs." She was not interested in reclaiming the land that had belonged to her parents. She said, "Who will work it?" It was a passive attitude, but it's obviously much harder.

Q: I would imagine that the Greek ambassador must have been like a fly in the ointment with that Macedonian thing. How was the Greek relationship?

BOHLEN: It was fine. It wasn't a direct relationship, a direct issue between the two countries. The Greeks, I think Greek diplomats, are less aroused by this issue than the politicians in Greece. It's a totally phony issue. There are no Greeks to speak of in Macedonia. It's a totally different country now, not to mention how the Greeks treat their minorities in Greece. They had perfectly good relations. I don't think they had a very distinguished ambassador there. Greece does a lot of small investments, finishing factories for apparel and so on.

The country with which Bulgaria saw it had an important interest was Turkey, in part because of the Turkish minority which is now, in the last years of Communism they tried to get them all to adopt Christian names or to leave, but then this ended after the fall of Zhivkov, and now there is certainly ethnic peace. They are very poor. They continue to emigrate. There is that interest, but also I think there is a fair amount of Turkish investment. Bulgaria is a neighbor, and so Turkey and Greece both were very strong

proponents of bringing Bulgaria and Romania into NATO and into the EU. They had an excellent ambassador there when I first got there. He was great.

Q: You mentioned problems with Evangelical Christians. The ones I saw in Kyrgyzstan, particularly the Americans, were pretty naïve people. What was happening in Bulgaria?

BOHLEN: It was the same story. Some were better than others. The Mormons, the Church of the Latter Day Saints, were relatively sophisticated. They operate in a lot of countries, and they understand the importance of being sensitive to people's feelings. Some of the others were not. Of course, they are all proselytizing religions, and this offended a lot of people. The Orthodox Church, which is a pretty backward looking church in many respects, took a very dim view of proselytizing, as it has in Russia. I think in the early days, the authorities would often arrest these people. We had one case where they tried to frame a guy, and he had some medicines that his mother had sent him, which they tried to claim were drugs. So they put him in jail, and eventually he was released. There were a lot of incidents like that. They did have some success because, I think, for people who were looking for religion. The Orthodox well is pretty dry these days. The church was very discredited for its role under the Communists. The Bulgarians are not a very religious people at this point in time, and they find proselytizing offensive, as they were for anything Orthodox. The proselytizers didn't make huge inroads. We had to spend a lot of time defending them. It's interesting, American missionaries have a very long tradition going back to the 19th century helping education in Bulgaria. They founded some of the first schools.

Q: Roberts School, for examples, I think, there was the equivalent there.

BOHLEN: There was an equivalent there which was founded in the 1920s, but even before that its antecedents were schools that were founded in the late 19th Century in the 1870s and 1880s. They founded the first women's school in Bulgaria. They were more what I would call traditional sects, Methodist and Baptist and so on, and they did great things for Bulgaria.

Q: How did you find the work of the European Union representation there and the OSCE and NATO. Were they working from a common strategy or were they all working on their own?

BOHLEN: I had very close relationships with the British, the French, the Germans to some degree, the Italians, and we would have NATO lunches once a month. It was really the key ambassadors that I worked with, of uneven quality I would say. The best tended to be the British and, in fact, the second British. The first British Ambassador who was there was the poor guy who was killed when the British Consulate in Istanbul was bombed. He was there. He was a very good diplomat and a very nice man. [Ed: On November 20, 2003, Roger Short, British Consul-General in Turkey was one of around 28 people killed by a truck bomb. After a tour as Ambassador to Bulgaria (1994-1998), he served as Chief of Staff at the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina until 2000 and then became Consul-General to Turkey in 2000.] The second

one [Ed: Richard Stagg] was really a star in the British Foreign Office. He had worked in Blair's office, and he spoke Bulgarian. He had served there before. He was great, and we worked very closely together. Particularly during those early months that I was there, the sort of crisis, we would consult frequently because we were trying to sort it all out. I felt that it was important. It's such an ingrained habit with me to work with the Europeans. That's why I don't get on with this administration. I think it was helpful. I think they were much more skeptical about the new government that took office and less convinced than I was that we should support these people.

Q: I thought we might talk about the public diplomacy side of your work in Bulgaria.

BOHLEN: I think it was very important. Bulgaria was a country that in the recent past had not had close ties to the United States. There is not a large Bulgarian-American community in this country. Unlike Poland, which always maintained its ties with the United States, I think there was not much feeling of closeness with the United States. The feelings about the United States were probably for a lot of people entangled in the feelings about the social and economic changes that had taken place. The Soviet Union had been Bulgaria's big protector, and they had prospered in a sense through this relationship. Then that relationship had been set to one side or downgraded or whatever, and many people were living worse than they had before. This was somehow associated with the closer relationship with the United States. One of those irrational things. It was certainly not true of the great many people for whom the United States was, in Bulgaria as in the rest of Eastern Europe, really the country that had stood up for the rights of the Eastern Europeans, the countries that at least then represented democracy and freedom. For many people who were not part of this elite, I think the United States did not always have a positive image. I thought it was very important to show Bulgarians that the United States cared about what happened in Bulgaria. I think I can say that we did have some success with that while I was there. This involved a lot of things. I personally tried to get out of Sofia as much as I could. We had a large aid program. We had the Department of Agriculture, the Peace Corps, the old USIA people had a fairly active program. Any time there was an opportunity to go inaugurate something; I would go and do it.

I think I talked last time about what we did during the difficult winter when everything was falling to pieces, and we did that aid program. The mayors were very grateful for that. AID had done a wonderful program that involved working with mayors because at the time I got there, the central government was both corrupt and dysfunctional, and AID had decided that they wouldn't give any money anymore through the central government, so they worked with local governments. They worked with a number of mayors of different political parties who subsequently formed the basis of a National Association of Mayors, the first time such a thing had existed in Bulgaria and which became a political force to focus on. Anyway, through this program, I went a lot to different towns and would visit with the mayors and would sort of show up. I always used to tell my staff, "The business of an ambassador is to show up. It doesn't matter what he or she does when you get there, but you just have to show up." I think this was very much appreciated. Same thing with Peace Corps programs. There was a lot of that, and I encouraged other members of the embassy to do this. I think because it was this difficult

winter, the Bulgarians were looking for some sign from outside, and many Bulgarians have said how much they appreciated this kind of outreach. So that was it mainly. I think it was not so much in the first part at least, it was not so much about policy. Our policy was to support the development of democracy and open economies in these countries. That was the general message. We weren't doing a heck of a lot to push this thing forward. We gave 30 million dollars a year. I think that when I got there and the Bulgarians were very isolated, and then the new government came in in the winter of 1997 was very anxious to improve relations with the West, and the then foreign minister who was Nadezhda Mihaylova who was a very energetic, smart, and also beautiful Foreign Minister, and she was generally conceded to win the beauty prize.

Q: Which surely doesn't hurt at international meetings!

BOHLEN: It certainly doesn't hurt! It doesn't hurt. And the new President Peter Stoyanov who was just a wonderful person, and they did endless travel to the countries of Western Europe and to the United States. When we were able to help that and to send that message to Washington and eventually to get them a visit, although I have to say the Clinton Administration was just really dreadful about scheduling these visits.

Anyway, so there wasn't a particular policy message other than that we support you and care about what happens and so on. The Bulgarians were very anxious to join NATO. At that time I think it was rather a distant prospect, and I felt I had to be very careful about not promising anything because they really weren't ready. I tried to encourage people to at least be thinking about this possibility and, of course, they became members in 2004. That was very encouraging. The hard part came with the Kosovo war. They really weren't on board. The government wasn't on board; public opinion certainly wasn't on board. They just did not like this war, and even after the government came around and actively supported us, they didn't like the war. It was the image of big rich countries beating up on a small Balkan country even though they and the Serbs were hereditary enemies. Many people had ties to people in Belgrade, and they felt great sympathy for what was happening. Then, of course, there were the bombs that overshot the border and fell into Sofia's suburb. The former Communist party, the Socialists would organize demonstrations every day outside the Embassy for two hours, just like the old Soviet times. Six o'clock it's over. I tried to go on television to give interviews, to talk about this, to talk about why it was important, why we were justified in doing what we did. I don't know that this was a huge success because the press was very much against it. One organization that we used a lot as a forum for speeches and especially when U. S. officials starting coming was the Atlantic Club, the founder and head of which is now the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Solomon Passy. Among the organizations that are a part of what is called the Atlantic Treaty Association, the Bulgarian Atlantic Club had the reputation of being the most active and energetic, and it was thanks to Solomon Passy. They were very supportive of what we were doing. They were one of the few. They were helpful. That was an outreach program with a specific message. I can't say I think it was very successful, but happily the war was over very quickly.

Q: Did things return after that?

BOHLEN: Yes, I would say. The international community promised a lot of money through something called the Stability Pact, not the one that regulates the euro, but the Balkan Stability Pack. It promised more than it ever delivered, but I think people understood that the international community recognized that it had in some way to compensate the Bulgarians for what they had done, for their role. I guess I talked last time about having to secure the passage of overflight rights. There was another aspect that I don't think I did talk about. The Bulgarians and the Romanians said, "Look. We are the most exposed to any Serbian counter operation, but we are not members of NATO. We have no guarantee that anybody will come to our defense if the Serbs should be so misguided as to attack." We did give them some kind of roundabout guarantee. This was all negotiated with great difficulty. I think the war confirmed their desire to be part of NATO. They saw, in a sense, how anomalous this was to be part of this. I think I've mentioned one of the concerns for the Bulgarians was Macedonia, whether it would split apart under the weight of the war. They were very relieved when the Kosovars started going back to Kosovo. This was a side show for the Bulgarians. Their main focus was on NATO and the EU.

Q: Did they have the capacity or the future capacity in your opinion or the embassy's opinion to take the steps that would prepare them to go into the EU and into NATO?

BOHLEN: I think for the EU at least it was a bit of a question mark. Nobody doubted that in the long run they would have the capacity because they're very educated, intelligent, motivated people. But there was so much wrong with the system, still is, that it seemed as though it was a very distant prospect. I don't think any of us would have predicted that they would be ready by 2007. In fact, they really worked very hard at the accession process, which has all these chapters that you have to complete, and they worked very hard at that. Everybody I talked to from the EU when the subsequent years (this was really after I left in August 1999) was very impressed by what they had done.

Q: And then what did you do?

BOHLEN: Then I came back to be the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Arms Control in the State Department.

Q: Where did that sit? Wasn't that part of the former Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA),which was going out of business… What was the status when you got there?

BOHLEN: ACDA had already gone out of business, and its component parts had been absorbed into the State Department. This all happened before I got there when I was focused on the Kosovo war and not on what was happening. The result was three different bureaus: Non Proliferation, Arms Control, Political/Military, and perhaps later the Bureau of Verification and Compliance. I think they really did a reorganization that was really not very well thought through. They were bending over backwards not to offend all the people from ACDA that had to be integrated into it.

What, in my opinion, they should have done was to combine the Bureau of Non-Proliferation and the Bureau of Arms Control because the Bureau of Arms Control was something that did negotiations with the Soviet Union, so it inherited the huge pool of experts on strategic arms negotiations. But these were already in 1999 a much lesser part of the landscape than they had been. It was obvious its importance was not what it had been. It was not essential.

Q: The focus was more towards non-proliferation would you say?

BOHLEN: The focus had been since the end of the Cold War had been on non-proliferation. I think several things contributed to this focus: the discovery of the weapons program that Iraq had, the end of the Cold War, the growth in terrorism, and then North Korean issues. All these new things coming up, no longer in the context of a bipolar world but much more messy, much more difficult to deal with. India, Pakistan, their tests in 1998. That was clearly where the action was, and the Arms Control Bureau on the one hand had the United States/Russian negotiations, and on the other they had all the bits and pieces like the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the CFE Treaty (the Conventional Forces in Europe). They had all the multi-lateral arms control as well, but that was always a lesser thing. In addition, it never made sense in my view. On the one hand you had the Non-Proliferation Bureau which was trying to stop the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons. They were in charge of all the export control regimes: the Australia Group and various nuclear groups. But the Arms Control Bureau was in charge of the treaties that banned all these things. It just didn't make sense to have them in two different bureaus. You should have had them all part of one. You should have had an integrated approach and so on. I was not around for this. I learned subsequently some people had tried to argue along the same lines that I did, but the other view went out that you should just replicate the bureaus.

We inherited all the Strategic Arms control, the Multilateral Arms Control. PM, before ACDA was integrated, had a small arms control program. That came to us, and there were various bits and pieces that had not been property sought out. I came back. It took me two months to get through the Senate confirmation process. The first thing that happened before I was confirmed was that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was voted down by the Senate by a huge majority. This treaty had been concluded in 1997, I think, and I think the Clinton Administration bears a huge responsibility for its failure. Not the total responsibility. They really did nothing to organize, to develop a strategy to try to get it through the Congress. There was very still opposition to it, I think from various quarters, from the nuclear labs in the first instance, people who just didn't want to give up the idea that you had to test. That was their livelihood, so they didn't want to give it up. This was during a very intensely partisan Congress, and they were looking for things, for sticks to beat the Clinton Administration with.

So the labs were able to combine with a number of senators to really drum up a lot of opposition to the treaty. It just sat for a long time. It sat in the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee. No hearings were held and, of course, the Republicans were in charge of Congress. Helms was the chairman. The Democrats kept saying, the Clinton Administration kept saying, "It's scandalous that the CTBT has not been brought to a vote." Then the Republicans called their bluff, and they held this really kind of overnight, things got rolling. They held hearings, and in a couple of weeks they went to a vote. There were a lot of people who testified against the treaty. A number of Republicans testified against it. Some military, many military testified for it. General Shalikashvili had been the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff when the treaty was signed so, of course, he was very much in favor of it. The administration had not laid the groundwork, and they were taken by surprise by the Republican switch, so it went down to defeat, quite decisively.

Q: Did you feel looking back through the records and talking with people that your part of the State Department hadn't done its prodding of the NSC or whomever was pushing this initiative?

BOHLEN: No, I can't say that. I was all very new to this, but one of the things that the people in the Bureau said, "we need to keep pushing the White House to do something about the CTBT." So they were very active and constantly pushing. Actually, the people in the NSC who were working on this were quite active, but at the level of Sandy Burger, they were not interested. They didn't make a convincing case, and I think as much as anything it fell victim to the anti-Clintonism in the Republican controlled Congress.

Q: It's hard to go back to that time. Toward the end, the Clinton Administration was emasculated, a term used in this case. It came out with a not overly-impressive record because of this, you might say, partisan poison.

BOHLEN: It was totally poisonous. The people who did Congressional relations were just in despair. Everything was so difficult and, of course, having Helms as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee didn't make things easier. This was a very difficult time, and I can't even say that if they had been better organized, if they had made their case, that it would have made the difference. I think, and you may remember, that Schroeder, Chirac and Blair signed a letter to the Senate asking them to vote for this treaty. The rejection came as a huge shock to the rest of the world. People didn't think that we would actually turn it down. They thought it would be like a Chemical Weapons Convention which had sort of squeaked through. I think in retrospect you can see it was not just the poisonous relations with the Clinton Administration, but many of those who would take power under Bush were… I mean, this whole anti-arms control feeling was out there, and I have to say that the labs—the nuclear labs—played their role even though any number of very eloquent and respected scientists and generals and even the head of a couple of labs said, "We don't need to test, and we won't need to test." We would always have the option of getting out of the treaty to test if we felt that our national security was at stake. Actually, we have not resumed testing.

Q: It's one of these Washington issues that become vitriolic and partisan. It has very little to do with the reality.

BOHLEN: That's right. What critics of the treaty said is that's okay to not test for now, but we can't be sure 20 years from now whether our stockpile will still be in as good shape. We had a program that was designed to improve the reliability and the safety of the stockpile, and we had a program that the Joint Chiefs and the labs had to sign off on the security and the liability of the stockpile every year. They continued to do so, and have continued to do so. I think there were different agendas. There were some like Brent Scowcroft was not. Dick Lugar was not in favor of the treaty. He felt there were too many uncertainties. It was too much of a risk to take.

Q: These were what we would call the "practical moderates."

BOHLEN: There's no question of the agenda of some and I think people like Paul Robinson who was the head of Los Alamos, his agenda was to create a consensus for resuming testing. In that he has so far failed. That was a very bad way to begin, and that consumed a lot of our attention for about three weeks. That's really all it took. It was amazingly short. There was some follow on to that because we have always had and out: a practice of the Vienna Convention says that if we sign the treaty but not ratify it, we will not undercut the purpose or objective of the treaty. Madeleine Albright sent a letter to our Allies saying, "We will continue to respect the spirit of the Treaty and not undercut it by not resuming testing." This was leaked to the Congress, and it created a furor because it seemed to say that we weren't paying any attention to what the Senate had done, and we were just going to go on as if everything were normal. I had to go up to the Hill a couple of times to soothe ruffled feathers. It's one of those interesting issues because the people on the Hill felt they had absolutely nailed the treaty and made it dead for all time because they were given bad advice by some of their staffers. On this issue of not undercutting, they said, "We don't contest the president's right to continue the moratorium on testing, but how can he say he won't undercut the purpose of the treaty when we've turned it down?" So we went round and round about that, but I said finally, "This is not worth fighting about. We have a different view of what our obligations are, but the practical effect is one that we are all comfortable with which is no resumption of testing. Let's just leave it lie." We didn't repeat that, the offending phrase. The other thing was that the treaty remains on the executive calendar of the Senate because 2/3 of the Senate has to vote to send… When the Bush Administration came in, of course, he wanted to withdraw it. This requires the consent of 2/3 or the Senate, or 60 votes. They have never really wanted to have the fight about it.

Q: So it's there.

BOHLEN: So it's there, which is sort of amusing, but I don't think it will be acted on any time soon till we see another swing of the pendulum.

Q: How about Germany, France and Great Britain? Their policy leaders, did they see this as something that was more domestic thing, let it go. What they wanted was being done anyway.

BOHLEN: No. They attached a lot of importance to us ratifying the treaty because the way the treaty was signed, 40 specific countries—not just any old 40 countries—but 40 specific countries have to sign and ratify the treaty before it can come into effect. They felt this was important. France, which had briefly resumed testing while I was in France, it broke the moratorium because the General said, "We just need to do these four more tests and then we will know what we need to know." France felt comfortable with not testing anymore, the Brits haven't really tested for years, and the Germans were anxious as ever to have this go into effect. There was a great sort of consternation. Among other things there's an organization that already exists in Vienna called the CTBTO (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) which put in place some of the verification things that we were very insistent on like seismic monitoring, various monitoring, air measurements. This sort of has been trundling along, and actually we continued to give money to it. Every year it's been a bit of a fight, but the Congress accepted that this is a good thing to do.

Q: It's so messy.

BOHLEN: It's so messy! I know. We obviously felt it was very important because, first of all, we give as usual 25%, and it's a good organization to have anyway, even if you don't have a treaty. Of course, the conservatives in Congress were lying in wait for it. That was the first episode. The second issue that I was very involved with under the Clinton Administration was missile defense. You may remember that after the North Korean test of a 3-stage missile in 1998—never mind the top stage fell off before it got to

its target (and they haven't replicated it)—everybody got very excited. Plus, the Rumsfeld Commission had taken a look at missile defense and had issued a very alarming report. Congress had by vote of 96 to 4 required the president to go ahead with the Missile Defense Program. The Clinton Administration had been futzing around with this and not really wanting to do it, but Defense Secretary Cohen did want to do it, so they devised these elaborate schemes that would look into feasibility and, of course, the research on missile defense never dried up. There was a big push from Congress to do this. We were trying with the Russians to try to get them to agree to amend the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to allow a national missile defense system. This was really a hard sell because we said, "Oh, just amend the ABM Treaty to allow national missile defense," which makes a mockery of the central purpose of the treaty which was to ban a national missile defense. The Russians didn't like this. They didn't like the whole missile defense thing. Our Allies didn't like it because the Russians were making a huge fuss about it.

Q: And we were talking about protecting the United States, not about protecting anybody else. That wasn't as big an issue.

BOHLEN: That wasn't as big an issue because they don't really believe in long range missile defense although now it seems to be reviving a bit. There we were meeting periodically with the Russians and not really getting anywhere. The Russians were engaging in a lot of propaganda. I said, "Well, who's talking to our European Allies?"

Well, nobody, it turned out. I said, "Well, that's something I know how to do, so I'll do that." I did a lot of trips to Europe. I would go around and talk to people.

Q: Did you get anywhere on that?

BOHLEN: I think I did. Toward the end of the Clinton Administration the Atlantic Council came out with the report on the Alliance and Missile Defense or something like that. Steve Hadley was one of its authors, and he came with Christopher Makins who's head of the Atlantic Council to present the report to me. Steve, who at that time and still is a very big proponent of missile defense. He said "I was impressed at how much they had evolved in their thinking about it," and he said, "I attribute that to the fact that you've been going around and talking to them." I don't know whether that's true, but it's a very nice compliment to have from a source that obviously didn't agree with the Clinton Administration approach.

Q: Overriding this whole thing is that the science and technology for a missile defense isn't there. It might be able to pick up a missile or two from North Korea but certainly wouldn't pick up any more sophisticated ones say from China.

BOHLEN: The technology's not there. I think the most convincing arguments… The hardest part for me was saying that there was a threat out there that required missile defense. North Korea with its little piddly missile.

Q: It doesn't make any sense. One missile, and the country's destroyed.

BOHLEN: Right. The retaliation would be absolutely intense, and I think that's much more of a deterrent than the missile defense. To my mind the weakest part was the threat argument. I didn't have any problem with the arguments about it's time to change the ABM Treaty. That made perfect sense to me that we weren't in the time of great confrontation, issues were gone. This did not present the threat to the Russians that it once did. So I think there were a lot of arguments that I could and did make about… first of all, the scale of the program—it was quite modest—and also the impact on the Russians and so on. The Europeans were grateful that I bothered to come through. I don't think their minds were changed, but they dropped some of their sillier arguments about how it was destabilizing.

Q: I can see that it would be unconvincing for a desk officer to make these demarches. It would be sort of repeating by rote what someone else has prepared. For your coming out there, you can…

BOHLEN: I think it was not that I had huge technical expertise but the fact that, first of all, someone bothered to come from Washington to talk to them about it. I think Strobe (Talbott) had talked to them once to the NAC (North Atlantic Council) in Brussels, and he talked another time. He got a very, very rough reception. I think I chipped away a bit at the massive resistance but, of course, I didn't really change their mind. As I say, it was showing up that mattered. I dealt with a lot of these people over the years. I knew them.

That's always been something I've enjoyed doing. I also took part in the United States/Russian negotiations, and this was something I found very frustrating. The real negotiation, to the extent that there was one, took place between Strobe Talbott and Georgiy Mamedov who was the Deputy Foreign Minister in Moscow. They used to meet periodically. They would meet for dinner in London when Strobe was on his way back from some… Strobe would meet with Mamedov here and there, and they would discuss the issue in obviously broad terms, and then there would be negotiations that were lead by John Holum who was John Bolton's predecessor as the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security. We would have these elaborate Soviet style meetings and John, who was a very senior official, had as his counterpart somebody who was really more of an Assistant Secretary level. We would have these long Soviet style negotiations where everybody would read set speeches. We spent a lot of time trying to persuade the Russians, because the military still did see this in terms of—or at least said they did—in terms of a kind of Cold War threat where their systems could be overwhelmed. We would spend a lot of time trying to convince them that it would not limit their retaliatory capability. Some of these papers were later leaked. Basically we were saying, "Missile defense will not hamper your ability to fire missiles at the United States if it should come to that," which when taken out of context, is a rather startling thing to say. Of course, it's all part of nuclear doctrine, but to the uninitiated this seems like a kind of peculiar argument, and it upset a lot of conservatives that we were saying this. Anyway, it's a perfectly legitimate argument, and I think the Russians knew what we were saying. But they saw absolutely no reason to change their position on this issue, and they had the propaganda high ground. Every year they would introduce a resolution in the UN supporting the ABM Treaty, not condemning missile defense but supporting the sanctity of the ABM Treaty and "cornerstone of strategic stability" and so on. It went on, and the whole system was crazy.

I later wrote an article about this period, and how was it that Bush was able to get Putin to go along with this? Of course, you had 9/11 and so on, but I think the Clinton Administration was a transitional administration in this field of strategic arms control because at the end of the Cold War we had all these successes: The START I Treaty, the START II Treaty, the CFE Treaty, and all these things that we'd been trying for years to get. They were signed at the end of the Bush II administration, but the moment we signed them, it was suddenly apparent that none of that mattered any more. It's completely irrelevant. So you're left with these huge two treaties with all of the verification and transparency requirements and the special ways the missiles had to be destroyed and so on, which our military began to regard as rather cumbersome at a certain point. Plus this mindset that said this is how we have to negotiate new treaties with the Russians. We were trying to do a commitment to further cuts for the reductions, to more transparency, more… relying on existing mechanisms. It didn't make sense anymore. These negotiations got nowhere. I think the Clinton Administration just had not really bothered to rethink the age in which we were. Maybe it was hard for a transitional administration to do it. I don't think the Bush I administration would have, either. They were coasting on the intellectual capital from the Cold War. I think that explains why Bush was able to change.

Q: We're talking about Bush II.

BOHLEN: Bush II, right. I'm trying to think if there's anything else we need to talk about before going to the Bush Administration.

Q: Bush II came in in January 2001. What did that do to you?

BOHLEN: I certainly asked myself the question. But when Powell came in, and I remember what a breath of fresh air he was because really none of us much liked Madeleine Albright or thought she was a good Secretary. I'm sorry to say that because I like her personally very much, and I respect her intelligence. She was, as I'm sure others have said, she was rather insecure and this was reflected in the way she ran the department.

Q: Surrounded herself, with an insider staff, not unlike the Baker staff, but it was not an impressive one.…

BOHLEN: It was not an impressive one at all. I think the thing that really symbolized her approach was the scandal about two laptops that were stolen from INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research). Of course, the Hill seized on this to make mischief, and it was a shocking lapse of security. They fired Don Kaiser. Madeleine came down to INR one Saturday morning and screamed and yelled at everybody and said, "You have damaged my credibility with the Hill," as though this were an issue about Madeleine Albright and not about the State Department, and there was nothing about, "This was a terrible thing and you shouldn't have let it happen, but we're in this together." I thought that was pretty despicable. With the new Administration I think a lot of us had hopes. A lot of us remembered working for Bush I and what a professional, wonderful team that was, and what a pleasure to do foreign policy under those people. We hoped that he was going to be like his father, that he would bring in a team sort of like that, and the first sign of that seemed to be the nomination of Powell to be his Secretary of State. We were very happy with that.

The moment he was formally nominated, he came over and he asked for a series of briefings from the staff. He right away involved the staff, involved the State Department people. I was asked to so a thing on missile defense and strategic issues and what I did. I had known him a little bit from past incarnations when he was at the White House. Then I was asked what my plans were. I had frankly hoped for another job, but for some of the reasons I've described, I really did not enjoy being Assistant Secretary for Arms Control. I felt frustrated at the very active role that Strobe was taking meant that Holum was downgraded in his interlocutor, and I was downgraded still farther. It seemed to be a very redundant sort of position, and I thought this isn't what I signed up for. But I didn't want to go overseas again because my husband and I have been separated for the better part of eight years. I was not offered another job. They said, "Well, do you want to stay on in this job?" I said, "Well, I'll stay for a year or so." Powell said, "You can stay as long as you want in that job." I appreciated that, that he kept me on. It was easier for him to keep me on because I said I was leaving, but I know that there was a lot of pressure from

conservatives to get me out sooner, including from Bolton. It was just such a breath of fresh air. He had these morning meetings, when he met with all the Assistant Secretaries , which, I understand, his successor Condi Rice has now done away with. Did you see that piece in the Post about all her staff and the people who are working with her?

Q: There was one in June 6, 7th or something like that. Washington Post.

BOHLEN: Anyway, the article said she'd abolished the time-wasting…

Q: From what I gathered, that was not time wasted. That was the Secretary making contact with points and developing the team spirit.

BOHLEN: That's right, and it gave everybody in the building a chance to feel that he had interacted with the Secretary even if he never said anything. These meetings never lasted more than 20 minutes, but I think in terms of bonding with the building, this was tremendously important. I don't think people feel bonded with Condi Rice. I was part of that outfit. Then Bolton was nominated which was not happy news because he had such a bad reputation in the department, not just the ideology, which was a feature of this administration, but also the personality, how disagreeable he was and how unpleasant to work with. Powell had word sent to me that he knew this would be difficult, and if there were any problems that I should feel free to come to him, which was very nice and typical of what he thinks of impact on other people. The first thing that really happened, it was going on before 9/11, was to deal with the issue of the ABM Treaty and Missile Defense. This was a priority for the Bush Administration and especially for the Rumsfeld team. He had written his commission report, and actually the person who wrote the report, Steve Cambone, became his alter ego over at Defense. There was a strong feeling that the Clinton Administration had not done enough to involve the Allies in this endeavor, so they sent out a team headed by Paul Wolfowitz and Steve Hadley and Marc Grossman who was Under Secretary for Political Affairs. And I went too.

We went to London, France, Germany. The team split up after a certain time. Also to Moscow. They explained the reasons why the Bush Administration wanted missile defense, why they thought it was important, and the AMB Treaty was a problem. At that point they hadn't made up their mind what to do with it. I think the message was clear. The Bush Administration is going to do missile defense, and never mind about the ABM Treaty. I think the mission was very much appreciated. The Russians gave them good treatment and so on. That was the first stage, and then… Bolton normally would have gone on this trip, but he hadn't been confirmed yet. Then I think we had one more trip in the summer where he led the delegation to Moscow. Then we had 9/11, and I think this really gave Putin an opportunity. Putin had understood that Bush was going to do this, and that if he had to get out of the ABM Treaty to do it, he was going to do it. There was nothing that Russia could do to stop them. I think he was probably looking for a graceful way to let this happen. The terrorist attack of 9/11 gave him this opportunity because he could position himself as the strategic partner of the United States in the war against the terrorism, shift the agenda to the War on Terrorism, and get rid of some of this baggage about strategic arms control that his military and his foreign ministry were insisting on.

We had several meetings with the Russians, but then in December 2001 Putin came to the president's ranch in Crawford, Texas, and he basically said…and we had a couple of delegations that came to Washington, and I think we were getting high level indications that something was going to…that the Russians were rethinking their position. What's interesting is that we were proposing to amend the treaty, and it became clear that the Russians were not interested in amending the treaty. They said, "If you're going to do it, better have it be a clean break. Withdraw from the ABM Treaty, but we won't be party to this idea that you can have an amendment to a treaty that makes it the opposite of what it was when you signed it, so we'd rather have just a clean break." So Putin told the President at Crawford in December 2001 that he accepted that we were going to withdraw from the AMB Treaty. They would not be party to it through any amendment, but he would not a raise a fuss. We rehearsed subsequently with the Russians the statement that they were going to issue. He said, "Mr. President, I must insist on a new strategic reduction treaty." It was already clear that the Bush Administration was not enamored of a new treaty and especially not a new treaty on the old model. The President said, "I understand, and you will have your treaty."

Sometime in December we issued our statement of our intention to withdraw from the Treaty, and the Russians issued a counter statement that said, "We regret this, but it's no threat to Russia," which was a huge step. That happened, and then Bolton went off to negotiate the treaty. What was interesting is that the Defense Department continued to fight the treaty because even though the president had made the commitment. I was at a meeting of principals where this meeting was discussed, and Rumsfeld and (Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas) Feith and all those people just continued to argue against the treaty because it was something that would bind us, and it was unacceptable. Cheney did not oppose it because he knew the president had given his word to Putin. The treaty went forward. It's almost really a joke in that it doesn't commit us to eliminate the warheads; it's just to deactivate them and allows us to keep a huge ready reserve of nuclear warheads. There was very little verification, very little transparency, very little of these.

Q: Almost a pro forma *exercise.*

BOHLEN: Yes. It was. It's a treaty that commits us almost to nothing. To bring down the number of our operationally ready missiles to a certain point, but there's no irreversibility. To the disgruntlement of the military, I think he went along with it. The military felt they really hadn't gotten as much in return as they would like. But it was done, and for the reasons I outlined earlier I didn't feel really offended by this. I thought the ABM Treaty was a document whose time had come and gone. It was time to move on. Of course, since the Russians had not objected to our withdrawing from the ABM Treaty, the Europeans couldn't either, and they basically accepted it. On this issue I think Bolton was doing pretty much what Powell wanted. He was being a loyal sort of government servant. Later he clashed with him on certain things.

Q: We'll stop at this point and pick it up, probably a final one. We're talking about how we backed out of the missile treaty, and it was almost pro forma*; what was the name?*

BOHLEN: The SORT Treaty. The Moscow Treaty.

I think we talked about that, the ABM Treaty and how we got out of that.

Q: What was the atmosphere as we did this? Was it a feeling of dismemberment of what we had done?

BOHLEN: I can't remember how much I talked about this before. In fact, as I think I described, Putin decided that he was not going to be able to oppose it, and he would just look weak if he made a big fuss and Bush went ahead and did it anyway. In the meantime you had had 9/11, and he saw a window of opportunity to position himself *vis a vis* the Bush Administration in a better way to emerge as a partner in the fight against terrorism. He did not oppose it. The choreography of how we exited the treaty was closely coordinated with the Russians, and Putin said, "I will issue a statement after the president issues his statement in which he expressed regret that this was happening. He said, "It doesn't threaten the security of Russia, and so we will live with it." Much of the opposition in this country from our European Allies, from our Asian Allies, had been predicated on Russian opposition, and they took their cue from that. Europeans expressed a concern that it would destabilize our relations with the Russians. When Putin decided to react as calmly as he did, the others had no hook to hang their protests on. Even though many people deplored it, it was less tumultuous than we had thought in the Clinton Administration.

I think you can regret that they did it as they did, but the fact is that the ABM Treaty was something that belonged to another age. It was that you might deplore the way in which they exited the ABM Treaty, but I think you couldn't really argue that the ABM Treaty was very relevant to the strategic situation today. In the end, it happened quite quietly, and today—four years later—you don't feel the absence of it hugely.

Q: Could you talk about working with John Bolton because he's now the Ambassador Pro-Tem. I don't know what you want to call him. He's unconfirmed. He's Ambassador to the United Nations without Senate confirmation, so it's a recess appointment. Very controversial. How did you find in your particular aspect working with him?

BOHLEN: In the beginning it was a mixed bag. He's a very, very smart man. He has a really excellent mind. He's very hard working. He's very disciplined. I think on the ABM Treaty he really was doing what Powell wanted. There was not a difference there. Once it was clear, we looked at various options of re-negotiating the ABM Treaty, which is what the Clinton Administration had tried to do, or various other variances, as an alternative to outright withdrawal. The Russians basically said they didn't want that, but Putin said his condition for accepting the American withdrawal was another strategic arms agreement. I should have mentioned that. That was his price. The president agreed to that, so Bolton was in charge of negotiating this new treaty. There was a split because the Defense

Department was totally opposed to the new treaty even though the president had committed to it. They tried to sabotage it in all sorts of ways. Even Cheney did not oppose the treaty because he recognized that the president had made a commitment. It was a very minimalist treaty. It essentially brings together two parallel commitments to cut our respective strategic forces to a range of 2200 to 1800 deployed weapons. Bolton carried the water on that, and the Russians were prepared to go along. Those were their marching orders: Make this work. We didn't have a lot of trouble with the Russians on the treaty. We had problems with the Defense Department who tried to…

Q: Who in the Defense Department. Was this Rumsfeld and…?

BOHLEN: It was Rumsfeld. It was Doug Feith. Ideologues both and they hated the whole idea of a new treaty. They just thought arms control treaties were bad news. They tried to block this, and it was the first of many fights with the Defense Department. On that Bolton was doing what the White House wanted. I think that was more important than… It also happened to be where Powell was on that issue. That went relatively harmoniously. I went with him several times to Russia, and those meetings went reasonably smoothly. We worked with Georgiy Mamedov who had been very close to Strobe Talbott, who had been Strobe's opposite number in a sense. He adapted to working with John Bolton. John has a very abrupt sort of manner. He's not given to niceties at all. His grasp of the substance that was okay. His management style was… Our morning meeting he would have us in for 15 minutes max before the Secretary's Staff meeting. Nobody was invited to sit down. We all stood including and, I have to say, John, which was very peculiar to me. First time I had ever run into that. Somebody told me that this is a recognized management style to make sure people don't waste time, but I think it's just rude. That wasn't my favorite moment. I think what he was most interested in pursuing were all the non-proliferation issues: North Korea, Iraq to some degree, Iran. I think right away he was getting into the intelligence, all the things we heard about during his confirmation hearings about how he would ask for the raw intelligence and interpret it himself. I think he started doing that right away. He also took an interest in learning how the different Bureaus worked. He used to come to our staff meetings occasionally.

Q: He seemed to have his own policy. On North Koreas, the Clinton Administration had apparently stopped some of this by its treaty and assisting the North Koreans taking other paths. When the Bush Administration came in, it seemed to call a halt to everything.

BOHLEN: I think the agreement, of course—and this was not my area—but the agreement that was concluded with the Clinton Administration in 1994 was called "The Agreed Framework." The Bush Administration had regarded the North Korean regime with horror. I think they understood that dropping the Agreed Framework would probably be a mistake, but they didn't want to resume the discussions. Powell wanted to resume the discussions early on and was slapped down by the president who overruled him publicly. They felt no reason to engage. Then there was the president's Axis of Evil speech, and there were no talks going on that the Bush Administration sent out a large number of criteria that had to be met including dismantlement of the weapons program

before the United States would do anything. He put every condition and requirement up front for the Koreans, and everything rear-loaded for the United States. Then there was the Axis of Evil speech, and so the North Koreans were getting more and more suspicious of this and less and less inclined to engage. Then we discovered that the North Koreans were trying to develop an enriched uranium capacity. They're far from having it, which was not exactly a violation of the Agreed Framework, which dealt only with plutonium, but it was certainly a violation of the spirit. It was a violation of another declaration commitment that they had made to the South Koreans. So the Bush Administration essentially used that as an excuse to drop the Agreed Framework. Time went by, and then the North Koreans said, "We're taking the fuel rods out of storage," which had been one of the things that the Agreed Framework had stopped. It was clear that they were moving toward making more bombs. They withdrew from the NPT and so on. Finally the Bush Administration was persuaded that they had to resume negotiations, which they have done. Basically by just delaying and not doing anything and taking their distance from the whole process, the Bush Administration lost a huge amount of time, and time was not on our side. I think now as a result of all this, which was entirely because of ideological feelings about North Korea, the president said at one point, "Kim Jong-il makes me sick. Anybody who could let his people starve this way…" There was a great deal of moral posturing, but in the meantime North Korea was able to use the time to further develop its capacity. We started the negotiations with a much weaker hand than we had in 2001.

Q: While you were there this wasn't in your "inbox," but was there talk within your Bureau saying, "God, time isn't on our side. We're wasting time."

BOHLEN: But it wasn't the business of my Bureau. It was the business of the Bureau of Nonproliferation. They had somebody new who came in as Assistant Secretary, John Wolfe. That was all going on. What was going on with us in the Arms Control Bureau was something called The Biological Weapons Convention Protocol. Biological Weapons Convention was an agreement signed in 1975 which prohibits the possession, the manufacture, the acquisition of biological weapons, but it was just an agreement of intent, and any violations would go to the Security Council. There was no provision for any kind of transparency or inspection or whatever. People in Geneva had been working for six years on the Biological Weapons Convention, on the protocol, an inspection protocol. We had a lot of trouble in any case even under the Clinton Administration because it was quite intrusive, and our pharmaceutical industry was not really prepared to accept these kinds of inspections. I think it is very much doubtful even if we had concluded it under the Clinton Administration whether the U.S. government would have bought off on it. There were lots of problems with it. By this point we kept saying to our higher ups, "We don't recommend that the United States sign up to this protocol." National Security Advisor Condi Rice kept coming back to the interagency group and saying, "We're got to offer something in its place before we say no," because this was the lesson of Kyoto and other things they said we're just not going to have. There was no alternative. By that point everybody was very keen on finding alternatives, and we worked on a sort of alternative package. We announced in July of 2001, I think it must have been, that we were not going to sign up to the protocol, but we said we have some ideas. We had put together an alternative package. I spent a lot of time on this issue consulting with Allies

trying to explain to them that we probably weren't going to ratify it. It took us forever to make the decision, but finally in July we said, "We're not going to do it, but we'll have some ideas." I set off with a group of ideas, which I thought had Bolton's blessing and had interagency agreement to discuss. I got the agreement of the major Allies to go along with this, and then when I got back to Washington, Bolton pulled the rug out from under me even though he previously given assent to it, but when he got back, he said, "I don't approve of this, and we're not going to have any of this." This was not very pleasant to have to go and say to my allied colleagues, "I didn't have authority to propose what I did propose."

Q: How did you analyze Bolton's reaction? Obviously…

BOHLEN: An element in the package was… There were a number of measures that countries would agree to take unilaterally. The crux of the matter was something called the "ad hoc group" which was a kind of negotiating group that had been put together to negotiate the protocol, and they agreed to keep going. I mean they—our Allies—very much wanted to have a forum where we could continue to discuss these things and to work toward something that might be a binding commitment at the end of the day. That's what Bolton was opposed to. He wanted to shut down the ad hoc group in Geneva and to not have any commitment on the part of the United States; nothing that could be construed as a legal commitment. So that's what he really pulled the plug on. I really had to eat crow and say this hadn't been authorized. I thought about going to Powell on this, but Powell never interfered on any of these things, on any arms control issues after the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and the SORT treaty. He never interfered. At the end of November, there was a review conference of the BWC—Biological Weapons Convention—and Bolton went to that. He essentially pulled the plug on the whole thing in a very dramatic and brutal way. He dictated the telegram to Bob Joseph at the NSC, and we sent it off because we assumed it had everyone's agreement. It caused an uproar. It was a mini sort of scandal. That was the end of the Biological Weapons Convention. That left some very deep scars on the…

Q: One of the things I've recently been talking to somebody who was on the NSC at various times. I don't think your paths would have crossed. Larry Rosen. Don you know him?

BOHLEN: Yes, I know Larry.

Q: He said he had seen Powell in interdepartmental meetings and found him and found him essentially not very effective. These are big things we were talking about. Allowing somebody like Bolton to run loose. He did not speak of very strong leadership.

BOHLEN: Perhaps, but he knew Bolton had Cheney's backing, and he lost every time he went up against Cheney or Rumsfeld. That was the configuration, and I think Powell could have intervened more forcefully on a lot of issues, but he had to pick his fights. The Biological Weapons Convention was rather a small bore issue, and it was just more issue where the Bush Administration spat in the face of the international community.

Q: Did you have the feeling of what was the problem they wanted to solved, or was it just an ideological thing: We don't want to have any agreements?

BOHLEN: I think it was that. I think he felt, and there's some truth to this, that if you have a group that meets they're going try to negotiate something, that they're going to try to create something, and he thought just better not to have it alt all.

Q: A treaty of this nature: Who were the usual suspects on the biological side as far as who we're trying to control? Libya?

BOHLEN: I think there are about 18 countries out there that have biological weapons. We and the Russians have biological defenses, which are very close to biological agents. The things that you do to counter them are often very close to the agent itself. The analogy, the model, for this protocol was the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is a very different thing. Chemical weapons are quite visible. You really can't destroy them. They sit in large vats. You can't destroy the evidence. If you're doing BW research, you can flush it down the toilet. It's very easy to conceal. We felt that we were looking for more intrusive inspections. The intrusive inspections wouldn't really find the smoking gun that we were looking for, but they would be extremely bothersome to the pharmaceutical industry. We had not been in favor of this from the beginning but yes, it was an attempt to establish a norm, a policeable norm the way we had for chemical weapons, for nuclear weapons, to give a right for challenge inspections. There were many, many problems with it because biological agents, toxins, can be very close to innocent things. It's hard to tell. It's often hard to distinguish an outbreak caused by the use of a biological agent from a real disease. There were many, many problems and yes, more than even trying to catch the Irans or whatever, you were trying to create a norm that people could adhere to. John Bolton's view was that we know the people who are trying to develop biological weapons, and adherence for the good guys isn't a problem, so we don't need this. We know who the bad guys are. The good guys don't need to be policed. Why have it? There are all sorts of other reasons why…

Q: You say his telegram to Joseph at the NSC caused a firestorm. Was it that Bolton was…

BOHLEN: Bolton dictated to Joseph at the NFC a telegram which Joseph called me up and said, "I'm sending it over, and I want you to send it out. This is what John and I have agreed." Maybe at that point I should have reacted more strongly than I did. It's something that I revisit often in my mind, when you're told your boss and the senior NSC guy have agreed on something, it's not clear.

Q: Where did the reaction come from?

BOHLEN: The reaction came from the Allies because when he got up and our representative there said, "We're not going to continue this," nobody was prepared for this. We're not going to continue the *ad hoc* group. That caused an uproar, and basically

the meeting just shut down without any sort of conclusion. Part of my feeling about not trying to stop this was my feeling that Powell wouldn't back me up.

Q: This happened when?

BOHLEN: This happened in November of 2001.

Q: Basically you were going to continue on for a year. Was that it?

BOHLEN: Yes, and that was as of January of 2001, and I ended up staying a year and a half. I stayed on till June. The other thing in which we became involved which was the removal of the head of the Chemical Weapons Convention, OPCW, Office for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which was in the Hague. He was a Brazilian who had been in touch with Iraqis and had done all sorts of dubious things, was always trying to go against the United States, and was mismanaging the finances. The people who were in touch with him on our side the career people, the negotiators, were very much opposed to his staying on even though we were the ones who'd said there really wasn't any alternative… Let me back up. He was up for renewal about a year before all this happened. The negotiator and his deputy came to me and said, "We don't think that there's anybody else. We really don't like this guy." (José) Bustani was his name. "But we don't see any alternatives, so we propose that we support his renomination. I said, "okay, if that's what you guys say, I'll go along." A year later they came back to me and said, "This guy's going to ruin the organization. We've got to try to remove him." I said, "Well, this is a fine time to tell me. The time to remove him was when he came up for renewal."

Bolton became particularly exorcised by some conversation that he'd had with the Iraqis in which he appeared to be saying, "You should come into the convention, and we can make it okay for you." Bolton decided we should get rid of him, and we should go to our Allies. That was a very stormy period because obviously it looked—and it was—and exercise of raw power by the United States even though many of our Allies totally shared our opinion of Bustani. Bolton thought he was a disaster for the organization, he was guilty of administrative and financial mismanagement, I don't think dishonesty, but he was really mismanaging. He was very bad news, and Bolton blamed us for the fact that he's gotten a second term. Many people supported the idea of Bustani going, but they were appalled by the tactics we were using to do this. We got Powell involved when he was meeting with the Brazilian Foreign Minister, and he told the Foreign Minister that Bustani had to go. The Brazilian Foreign Minister immediately closed ranks around this guy because he was a career diplomat, etc., etc. It was a very, very tough fight. Bustani resisted. He said, "I'm not going to resign." Of course, then there were many countries who had divided loyalties. The Latin American caucus, the… It was very, very tough. In the end we were able to get him to resign. It was very intense. Somebody called me from a newspaper the other day and said, "Tell us about this." They were looking to make a story out of a typical Bolton action, but in reality it was the career people who had given him the idea and told him it needed to be done. Again, this is something I ask myself about.

I think once we'd supported him, it was hard to say we didn't want him anymore. It left a lot of scars in the organization. He'd finally left, and he was finally replaced by somebody from somewhere in Central Europe. It certainly was a vast improvement. That was at the tail end of my time in the Arms Control Bureau, and I retired as of June 2002, and that was that. I didn't know if I talked about this, but the Arms Control Bureau had just been integrated into the State Department when I arrived in 1999. The whole of ACDA was done away with at the request of Jesse Helms and brought into the State Department, and three new bureaus were created: the old Political Military Bureau which existed in State which combined certain functions that the Nonproliferation Bureau and then the Arms Control Bureau. I think it was a great mistake not to have combined Nonproliferation and Arms Control because they really didn't deserve separate bureaus at that particular point in time. All of that was done before I came back from Bulgaria. Then Congress added a fourth bureau which was the Bureau of Verification. I think all of these people had worked for ACDA for many years, and the Arms Control Bureau had many wonderful people who had been doing nuclear weapons things for years and were extremely knowledgeable. There was a huge resource about knowledge of nuclear issues. They were not happy at being integrated into the State Department, so this was a difficult time for the Bureau, and I tried to help that process. It was a bureau that remained very isolated from the main stream of the State Department. It was very hard to solve that. I understand that now the inspectors have recommended that the Arms Control and Nonproliferation and Verification all be blended into one bureau. It's ridiculous! One colleague of mine used to call these "little boutique bureaus". I had had the biggest.

Q: While you were in Arms Control, particularly with Bolton, and getting involved in some of these things, did you feel that you were carrying water on a whole set of issues that really could have been handled much better or that you were stuck doing things that you felt were counterproductive?

BOHLEN: On the Biological Weapons Convention protocol, that certainly was the case. There was so much bad blood between the Pentagon and the… I mean, there were all kinds of other small issues. There was so much bad blood between the State Department and the Pentagon that every telegram we had to get out was a fight. They were absolutely the worst. Even my colleagues at the NSC said these people were unbelievable.

Q: We're talking about the civilian leadership essentially.

BOHLEN: Right. Never the military.

Q: While you were in the Arms Control Bureau did you find you had to work to keep the morale up among the more junior officers, get them with the program and say, "We're here at the behest of the president and his team." And you had to support them and keep them from running off and being almost mutinous?

BOHLEN: No, they weren't mutinous, but there was low morale because they didn't have enough to do after the ABM Treaty went away after the strategic negotiations went

away. We set up two working groups with the Russians under the new treaty, but nobody in the Defense Department was interested in doing it. They really were badly underemployed and I think that's what the inspectors saw. In the end I was there two and a half years. I have to say it's the one job I had in the Foreign Service that I really did not like. I did not enjoy it. I didn't enjoy it under the Clinton Administration. I didn't like it under Bolton for totally different reasons. Under the Clinton Administration, I was really an extra cog in the wheel. There were too many layers. I didn't feel there was a real job there that I was doing. Not something that needed an Assistant Secretary.

Q: You were there during the events of 9/11 when terrorists hit New York City and Washington. Did you sense a change of… all of a sudden a focus on Iraq, which seemed in retrospect and even at the time seemed to be not part of the terrorist problem. Did that have any effect, or were you observing anything of that nature?

BOHLEN: No. Where I sat, I did not see anything of that nature. What we now know, what the president said to Dick Clark, and what he said at cabinet meetings, none of that filtered… That was over at the White House. None of that filtered down to my level.

Q: I was just wondering. What about Iran. Did that play any part in what was happening there?

BOHLEN: No. I had nothing to do with what were the real issues of the day. There was not a real job there. Maybe I might have not described this when we were talking about getting out of the ABM Treaty. There was a trip at the beginning of the Bush Administration. Bolton wasn't confirmed yet. The president sent… He hadn't yet decided to get out of the ABM Treaty, but he sent Wolfowitz and Steve Hadley on a mission to Europe, and Marc Grossman. I went because Bolton wasn't confirmed yet to explain to the Allies why we loved missile defense. That was another part of this.

Q: How did that go?

BOHLEN: They were both very well spoken people, and the Allies were in a listening mode. They were still skeptical, but they listened. This would have been in the spring of 2001.

Q: What was your impression of Missile Defense and the development of it?

BOHLEN: I think certainly the way it's configured, it's certainly a waste of the taxpayers' money. Theater Missile Defense is something that works. The Patriot III is a fairly well functioning system unlike the Patriot I, which, contrary to what we were told at the time, did not stop Iraqi missiles from hitting Israel. The long range stuff is very, very far from being adequate…from being effective, I should say. The Bush Administration decided that they should have a missile capability by the year X—I guess by 2005—so they put three interceptors up at Fort Greeley at Alaska and declared them operational even though they've never been tested. This is how Rumsfeld runs the Pentagon. If you need a capability, you accelerate the starting date of when you're going

to have the capability. You just don't test. It doesn't matter. You have the capability, but it might not work because you haven't tested it, but at least you don't have a series of failed tests. The amount of money spent on this has been absolutely staggering, not only in this Administration but going back to Reagan. The technology is not there.

Q: Avis, I guess this is a good place to stop. What have you been doing since that time?

BOHLEN: Since that time I spent a year at the Woodrow Wilson Center, then I've been on a lot of boards. I was on a commission that did a report on the Western Balkans that was sponsored by the Bosch Foundation in Germany, The German Marshall Fund, and the Stewart Mott Foundation here. That kept me very busy last year. I'm on some other boards, and them last spring I started teaching at Georgetown. I teach a course on Weapons of Mass Destruction and Security.

Q: What are your students? Who are they?

BOHLEN: They are graduate students in the School of Foreign Service in Security Studies program.

Q: Do they tend to be a mixed bag as far as other countries, too?

BOHLEN: I haven't had any foreign students. I've only done this one year.

Q: Careerism where are they pointed? Do you have any idea?

BOHLEN: Some to government. Some already are in government. There are a lot of people that work, sort of think tanks.

Q: I want to thank you very much. It's been fun!

End of interview