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

STEPHEN C. ENGELKEN

Interviewed by: Mark Tauber
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INTERVIEW

Family Background

Q: Today is March 4, 2020; we're beginning our interview with Stephen Engelken. Steve, where and when were you born?

ENGELKEN: I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on August 6, 1952.

Q: Did you stay there or were you just born there and then your family moved, or is that

where you grew up?

ENGELKEN: I stayed there until I was age eighteen. I went to local Cincinnati public schools, and then my family moved out to a suburban town called Madeira, and I went to junior high and high school there.

Q: For one moment when I saw Madeira High School I thought of the girls private school and thought that can't be right.

ENGELKEN: No. It's just a coincidence.

Q: What was it like in that area when you were growing up? From '52 to when you graduated high school, a lot of changes were going on in the U.S. What did you see?

ENGELKEN: I lived in something like Our Town. It was classic middle America. My family on both sides had basically been there since the city was founded.

Q: That would have been?

ENGELKEN: 1788.

Q: Wow. I didn't realize it was that early.

ENGELKEN: It was the second settlement in the Northwest Territory. My mother's side of the family was intensely proud that our ever-so-many great uncle convinced Congress to open this area for settlement and led the first party of settlers. My mother and father's families had been there since Cincinnati's founding and to them this was really "our town".

At the time of my birth, my parents lived in a neighborhood called Madisonville, which is right on the edge of the city and was an independent little town until it was annexed by Cincinnati in 1907. I realized much later that my parents' generation had mores and views that were small-town Ohio. They were not politicized in the usual Left/Right sense of the term. They were true independents. My father in particular was conservative about some things and actually a free thinker about others. He cherished the memory of his father who in the 1920s had been an active member of the street car workers union.

At the same time, the family had a deep craving for respectability. There's an ethnic element here. Cincinnati was originally settled by families of English heritage, but in the mid-nineteenth century there was a large influx of Germans. Hence my name, Engelken, it's a German name; they came in 1856 from Hanover. We've looked up the landing certificate of the first Engelken to come in 1856; he describes his occupation as "dyer", someone who dyes cloth. He was apparently displaced about the time Germany moved to dying cloth with chemical dyes in an industrialized fashion.

Right around 1900 the Germans began to intermarry with the original English

community. So, I have four grandparents like everyone; on each side one grandparent is English and the other is German. My mother's mother (whose maiden name was Freuchtemeyer) spoke good German; she was born in the U.S. (her parents came in 1876). I really regret I didn't learn more German from her. All I can recall are the names of the cookies and desserts she made; I still long for "lebkuchen"and "pfeffernusse."

Once they married spouses of English heritage, both sides of my family basically stopped using German. My father who wanted out of intellectual curiosity to study German found it very hard in the 1930s even to find someone to teach him the language. He finally found a German teacher who was a refugee from the Nazis and interested him in Germany's political struggles of the early 1930s. Father got a shortwave radio and would listen to "*Deutsche Welle*" (German Wave). What was on *Deutsche Welle* in 1935? (Laughter) He had some very vivid memories. I wish he had done an oral history of listening to *Deutsche Welle* in '35 and '36 with Hitler speaking. He remembered listening to Nazi party rallies with people rhythmically chanting "Sieg heil" (hail to victory) over and over. He was lying on his bed in Cincinnati, Ohio on a hot summer night before air conditioning, trying not to move, just listening to this. He said it was terrifying. To him, the radio was a hot medium that could stimulate your imagination; you could just imagine the scene, people shouting rhythmically and then Hitler getting up and giving these awful speeches in highly accented German.

All right, so what I recall in the '50s growing up, the Cold War was tense and ever present. We did listen to the news a lot. My father was interested. To bring him from the '30s, he'd been drafted in 1942, his story in World War Two follows every movie you ever saw. He spent most of the war walking around Texas in training, was sent to Europe in the autumn of '44 and put on what was supposed to be a quiet section of the front in the Ardennes. He had a very vivid story which he told over and over about being on the roof of a building in a little village in Germany just yards from the Belgian border at five in the morning December 16, 1944, and all of a sudden, the skyline goes red as the Germans open up with an artillery barrage on to his position. This was the opening of the Battle of the Bulge. He was intensely proud throughout his life that his battalion stood their ground and repelled the attack on their sector.

The entire family retained an interest in foreign affairs after World War II. My mother's mother would talk often about German Chancellors Adenauer and Erhard. I remember the erection of the Berlin Wall. My grandmother was deeply upset about this. Of course, the news coverage of this was terrifying. There were many scenes of people trying to jump over the Wall and being shot. Awful stuff.

There was much discussion of a possible Third World War. I clearly remember the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962; I came home from school. Mother turned on the television and we watched live Kennedy's speech to the public in which he explained that Russia had installed missiles in Cuba, and that the U.S. would quarantine Cuba. The news media helpfully ran a map of the eastern United States with the radius drawn on it of the range of the missiles in Cuba; Cincinnati was just in range. Everybody assumed we were an important city and would be targeted. We all had an exaggerated view of the importance

of our town. I remember that very clearly.

My specific interest in embassies and the like began with my mother recounting to me her experiences as a locally engaged staffer at the British consulate in Cincinnati during World War II.

Q: They had a consulate in Cincinnati?

ENGELKEN: They did. Its purpose was what we would call today PD (public diplomacy). They had a consulate in Cincinnati, St. Louis, they had them all over. My mother was a secretary, making a little extra money while finishing university. She had a friend from university who worked with her at the consulate. This woman later joined the American Foreign Service as a secretary. I remember Mary coming home from Istanbul in 1960 where she had been a secretary at our consulate and describing the coup in Turkey. Then she went to Libya and finally to Paris which like any sane person she enjoyed immensely and stayed as long as she could, and then retired. As a result, I was aware of the Foreign Service and exposed to Foreign Service life much earlier than I think many people would have been.

Father worked as a bookkeeper for a small firm. He didn't make any fortune to put it mildly. Both he and my mother were university educated and interested in things. Mother spent my childhood wishing she could visit Athens and Rome, but we never had the money. At the same time, I had an aunt who loved to travel. She went to Europe in 1962, the first member of the family to vacation there. At that time, it seemed everybody got one trip to Europe and then died. Typically, my elders were not in very good health and many things were too strenuous for them. I can remember one of my grandmothers telling me that the tour had taken her to the Sainte Chapelle in Paris but—when she realized she would have to go up a narrow Gothic winding staircase to see the famous stained glass windows—she just stayed on the bus. I decided early on that I would not wait until I'm seventy and can't walk the steps to go see these things. That was one motivating factor of my interest in the Foreign Service.

Two, I was following all these things. I remember the Tonkin Gulf crisis; I remember Lyndon Johnson speaking to the nation on the Tonkin Gulf incident and then the rapid build-up in Vietnam. That's just before me in age. Then in about 1966 or '67 I took a state-wide test on Ohio history sponsored by the American Legion. The top two male and female scorers in each grade from sophomore, junior, and senior in high school were given a trip to Washington. I was the top male sophomore scorer and was taken for my first visit to the capital. We were taken to the Pentagon, the White House, and the Capitol. I met my congressman who at the time was Bob Taft. The idea was to explain to us how the government works.

Among the places we were taken was the State Department. Somebody from the public affairs bureau, a DAS (deputy assistant secretary), came down and talked to us. Of all the people I met on the trip, he was the one that impressed me the most. He was the smartest. He didn't come up with guff. Officers in the Pentagon had had a tough time giving

believable answers to our questions about U.S. operations in Vietnam and Laos. The State official did a far better job of answering our difficult questions. At this particular moment, the *Pueblo* was being held in North Korea. We asked point blank why the U.S. was not applying military pressure on the North to force the return of the ship and crew. He flatly said, "You want to get the crew home in coffins? We can probably go and get the ship, but I can't guarantee we can get the men." I thought he was much more straightforward. I would date my serious interest in joining the Foreign Service to that moment. When I returned from this trip, I began seriously figuring out how I could join. I chose to go to George Washington University, because I read somewhere that George Washington University had more graduates in the Foreign Service than anybody else.

Q: Did Cincinnati or your environs change much when you were growing up? Did it become more diverse or were you already beginning to see changes in the economic drivers in the local area?

ENGELKEN: No. At that point the city's economy was solid. I haven't been back in some years; I'd like to go back and find out how they did. Its pillars I think still hold, it was Procter & Gamble, and you still need toothpaste. There is still a jet engine factory there that is now a joint venture with a French company, SNECMA. They make many of the engines used on AIRBUS aircraft.

After I left the city became a lot more international, but in my time, no. There's now a large Toyota plant in Northern Kentucky.

University Experience

Q: So, you decide you're going to GW (George Washington University)?

ENGELKEN: Yes, they gave me a scholarship. I began my studies there in 1970.

Q: Of course, an interesting year for American politics and for kids in college.

ENGELKEN: Yes. My first year was very lively. I was not an activist, but there was a lot of protest activity around the city. GW is only four blocks from the White House. Abby Hoffman, the YIPPY (Youth International Party) leader once said "GW is the most strategically located university in America." In the spring of '71, the Vietnam War was still going on. Nixon was president. When I showed up on campus. and the atmosphere was still very much high '60s in several senses of that word. My first roommate was trying to sell peyote from the room. (Laughter) I asked to move and ended up with a roommate who had just come back from Vietnam. He had been in an infantry company during the Tet Offensive. He had won a bronze star. "I killed four VC" (Viet Cong) "that's what I got the star for." We talked about his experience in Vietnam. I'm glad I heard it. It was direct oral history unfiltered by anybody.

In the spring of 1971, there were two big demonstrations protesting the Vietnam War. On April 24 there was the moratorium march; it was going to be peaceful. I don't know how

many tens of thousands of people came. All of them were camped all over campus. People sleeping in the lobby of the dorm, students opened their rooms. I recall the Mall being full of people, mostly young, all the way from the Lincoln Memorial to the Capitol. It was that full. It was a large march, but peaceful.

There was then a group of more radical people (Students for a Democratic Society, Yippies, etc.) who urged everybody to stay for May and on May 3, they tried to shut down the city. They were more willing to do civil disobedience veering toward violence. Their plan was to get thousands of students to sit on the bridges – 14th Street, Roosevelt Bridge, Key Bridge, those bridges, and close traffic to strangle the city. Nixon and Attorney-General Mitchell were determined not to let that happen, to teach these people a lesson. There was a lot of tension in the preceding week. More than ten thousand camped in West Potomac Park and all over the universities. Somebody that week came to me a few days before this was going to happen and asked, "Had I noticed in the basement of the Treasury building there appeared to be a large contingent of MPs?" (military police) The Administration had carefully brought in MPs and National Guardsmen. They mobilized the DC (District of Columbia) guard, and the entire DC police force to be ready to prevent any closure of the bridges. I remember walking down to the camp in West Potomac Park and almost getting a contact high. There was a cloud of marijuana smoke; it just reeked. They were having a classic '60s sort of thing, playing various unknown bands accompanied by public service announcements – "Can Billy and Joey come to the medical tent because Cindy is having a bad trip?" There was a steady stream of ambulances going to GW Hospital for treatment for complications from the drugs they took.

The Administration did a tactically clever thing. Knowing these were students and all high as kites, at five A.M. on May 3 as the demonstration was supposed to begin, they announced that West Potomac Park would be closed, and everybody had to leave. The encampment was surrounded by the CDUs as they were called the civil disturbance units of the DC police, wearing riot helmets and carrying nightsticks. They pushed demonstrators too sleepy and stoned to resist out of the park and dispersed them. No one was hurt. When I came down to go to class that morning, my French book under my arm, the streets were full of bleary-eyed would-be demonstrators who had been forced out of the park. There were helicopters circling ominously. The DC police announced that GW campus was closed to pedestrian traffic. I never heard the announcement, but, when I came out of my dorm at 2119 H St. NW and found H Street blocked by a phalanx of police with shields and truncheons, I decided that I didn't need to go to class that badly that morning. Which was a good thing, because a few minutes later the police launched tear gas grenades and swept the street detaining everyone and taking them to RFK Stadium where they were held for 24 hours. The demonstration just dissolved. There were a few injuries but nothing too serious; In the end, this was not something like Kent State.

After that, '71, I remember the steam going out of the anti-war movement. Seventy-two was kind of a turning point year. And then of course the economy started to weaken.

Q: With '73 you have the first oil shock from the Yom Kippur War and so on. Also, other things in the economy.

ENGELKEN: Not well remembered but the Vietnam War sparked a big inflation which was quite notable by 1972. Nixon abandoned the gold standard in '72, he also began Vietnamizing the war, and ceased conscription in 1973, With that the steam just went out of the protest movement. By the time I graduated in '74, everybody was focused on getting a job. When I entered university, we had naively assumed it would be easy to find employment upon graduation. In the 60s jobs had been plentiful, but by 1974 the 1960s were long over. Finding work was a challenge as it has been ever since. The 1960s were an anomaly in many ways.

With the need to find a real job now weighing on me, in December of my senior year at GW, I took the written portion of the Foreign Service entrance exam at Roosevelt High School in Northwest DC. Amazingly, I passed.

Foreign Service Examination Process

Q: The first time you took it you were not old enough yet to enter.

ENGELKEN: I was twenty-one. Just barely old enough. I took it and then a month or two later I received an appointment to take an oral exam. At that point it was not the day-long assessment, it was just an hour and a half interview with three FSOs (Foreign Service officers) who were in BEX (Board of Examiners). I remember getting my appointment in April 1974. I left my French literature class on G Street, walked to the D Street entrance of the Department, got on the shuttle bus and got off at Pomponio Plaza in Rosslyn and managed to get in, up the elevator, and there they were. I think in one way it was good I did this the way I did it because I was really enthusiastic. I'd been in a university environment and you're taking tests all the time, so this was just another test.

The examiners asked a series of questions based on their own experience. I recall being asked the following, "Let's say you're the ambassador's staff aide somewhere, and the ambassador tells you he's concerned there may be a morale problem at the embassy and asks you to look into that. You spend the next week or two talking to people around the embassy and discover there is a morale problem. The problem is the ambassador. He never says hello, he's gruff and nasty. Now, what do you say to the ambassador?"

I remember the question, because it was a good question. We know this happens all the time. It gauged your frankness and ability to say truth to power. What I recall saying wasn't terribly courageous, but I said you must tell him there is a problem -- people feel we're not being collegial and courteous and so forth. I passed. They took me to the next room, finger-printed me with black ink the old way. I was then told I was on the register, and that I might be offered a job at some point in the next 18 months if a position became available.

When I graduated in May, I had no idea whether a career in the Foreign Service was

going to happen. I thus spent the summer going around Washington looking for a job. It was a humbling experience. At that time, you could get a civil service rating based on an undergraduate degree. You didn't have to take a test. I, therefore, got a rating that qualified me to serve as a GS-5 (general schedule) and went looking for an agency that would hire me. After many rejections, I finally found a position at the Tariff Commission. Before I reported for work there, I received a sudden call from State offering me a position in a Foreign Service entry class beginning on August 1.
As this had been my greatest dream for years, I accepted immediately.

Foreign Service Entry-Level Training

Q: This is still 1974?

ENGELKEN: Yes. Four days before my twenty-second birthday. I went to FSI (Foreign Service Institute)'s old location in Rosslyn, and I joined a class. They renumbered them after the Foreign Service Act of '81, but I was the 114th of some number series. I went through A-100 (orientation); there's nothing terribly unusual about that.

Q: I want to ask about your A-100, about how many people were in it?

ENGELKEN: We had a relatively large group, about twenty-five. There are bigger ones.

Q: Was it at all diverse?

ENGELKEN: Some. More later. There were maybe four or five females. We had at least one guy who was African American; he did very well in the Foreign Service, making senior ranks. A lot of people, however, looked like me. It was not an Ivy League group, I can tell you that. There were a lot of people from land grant colleges all around the Midwest. There were plenty like me who had washed dishes in high school.

Q: Any Vietnam vets?

ENGELKEN: I don't recall there were. It's interesting you should mention that because Human Resources came to the class (this is August '74) and asked everybody, "Would you be willing to accept an assignment in Vietnam?" I remember they came to me and told me I could get what's now the equivalent of an 02 job in Bien Hoa, where we had a consulate near the American air base. They came to various people; I think to everybody in the class. They said, "We're not going to make you do this, but we have a lot of need and if you're willing, we'd love to have you." Only one fellow in the class said yes, and he was sent immediately to the consulate in Nha Trang without even completing A-100. He was evacuated from the roof of the consulate in April 1975 and then evacuated again from the roof of Embassy Saigon a few weeks later. I met him some years later and asked him about his experience. He said, "Well, I got out with a t-shirt, I lost every other personal possession I took."

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia (1975-77)

After declining to go to Vietnam, Human Resources told me "You're going to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, as vice consul." Autumn of '74. I was interested in the Middle East; I thought it was cool. I had no idea, no inkling of what I was getting myself into. I was given a consular training course that was not as well organized as FSI's ConGen is now, and I realized later how much I didn't know when I got to post. I recall leaving on the second of February 1975, since the post was insisting, I had to get there immediately. It was not technically my first time out of the United States but almost. I'd been to Montreal, and at one point in high school I went to Mexico for a few days. I changed planes in Paris, got to walk around Paris on a gorgeous day. Then got on the plane the next morning and flew to Dhahran.

The plane was full of oil workers. They were buying large numbers of little whiskeys and all trying to get as plowed as possible. The flight stopped in Kuwait then Dhahran and Doha. I hadn't fully focused on what it meant to be in a dry "country". The oil workers were all commiserating with me, saying this is terrible, how long will you be there? Two years, I replied. They said they go six weeks and then get out. I remember some guy bought me a flask of whiskey and said, "You better drink this before you get off the plane." I drank some.

I get off the plane, and one of the things we should note here is the way the Gulf has changed. It was truly an underdeveloped place in 1975. They had just won the lottery by getting the big oil price hike after '73. The government had a huge budget surplus, many tens of billions of dollars of foreign exchange, and there were already complaints that they didn't need this money, because they couldn't spend it. The Saudis decided they were going to show their critics they were wrong, and that the Kingdom could spend it. In the spring of '75 they launched a massive five-year development plan that would have had them spending it all.

The country had been very poor. I remember talking with older men who would recall to me the first time they encountered air conditioning in 1960, the first time they traveled anywhere, the first paved road, the first door with a knob, etc. These things were in the living memory of middle-aged adults. People I met had grown up in grass huts, some in tents. I have to say if some researcher ever listens to my words, please do some psychological study on the development of the Gulf over the last seventy years. The Saudis I met who were over 50 years old in the '70s had grown up in a world where they couldn't just write checks to solve problems. They were very practical people, not ideological or arrogant. They did not have an entitled sense of wealth. They were grateful for what they had because they could remember what it was like when they didn't have it. I enjoyed dealing with them.

When I reported for duty in February of 1975, Consulate General Dhahran had three Foreign Service Officers: the Consul General, the Management officer, and me the sole vice-consul. There is now a department policy never to have a first-tour consular officer alone, and there's good reason for that. There were many things I did not know. I spent much time furiously studying the FAM (Foreign Affairs Manual) to read the rules and

regulations I was supposed to be enforcing. At that time (pre-internet), this basic rulebook was kept in a large binder and updated periodically by inserts sent to us via the diplomatic pouch. Immediately after arrival, I ran into trouble when I opened a drawer in one of our bar-lock cabinets and discovered a pile of these inserts in a stack. My predecessors had not been keeping our professional "Bible" up to date!

While we inserted all these guidances, I had to rely heavily on my chief FSN who was a Saudi citizen. But within two weeks of arriving somebody accused him of taking bribes to sway visa interviews. I don't think he did—or I know he did not influence my decision-making on visas. He was very careful to say that's up to you. But I then had to launch a mad effort to learn a smattering of Arabic enough to conduct a visa interview so it was clear that I was involved in the interview and that bribing my FSN wouldn't throw it. And then the allegations dropped away. I don't know to this day – in later life I would have called the RSO (regional security officer), but there was no RSO at post. It was just a management officer, consul general, and me, and FSNs.

The consul general, bless him, said he did not want to become involved in operating the consular section, that was my business. He sat in the CAA (controlled access area), a very quiet room, and wrote occasional reporting cables, but not too many. He did some entertaining and outreach. I was so young I didn't know what he was supposed to be doing, and he didn't keep me posted on what he did. I was too busy in any case and didn't have time to ask. An observation: detached consulates are not good places for first-tour officers because they don't do many things that embassies do and thus are not good places to learn the trade., There was so much I was never exposed to. I never wrote a reporting cable though I was a political cone officer on my first assignment. I wrote a few memcons (memorandum of conversation) and that was it. Nothing. It was very poor preparation for onward work. When I got to my second job, I was poorly prepared and had to work like a devil to get caught up to where I was supposed to be.

You wanted me to discuss my work in Dhahran. Services to American citizens took up most of my time. The Saudis, as I mentioned, had just launched a massive infrastructure construction program intended to transform the country. American companies won many of the resulting contracts and brought in thousands of American workers to complete the work. The newly arrived needed far more consular support than their predecessors who mostly had been employees and contractors of ARAMCO (Arabian-American Oil Company) which had been present in Dhahran since the discovery of oil in 1938. Its government relations office knew Saudi officials and understood Saudi customs. ARAMCO took excellent if paternal care of its employees who rarely needed the consulate's help. The same could not be said for the newly arrived companies who were trying to operate in what was for them an utterly alien environment. To say that they needed a lot of help is an understatement.

We did not have many resources to meet the need. For most of my time there I was the only consular officer. Slowly we added positions for locally engaged staff, and finally, in January 1977, we got a second American consular position.

Our limited ability to communicate with the rest of the world complicated things. For much of my time, it was difficult to get a telephone call through to the Embassy in Jeddah and a call to Washington was impossible. We had no computers of any kind. I recently looked at a personal photo of my old consular section. There were no electronic devices visible. My first writing instrument in the Foreign Service was a manual Underwood typewriter, which looked like it might have been made in 1930. We typed telegrams on green sheets that had carbon backing with pink sheets beneath and took them back to the vault where the communications and records officer would poke them by hand. (There were no optical scanners.) He would type a long tape based on your text and feed it into a machine that would broadcast it via short-wave radio waves off the ionosphere and back down to a relay site in Asmara, and then back to Washington from there. You came in in the morning and they'd say, "We didn't get much traffic today, there seems to have been a solar storm last night." You'd get cables that were half complete and then just ending in ampersands.

Issues and questions that could be resolved in hours today by email sometimes took weeks. I had to type requests for guidance and advisory opinions on forms called Operations Memoranda and send them back via unclassified pouch. It could easily take a month to receive an answer via the same means.

Of all the recurring problems I had to face, none was greater than exit visas. The Saudis at the time did not issue tourist visas. Anyone seeking to enter the country had either to be a Muslim pilgrim visiting Mecca or a worker with a work visa. To obtain a work visa you had to have a Saudi sponsor in country who would guarantee to employ you and cover any debts you might leave behind. You needed an exit visa to leave the country. You couldn't just go apply for an exit visa, it had to be your sponsor. The sponsors held everyone's passport, and I quickly realized this could become indentured servitude. Americans would get – everybody gets into an argument with their boss, that just happens all the time. But there, this system meant that these petty workplace disputes would become consular cases.

I was in country for two and a half years, almost every day somebody came to me and said "My boss is preventing me from leaving. I want to invoke the Shanghai Act, this is illegal."

"But you're in Saudi Arabia, I don't care if it's illegal by American law, Saudi law applies."

It got even weirder. If you died in country, your remains needed an exit visa.

Q: Oh, for heaven's sake.

ENGELKEN: One year I had twenty-six death cases. All kinds of crazy things. Auto accidents – people drove like bats out of hell. Five or six horrible accidents. A helicopter fell out of the sky with six people on it. On and on. Air crashes. One thing after another. Heart attacks. Someone once said everything that happens to Americans at home happens

to them abroad, but it's always harder to deal with. Aramco had dealt with all this stuff for their employees. They brought you in, if you wanted to leave, they got you an exit visa. I never had a complaint that they stopped anyone from departing. They had a health clinic. They housed you. It was cradle to grave company socialism as somebody put it to me. They had camps where people lived, little American camps that looked like a neighborhood in Tulsa. Americans adapted to that okay. The Americans who worked for Aramco actually had lived there long term and many spoke Arabic and had traveled around the Middle East and were sensitive to local customs and were good at not running afoul of them. But now we had people being brought in, housed in camps or block houses mixed in with Saudis or others. They did run afoul of the "mutawa", the Saudi religious police, for various minor things. That was always an issue.

But the biggest issue was this business about exit. It would turn into a major thing. I adopted the practice of calling the employer and saying, "John Doe is sitting in my office saying you're being a bad guy and not letting him leave. What's the truth?"

It was, for me, a good lesson. There was always another side of the story that the guy wasn't telling me. I've never forgotten one case where the boss (another American) said, "Did he tell you what he did?"

I looked at the guy standing next to me and said, "What did you do?"

Long pause. The guy on the phone says, "Did he tell you he slugged my wife and broke her jaw?"

"Did you break his wife's jaw?"

"Well, I didn't hit her that hard!"

"I'm not here to judge, but it does sound to me like you're not being as horribly treated as you were alleging."

I really learned from that, a lesson I took throughout my Foreign Service career, that people always give you a self-serving side of the story; there's always another side. Just like you can talk to Palestinians and Israelis – both are full of grievance, but they rarely acknowledge what they did to provoke the other side. You need to dig for the other side.

I also learned to expect the unexpected. Death cases were always difficult. The Saudis did not believe in embalming; you were supposed to be buried within twenty-four hours.

There was only one mortician in the country, at Aramco. Harry was his name. Harry would come in with a cigar in his mouth – he didn't smoke in my office, but he had a burnt one usually in his mouth or hand. He did not have a hearse; he just had a large station wagon. You would look out in the parking lot and there would be a wooden box in the back. Harry would come in because I was also the only person who could notarize things in English. Now technically if it was not an American citizen, I did not have to

notarize anything, but this was the only mortician I could work with and I didn't really want to annoy the mortician and Aramco because I might need them – and there were times I needed his help in getting remains out. So, I did often notarize things. I remember the first time he came in with his cigar, somebody looked up and said, "Harry, who do you got?"

"Oh it's a German, he electrocuted himself."

"Are those hard to do?"

"Oh man, they're a mess!"

Don't talk shop with a mortician. Anyway, he had one crazy thing after another. All the bodies in the whole country came to me. The worst case I ever had there was an American who converted to Islam, went on the pilgrimage to Mecca and on to Medina, and suffered kidney failure and died in Medina. Now, he did not have a work sponsor. He was just a private American. But he was retired military, so the military flew a plane over to Medina and tried to pick him up and take him to hospital in Germany. They just didn't get to him in time. There was a U.S. military training mission in Dhahran too, and they had a doctor.. Obtaining the exit visa for this man's remains took me six weeks.

Other things happened. As I said, everything happens to people abroad that happens at home. I remember we had an American citizen have a psychotic episode. This is not uncommon overseas. Every person who has ever done consular work has encountered this issue. In this case, it was complicated because Saudi Arabia at that point took the position that Freudian psychology was illegal. There were no psychiatrists in the country, nor were there mental health facilities of any sort. The person with mental health issues was employed by a small Saudi contractor to build houses, and he began acting bizarrely on his work site. The police took him to Dammam Central Hospital, but his co-workers visited him and came immediately to my office to report that "our friend is chained to the wall."

What are we going to do with him? Obviously, he's not going to improve chained to the wall and being treated by people with whom he does not have a common language. My senior locally engaged employee alerted me to the fact that ARAMCO had a psychiatrist, and a small mental health clinic. With some back-and-forth I was able to get permission from Dammam hospital to transfer the patient to the Aramco clinic which was able to stabilize him enough that we could think about putting him on an airplane home. I was then able to call the wife in New Mexico and say, "I'm sorry; your husband has had a psychotic episode. We've got him with a psychiatrist, but to get him home you're going to have to pay an air ticket from Dhahran to Albuquerque, not just for your husband but for the psychiatric nurse to keep him calm with Thorazine through the whole trip." Which they did, she met him at the airport. This must have been a catastrophic blow for this family. They were counting on him to make money and now he's unemployed and in need of expensive psychiatric hospitalization.

One of the tough things in consular work is you often have to break really bad news to people. And it is human to turn on the messenger. In this particular case, the family was polite, but I had many cases in which I got an earful.

In addition to American citizen services, we also had visa issues. At the time we considered Saudis to be very good nonimmigrant risks because a Saudi could get rich in Saudi Arabia and be a big fish in a small pond, why would he want to stay in the U.S.? At that time, Saudi citizens were all coming back without problems. I think over the long run that assumption led to some laxity in the late '90s when the Bin Laden folks applied, because Bin Laden and his guys would have been wealthy, why would they not come back? But in the mid-'70s we did not encounter terrorism issues.

What I did have was a lot of third-country nationals, Pakistanis, and Lebanese, and those you had to be very careful with. They'd already gone to one country for employment, why would they not go to another?

I also had immigrant visas, we had many Yemenis applying for IVs in Dhahran which seemed odd to me, even though there was a large Yemeni community in the Eastern Province doing day labor, digging ditches and the like. Having already left their home in Yemen for low wage jobs in Saudi Arabia, many of these men were ready to try their luck in the U.S. where wages were higher and opportunities greater. Given their small wages and lack of ties to Saudi Arabia, they were poor bets for non-immigrant visas, but they found a way to obtain immigrant visas, Yemen had no birth certificates. A birth certificate was just an affidavit from people in your village to swear you were the son of so and so. U.S. law allows U.S. citizens to petition for their non-citizen children and siblings.

The door was thus open for what was called "slot fraud" at the time. An individual would immigrate to the United States and on his documents, he would list his siblings and children. Often, Yemenis immigrating to the U.S. would invent the names of several siblings and children who didn't exist. Then they would go to Yemen and sell the right to be these other brothers or children. It got to the extreme that I received one petition approved by INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) in which the petitioner petitioned for his children by his two wives, and each wife had allegedly had ten boys and no girls. Now, the INS approved this and then wrote, "We calculated that the mathematical odds of this are one in five million." Why did they approve it?! This I dealt with by asking the applicants to name their brothers, from youngest to oldest. Is Khalid older than Naji, or is Naji older than Khalid? You go back and forth through this, and they become all twisted up because of course they memorized it, and not all that well. You didn't need to do a very detailed interview..

In an extreme case, a man came in first to my predecessor and then to me and asked for a non-immigrant visa for business in the United States.

"What's your business?"

Finally, he admitted, "I need to kill somebody."

“I don’t think we’re going to give you a visa for that. Who is it you want to kill and why?”

Under questioning he admitted that he had bought a slot from an American-Yemeni and had then gone to the embassy in Sanaa and been told, “if you were really Naji so-and-so, you have a visa.” The American citizen had sold the slot twice. The victim of this fraud confessed that he paid fifteen thousand dollars and threw his daughter into the bargain; she was married to the American citizen petitioner. The Yemeni visa applicant wanted to go to Brooklyn, kill the man who had defrauded him, collect his daughter, and get his money back. Obviously, we refused him the visa.

The applicant was nonetheless persistent. About a year later he returned and renewed his request for a visa. “I’m sorry, what part of ‘No’ did you not understand? You’re not going to the United States to do this.” I asked if he had any luck getting his money back. He said not really, but that he had recovered his daughter. The fraudster who had sold him the slot went back to visit his family in Yemen and the complainant had gotten his relatives in the village to surround the crook’s house at night at gunpoint and demand the money. Apparently, the fraudster said, “I don’t happen to have fifteen grand on me, but I’ll give you your daughter.” At least, the young woman was returned to her family.

At the time I hated the job, but I look back on it and I think it was very good for me, a naïve, idealistic person who had never been anywhere, to go and at the very gritty working level see how the world works. You were lied to sixteen times a day; I became much better at figuring out who was telling the truth and who wasn’t. Human nature is always to shade a story to your maximum benefit, not to tell inconvenient facts. I learned that you had to dig for them.

Q: Did you ever have any happier consular duties, like reports of marriage or birth?

ENGELKEN: We had reports of birth. I did have one marriage. The department agreed they would recognize a marriage by a qadi. A pilot who was training the Saudi air force brought his bride or found her, a Western woman, in Saudi Arabia and proposed and they agreed to be married. The ceremony was at Prince Bandar’s house. Bandar at that time was still an air force pilot, and could still fit in a flight suit. We went to Bandar’s house to have this wedding officiated by the qadi. I issued the report of marriage; it was legal.

Let’s conclude my Saudi experience, we can move on.

Q: Let’s pause here.

Q: Today is March 17, 2020; we’re resuming our interview with Stephen Engelken. Stephen, what year are we now in in your story?

ENGELKEN: In my story we are in August 1977.

Arabic Language Training (1977-79)

Q: Very good, please proceed.

ENGELKEN: Mark, today I hope we can cover three bits of my past. One is very briefly Arabic language training about which I don't think there is much to say. I did a short two-year tour after that in Amman, Jordan which I think we can get through relatively quickly. And then there's a brief stint in INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) most of which is classified, and I won't be able to say much. Finally, I have a tour in Lebanon> I have a lot to say about that that I don't think has ever been recorded anywhere that I've seen; it's key for me to get this on the record some way.

Arabic language training. I left Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in August 1977, went back to the United States, was assigned to two years of Arabic training, so 1977 to 1979. The first year was in Washington, the second year in Tunis, Tunisia. The Washington training was in that tower they used to rent in Rosslyn. You spent six hours a day cramped in a tiny room with four or six of your colleagues getting on each other's nerves. The teachers were all very nice. I liked all of them. Some people had problems with one or another, I thought they were all sweet, trying their best to make foreigners understand what is a truly alien language. What makes it alien is the structure of it. It takes a long time to internalize it. Once you put the structure in your head, then things become much easier. The first several months they talked to us in Arabic and would teach us random words, which are useful to know. But you didn't know how the words were formed and where they came from and why, so it was just a lot of random memorizations. It was hard to put the words in a sentence or change them.

The key—it took almost six months to pound into my head—that all words in Arabic have a three-consonant root, which is always a verb. You build words by adding suffixes, prefixes, and infixes into the trilateral three-consonant root. There are a set series of prefixes, suffixes, and infixes and you finally realized that they changed the meaning of the word in predictable ways. A prefix commonly used in Arabic is "ist", the word for to do is "'amal". If you add "ist" in front of that you have "istamal;" and "istamal" is to use something. If you think for a moment, to make seek to do – yeah, it's easy to understand and use. Here we are almost forty years later, and I remember this. Which is kind of miraculous.

The plurals in Arabic, most are irregular, they involve taking the trilateral roots and adding vowels and things in between the letters. Since we are going to be talking about Tunisia, I'll just say that one Tunisian is a "Tunsi" (makes sense), but it took me a long time to wrap my head around the plural which was "Twnasa", T-W-N was the root of the word. Anyway, we spent eight or nine months from August to June in that little room getting stir crazy, but we made a lot of progress. Then that summer we moved on to Tunisia. I had the month of July off, which was a lot of fun. I packed out, and after stops in France and Germany, I arrived in Tunisia. The Foreign Service Institute annex at the time was in a beautiful old building near the embassy on Avenue Bourguiba which had once been the Italian cultural section. It had six or seven rooms, quite spacious, high

ceilings, with a tangerine tree in the courtyard. I have fond memories of the place.

What's worth recalling is that the staff was a mix of Lebanese, Palestinians, and Tunisians. The Lebanese and Palestinians had been evacuated from Beirut in 1976 to Tunis. The problem with moving the school became immediately apparent; the Tunisian dialect is extremely different almost to the point of being incomprehensible to people from the eastern part of the Arab world, Egypt and east. This is one of the other great obstacles to foreigners studying Arabic. The way it is written in newspapers and used in television and radio is pretty much standardized, but what people speak to each other is extraordinarily different to the point that you would probably today have four or five different languages if you hadn't kept the writing the same. But the writing is archaic. I don't know if you studied Greek, but Greek is often written in a very archaic form that is not what people actually speak, forcing a foreign student to learn Greek twice. Arabic you end up having to learn one way to read and then you have to learn a different dialect to speak.

FSI tried to get around that by teaching us the way Arabic is written in the newspapers and spoken on the radio, in the theory that this is at least understandable to Arabs from Morocco to Oman, and that you can once you know the basic structure of the language make an adjustment to each dialect. As an example, from Tripoli, Libya, west in the Arab world there is a tendency to move the stress in words from the first syllable to the last and basically drop the vowel between the first two consonants. For example, in the eastern Arabic world a mountain or hill is called a "jabal". In Tunisia, it was "j**bal**", the second syllable was sounded and the first almost swallowed and dropped. It took me quite a while to get my ear around that but at least if you understood the structure of the language you could then realize that they are consistently doing this, it is the same language it just sounds different.

The Lebanese teachers brought from Beirut had clearly undergone their own culture shock when they got to Tunisia because the dialect was so different. They greeted us on our first day, closed the door and kept the Tunisian teachers out and said, "Here's a list of a hundred and fifty words that are commonly used in Lebanon, and here's what Tunisians say for those things" (in many cases, utterly different).

People often ask me, did it work? Were you able to use enough Arabic to make any difference? And the answer is yes. By the second half of my year – I made a point of going around Tunisia and not speaking French which I do speak, and that is the Tunisian second language and the language they automatically address a foreigner in. I had a whole series of pleasing situations where I would speak Arabic and people would just stop dead, like "Did you say what I thought you said?" It was like the dog talked. "You're not supposed to know that." Most of the time the reception was ecstatic. I learned that even in a place like Tunisia where everybody speaks French; people express different thoughts depending on what language they're using. If you're speaking French, they're more likely to give you the French thought process which would be critical of some things. In Arabic they might tell you they were sympathetic to the Islamists, but they wouldn't tell you in French. One of our Tunisian teachers said "If I were trying to pick up

a girl, I wouldn't talk to her in Arabic, I'd talk to her in French. But if I was talking to my mother, I wouldn't talk to her in French." The rules of society were very complicated.

Amman. Jordan (1979-81)

At the time I left Tunis in the summer of '79, there was a competition between Embassy Damascus and Embassy Amman to get Arabic speakers. I was originally assigned to Damascus, but Ambassador Veliotes in Jordan put up a fuss, he didn't have any Arabic speakers on his staff, and, therefore, I was assigned to Amman. In August 1979, I arrived.

This was contemporaneous with the Camp David agreements which provided for Israeli withdrawal from Sinai in return for a peace treaty with Egypt. Much of our effort for the next two years was on trying to get Jordan to follow Egypt and join the Camp David Accords and the peace process. Now, that was obviously led by the ambassador who was talking to King Hussein; no one less than that could have influenced Jordan's decision. But as a junior political officer, I was supposed to talk to people and find out what opinions were. Amman is heavily Palestinian. To say that people were bitter was an understatement. I don't think it is fully appreciated even now in the U.S., just how bitter these people were and are. Not necessarily violent, they talked to me all the time; their second language is English, and I talked to them in English and Arabic. I did not have a conversation in two years in Amman in which there was no discussion of the "qadyah al -Filastinia," the Palestinian issue. It was on everyone's mind; everyone was convinced that they had been robbed—just as if they had been mugged at gunpoint—and that their houses had been stolen from them. Now, there are long historical arguments; Israelis would argue that that's not true and I don't in an oral history propose to get into debating that. But the fact is that they felt they had been robbed and driven out of their homes by force. They often had stories.

And here's where I wish – if I were to advise the Palestinian Authority on something I think they ought to do oral histories on this while they still can with people who can still remember 1948 and the period right before and after. Many had very vivid stories of being driven out or their homes shot up. To say that Camp David was a tough sell was an understatement. Many of these people had come from within what was then called the Green Line, within the borders of Israel pre-1967. Camp David, which conceivably could have led to some sort of Palestinian autonomous entity on the West Bank, in their view didn't offer them anything. The people who came from the West Bank thought the autonomy being offered was a sham. That basically Israel would keep the water and land and give them nothing, or very little. They didn't buy it. Given that strong sentiment, the King felt he couldn't buy it either. I think King Hussein didn't want to go down in history (which he probably will) as the man who lost Jerusalem. He was very personally intent on issues involving the Haram ash-Sharif, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which was then and remains to this moment under control of a charitable establishment (*waqf*) chartered in Jordan. The Jordanians still have some small role in what happens on the Temple Mount.

Jordan was a lovely country. The climate was beautiful. Amman is about three thousand

feet above sea level; it got very hot in summer but at night it would cool down to the point you would need a jacket. Many dinner parties were outside – and by the way we went to dinner parties. Again, this is something that's getting lost in the Middle East as we hunker down for security – I went to dinner parties all the time, three or four times a week. I gained weight, because people were generous. They may be yelling at you about Palestine, but they always treated you with a beautiful spread of food. The Palestinians are good cooks.

I also would go to talk to the East Bankers, too. I had some contacts I deliberately cultivated who were from the East Bank. They cared about the Palestinian issue, but they had some odd angles. They were extremely worried that Israel was going to say that Jordan was the Palestinian state, and that their East Bank home would be handed to the Palestinians. Israeli right-wingers say things like that. So, East Bankers were intensely suspicious of the Camp David process because they thought the result would be that Jordan would be turned into a Palestinian state, and they would lose control of their homeland.

This was only ten years after Black September 1970. All Jordanians with whom I spoke were adamant that they were not going to repeat Black September or fight another civil war. This had a major impact on Camp David dynamic. When you asked many Jordanians why they did not want to participate in the peace process, they would respond "We would have to call the army into the street and shoot people to do that, and we're not going to do it.".

Another reason the ambassador wanted an Arabic speaking political officer was he had to talk to the East Bank tribes who were still nomadic Bedouin. The army was heavily recruited from the Bedouin, and we wanted to make sure we were on their good side. They really didn't speak much English. I would accompany the Ambassador to *mansaf* with them. *Mansaf* is a meal served under a Bedouin tent. There would be a whole sheep on a plate of rice and a sauce made of yogurt and sheep fat poured over it. That was it. Vegetables were nowhere to be seen at *mansaf*. After which you'd be served tea or coffee. But we would all sit in this big tent with the tribesmen and their sheik. The ambassador would talk to him, and I would have to translate. This had me sweating bullets. My Arabic was okay, but I wouldn't have passed myself off as an interpreter. I'd say it requires a much higher level of language than I had but I did it as best I could.

These *mansafs* were extremely colorful events, right out of the movies. We had to go once, I recall, almost to the Syrian border. It was a sun blasted area with lava fields from several hundred thousand years ago. The region was covered with black basalt. We went to see the Ahl al Jibal tribe and had lunch with the sheikh. I translated for the ambassador as best I could. We ate the sheep (no cutlery of course) with our right hands. After we returned to Amman, my colleagues who were seated to my right and left came down with typhoid, even though both had been immunized. I did not, thank goodness. I talk about eating for my country – we'll talk about Italy later but it's not just wonderful meals I had in Italy, it was also risking typhoid and eating sheep organs with my hand.

I also recall visiting the Howeitat for a similar meal. This tribe straddles the Jordanian-Saudi border and has been heavily recruited into the army. If you have seen the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*, it is the tribe that Lawrence allies with to attack Aqaba.

Q: Just a quick question, these tribes you're talking about that live in sort of border areas, but regardless of political demarcations these are all very desert-like conditions, perhaps there are a few oases but how did they survive? How did they manage from day to day?

ENGELKEN: Traditionally they had grazed their sheep and goats and camels out in the desert, but they had what they called "dira", from the Arabic triliteral root for circle. It was a circular route that every tribe followed during the course of the year. Jordan got rain in the winter and spring and for a brief period the desert would go green, and they could go out there and graze their flocks. Then they had some place near a well or an oasis where they would pass the summer months. That's the tradition of the Middle East.

Now by 1979/80, many people were beginning to settle down. They were coming to town, looking for jobs in the modern economy. Many of them liked to be truck drivers or taxi drivers; somehow it appealed to the nomad in them. But they were doing more than that, you would find East Bankers doing bank teller jobs or something in town. But if you talked to them about their origins, people would still proudly identify as Bedouins, even if they were living in an apartment in town. There was a transition that people were making at that time, and I suspect it has continued to the point that there are probably relatively few people living as true nomads today. The government had a policy of settling Bedouin, and they would build small houses for them in really remote dusty places. They would drill a well and give them houses and open spaces around houses so they could still keep their sheep and camels, sort of a transition step from wandering to settling. Most of the Bedouins by 1980 were somewhere in that transition. There weren't too many still wandering around and living in tents, but you could see them out in the desert still pasturing their animals even if they went home to sleep in permanent houses.

Back to why the U.S. embassy should be talking to them. The Ahh al-Jibal tribe, their circular route took them far into Syria. The Howeitat went deep into Saudi Arabia, and they kept in touch with their Saudi relatives. This is a big issue in Iraq; there is a tribe that lives partly in northern Saudi Arabia and partly in Iraq, a big one. We had issues with that tribe during the insurgency. We kept finding "Saudis" fighting with the tribe. But what a lot of those "Saudis" were, were Saudis who had gone to help their relatives in Iraq not for ideological motives but simply out of tribal solidarity. I hope Embassy Riyadh was able to go talk to the tribesmen in northern Saudi Arabia and find out what was going on, why are you going up there? There's a lot of talking that must happen. Bedouin are not notorious for coming to the point quickly. This was a part of the world where it's just impolite to walk in and say the reason I've come is to do this, can we get this done? You had to sit and talk all afternoon. And you had to tolerate the fact that every time you went the sheikh would come and ask for your help in obtaining U.S.visas for members of the tribe. Yes, there are Bedouin Jordanians driving taxis in New York and were at that time. There were visa risks. "I know your cousin; your nephew is a really good boy. I know

that, but that's not the criterion for a visa. Is he coming home?" Everybody who's ever done visa work has encountered this, not unique to Jordan.

It was always like a mutual exchange of favors. Sometimes you wanted something from them, but they expected you to deliver the visa and it was hard to say no, although you have to. That task often fell to me; the ambassador would tell the sheikh I'll look into it, and later on they would call me to follow up and I would have to say I'm sorry, we can't do this.

Q: In other words, making you the bad cop.

ENGELKEN: Yes, I had to play the bad guy. It probably should be that way, looking at the thing as a whole. At the time I didn't feel quite so much that way, I resented being asked to do that. But that was life. Every tour to the end of my career there was always somebody with a bad visa case, and I was always telling people bad news. (Mark, I'm sure you had to do the same wherever you served). People need to understand this better than I think we do.

What else was interesting about my tour in Jordan? Trips out of Jordan. We still had a vehicle that had belonged to Consulate Jerusalem before 1967. Before 1967, the consulate in Jerusalem was divided; one section was in the Jordanian held portion of the city and the other in the Israeli held portion of the city, and they used to go back and forth through the Mandelbaum Gate. The car was therefore dual registered; we didn't recognize either Jordanian or Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem. The car, therefore, had Jordanian license plates and Israeli plates. At that point there was still a state of war between Jordan and Israel; no shooting but still glowering at each other along the Jordan River. There is a peace treaty now but that came much later. Once a week somebody at Embassy Amman would be a non-pro courier and drive the pouch to Jerusalem and pick up whatever classified mail there was, and return. It was a way to keep our people in Amman and in Jerusalem in touch with each other, which I think was more important than the mail we carried. When you talk only to people on one side of a question constantly, eventually you begin seeing things in their perspective and you miss the other one. I never had time to talk to many, but I would come away with a different sense of reality. To the extent we could, we tried to get people from Embassy Tel Aviv to come over to Amman. At that time, it wasn't so common, but both sides needed to listen to the other, otherwise you lose all objectivity.

Q: Here this is an important point because you are talking about the late '70s and you had to go there periodically, to Tel Aviv in person because there was no other significant way of communicating.

ENGELKEN: Obviously we could send cables, but email didn't exist. In this pouch there were sometimes letters, typed from an IBM Selectric typewriter, because they had fewer copies floating around. We might want to comment on the Israeli position on something, but we didn't necessarily want our comments all over the Department.

There was no direct air connection between the two places as there is today, no bus service, no nothing. You would drive to the Allenby Bridge which at that time was just a bailey bridge thrown up after the original bridge was bombed in the '67 war. There was a series of checkpoints to go through. You had to stop some place and get permission to drive up to the bridge, and then you drove right to the edge of the bridge and pulled up in front of the last Jordanian machine gun nest (I'm not kidding, there was a bunker with a machine gun sticking out), pull up right in front of it, and walk to this little hut and talk to Captain Ibrahim who was always there to get him to agree that you could drive over the bridge. He never was too difficult, but he always had visa cases. You had to drink tea with him for a half hour and listen to his visa cases, and say we'll look into them although we could never facilitate any of them. Then I would walk out with a screwdriver, unscrew the Jordanian license plates off this old Chevy station wagon and screw on Israeli license plates. Now you're standing, as I said, in front of the last machine gun nest, Captain Ibrahim's watching you do it, and there's an Israeli standing on the bridge with his Uzi watching you do the same thing. The scene was bizarre. While you did this, you could see the real tragedy of the separation of the two areas. Occasionally a UN (United Nations) vehicle would drive over – there was a UN truce supervisory organization (UNTSO) that would occasionally send people over with special UN license plates, and then there were people with funerals. I can remember a whole line of pallbearers carrying a casket to the bridge and relatives on the other side coming to pick it up. They basically handed the casket across. I'm sure it took a lot of special permission to hand the casket over the bridge so somebody could be buried in his homeland. That tugged at me a bit.

When you drove over the bridge (it was one lane wide) you had to roll down the window, and the first Israeli sentry would wave his Uzi and yell "shalom" (peace) through the window, you had to switch from "salam" (peace) to shalom and say you're from the American embassy. You had to give them a special different passport. You were allowed to have two different diplomatic passports; you gave them the one good for travel to Israel and then they would send you to a custom shed down the road and people would question you sternly and eventually insist on stamping your passport. Then you drove to Jerusalem. It took about an hour from the bridge.

The Jordan Valley is one of the most dramatic geological sites. Amman and Jerusalem are not too different in altitude but there is a three-thousand-foot drop between them, more than that because you are going below sea level, on the road to the bridge you pass a milestone on each side that marks sea level, and you keep dropping for hundreds of feet; it's the lowest spot on Earth. The Dead Sea is just a few kilometers south of the Allenby Bridge. Then we'd go up to Jerusalem, turn the pouch in at the consulate. I usually stayed at the American Colony Hotel which had been founded by American pilgrims in the mid-nineteenth century; Agatha Christie would have been at home in this place, that was fun.

Anyway, that was the Jerusalem excursion. The other thing we did was drive to Damascus. I drove once, and several times I took a public bus. The old city of Damascus is just really cool. I'm very pleased to know that as far as I can tell that city survived the

civil war to this moment -- some damage but nothing major. It had wonderful shops, little streets, and a covered market. One street sold perfume, and another sold brass pots, and so on. There was one street that sold carpets. We spent a lot of time in the carpet bazaar. Everything I know about carpets comes from there. I've read books that didn't make any sense to me, but, if you ask what does a Caucasian rug look like, the shop owner would say "I have one" and he'd pull it out and snap it out in front of you. What's a Baluch rug look like? He'd pull another one out and you could see they don't look anything alike. I could see the difference.

Going up and back though was tense. The Jordanians didn't have good relations with Syria. In the middle of this period there was a moment when it looked like King Hussein might agree to join Camp David, and the Syrians redeployed two divisions to their border with Jordan. The Jordanian army redeployed – they had two armored divisions, they were greatly outnumbered by the Syrians but they took their two divisions and put them just south of the border; we had quite a confrontation for two or three weeks before King Hussein backed away from any idea he would join Camp David.

The Jordanian and Syrian border crossings weren't physically contiguous, there was a no man's land of a mile or two between them. The Syrians were not warm and fuzzy when you talked to them. They were very suspicious of us. You could tell instantly this was a police state. There were all kinds of men wandering around in various uniforms, some had cammy shirts, blue jeans and high heel boots; some reversed the pants and shirts -- civilian shirt and cammy pants. There was a unit everybody called the Pink Panthers, which wore olive drab and fuchsia camouflage. The joke was that the only place they could hide was a disco. But they all brandished guns.

There was a lot of tension. On one occasion we drove up there things were particularly bad, because the Muslim Brotherhood had begun an insurgency, assassinating Syrian officials and doing car bombings -- targeting the Russians too. It was the forerunner for what's going on now. We drove up once and I recall being stopped at a roadblock and the young soldier says, "Your ID!" (identification). I recall reaching very slowly and deliberately, not too fast and not too slow, under the dashboard to get my passport – I didn't want to scare him by moving too fast or slow because he had his AK resting on the frame of the door with the muzzle right behind my ear. They were widely rumored not to use the safety. But we spoke Arabic, and I got through.

And that pretty much covers most of what I recall of my time in Jordan. I suppose I should note that while I was there, the Iran-Iraq War broke out. We had to accept a lot of people evacuated from Baghdad by road from our mission there. But I think that summarizes Jordan, '79 to '81.

Q: The only other question I had was, you had mentioned the assumption that Jordan would eventually become the "homeland" of the Palestinians or at least the Palestinians who had had to move out of the West Bank. Did that appear to be happening?

ENGELKEN: No. The East Bankers were determined that they were not going to lose

control. The army was still heavily in the East Bank, with very few Palestinians in it. I don't know if there was a formal policy, but they didn't have many Palestinians in the military or in the police. The commercial sector, however, was almost all Palestinian, almost all the businessmen were Palestinian. So there was this odd division of society where the Palestinians had free range to run businesses, which they didn't so much in the Gulf. Palestinians when you pressed them on this, "Yeah, I do have more freedom here, but believe me the secret police watch us." The government at that time had a state of emergency that had been passed in 1950-something and never rescinded, there was a legal system, but the state of emergency allowed the authorities to supersede it. And yes, people could be arrested and detained without charge for quite long periods of time and the detention circumstances weren't pleasant. I wouldn't want to be interrogated there.

Q: Not a terribly important political question but, while you were in Jordan, did they make strides in preservation and excavation in archaeology?

ENGELKEN: Oh, surely. They were very – I saw more archaeological sites there than I did anywhere else. Notably they permitted something called the American Center for Oriental Research, ACOR, to operate. It had been in Jerusalem and after '67 most of them had to move to Jordan. It's somehow connected to Harvard or a consortium of Ivy League universities. They did archaeology in Jordan, quite a lot of it. The Jordanians were training archaeologists themselves and were quite interested in preserving these sites. The tourist value was not lost on them.

We knew an American professor whose specialty was identifying the age of sites by pottery. He showed us pots and took us to sites that went from 5000 BC to the Middle Ages, all while demonstrating how one could identify Roman pottery from Byzantine pottery from Nabataean pottery from the Bronze Age, and stuff from 5000 BC.

Like everybody else in Jordan, we went to Petra. This is a nice benefit of the Foreign Service; you know people that you wouldn't as a tourist. We knew the archaeologist curator of the site, a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian origin, from Jericho. We met him at several dinners in Amman and he said, "Come down and stay with me." So, we did. We went to Petra. Today there are several nice hotels there, but at the time there was just a shabby hotel down there that wasn't much. Therefore, we accepted the invitation. Petra is a dramatic red sandstone valley with tombs carved in it, honeycombed all over the place. Our archeologist host had one or two tombs he'd taken over; one he slept in and the other he used as an office. Then there was an abandoned tourist camp next to it that had been closed but was the one Agatha Christie stayed in. There were little rooms with no shower or anything that were tombs.

We, therefore, brought sleeping bags and stayed in the tomb next to the archaeologists. Despite the rough accommodations, it was spectacular, because we were there after the site closed for the night. The tourists left, and suddenly it was absolutely empty. One of the most beautiful things I can remember in my life is sitting with the archeologist, as he cooked kebabs over a small, fragrant fire of cedar wood and made tea. As it became completely dark, we had the view of the sun setting over Petra, all to ourselves. There

was no electricity at the site at the time; we just had the light of a Coleman lantern. Step beyond the circle of light cast by the lantern (which wasn't much) and you could see every star God ever created, horizon to horizon. About ten o'clock the moon rose and cast moonlight over everything. It was just spectacular. That's something you would never get as a regular tourist. The following morning the archeologist also told us where to go. It's a vast site, most tours just take you through a small part of it. It extends up mountainsides. We went to one part of the site that required climbing six hundred steps to reach an altar carved on a mountain top overlooking the whole thing. Again, my colleagues and I were the only ones there.

Q: This tour is ending. As you look back on this tour, were there skills or talents you acquired that were valuable later?

ENGELKEN: One, back to what I mentioned about going to Israel and listening to their side – I told you what I got out of being a consular officer was the perception people always give you self-serving stories. They always do. I've been horribly treated, on and on, and when you ask the police why they arrested him, they always mention something he never told you about, and you go back and ask did you really do this? Yes. It's the same between Palestinians and Israelis, all over the world, this knowledge that you've really got to talk to both sides. The Palestinians had a deep sense of being victimized and in their accounts. They would never include what they did that might have elicited the harsh treatment they received.

Since my Jordan tour. I always wanted to make sure I listened to both sides and never just took somebody's statement at face value. If an incident happens and you read it in the paper, often these accounts are very biased. I had a translator at the embassy who did a press roundup which was kind of comical; his English wasn't as good as he thought it was. He would always translate stories from the Jordanian press and say things like, "The Israeli occupants opened fire on armless women and children." The mental image, of course, is shooting Palestinians in wheelchairs. It was always the occupiers opening fire on Palestinians, it was never Palestinians doing an attack that elicited return fire. We'll get to Lebanon, that is something I took from one place to another, you have to find out. If one side is claiming an atrocity for example, you really have to go and find out – (A) did it really happen that way, and (B) was there something they might have done to provoke that? Very often when you get into it, there is.

Beginning there but throughout my career I've wanted to avoid the good guys/bad guys approach to things. Americans always want to come and to divide contending parties into good guys and bad guys. Whenever you get into it, it's always more complicated than that. At least, you should really verify that before you start saying the U.S. government should speak out or do something about something. So that beginning in Saudi, reinforced in Jordan and Lebanon a few years later, I've taken throughout. That's the main lesson I took.

Q: As the end of this tour approaches you are thinking about where you're going to go next and maybe doing some lobbying or investigating – how did that come about?

ENGELKEN: I'm trying to remember. I recall at this point they began publishing lists of things and I had a CDO (career development officer), I talked to my CDO and asked people at post to support me for one thing or another. Again, the lobbying got a lot more intense later. I frankly was naive still at this point on how much lobbying I needed to do. I didn't do as much as I should have. I can't say that I came out poorly; I was assigned to INR. One other significant development, at the end of my stay in Amman I became engaged to another Foreign Service officer. She will probably be seeking to sign up with you for her oral history.

Q: As soon as the coronavirus abates.

ENGELKEN: What happened won't change. She has her own stories. But as part of life in the Foreign Service, from this point on we have to mention the complications. We talked about lobbying; after this point lobbying became a lot more important and serious to me, because I had to get assigned to the same place with my spouse. That as you would know is complicated. Leaving Amman, I didn't really have that, I just wanted to go back to Washington, and we figured (as proved true) that if I got to Washington, she'd get to Washington and we'd be able to synchronize our tours, which is what happened. After that it became much more complicated.

INR, Washington, D.C. (1981-83)

Briefly I went to INR, which was a useful tour.

Q: What year was that?

ENGELKEN: Eighty-one to '83.

Q: What section of INR?

ENGELKEN: Near East/South Asia. I was the analyst for Syria and Jordan. Obviously much of the content of what was going on is still classified, but what did I get out of it? I received a lot of coaching on writing, which I needed. I'm glad I had that tutoring. You had to write – this is when I really made the switch from writing like a graduate student or an undergrad to a real Foreign Service officer. In university, you are supposed to write everything you know about something, demonstrating the depth of your knowledge. However, when you are writing a quick intelligence memo, the question isn't how much you know, it's how coherently and succinctly you can defend the conclusion you've reached. You are limited to a page or a page and a half. Like most people, when I first started doing this it was hard to cut my prose down and judge which facts are convincing and which ones are merely supporting but thus not necessary. The basic outline of what we wrote was X is true because Y and Z are true. That's it. That's pretty much what you said. You had to do it quickly.

While I was there Israel invaded Lebanon in the beginning of June of '82. It was strongly

resisted by Palestinian militias and Syrian regulars who were in Lebanon in some numbers. You could see the fog of war. I was called in and worked day and night for several weeks as the Israelis advanced toward Beirut. One of my colleagues, the analyst for the Palestinians, was Aaron David Miller. Aaron and I did a lot of drafting in this period. Even with all the intelligence resources of the U.S. government, it was hard to tell in the early days of this operation what had happened. There would be press reports from the Arabs and from the Israelis, often making contradictory claims. The Israelis would claim to have captured something and it turned out they hadn't gotten there yet. There was a lot of confusion even with every technical asset the U.S. has.

So back to figuring out what's true; it got hard. You had to learn to draft quickly. We had to produce papers on a few hours notice. I remember briefing the deputy secretary on two hours notice. This was good training for the rest of my career. I learned a lot out of this tour in that sense. How to draft short, clear sentences, organize my thoughts, and get them on paper fast.

The other thing, I guess I can say this much out of what I was seeing, was that we watched the Iranians move into Lebanon in this period. As the Israelis were advancing north the Iranians were trying and succeeding in sending men and trainers and equipment through Syria into Lebanon to begin organizing the Lebanese Shia community. It was very frustrating to watch this happening and be unable to stop it.

It was clear in this period after they moved in that the Iranians were very hostile to us and were planning to do things to us. My tour ended in April of '83.

Q: Oh. Right before the Marine barracks and so on.

ENGELKEN: Yes, right. In early April of '83, the last thing I did before moving to my next assignment, was write a memo saying that the Iranians are targeting the Americans in Lebanon. I recall being taken upstairs to present it to Arnie Raphel who was a NEA deputy assistant secretary at the time, who exclaimed is that really true??! We showed him the supporting raw evidence. He said, "Oh my gosh, I think you'[re right." Then he grabbed the memo and ran upstairs. I don't know what he did with it, but he was trying to be Paul Revere.

Beirut, Lebanon 1983-84

Because I regularly met the office director for NEA/ARN (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq Affairs) to brief him on sensitive intelligence, I was a known quantity. When the Department decided to expand Embassy Beirut in January 1983 to support our efforts to establish stability, the NEA/ARN Director called me in and said, "I would like to have a nice young couple on the staff at Embassy Beirut. You could be a political officer and your wife an econ officer."

Wow! My wife had spent some of her childhood in Beirut so the thought of going back was pleasing to her. The director painted a rosy picture. Things were getting better. There

was a big burst of optimism in Lebanon at this point. “The two of you would make a positive contribution to the morale at post. What I don’t want to send is some guy who just had a messy divorce and has a death wish. I want people who will make the post a better place." We said yes. That’s an assignment I didn’t lobby for, I was recruited for it.

This is how it came to be that on the morning of 18 April 1983 I was at home in bed; the packers were coming that day to take my air freight. My wife who in the interim had been assigned to the State Operations Center (S/SO) called me about 7:30 and said “Honey, I’ll be a little late coming home” (she was on the midnight shift), “they’ve bombed the Embassy."

I was shocked and nearly fell out of bed. I put down the phone, got dressed, and turned on the television. At this point I didn’t have cable, I recall NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation) was broadcasting. There was a TV camera set up in front of the burning chancery. While I was listening to the news reports the packers came and took my air freight to go there.

A day or two later I got a call from the office director, who asked me to come by his office, and I did. He said that when we asked you to do this, we didn’t know, and you didn’t know there would be a terrorist attack; obviously, there’s a threat. If you don’t want to go, we’ll understand. You don’t have to go. But you need to know that we’re trying to get everyone who went through the bombing out of there. They’ve just gone through hell; we want to get them out. If you don’t go, somebody will have to stay.

I immediately replied, “I’ll go." To my young mind, this was an exciting adventure. On the 27th of April – these dates I can remember because they are so fixed in my head – so seven or eight days after the bombing, I got on a plane, flew to Athens, changed planes, and flew into the darkening evening sky on MEA, Middle East Airlines, to Beirut. I admit up to that point I was rather lighthearted, but, as I boarded the plane to Beirut, the gravity of things sank in. I thought, “What have I done?" My predecessor who had bandages on his face met me at planeside. He’d been hit by flying glass like so many at the embassy. He took me into town, we went to a little restaurant near the blown-up embassy, had drinks with the political, econ, and other sections. Many of my new colleagues were still wearing bandages. I was taken to somebody’s apartment to sleep and told to begin the next day.

Thus begins my account of my 1983-84 assignment to Lebanon.

But to understand what follows, we need to set the scene a little bit. The Israelis had invaded in June 1982. The Marines were deployed in September of ‘82. The Israelis withdrew from the downtown area of Beirut, but they were just beyond the airport and maintaining checkpoints on roads going up into the Mountain (Bayt Miri) just north of town.

Q: Take a moment to explain why the Marines were there. What was the immediate policy the U.S. had taken to make that step?

ENGELKEN: In the summer of ‘82, the Israelis cornered the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) in Beirut, and there was a siege lasting three or four months. The U.S. was trying to prevent a bloody assault on the city by the Israelis that would have precipitated a wave of anti-American sentiment throughout the Islamic world much as the Israeli assault on Gaza is causing as this is transcribed in 2024. In September 1982, Ambassador Phil Habib, Morris Draper, and others negotiated among the PLO, Israelis, and Lebanese Government authorities, the withdrawal of Palestinian fighters from Beirut. They were taken by sea from Beirut to Tunisia and given safehaven there. In the course of these negotiations, the Palestinians were very reluctant to agree to leave Beirut, saying that, if they left, their families would be massacred. We want you Americans to give a guarantee that our families will not be massacred, and that we won’t be killed as we withdraw.

Therefore, in early September, Marines were deployed basically to escort the Palestinian fighters to ships at the Beirut port, and to leave. The Israelis withdrew from most of the city at that point, and the Marines re-embarked, their mission apparently done.

At this point, Lebanon had a presidential election and Bashir Gemayel, head of the Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) militia was elected. He was almost immediately assassinated, and his brother, Amin, was then elected in his stead. Bashir’s LF comrades were outraged at his death. Here we enter what is still controversial history, the massacre at Sabra and Shatila camps in southern Beirut. On September 16, 1983, LF militiamen entered Sabra and Shatila camp and started killing people – kids, mothers, grannies, anybody they could find. They put several thousand people on trucks and took them away: they’ve never been seen again. We don’t know the exact death toll, but it’s in the thousands.

Embassy Political Counselor Ryan Crocker and the New York Times correspondent Tom Friedman went together to Sabra and Shatila camp and saw all the dead bodies. Friedman wrote an article in the New York Times that won him, I think, the Pulitzer Prize and made him the famous columnist he is now. Ryan came back to the embassy and wrote this incredible telegram which I hope is declassified that reports what he saw with his own eyes. At the same time, Palestinians were calling Ambassador Phil Habib and saying “You betrayed us. You said this wouldn’t happen. This is exactly what we said would happen.”

The strong feeling—I heard Ambassador Habib recount his memories of this—Ambassador Habib’s strong feeling was that the Israelis facilitated the entry of the Lebanese Forces into Sabra-Shatila. U.S. Embassy officers felt similarly. One remarked to me, “There is no way that militiamen would have spent two days firing however many thousand rounds of ammo in this camp, and the Israelis wouldn’t have known it was going on. They were manning a checkpoint just outside the camp throughout."

Q: The reason the Christian forces did it was because they assumed the assassin was associated with Palestinians?

ENGELKEN: Yes, and they saw the Palestinians as a stalking horse for the Syrians. Since the beginning of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, the Christian militias had wanted to expel the Palestinians. In 1976, the Christian militias captured a Palestinian camp, Tel Zaatar, and massacred everybody. We don't know how many thousand people were killed there. The Sabra-Shatila massacre was thus well in keeping with past practice and gets to why when people asked me who were the good guys and the bad guys in Lebanon, I shrugged my shoulders.

Habib reported that he met Ariel Sharon who was then the defense minister and was in Lebanon with his troops and demanded that the Israelis pull out. The Israelis said they weren't going to pull out because there would be chaos in the city. The solution to this was another deployment of American Marines into Beirut – and not just Marines but the creation of a Multinational Force (MNF). A Marine battalion, a French battalion, an Italian battalion, and a British armored car company were deployed, as part of what we called the MNF. Each national contingent was given a sector of West Beirut to supervise and to facilitate the entry into Beirut of what little remained of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the para-military police, the Internal Security Force (ISF). The LAF had been on the sidelines throughout the civil war, but there were several brigades that were constituted, equipped, and had never been in combat throughout the entire time.

The Marines' mission was to assist the Lebanese Government to assume control of Beirut, turning over security in the city to the army, and to keep other parties (Israel, Syria, Palestinians) from interfering. The Marines were assigned a sector around the international airport, which was on the southern side of the city, and the Israelis were just outside it. The French got the Ras Beirut area, the old downtown. The Italians were given the area between the French sector and the American sector, including the Sabra-Shatila refugee camps. The British had a spot not far from the airport. (N.B. None of these sectors included predominantly Christian East Beirut, where armed and uniformed LF militiamen continued to patrol the streets. The predominantly Muslim West Beirut militias were not permitted to appear armed in public.)

Up to this point, all well and good. Then President Reagan in late September was asked at a press conference, "How long will the Marines stay in Beirut?" The conception I think in the U.S. government up to this point had been that we would stay until the LAF was strong enough to assure order in the city, and then we'll go. I would say had that been the criterion for withdrawal, things might have been okay.

Reagan, however, said we would stay in Lebanon until the withdrawal of all foreign forces. There was still a third of the country with Syrian troops in it and another half of the country that had Israeli troops in it—so until all of them left. A Marine battalion is a potent force but, as we saw in the coming year and a half, they were not supermen. We did not have enough force there to overawe anybody. It was a bluff that worked in the short run but not in the long run.

Israel had very important interests in Lebanon and so did Syria. Both were willing to shed blood to defend those interests. Neither was going to give up easily. The Israelis wanted a

friendly government in Lebanon. Their invasion timed nicely with the Lebanese presidential election and almost surely, they had intended from the start to influence the election in favor of the Lebanese Forces' candidate, Bashir Gemayel. (Israel had extensively aided the anti-Palestinian LF during the 1975-82 Civil War.)

The Syrians, who almost surely were the ones who blew up Bashir Gemayel, were absolutely determined there would not be an Israeli puppet government in Beirut, or pro-Israeli government. The war hadn't settled anything really.

Lebanon during my Beirut posting was the theater for a struggle over hegemony between Israel and Syria that varied along a spectrum from direct state-on-state conflict to indirect asymmetrical warfare. Our public really didn't see that. They were aware of isolated terrorist attacks involving Americans, but they didn't see the larger struggle of which these were just a part.

I arrived at the end of April 1983. On the 17th of May '83, Ambassador Habib and his staff announced the conclusion of an agreement between Israel and Lebanon, which became known as the May 17 Agreement. This would have provided for the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Lebanon, in exchange for Israel having certain security guarantees in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese, for example, wouldn't have been able to deploy artillery within a certain range of the border; the number of troops would have been limited. Things like that, I don't remember all the details.

Habib then went to Damascus to lay out the agreement to President Hafez al-Assad. Assad bridled immediately, saying essentially: I won't accept that, I won't agree to it, I won't do anything to facilitate it, and I will absolutely do everything I can to prevent Israel from having *droit de regard* over any portion of Lebanese territory. The Israelis should derive no benefit from their invasion.

Habib came back to Washington and said, "I don't think this will fly" and resigned. Which left my embassy colleagues agog – he negotiated this thing and then just dropped it.

After the Syrians made their total opposition clear, the Lebanese Government announced it wouldn't implement the May 17 Agreement until there was a further understanding with Syria. The Syrians flatly refused to consider withdrawing.

The struggle between Syria and Israel over the May 17 Agreement lies behind everything else that happened subsequently. Israel insisted the agreement be applied, Syria adamant it should not be applied, and that they will not withdraw. The U.S. then tried to negotiate with the Syrians, Israelis, and Lebanese some way everybody would agree to apply the May 17 Agreement, and the Syrians would agree to leave.

We never succeeded. We did not, I think, fully appreciate the degree to which the Syrians would use terrorism and insurgent tactics. We were thinking way too much about conventional military balances. The Israelis had obvious military superiority. But they

didn't want to get too deep into northern Lebanon, because it was logistically very difficult for them.

The period of my time from April 1983 until September 1984 felt like a series of steps down into hell. It was divided into a period from my April arrival until the end of August 1983; there were negotiations going on, and the situation wasn't terribly violent. The next, much more violent phase, began at the end of August and continued until February 1984, when the Lebanese Army disintegrated and the MNF was withdrawn. From February to July1984, we were just hanging on, confined to a small perimeter along the West Beirut Corniche and focused mostly on finding and obtaining the release of Americans who had been kidnapped. In my last two months, August-September 1984, we moved all operations to Awkhar in East Beirut and were engaged in trying to reestablish operations there.

In August 1983, the Israelis announced if the Lebanese weren't going to implement the May 17 Agreement, they were going to withdraw unilaterally to a line north of Sidon along the Awwali River. This was a threat, not a good thing.

Q: Is that river the same as the Litani?

ENGELKEN: No, it's a river just north of the city of Sidon.

The Israelis said if Lebanon did not implement its part of the deal, they were going to leave. What they would have been evacuating was an area called the Shuf, a mountainous region southeast of Beirut, which had a mixed Druze and Maronite Christian population and a long history of sectarian tensions going back to the 1860s. At this moment, the Druze were aligned with the Syrians and the Maronites with the Israelis.

April to August. U.S. officials were going back and forth, trying to get first the Syrians to agree to May 17, and then if the Israelis were going to withdraw to have them agree to permit the LAF to take over the positions the IDF was vacating and to prevent communal violence that everybody expected between Druze and Maronites. It didn't happen. The Israelis said if Lebanon doesn't implement May 17 by the end of August, we're leaving.

There were several shooting incidents aimed at the Marines in early August. The shooting came from positions near Druze villages behind what was supposedly the Israeli line. Somebody from there—I assume the Druze, but I don't know for certain—fired several shells at the Marines in early August '83 and the fragments wounded several Marines. These were our first Marine casualties. The Marines fired back. The Marines had – remember it's only a battalion landing team -- twelve hundred men, supported by a helicopter wing with several transport helicopters and two Cobra gunships. There were ashore as I recall four towed 155mm howitzers and two M60 tanks. Not a huge force. On this occasion, the Marines returned fire with their 155s and hit things; there were secondary explosions.

These incidents showed that heavy weaponry had already been smuggled in behind the

Israeli line. The Druze community up on the mountain was already arming itself, and the Christians were doing the same. I remember on July 4, 1983, going to a bizarre Independence Day event on the deck of a U.S. Navy helicopter carrier standing right off the shore. We're eating weenies and beans literally on barbecue grills on the deck with a beautiful view of the Beirut airport and mountains around it. While I'm standing there you could see little puffs of smoke on the mountain. There was a Druze village and a Maronite village, and they were periodically mortaring each other. This was ostensibly in an area the Israelis controlled. I don't know what they were doing, but they certainly weren't controlling it. That ratcheted up the tension a lot. It was clear that, if the Israelis were to leave completely, these two groups were going to go after each other with everything they had.

Our focus at this point (August 1983) was to try to convince all Lebanese armed factions to permit the Lebanese Army to move in behind the withdrawing Israelis and prevent the development of a security vacuum. In the June to early August period, I and my embassy colleagues visited every faction except Hizbollah. I talked to the Shiite Amal militia, to the predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party militia, to whatever Sunnis I could find including former prime minister Takieddine Solh, former prime minister Saeb Salam his son Tamam Salem, both of whom became prime ministers in the 1990s and early 2000s. I even talked to Druze leader Walid Jumblatt himself on one occasion. I talked to various leaders of the Lebanese Forces, as well as to members of the Chamoun family, Maronites with their own rival militia and roots in the Shuf region. I talked to people prominent in the Phalange Party. Tried to get everybody to agree. I remember going to Lebanese Forces headquarters in a place called Karantina, the old quarantine hospital in the port. (To Muslims this was a terrifying place.) I remember meeting the head of the public relations arm of the Lebanese Forces and he explained to me how when the Israelis withdrew the LF was going to surge up the mountain behind them and occupy the Maronite villages. When I pointed out they'd have to drive through Druze villages, he said "If you fire five shells an hour, people will leave the streets and we'll just drive through." Sounded nuts to me, which it proved when the moment came.

At this point I should add one other thing. Parts of my account must address how the embassy functioned in a high threat situation. In the April 1983 to August 1983 period, the Embassy operated like it was in a normal place. This wasn't like Baghdad after the invasion. My wife and I lived in an apartment about a half kilometer from the embassy in the lighthouse (Manara) quarter of Ras Beirut. The other apartments in the building were all inhabited by Lebanese. It was a crowded middle class, confessionally mixed neighborhood.

I mentioned that I reported for work on April 28 just ten days after the Embassy was bombed. Our offices were in the DCM's (deputy chief of mission) apartment, in the Durraford Building about a hundred meters west from the blown-up embassy. His kitchen and dining room windows had been blown out, their curtains hanging in tatters; there was glass everywhere. The econ section met on the DCM's dining table; the political section got the DCM's living room coffee table. We drafted our work on yellow legal pads. To say this was a makeshift arrangement is an understatement.

The DCM and the management staff at the embassy had to find someplace for us to function quickly. Kudos to them, they obtained permission from the British to use a floor of their embassy. The UK chancery was about six hundred meters west on the Corniche from the blown-up embassy. We were also able to find space in the Durraford apartment building in which the embassy had three or four apartments. The ground floor apartment in that building was quickly converted into the consular section. Another apartment became the public affairs section. A third apartment was converted into the management section. Portables were added in the parking area behind the building to house the motor pool and a tiny commissary that was stocked with snack foods and cheap alcohol. Embassy offices that needed to work in a classified setting were placed on the second floor of the British embassy. (The British retained the ground floor and third floor for their staff.) My wife and I, pol and econ, were in the British embassy along with the defense attaché and the in-town offices of the ambassador and the DCM.

By today's standards our 1983 technology was crude, we used IBM Selectrics, but there were no computers. We typed out draft telegrams on yellow legal paper and then we would give them to a secretary to type in final on red-bordered paper that the communications staff fed into an optical reader once all had cleared.

Life in the city was relatively normal. I remember going out to eat in restaurants (and Lebanon has some fantastic ones), walking all over the Hamra Street area and through the AUB (American University in Beirut) campus. Nobody was terribly worried. There were police and army checkpoints around. To the eye the city looked normal and secure.

I was disabused of that notion on the 29th of August 1983. The Israelis were supposed to withdraw from the Shuf to the Awwali the following day, August 30, but the pro-Syrian militias preempted any possibility of a peaceful handover of Israeli positions to the LAF. Without warning, on August 29, armed men appeared on the streets. They were wearing armbands from the various pro-Syrian militias. (Around the British Embassy, the fighters were largely members of Walid Jumblatt's PSP.) Suddenly there were men with masks made out of pillowcases—eye holes, nose holes—AK-47s and RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) and makeshift uniforms with burgundy berets and green camouflage jackets. There were exchanges of fire with the police all over the place. I remember reporting to the DCM and saying (I was listening to the radio news) "Boss, armed men are appearing all over the city."

He said, "Yeah, I just heard that." And while we're having this conversation someone fired an entire belt through a machine gun nearby. I'll admit to having some cold sweat go down my back. Suddenly, the streets were empty. It was clear that the militias had been smuggling in weapons throughout the period of peace, and in a few hours the city went from a place where you could have dinner and walk around at midnight to a place you didn't feel safe on the street at any hour of the day.

The LAF and ISF withdrew from West Beirut. This is still strange to me, but they withdrew to East Beirut on the afternoon of August 29, and for several hours the militias

had control of the Western half of the city.

There was a hotel near us that had U.S. Army trainers (at this point we had resumed our training relationship with the LAF) and it was surrounded by what I later learned was a predecessor group of Hizbollah, threatening to kill them if they didn't leave. DCM Robert Pugh and PolCounselor Crocker put on Kevlar vests and went out under a flag of truce to negotiate the withdrawal of our servicemen from the hotel. After a tense hour or so of negotiations, we put them on buses and drove them to the Embassy.

I should add that, in addition to our regular 14-man Marine security guard detachment, the Embassy was guarded by a reinforced platoon drawn from the Marine battalion landing team down at the airport. This detachment consisted of three LTV-8 amphibious armored personnel carriers and about ninety Marines. The LTV8s had fifty caliber machine guns, while the Marine infantrymen had their personal weapons, including M-16s, Light Anti-Armor Weapons (LAAW) rockets, and several M-60 machine guns. Sounds like a lot, but in the context of Beirut this was nothing terribly intimidating. This armament left them on an equal plane with the militiamen who wielded Kalashnikovs, machine guns, and RPGs. The Marines' advantage lay in their superior training not their firepower. And the LTV8s were vulnerable to RPGs so they had to be careful.

I spent the day listening to radio reports of skirmishes around the city and writing sitreps (situation reports). Finally, my wife and I got into our Volkswagen Bug and about at ten at night I met the RSO who was standing in the street carrying an Uzi and looking both ways, "I think you can go now," he said. We drove out and quickly down the deserted streets– all the lights were out; the electricity was off - back to our apartment and ran up the seven flights of stairs and tried to cook dinner with me holding a flashlight in the Statue of Liberty position while my wife tried to make something on the stove top. Scattered shots were audible all night.

There was a steel door like a vault door you could close to secure the apartment. We locked ourselves in behind the steel door and hoped nobody had noticed us, since there was no "cavalry" that could come and rescue us, if the militias tried to break in. Whatever QRF (quick reaction force) there was, was down guarding the embassy. It would have been very risky for them to try to leave the perimeter.

The following morning, we all had a radio check (we communicated by two-way radios; no such thing as cell phones in 1983) and were advised by the Regional Security Officer's staff not to come into work.

The LAF at that point began to move back into the city from the East. Their own artillery shelled targets ahead of their advance. At the same time, the PSP militia in the mountains southeast of town fired artillery at the advancing government troops to support their defending militia holding the neighborhood around the Embassy. Consequently, our neighborhood was hit from two different directions at the same time.

I spent that morning listening to things whiz over our apartment building and go bang.

One shell landed close enough to me that you could hear glass break and people scream. Fortunately, it didn't hit our apartment.

We stayed in our apartment all morning and into the early afternoon. Finally, a small, armored car and some Lebanese troops came up our street and stopped. They pointed guns at everybody they could see, verifying their identities and making sure they were not hostile. It was more like an occupying army, although no one on our street attempted to resist them. After an hour or so, the Lebanese Army patrol moved on up the street toward the campus of American University of Beirut and the Hamra district. That evening and the following day, the Army finished reestablishing control of most of West Beirut, while the militias melted away. The government security forces, however, were unable to reassert control over West Beirut's southern suburbs known locally as the Dhahiya. There, they met significant resistance. This area was predominantly Shiite, and fell under the control of the Shiite militias, Amal and what later became known as Hizbollah. Hizbollah has never relinquished that control from then to now.

The uprising in Beirut succeeded in preventing the Lebanese army from filling in behind the withdrawing Israelis; instead of moving up into the Shuf mountains, as it had intended, the army had to turn around and reoccupy its own capital. And just as everyone had feared, the Israeli pull-out led to a security vacuum which the Christian Lebanese Forces and the Druze Progressive Socialist Party militias rushed to fill. Widespread violence lasting several weeks was the result. Both parties were guilty of large-scale massacres of civilians. We don't know how many people died, but both parties were determined to empty the area of hostile populations. The term ethnic cleansing hadn't yet been invented, but that is what happened. When a village was captured, the winning side would kill some of the inhabitants and send the survivors fleeing down unsafe roads toward Beirut, where they often squatted in vacant buildings.

This violence left the MNF in an awkward position. It was ostensibly a peacekeeping force, meant to keep Israel from intervening militarily in Beirut city and to back-up the Lebanese government security forces as they asserted control. The Israeli withdrawal to positions from which they no longer threatened the city left the MNF without a clear *raison-d'etre*. The LAF had shown that it could control most of Beirut, but the Shiite militias in the southern suburbs were continuing to resist, as was the Druze PSP militia in the hills to the southeast. The ambiguity in the MNF's mission to back-up the Lebanese Army was now glaring. Should the MNF battalions be expected to intervene directly alongside the LAF to help subdue the Shiites and Druze? And, if it did, could it still call itself a peacekeeping force?

None of the MNF partners were eager to become direct participants in Lebanon's civil war, despite appeals from the Lebanese Government for direct military help. The issue of how much help to give Lebanon was hotly debated in Washington and among the MNF capitals (Paris, Rome, and London) but never fully resolved. The U.S. with help from the partners launched a robust train and equip program for the Lebanese Army (LAF). U.S. military trainers who belonged to a U.S. Embassy Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) led by Colonel Arthur Fintel rotated in to work from offices in the Lebanese Defense

ministry. They made significant progress in the next few months on a plan to build the Lebanese Army up to a force of ten brigades.

While debates over mission and strategy went on at higher levels, the MNF battalions were left occupying positions on the ground that were adjacent to the confrontation lines between the government and the militias. The Marines occupying Beirut Airport were particularly exposed. The Shiite controlled southern suburb came up to the northern and eastern perimeter of the Airport, while the Druze controlled positions in the hills overlooking the Marines. The Marines came under periodic fire from both the Shiites and Druze, and they returned proportionate fire.

The next month, September 1983, was all-out, war. It was known as the "Mountain War" or the "September War." I said at the beginning of this interview that Lebanon varied between a war conducted conventionally and by asymmetric means. September 1983 was a conventional war. The Lebanese government had two pretty good brigades (5th and 8th brigades in Lebanese Army numbering) that had not been involved in much fighting during the civil war. They'd been kept aside and in good condition. Now they used them. After asserting control of the city on August 30-31. The LAF was sent up the mountain ridge east of the city to try to restore order in the Shuf. They were unable to advance far, but the Eighth Brigade was able to seize a town overlooking the airport and the city of Beirut called Souk El-Gharb, and Lebanese Army Special Forces units captured another ridge top village, called Qabr Shmun a few miles to the south. From there they were planning to advance farther up the mountain, but they ran into intense resistance from the PSP and other pro-Syrian militias and were unable to move further.

Most importantly, the government forces were not able to link their forces at Souk El-Gharb with those at Qabr Shmun. There was a gap between them and through that gap ran a road that pro-Syrian forces were able to use to send supplies to their predominantly Shiite allies holding the southern suburbs. The LAFs Souk El-Gharb position was both strategic and vulnerable. From it, the Army could direct fire on to the opposition's supply road to the southern suburbs as well as on to roads leading over the crest of Mount Lebanon that the PSP and other pro-Syrian militias used to bring in supplies from the Syrian controlled Bekaa Valley. The PSP was keen to force the Army to retreat from Souk El-Gharb, while the Army was determined to advance and cut the supply road to the southern suburbs. Throughout September, pro-Syrian militia units launched infantry attacks and shelled Souk El-Gharb daily, while the LAF returned the artillery fire in equal measure. The noise was audible throughout the city, and at night the sky above the beleaguered garrison was lit by parachute flares and the repeated flash of artillery.

Through it all, we had to keep the U.S. Embassy functioning. For much of the month my role in all this was to write three sitreps a day detailing minutely every reported bombing, shelling, kidnapping as well as all significant statements by the various factions and the government. I received this assignment, because I was an Arabic language officer and could listen to Arabic language broadcasts by various radio stations and hear what they were reporting. The Christian Phalange Party had a radio station called "*Sawt Lubnan*", "Voice of Lebanon," which was extremely sensational and would announce all kinds of

incidents, sometimes accurately. Muslims listened to it as well as Christians because they scooped everybody, but in their rush to report quickly they often got things wrong. You had to listen to "*Itha'at Bayrut*", Beirut government broadcasting, which was much more staid but more often accurate. And at some point, the Druze opened a radio station, "*Sawt al Jaba*l", Voice of the Mountain. These stations broadcast news at fifteen-minute intervals. The government on the hour, the Phalange at quarter past, the Druze at thirty past. Finally, there was another Christian radio station, run by the Lebanese Forces (LF), "*Sawt Lubnan al-Hurr*", Voice of Free Lebanon, that broadcast at forty-five past the hour, and then back to the government station fifteen minutes later. Listening to these news bulletins, you could get a somewhat balanced picture of what was going on, without taking the risk of leaving the office. In addition, the RSO would come in and report things to me, and we'd hear things from the Marines. My colleagues and I would also try to telephone our contacts to confirm radio reports, especially when these seemed deliberately inflammatory or manipulative. This went on seven days a week. I don't think I had more than one or two afternoons off during the whole month.

If that sounds like a grind, it was. Days spent in the office began to blend into one and another. I had trouble remembering what day of the week it was, and when I look back to try to recall this period, I remember specific hair-raising moments but have trouble remembering precisely in what order they occurred.

It didn't help that there was almost no way to relax when out of the office. The interruption in the supply of electricity saw to that. To pressure the government, the pro-Syrian militias cut power lines connecting Beirut with a generating plant near Sidon. While there was a second generating plant north of Beirut in a Christian dominated area, the loss of power from the Sidon plant forced the government to ration power to the city. For months thereafter, we received power six hours a day, on a rotating basis. Your neighborhood got power in the morning today and tomorrow in the afternoon; the next day it came in the evening; and the day after that from midnight to six. Our apartments at that point had no generators. We suffered along with the rest of the population. Coming home from a long day in the office, I would park my old VW Beetle in the unlit garage beneath our apartment building, feel my way to the staircase, climb seven flights, unlock the door, and immediately try to assist my wife to prepare dinner by the light of a Coleman lantern and several battery powered flashlights. The stove at least worked; it was powered by gas from a propane tank and had no pilot lights. We just lit the burners with matches. The absence of electricity three nights out of four meant it was almost impossible to read, play music, or watch videos. (We used a VHS machine when power was available.) After dinner, we just went to bed, because there was nothing else to do and got up the next morning and did it all over again.

These circumstances made it hard to accomplish even some basic tasks. For example, I recall getting up in the middle of the night a time or two to do laundry. Buying provisions was another challenge. The Embassy commissary had been destroyed in the bomb, and all we had to replace it was a tiny portable behind the Durraford Building stocked only with Johnny Walker Red Label, Emerald Dry wine, and snack foods. In other words, nothing nourishing. We had to pick up things on short dashes from the Embassy while

trying to work or in the few minutes between the end of the working day and the beginning of the government's 8:00 p.m. curfew. This had its own risks, however. One evening, we returned home from the office, and my wife noticed that we were out of the mustard needed to make a vinaigrette. I went two blocks up the street to Smith's grocery, bought the mustard, returned to the apartment, and triumphantly announced, "Honey, I have the mustard," when an ear-splitting bang rang out, and the curtains in front of the open window billowed. I looked up the street and saw flames nine feet tall leaping out of the grocery where I had just been less than five minutes before. Apparently, the owners had been refusing to pay extortion money, and someone had set off a two-kilo bomb in the store to enforce the demand.

In desperation, we would attempt little escapes from the routine. The Regional Security Officer urged all Embassy staff to respect the curfew, but, in fact, it was seldom enforced. The restaurants and food take-out stands with generators remained open. Several times when we returned late from the office, we took the risk of going three blocks east and picking up a rotisserie chicken from a traiteur stand. In Lebanon, they all came with whipped garlic (toum) and pickled vegetables and were a wonderful escape from the bland food we were able to make in our dark apartment.

On occasion, the war came to us directly in the British chancery. There were two officers from EUCOM (European Command), both Marines, a colonel, and a lieutenant colonel, sitting down the hall from us with a two-way radio connected to the Marines at the airport. They came running in one day to tell me the Marines had learned that the Druze were going to shell the French embassy within the next few minutes, and could somebody get the word to the French to take cover? I knew the French DCM, I had the correct telephone number, but I couldn't find a working telephone. Someone had cut our telephone lines. Finally, I found an old rotary device that belonged to the British Embassy, and I was able to telephone the French DCM and say, "Take cover now, we've heard they are going to shell you within moments." They took cover. But it turned out the Marines had misunderstood the warning a little bit. What was shelled was not the chancery of the French embassy, but the French ambassador's residence which was farther south and was then used as the headquarters of the French MNF battalion. The commander of that battalion was killed. He was entering the compound by chance and a shell landed on his Jeep.

At the same time the Italian chancery took a direct hit from a shell that failed to explode. They were trying to find an EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) team to disarm this thing when the French DCM called to say nothing's happened, are we in the clear? "Yes, I think we got the message wrong, and it's your ambassador's residence, "Résidence des Pins" (residence of the pines) that was shelled."

Providing support to a series of presidential emissaries who attempted to broker the withdrawal of Syrian and Israeli forces was another duty that occupied us in this period. These gentlemen rarely set foot in the embassy offices on the Corniche. They spent their time at the ambassador's residence which was in Yarzeh five miles away in the foothills of the mountain below Souk al-Gharb. This put it between the presidential palace (about

a hundred meters to the east) and maybe eight hundred meters south of the defense ministry. Both were considered by the opposition to be legitimate military targets and were shelled regularly. The residence was just over the lip of a rise, on the reverse slope from the direction of the incoming artillery. I don't believe it was ever hit, but there were numerous close calls. To make things worse for occupants of the residence, the LAF placed much of its artillery near the Defense Ministry, and the Army vigorously used it to protect the Souk El-Gharb garrison and for counter-battery fire. Anyone at the residence was thus surrounded by a deafening duet of incoming and outgoing fire. One could assure oneself that the residence was unlikely to be hit, but the extremely loud bombardments were quite unnerving.

In July, President Reagan appointed then deputy National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane special negotiator for Mideast issues and launched him on a shuttle campaign to Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, to try to negotiate an end to this thing. Bud would helicopter in – at the start he took a small military jet into the airport, but that became too dangerous, and he began coming by a Marine helicopter. He usually landed at the defense ministry. He needed embassy officers to courier classified traffic up to him from the chancery and to take the texts of his outgoing messages back down the hill to be transmitted from the Embassy.

Q: Is it possible to drive from the embassy to the residence?

ENGELKEN: Absolutely, but dangerous. My wife and I both had to go up multiple times. It seemed always to be night – often after midnight – when the call summoning us would come. Bud would spend the day talking to Lebanese leaders, and then he would frankly agonize over what to recommend to Washington to do. The Lebanese government obviously wanted us to intervene militarily on their behalf. There was a big argument in Washington. Weinberger and Shultz, the secretary of Defense and Secretary of State, were very dubious about that. What Reagan thought I honestly don't know; I think it depended on the day. There were big arguments about what to say, what threats to make to the Syrians, what offers to make to them, what we should or should not do militarily. Bud would talk often to President Amin Gemayel, Gemayel's close advisors, and the chief of the army General Ibrahim Tannous, and in the evening would send in a cable with his recommendation as to what to do or what they said. It was typically the comment, the recommendation, he would agonize over.

Once Bud finally made up his mind, his secretary, Wilma Hall, who travelled in his party would telephone and say something like "Mr. McFarlane needs you immediately! He has a flash cable!"

"Oh my gosh, flash – gotta go." Whatever the time was, I would call the duty driver who would come in a white Dodge K-Car that was supposedly armored; there was Plexiglas in the windows and a little metal behind the seat. I think if somebody shot at you with a pistol from behind it might have protected you.

Q: Anybody who remembers a K-Car knows you couldn't armor it even if you wanted to,

it would collapse.

ENGELKEN: It was not exactly an overpowered car. With no armor it wasn't fast or maneuverable; armored it was extremely slow. I think everybody who served there has this memory of driving through the city in absolute darkness; no one on the street; the driver would have the AM radio turned to Voice of Lebanon to listen if anything's happening. There was a point after you had crossed through the neighborhood of burned-out buildings that marked the old green line that you would come up a rise and have a clear view up the hill to the ambassador's residence and on up to Souk El Gharb on the ridgeline above it. At this point, the driver would always stop and ask, "Mr. Engelken, do we go, or don't we?" You could see those white flashes and little parachute flares hanging over the mountain. The Voice of Lebanon radio always seemed to be announcing that "Shells just landed in such and such a neighborhood in East Beirut."

"Do we go or don't we?" the driver would repeat, obviously hoping that I would say no.

The answer was always "No, it's a flash telegram– gotta go."

You would then drive up a series of switchback roads to the residence. The road was covered with splat marks where Katyusha rockets had landed, shrapnel skittering down the road, and craters in the road where shells had hit. You were not safe. You just had to hope that Ahmed or Maroun didn't pull the lanyard at that moment. As it happened, no one on our staff was killed, but it certainly could have happened. A Lebanese American acquaintance of mine was killed on that very road when a rocket hit his car. It was always disconcerting to me to pass the burned-out wreckage of his car which sat there untouched for months.

You'd finally arrive at the residence and typically you'd find Bud in full hand-wringing mode. He had two aides, Howard Teischer and Phil Durr. Phil was then a Navy commander and Howard, I don't know where Howard came from, he was an NSC (National Security Council) employee, I don't know where they found him. He was not Foreign Service. I think he had been a civilian at DOD (Department of Defense) at one point. Bud always seemed to be in a huddle with them in a side room when I arrived. I would sit in the ambassador's living room or just cool my heels sitting on a straight-backed chair in the entry hall.

MacFarlane also had a deputy special representative, Richard Fairbanks. The two tried to stay in different cities. Fairbanks would be in Tel Aviv when Bud was in Beirut or vice-versa.

The special negotiators didn't, as far as I could discern, ask Ambassador Dillon's opinion about much, and more junior embassy staff were never consulted. We were there just to move paper; no one ever asked you anything. They would all disappear in a room and for an hour and a half you would just sit there. This is a flash. Why am I sitting here for an hour and a half at one A.M.? I remember many times sitting there for two or three hours waiting while they cogitated over the message. Finally, at 3:30 a.m. or some such time,

they would give you the thing. You had to carry it back down the scary road to the telecom center at the chancery at the British embassy. You had to put it in a little pouch (as if that was going to protect it) and drive the message, usually labelled SECRET/NOFORN (no foreigner)/NODIS (no distribution–to the chancery, wake up the duty communicator and bring him in to transmit the text. Naturally, the duty communicator would cuss a blue streak, because this was extremely disruptive to their slumbers. (I don't blame them.)

This went on for weeks, months. Around September 19, Fairbanks had one of my colleagues courier a cable that pleaded strongly for U.S. intervention in the Suq al-Gharb battle, arguing that the Lebanese garrison was on the point of collapse and that U.S. personnel at the Ambassador's residence in Yarzeh risked capture if Suq al-Gharb fell.

The Lebanese government was appealing strongly at that moment for military aid. They said they only had a few hours of artillery ammunition left. They appealed for additional ammunition. They said the Souk El Gharb garrison was about to fall, that it had been under attack by a human wave of Iranian Revolutionary Guards – the Iranians had been moving into Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley at this point, and it was just possible that Iranian guardsmen might have been up there. Why not? If Souk El Gharb fell, the argument went, the pro-Syrian forces would come down the hill, capture the defense ministry and the presidential palace and the American ambassador's residence, and that would be the end of it; they'd win.

The cable ended with a recommendation that we take military action to prevent the fall of Souk El Gharb, and ended with the line, "Ambassador Dillon concurs." Bob Dillon was a very nice man who was obviously having trouble keeping up with the late-night machinations of the special envoys who rarely asked his opinion. He was cautious by nature and not one to suddenly recommend open warfare.

None of us saw the text of the message until the comeback copy appeared in our "take" the following morning. When we read it, however, we were shocked. This was a declaration of war.

As it happened, Ambassador Dillon drove into the Embassy that morning. No sooner had he come through the front door than he was confronted by the political section chief who asked him "Ambassador, did you approve this? Did you approve of intervening in the civil war? This is a major step if we do this."

The ambassador looked blank (I was standing there), "What? Intervene? No, I didn't recommend we do that." I never got a full explanation of what had happened at the ambassador's residence the previous evening. The most charitable explanation I can offer is that the special envoy's staff showed Dillon an earlier draft of the message and then strengthened it to include the direct appeal for military action after Dillon had retired for the night.

In my recollection, we stood there in the Embassy foyer for some minutes debating what

to do, when the defense attaché ran down the hall and said, "Forget about trying to stop military action, the planes are airborne; we're going to do an airstrike at Souk El Gharb" (He was referring to aircraft from the USS *Eisenhower* then offshore.) In the end, no such attack happened, because the Lebanese couldn't give the Navy a clear bomb line. The planes dropped their bombs in the Med and returned to the carrier. At that point we all gave a big sigh of relief; we hadn't done something rash. Minutes later, nonetheless, three U.S. destroyers opened fire with their main guns from a point less than a kilometer off the shoreline of Ras Beirut. Their fire passed directly over the British Embassy and our offices.

Q: You can see them?

ENGELKEN: Yes. I left my desk to walk out to the sidewalk in front of the embassy, from where I could see them clearly. Between them each fired ninety rounds from their main gun in turns. They were sailing in slow circles; one would fire for five minutes then the other one. They hit positions around Suq al-Gharb occupied by the opposition, whoever they were. That was an intervention in the Lebanese Civil War. It was not returning fire. Up to that point, any fire had returned fire when fired upon. This time we were firing to support a Lebanese military objective.

In the very short run, our action had an effect. A tenuous ceasefire was put in place in early October '83. When it went into effect, the southern suburbs of Beirut still had not been re-occupied by the army, they were controlled by Amal, the predecessor groups of Hizbollah, and a collection of small militias that spanned the ideological spectrum from Islamist to Communist. They rapidly built a confrontation line, it looked like the old green line, in a semi-circle around the suburbs that ended at the edge of the airport. The Marines sitting in the airport were overlooked by a ramshackle neighborhood that looked like a Palestinian refugee camp, but was just a slum inhabited mostly by Lebanese Shiites who had fled the Israelis in the south. Understandably, they were in a cranky mood. They wanted to go home, they saw us as supporting the Israelis, and periodically from that point on there was sniper fire or mortar fire coming from that suburb on to the Marines.

When one drove to the airport to see the Marines, the slum came right to the edge of the road, and there were barricades along the road, with little black flags (a Shiite emblem) flying from them. The road was technically under government control, but the government didn't control more than fifty meters east of it. We drove down this road all the time. We thought, if somebody comes from behind that barricade with enough men, we are toast. Again, in your armored K-Car you are not exactly ready to fend them off. Nobody had bodyguards, none of the things that we now do in high threat posts. We just operated unprotected.

I mention the airport road, because we took it frequently in this period to meet CODELs (congressional delegations). The CODELs would arrive there by helicopter from the helicopter carrier supporting the Amphibious Ready Group offshore, and we would meet them in Embassy vehicles to drive them to the Embassy and to Yarze to talk to the president and commander defense forces and have a briefing by the ambassador or charge

and then back to the airport. These visits were a burden but just part of the job. We could not turn them down. Above all, we couldn't tell the visiting Congressional members that they were putting themselves and us in harm's way. We were at least able to enforce a rule that visits must take place entirely during daylight hours and had to conclude before nightfall. No overnights were permitted.

This takes us to the morning of October 23. A colleague was preparing to go to the airport to greet Senator Humphrey of New Hampshire. My wife and I were in bed at 6:22 a.m., when this incredible shock wave went through our apartment building. We both woke up with a start to say, "That was a car bomb, close." Fifty seconds later another big shock wave went through. Another big car bomb, what's going on?

A few minutes later, the telephone rings, "Can you both come in? Bring your lunch. You will be here all day." We had hoped to have a rare Sunday off but dressed and went in about 7:30 a.m. Bleary-eyed, we arrived, to learn that the Marines had been bombed. And the French. This is the famous Marine bombing that killed two hundred and forty-plus Marines, and also eighty-plus French paratrooper conscripts, the only conscript unit the French deployed. It was thus a big deal in France.

There was an investigation, who did it and why? The answer to that I think remains classified. I never got a clear briefing in my entire time there. The assumption I and I think everybody made was that the Syrians and Iranians had worked together to do this. This was one of the first suicide car bombings. SVBIEDs (suicide vehicle-born improvised explosive devices) became a normal tactic twenty years later in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they were shocking in 1983.

Many have speculated that the Marine bombing was retaliation for the Navy shelling at Suq al-Gharb in September. We had intervened; the gloves are off, you get it back. I can't prove that. I don't know, I didn't see at the time whatever intel there might have been. Someone in the years ahead will research the archives and finally come out with what we think happened. But in hindsight it seems clear that Syria/Iran and their supporters had decided that the U.S. and French were an obstacle to their effort to establish control over Lebanon, and that it was high time for us to leave.

At this moment, Bud McFarlane was recalled and made national security advisor. Don Rumsfeld was named to replace him. Rumsfeld then resumed shuttling between Beirut, Tel Aviv, Damascus, and the MNF capitals. the same way McFarlane had done. At this moment the big issue was whether we should retaliate and how, for the bombings of the French and the Marines. The French eventually retaliated for the bombing of their troops by launching a small air strike on the Hizbollah-controlled Sheikh Abdallah Barracks in Baalbek. The damage and casualties were not large, but they did fly several Super Etendards from the *Foch* aircraft carrier and do an airstrike. Within the U.S. Government debate went back and forth for weeks on what to do.

It won't surprise you to hear that Rumsfeld was a hawk. He wanted to respond and was trying to convince Shultz and Weinberger and others to do so. They were reluctant to get

deeper into the war. At the same time in November resistance to the Israeli troops occupying South Lebanon began to intensify. The use of IEDs (improvised explosive devices) aimed at vehicles began. In many ways, this tactic was pioneered in South Lebanon. Israel started taking casualties. On November 4, a truck born VBIED leveled Israeli intelligence headquarters in Tyre. The situation in the south became much more troubled, as the Israelis had increasing difficulty keeping control. The Syrians' and Iranians' goal at this point was to force all Western forces to withdraw.

I still am of two minds on what we should have done. Emotionally, it would have felt satisfying to retaliate, but to be effective any retaliation would have had to be massive. We would have had to reinforce the Marines significantly and move to what would twenty years later be called "shock and awe." This would have meant a direct intervention in the war and could have saddled us with a large nation-building project that we weren't prepared for. Just as in Iraq in 2003, the Syrians and Iranians would have organized resistance to us using IEDs. In many ways, Lebanon 1983 was a dress rehearsal for Iraq in 2003.

At the same time, by not responding we showed the SVBIED tactic to be effective. The Iranians and Syrians had frankly deterred us to some extent, and I think in their calculations the October 23 bombing was a success.

In the light of hindsight 40 years later, I think that the Marine bombing left us at a fork in the road. We either needed to escalate significantly or leave. We did neither. Unwilling to up the ante or to admit defeat, we persisted with a strategy that wasn't working.

To return to events, in early November the Marine Amphibious unit (MAU) that had suffered the October 23 attack (24 MAU) was rotated out and replaced by 22 MAU, which had been diverted to the Caribbean for the Grenada operation on its way to the Mediterranean. The rotation had been previously scheduled and was not a response to the bombing, but a change to the Marines' command structure was definitely a reaction to the bombing. Instead of leaving 22 MAU under the command of a colonel as 24 MAU had been, Brigadier General James Joy was placed in charge. Joy was a serious Marine. I didn't find him wobbly or weak; he was not an agonizer. But he was a cautious man. I was left with the impression that the Pentagon had placed a senior officer in command who could not be pushed around by the Special Negotiator and the NSC staffers in his entourage.

At this point, my duties were changed somewhat. I was made full time control officer for Rumsfeld visits, and my colleagues took over some of my sitrep drafting responsibilities.

Q: In this case with Rumsfeld, were you allowed in the room?

ENGELKEN: No. Almost never. My duties were strictly to move documents back and forth from the chancery to the Ambassador's residence and to tend to logistics (e.g., ensuring that straphangers would have hotel accommodation and two-way radios, if they were to stay the night.)

The only member of the mission who was regularly consulted by the Special Representative and his staff was our new ambassador, Reginald Bartholomew. (Bob Dillon departed post in mid-October, and Reggie Bartholomew had the bad fortune to arrive in the evening of October 22, the night before the Marine barracks bombing.) Rumsfeld and staff did let Reggie in the room. Reggie was determined to stick close and not get excluded the way Dillon had been. Ambassador Bartholomew was determined not to allow any communication to leave that claimed "Reggie Bartholomew concurs" when Reggie Bartholomew had not concurred. But to do that he had to join the "let's go get them" crowd.

Searching my memory, I do recall one occasion in which I was allowed into one of Rumsfeld's discussions. In late November 1983, I recall accompanying General Joy into an introductory call on the Special Negotiator. Much of the conversation focused on the Marines' offensive capabilities. In my recollection, Rumsfeld asked at one point "General, can your troops take the ridge line on which Suq al-Gharb is sitting?"

"Yes, sir. How many casualties are acceptable, sir?"

Rumsfeld recoiled, and said, "No, I asked you if you can take it. Can you take it?"

"Yes, sir, I can take it, but I cannot take it without casualties, what is an acceptable loss?"

Rumsfeld—they went back and forth five or six times—Rumsfeld not willing to say explicitly that he was willing to accept casualties, although it is obvious that there would have been significant ones. The general wasn't giving, he didn't budge, he didn't say all right, we'll do it. He said, "My military opinion is yes, we can take the ridge, but we cannot take it without significant casualties. Is that acceptable?" And Rumsfeld never said yes. I think the general was relying on what he knew Weinberger wanted. There was an interesting tension within the U.S. government on this.

In movies you often see military officers advocating military action recklessly. I must tell you, the Marine officers in Beirut were professional. They were not just looking to go blow something up. They were very clear, "There are things we can and can't do, you need X number of men to do this, you need X amount of firepower to do that, and I cannot do it with less."

One of the big questions I would have liked to ask Don Rumsfeld before his 2021 death is what lesson did you take from Lebanon and apply to Iraq? It was a very similar situation. We were trying to do a lot with little. Remember the argument about how many troops needed to occupy Iraq? A professional soldier gave a number double what Rumsfeld felt were needed. I fear the lesson Rumsfeld took from this Lebanon experience was that U.S. military officers were overly cautious and risk averse. He strongly felt we had to take risks, and that the risks weren't as grave as people thought they were.

Let's move up to Christmas 1983. The holiday began with hope. Another ceasefire was in

place. Although there was still shooting every day at Souk El Gharb, for the most part the city was calm—calm enough that Beirut International Airport closed since the fighting at the end of August reopened. I can clearly recall attending a Christmas service on the campus of American University of Beirut (AUB). The auditorium was full, and we were singing Christmas carols when suddenly the loud whine of a passenger plane on final approach interrupted the proceedings. The attendees burst into cheers. This was the first plane to arrive in months, and we all hoped that it betokened a return of normality and peace.

Indeed, I can't remember any Christmas where I more enthusiastically welcomed the Prince of Peace. Nothing like seeing months of near pointless violence to make one appreciate peace. But it was not to be. We had a little Christmas party in our apartment for a few friends on December 24. I put on my turntable a record of Christmas carols, about eight or nine at night (we were going to end the party at 9:30). As I put on the record, suddenly a tremendous amount of firing was audible in the distance. Hizbollah attempted to break out of the southern suburbs and attack the main part of town. That was the end of the ceasefire.

The following morning, Christmas Day, we were invited to the home of an American banker who was hosting a Christmas brunch in a suburb under Lebanese Forces control just above Beirut along the coast. As we drove north on the coastal freeway, we passed a column of M-48 tanks heading in the southbound lanes toward the gunfire which remained audible. The Lebanese Army had had trouble containing the attack and had sent for the partially trained Ninth Brigade from the Army's training ground to reinforce the city's defenders.

It was the most bizarre Christmas I can recall. Our host was in a jolly mood, despite the distant sound of gunfire and put out a very nice buffet – Bloody Marys and smoked salmon and caviar. (While Beirut often ran out of basics like milk and bread, expensive delicacies like smoked salmon were always available.) For some reason, he never explained he wore a coonskin hat like Davy Crockett's, and he suddenly announced as we tucked into the caviar, "I bought two rifles the other day, do you want to look at them?" He proceeded to drag out a Kalashnikov and an M16 he had acquired on Lebanon's active arms black market. (Obviously, somebody in the Lebanese army had sold the M16.) And at his suggestion, we watched *Mad Max* on a VHS tape, each cradling an (unloaded) automatic weapon. That was Beirut!

The strangeness of this place never stopped. Despite renewed exchanges of fire around the edges of the southern suburbs, we were able to get out a bit more in January and see contacts. I had a pretty good contact in the Progressive Socialist Party. Although their militia was shooting at the Marines near the Airport., you could go meet them. I made the acquaintance of the PSP's foreign affairs spokesperson. He hosted a very nice dinner for me and my wife in this period with a massive table full of food in his apartment. His front door was like a safe vault, and there were a couple of guys with Kalashnikovs standing outside. We had a lovely meal with tabbouleh, roasted lamb, wine, and an intelligent discussion of the political situation, while gunfire resounded in the middle distance.

That takes us up to mid-January, 1984. Negotiations over the withdrawal of foreign forces were making no progress, and it appeared that the desultory low-level violence then prevailing could continue indefinitely. The Lebanese Government, therefore, decided to force a military solution. The southern suburbs, if you recall, were connected for resupply by a narrow corridor going to the Syrian/Muslim held areas in the hills overlooking the city. Government controlled Souk El Gharb was on one side of the corridor and another village called Qabr Shmoun was about two or three miles on the other side. Hizbollah and the Druze had built a makeshift road through this gap and used it to supply the southern suburbs with ammunition and military equipment. The Lebanese government made the logical argument, "it will be a bloodbath if we try to fight house to house through the southern suburbs; we should close the gap on the mountain ridge overlooking the city, advance from Suq al-Gharb to Qabr Shmoun and cut the road completely. At that point the southern suburbs will be besieged and at some point, they will have to give in and we won't have to fight block to block and kill thousands."

Not illogical, but they worried, "the Syrians have two hundred twenty-five artillery pieces within range of Suq al- Gharb and we have only eighty-five artillery pieces or so." They thus felt they were sure to lose if the Syrians opened up with all they had at any LAF force trying to advance from Suq al-Gharb to Qabr Shmoun. "Would the US fire artillery support?" they asked. At this point we had the *USS New Jersey* offshore, three or four destroyers, and a helicopter carrier. We could have brought an aircraft carrier to do air strikes too. "

We spent much of the month of January debating what assistance the U.S. would provide to an effort to "close the gap." Rumsfeld shuttled among Rome, Paris, and London in an effort to convince MNF partners to support the Lebanese offensive. He visited Tel Aviv to keep the Israelis informed, and he went to Washington repeatedly to argue with Shultz and Weinberger and the NSC about greater U.S. direct involvement in the war. In my memory, my colleagues and I were frequently called up to Yarzeh in the small hours to courier messages. CODELs continued constantly.

Tensions started to rise. The Marines come under fire almost daily at this point. I remember standing on the ambassador's terrace one evening while waiting for yet another cable to be finished and watching a Druze pickup truck with a ZSU 23-4 (Russian acronym for a four-barreled anti-aircraft system) mounted in the bed "hose down" the Marines. *USS Bowen* stood offshore and returned fire with its main gun. *Bowen*'s rounds looked like big fireballs skittering up the mountainside. The Druze quickly figured out how many seconds it took us to aim the gun on the *Bowen*. They would fire for the exact number of seconds then put their truck in gear and move. As far as I know, nobody got hurt in this. I know no Marines were hurt; they had at this point buried in shipping containers in the ground to provide cover. The 23-millimeter fire wasn't big enough to penetrate this, and I don't think we ever hit the truck. Thousands of dollars of ammunition were expended, terrifying everybody within hearing, and nothing happened.

The Lebanese Army's plan for an offensive to "close the gap" was so widely known that word must have reached the Syrians and Iranians. It is extremely likely that the Lebanese Army was penetrated. Everyone knew what was planned.

Knowing that a resumption of fighting was likely in the beginning of February, my wife and I took the opportunity of a quiet weekend at the end of January to drive up to Brummana, a Christian town northeast of Beirut, for Sunday lunch. Brumanna had been a resort before the war. It was a pretty place with fresh mountain air, shady streets, and little cafes almost everywhere. We pulled up to one that had an attractive dining room, and ordered a shrimp and avocado salad with a nice vinaigrette and "shish tawook" (grilled chicken) for the main course and a nice glass of wine. Sitting there in this civilized place with excellent food, we hoped to forget the war for a few minutes and really relax in a way we hadn't in months. It was not to be. In the middle of lunch there was a deafening explosion. The Christian restaurant patrons flung open the windows and began clinking their wine glasses together and shouting to each other "They're bombing the Palestinians! Hurrah!" I looked through the window and could see a deep valley and then another little village on the next ridge called Bhamdun. It was held by the Syrians, Druze, and Palestinians. There was a huge column of smoke coming from it and several follow-on explosions. The restaurant owner then grabbed me and said, "You're American, don't you want to watch?"

He took me outside, as the Voice of Lebanon Radio was already reporting that the Americans were bombing Bhamdun. This was incorrect. It was an Israeli airstrike. By the time I got to the restaurant parking lot, I could see four Israeli Kfirs, fighter bombers, pulling out of their dive, banking left to return to Israel. Behind them, there were little red twinkling lights all the way up to the crest of Mount Lebanon. These were Syrian-manned ZSU 23-4 anti-aircraft cannons. They hit their target. Suddenly, the last Kfir flipped over; the pilot bailed out; and his plane dropped into the sea. He was captured by the LAF. The Israelis demanded the Lebanese return him. The ambassador and Defense Attache spent the night relaying messages back and forth between the Lebanese and Israelis to negotiate his release back to Israel.

A bit shaken, I quickly paid the bill and left my meal half-finished to drive back to town as fast as I could.

The next week was the worst week of my life.

Q: This week is early 1984?

ENGELKEN: First week of February 1984.

Q: This is when also the kidnappings in the American University in Beirut are beginning?

ENGELKEN: Not yet, but thank you for raising the subject. In January 1984, the acting president of AUB, Malcolm Kerr, was murdered in his office about five hundred meters from the British chancery where we were working. Among my many other jobs, I had

had the responsibility to brief Dr. Kerr regularly on U.S. efforts to obtain the release of David Dodge, the real president of AUB who had been kidnapped in 1982. Many details of Dodge's kidnapping and eventual release remain classified, and I can't discuss them. All I can say is that by the beginning of January, I was authorized to tell Dr. Kerr that we were optimistic that Dodge would soon be released. It was thus a terrible shock when I received a call on January 18 telling me that "Malcolm's been killed." I had gotten to know and respect him. Even in a place where death was common, Malcolm's murder really shocked me.

In the first week of February, the opposition (pro-Syrian militias and probably Syrian regular forces) preempted the government's planned attack in the hills east of Beirut. To lead the offensive, the government took the 8th Brigade, its best brigade, off the confrontation line in the city and moved it up into the hills. The opposition responded by bringing more capable units into the southern suburbs and placing them opposite the portions of the line previously held by the 8thBrigade. At the time, we suspected these units were Syrian Special Forces in plainclothes, but I don't know whether we were ever able to confirm that. Whoever they were, they got the jump on the Lebanese Army, attacking first out of the southern suburbs in the first days of February 1984.

The attack fell on a relatively green, partially trained Lebanese brigade that began to give ground block by block near the Mar Mikhayil Church, uncovering the road to the Lebanese presidential palace in Yarzeh. At this point the Lebanese government appeared to panic. They thought they were going to lose a chunk of East Beirut, and that the presidential palace, the defense ministry (and U.S. ambassador's residence) could be captured. They cancelled the "closing the gap" offensive and moved the 8th Brigade back down from the mountain to reinforce the weaker units trying to hold the line near Mar Mikhayil Church. They also took all the artillery they had and all their U.S.-provided M-48 tanks (we had given them forty+) and parked them below the presidential palace and began firing into the heavily populated southern suburbs. It stopped the attack, but at the cost of destroying the fragile inter-sectarian political consensus that had under-pinned the government and army up to that point.

The bombardment was deafening. I could hear it five miles away on the Corniche. Just a steady rumble, boom-boom-boom. And a steady stream of ambulances coming to American University Hospital from the southern suburbs waving white flags. As civilian casualties in what was a predominantly Shiite neighborhood began to mount the fighting took on a more sectarian character. The population of the southern suburbs increasingly attributed responsibility for their plight to the viciousness of what they believed was the predominantly Christian officer corps. (Note: There were many more Muslim officers than popularly believed but impressions can matter more than facts. End Note.)

At this point, the pro-government Lebanese began to ask Americans insistently, "Are you going to make good on your promise to fire?"

I have this clear memory of the 4th of February. I was told to take several embassy vehicles ("armored" K-Cars) and drive to the defense ministry after sunset to meet

Rumsfeld and members of his staff who would be arriving in two helicopters. The Defense Ministry LZ was a spooky place. The ministry building had been shelled repeatedly. It was a blacked-out hulk with largely blown out windows. The ground was covered with shrapnel. It crunched under your feet as you walked around. There was a field with two M113 armored personnel carriers parked with their doors open so you could dive in them if incoming started. I stood there with the management counselor, and one of the ARSOs (assistant RSO) who had a little blue flashlight which he flicked on and off to mark the landing zone for the incoming helicopters. You could hear two Huey helicopters chugging up from the sea to the west, while parachute flares hung over Souk El Gharb to the southeast, and small-arms fire was audible from the suburbs to the south. One of the helicopters got lost and went around in circles for minutes, we were really in agony about that. It's raining. We gathered Rumsfeld and his staff in the car and took them to see the ambassador.

There was a meeting that day or the next that I remember very clearly. For some reason I was allowed to hear the discussion, which was the scariest I ever heard in forty years in this business. Rumsfeld asked Durr, "How many shells does the *New Jersey* have?"

"Six hundred, sir."

"How long would it take to fire those shells?"

"About twenty-four hours sir, then the barrels would start to deteriorate, and we'd run out of ammo."

Then Rumsfeld said something like good, we can fire the whole load before the first 24-hour news cycle and the wimps in the Pentagon intervene to stop it. The current rules of engagement say that if we're taking shell fire, we can return fire. If the Marines take shell fire or shells land near the Ambassador's residence, that's enough. I can ask the PHIBRON (amphibious squadron) commander to fire and we'll fire and before the Pentagon realizes it, they can fire the entire load on the opposition."

This to me had echoes of Tonkin Gulf. Nobody asked me what I thought about this; I was photocopying and sort of overhearing this.

In the Rumsfeld entourage was Ed Derwinski, then Counselor of the State Department, and a former congressman from Chicago whose task seemed to be finding ways to bolster the Lebanese Government. He had an idea. He wanted to mobilize Lebanon's significant Armenian community which had largely stayed on the sidelines of the conflict. Despite the ominously intensifying artillery exchanges, I was asked to make appointments for him at which he sought to promote this idea. When we came to the Army commander, General Tannous, he asked how the Armenians were doing in the Lebanese army. Tannous's jaw dropped. He asked incredulously, "Armenians in the army?" They obviously hadn't enlisted in large numbers. Tannous explained there were some in the artillery corps, but few were in other types of units.

Discussion of Armenians in the Lebanese Army was quickly overtaken by events. Shell fire intensified around Yarzeh on the afternoon of the fifth. We spent a couple of hours listening to the shelling. They hit the presidential palace. At this point my wife was accompanying Derwinski in a meeting at the palace when the phone rang. The RSO called. President Gemayel answered the phone and says to my wife, “It’s for you." Everyone’s glaring at her. She picks up the phone, and the RSO tells her: You must get them out of there now. We hear they’re going to shell the presidential palace; leave now. Derwinski and party did as requested, and, as they were leaving, shells shattered the windows of the palace. The party scooted in their fully armored Chevy Suburbans to the Residence over the lip of the hill and wasn’t hit.

Against the background of intensifying shelling and the likelihood of an imminent resumption of full-scale hostilities. We decided that we had to get some of the non-essential Washington visitors out of the country. Ed Derwinski fell in that category, so did one of the secretaries in the Rumsfeld party. (It wasn’t Wilma at this point.) We took them all in the armored K-Cars and as we’re loading the cars in front of the ambassador’s residence, I have a distinct memory of seeing a Katyusha fly overhead. It was slowing down enough, the jet from the rocket engines had finished, I could see the thing very clearly about two hundred feet above me go right over and land in the ravine behind us. We boarded the cars and drove down to the embassy. By this point Marines had blocked the Corniche completely with earth-filled concrete forms two meters high. Behind these we had positioned Marine LTV-8 armored personnel carriers, and we’d cut down the palm trees to use the Corniche as a helicopter landing pad. The moment our convoy of cars arrived, Ambassador Christopher Ross—who was part of Rumsfeld’s team—raced into the embassy and began emptying a bar-lock cabinet that had sat in the political section’s offices since May 1983 without any of us knowing what was inside. It turned out to contain the files of the entire negotiating history of the May 17 Agreement. Chris crammed the files into big cartons and carried them outside just as a Marine “Huey” helicopter came skimming over the sea to land on the sidewalk in front of the embassy. While the helicopter’s rotors continued to spin, we loaded Ed, Chris, the secretary and the safe-full of files onto the Huey. The helicopter verged on being overloaded. With the file boxes taking up most of the seats, the door gunners had to stand on the skids. Nonetheless, they took off and headed south for Israel at less than 100 feet above the wave tops.

Q: One question. Did in the end the ship offshore fire its guns?

ENGELKEN: I’ll get to that. The answer is yes, we’ll get to that in a moment.

We now come to the day the U.S. effort to stabilize Lebanon collapsed. It was the most frightening 24 hours of my 40-year career.

On the morning of the 6th of February, my wife and I woke, dressed, and got in our car to go to work as usual. When we drove out of the garage, however, we found the street full of peasant-looking people, women with bags of belongings balanced on their heads. They had come out of the southern suburbs to escape intense shelling from government forces

defending the approaches to the Presidential Palace and government buildings. These displaced persons were beginning to break into vacant apartments, to seize places to sleep. We drove to work, and I got into an official car and went to meet one of my contacts for a routine discussion of the situation. My wife was frantically trying to get me recalled. Finally, they were able to reach my driver by radio, and he came and got me out of the meeting. People in our building, a missionary couple, had called the embassy to say people were breaking down their door to seize their apartment, what should they do, could we come get them? We did not have anybody to do that. In the end, they weren't hurt but I'm certain they were forced out of their apartment and had to leave. Obviously, my wife and I feared our apartment would be the next one broken into.

As part of my regular duties, I audited Radio Beirut news at noon. It announced that there would be a total curfew beginning at one P.M. (the afternoon) and anybody on the street after that would be shot. While I had been meeting a contact and worrying about the security of my apartment, the Sixth Brigade of the Lebanese Army, the unit that had been guarding West Beirut, had mutinied in protest at the heavy shelling of the Shia suburbs, The 6th Brigade, which was heavily Shia itself, had announced at noon that it was no longer accepting orders from the defense ministry. In many places in the town, the 6th Brigade troops left their posts and handed their arms, the M113s and all the weapons we'd equipped them with, over to PSP, Amal, and Hizbollah. At about one P.M., once again militia roadblocks began appearing all over the city. I remember the RSO running in to say, "Hey, men I don't recognize have blocked both entrances on the Corniche into the embassy complex. We don't know who they are. They're wearing masks and have Kalashnikovs. I don't know what's going on."

Up to this point, we still had staff, including adult family members, living in apartments scattered around the city north of Corniche Mazra'a, the boulevard that separated the city proper from the southern suburbs. Several spouses called on the radio, terrified with good reason to report that there was shooting going on around their buildings and people were trying to break in. One building had a 6th Brigade guard post in front and this post did what they were supposed to do; they defended the building. They didn't hand over their guns or melt away. They were firing and RPGs were landing in the lobby of the apartment building. The spouses were on the third or fourth or fifth floor hearing this, obviously frightened. All we could do at this point was tell everybody to shelter in place.

It took two or three days before we were able to go out and rescue stranded spouses. The RSO finally went out with a white flag and began to parley with the militiamen blocking us in. It turned out, they were all residents of the neighborhood, and that we had met them previously in their civilian lives. They were members of the PSP and were of the Druze religion. Their leader, Saleh, was the man who ran the coffee shop. The other armed men were mostly attendants at the neighborhood gas station. All now wore red arm bands and carried Kalashnikovs and bags over their heads with eye holes cut in them. Despite their scary aspect, the RSO was able to establish a rapport with them. After all, this was their neighborhood, and they did not want it wrecked by fighting.

But at this point, a problem erupted. There was a heavily Christian LAF Special Forces

company in West Beirut. They were not going to surrender. Instead, they took hostages and retreated into the military officer's club (Bain Militaire) at the very tip of the Beirut Peninsula about 800 meters west from the U.S./UK Embassy chancery. They were barricaded in there. The Druze, Saleh and his boys, were trying to attack them there. They were aided by other militiamen from allied groups. As night fell, heavy gunfire erupted as the militias attempted and failed to storm the officers club. The Lebanese Army called us to warn us to take cover, since they were going to fire artillery support for their stranded company.

At the same time, we had another severe problem. The one P.M. curfew had caught us with all the FSNs in the building. You couldn't just turn them loose. The streets were completely unsafe. Someone had decided a month earlier that the bottles of water and MREs (meals, ready to eat) had been blocking the hall and were a hazard. They, therefore, removed them. Thus, instead of having water and MREs, we had nothing. All members of the staff, Lebanese or American, had nothing but the clothes they were wearing when they came to work. We had more than 80 people within the secured perimeter with nothing to eat or drink (Tap water was not potable.) We had to make do. We sent one of the ARSOs down to the Durraford Building. He shot the lock off the portable trailer we were using as a commissary, and gathered whatever edibles he could find in there, and drove back. By this point, the Lebanese Army had begun shelling the area as it had warned.

The ARSO came running up the steps of the UK Embassy with the loot. What's in an embassy commissary if you must eat it? Everybody got a can of orangey Cheese Balls and a two-pound bag of peanut M&Ms. We had our choice of either straight Scotch (recall no water available) or Emerald Dry California white wine.

It was a rough evening. No one had a toothbrush, and you can imagine that eating two pounds of M&Ms and swilling Scotch around my mouth left me desperately wanting one.

At this point for the only time in my career, the decision was made to burn the files. Burn it all. We may be forced out of here tonight, burn it all. We didn't have much in the way of files because we'd been bombed the previous April, so there wasn't much left. Only one safe drawer for the Pol Section. Nonetheless, it took me an hour to put it all down the shredder. It was slow, kept jamming, overheating. I can understand how Embassy Tehran failed to destroy everything in 1979. People down the street in the consular section had to shred the passports and the visa foils, and break the visa plates, and break the seals, the old consular seals. Those are hard. The passports kept blocking the shredder. They told me they spent hours trying to destroy everything, while shell fire kept coming into the neighborhood. It was dramatic.

At this point it was early evening. It was to be a long night. We sat in the hall or in the basement. The Lebanese army repeatedly asked for permission for the trapped company in the Bain Militaire to fall back into our perimeter. This would have made us a target. We rejected their request. The Lebanese Army, therefore, continued firing shells into the neighborhood all night. They were apparently trying to prevent the militias from forming

up for a new assault on the officers' club. You could hear the muzzle blast and count to five and then there would be an explosion, close enough in many cases that you could hear shrapnel hit the side of the building. I remember hearing glass break and people screaming in neighboring apartment buildings. The air was full of Cordite smoke. Anybody who's been under shell fire will say it's the most helpless feeling you can ever have.

Q: Cordite smoke is also poisonous so you had all kinds of respiratory complications.

ENGELKEN: I developed asthma after this, although I can't prove it is connected.

We spent an awful night. Finally, the government and the Druze negotiated the withdrawal of the troops in the Bain Militaire. The two sides exchanged their hostages, and a Lebanese military helicopter came to fetch the Special Forces away. The shell fire stopped.

I should add during the afternoon of this awful day, the Green Line which divided the city into East and West reestablished itself. As soon as the Lebanese Army was off the streets of West Beirut, the West Beirut militias, the Druze and Shias and a Sunni militia called the Mourabitoun all began reoccupying their old positions. The Christian Lebanese Forces militia did the same on the other side, and by morning of February 7 the city was redivided. All vehicle traffic between the two halves of the city was impossible. This meant the Embassy on the Corniche in Ras Beirut was on the other side of a confrontation line from the ambassador's residence in Yarzeh. Phone service was out. We could only communicate by radio.

The RSO was beset by the staff. We were all clamoring, of course, to get the spouses; we'd like to get a change of clothes and a toothbrush. And many of us had pets; my wife and I had a cat at home. A lot of people did. We wanted to get her. The RSO to his credit negotiated with Saleh the cafe owner and Druze leader, to have his men accompany us to our residences to get our baggage and the cat. We got in an armored Suburban, but in the front seat riding shotgun was a Druze militiaman with a red armband and a Kalashnikov, and I'm putting myself entirely at his discretion. It was funny, when they gave you their word, they really kept it. As I boarded the truck, the RSO came up and whispered in my ear, "You have got to get moving. The *New Jersey* is going to fire on the mountain in an hour." This meant we were going to have the *New Jersey* fire on the relatives of the people who were guarding me.

Okay. Adrenaline pumping, we threw clothes into bags; we fished the cat out from under the bed where she had dug her claws into the carpet, her hair was standing straight up, put her in her carrier, and drove back to the embassy. Then what were we going to do? Next to the embassy was an apartment building, the El Dorado Building, where the Mission had six of the seven apartments. The Embassy just commandeered it. The Durraford Building where we had the consular and public affairs and some of the management section, also had apartments that were used to house American staff.

My wife was tasked with doing a survey of accommodations; how many sofas we had, love seats – short people got love seats, tall people got sofas; every bed in the Durraford Building and the El Dorado Building was occupied. My wife and I moved in with newly arrived Political counselor, David Winn, and another couple also. He had a three-bedroom apartment, two couples (tandem couples, not dependent spouses) all moved into the apartment. The Marine officers got the couches, I think we had a Philippine FBO (Foreign Building Office) employee who got the love seat because he was shorter. We were stuck there. People then threw all their cats into this apartment. We had five or six cats at one point, who did not like each other. There were thus frequent cat fights on top of everything else.

That night the *New Jersey* did open fire. Rumsfeld convinced them to open fire, claiming that the residence was under shell fire. You could just see these incredible jets of flame over the horizon, jets of flame coming over the horizon from nine 16-inch guns, it was deafening, and the ship was miles away from us. But it turns out they couldn't hit the side of a barn. They didn't hit anything. As best we know the only thing they hit was a Syrian ambulance. There was an air-naval gunfire liaison company, the ANGLICO team, up on the mountain near Brummana with spotter scopes to adjust the fire. Every time they tried to correct the aim; it grew worse. They finally just let the shells hit the side of the mountain uselessly.

Q: You mentioned spotters, but doesn't the Navy also have aircraft that are supposed to be doing some of the recon?

ENGELKEN: I don't think the aircraft carrier was offshore at this moment, and the helicopter carrier only had a few transport helicopters, a couple of Cobra gunships but not much. There were ZSU 23-4s all over the mountain. A slow observation aircraft would have been a vulnerable target.

After this thunderous barrage, the city largely fell quiet. The fighting died down. We decided to evacuate non-official Americans from the country and to reduce the Embassy staff. The State Department announced on VOA (Voice of America) and BBC (British Broadcasting Company) that Americans should leave Lebanon, and that we were going to evacuate all non-essential staff from the U.S. Embassy. (My wife and I were told we were essential and that we were going to stay until they burned the Embassy over our heads.)

West Beirut-based non-official Americans (and nationals of friendly countries) wishing to leave Lebanon were told to report to the U.S./U.K. embassy on the Corniche, and an evacuation point was established in the port of Jouniyeh just north of East Beirut. Tables were set up on the Corniche. There were five folding tables, five of us sitting behind them, and five queues of frightened civilians. They made a diverse crowd. There were Americans (many of Lebanese-ancestry) but also Turks, British, and other NATO nationals. Even the Mauritian tennis team that had been studying at AUB on an AID scholarship showed up with their tennis racquets. My wife and I were both seated behind a table and spent the better part of a day deciding who was eligible for evacuation and who was not based on instructions in a telegram we had received that morning from State

in Washington. Those we considered eligible were ushered away by the Marines and formed into organized groups equal in size to the carrying capacity of a CH-53 helicopter. A steady parade of these large helicopters landed one after another on the Corniche to pick up evacuees and shuttle them to Larnaca in Cyprus.

For the most part, the evacuees were orderly. The helicopters were not rushed or mobbed. The only disruption to an otherwise orderly process came when some group opened mortar fire on us. I saw a shell land in the sea about several hundred meters offshore. There was a geyser, and a moment later a little bit closer another shell, another geyser, and then another closer still. I realized somebody was walking the shots right in toward us. One of the RSOs suddenly yelled "Take cover," and we all ran to line up against a low parapet wall in front of the Embassy. The RSO engaged Saleh the Druze commander who insisted he hadn't given permission for this shell fire which he insisted was from a different Beirut militia. Several RSOs and several Druze militiamen fanned out and went up the hill together to search the AUB campus to find the mortar. They eventually chased whoever was doing this away. No one was hurt. But the last shell landed forty meters from us. (We did have one casualty a few minutes later. A Turkish woman waiting for a helicopter was struck in the ear by a spent round. The Marines bandaged her up, and she proceeded to leave the helicopters with her group.)

Eventually, we loaded all the eligible persons presenting themselves in West Beirut. The following day we did it all over again in East Beirut. We had to fly by Marine helicopter to Jounieh which is just north of East Beirut and load eligible evacuees into landing craft which took them to the ships of the amphibious squadron offshore which in turn delivered them to the port of Larnaca in Cyprus.

At this point, U.S. policy in Lebanon needed a complete reexamination. The Lebanese army had just collapsed, essentially. The LAF didn't have the military power to regain the city. There was a brigade stranded south of Beirut airport, the 4th Brigade; it was attacked a few days later and just disintegrated. They fled to Israeli lines in Sidon. Two or three brigades had gone over to the other side. The army was split on confessional lines, exactly what we had tried to avoid. Remaining forces did not have enough force to recover the city, and there was no prospect of them being able to assume security duties in the south, assuming Israel could have been persuaded to withdraw.

We had to recognize that the Syrians had won. The U.S. dithered for a couple of weeks but by the end of February 1984, the Marines were withdrawn from the airport and the MNF left.

Then what? The Embassy was still there. The reinforced Marine platoon detached from the Marine Amphibious Unit remained behind to guard the chancery buildings on the Corniche. But what was our mission at this point? We were told that Secretary Shultz felt we couldn't let terrorists drive us out of a country. He was, therefore, determined to keep us there, and so we stayed. Why was never clear.

What was clear was that we were in great danger. Like all embassies for the last several

decades, when you came to work in the morning there was a stack of threats. At this point, the volume of the threat stream tripled. There were supposedly going to be donkey bombs VBIEDs, suiciders with suicide vests, a suicide helicopter threat, and so on. None of these things came to pass, but the aspirations in them were terrifying.

Within the Embassy, there was also little open discussion of our plight. We quietly indulged in gallows humor but, otherwise, went about our tasks as before. I continued to try to go out and call on Lebanese contacts, but what was there to say? I do not remember mission management organizing a town hall or even a meeting of the emergency action committee, as U.S. embassies would do today. The most I recall is a staff meeting in which an Intelligence Community (IC) officer warned that “Somebody in this room will be attacked in the next month." That was pretty stark, but there was no discussion of further drawdowns.

Following the upheaval on February 6, Beirut settled into a tense, uneasy calm. Christian and Muslim militias resumed sniping at each other across the Green Line just as they had done prior to the Israeli invasion in 1982. The Muslim militias jostled with each other for control of specific neighborhoods in West Beirut. Ain Mraisseh, the neighborhood where the Embassy offices were located, was under the control of Walid Jumblatt’s PSP militia, but a few blocks east the old hotel district seemed to be under the control of Hizbollah. Rue Hamra just a few blocks south and up the hill from us seemed to be controlled by a Sunni militia called the Murabitoun. Other parts of Ras Beirut were the turf of the Syrian Social National Party (SSNP), a small group that was particularly close to the Syrian regime. It went on like that across the city. The Lebanese police and army were nowhere to be seen; instead, the militias marked their turf by having militiamen manning checkpoints along the boundaries of their fiefdoms.

Despite the general lack of law and order, we were permitted to resume living in our apartments toward the end of February, even though we were completely vulnerable. There was no quick reaction force (QRF) and no police or army to summon for help. I remember locking the steel door to my apartment one night and thinking what are we going to do if somebody fires an RPG and blows in this door?

My wife and I were able to take a brief vacation to Paris at the beginning of March. On our return, we stopped in Larnaca and were getting ready to board a helicopter to go back to post when we were warned that William Buckley, a senior embassy officer, had been kidnapped from his apartment which was located about five hundred meters from ours.

This caused a major crisis. Finding our colleague and the other Americans who were eventually kidnapped became the Embassy’s focus for the rest of my tour in Beirut.

Upon my return, I found the Embassy in an uproar. Everyone who had any Lebanese contacts was told to approach them and ask for information on our colleague’s whereabouts. Of course, our usual friends claimed to know nothing about this affair. Initially, the RSO had the most success. Talking to his contacts in the various Beirut militias, he was able to trace the route taken by the kidnappers through the city as far as

the Beirut-Damascus Highway where the trail went cold. The car with Bill in it was last seen heading up the Mountain and toward the Bekaa Valley.

I was asked to go talk to the Sunni mufti (Islamic jurist) and ask if he could contact a Shia cleric, Sayyid Mohammad Hussayn FadlAllah, who was believed to be the spiritual guide of Hizbollah. We were trying to open some sort of channel to the kidnappers and learn their demands. No motor pool cars were available for this errand. Several had been stolen on February 6, and some of our regular drivers had yet to return to work. I thus had to drive alone in my personal car, an old VW Beetle to Mufti's offices a few blocks south of Corniche Mazra'a and very close to the southern suburbs. I remember driving past a traffic circle that had an M-48 tank turret lying in the middle of it that had been lying there since the February 6 fighting. There were young men with blue jeans and Kalashnikovs standing around; who were they? Who knows? They didn't stop me, but. I went as fast as I could to the Mufti's Mosque and office complex and asked his chief secretary for help contacting FadlAllah. In front of me, the man opened his Rolodex, found FadlAllah's number, called it, and put him on speaker phone. Of course, FadlAllah insisted, "I know nothing about this; I'm not going to be involved; don't call me." That effort was fruitless.

The Iranians particularly but also the Syrians, wanted to push all Western foreigners out of West and East Beirut if they could. To do so, they began randomly kidnapping all the Americans they could get their hands on. I recall toward the end of February we organized a meeting to discuss security with American consular wardens. Among them were three AUB faculty members. Since their acting president had just been murdered, it was obvious to us that they were all in danger. DCM Pugh strongly urged them to leave Lebanon immediately saying, "We can't protect you, and there is clearly an effort to kidnap Westerners of any kind."

Among those present, I recall Thomas Sutherland, the dean of the agriculture faculty, but there were other AUB faculty members there as well. Many of them had been there for forty years, loved Lebanon, and strongly rejected the idea that the time had come for them to depart. They argued, "Everybody knows us and knows we're okay, that we're friends of Lebanon unlike you Embassy officers." A heated discussion followed. Pugh, other Embassy staff members, and I warned that these long resident Americans had missed the change in atmosphere. While they might once have been seen as "good guys and friends of the Arab cause," the Iranians and Syrians didn't care. They were determined to destroy AUB and all Western cultural institutions and eliminate American political and cultural influence in Lebanon. Two or three weeks later Sutherland was kidnapped, and then a steady stream of others: Presbyterian Minister Benjamin Weir, CNN Bureau Chief Jeremy Levin, Lebanese International School chief Frank Reed, etc. etc. The kidnappings seemed to occur at two- or three-week intervals throughout the coming spring and into the following year. Each time the Embassy attempted to spring into action, but the kidnappers steadfastly refused to communicate with us. The story of the hostages at this point merges into the Iran-Contra story and leaves my personal recollection.

As March 1984 proceeded, unity among the West Beirut militias began to crack. Hizbollah wanted to expel foreigners, for example, but other groups were not so keen, and were increasingly threatened by Hizbollah's growing strength. The Druze, for example, as heterodox Muslims worried that they might become the target of persecution from fundamentalists like Hizbollah somewhere down the road. Sunnis also started to worry that their traditional domination of Lebanon's Muslim community was threatened.

All alliances in Lebanon were tactical; groups would change sides without blushing. The alliance of militias that had defeated the government in February fell apart a month later in March. My wife and I woke up one morning early that month and heard shooting all through the Ras Beirut neighborhood. The RSO asked PSP Ain Mreisseh chief Saleh what's going on. "Oh, we're going to get rid of the Mourabitoun today," he responded cheerily. And so, they did. After a six-hour gun battle, fighters of the Sunni militia surrendered to a joint attack by the PSP and the Shiite Amal and Hizbollah militias.

To show there were no hard feelings (or firm loyalties), the PSP immediately enlisted the Kurdish members (Kurds are Sunnis) of the Mourabitoun into what was otherwise mostly a Druze militia. The next week I saw many men I knew to be Kurds wearing PSP armbands.

In sum, the government's defeat didn't bring peace. Instead of conflict between the government and militias opposed to the May 17 Agreement, there was an atmosphere of tension pitting all against all.

Yet the Embassy was still expected to somehow negotiate implementation of the May 17 Agreement. Donald Rumsfeld stepped away from his Middle East negotiator role in March 1984, leaving Ambassador Bartholomew to soldier along on his own. I remember taking the Ambassador to meet the Higher Shiite council, a group of six stern, bearded clerics with black turbans that represented Lebanon's Shiite clergy. We tried to discuss the security arrangements Israel would need in exchange for evacuating predominantly Shiite areas of South Lebanon. They stoutly rejected giving Israel any quid-pro-quos for withdrawal. This deadly serious conversation led to a funny exchange. I had been trying to interpret for Ambassador Bartholomew, even though my Arabic fluency was not up to that level. I remember sweating bullets in this painful three-hour meeting. Eventually the Ambassador became exasperated by the Shiite clerics' unwillingness to enter into any real give and take, and he asked me to tell them "A stitch in time saves nine." This had me floored. Anyone who has attempted to translate knows that proverbs cannot be translated literally. I had to tell the Ambassador "I'm sure there is an Arab proverb that means that, but I don't know it. And I don't know how to say stitch in Arabic." This brought welcome laughter from all in the meeting, but, in the end, we made absolutely no progress.

While we continued to work fruitlessly on negotiating withdrawal, the need to deal with an ever-growing list of hostages finally made it apparent that there was no way that we should be living in unguarded apartments scattered around Ras Beirut. We were just too vulnerable. In late March, DCM Pugh decided that we had to leave those apartments and

concentrate everyone within the perimeter guarded by the Marine reinforced platoon (basically between the British chancery and the Durraford Building -- a distance of about six hundred meters). This meant putting everyone doubling or tripling everyone up once more in apartments in the El Dorado and Durraford Buildings. My wife and I were lucky in that we were once again given our own bedroom in the apartment of my boss, the Political Chief. Another couple occupied the apartment's third bedroom and a rotating cast of colleagues slept on the sofas in Winn's living room.

We were safer but logistically still insecure. We had looted our own commissary in February, and there was no way to replace it. We had to go out to local markets to buy food. This, of course, created a significant vulnerability. The Embassy hired additional local guards to provide protection for these food runs. One was expected to book a car and a local guard, go out to the supermarket; "Cover me, I'm going to buy peaches." It was very strange to walk through a market with an ordinary shopping cart, while accompanied by a local guard with a 9-millimeter in his armpit looking in all directions in case somebody goes after us. I suppose I should have been less self-conscious. Everyone in Beirut was armed. We had an incident everybody laughed at at the time. There was a very nice supermarket called Goodies, their equivalent of Whole Foods, with beautiful stacks of fruit and veg. Of course, with the police gone, crime rose. A man snatched a woman's purse in the fruit aisle and went running past the check-out counter to leave the store. The ladies paying for their groceries had a different idea. They pulled out small "lady-sized" revolvers from their purses and shot the thief as he ran by. They didn't kill him but did put a couple of .22 rounds in him. He did not get away.

In May, my wife and I visited southern Lebanon behind Israeli lines. No Embassy officer had been to the region for many months, and Embassy Tel Aviv was offering to go up with an Israeli Army guard to look at the area. Had word of this gotten out, it would have confirmed Lebanese paranoia that Israel was planning to annex the area, establish settlements, and drain water from the Litani River. There was also the very real danger that the Israelis would have their guests talk only to their collaborators and not get an honest picture of the situation. We strenuously opposed Embassy Tel Aviv's offer, and insisted Embassy Beirut could do the visit.

Having waved off Embassy Tel Aviv, we then had to make the trip to the south happen. It was not easy. The only open road wound through a Druze dominated region known as the Shuf and crossed Israeli lines at Batir, a remote Israeli checkpoint high in the hills. From there the road twisted its way down to Sidon and the four-lane coast road. We, therefore, had to negotiate with the Druze safe passage. We also tried to send word to our contacts in the South that we were coming, but there was no way to know whether the messages we had entrusted to Lebanese traveling south before us had been received. All telephone lines between the occupied south and the rest of the country had been cut.

When the time came, my wife and I, an ARSO, and an Embassy driver got into one of the armored K-Cars and drove first to Walid Jumblatt's residence at Mukhtara in the Shuf mountains. He had a wonderful Ottoman era palace, which was surrounded by sandbags at the time. Jumblatt himself was not in residence, but we stopped for tea with an uncle

and other clan members just to make sure they knew we were going to drive through their territory. We then drove to the Batir checkpoint and were questioned sternly by Israeli soldiers before going through a concertina wire chicane and on down the mountain slope to Sidon and ultimately to Tyre. Since we had not been able to phone ahead, we just stopped and knocked on the doors of people we had previously met in Beirut. Everyone invited us in for tea. They were eager to talk and to tell an outsider what was going on. I learned a lot.

Their big complaint was that they were cut off from Beirut, the normal market for their agricultural produce. While trucks were in theory permitted to transport the region's fruit and vegetables through the Batir crossing, in practice it was almost impossible. The Israelis who had been coming under increasing attacks from resistance groups understandably searched every truck very carefully. This was time consuming and meant there was a long queue waiting to go through the Batir checkpoint. The fruit and vegetables often rotted before they could be sold. Locals told me that the cost of renting a refrigerated truck basically wiped-out whatever profit they might have made. On top of this, my interlocutors claimed (I don't know if this is true) that the Israelis would not let them export their fruit to Israel, as it would have competed with Israeli fruit. As we drove along, we could see orchards with oranges, grapefruit, and apples lying on the ground rotting. No one had bothered to pick them.

Not surprisingly, resistance was clearly intensifying. When I travelled south in May 1983, Israeli soldiers were relaxed, shirts off, lounging around. No more. By spring 1984, they were moving only in convoys, guns at the ready, flak jackets and steel pots on. And in vast areas they weren't moving on foot or interacting with the population. Their patrols would drive through and then there would be nobody after that. I don't know how much they were controlling; they held some strong points. I don't think they controlled much of the population.

We showed up in Tyre to see the head of one of its biggest families. We had previously met in Beirut, where he was a lawyer, a deputy in parliament, wore a three-piece suit and was suave and sophisticated with excellent English. Knock on his door unexpectedly in Tyre, and he was a different man. He greeted us in a leather bomber jacket with a .45 automatic under his armpit. Members of his family were gathered around the dining table, Kalashnikovs in the corner, and they were having a council of war. The Israelis had allowed him to form his own (collaborationist) militia, and they'd had a fight with the militia of the Tyre Fishermen's union the previous day Since both militias were tolerated by Israel. I am sure the fight was over dividing the proceeds of extortion rather than politics.

Our host said, "you must have dinner," and within an hour they had the table covered with hummus, baba ganoush, tabbouleh, lamb, and rice. We were not invited, not expected, but boom a wonderful meal– that's just Lebanese hospitality. That's what they do.

After our trip I recall meeting (this is significant later) meeting one of the deputies of

Nabatieh, a small town in which we had stopped on this trip. He was a Shiite who lived in East Beirut (I don't know how he managed this). He invited us to the Faraya ski lodge high in the mountains in the Christian held area. As often in Lebanon, the place was strange. We dined on lobster tail as I recall. There was a heated pool, women in bikinis, and he talked to us about how things are going in south Lebanon. The conflict seemed a world away.

By now, I am discussing events in the summer of 1984. The main issue facing the Mission was what are we going to do with the embassy? The buildings from which we were working (Derriford Building and UK Embassy) had been chosen *in extremis* after the bombing the year before. They were never meant to be permanent. This makeshift arrangement was becoming more and more unsustainable as time went on. To reduce the risk of a sudden VBIED attack we had blocked the Corniche, the main street of West Beirut. This left West Beirut traffic terribly snarled, and Beirutis were becoming more vocal complaining about it. At the same time, the Marines and Sixth Fleet were becoming ever more impatient about leaving the reinforced platoon and the three LTV-8 "Amtracs" to guard us. The fleet had had to keep ships standing offshore to keep the Marine platoon supplied and the battalion landing team from which it was drawn was weakened and would have had difficulty responding if a crisis had erupted somewhere else. Finally, DoD gave us a deadline. "We're leaving by July 31." And the State Department's going to have to figure out how to survive on its own in Beirut, if it wants to keep a post there.

The fundamental problem was that the security threat had not diminished in the least. We still had hostages being held, and there was no reliable force in Beirut that was willing or able to protect us. Normally, that would be the responsibility of the host government, but Lebanon was close to a failed state, and West Beirut was beyond its control.

The management counselor and the DCM made herculean efforts in May and June to find alternative, secure places in which to work. We were concerned about completely closing in West Beirut, since this would be perceived as abandoning the Muslim community and siding with the Christians. We, therefore, tried to build a fortified office in West Beirut and an office in East Beirut where we thought we were going to be more secure. It was deep into East Beirut, well away from the confrontation line, up the mountain a bit in a place called Awkar. The Embassy had only a month or less to prepare the lease and modify the structure which was originally an apartment building.

At the same time, we were very worried about the security of the site we were going to keep in West Beirut. This was supposed to be in a never completed building a few hundred meters west of the British Embassy site. The RSO spent a lot of time hiring Saleh and his men to guard the West Beirut office. We basically hired a militia to guard it. Then we formed a local guard force from scratch in the East. The RSO was trying to do two things at once and was overwhelmed. We, Embassy staff members, were very worried about maintaining security as we moved between the Awkar and West Beirut sites. To do so, we had to drive through the green line. Both sides had agreed on crossing points to let traffic pass, but there was no guarantee that you were safe. When you entered West Beirut, I can recall there was a barricade and overlooking the crossing point were

guys with binoculars, face masks, Kalashnikovs, and the flags of the West Beirut militias behind them including Hizbollah. They were clearly looking for people in traffic to pick up. Our armored K-Cars stood out like a sore thumb. No one in Lebanon drove anything like them. We made the feeble effort of trying to repaint them—better than nothing I suppose. But that was feeble. Obviously, we were extremely worried about being kidnapped while driving back and forth.

Ready or not, we moved on the 1st of August. The Marines put their amphibious armored personnel carriers in the water from a little fishing cove about 200 meters east of the Durraford Building, sailed out to a Landing Ship Tank, an LST, boarded and sailed away. By this point, trust had built up so much between us and Saleh's local PSP militia that we let armed PSP militiamen into our perimeter and escorted the Marines "AmTracs" to their launch point in what was after all a PSP controlled neighborhood. All went smoothly and without incident, but, as I looked at the unmanned barricades, the realization sank in that we were home alone, with just the local guards, our allied PSP detachment, and the fourteen-man Marine security guard detachment. That's it. No QRF at all.

We moved to the east immediately thereafter. We had a brief moment of relative relaxation. Things seemed normal in East Beirut and even more so along the coast to the north. There was electricity most of the time; restaurants were open; grocery stores were well-stocked; there was no curfew. The gunfire along the green line was no longer audible in Awkar. We were mostly beyond the reach of the West Beirut militias' artillery. I remember going to Jounieh, a little port north of Beirut, going to Byblos (Arabic: Jubayl). There were lovely seafood restaurants on terraces overlooking the sea. In other times, people took vacations in Lebanon, and you could see why. They had a ski lodge, restaurants, the beach. It was lovely. People swam in the sea (and contracted horrible skin infections because untreated sewage was coming into the sea, but never mind). As we later realized, the calm was deceptive. Lebanon's demons still lurked.

We were given a nice apartment on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. For the first time in a year, I felt comfortable, happy, and my wife and I decided to do something bold. We went to northern Lebanon. No one from the Embassy had been there in years.

The politics of the north were completely divorced from those of Beirut and central Lebanon. The area was under nominal Syrian control, but the relatively small Syrian garrison largely left security in the hands of a tangle of local militias, most of them confessionally based. These armed groups fought and squabbled with each other frequently with the Syrians occasionally coming down violently on whatever militia was becoming too powerful. In other words, the Syrians kept control by maintaining a balance of power among mutually antagonistic local groups.

Gabi, my political Foreign Service National (FSN) who came from the Koura District southeast of Tripoli assured us that we could in fact safely travel there. "I know these people," he said, "You can go." So, we did, with Gabi brokering our appointments.

We went first to Tripoli itself and called on several prominent Sunni leaders, including

former Prime Minister Rashid Karame and then we went up the mountain to the town of Ihdin to call on Robert Franjiyyah, then the nominal head of a predominantly Maronite militia called the Marada (Giants) Brigades. Robert was the well-heeled, thirty-ish younger son of former Lebanese President, Suleiman Franjiyyah. We met in his quiet, expensively furnished office with a tiger skin rug on the floor and a telex machine steadily printing off stock prices in the corner. He received us immaculately dressed in a navy-blue suit, white shirt, and tie. As I recall, the conversation started off stiffly as we asked basic questions about his militia and its conflicts with neighboring ones, but he warmed up as he realized we were familiar with much of the Lebanese political situation, and it became apparent that he was enjoying a thoughtful conversation. When we finished, he escorted us out into a crowded waiting room and put on his mask again. The smile disappeared and the stern, haughty look of a "Sicilian godfather" reappeared as he dealt with a large gaggle of favor-seekers and supplicants from the villages controlled by his militia. Most of these people seemed to be poor, older women in simple black dresses and black stockings who sank to their knees and grabbed his trouser cuff to ask either to have a grandson enlisted in the militia (and thus paid) or released from militia service for more lucrative civilian employment. Robert "Beg," as he was addressed, patiently promised each petitioner to investigate their case.

This meeting went even better than we thought. Shortly, after our return to Beirut, we received an invitation to have dinner with Robert and his father, the ex-president, and to spend the night at their palatial Ihdin residence. We had a long discussion with the RSO about this, but eventually obtained his agreement to go.

This turned into a most revealing evening. In my recollection, the family debated at length the apparent apparition of the Virgin in Medjujorje, Yugoslavia. Robert's parents had invited a pretty but empty-headed young woman from a good family whom they were obviously hoping Robert would find attractive. It wasn't working. The more inane her conversation became, the more he visibly recoiled. Finally, at the end of the evening we all excused ourselves to go to bed. Robert stopped us, asked if we would like a nightcap in a small sitting room off the main dining room. We, of course, agreed, and over a gin and tonic he expressed deep unhappiness with his life. He admitted that he had never wanted to be a militia leader, but "my family has a certain tradition which I must follow." He explained that his older brother Tony had been groomed for politics and to lead the family's military force. Tony, all his family members, the family servants, and the family's pet dogs had all been murdered in 1976, when gunmen connected to the Phalange Party had raided the Ihdin home. Even Tony's three-year old daughter was heartlessly killed. Suleiman, the ex-President swore revenge and had a family photo of the little girl pasted on walls and fence posts throughout the Ihdin area. There was no written explanation on these posters, but there did not need to be. Everyone understood that the little girl must be avenged. (N.B. This was Christian on Christian violence that had nothing to do with Lebanon's sectarian conflicts. Word was that the Franjiyyah had fallen out with the Phalange party over the division of the extortion from the Batrun cement plant.)

The following morning Robert took us in his personal jeep up to the top of Qurnat

as-Sawda, Lebanon's highest mountain (about 9000 feet above sea level). We stopped periodically on the way to talk to shepherds. The conversation always was the same. Robert would ask whether they needed anything. They would reply that they didn't and invite him to have coffee with them. He would reply that he would next time, and, as he put the jeep in gear to drive away, they would shout "Allah, yutawwal 'umrak, ya beg!" ("May God prolong your life, o prince!")

The scene at the mountain top was spectacular. Even though it was August 22, there were still scattered snow drifts. On the west side of the mountain, one could see north as far as Lattakia and south as far as Beirut. On the eastern side, the Bekaa Valley with a large green oasis around Baalbekk was visible. Robert had sent three family retainers ahead to put up inside a glacial cirque an umbrella and table set with china plates and Christoffle silver. The men first served us grilled kebabs, sweetened yoghurt and Arak chilled with snow, then shouldered automatic rifles and took positions along the rim of the cirque to ensure that no unwanted guests should intrude. My wife, Robert, and I spent a happy two hours sitting there in the cool watching periodic Israeli fighter patrols come from the south along the Lebanon range as far north as Latakia, Syria.

It was literally impossible to top this experience, and, in fact, though we did not know it, our time in Lebanon was coming to an end.

We left on vacation on September 6. On September 20, a suicide bomber hit the Awkar building. We hadn't installed the drop bar yet. The attacker used a car stolen from us during the February 1984 turmoil. I was in Washington at the time, my wife as well. We were called into the OpCenter that morning to help Washington get a grip on what was happening. No one state-side had yet visited the Awkar site and knew how it was laid out. My wife and I sat for several depressing hours in the OpCenter looking at live TV news feeds of the destruction and helping identify embassy staff who were still alive and functioning and explaining to our colleagues from the Lebanon Desk, NEA/EX, and DS how the site had been organized pre-explosion and what appeared to have survived.

After a couple of days, my wife and I resumed our vacation fully expecting to return in a week to the rubble to help put the Embassy back together a second time. I then received another call summoning me back to the Department yet again. I met with the NEA/ARN office director (responsible at the time for Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq) who told me that Embassy Beirut had learned that I was under a threat because Hizbollah intended to "liquidate" me. The office director told me my assignment to Beirut was being curtailed immediately. I protested saying the threat was vague, had no identifying details about me, and that it did not really change anything. Hizbollah would have liquidated me even if it did not have info that I had been to south Lebanon. The response was essentially, "It would embarrass us if you were killed. Therefore, we don't want you to go back."

The office director, who was the same person who had recruited me to go to Beirut in January 1983, observed they would have to replace me. This time he did not seem to be interested in someone who would bolster morale. He looked at me and asked deadpan "Do you know anybody who's just had a nasty divorce? "I said, "No I don't." And a day

or two later they decided to curtail my wife as well.

That ends our Lebanon story. Nothing else I did in 37 years in the Foreign Service was remotely as weird or dangerous. The story hasn't really been told how the Embassy survived and continued to function through this. Everything I have read about the 1983-84 U.S. intervention in Lebanon focuses on the Marines and the high policy debates in Washington that accompanied this exercise. The Marines had a difficult, and dangerous experience, but no one seems to focus on the embassy and the fact we were left there alone. Too dangerous for the Marines, but we were still there. Forget the image of Embassy life as a series of parties and cucumber sandwiches. We survived by our own wits with very little help or consideration from the Department or Washington more generally.

Q: Yeah. As a quick aside I joined the Foreign Service in June of '84, and in the months preceding I'm completing a masters degree, and following the news naturally about Lebanon because I'm joining the Foreign Service. What's going on? It became dizzyingly impossible to follow what was actually happening, and even what U.S. policy was, because of all the changing alliances and things that got blown up. What did it mean? Was it just what you mentioned about the Maronites, a feud or political? How expansive had Syrian influence become? What about the Israelis? It went on and on. You really couldn't make sense of it if all you were reading was the media and the news.

ENGELKEN: When you were there and talking to people of all factions, it made some sort of strange sense. I recall I was acting as a control officer for a visitor, when a bomb went off in a Beirut neighborhood. I told the visitor, "Oh that clearly was a message from group x to group y."

"How do you know that? How does that make sense?"

"No, it's obvious."

I have one other memory. In this spring of '84, to show how bad things were – my morale had bottomed. We didn't get mail for six weeks, early February to mid-March of '84. Nobody even noticed we didn't have mail because we were so busy trying to survive. Finally in mid-March, we discovered that someone in the Department's pouch room had misunderstood and thought the Embassy was closed and had ordered all our mail held in Washington. Of course, everyone at post was outraged. We sent an incandescent protest and our mail, great bags of it, was eventually delivered. When opened, we found many dunning notices from credit card companies charging my colleagues interest and penalties for not paying bills they had never received. (This was decades before autopay and on-line transactions; all payments at the time had to go by paper check.) Worse still, everyone who had life insurance from USAA (United Service Automobile Association) received a notice that their insurance was canceled, USAA refused to insure lives in what it considered a war zone. Essentially, this was a letter from a responsible insurer that said it considered your life was not worth a plugged nickel. NEA/EX worked months to have our credit records restored and to convince USAA to reverse its decision.

Q: Wow. Okay. On that cheery note. At the next session we'll tie a knot on this and talk about where you go next and what it's like to be told you're not going back to post, what happens to you from there.

ENGELKEN: There's a story that has to be told about what happened to the people who were told, they evacuated a lot of people after that, but nothing was set up to take care of evacuees at the time.

Q: I'll make a note to discuss the evacuation. Obviously, that is a major department policy issue that does change over time, but back in the mid-1980s I'm sure nobody was thinking very much about anything other than moving you.

ENGELKEN: This is the thing that eventually led to the formation of the Family Liaison Office (FLO). They didn't have FLO at the time. This is when they began FLO. This led to a lot of things. When we arrived back, they said "you're on your own. Your clothes and everything are in Lebanon, but you're here." One guy literally evacuated in a hospital gown.

Q: Incredible. We'll end here. This was riveting.

ENGELKEN: Thank you for letting me get that one off my chest, nothing else bothers me nearly like that one.

I spent the month of October subbing on the Lebanon desk as the Lebanon desk officer. The real desk officer had been on his honeymoon when the Embassy was bombed in September, and they called him back from his honeymoon to come and deal with this. I subbed in and said "You can resume your honeymoon."

This was the time I lobbied hard for a position, running around the building with my PAR (personnel record) talking with office directors who looked at you sternly. My wife to be felt we had gone through a lot, and she wanted to do something nice, quiet, and pleasant, and felt we had earned it. There were two jobs vacant at about the right time in Rome, one in the political section and the other as an assistant GSO (general services officer); my wife was management cone. It was a good fit.

I thus went to talk to the deputy director of EUR/WE (Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs (at the time)/Office of Western European Affairs) and explained everything. I didn't have Italian at this point, the job was language designated. It didn't open until summer of 1985 and this is October of 1984. I had French and I said I can learn Italian. Of course, they did not believe me. "You don't have any expertise in the area." Basically, he looked at me and then made an inadmissible statement. He said, "We don't run one Foreign Service, we run five. Go back to your bureau."

This still persists to some extent, but a lot less than it used to. In the 1980s it was very

clear, you were a Latin Americanist, and you may never serve anywhere else, and if you got stuck on the Africa circuit, you were going to be wearing mud cloth shirts for the rest of your life, and so forth. People hid behind all kinds of arcane knowledge. You remember "Berlinery?"

Q: Absolutely, it was practically a compartment unto itself.

ENGELKEN: If you mastered the details of the 1949 four-powers agreement on the status of Berlin, you were made for the rest of your life—one tour after another in Germany. I think truly (and rightly) efforts over the years have been made to break that sort of personnel siloing.

After my brush-off in EUR/WE, I went back and told my wife, and she said, "That's inadmissible. They can't say that. Call Ambassador Bartholomew and ask for his help."

I hadn't gotten on terribly well with him, but I called him and to his credit (I will always owe him this) he did me the most massive favor. I recounted the story I just told you. He exclaimed Christ! EUR/WE said that? Really? I'm calling the EUR Front Office right now. And he did just that, reading them the riot act. With the result that the EUR assignments people called me a few days later and asked, "What job do you want?" I specified the political job in Rome. They said, "Okay. There is an Italian class that begins in November."

Q: When they want to make it available, they do.

ENGELKEN: Yes. I went through Italian. I had the six months you need to prepare properly for a new assignment. After Arabic, Italian seemed easy. I had a good time, and I was rated 3+/3+ at the end of the course. I thus passed the minimum. In August of '85 I arrived in Rome.

But to back up; we talked about problems with being evacuated. September of '84, we're curtailed suddenly. My apartment's rented on a year lease; I don't have anywhere to stay. My sister-in-law was kind, but she had a tiny house. We didn't want to stay there for months. I had two suitcases with summer clothes in them; the season is changing; all my clothing is in Beirut. What do we do?

Most of our colleagues who were evacuated after the bombing were in the same situation. No one had more than a suitcase or two. I think you would receive thirty days of per diem if you were evacuated. Most leases in the DC area have a diplomatic clause and fortunately I had one. But you must give your tenant sixty or ninety days notice to vacate. Honestly that's fair, but it meant I had to go out and rent an apartment for three months and I didn't really have furniture, we were always sitting on the floor. Eventually they were able to get my furniture which had been stored, but it took a while. It took months to get our baggage out of Beirut. It was dangerous for the remaining embassy staff to go to our apartment, and it was hardly their top priority. They had to first restore the building function, and then some time in December or January were able to get out HHE

(household effects) on a ship which also took a month. It might have been January or February before I got my clothing.

I remember Beirut evacuees had a meeting with Alfred Atherton who was the DG (Director General) of the Foreign Service. He called us in because people were really griping. I think some of it was getting to the Hill. He was trying to head that off. We really gave him something, an earful. Not so much me (I had problems but—). The RSO recounted that he was at the embassy when the truck arrived; he heard the local guards shooting; he grabbed his semi-automatic pistol and ran out the door to see what was going on. He met the blast full force and survived but had a gash from his hairline to his lip. Entire face was stitched together rapidly in a Lebanese hospital and not by a plastic surgeon. As a result, his eyebrow didn't meet, he couldn't quite close his eye, and his lips didn't even meet. He looked like Frankenstein. He asked the DG, what am I going to do? I got evacuated in a hospital gown. I'm naked. I have nothing, nothing."

There was another woman, the B&F (budget and finance) officer who had been hit by the blast sideways. She had suffered a serious injury to her left eye. She was taken back to the U.S. and eventually lost sight in the eye; the retina detached. It was awful. There were many problems with getting the department to compensate evacuees for their out of pocket medical and housing costs. The department initially refused to pay for plastic surgery to restore the RSO's face. They reportedly told him we have a rule against paying for cosmetic surgery.

He said if you don't pay, I'm going to go to the Hill and sit there and let them look at me and say you won't pay. I don't think you want me to do that. They eventually gave in.

We had problems getting the department to assist a female FSN. She worked in the consular section, Lebanese, and was only twenty-two years old. Like so many, she received a face full of glass in the explosion. Again, her eye was severely injured. We had to campaign and finally the Department agreed to send her to Washington, to Georgetown hospital, for a serious examination to see if they could save the eye. They refused to pay for any member of her family to accompany her. She had never been out of Lebanon in her life. She did speak decent English, but she was twenty-two and probably more childlike than an American of the same age. The American evacuees took turns going to see her at the hospital to provide a little comfort.

Her doctors finally decided her eye could not be saved and removed it. She was depressed (Who could blame her?). Nobody will want to marry me, I'm now ugly. Jo Ellen and I took her to a place in a strip mall in Maryland that fit and made her a glass eye, which was designed so it would generally track with the other eye. It wasn't a bad prosthesis. But if the Department had had its way, she would have had to do this alone. She had never been in the U.S. before; did not know Washington at all, and was somehow expected to get herself on her own to Landover, Maryland for this stressful, sad procedure? We never could get them to pay for her mother to come to DC and take care of her. Anyway, Jo Ellen and I took her. She eventually went back to Beirut, and I think continued to work for the Embassy because that was the only job available. I've lost track

of her.

We are now in the summer of 1985 and I arrive in Rome, a few weeks ahead of my wife. It's a lovely place. It was a true reward for the rough tour in Beirut.

Rome, Italy (1985-1989)

Q: Your wife took the management job, and you took the political job?

ENGELKEN: Yes. It was obvious shall we say that I was not the political counselor's candidate. He honestly acted like he wasn't sure I could use a fork. This is a sophisticated place, not the wild place like Beirut, you're not the right guy to fit in here; all this really – to say I got a cold welcome is an understatement. But I got to work.

It was a beautiful place. We were assigned a small apartment in Trastevere, across the river. It's now a fashionable neighborhood, at the time it was probably in the process of gentrifying. It still had some funky charm to it. The people in the neighborhood considered themselves to be true Romans. Rome is like Washington. It was a tiny town when the country unified in the 1860s, almost everybody you meet in Rome came from somewhere else. Maybe they were born there, but their family's from somewhere else. Inhabitants of Trastevere and another neighborhood called Testaccio across the Tiber are the two neighborhoods considered themselves Romaneschi, "real Romans". The restaurants in the neighborhood tried to keep this going by having their menus printed in Romanesco which is a dialect. It's not standard Italian, but I really liked the color it gave to the neighborhood.

Not many Italians in this period spoke good English. An earlier generation had learned French. Younger people were moving toward English, but the politicians I had to talk to did not speak English. We polished our Italian by talking to folks in our neighborhood. I'd talk and use my FSI Italian, and folks would look at me with a gleam in the eye, "All right smarty pants" and then they'd speak to me in dialect, just to see how good my Italian really was. Of course, I couldn't follow them, they had a good laugh, but they would explain to me what the words meant. There were all kinds of expressions that were typical only to Rome you could pick up.

I was assigned four or five political parties to follow. I had the Socialists who at that point had the prime minister, Bettino Craxi. I had Social Democrats who were a splinter of the Socialists. Republicans led by Giovanni Spadolini, the defense minister who professed to be the party of clean government. I had Liberals who were classic liberals, a small party in Piemonte mostly.

Q: Was Cicciolina already in parliament then?

ENGELKEN: That happened while I was there.

Q; That's a cute story.

ENGELKEN: She got elected while I was there.

I also was the designee to talk to the MSI, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement), which was the neo fascist party. I didn't go see them. Our rule was we never went to see them. If they asked to see us, I would receive them. About once a year they would ask to see the ambassador. The ambassador always refused and delegated it to me, second secretary, pretty junior. I had to see a guy named Mirko Tremaglia, who had been a soldier in the army of the Republic of Salo, the Italian Social Republic that Mussolini founded behind German lines in 1943. The soldiers of the Republic of Salo spent their time hunting partisans. I don't think we really appreciate the extent Italy fought a civil war behind German lines in 1943-45. Most of the partisans were Communist, far to the left. The Red Belt—Emilia-Romagna—formed right at the end of the war as the Communist Party seized large, landed estates and never returned them, never restored to their owners. The Communists formed agricultural cooperatives, some became quite successful and wealthy. By the time I was there, they were making a lot of money. Classic one—Riunite Wine. "Riunite" is not some family's last name, it is reunification wine, a Commie wine. My econ colleagues got to meet people from there, they said they'd like to market in the United States. "We think it will go well, it's sweet and bubbly like Coca-Cola." They did succeed in selling some for a while here.

Anyway, for four years I had lots of fun. The government paid me to have lunch in Roman restaurants with politicians. Each party had their favorite two or three restaurants. One I remember, the Liberals had a Tuscan themed restaurant called Le Fontanelle, the little fountains. The Socialists had a couple of places, the Republicans—everyone had their own, and they were all good of course. The one you could take everybody to (it still exists) is called Da Fortunato Trattoria del Pantheon. It's on the piazza in front of the Pantheon, which is two blocks from the Palazzo Montecitorio which is the parliament. All the deputies would go there for lunch. It was a hoot taking somebody there, because the MPs were all gesturing to each other. Clearly, everybody knew each other, and they were talking across party lines. The Communists talking to the Christian Democrats; everybody's talking to everybody. The food was good. Needless to say, it was a good idea to walk back to the embassy. After one such lunch I came back and found four phone messages, each larger and larger, the ambassador wants to see you, the ambassador wants to see you, the ambassador wants to see you NOW! I go running down to see the ambassador and I am sheets well into the wind.

The ambassador was Maxwell Rabb. He had practiced securities law in New York, and had some connection to George H. W. Bush. He was over eighty and had been a Republican since the 1920s. You asked who his favorite president was, he would always say Calvin Coolidge. He had admired Coolidge's handling of the Boston police strike of 1920. Rabb was a good guy. He took the job seriously. I respected him.

There was one other angle to my job. I was the terrorism and narcotics coordinator. This gradually took more and more of my time and proved to be extremely interesting. When I got there the political counselor who didn't like me wasn't interested in these topics. He

was more interested in following domestic politics and the struggle of the Communists versus the Christian Democrats.

There were serious terrorist incidents in Italy in the 1980s, however. During my tour, we had I think the last one or two attacks by the Red Brigades, domestic terrorists. By that point, the mid-1980s, the Italian police had become skilled at countering them. Through effective police work in the early '80s against them, they had built up informants and really suppressed most of them. We were still dealing with the fallout. When I arrived, for example, the investigation into the murder of the head of the Sinai MFO (Multinational Force and Observers), a retired Foreign Service Officer named Leamon (Ray) Hunt, was still under way.

Q: A quick thing about the Red Brigades. Reading about them from outside of Italy, it never seemed entirely clear to me what their objectives were that were served by the terrorism they undertook.

ENGELKEN: One of their failings was that they wrote everything down. They spent long periods of time in very turgid arguments about ideology. Just really mind numbingly boring, the people who had to read these documents said this was the dullest stuff they've ever read, about the ideal state. They had theories about how the state should be formed and how society should be governed, and they were going to implement them through direct action. They did attempt to eliminate—they assassinated any number of prosecutors and senior police officers. They were trying to dismantle the repressive arms of the state as they saw them, and there was going to be some popular uprising that they were going to somehow trigger.

The question remains, and I've never seen this answered but it ought to be, to what extent did the KGB (Soviet/Russian secret police) help these people? I don't know, but I have to ask, I have to wonder. We could not find much of a connection between them and the established Communist Party which the Soviets openly financed. Remember those agricultural cooperatives I mentioned? The Soviets bought tons of farm produce from them and that was a way to launder money to the PCI as it was called, "Partito Comunista Italiana". But that was well known, the PCI didn't even deny it much. But it was obvious at that point the PCI was not going to win. They were in the process of becoming bourgeois; they were getting very interested in those businesses; they were turning quite entrepreneurial; and they weren't actually revolutionaries any longer. Parts of the country that voted communist were quite wealthy. Nobody really wanted some crazed commie revolution, they just wanted what they thought was fair treatment.

What role did the Soviets play in these things? I know of strong evidence of a Soviet connection to the Red Army Faction (Baader-Meinhof gang) in Germany. When was the last Red Army Faction attack? December '89, **after** the fall of the wall. Then it stopped. Why did it stop? Because a lot of the RAF guys had been hiding out in East Germany and the last attack was almost surely done by the "Stasi" (East German secret police), Stasi agents claiming to be the Red Army Faction.

Q: I had never heard that.

ENGELKEN: There's a story to be written there.

I don't know enough about the Red Brigades to say this, but I must wonder, did they get money from the Soviets somehow? From a Soviet perspective, the Red Brigades were just agents of chaos. They disrupted Western societies, frankly the way Putin is trying to back right-wing forces right now. He doesn't expect the American Nazis to take power or even want them to; he just wants the United States to be distracted, divided, and weakened. Did they support the Red Brigades? I don't know, I don't have evidence of it, but I have a deep instinct that they must have somehow.

Anyway, another reason I say this is Abu Nidal. Are you familiar with them?

Q: Yeah.

ENGELKEN: It's an acquired taste. The Abu Nidal Organization, the Fatah Revolutionary Council, targeted Italy extensively in the period I was there. It's another group that I must wonder why they do what they did? What were they gaining? Were the Italians really aiding Israel that much? A little bit. But cutting off Italian aid to Israel was not going to do anything much to Israel. Again, I'm deeply suspicious. The last Abu Nidal operation was in Greece in the summer of '89, and it stopped after the fall of the Wall. I can't prove that they were Soviet agents, but I am deeply suspicious. I know they were keeping money in Eastern European bank accounts, like Polish banks. There were a whole series of seemingly mindless and crazy stupid terrorist attacks with no clear objective that I could figure out. They just seemed intended to keep Westerners on the defensive.

Q: By the way, I was in the service at the time and reading about it in Foreign Affairs, trying to make sense of why they were attacking Italy. This is not a hugely strategic country, and the targets are not even what you would assume would be typical targets of terrorists.

ENGELKEN: Yeah. I have another theory which I can't prove. Were they trying to extort money out of Italy by damaging Italy's tourism industry?

Q: Of course, there was kidnapping and maybe they got some money that way, but—

ENGELKEN: They have said—none of this do I know for certain. I have no evidence of it, but I have lots of questions now as I think about it later. At the time it seemed less strange to me than it does now.

While I was in Italy, there were attacks by groups advocating the Palestinian cause. It began in October 1985, when the Palestine Liberation Front (a different group from Abu Nidal) hijacked the Italian-flagged cruise ship *Achille Lauro,* while it was touring in the Mediterranean. This was a big deal. There were U.S. citizens aboard, some of them quite

elderly. The U.S. deployed a team of special operators from Delta Force to Embassy Rome. They took over a large reception room outside the Ambassador's office, setting up many radios. And we had a State Department officer from S/CT (coordinator for counterterrorism) attached to them, to liaise with the Italians on recapturing the ship.

We were liaising with the Italians while they were trying to figure out a way for a SEAL (sea, air, and land) team to recapture the ship. I recall a desperate rush to get the right equipment and personnel into the area and significant debate as to whether attempting a rescue was worth the risk. Things came to a head when the terrorists shot Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly American in a wheelchair who was recovering from several strokes. He was as harmless a person as you could imagine. His captors demanded money and the release of prisoners held by Israel. To enforce their demands, they shot Mr. Klinghoffer and threw him overboard. The terrorists probably realized there might be an attack on the ship, so they forced the crew to sail to Port Said, Egypt, as fast as possible. There they got off the ship, let the passengers debark without further bloodshed, and were detained by the Egyptians.

Egypt then faced a dilemma. It was under intense pressure from Israel, the U.S., and Europe to prosecute and imprison the hijackers or to turn them over to Italy to do so, but public opinion in Egypt and Arab countries was sympathetic to them. They were Palestinian heroes. Egypt attempted to resolve the problem by getting rid of the hijackers quietly. It put them, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Front Abu Abbas (Muhammad Zaidan), and senior Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Hani al-Hassan on an EgyptAir flight from Cairo to Tunis. The U.S. became aware of this flight and the White House ordered a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean to scramble F-14s and intercept the EgyptAir plane, forcing it to accompany them to the U.S. Naval Air Station at Sigonella. This was a joint U.S.-Italian base under Italian sovereign control near Catania, Sicily.

While this was going on, I was blissfully ignorant, having taken our S/CT colleague to dinner on the assumption that it would be a quiet evening. It was not. I returned to my apartment late in the evening to find pandemonium. My landline phone had apparently rung off the hook (no cell phones yet). I and many others were called into the Embassy.

The United States had not told the Italians about this plan until the Egypt Air plane was approaching the Sigonella airfield. Ambassador Rabb received a call from Washington at two in the morning directing him to contact the Italian prime minister and obtain his permission for the plane to land and for us to remove the terrorists, load them on a U.S. military transport then take them to the U.S. for prosecution and trial.

This triggered a major crisis in U.S.-Italian relations. The Italians had been trying to maintain an even-handed stance toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, and they were genuinely offended by what they perceived as a violation of their sovereignty. As the Italian prime minister told the parliament two days later the U.S. special forces at Sigonella surrounded the Egyptian plane and demanded the Egyptians debark. They refused. The special forces team was then surrounded by the "carabinieri" (Italian military police), and they were

pointing guns at each other. The Italians were determined that we were not going to arrest the suspected terrorists and remove them from Italian territory without going through the legal extradition process. Urgent calls to Washington and Rome followed as both sides attempted to resolve the stand-off. The four hijackers were detained by Italian police in Sigonella, but the lead organizer of the operation Abu Abbas and his PLO colleague remained on the airplane, despite U.S. demands that they too be arrested and prosecuted.

Suddenly, the Egyptian plane with the two leaders aboard began to taxi down the runway and take off. A small U.S. Navy executive jet (not a fighter plane) then took off down the taxiway without clearance from the tower to pursue the EgyptAir plane and find out where it was going. This is how we learned that the Egyptian craft went on to land at Ciampino Airport. Ciampino is a small, dual-use military-civilian airport southeast of Rome which at the time was used for a few domestic flights and by the Italian Government's executive squadron. Once on the ground, the Italian authorities permitted Abu Abbas and Hani al-Hassan to get off the plane and board Egyptian Embassy vehicles which drove them to the Egyptian Academy, the Egyptian Embassy's Cultural Center and thus a building considered part of the premises of the Egyptian Embassy. U.S. law enforcement officers attached to the Embassy Rome tailed the motorcade but had no jurisdiction to stop it. It was a day of intense diplomatic action. The highest levels of the U.S. government were demanding that Abu Abbas be detained in increasingly testy messages passed by Ambassador Rabb and in direct phone calls by senior White House officials including President Reagan.

The Italians eventually split the baby. They arrested the four gunmen who had actually murdered Klinghoffer, but they argued there was insufficient evidence to hold Abu Abbas and Hani al-Hassan. Instead, the two were returned to the EgyptAir plane at Ciampino and then flown over to Rome's main international airport at Fiumicino. As the EgyptAir plane taxied down a runway, it stopped, lowered its stairs, and the two Palestinian leaders ran down and then up the lowered stairs of a Yugoslav Airways plane which then took off for Yugoslavia. Abu Abbas was then able make good his escape by flying from Yugoslavia to Iraq via a stop in South Yemen. He was eventually detained by U.S. troops after the occupation of Iraq and died in U.S. custody in 2004.

Once Abu Abbas had made good his escape, the focus switched to the four low-level terrorists whom the Italians were holding. There was much suspicion on the American side that Italy would either not prosecute them at all or would let them off with very light sentences. We wanted to be able to prosecute them in an American court, should they ever come into our hands. For that, we needed evidence that would be admissible in an American court, and that meant that we wanted U.S. law enforcement to collect it. I was instructed to approach the Foreign and Interior Ministries to demand permission for the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) to interview the detained hijackers, and to search the *Achille Lauro*, then docked in Genoa, the ship was after all a crime scene. Also, after several weeks of back and forth with the Foreign, Interior, and Justice Ministries, we arranged to have Mrs. Klinghoffer—still outraged at her husband's murder—do a line-up of the hijackers who were still being held in Sicily. Mrs. Klinghoffer identified them. The confrontation was incandescent. FBI agents on the staff of Embassy Rome were

eventually permitted to go to Genoa and survey the *Achille Lauro*, look at the bullet holes in the deck, take fingerprints, etc. In the end, we would have been able to prosecute them in a U.S. court. The Italians, however, did try them (I had to report on the trial). They were sentenced to what would sound to an American like a light sentence – from fifteen up to thirty years. The surviving ones have eventually been released, because they served their terms.

The *Achille Lauro* hijacking was followed by a series of Middle Eastern origin terrorist attacks aimed at Italy and other countries in Europe. Much of my time for the remainder of my tour was taken up in dealing with the fallout from these attacks. As with the *Achille Lauro* incident, I needed to assist U.S. law enforcement agencies in obtaining access to crime scenes and to arrested terrorist suspects. In some cases, Italian investigators passed information on their investigations directly to me. There were trials to report on. Finally, there was significant back and forth between State's Counter-Terrorism Office (S/CT) and the Italian Foreign and Interior Ministries attempting to agree on joint counter-terrorism procedures and on diplomatic efforts to pressure terrorist sponsor states.

I recall that the following incidents were connected to the ANO:

- September 1985: A 16-year-old Palestinian from Shatila camp in Beirut threw a gym bag full of explosives through the front door of the British Airways office in Via Bissolati in Rome. Twenty people were injured, one of whom was killed. The explosion was audible at Embassy Rome two blocks away. Having just been in Beirut, I and another colleague, also a Beirut veteran, ran into the central hall to avoid flying glass. Those who had not been in Beirut ran to the windows to see what was going on. Our Beirut training conditioned us well.
- December 1985: A few days after Christmas, four gunmen armed with Kalashnikovs and hand grenades burst into the departures area at Fiumicino Airport and opened fire on passengers waiting at the El Al check-in counter. Passengers waiting in line in front of the adjacent TWA counter also came under fire. Israeli security guards and Italian carabinieri returned fire killing three of the four attackers. The fourth terrorist was wounded and captured. Four Americans, including seven-year-old Natasha Simpson died. Scores of passengers were injured. A similar scene played out in Vienna, where a simultaneous attack by three similarly armed attackers killed and injured dozens more.

I was much involved over the next two years in reporting on the investigation into the Fiumicino attack. Normally, detailed reports would have gone through law enforcement or intelligence community (IC) channels, but State's Counter-terrorism office (S/CT) pushed for me to do much of the reporting in the State (TERREP) channel. S/CT at the time was critical of the IC, believing it to be deliberately slow in disseminating information. As it happened, my predecessor at Embassy Rome had gone on to work in S/CT. During his tour in Italy, he had made the acquaintance of an investigating magistrate in the pool of judges who investigated terrorist cases. (N.B. Investigating magistrates are a feature of the Napoleonic legal system. They direct the work of

detectives, interrogate witnesses and suspects, and produce the equivalent of indictments which are then given to prosecutors to prosecute in court.) In this case, my predecessor's magistrate contact telephoned him in Washington to say that he had come with information on the Fiumicino case that the U.S. would want to know. My predecessor then telephoned me, and I went to call the magistrate. From that point on, I would call on him about once a month to get updates on the case. For me, it was like being given a chapter in an intriguing detective story once a month. It was one of the most interesting things I did in my career.

During the Red Brigades campaign against Italy, the Italians had formed a pool of specialized investigating magistrates to handle terrorism cases. The idea was they shared their files so if any of them were murdered, the others could pick up the case. They worked in an odd building on the bank of the Tiber. It had been built after World War I. On the front was a sign for the "*associazione dei mutilati di guerra*", the association of war wounded. Apparently, at one time it had housed the equivalent of the Veterans Affairs Department, but by 1986 it looked derelict and abandoned. No one went in or out of the main front door. I would go around to the back, and there at ground level was an unmarked door with a videophone. I pushed a button and explained who I was and who I wanted to see, and it would open. I would go up a stairway to the center of the building which had murals painted in the late 1930s that showed Italian biplanes bombing a map of Ethiopia. I then went down a hallway into the judge's office. He had a group of police bodyguards who would hold their Beretta sub-machine guns and watch, while the judge briefed me on his investigation.

The judge's explanations convinced me that the Italians had done careful forensic work. This part of the case was like a police procedural and was quite interesting. Did you know that you can still figure out the source of a hand grenade even after it has exploded? There is a serial number on the pin or spoon that remains after it goes off. The number on the spoon indicates who manufactured the grenade and when. The Italian police had carefully combed Fiumicino airport and picked up the discarded spoons and were trying to figure out who manufactured the grenades. They were in touch with their Austrian counterparts who were investigating the simultaneous Schwechat airport attack. The numbers in Schwechat were in series with the numbers in Rome; the hand grenades were manufactured at the same time, and they came out of the same box. Moreover, they were also in sync with spoon numbers that had been used in a grenade attack on a synagogue on Rue Copernic in Paris, and an attack in the early '80s on Rome's main synagogue. The Abu Nidal Organization was believed to have been responsible for these attacks as well.

The grenades were thus easily traced, and we and our European partners were well aware of who manufactured them and who turned them over to the Abu Nidal Organization. I can't say more here for reasons of classification. Obviously, there was a strong international effort to shut down the supply of weaponry to Abu Nidal.

Once the weapons were traced, the magistrate and Italian police investigators then turned their attention to interrogating the surviving terrorist minutely for details on how he had been trained and what route he had followed to come to Italy. They also combed carefully

through the pocket litter of the deceased terrorists and the survivor. Either the terrorists' tradecraft wasn't good, or they really didn't care who knew where and how they operated. The terrorists, for example, carried a phone number in an Arab capital that they could call in case of emergencies. This too was easily traced. Over time, the Italians became confident they knew the route the terrorists had taken to Italy and what governments had at a minimum turned a blind eye to Abu Nidal operations.

This still didn't solve all mysteries of the attack. Perhaps the most important one was who cased Fiumicino Airport, smuggled the weapons, gave the terrorists their instruction, and more generally planned the operation? The terrorists themselves were young, unsophisticated men, who had never traveled outside the Middle East. They had been told to go to Rome, but to maintain operational security they had not been issued their weapons or even told of their mission prior to arrival in Italy.

For months, the Italian investigators tried to identify the attack facilitator. The investigating magistrate admitted considerable frustration to me with the difficulty of the hunt. For example, Italian investigators went through all the passport cards filled in at Rome's many hotels during the period leading up to the Fiumicino attack and could not find any that were anomalous.

Finally, the Italians caught a break. I was never told exactly how, but I suspect the lead may have come from the testimony of the surviving terrorist. He told Italian investigators that he and the other terrorists had crossed the Balkans from the Middle East by land in groups of two and had entered Italian territory near Trieste. From there, they went to Rome and met on the steps of Santa Maria Maggiore church, where someone they had never seen before approached them, gave them the right password, and provided them with their weapons and instructions. A day or two later, this unknown individual drove the four terrorists to Fiumicino Airport, wished them luck, and drove off while the four entered the terminal to carry out their attack. They had no escape plan.

Who was this sleeper agent? I still don't know his real name. The surviving terrorist knew him by an alias that was certainly not his birth name. He was a true "jackal" right out of the movie *The Day of the Jackal*. Investigators eventually found he had used a long list of aliases, but to this day no one is certain of his real name. We eventually collected his fingerprints. The best guess was that he was a Palestinian who had grown up in Lebanon, but I'm not even sure of that entirely.

The amusing or interesting bit of this is that, like right out of the movie *Little Drummer Girl*, he had evaded Italian surveillance because he did not stay in hotels. Remember at every European hotel you fill out that card with your passport number and name. Those are tabulated, people do look at them and they do find people that way. But he knew that. His MO (modus operandi) was to pick up girls in cafes and ask if he could stay with them. The Italian police eventually traced a long list of young women who had given him lodging.

This went on. The man was never arrested. He apparently got out of Italy. I wonder how

he did so. But he then shows up. There was an attack on a Pan Am plane in Karachi in September 1986 period, and he seems to have been involved in organizing that. The last attack that I know of that Abu Nidal did was on the *City of Poros* ferry in Greece in July 1988. Again, this man's fingerprints show up in the hotel room where the attackers had been. As far as I know, he was never heard from again. A true "jackal."

Terrorism touched us in Italy in other ways, during this period. In April 1986, there was a bombing in the La Belle discotheque in Berlin, in which the forensic evidence linking Libya to the crime was strong,

President Reagan decided to retaliate, you'll recall, and we bombed Tripoli. It was a highly controversial move. The F-111s took off from England and the French denied their airspace, as a result they had to fly around Spain. They did not enter Italian airspace, but this operation was big news in Italy. After all, it involved a former Italian colony with which Italy still has extensive personal and unofficial ties.

By happenstance I was on vacation in Siena and sitting in an Italian hotel lobby with other Italian guests while Italian television reported live on the U.S. raid. Everyone in the room started out upset that the U.S. was conducting an act of war in their neighborhood, until Italian television reported that two missiles had just landed off Italy's southernmost island, Lampedusa. These were apparently two Scuds fired by Libya in retaliation for the U.S. raid. The mood of the Italian audience completely shifted. "What? The Libyans dared to do that? We'll bomb them ourselves!" That's literally what the man next to me said. Qadhafi was not a diplomat, as we know, and he completely lost whatever international sympathy he might have garnered for the raid by attacking Italy which had had nothing to do with the attack.

We are still not done with terrorism. In January 1987, there was an incident that appeared to involve Lebanese Hizbollah and, again, took much of my time. German authorities at Frankfurt Airport arrested a man named Mohammed Ali Hamadeh who arrived on a flight from Lebanon with what appeared to be a chemical that could be used to manufacture explosives. Hamadeh was of great interest to the U.S. because he was suspected of involvement in the hijacking of a TWA 847 to Beirut in 1985, during which Navy diver Robert Stethem was brutally murdered.

On the very same day of Hamadeh's arrest, Italian customs officers detained a Lebanese national, using the name of Bachir Khodr, who was arriving at an airport in Milan. What made them suspect him? First, Khodr was carrying a box of chocolate Easter eggs at a time that was not close to Easter. Second, he was carrying a sand painting. Italians are nothing if not appreciative and knowledgeable about art. They took one look at this "painting" and thought it was the most god-awful ugly thing they had ever seen, and that there was no way someone would lug the heavy thing around the world. They, therefore, opened the back of it and found a white powder mixed with the sand. They immediately assumed Khodr was smuggling drugs. They, therefore, brought a drug dog to smell the powder, but the dog did not hit on it. There was much consternation to figure out what the powder was. Finally, the head of the customs team put some of the powder in his ashtray

and dropped a match on it. It exploded and blew a hole in his desk. The powder turned out to be Semtex (plastic explosive). With that, the customs officers checked the odd Easter eggs and discovered they contained detonators covered in chocolate.

Khodr's case was assigned to the same investigative magistrate who was then working on the Fiumicino case. He called me a few weeks later to report that Khodr seemed to be carrying in his pockets numerous phone numbers. The magistrate suspected these provided Khodr a way to contact other sleeper agents. Most were in Italy, but some were elsewhere in Europe, and several were in the U.S. At that point, I enlisted the help of the Embassy's FBI office (known as the Legal Attache or LegAtt). I arranged for them to meet the magistrate and transmit the information back to their headquarters for follow-up within the U.S.

In addition to terrorism, my responsibilities included narcotics issues. In this domain, my task was to assist U.S. law enforcement agencies in obtaining the access they needed to pursue investigations into criminal cases. As just mentioned, there was an FBI office (LegAtt) at the embassy, and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and U.S. Customs also had offices at the Embassy. Eventually, a senior attorney from the U.S. Justice Department's criminal division was also assigned to Rome. LegAtt, DEA, and Customs had been in Rome for years, had Italian speaking staff, and were able to accomplish a great deal without my involvement, but occasionally they ran into politically sensitive areas or needed my help in dealing with the ambassador.

In the anti-drug effort, our principal focus was the Italian mafia. In the early '80s it was demonstrated that the Italian mafia had connections into the United States. In the '70s it was always said they didn't. The five families in New York were independent of the mafia in Sicily. Financially yes, but they did cooperate when it was in their mutual interest. That was the situation in the famous Pizza Connection case, a number of pizza parlors in the Jersey suburbs of New York that were selling pizza in the front of the shop and heroin supplied from Sicily out the back door. There have been successful prosecutions; the case attracted a great deal of attention at the time.

About the time I arrived in Italy, a senior Sicilian mafioso named Tommaso Buscetta turned state's evidence, becoming the first senior mafia don to break "*omerta*" (code of silence). In the 1970s, Buscetta had been serving time in an Italian prison and while in prison his rivals murdered one of his sons and stole the territory his Mafia "family" controlled. That violated the code, which forbade Mafiosi to encroach on each other while someone was in prison. Buscetta fled to Brazil when he finished serving his sentence in Italy. The leaders of several Sicilian mafia families tried to force him to return to Italy by murdering two more of his children. In the meantime, both the Italian police and the U.S. DEA tracked him down and requested his provisional arrest pending extradition, The Brazilians detained him. Facing long prison sentences in Italy and the U.S. and bitter at the way his former Mafia colleagues had treated him, Buscetta told both U.S. and Italian police that he would be willing to turn state's evidence and testify in court against senior Mafiosi. This was a major break for law enforcement, but it immediately raised the question of whether Buscetta should be sent to the U.S. or to Italy.

Eventually, the U.S. and Italy reached a deal on how to handle this case. The Italians were genuinely concerned about their ability to keep Buscetta alive in an Italian prison, since the Sicilian mob placed a high price on the head of such a turncoat. The U.S. and Italy finally agreed that Buscetta should be sent first to the U.S. to testify in the Pizza Case and then go into the witness protection program. He would, however, be made available to testify in Italian court any time the Italians requested him.

In January1986, the Italians requested we deliver on our side of the bargain and make Buscetta available to testify in what became known in Italy as the Palermo "*maxi-processo.*" (This was a trial of more than 470 accused Mafiosi, the largest ever conducted.) A senior U.S. attorney from the criminal division of the Justice Department then in Rome on TDY and who did not speak Italian asked my assistance in negotiating the terms for Buscetta's return to Italy. U.S. law enforcement agents were deeply concerned about his safety while in Italian custody. It was agreed finally that the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) would have somebody in the cell with him at all times. I think that was a wise precaution. Mr. Buscetta died a year or two ago, naturally, in the United States; the mafia didn't do what they would have liked to do.

Buscetta's testimony in Palermo made headlines in Italy for weeks. The media buzz seemed to stimulate prosecutors up and down Italy to make requests for him to testify publicly in cases they were preparing. The Justice Criminal Division attorney at this point returned to the U.S. and was replaced by a senior attorney from the Southern District of New York. The latter warned me repeatedly that many of these requests were frivolous at best and malicious at worst. Every time we had to bring Buscetta out of witness protection we risked revealing his new identity in the U.S. The Mob had informants all over the U.S. who might spot him. This was creepy to think about, but obviously true. The New York attorney and I spent a lot of time negotiating and pushing back on many of these requests, although I recall that we brought Buscetta back to Italy on one or two other later occasions. Each time was a nail-biting experience.

In my period in Rome, we had regular meetings of a joint U.S.-Italian working group on organized crime and terrorism. This mechanism linked the Italian Interior Ministry and the U.S. Justice Department. and the FBI and DEA, Customs. Attorney General Ed Meese used to come and meet with Oscar Luigi Scalfaro who at that time was interior minister and later became president of Italy. The directors of the FBI and DEA often accompanied Meese.

The meetings took a lot of my time to arrange, but the results were positive. Notably, Italy began to have success prosecuting Mafiosi after years of frustration. The heads of several Sicilian mafia families were convicted and given long sentences. Finally, after my departure in 1989, the Italians managed to arrest and convict the *capo dei tutti capi* (boss of bosses) Salvatore Riina. The Mafia remains a problem in Sicily just as it does in New York, but it is no longer beyond the reach of the law.

The struggle was so difficult because Italian law enforcement and the judiciary were penetrated by Mafia informants. (This is why handling Buscetta's return visits to Italy

was such a difficult and sensitive issue). In the 1980s, U.S. prosecutors and FBI/DEA investigators worked heavily with two investigating magistrates in Palermo whose integrity was unquestioned. Giovanni Falcone and his colleague Paolo Borsellino were firmly committed to the struggle to rid Sicily of the Mafia. By the late 1980s they had established a clear track record of pursuing the Mafia. Who else agreed with them was less clear, and this made the task of American law enforcement extremely difficult. Who could they trust? Not everyone wearing a police uniform or working in the magistracy was on the right side. It became like a spy game, trying to figure out who was "bent" and not. Obviously, I did not have the lead on that, but I had to keep it in mind when dealing with people at the Justice and Interior Ministries. It was better not to share much information with people you did not know well, even if by their position they should have been above reproach.

But Falcone was an honest magistrate. I got to meet him only once. Straight guy, fascinating. He was eventually blown up. Both he and Borsellino were both assassinated two months apart in 1992. There was no way these bombings could have happened if somebody on the inside hadn't ratted on them. It just couldn't happen.

Falcone in this period used to go and swim (we had a consulate in Palermo) in the CG's pool. The CG asked, "Why do you come here to swim?"

"It's the only place in Palermo I can do so safely."

"Why is this safe?"

"It would be bad for business if they blew up the American consulate. There would be more FBI agents put on the case, and the FBI would go after them. So, they won't do it here because it would be bad for business."

Two other things. I'm in the political section. Who's one of my colleagues? Aldrich Ames. He's doing life in a prison in Pennsylvania for espionage.

Rick was a Russian mole, and it's a matter of record that he was assigned to Embassy Rome in this period. He used to attend the political section's weekly staff meeting. He appeared a friendly man, ebullient, had a pipe, outgoing. He would, however, always ask if somebody would go with him to have dinner with Russians diplomats

My colleagues and I looked at him and said, "We're not sent here to cover Russians. That is not part of our job description." Security procedures at the time required all State officers to write memcons of any conversations they might have had with officials of the East Bloc, and you could be asked about contacts with Soviets in your five-year security clearance updates. Despite his repeated pleas, we all told him that talking to Russians was his job and not ours.

Ames drove around Rome in a white convertible Jaguar, a model that was not common there. We used to ask his colleagues, "Boy, that's an expensive car and unique in the city.

Aren't you guys supposed to be discreet? This is flamboyant."

You know his wife is Colombian and she has money would come the answer. His wife was Colombian, but, in the end. it was shown that the money wasn't hers. It came from Rick's "side hustle." At the time though, everyone seemed to want to accept his cover story.

That was Rome. To finish Rome, last thing – my farewell party in summer 1989. I knew that I'd gotten on well with many of the politicians in the parties I was supposed to report on (Socialists, Social Democrats, Republicans, and Liberals). And, in addition to them, in my last year, I was also tasked with following the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Throughout my whole four years there, I had met regularly with them, gone to lunch or dinner with them, and in many cases visited them in their constituencies. With a few exceptions, they were a delightfully cynical bunch with a sense of humor. This applies to the Communists I dealt with as much as the others. The latter at this point were eager to meet the Embassy and, of course, wanted to be accepted as just another political party. (A few years after my departure, the PCI split into a small hard-line group, *Rifondazione Comunista* and a much larger group, called the Democratic Party, that accepted liberal democracy and participated in Italian governing coalitions thereafter.) Reporting on the ins and outs of Rome's coalition dynamics was a great parlor sport once I got the hang of it.

I came to my farewell party, which I think showed how much trust I had cultivated over my time. It was just a *coupe de champagne* and a little cake in the Embassy chancery, nothing fancy. I invited many of my political contacts and many of them came, including the Communists. But what touched me was that several of them came with their mistresses. These women were way too young to be their wives. I remember one man in particular who was, I think we would describe him as portly and short. He was about five-two, bald, and built like a fireplug, sixtyish, and shows up with what Tom Wolfe calls in his book <u>The Bonfire of the Vanities</u> a lemon tart. She is six feet tall, blonde, and I'm sure she's from some country east of Italy. She wore high heels and towered over him, easily thirty years younger. I mean this could not have been his wife. I didn't press as to her identity. But at least five of my contacts came with female escorts. Maybe there was a party afterward they were going to? I don't know. But I felt they had taken me into confidence.

It was a lovely time. I was able to be assigned as desk officer for France as I left, because I had supported Bill Body the DAS for EUR; Bill helped me get assigned to be French desk officer. So that's where I move on at that point.

Q: So no little story about Cicciolina?

ENGELKEN: I never met her. She was obviously displaying her charms in the media. My wife was perturbed when I was looking at her picture in an Italian news magazine. "What are you looking at?". It was the equivalent of <u>Time</u> but there she was wearing a corset and nothing else at a political rally. Just doing political research, honey. No, I never

met her. She was with a small party called the *Radicali* who nominated her as some kind of a joke, and I think they were taken aback when she actually won a seat in Rome. She added shall we say color to the Italian scene. But no, I did not have the pleasure of going to interview her on any topic.

But it was a lovely time. I was able to travel all over the country. Probably the tour I enjoyed the most out of all, although I had other nice ones I'll get to. Beautiful, spoke the language, got along with everybody, and had interesting issues. Tremendous.

Desk Officer for France – State Department 1989-91

Q: Today is May 5, 2020, and we're resuming our interview with Stephen Engelken as he returns from Rome to Washington to be the French desk officer; what year is that?

ENGELKEN: We are in the autumn of 1989. I began as the French desk officer in 1989 and had the position until the summer of 1991. It was an historic moment – I had no idea of course at the time – the autumn of '89 saw the fall of the wall, the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of a lot of everyone's preconceptions and theories about how things were going to work. The French were deeply challenged in a lot of ways by that. They elaborated a philosophy over the Cold War in which France should take a carefully distinct and different position from the United States that usually tried to position France between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They did not at that point belong to the military wing of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), for example. On many issues they would often deliberately take a slightly nuanced position. It was called the "*difference francaise*." The French always said "Yes, but…" never just yes. By threatening to play the spoiler, they increased their influence. This was particularly true on issues under consideration in the NATO Alliance which operates on consensus. Any single member state can block things.

In the autumn of '89 as East Germany began to collapse, the French went through this period of real confusion. We also had our own issues. The French have a word, *déboussolé*, which means disoriented. They were for several months absolutely *déboussolé*. Mitterrand was, I think, quite terrified at the thought of a unified Germany. He flew off as I recall to Kiev, at that time still Soviet, in late November or early December '89 to meet with Gorbachev. He seemed to be trying to brainstorm on ways they could keep the DDR ("*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*", German Democratic Republic, also known as East Germany) alive. We, however, were not trying to keep the DDR going. We made the correct decision that like it or not, this was going to happen; East Germany was going to collapse; and we had either better get on the train or go down in history as trying to resist the will of the German people. Wisely, we did not try to do that.

However, on the day that they demolished Checkpoint Charlie and began demolishing the wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate to reopen it, Mitterrand flew to East Berlin to meet with the dying DDR – he refused an invitation to go to this historic ceremony at the Gate, something I've had other French people later say, "What was he thinking?" It was

obvious that this regime was dead. You couldn't put it on the ventilator and keep it going, in our current analogy.

How does this affect us? In this period, Mitterrand also started referring to NATO in the past tense. NATO was, not is. That greatly alarmed the American government, all of us; we did not see NATO as dead. But it was one of the questions posed at that moment; do we still need this Cold War thing?

Q: Just to give you a little support there, even George Kennan, ancient as he was, wrote in the New York Times or one of the major newspapers, we should really not be thinking about NATO as a force anymore to frighten the Soviet Union, that the Cold War is over, et cetera. There was academic thinking, a minority, but there was academic thinking that really NATO had seen its day and it was time to kind of wrap it up.

ENGELKEN: Yeah, there was a lot of discussion about that. We decided that it worked so well and had all these mechanisms that you and I must recognize today the American people didn't know existed, didn't understand why they were useful, and now in the 2020s it has become a major problem on our end.

Why did we want to keep it if we didn't have a Soviet threat? Well, it was the only link we had to Europe. The French were very clear they didn't want an American link to the European Union. It wasn't the European Union at that point, it was just the European Community. They were clear they didn't want that. So, what link did we have? How could we keep this community together? NATO was it. Then of course throughout the '90s we launched on a whole series of questions about what it should do, and this is when we got into out-of-area stuff which had originally been forbidden in the NATO treaty. That's getting ahead of ourselves.

We're now in the beginning of 1990. The George H.W. Bush administration is very concerned about all of this, and I think showed some brilliant statesmanship (because I agreed with what they did) in keeping NATO together, keeping us on at least speaking terms with the French who seemed keen at that one moment to push us out of Europe, while staying close to Helmut Kohl in Germany. I think they were the most skillful administration diplomatically for which I worked.

Q: I would agree.

ENGELKEN: They weren't as skillful as they should have been domestically, but they were in foreign policy, for which I don't think they get enough credit.

Part of this effort to keep it together . . . they didn't abandon the French. It would have been easy to say, "Oh just isolate the French, we don't need them." We've got this solid relationship with Germany and with Britain (where Margaret Thatcher was still in office.).

Q: Yes, it was the very last years of Thatcher.

ENGELKEN: What do we need the French for? I heard that murmured question quite a lot. Well, we needed them because Germans felt they wanted them. We kept putting the Germans in an awkward position where we would want something, and the French would oppose, and we would call on Berlin and say you must side with us, tell the French what they want is wrong. But to his credit, Bush did not give up on the French. He continued to call Mitterrand regularly, like every two weeks or so, throughout this whole period. This is a lot of presidential time. James Baker the secretary went to France regularly, he called his counterpart who was Roland Dumas at the time. Roland was not a pro-American guy at all, very much in the French line.

As the desk officer I was tasked with writing briefing papers for these calls and meetings. I suspect they were heavily edited before they reached their intended users, but State procedure required a paper for every encounter. I recall, in particular, being asked to write papers called "sec-pres memos," memos from the secretary to the president, every time the President met Mitterrand. The two had this habit of meeting on desert islands. Bush invited Mitterrand early in his term to his home at Kennebunkport, Maine.

Q: There's a little bit, you may be hitting the microphone. There's static.

ENGELKEN: They met at Kennebunkport, everything went reasonably well except when Bush offered to put Mitterrand in his cigarette boat and go out to the harbor. Mitterrand basically said, "I get seasick looking at rivers. No way I am getting on that boat." An awkward moment.

Then Mitterrand reciprocated with an invitation to meet, I believe, on Martinique. That one I had to write a Sec-Pres memo, and it was the most awful experience I ever had in the Department. All clearers wanted to change it, and the Secretariat kept changing the format. We started with just ticks and bullets then went to ticks and some prose paras. and ended up with all prose paras. This was at a time when redoing things was even more difficult than it is now. For example, we had different kinds of paper: red letterhead for action memos, green letterhead for briefing papers, and blue letterhead for information memo. But even that oversimplifies it. For a memo from the Secretary to the President there was special Secretary letterhead. I had to go up to Executive Secretariat several times to beg for this special paper, because we kept re-doing the memo. It didn't help that I was using a Wang with a daisy wheel impact printer. The special paper always seemed to slip and slide on the platen, and lines would suddenly start printing diagonally down a page. Oh, no! It's due now and the staff are calling and you can't get the thing to print correctly.

This sec-pres was particularly cursed, because not only did the format have to be right but the substance was controversial. What exactly was NATO's role post-Cold War? Could there be a European Security and Defense Identity outside of NATO and associated with the Western European Union or what was still called the European Community. What relationship should the U.S. have to the European Community? What role, if any, did we foresee for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe? And these were only

the questions swirling about European institutional architecture. The U.S. had significant differences with France over trade negotiations. And were we on the same page about nuclear testing? With so much at stake, it is no surprise that clearers cared passionately about the content. Eventually, I whittled the list of clearances still needed to EUR PDAS Jim Dobbins and Counselor of the Department Bob Zoellick.

Q: Dobbins isn't going to win that one.

ENGELKEN: Well, he tried hard. He had a lot of passion about NATO which he wanted to put in there and Zoellick was curbing it a bit. I gave up trying to put my own ideas in this. We went for hours where Dobbins would correct my paper and send it up, Zoellick would correct it and send it back, Dobbins would then correct Zoellick's corrections. I had to retype it every time as the drafter, to fix it. Finally, we got Dobbins and Zoellick on the phone with each other at about six o'clock at night. I said "I'm happy to pass messages but this is ridiculous. Would you guys just agree on the text? You're the bosses." They spent a testy hour exchanging back and forth on the phone, agreeing on the message. We finally got an agreed text between seven and eight at night, and we called the Executive Secretariat and said we've got it. We send it up to the secretariat who says okay. I don't know if they showed it to Baker or not.

Q: Here I could be a little bit of help. I was in S (office of the secretary) staff at that time and I can tell you what happened to paper once it reached the secretary's office. It went to Zoellick's office, and he was the last one to talk to the secretary before the secretary actually read it. Whatever went into the secretary had Zoellick's last imprint on it.

ENGELKEN: About 8:00 p.m., I received a call – the president is due to fly the next morning, this is like two days past the due deadline, various people are screaming at me. It was winter as I recall, temperatures in the teens, patches of little frozen snow and ice around. They called me and asked me to physically carry it over to the NSC. So, we put it in a double-sealed envelope, and I walked it over. The officer who did Western Europe at that time, came down and met me at the guard booth and I handed the thing over to him. They said, "We'll put it in the president's package, and he'll read it on the plane." At the moment, I thought they were humoring me, and that the paper would just wind up in a burn bag.

A few days later, nonetheless, the Deputy Executive Secretary at the time, called me to his desk in one of those little offices with glass around it and Venetian blinds. He closed the blinds and had me sit down looking as though he was about to confide a big secret and said I'm sorry we put you through so many different format changes on that memo. You need to understand, we're still struggling to adapt to the new president (George H.W. Bush). We made a discovery. The president reads. He paused to let that sink in and continued, you give him three or four pages of simple prose and he'll read it. It thus matters what you put in this paper. If we thought it was never going to be shown to POTUS, we wouldn't have put all this effort into it. What you did matters! This lifted my spirits greatly. I had been involved in an effort at making policy! Desk officers don't have the chance to do that often. Most of the time we're just a secretary taking the notes.

Bush and Mitterrand continued to meet off and on. I recall that the Martinique meeting was followed by one on Key Largo a few months later, then there might have been one on another Guadeloupe. Oh, it ended at Rambouillet. A meeting at the Château de Rambouillet, today France's equivalent to Camp David.

Q: Yes, that name sticks in my head. That's the last one where they finally came to a meeting of the minds.

ENGELKEN: Yep. But the desk was extremely busy at this point. We're just going over the NATO stuff. What was so cool about the French desk was the French really are into everything. We forget, the sun still doesn't set on the French empire. They still had islands in the Pacific, they were still doing nuclear tests out there. We were still cleaning up the mess from the *Rainbow Warrior*. They had a possession in South America and in the Antilles, they were a major power in Africa to this moment. We were at that point really relying on them – you guys keep this quiet, because we don't have the time or expertise to deal with it.

It's easy to slip into "clientitis", I guess I did a little bit. But I was arguing with people who felt that dealing with the French was so much trouble that they tried to leave them out. The EUR Front Office at the time seemed to me to be run by Germanophiles. But look at Europe. Who was genuinely willing to lift a rifle and do something? It basically came down to the French and the British.

"Well, what do we need the French for?"

They actually have an army" (not near as big as ours, but they have an army), they had two small aircraft carriers, the *Foch* and the *Clemenceau*. They were a nuclear power. They had six nuclear missile-firing submarines. And the French public was willing to tolerate casualties in a way that the German public wasn't, many European publics weren't ready for that.

So why am I saying this? The French Desk was fascinating because there were so many issues on which the French were important. They were part of the Antarctic Treaty. So, I used to get calls from the office of polar affairs about things in the Antarctic; there were at that point major issues on the environment, and they would talk to you about that. They were the major obstacle on trade deals at the time. We were beginning the Uruguay Round discussions, and obviously Bob Zoellick had opinions on that which he also was putting into those memos. But, as I said, they were a nuclear power, and an NPT, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty member. I recall circulating memos for clearance and suddenly the office of the special Ambassador for nonproliferation would appear with an entire page of talking points on North Korea. Well, no one can deny North Korea wasn't important, gosh if we could have stopped their program in 1990 it would have been a good thing. But as you recall when you're told your memo can only be a page and a half, you can't – sorry guys, I'll give you a bullet, but you can't give me a page of bullets. And long mushy ones, like they were writing a script that somebody was going to sit there and

read and that's not how people work. They weren't even useful.

But you get all these things. African issues, people wanted - "We've got to talk to them about Djibouti" or something. If you're in AF (Bureau of African Affairs), that is important. Nuclear, drug trading, there were all these issues they were involved in and cared about. When it came down to it, a lot of the times we actually did agree. Of course, with a little "difference francaise" (French difference), but we could come to an agreement.

Now back to the other major issue in this period. Summer of 1990, August 2, 1990, the Iraqis occupied Kuwait. This is a big deal. The French had a very close and warm relationship with Saddam. They had sold Mirages to Iraq. Frankly, we had, not warm but some kind of relationship with him. The reaction in Washington to this was a sense of betrayal. We had helped Iraq survive the Iran war; how could they betray us this way through this outrageous act? I don't think we appreciated the extent to which the Iraqis were broke.

There was an intense emotional reaction throughout the Department. How could this a-hole turn around and do this? Then it's Katy bar the door in the Persian Gulf. Anyone could occupy anything in the Persian Gulf, if you say the states in the Persian Gulf are not legitimate, which is what Iraq's position was.

You will recall the president began a military buildup and said the invasion would not stand.

We got into long arguments with the French over responding to Iraq. Initially, we wanted to use NATO, but the French said no. The French insisted it had to be under a Security Council resolution, as I recall. In contrast to 2003, Bush Senior was successful in getting a UNSC resolution that authorized all necessary force. Took a while, the French held out. They kept trying to talk the Iraqis into defusing the crisis, but in the end they failed.

The French did deploy a five-thousand-man ground element so that in March '91, they were in position to participate in Desert Storm. There were officials around the U.S.G. telling me up until the last moment that they expected the French to back out and not join the operation. But in fact, the French did enter Iraqi territory. We dropped the 82nd Airborne deep into Iraq, 82nd and the 101st, and then the French detachment advanced and linked up with them. I don't think they met any significant resistance, but they did do what they said they were going to do; they did participate in the bombing campaign, with Mirages, and they did bomb Iraq. The British too, but if I remember right our other NATO allies – I don't recall any German division in this for example. It did raise France's stock in Washington when they acted. We didn't think they would, but they did.

Another thing came up in this period. Mitterrand at the end of '91 or early '92 announces he's going to stop nuclear tests. We were blindsided; they didn't tell us before the public announcement. We were desperately trying to maintain public support for nuclear testing – you still find people in the U.S. government who argue passionately that you can't be

sure that our arsenal will work if you don't test them periodically.

So, it was a busy and fascinating moment to watch all this stuff. The French as I said were a Security Council member so anything that came to the council you had to include in the briefing papers.

Paris - *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* 1991-92

At the end of my tour as French desk officer – we're now in summer 1991 – I obviously wanted to serve in Paris and arranged a one-year assignment to study at ENA, *École Nationale d'Administration* (National School of Administration). There was a position the following year for my wife as senior GSO in Paris. She took a year off, and I went to ENA. We had just had a son then, born in April of 1991.

ENA was interesting and fun. For those who aren't familiar, it is like a graduate program and training center combination, something akin to NDU (National Defense University), for French civil servants. In France at the time, it was huge. You didn't enter the senior ranks of the French civil service unless you went to ENA. The French graduates of ENA immediately entered the French equivalent of the senior executive service.

Q: A question about that. Among the graduates, was there a network the way perhaps some of the large universities in the U.S. have alumni networks?

ENGELKEN: Oh, sure. Very much. To jump to another country's term, they were batch-mates. For the years I remained in Paris, my class met once a year; we had dinner and very much tried to stay networked. Succeeding French administrations tinkered frequently with course of study. At that moment in 1991 there were two different cycles; a long cycle for people who had just recently been undergraduates who had passed the test. They were twenty-five-year-olds who thought they were smart. Boy, were they arrogant. Because I was much older than that and it didn't fit our assignment cycle, I was put into what was called the "cycle court", the short cycle, which was for people who were mid-career entrants to the senior executive service. They were similar to GS (general schedule)-15s in the American system who were being given a training course to be promoted into the senior service. These folks had been around a bit, and they were rather cynical. I really liked them. They were not arrogant. They were willing to whisper to you that the theories the French had were not always correct. The young'uns were icon-worshippers, and the older ones were iconoclasts. The guys you probably met in NATO were the twenty-four-year-olds who were absolutely sure of themselves and of French theories of how the Alliance should work.

It was fun to talk with the foreign students – it was the first year they had people from Eastern Europe. I went through the course with Romanians and others. ENA had a course on French history which was fun because it was French history as viewed by the French elite. Its whole goal was to emphasize the continuity of administration over history, rather than what you get when you study French history in the U.S. or the Anglo-Saxon world, which is an emphasis on the revolutions. I had one teacher tell me, "We only had one true

revolution; that was in 1789; everything afterwards was just a small change of regime."

Because we were studying to be bureaucrats in France, they would go through the fact that legislation from previous regimes remained valid unless canceled. I remember we were given a class on administrative law, and on EU law too. Like a lot of the law courses, there were cases to analyze. Why was this decided this way? Here's the law. The example case I recall concerned the payments the French government makes to women for having children. This allowance turns out to have originated by the Vichy government. I didn't know that. We were required to read the text of an ordinance from the Vichy government putting this in place. It begins "We, the marshal, decree it shall be the following thing." It was written like a royal decree with "we the marshal" rather than "we the king". In 1991, this was still a valid law, from 1941 or '42, even though Marshal Petain is now a villain. All in all, it was an interesting course in French constitutional law.

I was permitted to do a brief internship with a "prefect", the representative of the central government in the province. I was allowed to go to Avignon. It was October to January, not tourist season. Lots of restaurants were closed, cafes closed. Despite its reputation as being a warm summer holiday place, it is not particularly warm in winter. It snowed once while I was there, and we had lots of drizzle and the Rhone River Valley is prone to what they call the "mistral", the wind that comes from the north and blows right down the Rhone valley. If there's a high north of the Massif Central, and a low in the Med, in the Gulf of Lyons off the Rhone delta, this incredible thirty-knot wind comes whipping down and blows all day. At first, you think it's not that cold, but the windchill is absolutely freezing. But it was fun to sit and listen to small town life in France. You got a sense of how the French state works at the local level. The prefect in his meetings would talk to his staff about the mayor, plotting against the mayor. Until this moment I never understood why the French allowed mayors to be elected to serve in parliament; you could be a "deputy-mayor" (member of parliament-mayor).

Q: I remember Giscard d'Estaing while president kept his position as mayor of a relatively small town.

ENGELKEN: In southwest France, yeah. That's true. Mitterrand had a mayor's position too. He nominated a colleague to go down and administer it. The thing was the mayor of Avignon was a deputy-mayor, she was a "Socialiste" (socialist). The government was Socialiste. The prefect got his orders from the interior minister, but the mayor was an MP and a member of the governing majority supporter of the government. The MP thus could talk directly to the interior minister in a way that the prefect really couldn't. The prefect had to worry about the mayor going over his head. He spent a lot of time worrying about that possibility. Under French law up to that point (Mitterrand changed it but up until the late '80s) the prefect had the right to essentially veto any acts or decisions by a local council. He could stamp "inopportune" (untimely) on a decision and veto it. Mitterrand changed that. Particularly when the prefect could veto the mayor's decisions you could see why the mayor would want a channel around it. It wasn't as dictatorial as it sounded.

There were all kinds of backroom struggles and deals over minor issues like where a

beltway was going to be built, and how to reform the wine cooperative -- not the stuff that we Americans need to worry about. But it was fun to hear.

Foreign policy came in once or twice. I was sitting in a meeting with the prefect when the interior minister – this is '91, shortly after the fall of everything, the Soviet Union hadn't broken up yet – telephoned. The Hungarians had asked the French government for help in reforming their cherry orchards. Would there be any experts in the Department of the Vaucluse (a major cherry-growing area) that would be willing to help? The prefect called the cherry growers association and asked if they wanted to help Hungarians. The answer was a flat no. Absolutely not. They're competitors. We're not going to help them. The prefect understood. He put the phone down and looked at me and said, "What can I do? They don't see it. This is going to happen anyway. Somebody's going to go in there and help them do this, or they'll figure it out on their own. We could make ourselves allies and help our relationship in the long term, but it's all short term." Remember, France was a very late convert to admitting the eastern states into the EU.

Two last stories from ENA. One was in Avignon. Most of the time I got a fair amount of hostility, "You're an American." It was all about "*capitalisme sauvage*" (savage capitalism) and "We don't do things the American way. You rely on *capitalisme sauvage* and then there's the Soviet model which is extreme on the other side; we take a middle road." It was also on economic and management stuff, state relationship to business – the state was very much involved in business and the French businessmen expected the state to help them. I heard people complain, "The state isn't involved in this business, how can we succeed?" We do culturally have a totally different attitude about the state. There is absolutely no cultural understanding of libertarianism. They can't understand why you would not want the government involved.

Sometimes, however, people would look at me and say, "You're an American; what do we do?" For some reason, I was assumed to be an expert on inner cities and race relations and things like that. I tried to be humble when the subject arose, pointing out that the U.S. hadn't solved those problems. I remember I was taken – autumn of 1991, I was taken by the *commissaire* of police to view a massive housing project on the edge of Avignon. There were big buildings twenty stories tall, ugly as sin, poorly maintained, all full of Moroccans. There residents were throwing rocks at the buses at night as they went by, shops closing around this place because there was so much shoplifting. The chief of police looks at me and says, "What do we do? I don't know what to do about this."

I said, "Whatever you do, don't abandon the neighborhood. You've got to try." Eventually what did happen was they took the idea from St. Louis or Chicago, and they imploded the thing. They removed the inhabitants and blew the thing down.

Q: It was a mistake; they should have never built something like that and certainly our experience in the U.S. tells us the same things.

ENGELKEN: At the beginning of the 1990s, the lecturers at ENA, who were all themselves senior civil servants, were convinced that France had a better approach to

social problems than Americans did. Today, I think both they and we would be much humbler. We face very similar problems.

In spring of 1992 I was assigned with a group of fellow students to do a paper on the housing of immigrants in publicly owned housing. For my part of the project, I went to interview the "sous-prefet" for "*quartiers difficiles*" (difficult neighborhoods), in Seine-Saint-Denis, the department on the northeast side of Paris that has the highest percentage of immigrants of any department in France. You pass it when you leave Charles de Gaulle Airport driving south back to the city, it's on the left. I took the metro to Bobigny and walked to the *prefecture*. It was a hot day, and, when I arrived at the sous-prefet's office, it was not air conditioned. He had the windows open, and the fan going. He had his tie knot down to here and a large ashtray full of butts – they hadn't banned smoking in public areas. After I introduced myself and explained my mission, he asked "what did they tell you downtown? I bet they told you we've solved this problem." "*En France, il n'y a pas de ghettos.*" We will prevent them from developing. The sous-prefet admitted that the French State was falling down in this effort. Despite the happy talk from the government, he warned that social tensions were building up. "We haven't solved this problem at all." By way of example, he asked, what happens when you have a retired lieutenant colonel who served in the Algerian war and on his pension cannot afford commercial housing, living in a social apartment in public housing which is mostly full of Algerians? On this particular day, the Algerian father is downstairs sacrificing a goat in the courtyard, and the kids are playing soccer in the hall. Suddenly shotguns come out of the wardrobe, and we, the authorities, have a major problem.

I'm sure he was changing names but describing a real event. It certainly sounded real. He went on and on about it, we have a major problem. He said,"Do you guys have ideas about what we should do about this; I'm quite interested."

Q: this is ---

ENGELKEN: It's May 1992.

Q: As an aside, by 2008 when I was taking a year in the National Defense University, we were still studying that problem.

ENGELKEN: Nobody solved it. It was interesting, the French at the time were in denial. When you know France well, you realize (this has become apparent in recent decades), that Paris is surrounded by a boulevard, La Peripherique, a beltway, and that really encysts the city. The city is wealthy. The well-off live downtown in their own bubble. They have their "*residences secondaires*" (second homes) that are well out into the countryside. And then Paris is surrounded by this suburban area, the "banlieues" (suburbs), and life is gritty there. You don't hear Edith Piaf and accordions playing. There are many immigrants, and they are disgruntled, and the rest of the population is disgruntled with them, a lot of tension.

It was striking that the civil servants who were dealing with social issues in the suburbs

were telling me already in 1992 that the French state was in denial about a major problem. Their ideological position was “We’ve solved it because unlike you, we’ve provided housing for all these people." Today, it’s very different. My French friends acknowledge they have a major problem, but what to do about it?

Q: For one more second, this 2008 study we were looking at at NDU was looking at why the French government at the time was refusing the twenty five billion from the Kuwait sovereign fund to rebuild and develop and they were refusing another ten billion from Saudi Arabia to do the same. These countries were willing to come in with a lot of money to help them build and structure, and oh no – France was not anywhere near ready to take money from them, and the basic reason was with the money came mullahs.

ENGELKEN: There is no more Islamophobic country I know. We Americans seldom study the period in Algeria. For those who may someday read this, there is a good book called The French Intifada, written about five years ago which I would recommend to anyone. It goes back over, begins with the situation in modern France with a lot of tension and says, how did this happen, and goes back to the Algerian experience. It was pretty ugly stuff and it just moved on in France after the end of the Algerian war.

Paris, France – 1992-95

So ‘92, I finished my course in June, and I took a position as chief of the pol-mil section At Embassy Paris. Same kind of issues continue as when I was on the Desk, the post-Cold War things. At some point about two years into it, the Deputy PolChief moved on, and I moved up to that position. Fun job. We got into all the same issues: nuclear issues and the future of NATO. I would constantly get calls from USNATO, “Would you go bludgeon the head of the NATO desk until he agrees to this thing?" What I could never convey, people would call or send me a cable and I hadn’t been involved in the meeting so I didn’t really know what the argument was about and I’m trying to follow the line as best I could. The French would always say, “Did they tell you the whole story?" There was always a detail I didn’t know, which would allow them to say “*votre argument ne tient pas*." (Your argument doesn’t hold.) Sometimes, I could be useful when I got them to explain their position better. But the odds I was going to convince them to change their theology on NATO as a first secretary were pretty low.

Q: What’s funny, you’re now talking about ‘92 and ‘93? I remember seeing those cables. Whether it was you or someone else going into the foreign ministry and getting more data and nuance about the French position than we even got at NATO or in Vienna for the OSCE and so on.

ENGELKEN: Yeah. That was probably what was useful. After butting my head and running smack into the wall repeatedly at the Foreign Ministry’s NATO office, I eventually realized that what my reporting could add was illumination on the debates within the French Government over what position to take at Evere. The Foreign Ministry was responsible for instructing the French NATO mission, and it adhered doggedly to long-standing positions and gave no hint that there were any differences of opinion

within the French Government. The defense ministry often took a different view than the foreign ministry. So did the Prime Minister's office. (Remember for two years in this period, the Prime Minister was from a different party from that of the President.) There was often a three-sided, or four-sided debate, if you included the President's office, over issues of security policy. By going all over town to see the Ministers' diplomatic advisors, I could pick up a lot of nuance and background that the Foreign Ministry never shared.

To take one example, there were numerous arguments in this period over how to set up command structures for joint operations (e.g., during the Gulf War and later in Bosnia). The French always wanted an ad hoc command structure (i.e., not an already existing NATO command) which they wanted to structure to ensure that civilians not military officers had the last word. The U.S. military always forcefully rejected what they saw as jury-rigged structures that would put a civilian commissar in charge who would be making military decisions based on political not military considerations. The French defense ministry was far more sympathetic to American arguments about command structures than was the Foreign Ministry or President Mitterrand's office. Prime Minister Balladur tended to lean more to the Defense Ministry than Mitterrand did. The French uniformed military generally had little problem working with NATO or the U.S. specifically, including under U.S. command if need be. Decades of joint training and operations meant that the militaries were quite accustomed to working together. Knowing this behind-the-scenes debate in France helped U.S. negotiators press successfully for workable command structures. If you got the French and the U.S. dealing military to military, they were fine.

Q: Same was true in Vienna; they had a few military reps, colonel level or so, and they were perfectly fine with all our military people. It was when the foreign ministry guy started talking that things went to heck.

ENGELKEN: The MFA was really the keeper of the theology: that the U.S. and French militaries should be kept apart. They knew their military would get along; it was like two magnets going bang together. The main goal of the MFA was to keep them apart. In the '50s they'd been very close and what de Gaulle did was pull them apart. They were determined to maintain that; this theology that had been agreed on. It was obvious to me that our goal should always be to get their military to talk to our military and not get into these theological discussions. The practical people would have to implement things on the ground.

What really precipitated that was Bosnia. This is the period of UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) or FORPRONU as the French called it. The French had a large detachment in Sarajevo. They were very torn as to what they wanted. France had been a historical ally of Serbia. When I first heard that I said, oh come on that was 1914; is that relevant? It turned out it was to Mitterrand. He still remembered the Serbs as friends. So, they did not initially want to come in guns blazing on behalf of the Muslims in Sarajevo. But their public opinion was always motivated or agitated by public scenes of awful atrocities going on in Sarajevo. They wanted to stop (to their credit) the atrocities, which

meant putting the brakes on the Serbs. They were under tremendous public pressure to stop the atrocities; "this can't be happening in Europe. You can drive there by car; this can't be allowed to happen in Europe. This is the first real conflict we've had since World War II in Europe, and we can't allow this."

So, the government was torn. They didn't want to alienate the Serbs, but obviously they didn't want to countenance the atrocities that were going on. They also wanted to build up an autonomous European military capacity that could deploy and defend European interests independent of the U.S. and NATO. Initially, therefore, the French tried to use the crisis to force the creation of the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) that they dreamed of. They revived a largely dormant Europe-only defense treaty from 1948 that created the Western European Union (WEU) and loudly announced that Europe would handle the Balkan crisis without needing U.S. help. WEU members offered to deploy to Bosnia on a peacekeeping mission under the United Nations. This mission was authorized by the Security Council acting under Chapter Six of the UN charter which authorized blue-helmeted peacekeepers only to use force in self-defense.

The French deployed a battalion to Sarajevo under UNPROFOR, while their European partners, notably including Britain, deployed forces elsewhere in Bosnia to protect threatened populations. The fundamental problem was that there was no peace to keep. There were periodic ceasefires and lots of negotiation, I don't remember all the details. What I do remember is that the French force took casualties often. I think in total they eventually suffered more than forty killed in action. They kept losing soldiers, usually due to fire from Serb areas into areas held by Bosnian Muslims. Compared to other wars, it was small but a battalion losing forty KIA over a couple of years in what was supposed to be a peacekeeping operation left the French military deeply frustrated -- all the more since there was no progress toward a political settlement. It appeared that the war might continue for many years more, since UNPROFOR lacked the military force that would have been needed to compel the participants to settle.

Over time the French position evolved and became ever more pragmatic. Finally, after the horrible massacre at Srebrenica the French admitted that the European effort embodied in UNPROFOR was not working. Their European partners in UNPROFOR pushed them hard to see this. They agreed, but it was a bitter conclusion.

Q: If you needed a better example of how Europe failed to manage, Srebenica – you don't need to go further.

ENGELKEN: The French felt humiliated too. You did what? You surrendered? Why are you there? Then there were the massacres. We knew it was happening at the time. I remember seeing cables from Sarajevo saying we've lost phone contact with people in Srebrenica. Last report they got was that the Serbs were entering the town and separating the women from the men, lining up adult males and marching them away. We all knew where that march was going to end. It was a terrible sense of frustration and helplessness. Here's a massacre about to happen, and we can't stop it. That affected U.S. public opinion, too.

Finally, the British told the French, “This chapter six stuff is stupid. We’ve got to go in with a lot more force than we have there, and we cannot do it on our own. The Americans have to come." The French agreed at that point; this is ‘94, so two years of frustration. We replied that we would come but only in a NATO operation. The French swallowed hard and agreed. This was the opposite of what they wanted, but they realized there was no alternative. The militaries did work together well. The French loved having American air cover. I think we had a carrier in the Adriatic for a while. They loved having the NATO air operation, it worked fine, it really did deter the Serbs. As you recall, it was almost bloodless. We were able to move in, negotiate a settlement – the Serbs then suffered defeat by the Croats, too. But we were able to have a settlement and it was great. I don’t know what more could have been done at the end though it was awful what had to happen before we got there. That was a highly successful operation.

Other things. Of course, Pamela Harriman arrived as ambassador at this point, about ‘94 I think. She was a hoot. I knew people who worked with her who did not like her. My experience on the other hand was a lot of fun. She came to the embassy – she was well known to the French and spoke passable French in contrast to most American ambassadors. The chancery in Paris has a lobby and a stairway coming down from the second-floor American style. They had the embassy staff assembled to meet the new ambassador. We were all standing with the FSNs in the lobby, and she made a dramatic entrance down the stairs followed by her staffers and spoke to us from a landing at the bottom of the stairs. She charmed the staff instantly. She said how happy she was to be in France. She spoke with a Churchillian accent. “I remember the first time I saw Paris; it was on the eve of the war, 1939." I thought the FSN behind me was going to break into tears. She evoked 1939, the Third Republic – older Frenchmen at the time remembered the period fondly. There were a lot of old ladies dabbing their eyes over this.

She had an incredible life history, which she drew on for powerful stories to make her points effectively. As the spouse of Winston Churchill’s son, Randolph, she lived in 10 Downing Street throughout World War II. Winston included her in many things, which left her with rich and surprising reminiscences. One of her great ways to win a debate or argument was to cite Churchill: “Well you know, Winston used to say..." It was really hard to trump that.

The other trump card she had was a letter she had received from Charles de Gaulle in the autumn of 1941, congratulating her on the birth of her son. It had been typed on a manual typewriter, four or five lines long, signed by Charles de Gaulle. She kept it in her purse and when she’d get into arguments over theological issues with the French, she would just happen to drop this out there. She’d say, “Winston always had de Gaulle to tea on Thursdays. I met him." There are very few French people who could honestly say they had known de Gaulle in the autumn of ‘41. The strength of his movement really began in ‘42 or ‘43 as disaffection with the occupation grew. In ‘41 most people in France were probably still with the marshal and didn’t even know who de Gaulle was. Among people in the Gaullist party there had been a competition, who joined first. “Oh, I joined in early ‘42, and you waited until the spring of ‘44 when the Germans were clearly on the verge

of defeat and it was time to switch sides." I never saw anybody who could say they had done this in ‘41. So that was another trump she kept.

Her predecessor, Walter Curley, had been a very nice man. I had no difficulties with Walter. But he didn’t like arguing with the French on all these disputes we had with them. Who did like it? Like a lot of American ambassadors, he approached being ambassador to France as being a sort of social thing. He loved to hang around with aristocrats. There were all kinds of people hanging around France that used the title count of this or baron of that, exiled nobles from all over. He kept in contact with the exiled king of Romania, the “Shahbanu” (wife of the shah), and the pretender to the French throne, the Count of Paris. The big event of his social year was a grouse hunt that he organized in his castle in Ireland.

Like most of us, Walter wanted to be the good guy, the polite diplomat building the bilateral relationship based on friendship. A diplomat’s job, however, isn’t always to be the nice guy. Sometimes you have to forcefully disagree with your hosts. He was not fond of doing that. It just went against his nature. I recall an occasion where we had an instruction cable from Washington that ordered the ambassador to go to Mitterrand in person to object to positions France was taking on NATO. We had a meeting with the ambassador to go over the talking points, noting that the message included the line “The ambassador shall call.”

Q: I remember cables like that.

ENGELKEN: Yes. After we went over with him the disputes we had been having with the French, he read over the demarche again and concluded “They won’t like it.”

“Yes, Walter, they won’t like it.”

He said, “Can’t you guys deliver these points?" He looks at the pol counselor; “Can’t you go?”

The PolCouns responded, “I can go and say these things. but it won’t have the same impact.”

Curley said, “But they won’t like it.”

“Well, Washington doesn’t want them to like it. Ambassador, your job is not to go and be friends but to go and stick your middle finger in their face.”

“Oh.”

“That’s part of the job, too.”

“Oh, well, I’ll go alone.”

“Oh no no no Walter, you can’t.”

“No, no.”

He insisted. He walked to the Elysee and came back and dictated something. We all looked at it and said is that what he really said? I don’t know. I just don’t know.

Anyway, back to Pamela Harriman. I give her credit; she was willing to talk to people about hard controversial things. We were in the last phase of the Uruguay Round, and the French were the holdouts. There was a big argument over subsidization of oil seeds. The EU subsidizes rape seed and other things extensively. They did it to get people off of other crops that were being produced in surplus, butter mountains and the like. The French were adamant that restrictions on agricultural subsidies should not be included in the Uruguay Round agreement, because they subsidized agriculture enormously. I don’t remember the conclusion, but I remember meeting with her, coaching her on what to say; she was going to see the agriculture minister. She didn’t try to beg off saying “oh no they won’t like it." She set her jaw firmly and took a notetaker, so we know what she said. She talked *en francais* – now there’s specialized vocabulary which she had to learn; what is a rapeseed in French? I don’t know. So, she negotiated with them about agricultural subsidies *en francais*, some highly technical stuff in French. I think eventually they did come around; I don’t credit her entirely with that, but she did loyally carry out the demarche even if it was certain to evoke a strong reaction.

State Department Washington, D.C. - Deputy Director NEA/ARP 1995-97

I think that covers the highlights of my service at Embassy Paris. In the spring of ’95, I decided I had been in Europe too much. I noticed that the boards didn’t like too much service in nice places. I’d done Italy and France back-to-back, and I figured I would have to get the pate’ off my shoes. So, I decided to go back to the Near East bureau and become the deputy director for Arabian Peninsula affairs, ‘95 to ‘97. The office was responsible for Saudi Arabia, the small Gulf states, and Yemen.

In that period, post-Gulf-War, our relationships were warm. The overarching concern driving U.S. Gulf policy in this period was that Kuwait remained vulnerable. The Iraqis had three armored divisions in southern Iraq that were capable at least theoretically of moving on Kuwait. There were three routes into Kuwait from the north, one along the coast, one in the middle, one in the desert to the west. Kuwait simply did not have enough troops to defend all three routes. Even if the Iraqi Army was in poor condition after the Gulf War, it was certainly still capable of driving down the three roads unopposed. U.S. policymakers worried deeply about what would happen if the Iraqis were to occupy Kuwait again. Would we have the stomach to go back and liberate it again? No one was confident.

The conundrum facing the United States in the 1990s has not been fully explained to the public, I think. If we had pulled out entirely from the Gulf, would the Iraqis reoccupy Kuwait? The U.S. military kept taking the position that we cannot defend Kuwait only

having troops in Kuwaiti territory. It's too far forward, aircraft on the ground in Kuwait are going to be extraordinarily vulnerable, probably Iraqi artillery will get within range within hours of an attack and render the airfields unusable. We thus felt we needed to have aircraft stationed in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. This wasn't popular with Gulf publics. During the build-up to Desert Storm, we said we were going to leave as soon as Kuwait was liberated; we didn't.

There were periodic crises while I was in NEA/ARP where we would notice the Iraqis moving forces around or the Iraqis would be delinquent in complying with their obligations, WMD (weapons of mass destruction) for example. We would respond by surging aircraft into the Gulf; tensions would rise; then the Iraqis would back down just enough to defuse the things. We would then go back to the status quo ante. These periodic crises were terribly unpopular with Gulf publics. They jangled a lot of nerves, and ordinary citizens couldn't understand why they were necessary. Hadn't the U.S. defeated Iraq? Wouldn't it have been insane for the Iraqis to try to attack Kuwait again? Many ordinary Gulf citizens thus looked for ulterior motives for U.S. behavior. Weren't the crises completely manufactured to give the Americans an excuse to stay in the Gulf? Wasn't the U.S. motive somehow to keep Arabs and Muslims divided and ultimately to steal the oil wealth the Gulf states had accumulated? Conscious of this strain in Gulf opinion, the Iraqis were always careful to make it look like the U.S. was being provocative. Since the reasons for our actions were often to be found in highly classified intelligence reports, we couldn't explain to Gulf publics why we were doing what we were doing.

Aware of this discontent but hamstrung in dealing with it, we spent much time trying to gauge how much U.S. military presence the Gulf states would tolerate. Will Gulf publics turn on us? How do we secure Kuwait long-term when the Iraqis, Saddam, still hadn't reconciled and hated the Kuwaitis even more now? There was just no way Kuwait on its own was ever going to have the military power to defend itself against Iraq.

We kept going back and forth over this issue. We never came to a final resolution; rather what happened was that another issue arose to push it into the background. It turned out to be correct to worry about Gulf states' reaction to our military presence. The Wahabis who are the religious sect that control Saudi Arabia believed in a "hadith" (traditional saying attributed to the Prophet) that said the Arabian Peninsula is to be reserved for Muslims. Non-Muslims (*kuffar*) could live and work elsewhere in the Islamic world, but they should not be in the Arabian Peninsula, Islam's holy land.

Forward to the middle of the twentieth century, you have foreigners come to Saudi Arabia to work and drill for oil. There was initially a great deal of resistance in Saudi Arabia to that. Saudis didn't like having all these foreigners. It seemed blasphemous, almost; this is the holy land, how can you have non-Muslims here working? That was why Aramco built camps for their workers that segregated them from the population. So, at the end of the Gulf War there was a major presence of hundreds of thousands of Americans doing things that are culturally inappropriate – we had female soldiers and things like that, women driving trucks. It was really shocking to the Saudis and violated a

lot of mores. They tolerated it, sort of, the government tolerated it because they had to. But we said we were going to leave. So, we don't leave. Who likes that? That was Bin Laden's fundamental beef. Yes, he doesn't like our policy in Israel and various other things, but his fundamental beef was the presence of American troops in the Arabian Peninsula.

We knew about him, and we were quite concerned. He was at this point living in Khartoum, and we were pressing the Sudanese to return him to Saudi Arabia. The Saudis were ambivalent about whether they wanted him back. They'd revoked his citizenship. They didn't want this guy. What eventually happened was, we were pressing the Sudanese and were asking the Saudis to press the Sudanese, the Sudanese eventually expelled Bin Laden to Afghanistan. "He can't be any trouble there, it's remote." Well, we weren't terribly happy about that, but we didn't hit the alarm bell. In retrospect with perfect hindsight, we should not have been so complacent.

Then it became an issue between us and the Taliban, and it was off my plate. But why do I mention all of this? In November 1995 there was a bombing at the headquarters of the advisory group we had for the Saudi national guard. It was known as Office of the Project Manager - Saudi Arabian National Guard, OPM-SANG. It had been in Riyadh since the '70s. Back to this reluctance to bring foreigners into the holy land, the Saudis only allowed the embassies into Riyadh in the early 1980s. So, our Embassy to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia moved from Jiddah to Riyadh only in the mid-80s. When it did so, the OPM-SANG office had already been in Riyadh for many years. It had worked out its management and support issues, including security, without much assistance from the embassy, and the embassy took the view that, if OPM-SANG didn't need help, the Embassy should not force it on them. The Embassy thus did not spend a lot of time worrying about OPM-SANG's security. The RSO talked to OPM-SANG once or twice a year, and that was it. There was no record of OPM-SANG ever having asked the Embassy for assistance with security.

Bombing. The accountability review board (ARB), which I sat on, said, "Wait a minute." We parsed through the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the one that establishes control of the military, various pieces of legislation. We concluded the ambassador is responsible for the security of all Americans not assigned to a combat commander. Nonetheless, after the bombing Embassy Riyadh defended itself by maintaining, "We had no responsibility for these guys, nobody ever told us this. They never asked for help, and if we'd gone and said, 'We're responsible' they would have rebelled and said, 'No, we're not accepting it. We're not going to take guidance from the Embassy.'"

Meanwhile DOD was saying "We aren't expert at force protection, we don't do this. You at the State Department are much better at static security than we are." Which was quite an admission.

The ARB dinged Embassy Riyadh lightly, affirming that it should have taken responsibility for security at OPM-SANG. Notably, the ARB recommended that there should be an MOU (memorandum of understanding) between the ambassador and the

regional combatant commander in every country in which the U.S. military is present that would specify who was responsible for the security of each unit, so there could be no confusion. Since the OPM-SANG bombing every new ambassador around the world has to sign an MOU with the area commander assigning security responsibilities. In the Middle East it would be with CENTCOM (Central Command), that "this detachment I'm responsible for, that combat unit you are." So, the defense attachés, the Marine guard detachments, the ODC (Office of Defense Cooperation), all of those sitting in the embassy, the ambassador and the RSO were responsible for, and for their security at their residences. But if we deploy the 82nd Airborne somewhere, the RSO doesn't have to deal with that. That comes out of that incident. Five Americans and two third country nationals were killed in the incident, in which a car bomb parked against the building blew up.

Now, who did it? I don't know. I know there was a long investigation by both the U.S. and the Saudis. I recall that we pretty much concluded that the explosives had been smuggled in from Yemen but what organization did it was not fully clear by the time that I left the NEA/ARP job for other duties. My hunch, nonetheless, is that young Sunni Saudis connected to or inspired by Bin Laden had to be responsible. The term, "al-Qaida," was not in common use at that point in time, but I think that one of the groups coalesced later into al-Qaida had to have been involved.

Eight months later in June 1996, there was a bombing at Khobar Towers; that's better known. Fourteen airmen were killed. It was a housing complex near the Dhahran Air Force base that coalition forces used to fly patrols over southern Iraq in support of the No-Fly zone. We had F-15s at Dhahran Air Base for this mission. The airmen slept in the Khobar Towers complex.

Here's one bit that I do want to have recorded: After the bombing, there was a large to-do over whether intelligence warning of a threat to the base had been passed to the Brigadier commanding the detachment. The true story was that information suggesting a possible attack was developed by members of the Brigadier's command. They discounted it to some extent and just never shared it with him.

Let me elaborate. Through the autumn '95 and the spring of '96, NEA/ARP for some reason was being copied on reports filed by the U.S. Air Force Special Police who were guarding the Khobar Towers perimeter. These reports were addressed to the headquarters of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) in Crystal City Alexandria and the Saudi Desk at State was somehow receiving info copies of them. I read many of these reports at the time, because the Air Force sentries regularly reported obvious surveillance of the complex by individuals with binoculars, video cameras, and cameras with telephoto lenses.

Surveillance of U.S. facilities (including Embassy Riyadh and our consulates in Dhahran and Jeddah) picked up tremendously after the OPM-SANG bombing. There were numerous incidents all over the country; sightings of people who were doing really spooky things tracking and following Americans. We were quite worried about that. The

surveillance at Khobar Towers reported by the Air Force police at the perimeter was probably the most intense I saw anywhere. It was really obvious. We'd get this report - "Saw two guys with binoculars. A week later, "Saw a guy with a video camera." Another week later, "Saw a guy with a tele-photo lens." Then people loitering by this gate, by that gate. On and on, it went on for months. It was really obvious.

My concern increased still more in late May 1996. The Air Force Special Police sentries reported that a car had come up and pushed a jersey barrier with its right fender; there was a jersey barrier and a chain link fence and then the building. It didn't have a set-back as we would say today. The car tapped the jersey barrier several times, The Special Police had to run to the vehicle gate, find the Saudi police there, and run with them to the spot where the car was pushing the barrier to see what was going on. By the time they arrived on scene, the suspicious car had pulled off and driven away.

I showed the report to my supervisor, the NEA/ARP Office Director, and he exclaimed, "That's a dry run! What do we do?"

I had this awful moment where I thought you're right, that is. I didn't know what to do. What I did clearly wasn't the right thing. I called the political adviser at CENTCOM and said, "You have to get people out of Khobar Towers."

He said, "What? No way, we can't get out of there."

"No, you have to!"

It turned out that the distribution of the Air Force police messages had gone to us but not to CENTCOM. They went to AFCENT, the Air Force component which was at Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina, and then up to Alexandria. But MacDill wasn't getting any of them, and it was obvious that staff at Shaw weren't paying attention, just silly reports from bored police who had nothing to do.

It took CENTCOM days to find this message, I gave them the date-time group and the sender, it still took them literally days to find it. Then they pushed back saying surveillance was being reported country-wide, what makes this report different? This was a dry run, I replied. They were still scratching their heads when the bomb went off.

As the days went by and I was not getting anywhere with CENTCOM, I tried a different way to raise the alarm. I asked INR if they would write something. They did, they put in some short article about intense surveillance at Khobar Towers in the Secretary's Morning Summary. They also got DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) to write something in the military intelligence digest (MID), and they did a three-sentence line in the MID saying that there had been threatening surveillance at Khobar Towers. The MID was disseminated to the Congressional armed services committees. The MID article appeared the day before the bombing. Congressional staff saw this article then heard on the radio fourteen people dead, massive damage, and of course their immediate reaction was "Why didn't you do something? Did you tell the commander?"

There was a lot of assumption that there was some special intelligence somewhere. Maybe there was, I don't know. I was in a lot of compartments, and I did not see anything. My office's suspicion that Khobar Towers was a target was entirely based on the surveillance report, which was written by people on the staff of the commander at Khobar Towers. It wasn't like we didn't send them anything.

All right, next step. The military asked General Downing, who had just retired as commander of Special Operations Command (SOCOM), to lead a team to investigate the attack. He asked for somebody from the Department to join his team, and I was volunteered to go and join him. It was a cool trip. I flew to MacDill, met General Downing and had a long talk with him. We flew nonstop from MacDill to Dhahran in a C-141 that refueled twice in air. I'd never done that, they let me come to the cockpit to watch. It was cool.

We landed in Dhahran and we went and slept in Khobar Towers. I was in the building next to the blown-up building. During this trip, I explained to the team members the background, why the MID article was written and why this kicked off this big fuss. They went and asked the executive officer of the Wing, had he ever brought the Air Force police reports of surveillance to the commander's attention? The answer was negative. The current Executive Officer and his predecessors had generally not discussed perimeter security issues with the C.O.

The Dhahran Air Wing was a temporary unit, intended to operate only as long as No-Fly Zone enforcement was needed. Because of its transient nature, the Air Force rotated people every three months. The current executive officer hadn't seen all the surveillance reports from autumn because he'd only arrived relatively recently. He didn't see it as the latest in a long string, but just kind of an odd, one-off thing. Downing's team did ask him what he had done to follow up. He had tasked his team to ask the Saudi air force liaison officer, a Lieutenant Colonel, to close the roadway the suspicious car had been driving on. That didn't happen. This is Saudi Arabia; a lieutenant colonel can't close an area to the public. A major cultural difference between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, all decisions in Saudi Arabia are elevated to much higher levels than would be true here. Technically the Saudi air force could have gone to the mayor of the town of al Khobar, but the mayor of the town's not going to take a politically unpopular move to close a road and inconvenience the Saudi public without senior back-up. So, I asked the XO did you go to the emir, the governor of the province? He looked at me blankly.

"You should have gone to the emir!"

Our only point of contact in the Saudi Government is the Saudi Air Force, he countered.

Then you should have asked our Dhahran consulate.

The Dhahran consul-general was a personal friend. He told me later that the Air Force never came to him; they never told him about a problem. Had he been aware, he would

have been happy to take this up with the Eastern Province Governor.

Q: Actually, as an aside, having interviewed other people who served in Dhahran for other reasons including consular officers, consular officers would have to go to the emir to get an American released from jail and deported, they had been caught with a Bible or some small infraction, they went to the emir.

ENGELKEN: That's right.

All right, self-criticism. If I had to rerun this, I would have called my friend the CG in Dhahran and asked if he'd seen the report. Maybe he could have gone to the Air Force and said, "I can help you." I don't know whether they would have been willing to accept our help. But he could have at least offered to help and pushed it up the radar of the commander. We should have gotten the embassy involved too.

But the military when you're sitting on the outside is this enormous beast, lumbering. If you aren't from it, you don't know where the buttons are.

Q: Exactly. That's why you have military liaison officers at State.

ENGELKEN: Yes. But again, I've dealt with some of them and I'm not sure how well they would have done either on this. My proposed solution, moving Air Force staff out of Khobar Towers, would have been a massive move, it would have taken six months to do.

Q: They could have at least reinforced or closed some things.

ENGELKEN: They could have moved the perimeter out, or they could have closed the building closest to the exposed point and relocated staff elsewhere within the complex, which is what they did with the remaining staff after the bombing.

While I was in Saudi Arabia with the investigating team, I took General Downing aside and said, "you have to talk to the emir." He agreed immediately. We called the consulate and within a few hours we got an appointment with the governor, who was the son of then King Fahd, certainly a man with a lot of authority. He said "if you'd told me I would have done something.

As the Downing Mission concluded, it had to consider whether to recommend discipline for the commander of the air wing. General Downing in the end concluded that he couldn't do that because he couldn't find anybody who said he had brought the problem to the commander. The commander was not negligent; nobody ever told him that he had a problem. The commander's mind was in the box of air over Iraq; what was going on around the perimeter of his air base wasn't in his view his concern, he was thinking about enforcing the no-fly zone. Downing said that was his primary mission, though he was responsible for the security of his men.

The commander was relieved and had to retire; so, he wasn't exactly let off scot-free. In

the end Downing recommended that the Air Force stop these three-month rotations, send people there for longer. He said, I'm sorry, nobody wants to be away from their family, but they have to do it. And they did have to pay more attention to what's going on outside the perimeter. He recommended (I know the military followed up on this, not just because of this incident) that the military create a force protection service. I think DOD has one now that was modeled on DS (Diplomatic Security); specialists in static security, so we don't leave ourselves vulnerable.

There were changes to procedure resulting from both the OPM-SANG and Khobar Towers incidents that are still being implemented today. One of the effects on the State Department side was that we created surveillance detection teams (SDT). They were instituted about 2000. After Khobar Towers and other incidents like it, DS observed that detectable surveillance had preceded almost every attack on U.S. personnel abroad. Almost every embassy I know today has a surveillance detection team. These are locally hired as part of the local guards. The other long-term impact was the Ambassador-COCOM security memorandum, agreeing on a clear division of responsibility for security of Defense Department personnel in each country.

That pretty much takes us through the end of my time as deputy director for the Arabian Peninsula. I'm about out of batteries. We're up to December 1997. Maybe in the next session I can get through the rest of it.

State Department, Washington, D.C. – Deputy Director IO/PHO 1997

Q: Today is May 21st, 2020 and we're resuming our interview with Stephen Engelken as he begins a deputy director slot in IO, International Organizations, in 1997.

ENGELKEN: Right. As I recall, in August 1997 I became deputy director for peacekeeping. There were two deputy directors in the office and we each had a group of peacekeeping operations we were looking over. I was looking over a lot of the ones in Europe, and the Near East; the other Deputy Director looked after the operations in Africa. The office had been created because at the time there was a great deal of concern in Congress about the cost of these operations. This is a long running sore which continues to the present moment. The United States, as I recall, paid 25 percent of the cost of UN Peacekeeping Operations.

Q: As a quick aside, 25 percent is in addition to what we pay as dues to the UN and in addition to what we pay to other organizations like UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) and so on.

ENGELKEN: Right. Bosnia brought this issue to a boil. Up until the early '90s, the U.S. assessed portion of the budget for peacekeeping had been stable for years. It was in the low several hundred million dollars, like two or three hundred million dollars, for many years. It didn't attract much attention.

That changed with the creation of UNPROFOR in Bosnia, and there were other things

blowing up in the Balkans; Kosovo was obviously about to blow. The Clinton Administration had announced a preference for doing things through the UN, and that opened an ideological divide that has existed since probably the 1920s, between Democratic administrations favoring international organizations and Republican organizations being skeptical of them. Congress was particularly annoyed that, when the UN decided to mount a peacekeeping operation, the U.S. was automatically committed to pay. To them this was violating Congress' right to appropriate money according to its will. There was some other body, not even an American body, getting into the appropriations process. So, every year we would have to go back to ask for an appropriation. What really ticked things off was just before I got to the office, the U.S. share of the UN peacekeeping budget ballooned from two or three hundred million to over a billion dollars in '94 or '95.

"Where did this come from, we didn't agree, why did you do that?"

There was also much complaint that peacekeeping operations seem never to end. There are peacekeeping operations that have been in operation since 1947. There were any number created in the '40s, '50s, '60s that still exist, and the question is "Why? Shouldn't we seek a way to end them. And in any case, these are Band Aids on problems because you can't solve them."

This is getting us into the whole question of frozen conflicts which as we speak remains a serious issue.

Because of the budget surprises in 1994, the Congress required in legislation I think passed in '95 that we had to brief the Hill every month on the status of peacekeeping operations. The Hill wanted no surprises, they didn't want "you guys" wandering in and saying oh we need another billion. I think it was in '95 they had to do a supplemental appropriation of a billion dollars. That went down poorly with people who were not inclined from the beginning to support UN operations. So, we had to brief the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the appropriators on both sides and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee every month. That was my principal job, to go make this monthly briefing. We mostly talked to junior staffers, but occasionally staff directors would join in, if there was something very "front page' being discussed.

It was always the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (chaired by Jesse Helms at the time) where we encountered the greatest hostility "Why aren't you getting this done? Why do we still have UNIFIL (UN Interim Force in Lebanon) in Lebanon? Can't you come up with something? Cyprus, nothing has happened since 1974, why do we still have several thousand peacekeepers in Cyprus? Can't you come up with some other solution that gets this off the U.S. budget? Can't Greece and Turkey agree to some other way of doing this? Present us a plan to shut these things down."

We dutifully drew up plans, but nobody came up with a good alternative. UNFICYP (UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) is still there, UNIFIL is still there. It's very hard. If the situation has been quiet for forty-five years, why rip the Band Aid off and risk conflict

between two NATO allies? On my side of the table, this seemed kind of cheap, there aren't American soldiers there, we're not putting our people at risk, it's the Canadians in Cyprus.

I only stayed six months in the office, from August until the end of January because in the middle of August I got a call from the gentleman who had been my boss in Paris from '92 to '95; he had just become DCM in Canberra. He called and said, "Do you want to be political counselor in Canberra, and your wife can be admin counselor?"

Now that was a dream tandem assignment in a beautiful place. I, therefore, asked to curtail. I got a lot of grumpy faces, because I'd just started in PHO. I don't blame them, if I had been on the other side of the table, I would have been pretty grumpy, too. People eventually said once they had found a replacement, I could go. In the end, we were curtailed and at the end of January 1998, we went to Canberra to take up our duties.

Canberra, Australia, 1998-2001

Australia was a beautiful place. I enjoyed my tour there as political counselor immensely. Canberra had about three hundred thousand people at the time. It had the atmosphere of a small college town. It is a planned city, designed by an American architect, Walter Burley Griffin who was a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. He did a pretty good job. It's very green. Burley Griffin convinced people to plant American trees (we wouldn't do this today). The American trees they brought were fascinating because they adapted quickly to the reversed seasons. I remember going to church at Easter and there were colored leaves falling off the chestnut trees. The days were getting shorter as we're celebrating the birth of new life. You suddenly realized how much our traditional holidays are seasonal and transposing them to the opposite end of the world causes them to lose all sense. Christmas falls near the summer solstice. Christmas dinner would be a turkey or a goose or something roasted, which makes perfect sense in the U.S. When it's cold outside and the house is cold, it's great to run the oven all day. But if it's ninety-five degrees outside this makes no sense.

Anyway, our relations with Australia were very warm. You could talk to people about anything. We had conversations at levels of sensitivity that I never had in any other post. Elsewhere you always had to hold something back. But here I was in one of the "Five Eyes."

The Five Eyes arrangement goes back to World War Two. In Australia you felt World War Two had ended only recently.

Q: Interesting. You're talking in the 2000s where most of the veterans are quite old.

ENGELKEN: Yes, they were quite old.

During World War Two, Australians had a terrible scare. When the Pacific war began in December 1941, most of their army was in the Western Desert of Egypt. The British

wanted them to stay there, but the Australians insisted they be withdrawn to defend the Australian mainland. This took several months during which Australia was virtually undefended. It led to a real crisis in British/Australian relations, as Britain appeared to prioritize Imperial defense writ large over defense of the Australian homeland.

Americans forget how close the Japanese got to Australia. While the Australian army was being shipped back from Egypt, the Japanese captured Singapore (including many thousand Australian troops) and overran the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia today) and the northern shore of New Guinea.

There's another point here. We were trapped in the Philippines in early 1942, on Bataan. There was a big effort to try to rescue the garrison on Bataan; how were we going to do that? The plan was to mass forces in Darwin, northern Australia, and sail around the western end of New Guinea and get to Bataan to either reinforce it or evacuate the garrison. When the Japanese captured all of what's now Indonesia, basically we just couldn't get through. We had begun building up forces in Darwin, and (here's where the Five Eyes comes in), we'd evacuated the naval signals intelligence detachment that had been on Corregidor, one of the places we were trying to listen to Japanese radio comms. They were evacuated to Melbourne. It was the beginning of the war, everything was makeshift, nothing planned, they just did whatever worked, not what ideology or doctrine told them to do. At that moment we merged the signals intelligence detachments. We had one, the Australians had one, we didn't have enough people to go around who knew Japanese, so they merged the detachments, and the Australians and New Zealanders were all there together and were all merged, and that remains to this day, that's the origin of it.

Q: Fascinating, I didn't know that.

ENGELKEN: I would have never known this either. The Australians remember this.

To prevent the U.S. Navy from basing in Darwin and trying to go north, four Japanese aircraft carriers stood off of Darwin on February 19, 1942, and bombed it for an entire day. Nobody knows to this day how many citizens of Darwin died. The government deliberately undercounted. The best guess is that 250 (mostly civilians) were killed, but we don't really know. There were enough dead that they put them in a mass grave. The city was devastated. The U.S. Navy had two ships sunk in the harbor; there were other British and Australian ships sunk. The U.S. happened on that day to have several P-40s at an airfield in Darwin that we were trying to send north to help defend the Philippines. These were the only allied aircraft in the sky when the Japanese attacked. Most of the P-40s were shot down.

For the next several months we kept a detachment of P-40s at Darwin, and the air defense of Darwin was done by the United States until May or June of '42. In that time the Japanese created an air wing in southern Timor and bombed Darwin regularly. They did air strikes all over the northern end of Australia as far south as Tennant Creek. They also bombed the northern finger of Queensland, the Cape York Peninsula. Americans don't remember this, but Australia was bombed. It was a remote part of Australia, the big cities

weren't touched, but the population was terrified: They didn't have any way to defend themselves. Australia had virtually no air force at this point, a small navy, big continent, small army. It leaked, I think, that if the Japanese invaded the Australian plan was to withdraw to a line from Brisbane to Adelaide and they weren't going to defend anything north of that. Well, several hundred thousand Australians lived north of that line. They would have been occupied by the Japanese.

In this moment of extreme crisis, the Australian prime minister John Curtin made a famous speech in which he said, "Australia looks to the United States." That marks an historic pivot in Australian orientation and the close relationship begins then. We based submarines in Brisbane and Perth; we based a large air force in Queensland. When the Japanese attempted to sail around the eastern end of New Guinea with two or three carriers and an invasion fleet with a target of Australian-held Port Moresby on the southern coast of New Guinea, the U.S. Navy intercepted them, and you have the Battle of the Coral Sea, where we lost a big aircraft carrier, and the Japanese lost a small one and dozens of aircraft. In the end, they abandoned the effort. For Australia it was a close call. If the Japanese had been able to seize Port Moresby and establish an air wing there, they would have been able to fly as far south as Brisbane and would have been able to do attacks into the populated part of the country. This was a saving moment for Australia.

So fast forward to 2000. At that point you're right, the veterans are old. There's an older generation of Australia that's wedded to this moment, still remembered it. Australia still had an official Coral Sea commemoration on the anniversary of the battle in early May. There was a ceremony at the monument for the fallen near the Australian War Museum. They had a marching band play "Waltzing Matilda." School children threw flowers into the pond. There was a Coral Sea race at the racetrack, and a ball which we all attended in black tie.

You could see, however, that it was in danger of becoming a dying tradition. Other than the schoolchildren who were told to go, the people who attended Coral Sea events were all in their fifties and sixties at that point, and you didn't find many younger Australians. A worry of mine at the time and today is, do they feel the same attachment? Australians would turn this around and ask, do you, Americans, feel the same attachment? Can we rely on you if (now) the Chinese come south? This was long before they began talking about the South China Sea, but the Chinese had already announced their claim to the Nine Dash Line. I had essentially a whole graduate level course taught by Australians to me about security in the Pacific, I talked to the defense and foreign ministries, the prime minister's cabinet office, about security in the Pacific, what countries can we use to manage the Chinese, which have the gumption to stand up to China and which ones don't. We were just beginning to reopen relations with Vietnam, and they were strongly encouraging us to do that, they said "Vietnam is one of the few countries that has a history of standing up to the Chinese, the Chinese can't just push them around, they're not going to kowtow." The other one they wanted us to support was Indonesia. Yes. (laughter) Did you serve there?

Q: No but Indonesia just doesn't seem like a wise choice to me.

ENGELKEN: They didn't have much choice. Indonesia was their closest neighbor, "only" two hundred miles of sea (it's nice when you don't have any land neighbors, isn't it?) separated Australia from Indonesia, for them that was close. Two hundred million people. It also has an anti-Chinese bias in people. There are overseas Chinese communities in Indonesia and whenever anything goes bad in Indonesia there is a riot and people turn on the Chinese. That's not very edifying. They don't have a cultural tradition of looking to China. There is a lot of Asia where culture ultimately came from China and people have some cultural deference to China; Indonesia is not one of them. It's predominantly Muslim. They didn't have a close historical attachment to China.

I spent my tour in Canberra closely following events in Indonesia, because it was Australia's biggest foreign policy concern. The Asian Financial Crisis had destabilized the regime. Then-president Suharto had at that point been the military dictator since the '60s, and the Australians had established a comfortable relationship with him. Better the devil you know. The Australians trained the Indonesian army including their special forces unit, Kopassus, which was widely reputed to be involved in extrajudicial killings. We wouldn't do it. I think this is about the time the Leahy Amendment was passed, we would not train Kopassus for that reason. The Australians would.

The Australians could see Suharto wobbling. He was old with no clear successor; much of his coterie were reputed to be corrupt and lacking popular respect. There was no clear successor. Few civilians had any experience governing. There were courageous dissidents who had spoken out against the regime and been in prison multiple times, had popular respect, but hadn't governed anything. You had a formation of parties. As I recall you had Sukarno's daughter (the previous leader Suharto had overthrown bloodily in '65), Megawati – she'd been a dissident and had a famous last name, but other than that she had no background in governing anything. There was a leadership crisis which I think Indonesia is still working its way through.

So, we spent endless amounts of time talking about Indonesia and how to strengthen it. On Washington's agenda, this was medium important. No one denied Indonesia's significance. It's an OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) member. There were many reasons to pay attention to Indonesia. But for the United States the fall of Suharto was not the sort of crisis that a revolution in Mexico would be. Your priority depends on where you sit.

The U.S. and Australia constantly had issues on priorities. They had over the years decided they were going to be part of East Asia and better integrated into their region. They wanted to join East Asian organizations like APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The Malaysians firmly vetoed their ASEAN candidacy, essentially saying that Australia was a European nation attached to Asia's backside. This, of course, didn't go down well in Australia.

Australians perceived their greatest challenge in this period as becoming accepted as part of Asia. The U.S.'s concerns were global, however, and Australia's were increasingly

focused on Asia. They were not interested in Latin America or Africa, for example. That said, they had a policy of backing the United States, what they called an insurance policy. They'll support the United States in our various military operations if we in turn agree to support them when the day comes that they face an attack from China.

Shortly after I arrived in 1998 there was a small crisis, which illustrated our differences but showed how close we were in another way. The U.S. intelligence community thought the Iraqis were going to violate the "no-drive zone" in southern Iraq along the Kuwaiti border; remember I'd said the Kuwaitis didn't have enough forces to defend Kuwait on their own. The U.S., therefore, surged aircraft and troops to Kuwait to head this off. We also asked the Australians and other coalition partners for help, and the Australians responded by agreeing to dispatch their SAS (Special Air Service) regiment to Kuwait. Prime Minister Howard and Opposition leader Beazley had a ceremony at the Fremantle naval base just outside of Perth to farewell the troops flying off to Kuwait. The event gained headlines in Australia and was clearly intended to prepare the public for possible hostilities. All seemed on track. The following day, however, the foreign minister's chief of staff telephoned to ask, "Can you come to the Foreign Minister's Parliament House office right now?"

I had only been in country for about three weeks, and the ambassador and DCM were both out of the office on other business. So, I went right over. The foreign minister at the time was Alexander Downer. Mr. Downer had been a candidate for leadership of the Liberal Party but had lost the leadership spill to John Howard who had made his former rival foreign minister. Downer later became famous as the mysterious Australian diplomat in London in 2016 who talked to one of Trump's acolytes who got caught up in the Mueller investigation. Downer to me was not mysterious at all. He wasn't connected to any secret service of any kind. He was just an ordinary, bland Australian politician.

When I arrived at the Foreign Minister's office his chief of staff greeted me immediately and explained the problem. The SAS unit was holding on Diego Garcia because they did not have permission to land in Kuwait. The Australian media had in the meantime staked out Kuwait airport to watch them land and was going to suspect something was wrong if the SAS didn't land soon. Instead of the news reporting about doughty Australians arriving to save Kuwait, the story was going to be that Australian troops were unwelcome in the place they were supposed to be fighting for (!).

Drawing on my stint in NEA/ARP (see above), I explained we always had trouble with the Gulf States when seeking permission to station military assets. They were jealous of their sovereignty and didn't want the Americans to fly in whenever they chose, "what kind of war are you dragging us into? Is this deployment really necessary? Do we want to have a conflict with Iraq now?" In this case, it turned out we had invited the Australians to Kuwait without asking Kuwait. Which exemplifies why they should be touchy about their sovereignty.

As I explained all of this to the chief of staff, his face began to fall. "Really, you have problems with Kuwait? You just saved Kuwait." Well, gratitude doesn't last long.

He grabbed me by the sleeve and said, “Let’s go talk to Alexander.”

I worried that the ambassador would be “p.o.ed” at me; I shouldn’t be talking to the foreign minister, as a first secretary. The F.M. was her contact. But it also shows you something positive about Australia; they weren’t rank conscious. It was the least rank conscious place I’ve been. I don’t think the secretary of state would agree to speak to the pol chief of any embassy in Washington. We would insist that it had to be the Ambassador or Charge’. Within a flash, however, I was in talking to the Foreign Minister. I began by repeating my account of the difficulties in dealing with the Gulf states on military deployments. This clearly alarmed him. He was perspiring and quite emotional. This must be resolved before evening news broadcasts begin, he declared.

So, I said I would call the U.S. embassy in Kuwait and see what we can do. First question is it’s 2:00 p.m. in Canberra, what time is it in Kuwait? Turns out it was eight hours behind. I thus called Embassy Kuwait before opening of business there and was put through to the DCM. I had met him previously a few times. He was well known for his salty speech. I explained the problem. He says, “Christ, can’t the Australians ask the Kuwaitis?" Turns out they didn’t have an embassy in Kuwait. They covered it from Riyadh and their ambassador in Riyadh hadn’t even gotten around to presenting his credentials in Kuwait, so they had nobody other than their first secretary in Riyadh that they could fly up to Kuwait to do this. They had a tiny embassy in Riyadh focused mostly on selling agricultural products to the Saudis.

I explained all this to the DCM, leaning hard on the urgency for quick action and eliciting more Anglo-Saxonisms. Finally, he said “All right, I’ll go talk to them." He called back a couple of hours later and said, “It’s settled, they can land." The Australians in the end arrived roughly in time for the nightly news, and no one in Australia was ever wiser that there had been a problem. That’s one of my best anecdotes from Australia.

Another thing of significance that happened in my time was the Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor. At the time the Portuguese left East Timor in1974 an anti-Portuguese liberation movement (the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) (FRETILIN) was already active and had been engaged in some low-level guerrilla attacks. FRETILIN stepped into the vacuum left by the Portuguese and proclaimed themselves the government of East Timor. At the time foreign observers feared there would be a pro-Communist/pro-Chinese takeover of the country. That possibility was absolutely unacceptable to Indonesian President Suharto who had massacred the Communist Party in Indonesia in 1965, and he was not about to let them take over next door. He, therefore, occupied East Timor and tried to incorporate it into Indonesia. But the East Timorese had maintained some sense of identity and had never really reconciled to the Indonesian occupation.

By the time I arrived in Australia, Indonesia was under significant financial and diplomatic pressure to quit East Timor. Portugal, the former colonial power, was pressing Jakarta hard bilaterally and at the UN. There was a large East Timorese diaspora in

Lisbon seeking the GoP's diplomatic backing, and there was a general feeling in Portugal that their withdrawal in 1975 amounted to a shameful abandonment. Australia was the other country pressing Indonesia hard to end its rule. In Canberra, support for East Timor came from both sides of the political spectrum. Many Australians on the left fringe of the Labor Party had been very supportive of East Timor in 1974. There were several journalists who had gone to report on the East Timorese in the way one kind of American went down to endorse the Sandinistas. Similar kind of group. When the Indonesians moved in, four Australian journalists disappeared and were never accounted for. Everyone assumes the Indonesians shot them and buried them, but they never admitted it. So, on the Australian left there were people holding a candle for East Timor and criticizing the Australian government for tolerating the tyrannical rule of Suharto.

Ironically on the right there was also support for East Timor. The Australians have something called the Returned Services League, the RSL, which is their equivalent to the American Legion. The RSL championed East Timor, too, because one of these unknown (to Americans) historical facts is that as the Japanese in 1942 moved into the Dutch islands north of Australia, the Australians landed troops in Dutch West Timor to resist them. The Japanese defeated the battalion-sized Australian force and compelled it to conduct a fighting withdrawal into East Timor, then Portuguese territory. The Japanese pursued them and invaded and occupied East Timor. They spent a year chasing the Australian battalion in the jungled hills of East Timor, but the Australians were able to hold out for all that time, because they had the support of the population. The population fed and hid them. The Japanese tortured East Timorese to find them, and the East Timorese never betrayed them. A year or so later the Australian navy was able to sneak up and get the soldiers out in good order. Most members of the battalion survived. The RSL argued that Australia had a debt to the people of East Timor, who essentially had suffered and died for Australia.

With both sides of politics engaged, media attention to East Timor was intense. I don't think the American media gave the story much coverage at all. Few Americans would know where East Timor was.

In the end, the Indonesians decided to withdraw. They needed financial aid, and it was obvious even to them that the East Timorese are not grateful to be part of Indonesia. So, the Indonesians abruptly announced they were leaving. It was a bitter moment for them. The departing troops took everything, the toilet bowls, light bulbs, everything movable, presumably on the assumption that Indonesia had imported these things after the 1974 occupation, and that it should, therefore, have a right to take them back.

The situation in the territory became chaotic. There were many reports that the Indonesians were backing various small militias that were creating havoc and had little popular support. Survivors of the FRETILIN guerrilla group enjoyed some popular respect and support. The archbishop also commanded respect and support. He had stayed throughout the occupation and was perceived as not being a collaborator. The Indonesians released their East Timorese political prisoners. Xanana Gusmao, the senior surviving FRETILIN guerrilla leader, was released. He'd spent eight years in jail and was

then in his late fifties, so young enough to take charge. But what do you learn in a prison cell? He was a nice guy, I got to meet him once. Jose' Ramos-Horta, the foreign spokesman of the FRETILIN, spent a lot of time in Australia at this point, and I got to meet him several times and talk about arrangements for the transition.

The Australians were afraid the Indonesians were deliberately sowing chaos in East Timor. They didn't want chaos on their border, they felt an obligation to ensure East Timor didn't repeat another failed effort to establish a state. They wanted the UN to come in and send an international peacekeeping force in which they very much wanted the U.S. to participate.

The U.S. and Australia had a row, because we were not willing to join them in putting troops on the ground in East Timor. This was in the spring of 2001 under President George W. Bush, but I don't think Al Gore or Clinton would have been any more eager to join. Our longstanding allergy to participating in UN peacekeeping forces should have been well known to the Australians. So should the fact that the American public was almost totally ignorant of East Timor.

As Australian and American public opinion veered in different directions, I was very much involved in talks between the foreign ministry, the defense ministry, and the prime minister's office over how to mobilize the international community to stabilize the situation in East Timor, while preserving the U.S.-Australia relationship. Australians reproached us bitterly, observing that they had sent troops to Vietnam, to the Gulf War, to Kuwait every time the U.S. had asked for them, and they wanted to know why we wouldn't come when they asked for our help in return. We searched for a way the U.S. could demonstrate support for Australia in a way that would be politically sustainable back in the U.S.

There's another bit that should be noted. In addition to talking to the U.S. embassy and having their embassy in Washington talk to the U.S. government, the Australians had a large consulate in Honolulu. The consulate in Honolulu talked to CINCPAC (commander in chief, Pacific Command); that's why it was there. They would talk extensively with CINCPAC, assuming that informing Pacific Command meant they had informed the U.S. Government. We kept trying to tell them, however, that CINCPAC doesn't have a reporting line to the Secretary of Defense or the White House. They were talking to an important official for the region, but he wasn't the viceroy. Frankly CINCPAC was way over into political stuff and always has been.

Remember when Rumsfeld became Secretary of Defense and reduced the titles and roles of the regional area commanders? This story illustrates why.

Q: I didn't remember that.

ENGELKEN: He changed the titles to "combatant commanders."

ENGELKEN: Whereas before they had been commander-in-chief. Commander-in-chief, Pacific, and commander-in-chief, Europe. And now I think it's just a combatant commander.

Anyway, they changed the title and kind of demoted regional commands because Rumsfeld thought collectively the CINCs (commanders in chief) as they used to call them had gotten too big for their britches. They were way over the line into foreign and security policy, and people all over the world were seeing them as viceroys. They would talk to them, and the CINCs were not necessarily clearing what they said with SECDEF, the Joint Staff, and the president.

Q: Did that status of the CINCs change back under Obama?

ENGELKEN: No, I don't think so. Whatever title you give them, practically people still refer to them – I've talked to people recently who work at PACOM (Pacific Command) and I don't think they've changed that much. They're still thinking about the politics of the region.

Q: The reason I ask is because the State Department has increased the number of POLADs (political advisers) around the world with the understanding that these are important jobs.

ENGELKEN: They are.

Q: I'm wondering, why would State increase the number of POLAD jobs if the relative weight of these commanders—

THIRD PERSON: I just checked the official title of all of the regionals are "combatant commands" and the title of the chief is the combatant commander.

ENGELKEN: All are referred to as unified combatant commander. A little bit less exalted. Why? Mark, it's the militarization of foreign policy. It's behind our whole discussion here. We do need to have all these POLADs, because we have to stay current on what these regional combatant commanders are doing. Most of their foreign interlocutors assume they are speaking for the U.S. government, and our ambassadors need to know what the heck they're saying to coordinate what we're saying.

At that particular moment in early 2001, I spent a lot of time talking to CINCPAC, which was fun, because if it's nine in the morning in Australia, what time is it in Honolulu? It turned out to be nineteen hours behind.

Q: Because it's the next day or?

ENGELKEN: The previous day! This is a concern. It was a lot easier to call Honolulu than Washington which was thirteen or fourteen hours behind Canberra. It was just terrible, you either had to call Washington at six in the morning Australian time or at

eleven at night. But you could call Honolulu in your daytime and their daytime. They were five hours ahead, but the previous day. When it's nine o'clock in the morning in Canberra, it's two o'clock in the afternoon in Honolulu, so you can call at a reasonable time for all and have a good discussion when all are awake and alert. But you always had to specify what date something would happen. The Date Line created enormous possibilities for confusion. You could never say "tomorrow" and "yesterday" because you were talking to someone who was still in the previous calendar day. I had to say, "we're going to do this on March 18 or March 20", otherwise it got confusing.

In the end, the U.S. picked up enough of the gathering outrage in Australia and helped in two ways. Politically, we supported them in the UN to get a resolution that authorized willing countries to deploy troops to East Timor to stabilize the situation and cooperate with a UN special representative to establish an interim government and a process for elections and a constitution, the sorts of things that have to be done when you're going to establish a state. Militarily, the U.S. stationed a Marine amphibious assault helicopter carrier in the sea between Australia and East Timor. It had two thousand Marines embarked along with helicopters and landing craft.

The helicopter carrier provided Australian helicopters moving from Darwin to Dili with a "lily pad" where they could refuel and repair if needed. The long over-water flight between Australia's northern coast and East Timor was not something that Australia's defense planners had foreseen or provided for. Like most of our allies, force projection and strategic lift were not things they had budgeted for. In the same vein, we also used some of the embarked amphibious landing craft to land supplies for the Australians. The Marines were under instruction they couldn't stay overnight, they had to re-embark every evening, so we didn't have to inform Congress formally under the War Powers Act that we had deployed.

In the end, the Australian Government professed to be satisfied with the support they received from us in dealing with the East Timor crisis. I remember a senior Defense Ministry official telling me, "This is great, you've done well. Our biggest fear was that the Indonesians would try some sort of guerrilla activity aimed at Australian troops, but the helicopter carrier sends a big signal you support the operation; the Indonesians know you have two thousand Marines on board, fully armed, who can land in hours, and that sent the signal to the Indonesians to back off." Which they did. The Australians got critical logistical support and they felt we had deterred the Indonesians. So fine on the government-to-government level.

I'm not clear whether the Australian public understood the value of our support, however. As this crisis unfolded, I recall meeting irate members of parliament, many of them members of the Liberal Party, which is the conservative, right of center party in Australia that is usually pro-American. They felt the U.S. had not repaid all the support Australia had given us over the years. I countered by pointing to the signal sent by the carrier and the logistics support we had provided. A prominent Liberal backbencher who later went on to become Foreign Minister looked totally blank when I mentioned the helicopter carrier. "What's that?" I recall her asking. It was obvious she had no idea of the

capabilities of the ship and couldn't distinguish it from a dinghy. She was not alone. The MPs insisted they wanted U.S. boots on the ground. I doubt I satisfied them. They would have been much happier with the symbolic deployment of a company of Marines much as the British did. So, here's an example where government to government private contacts can do things, but there's a public aspect to diplomacy at which we often fail. We obviously tried; the PD section tried very hard to explain it. DOD, PACOM, tried to explain the value of our assistance. But I think some day in the Australian list of American sins, this will be one.

At that point it was time to go. I had to leave.

Q: You're going to be leaving post, I just want to ask one last question before we leave Australia. Since you were working with the foreign ministry and so on, were there other regional issues? Because over time Australia has been doing more business with China and emerging Southeast Asian nations, were there other regional issues you got involved with.

ENGELKEN: Yes, but these were – the Australians at this point were always telling us to pay more attention to Asia, they felt we were too Europe-centric and Middle East-centric. "Asia is where it's happening." It got kind of monotonous. "You have to do more with China."

As I said Australia wanted to join ASEAN. They participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum which other countries could participate in, including the U.S. They had an ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Sydney that I had to go to and take notes at. But other regional issues. We talked about the Pacific islands, one of the few places where Australia is a superpower. The Solomon Islands, how much do we Americans think about the Solomon Islands? Not very much. What's going on in Kiribati today? Samoa? Fiji? Fiji was something we did talk about. Some of these islands are not very stable. The Solomon Islands to the extent you care about them, aren't terribly stable. The country is a colonial creation, each island had different ethnic groups on them. They don't all speak the same language. The country was created by the British in the late nineteenth century, but the British weren't there very long. We didn't stay long after the war. In 2001, there was serious trouble in Guadalcanal when the Gualis, who are the natives for which the island is named, went after people from Malaita, another island. There was rioting all over Honiara, which is the town that grew up around Henderson Field, the air base we created in World War Two and is now the capital.

The Australians landed troops there briefly, helped restore order and evacuate their citizens and our citizens. I had to talk to them to ask if they could get the handful of Americans out of there. It's not just the U.S. evacuating people; the Australians have returned the favor a couple of times.

We would talk about PNG, Papua New Guinea, a former Australian colony, especially efforts to settle the long-running insurgency on the island of Bougainville. Then, as now, our concern was the Chinese moving in. Bougainville, for example, had a large copper

mine that was attractive to them.

We talked about Kiribati, which is what the island of Tarawa which we famously assaulted in World War Two is called today. Fiji was a concern because they had a coup. The Fijian army is ethnically Fijian and will never allow the ethnic Indian population to take over. The Australians, Kiwis, and the U.S. would, nonetheless, periodically discuss ways to restore democracy to Fiji.

So that's what I can think of. This is a scene where we can stop. I left in July 2001, the East Timor crisis went on right up almost to my last day. At that point I went off to the Congressional affairs office which need not detain us long; I did not do very much there. It was not my favorite tour.

Q: Today is Tuesday May 26th, 2020, we're resuming our interview with Stephen Engelken. Stephen you have a little bit more time left in Australia; what is the final year there for you?

ENGELKEN: It was 2001. I should have mentioned there were two things of significance. One was the Sydney Olympics, in 2000, which took up a lot of post's time. I was named coordinator for security issues. There was an endless parade of U.S. government agencies coming to Sydney to look at security arrangements. We had people who specialized in biological and radiological weapons coming to ensure things were okay. Obviously, the Australians thought they were pretty competent on security issues and didn't need a lot of help, thank you, so there was diplomacy involved to get them to agree to let us do things they thought they didn't really need help with. I had to work a lot with the RSO who had a great deal to do with that, he was the liaison with the Australian Federal Police which was the police agency that had a lot of responsibility. Australia being a federal country, there was the New South Wales (NSW) police and just as in the United States, the Kansas state troopers and the FBI don't always see eye to eye. NSW police also were very prickly about being patronized in some way. In Australia the federal police are much smaller than the FBI, and the NSW police are stronger than the local police would be.

Mostly this was just a story of delicate diplomacy to ensure that our various experts got access without ticking off local authorities. In the end as you know the Sydney Olympics went beautifully; there were no problems. Australians ran beautiful games; the weather was perfect; crowds were enthusiastic; everybody had a good time. It is just worth remembering that the Olympics in general have more diplomacy hiding behind them than I think people realize. Ever since Munich in 1972, more and more effort has gone into securing them. This is a multinational effort, and it requires lots of delicate handling to make sure police forces don't feel disrespected.

The other thing? What else happened in 2000? We began a new millennium. Just as an amusing note for anyone who might look at this, Y2K was a big issue. A tempest in a teacup, or certainly it seems from twenty years after. We had all kinds of demarches, more for the economic section than the political section to make sure that the Australians

were Y2K compliant. The amusing thing because of the way the date line is configured, New Zealand and Australia were the first two advanced economies to pass into the new millennium. State had a task force standing up that day to follow any catastrophes. The task force called people right in the middle of our elaborate New Year's party to ask, "Would you go out and find an ATM" (automated teller machine) "to take money out of?" It was 12:01, the duty officer had to go out and take money out of an ATM and make sure it worked – which of course it did. That was just funny.

With that let's move on to Congressional affairs. (Those were two funny stories, took up a lot of time; I can't say it was worth the effort.)

State Department, Congressional Affairs, Legislative Management Officer 2001-2002

I worked from August 2001 until August 2002 in State's Congressional Affairs Bureau as a legislative management officer. I was supposed to follow Europe; there were two of us focused on that region. The job brought interesting and valuable insights into the Congressional role in foreign policy, but it was not my favorite job in the Foreign Service. All the substance came from the European bureau. We in H (Bureau of Legislative Affairs) weren't supposed to be adding our opinions on anything. The members of Congress and their staffs that you met didn't want to talk to you particularly. They saw Legislative Management Officers as mere messengers if you will. I went up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. You'd talk to the European bureau, and they'd say, "Tell the Hill the following thing." Then you would go to the Hill and the staff would say, "You tell the European Bureau the following thing." You were just a message passer for the most part which I didn't find terribly substantive, after this many years in the Foreign Service I thought I could have done more than that.

In Congressional Affairs, it was the Bureau front office that did most of the negotiating. We were just to go up and test the waters and find where the problems were, then the front office would roll in to negotiate. There were five or six people (I bet this isn't so different to this moment) in Congressional affairs who were authorized to seriously negotiate with the Hill. Most of what they negotiated on was money, appropriations. You remember there is usually (or supposed to be) an authorization bill every year which has a lot of policy riders in it, then the appropriations bill which has the money. Of course, the appropriators would tell you they were what really counts. In many ways they were right.

My only observation on this process is that the people who were doing heavy negotiating had all come from the Hill. They were former congressional staffers or people brought in as political appointees peculiar to the administration, but there were several former staffers who had been there for many years. They truly had lost their political color; I don't think they cared whether they were working for a Democratic or Republican administration. It frustrated me a bit because they didn't know how things work at an embassy. They had some idea, but they had never actually gone to a country and tried to implement things. Of course, congressional staff had no idea either.

This is a flaw embedded in our system that nobody focuses on; if people who try to set policy and procedures, don't know how things work now, have not sat in an office halfway around the world and gone to a foreign government to tell them we want you to do this or we will sanction you or whatever and have not gotten immediate blow-back (you can take your money and put it where the sun don't shine is usually the first reaction of any government, even ones that really need the money). There was a lack of practicality or hands-on experience which is what I thought we the FSOs that worked there could have been used to provide. But we typically weren't. Nobody wanted to know what our experience was. Occasionally you could speak up and try to say that something doesn't make sense or how is anybody going to implement that? There are all kinds of things in legislation that aren't easily implementable in the real world, and that we are way over the line into interfering in other countries' internal affairs and sovereignty.

One other thing about the time I'm in Congressional affairs. On the morning of September 11, 2001, I was in my first month on the job. I came to work on that beautiful sunny early autumn day, and what was on my mind? The Bush administration wanted to get legislation reforming U.S. immigration laws through Congress.

Q: Interesting, that's still early in the Bush …

ENGELKEN: Yes, first year. Bush was not a hardliner on immigration. They wanted a reform of the law that would have allowed more temporary workers. They weren't going to allow more people to immigrate permanently. Texas farmers and in the southwest often want to use more Mexican labor, ditto for U.S. businesses. The immediate obstacle to Bush's legislation was James Sensenbrenner, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee at the time, a congressman from Wisconsin. He was the original ur-immigration hardliner. Discussion at our staff meeting at 8:30 a.m. on the morning of September 11 mostly consisted of strategizing on how to convince Sensenbrenner and other Republicans to allow some sort of immigration legislation to advance.

By the time we emerged from the staff meeting, we could see on CNN pictures of the first plane striking the twin towers. At first, we thought it was a strange accident. Then the second plane hit, and then everyone around me knew this couldn't be an accident. It became increasingly difficult to pay attention to the subject of the meeting and eventually we just stopped. I then went to attend the EUR staff meeting that began at 9:00 a.m. (I normally attended the EUR meetings as well as the H staff meeting.) While we were going round the table, someone put their head through the door to say, "A plane's just hit the Pentagon." We looked at each other and agreed that things were becoming serious.

Suddenly, the fire alarm in Main State began to clang. I was told later there was no other way of evacuating the building at that time. Since then, State has put a lot of effort into improving our crisis response mechanisms. So, we go running out. I'm standing on C Street which at that point was still open to the public. There were easily three thousand people milling around on C Street with no direction, nowhere to go, no one to tell them what to do. Nobody really knew what was going on.

As I stood there, you could hear jets coming up the Potomac from Patuxent air station. I think they scrambled some F-16s that years later I learned were not armed. They came roaring up the Potomac and broke the sound barrier. I assume it's another bomb (it wasn't, that was my error) so I'm not going to stand here in a crowd of people waiting for another bomb to go off. I tried to find my wife who at that point was working in SA-1 (State annex 1). She was trying to arrange for the evacuation of the Department's Day care center, which was in the SA-1 building. The children were moved to the Presbyterian church on Virginia Avenue at that point, their designated safe haven. At least they had one.

But you can imagine, you couldn't call anybody because the cell phones went down.

Q: I was on home leave in Georgia, my plan had been to drive up the Smoky Mountain trail and then when I heard this I just drove straight back to Washington; I was actually driving back.

ENGELKEN: Right. Good thing you were in a car rather than an airplane. Just chaos. The place was utter chaos. I tried to get on the Metro. The stations were full of thousands of people, but trains didn't seem to be running. There was no announcement, nothing to tell you what was going on. The cell phone net went dead. I decided to walk from the Department to Tenleytown where I had parked my car and gotten on the Metro. It was a bizarre scene. I walked up Massachusetts Avenue, by the Naval Observatory. There were pick-up trucks full of well-dressed people, men in suits and ladies in dresses, sitting in the bed like war refugees, because there was no way to get home.

Any hope of getting immigration reform died the moment the planes hit the towers. Here we are twenty years later, and we're no closer. That attack killed it dead. So as someone who would have liked to see a reformed immigration act, that makes me very sad. Anybody who's ever done consular work knows this. You spend your time imposing a massive jumble of arbitrary rules, you're harassing people but not really stopping them. If they're really determined to get through the immigration system, at least at that period they could. But it was always difficult, consular officers were always asking for difficult to obtain documents, it would take years to amass these things. Then they wait for years in queues. "Let's make everybody really disgruntled by the time they get in." And then we let them in, then they're okay. The immigration system to this moment is still dogged by legislation that isn't clear. Do we want immigrants, or do we not? It seems that we just want to harass immigrants. Anyway, I'll stop at that point because the immigration thing could go on and on.

Now, let me just stop for a moment. I got promoted in the spring of 2002. So as I said I didn't like my job much. The minute I got promoted I walked into the front office and said "get me out of here."

Q: You were promoted to what grade?

ENGELKEN: OC, into the Senior Foreign Service. I felt really happy with myself. It was my sixth try, and I thought this was the end of it. But no, I got promoted. So, I walked down and said, “I want to supervise something." I wasn’t supervising anybody; I didn’t even have a secretary. It’s time to move on.

I was permitted to curtail, then I spent the summer of 2002 trying to find something in the Department – my wife was assigned in Washington, I couldn’t go overseas again. We had my son in school in fifth grade. You must be careful how many times you uproot your kids. We’d just gotten back, so no I can’t go overseas. I went looking for an office to direct, that was my goal – I wanted to be an office director. I wound up getting a job of course that nobody wanted, which is what you would expect, I was coming into the assignments cycle late, people had already been picked. I don’t have a grudge about this because I enjoyed the job I ended up with.

State Department, Washington, D.C., Director of Office of Proliferation Threat Reduction, Nonproliferation Bureau 2002-2004

I went to the Nonproliferation Bureau and was the director of the office of Proliferation Threat Reduction. It was then called NP/PTR; they’ve since merged the NP bureau with the arms control bureau so now it’s the International Security and Nonproliferation Bureau. The office is now called CTR (Comprehensive Threat Reduction) for some reason, but it still exists.

I joined the office of Proliferation Threat Reduction in August 2002. Let’s explain what that is first of all. At the end of the Cold War, there was a massive economic collapse in the former Soviet Union. The Russian, ex-Soviet defense budget shrank to very little, you had all these reports of things falling apart, just disintegrating in the former Soviet Union and the newly free Eastern European countries. There was a great deal of concern in Congress that there would be outward proliferation from the former Soviet Union, that people could steal nuclear weapons or take dangerous pathogens or chemicals out of there. Or, that the scientists who designed these things were now in many cases paid very little or unemployed and that they might decide to find more lucrative employment abroad. There were other countries that were trying to develop weapons of mass destruction; maybe former Soviet scientists would be willing to go work in North Korea or Iran or fill in the blank, wherever you can think of.

Senator Nunn and Senator Lugar got legislation through that created programs at State, DOD, and Energy, the NNSA (National Nuclear Security Administration). This was in the late ‘90s. There was a bureaucratic tussle for a year or two between State, DOD, and DOE (Department of Energy) to figure out who was going to do what. Eventually we got it worked out that DOE would use its program moneys to secure things in the former Soviet Union, that DOD (its office was called CTR, Comprehensive Threat Reduction) would pay to destroy things that weren’t needed any more, and State would use its money to redirect scientists and engineers to civilian employment and assist the conversion of the former Soviet weapons complex into civilian uses.

Eventually Putin put a stop to all of this, but in 2002 this was still going. It's worth remembering, this wasn't a hostile arrangement. We were doing this in cooperation with Russians. I got to meet many Russian scientists who had worked to develop weapons of mass destruction. Very bizarre, you found yourself talking to people who had spent much of their adult life trying to figure out how to make the molecules smaller so they could get into your lungs better and poison you quicker. They regarded themselves as scientists. The whole key to understanding how this worked was the Soviet Union put great emphasis on science. Being a scientist was prestigious. People were very proud if you asked them what they were, they would say "I'm a scientist." The perversion of the whole system was that many of the jobs in many fields of science involved weapons work. When a Soviet scientist worked on a weapon project, his work was classified. He could not publish, and he had to remain anonymous. In many cases, the Soviets put these people in closed cities in Siberia or the northern stretches of Russia, remote and not very pleasant places to live and you couldn't get in and out easily.

It was a quirk of Soviet research – in the United States we do a lot of our research at universities, CalTech and Berkeley and other things do a lot of research including stuff that is weapons related. The Soviets created a whole series of research institutes that were not connected to universities. To use Solzhenitsyn there is a whole archipelago of research institutes from Poland to the Chinese border, all over the place, scattered. Usually, they were given some vaguely innocuous name that sounded highly euphemistic. I remember one we used to go to was called, if you translated the name into English, the Institute of Organically Active Molecules. It was a chemical weapons institute. When the Russians signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, it was declared a chemical weapons site. Or there is rather famously an institute whose Russian acronym is VECTOR.

Q: Right out of a 007 movie.

ENGELKEN: Yes, it's the Advanced Institute of Virology or something like that. It's just outside of Novosibirsk. It's their repository for smallpox among other things, it's a BL4 (biosafety level four) level facility. They had more BL4 level space at this institute than we have in the entire United States. At the time there was a lot of worry, because the institute had run into hard times and didn't have the money to maintain its electric power supply. Sections were closed. In this situation, you could think of all kinds of nightmare scenarios. Moving pathogens can be easier than you think, just a Petri dish basically, not big and because it's organic or biological you don't need a large quantity. You get it to a medium and you can cultivate it and make gazillions of copies. Microbes reproduce at a geometric rate. We've seen this now with coronavirus, a few at one point and now everywhere in the world.

We ran programs to redirect these scientists to honest work. We made a big effort to think of honest civilian uses for this technology and for these institutes and redirect them to civilian occupations. Since I knew when I started almost zip about this topic, what was key is I had a staff of scientists. We had four or five AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) fellows and several scientists who had come from the U.S. National Labs, like Los Alamos, Livermore, Pacific Northwest, Oak Ridge, and

Brookhaven in New York. They are a tremendous repository of expertise, and I ended up with a lot of respect for these people. They were critical in multiple ways. I mentioned the former Soviet scientists were scientists and wanted to be treated as scientists. You had to have a scientist to go talk to them. If I had gone to talk to them, they would have been very guarded, and wouldn't have felt flattered in any way. In the end, they would probably have refused to cooperate. But if you had Doctor Something from some university in the U.S., go and sit down and have vodka and tea with them and sit and talk, they were very flattered to be treated as peers. They craved respect more than money. It turned out that one of the things we could do that was most popular with them was helping them get published. This cost the U.S. taxpayer virtually nothing.

Q: About the last thing I would have thought, but that's fascinating.

ENGELKEN: The thing they all kvetched about was that in the Soviet times they were prohibited from publishing. "I did all this cool work on how to get small molecules into lungs and I can't publish it; nobody knows what I did. I would like to be recognized as a leading toxicologist."

Okay. What's the harm? Well, there was some harm in some of the things they did, but I'd rather they be published than find a job in Iran. There was evidence the Iranians were trying to go to the Soviet institutes and see who they could hire. I think when the book is finally written a long time from now, on various Iranian WMD programs I think we will find former Soviet scientists who were down there working and provided significant help to the programs.

Our work was done cooperatively with the governments of the former Soviet Union. We were not clandestine in any way. In Moscow, we had an international science center. The EU, Germany, and Japan joined us in supporting this. The Russians sat on the board, and my biggest job was to go every six months and sit in on the board meeting of this thing. We would decide what projects to support, but with five or six Russians on the board and Russia in essence approved what we were doing. They were informed and it was clear you couldn't proceed if they didn't want you to, and there were occasions they didn't want you to.

The Russians were all elderly. Their pensions were nearly worthless with post-Soviet inflation; they were not going to retire until they went out boots first. As a result, you found lots of old-think among these guys. Of course, they would reminisce about the old days, and you'd hear all kinds of stuff we never heard during those old days. I remember one meeting, one of the Russian representatives started complaining that papers we were giving them to read were too long. He said, "The Politburo never considered a document longer than one page." The French guy sitting next to me whispered loudly, "And look what happened to them." (Laughter)

We also had a center in Kyiv. Already, the Ukrainian-Russian rivalry was there. The Ukrainians would not participate at the Russian center. The former Soviet states had sort of chosen sides. You had the Ukrainian center, the Uzbeks and Georgians belonged to it,

trying to remember who else. The Russian center had the Kazakhs and Belarus obviously (no surprise there) and maybe Azerbaijan. I would go to Moscow in March and October, and Kyiv in December and June, for these board meetings. Some of this stuff worked, by the way. One of the areas in which Soviet science had been advanced was material science. They were topnotch at this. The Ukrainians, for example, were experts at metal alloys. In particular, they had done a lot of work with titanium alloys, and by the time I left this job they were making fan blades for Pratt & Whitney. They had a good titanium alloy, and P&W bought it not to be nice to them but because it was a good fan blade at a good price for a jet engine. There were partnerships between Boeing and various former institutes that corporatized themselves and worked on rockets, commercial space rockets.

Just strange things you could find. I've never forgotten one of the great things about the job. I was allowed to go to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. We had a meeting of our Ukrainian center which for some reason the Uzbeks hosted in Samarkand, which is as exotic and remote a place as I've ever been. Cool that I got to go there. In Tashkent, I cut the ribbon on a project we had dubbed finished, assisting a former Soviet institute that dealt with animal venom. They spent the Soviet years extracting various spider venoms and venoms of other venomous animals to figure out how to make better poisons. Anyway, we had finished a project in assisting the institute to convert itself to making chemicals for cosmetics. They were providing chemicals to make lipstick, as I recall. The mind always reeled, but okay.

Another strange adventure: The Institute of Organically Active Molecules was on the outskirts of Moscow. I was taken out there to talk about possible projects. It was a vast building that was mostly empty, with little naked light bulbs hanging from cords in the hall, long dark halls. I was greeted by several little old ladies who were weapons scientists. They made us tea ("I hope that's just sugar you're putting in there"). We were working to have them convert the institute to make pharmaceuticals. They had a line of sedatives. It was a creepy place. I was given a tour. We were walked out the back to a vast yard covered in pea gravel surrounding many concrete bunkers. As we stood there with stray cats running through puddles of mud, my host said "We have Sarin in this bunker, and phosgene in that one, mustard gas in this. This is a declared chemical weapons site; we're not hiding anything." They had the whole devil's kitchen there. Suddenly a man appears out of the ground, starts grabbing us and profusely saying how delighted he was that we had paid for him to attend a toxicology convention in Salt Lake City the previous month. It was the first time he'd been treated like a scientist. Again, respect meant more than money to them. Our guide who was talking to me asked if we could use program funds to build a better fence. "The fence fell down in the back, and I think people are trying to steal the sedatives or could get into a bunker and steal something really dangerous and I can't stop that." I think we did pay for the fence.

So, we were doing our thing, and the projects were proceeding smoothly for the most part, when a great hue and cry arose about Iraq refusing to abide by UN resolutions that prohibited it from having weapons of mass destruction. As part of my duties, I was able to see most of the information stream reporting on this. Was it as damning as claimed by the Administration or not? At the time, I felt that (once the U.S. Army got into Iraq) all

that we would find would be some rusty chemical munitions and a few rockets. I did not think they had an advanced functioning nuclear program or much in the way of bioweapons. And this is pretty much what we did find in the end.

The question arose in 2003, though, whether the appropriated funds we had were geographically restricted to the former Soviet Union. We consulted Senator Lugar who said essentially if you have a good use for the funds elsewhere, we'll let you reprogram the money. This was immediately relevant because of Libya. This is the moment when the Libyans came to the U.S. and said, "We've decided to get rid of our nuclear program; would you do the same thing for us that you're doing for the Soviets? Would you help us redirect our scientists to other employment?"

I sent somebody from my office, a scientist, to Tripoli, and she talked to the Libyan scientists and reported back, "I don't think many of these guys are great scientists but if you tell me that as part of the deal, we get Libyan nuclear materials in exchange for re-employment I guess it's worth doing." So, we launched a program on re-employing Libyans, it was just getting started as I moved on to another assignment. I, therefore, do not know what became of it. It is hard to believe it survived the disintegration of the Qadhafi regime in 2011.

A bigger issue than Libya was Iraq. As you recall, in March 2003 we invaded Iraq and occupied the country. There was a nonproliferation question mixed in with many others as the military campaign concluded. How do we destroy all elements of the Iraqi WMD programs and (in my office) how do we ensure that whatever scientists worked on these don't go off to Iran (Iraqi Shias particularly were quite willing to work in Iran) or other places?

There was heated debate within the USG through spring and summer 2003 about how to address the nonproliferation issues presented by the occupation of Iraq. This is the period when Iraq was being governed by the Coalition Provisional Authority, CPA; Jerry Bremer was the supremo, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense. Sadly, CPA turned into a chaotic mess. Everything was done on the fly; no one had planned anything. Even the fundamental objective wasn't clear. Were we trying to help Iraq get back on its feet or punish it? This wasn't clear to me.

I represented my office in a series of inter-agency working group (IAWG) meetings at the NSC. We debated how best to ensure that Iraq would not become a source of onward proliferation. DoD was represented by Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy J.D. Crouch. He took a hard line and clearly did not believe that other U.S.G. agencies could be trusted to do so. He assured the IAWG that DoD would destroy the Iraqis' physical WMD infrastructure, and, as I recall, opposed any involvement of the Department of Energy fearing that its experts would try to save and repair things, as they had done in the former Soviet Union.

We eventually got to the question of scientists. I recall someone from the Intelligence Community (IC) saying, we have evidence that Iraqi scientists are trying to flee Iraq.

They were monitoring employment message boards, and these scientists were posting their resumes in Dubai. They thought Iran was actively trying to find and hire these people. The U.S. should act quickly to prevent this, they argued.

I volunteered that State NP/PTR could reemploy them. We could keep them in Iraq and find things for them to do. We have experience at this; we have the money; and we've already talked to Hill staff who are asking, "why aren't you already doing this?"

Crouch rejoined that we at DoD don't want the State Department running programs in Iraq. We don't want State in there at all.

The NSC person – remember this is the Bush administration, everybody at NSC is a Bushie – asked "What do you propose to do about these scientists?"

Crouch answered, we'll just detain them.

The NSC then asked, "Do you know where they are?"

Long pause.

Why would they stick around if you're starting to detain them? If you start rounding them up, they really are going to leave. They aren't going to wait for you to grab them and send them to Camp Buka.

Crouch had no real answer to this. Everybody around the table except the DOD rep said this could not be solved with hoods and cuffs. Ultimately, the Iraqi scientists saw themselves as patriotic citizens who were doing what their government told them to do. Why were we trying to punish them?

That didn't sit well with DOD. The discussion continued off and on into the autumn. By October, the insurgency was starting to get going. Suddenly, there was a massive course correction in Washington. Crouch resigned his position for other work within the Administration, and there suddenly seemed to be growing concern in Washington for the way things were going in Iraq.

At the beginning of November, I recall going to an IAWG meeting at the NSC, and there was a different person representing DOD. He looked at me and asked, "Why aren't you guys there? It's eight months after the invasion and you guys from the State Department still haven't done anything?"

"Well, you guys have spent the last eight months preventing us from doing anything."

The DoD officer, of course, professed complete ignorance. "No, no, I want you there tomorrow."

So, I found somebody on my staff willing to go in November 2003, a AAAS fellow who

had been dean of the chemistry department at one of the campuses of the University of Texas, a senior guy in his sixties. I asked, “Carl, why do you want to do this?”

He said, “I’m really bored. I want to do something adventurous." So, he agreed to do it.

“Okay, how quickly can you do it?”

“Give me a week."

He went to Langley to talk to people and came back and said, “These guys don’t know anything. They aren’t real scientists. They don’t know who does what or how things work. They’re just reading reports. Give me three or four days with LexisNexis." So, he spent a week researching articles published by Iraqi scientists from ‘85 to 2003. He had the scientific background to be able to determine, “This article related to something that could be weaponized, and that article has no weapons use."

He went through published articles, figuring that above all a scientist wants to be published and recognized, and the temptation to publish is overwhelming. He said, “I bet the Iraqi government couldn’t stop all of this” and it turned out they didn’t. He came up with a list of twelve or fifteen names of people working in Iraq (a couple were Egyptians) that had published articles on things he thought were suspiciously close to weapons research. They were in respected, peer-reviewed journals around the world. He then flew to Baghdad, and he spent a week or ten days trying to track down these names. He started at Baghdad University and talked to the chemistry and biology and physics faculty, “I’m an American scientist trying to figure out what you guys did. I do have some money I can help you with."

I’d made the argument in the interagency meeting that we’d find these guys by putting out money. It’s like catching birds, if we give money to one of these guys they’ll start crawling out of the woodwork where they’d been hiding to see if they can’t get something. Rather than launch a major detective effort that no one had the resources or time for. This is exactly what happened.

First, his list of scientists was bang on. Every one of them turned out to have worked on one aspect or another of WMD. It was amusing; one of them had published an article on camel pox, an orthopox virus related to smallpox that infects camels. There’s monkeypox by the way, the mind reels at the ghastly thought of other viruses that maybe somebody could weaponize.

The amusing story was, he asked where Doctor So-and-So was. “Well, he’s no longer with us.”

“What happened?”

“Well, he contracted camel pox while researching it and it killed him." Hoist on his own petard. So, I guess we don’t have to worry about redirecting him.

Anyway, we were eventually able to get up a program. We got it into the Iraqi university scientific community. Last, I heard it was still operating. We have some little center at the embassy which goes out quietly and talks to the scientific community and gives them a little money to keep going and stay in Iraq. We made the argument that you want these people to build Iraq rather than go and build some other country. I think it did succeed at a modest level.

We also learned a good deal about their past programs. They admitted that they had tried to start a nuclear weapons program but had run out of money. The dean of the physics faculty told my AAAS fellow, "We shouldn't even be giving degrees." As sanctions bit, Iraq had to economize its foreign currency, so they stopped subscribing to academic journals (many are really expensive). She said, "I haven't had a new physics journal here since 1995. We're behind the field. I don't think I should be awarding doctorates and master's degrees in physics; we're behind."

One thing we offered to do was to pay for subscriptions. That got us a big win. A lesson here, some of the biggest things were small. I can help you get published; I can help you get a subscription to Physics Weekly or whatever it's called. That was immensely appreciated.

State Department, Washington, D.C., Director, Office of Pakistan/Bangladesh Affairs (SCA/PB) March 2004-July 2006

So, at this point because I'm working on these nonproliferation things and my tour is going to be up in a few months, I got a call. "Would you join the South Asia bureau? We're going to go meet several individuals from the Pakistani Strategic Plans Division." These were the guys working the Pakistani nuclear program. We did not launch some big programming in Pakistan; they were not committed to reducing their nuclear weapons at all. In fact, as we speak it's the world's fastest-growing nuclear arsenal. But we did talk to them. At that point the guy who was office director for Pakistan was moving onto another job, so the South Asia bureau asked me to become director of the Pakistan office. I then in March 2004 became the director of Pakistan-Bangladesh Affairs and spent 2004 to the summer of 2006 doing that.

Q: This offer for Pakistan came about because you had become known in the nonproliferation area, and they were interested in tapping that skill?

ENGELKEN: Yes. We were trying to see if we could get something going with Pakistan. Well, we didn't do much, and whatever we did is classified and should be.

My involvement came after a period when Pakistan was a major source of proliferation. There was a gentleman you've probably read about called A.Q. Khan who ran strategic plans for a while. As best as I could piece together and I'm not the expert, a lot of it remains highly classified, I think A.Q. Khan had been authorized to procure items for the Pakistani program that were covered by the various technology control regimes, the

Nuclear Suppliers Group and things like that. So, he was authorized to get around our export controls. To do this and try to do it on the cheap, I think he started off selling things or trading things. At some point, unclear to me or anybody else, he kind of went into business for himself. And so not only was the money he was raising benefiting the Pakistani weapons program, but it was also benefiting A.Q. Khan personally. We found that he owned a hotel in Timbuktu, for example, of all places.

Anyway, as the U.S. engaged Pakistan after 9/11, we had a long agenda. Everybody's very familiar with the terrorism agenda, the desire to put Al Qaeda out of business and to stop the Afghan Taliban, and Pakistan's toleration or support for other terrorist groups including ones that attack India.

The less well known is that we probably did succeed in one way on a nonproliferation issue. A.Q. Khan, Musharraf eventually put him out of business. He was never prosecuted – we wanted him to be prosecuted and we wanted to interview him, but the Pakistanis never permitted us to interview him. So, we don't know the full story of what he did. But from what we could tell Pakistan did shut down his proliferation ring, which was extensive.

Let's go to 2004, Pakistan/Bangladesh Desk. It was a major concern of the Department, one of the most high-profile jobs I ever got. I really felt the heat. The secretary – Rich Armitage was deputy secretary and wanted to know every morning what was going on in Pakistan. Every morning I had to get up and the first thing I did was call Embassy Islamabad at 6:30 or seven in the morning my time, talk to the DCM and find out whether there had been terrorist incidents, what's the latest things they were saying, what they were doing.

We were trying to turn the U.S.-Pakistan relationship around completely. A bit of history. When I teach my class on Pakistan familiarization, I have a slide I show of the up and down U.S.-Pakistani relations over the decades. There were warm periods – they joined the Cold War alliance system, they were SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) members. The Pakistanis will never stop reminding you that they allowed U-2s to fly from Peshawar, and Francis Gary Powers had taken off from Peshawar when he was shot down. The big issue between the U.S. and Pakistan is the U.S. has never shared Pakistan's paranoia about India. What's really at root here is, Muslims are a minority in the subcontinent. The Muslims of Pakistan have this conviction that the Hindus are going to dominate and destroy them. I don't think anything over the decades has ever gotten them off of this obsession. Yes, they have a territorial claim about Kashmir. But I strongly believe if they settled the Kashmir issue today there would still be intense hostility between Pakistan and India which would go on and on and on. We haven't come up with a way of dealing with that.

The U.S. and Pakistan have had several honeymoons and several massive break-ups. In the Cold War years, we were close allies. Pakistan attempted to regain Kashmir in 1965. Parallel to things they've done since, they parachuted paratroopers into Kashmir, the population failed to rise to support them, and India responded by attacking along the

length of the Pakistan/India border (not just in Kashmir). Notably, it attempted to capture Lahore. The United States reacted by cutting off arm sales to both Pakistan and India. While the cutoff wasn't that important to India, which had a lot of Russian equipment, it was a major blow to Pakistan. The Pakistanis were furious, they felt we hadn't supported them, although we had told them many times that the U.S. alliance is against Russia, not India. They never really accepted that.

So we go through a cold period, and it gets even colder after Bangladesh seceded in 1971 and India occupies Bangladesh. Pakistan thought the United States should have intervened militarily to prevent the Hindu occupation of East Pakistan, despite the atrocities perpetrated by the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan in 1970.

The relationship takes a u-turn, of course, in 1979. The Russians invade Afghanistan. All of a sudden, the U.S. needs them again. So we do an about-face and begin giving aid to Pakistan in large amounts and using Pakistan to aid the mujahideen. Famously this all came to a screaming blow-up in 1990. The Soviets withdrew in '89, the remaining Communist government is wobbling. At this point, President H. W. Bush feels he can no longer certify that Pakistan does not have a nuclear weapons program. The Pressler Amendment stipulated that every year for us to give aid to Pakistan we had to certify it did not have a nuclear weapons program. By 1990, the evidence of a nuclear program was overwhelming. So, the president said "I can't certify this anymore." In 1990 we cut off all assistance to Pakistan, civilian and military. Embassy Islamabad went to being kind of a small, sleepy post. We had a relationship with Pakistan. In the '90s it was under civilian rule most of the time, but ties weren't close. We had cut off military assistance, we had cut off IMET (international military education and training) too. No Pakistani officers were going to U.S. military schools from '90 up to 2001.

The Pakistanis felt again that we had abandoned them. We used them to get the Russians out of Afghanistan and the minute the Russians left, we dropped them. After all, their nuclear weapons program was necessary to deter India, in their view.

So come 2001, then Deputy Secretary Armitage had his famous "are you with us or against us" meeting on September 12. The head of the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) was visiting the United States by coincidence on September 11. The day following he was called in to meet Armitage, who asked "are you with us or against us?" Musharraf made a 180-degree U-turn a few days later. He agreed Pakistan would support the U.S. by opening its air space for the U.S. Air Force to bomb Afghanistan and eventually by opening its ports and roads so we could supply U.S. elements in Afghanistan by road through Pakistan. Now, we never sent lethal munitions through Pakistan, but the non-lethal sustainment was via what we called the GLOCs, ground line of communication, mostly through the port of Karachi through the Khyber Pass to Kabul or through Quetta and the Bolan Pass to Kandahar.

At this moment, I'm trying to get the right description of the mood in Washington. I think there are going to be a lot of recriminations about who did what over the years. Ultimately, it's obvious we did not succeed in inducing Pakistan to cut off the Taliban.

They briefly withdrew support in 2001 when the Taliban collapsed, but, once the Taliban fell back into Pakistan, Pakistan didn't arrest or detain them. Pakistan let them reorganize and rearm and get back in business from Pakistani territory. We could have a long debate on the full extent to which the Pakistani military aided them, but it is indisputable that they did nothing to prevent it. Absolutely nothing.

What we know now wasn't so clear then. 9/11 caught the Pakistanis flat-footed. They were concerned about India. Their army was on the Indian border. They had very little on the Afghan border, and they had these tribal agencies along the part of the Afghan border where they had no troops at all. September 11 required them to reorient their attention to Afghanistan. People were trying to get the Pakistanis to be allies, and we tried to do it by being nice. I'm not sure that was the right strategy, but I'm not sure what the other strategy would have been.

Our effort to build an alliance-like relationship with Pakistan ran into a conflict that we did not solve: How to improve our relationship with India and Pakistan at the same time. The U.S. needed friendly relations with both. In our American mind, our efforts in Islamabad and New Delhi had different objectives and should be viewed separately. Improved relations with India, were intended to build a bulwark against China and to open the door to mutually profitable trade and investment. In Pakistan, we sought to combat terrorist groups that threatened the U.S. We needed transit rights to provide logistical support to our forces in Afghanistan. We also wanted to ensure that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was safely secured.

Needless to say, Indians and Pakistanis did not see the relationships as separate. Rather, they saw them as a zero-sum game. Improved U.S. relations with India must inherently mean poorer U.S. relations with Pakistan and vice versa. During my 2004-2006 stint as Pakistan Office Director, this phenomenon appeared with regard to nuclear issues. The U.S.-India civil nuclear deal of 2005 was intended to be the keystone of a new and stronger U.S.-India relationship, but it provoked an intensely negative reaction in Pakistan which saw the move as strengthening India's ability to produce nuclear weapons. This was not our intent, and we had good arguments for why the deal would not enhance India's military capabilities. The Pakistanis, however, were adamant in their view that the agreement marked a U.S. "tilt" toward India in a way that threatened Pakistan's national security.

Even more important, Pakistan saw our willingness to tolerate and even encourage Indian aid and investment in Afghanistan as an existential threat to Pakistan. Afghanistan is Pakistan's back door, and Pakistan's all-powerful military and intelligence services complained to us over and over about the Indian diplomatic and consular presence in Afghanistan. They were convinced that India's embassy and consulates were full of Indian intelligence agents who were providing military and financial support to the pro-Taliban movements that sprang up in Pakistan's tribal belt along the Afghan border in 2003-2004.

With skepticism widespread in Pakistan about the wisdom of President Musharraf's

choice to align with the U.S., my time as office director seemed to be spent in a race to demonstrate the benefit to Pakistan of being a friend of the U.S. We always seemed to be a day late and dollar short in that competition. Nothing could move as fast or be as generous as Pakistanis felt was their due.

One major handicap was trying to get the human infrastructure in place at Embassy Islamabad to deliver on our promises. On September 11, 2001, we had no AID program and no AID mission in Pakistan. We also had no Office of Defense Cooperation to oversee arms sales. All of a sudden, the military and civilian assistance spigots were turned on again, but by early 2004, when I made my initial visit to Pakistan, our AID mission still had only five U.S. Direct Hire employees to administer $300 million in economic assistance funds. This was too few to deliver all the assistance in visible project aid. SCA/PB became involved in lengthy inter-agency debates over how the non-project aid should be disbursed. Eventually, much of it was used for debt relief and for government-to-government grants for projects the Pakistani government undertook. All of this took time that in retrospect I think we did not have. U.S. economic assistance remained largely invisible to the Pakistani public for years.

We did somewhat better with military assistance. In FY 2004 and FY ’05, I recall that Congress appropriated $300 million in military assistance (primarily FMF) roughly balancing the amount of civilian assistance going to Pakistan. My office became deeply involved in policy debates over whether to permit the transfer of F-16s to Pakistan. Despite complaints on the Hill and elsewhere (notably from India) that these aircraft would not be useful in Pakistan’s campaign to secure its Afghan border, the F-16s provided at this point were used extensively and effectively in the border counter-insurgency campaign. I heard Pakistani air force officers express deep appreciation for them, and they were highly visible to the Pakistani public as tangible evidence of U.S. support.

In return of course we wanted them to round up Al Qaeda, shut their borders so that terrorists couldn’t transit Pakistan, stop the laundering of funds that went to terrorist groups via Islamic charities and things like that. There was a long list of anti-terrorism things we wanted them to do and that was clearly our priority.

The Pakistanis were not particularly fond of Al Qaeda. In our mind Al Qaeda and the Taliban were closely linked; not in their mind, as best I can tell. People need to remember that they did in the 2003 to 2005 period pick up a number of members of Al Qaeda. In the period I was head of SCA/PB, they found Abu Zubaida, the guy who was supposedly the missing member of the 9/11 team. Most notably, they picked up Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and turned him over to us. They also arrested Mir Aimal Kasi, who had shot up the line of cars trying to enter the CIA’s Langley campus one morning in early 1993, killing two. He fled to Pakistan’s Baluchistan Province, a lawless area. We were with their assistance able to arrest him and return him to the United States; he was tried and ultimately executed. So, they did bring us people. However, they notably never arrested Bin Laden or his deputy, Zawahiri.

Q: While you're talking about our list of requirements, were there any requirements on our side regarding the Haqqani network?

ENGELKEN: The Haqqanis became more prominent later. Yes, we did ask for them, but they hadn't assumed such a prominent role in the 2003-2006 period. When we talk about my stint in Pakistan in 2010-2011, things were very different. By that time, the Haqqanis were very prominent both in Taliban operations in Afghanistan and in support of operations by the Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP) inside Pakistan.

In 2004, the Pakistanis began sending regular troops into the tribal agencies with our encouragement. (The regular army was withdrawn from the Agencies after independence in 1947 and stayed away from the area until after 9/11/2001.) We told Pakistan that it had to secure its border. They tried, and ran into a lot of resistance, taking casualties. The Pakistani army at this point had been configured to fight on the plains of Punjab, it was armor-heavy and not particularly well configured to fight in the mountains. The officer corps at that point was heavily Punjabi. Pakistan has different ethnicities just like India does. The mountainous areas are inhabited by Pashtuns, but the army officer corps was heavily Punjabi. Punjabis and Pashturns see each other as different whether we do or not. Pashtun and Punjabi are distinctly different languages and the two communities have different outlooks.

After the Pakistanis ran into resistance, they complained to us that they suffered these losses trying to do what we asked. They always cast the conflict along the border as a campaign entirely for the Americans and not for their own interests. Not surprisingly, the Pakistan public quickly perceived the conflict as not their fight, and they began blaming us for it. They still do. We repeatedly urged the Pakistan Government to explain to its people that the war was in Pakistan's interests in which the U.S. and Pakistan were fighting a common terrorist foe, but that narrative never seemed to take hold. It always became the Americans' war, and Pakistani politicians to this day proudly claim as they campaign for office that they will never again let their country become involved in a foreigners' war.

On the U.S. side, we had complicated debates in this period about whether the Pakistanis were seriously trying to gain control of the Tribal Agencies along the border or were just going play-acting for us. When they would launch a sweep, it always seemed that the bad guys would get away. We began to wonder: Is their opsec (operational security) that bad? I think in some cases it was. Were people in the Pakistani army calling their relatives saying, "Hey you've got to get out of there"? Or was there a deliberate decision on high by the military to say we have to go through the motions of launching a sweep; the Americans are insisting on it. But can you tell so and so (e.g.the Haqqanis) to get out of there before we go, so we don't have to shoot them?

I think all of those things happened, and I'm still to this day unsure of how the mix comes out. Initially they were moving from low ground to high ground and could have been seen for miles. The first movement into North Waziristan agency, they had a mile-long column of vehicles, and anybody with binoculars could have seen them coming. The

terrorists could have easily gotten away. Later on, that was harder to say. I think somewhere in 2005-2006 we switched from one to the other. It became really complicated.

The Pakistani Taliban (TTP) did not officially form until 2007, after my time. So, it wasn't clear exactly who the Army was fighting up in the mountains. Was the opposition just tribesmen trying to guard their autonomy against central government control; were they the Afghan Taliban fighting the Pakistan army, or were they terrorist supporters of al-Qaeda? We kept getting reports that basically asserted that all the world's jihadi organizations were hanging around in the tribal agencies. The Pakistan Army frequently reported that it was clashing with the IMU, the Islamic Movement for Uzbekistan. There clearly were some Uzbek Islamists who had gone to Pakistan because they had nowhere else to go. When the Pakistan army would advance, the groups that later became the Pakistani Taliban would leave the Uzbeks behind as the rear guard. "You guys hold them off while we get out of here." I'm sure would-be Taliban regarded them as complete write-offs; if IMU members were killed, they didn't care. The Uzbeks weren't terribly popular on either side of the border.

The situation in 2004, 2005, and 2006 was less clear than it was when I returned in 2010. By then it was clear that the Pakistanis were deliberately tolerating the Taliban. While the Pakistan Army conducted sweeps in the Federally Administered Tribal Agencies (FATA), they made no effort to control the substantial Afghan Taliban presence in northern Baluchistan around Quetta and Zhob. That the Taliban leadership, the so-called Quetta Shura, was in Baluchistan was an open secret and not really disputed by most Pakistanis. Quetta was surrounded by a ring of Afghan refugee settlements that had grown into villages or towns of forty to fifty thousand. I think these places were probably where the Afghan Taliban first recruited people, organized, and prepared to resume the war after their collapse in 2002.

Musharraf – I guess what I need to say, people always refer to him as a military dictator. I think that was false, a misapprehension of the situation. The Pakistan army operates on collective decision-making. They hold a meeting once a month of the corps commanders, there are ten or twelve corps. Every month they meet and issue communiques. The corps commanders have met and decided something. They would act like the board of directors of the army but also in many ways of Pakistan. Musharraf had real political ambitions, but he had to take careful account of the opinions of his brother officers.

In this time period, I visited Pakistan several times and I remember talking to a member of a political party who said, "Well you know the problem in Pakistan is that all of our generals are politicians, and all of our politicians are autocrats." Musharraf seized power in 1999 because he had a deep dislike of Nawaz Sharif, the then-current prime minister. He believed Nawaz was trying to do him in personally and thought Nawaz was way too weak to stand up to India. Soon after seizing power, Musharraf began to legitimize his rule. He didn't run a straight military regime. He had an election in 2002 from which he eliminated parties he didn't like. Nawaz's party couldn't campaign easily; they ran for some seats but were hindered in many different ways. The PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party),

Bhutto's party, was also very much inhibited from running, they couldn't campaign freely. By no means was this a free and fair election. Instead, Musharraf encouraged a breakaway group from Nawaz's party to join him, and this group eventually provided the prime minister of his government.

This parliament's term was going to end in 2007. The U.S. started off this period trying to encourage democracy. We urged him to "take off the uniform" and just be a civilian president. Which he didn't do until 2007, and he immediately fell from power when he did so.

Over time Musharraf gradually morphed from being a military leader making quick decisions and giving orders, to a politician. With each succeeding year he became more and more a politician and more and more concerned about political reactions to things. As we pressed him to do some of these counter-terrorism things we know even his civilian advisers, not just the intelligence service, said "Boss you can't do that; if you want to be elected, you want the Muslim vote."

Under our pressure, Musharraf announced in 2005 that all madrassas, all Islamic schools, had to register with the government and declare their finances. They were forbidden from taking foreign students, and they couldn't accept money from outside the country. If this order had been enforced, it would have been a very good thing. Musharraf announced this, and the government got about half of all madrassas registered, then the whole initiative just petered out. There were big demonstrations organized by the people who run the madrassas – remember these are businesses. Yes, many are radical jihadis but it's also a business. The madrassah operators were particularly successful in mobilizing the streets by using the phrase: "the Americans are trying to change our curriculum, and we will not tolerate it." The U.S., of course, was trying to stop teaching jihadi stuff, not just in madrassas but also in the public schools. We looked at the textbooks and found they were full of "hate India" stuff. All the way through. "If you have eight mortar shells and fire four, how many do you have left?" was jihadi math, it was marbled through all textbooks. Getting rid of it was a real challenge which we never succeeded in doing. They issued a new textbook and some things we objected to were taken out, but other stuff was put in.

There are legal Islamist parties in Pakistan which to my knowledge are not terrorists. They don't receive large numbers of votes, but they often receive a sufficient number to make them partners to round out a coalition needed by one of the major parties. When this happens, the Islamists always demand the education ministry portfolio as a price for their support. Once in charge of this ministry, they try to have their people hired as teachers. The education ministry has many people on permanent staff who are members of these parties. Musharraf in the 2002 to '7 period relied to some extent on political support from the legal Islamist parties. The mainstream civilian parties, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Nawaz's party, the PML- N (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) were both bitterly opposed to him. So, where's he going to get support? He cobbled together a group of notables (the French term) from various small towns, often large landowners, but one coalition element was the Islamist parties. In this situation,

Musharraf felt constrained from decisive steps to secularize the curriculum and to reduce the Islamists' influence on public life more generally. During these years, he'd go to the United States and tell us decisively that he was going to do the needful, but upon return he'd do it halfway and stop when domestic resistance started to grow. To this day, for example, the government has not finished registering all the madrassas, and I don't see a government with the political will to do that.

This is another element to explain why Pakistan's military-led government didn't crack down on the Taliban. Senior officials would say "All hell's going to break loose if we go after these people; they're really strong." Musharraf's goal throughout the period was to be reelected in 2007. Which led to odd things. While I was office director, Benazir Bhutto visited Washington at least twice. We couldn't receive her at any kind of high level. Musharraf would have gone nuts if we met her at a high level. On one of these visits, I think I was the senior-most U.S. official to see her. On her second visit, we had a DAS see her. The DAS and I had lunch with Benazir and her husband, Asif, at a hotel on M Street, at M and 22nd. She talked about how she was going to win the election (this was early 2006) and planning to get back in power. Musharraf was negotiating with her on some kind of deal where he could be president and she would be prime minister. She wouldn't prosecute him, and he wouldn't prosecute her. She did return to Pakistan in 2007 and was immediately murdered in a bomb attack. Pakistan is full of conspiracy theories (none of which I can prove or disprove) about who was responsible for that attack.

It's important to think of Musharraf not as a military dictator but as the "primus inter pares" (first among equals) of military officers (he had to depend on their support) and as a man trying to build a civilian following which he didn't initially have and therefore dependent on support and advice from civilian politicians, or Islamist parties, which definitely inhibited him from taking the action we wanted on really cutting off the flow of funds to the madrassas and ultimately to terrorist groups. It doesn't matter that he survived two assassination attacks by jihadis who in one case had infiltrated the air force and tried to blow him up. Why wouldn't he do his utmost to eliminate the people trying to kill him? He tried to arrest some of them but not all of them, he was forever trying to balance things that were really unbalanceable, and eventually failed and had to leave office. Eventually the army said, "enough's enough, time to let the civilians back to office."

I also was responsible for Bangladesh which I visited a couple of times. I regret I never got to serve there. I think it would have been fun. You felt the size of the population, and the poverty suffered by most. But they were making a big economic push then which continued. They were passing Pakistan in GDP (gross domestic product) per capita

Anyway, Bangladesh politics have been extremely polarized for decades. You had the "two old ladies" as they would call them. On one side, there was Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the man who founded the country and was assassinated by army officers in a coup, and, on the other, was Khaleda Zia, the widow of the officer who led the coup that assassinated Mujibur. Khaleda Zia runs the Bangladesh

National Party (BNP), and Sheikh Hasina runs the Awami League. They have alternated in power back and forth from the early ‘80s until now. At the time, Khaleda Zia and the BNP were in power and the Awami League was in opposition. They have since reversed roles. Despite the fact that Awami League supporters were always coming to me as the senior-most Department official following Bangladesh to claim the BNP was in league with Islamists, we didn’t see much difference between them. What was true was that both parties were corrupt and from a Washington perspective were peas in a pod.

I remember visiting Dhaka, flying straight from the U.S. to Dhaka, two plane changes, eleven time zones, total exhaustion. An Embassy colleague met me at the airport at eight in the morning and took me on a series of appointments nonstop until eight in the evening when we went to dinner with several disaffected members of the BNP. I was so tired I was literally swaying. After a long, heavy dinner, the host brought out a bottle of scotch, poured me a glass which in my exhausted condition left me instantly under the table. I was just about to nod off, when our host jolted me awake by saying, “You know, we just need a little coup.”

“What!!?”

“You know, just to get rid of the ‘two old ladies.’" Would you Americans just stop being paranoid about coups? We just need a coup to get rid of the ‘two old ladies,’ and then we’ll resume democratic life as normal. Everything will work fine as long as they are out of the way.”

I sat there thinking that I was probably one of the most senior Americans to visit Bangladesh in years. Tired as I was, I had to stand up and say, “no you may not do a coup; you may not tell anyone that the Americans endorsed a coup; U.S. law is very clear we cannot support you, we’ll cut you off." I feared he was trying to have me nod out of politeness and exhaustion, then he could say “I talked to the Americans, they didn’t seem to care too much, sure let’s go do it." I did not want him running around town saying, “I just talked to a senior guy from Washington, and he didn’t seem to care if there was a coup.”

So, anyway there wasn’t a coup. Or, there was in a way. Bangladesh had this system of installing a caretaker government to run the country while elections were held. Subsequent to my visit, the BNP resigned on schedule in favor of a caretaker government to hold an election. Then the caretaker never left. The caretaker postponed the election for two years and governed with the support of the army, putting both old ladies in jail.

This was a test of the thesis that getting rid of the two old ladies would solve things – it didn’t. Eventually the caretaker government collapsed, they had to have the election. The other old lady won (Sheikh Hasina) and this would have been 2008 or ‘9; she stayed in power until riots forced her out in 2024. She held one or two elections, but she managed to jimmy the outcome; I’m not sure how free and fair they were. But having taken office she was not willing to leave.

Despite all of that, Bangladesh (perhaps because it's been governed by women more than men for the last thirty years) has accomplished a great deal on girls education. Their birth rate is now significantly lower than Pakistan's. When the countries were united in the '60s there were more people in East Pakistan than in the West. West Pakistan now has a third more people than Bangladesh does. The Bangladeshi Government is successfully trying to slow this population explosion. Education levels are better in Bangladesh, and there's been significant investment in ready-made garments; sweatshops, let's be honest here, not something one should be terribly proud of, but they employ many people. Almost all baseball caps in the U.S. are made in Bangladesh. They have done something; their economy is moving forward. They found gas. They have made progress. As companies have looked to move out of China, many have gone to Bangladesh as well as Vietnam. They are economically doing better than you would think. Our image of the place as a starving basket-case is not true anymore. It has problems, but it's not a starving basket-case.

Q: Have they been able to do anything to mitigate what happens when typhoons or tsunamis hit?

ENGELKEN: They had a typhoon hit last week. There are problems, nobody would say it was fun. The whole crisis in the 1970s was kicked off by a horrible cyclone. I think one hundred thousand people died when the Pakistani government did nothing to help the survivors, it was ghastly and it's what helped kick off the rebellion that led to the division of the country. Since then, with help from AID the Bangladeshi government has built storm shelters on a lot of the barrier islands and set up a warning service. As a result, this week as a cyclone came up the Bay of Bengal, people were warned. In 1970, nobody got any warning and those on small islands just above sea level had nowhere to go when the storm surge came. Most of the islands now have shelters and warning systems. I don't know what the death toll of this last one was, but it was in tens and not hundreds of thousands. So, they have done a lot.

So, Bangladesh was an interesting thing. The fact I was almost the most senior person to visit tells you that Washington is pretty much not paying attention. I constantly had to say there are better numbers about Bangladesh.

That takes us to 2006 and the end of my tour. At that point I took a year of leave without pay to accompany my wife in Frankfurt, after which I took a job at UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) for two years, then I went off to Pakistan again. The next jobs have nothing to do with Pakistan. I will compare the situation between 2010-11 when I was in Islamabad with the one in 2004-06 because it was quite different.

Leave Without Pay – Frankfurt, Germany 2006-2007

Q: Today is June 10th, 2020, and we're resuming our interview with Stephen Engelken. Stephen, do you want to say anything about this year, 2006 to '7, when you were on leave without pay?

ENGELKEN: Nothing terribly interesting to history. Obviously, my wife had a very nice time as consul-general in Frankfurt, and I got to live in a very beautiful house. You could see where German social attitudes haven't quite caught up to ours; people really had a hard time figuring out how to react to me as a trailing spouse. It was just odd; they didn't know quite what to do with me. But I got through the year then bid on a lot of jobs in Western Europe which of course were heavily competed for. What I wanted was to be close to Frankfurt so that I could go back and see my son who at that point was in high school.

My wife began in Frankfurt – here's a classic Foreign Service dilemma – it's a three-year tour. When she took the job, they were very clear to her, "don't ask for an extension, it's a three-year tour, that's it. You're getting to live for three years in a beautiful house, great job; that's it, that's the limit. There's a whole queue of people who'd like to do that."

We began as my son was an entering freshman in high school. And high school is four years, not three. We tried to figure out how we could find a post that had a high school (there aren't that many) with a similar program so that he could at some point transition. He made a big deal to me about "I don't want to transfer in my senior year." Foreign Service families have this problem all the time, not new or unique to me in any way. So, I wanted to find a place that had a high school that was run in a similar way with a similar program. He began the international high school in Frankfurt. It emphasized the international baccalaureate (IB). They really pressed all the students to join the IB program. We could have another discussion whether that's a good thing or not.

Anyway, he conformed to the pressure and entered the IB effort. I accepted a job in Paris, because it had a high school (there's an American school in Paris) that also did the IB; he could transition easily, with a very similar curriculum and faculty. We had him in Frankfurt for two years and then in Paris for two years. I began in 2007 and stayed in Paris until July 2010.

I have to say that I think the American school in Paris did a very good job. He matured immensely in those two years. He matured immensely from fourteen to eighteen. He started off not being terribly serious about schoolwork and ended up being quite serious about it and did well. I think they did a good job with him.

U.S. Mission to UNESCO, Deputy Chief of Mission, 2007-2010

I became the deputy chief of the U.S. Delegation to UNESCO in July 2007. The delegation was headed by Ambassador Louise Oliver, a political appointee of the Bush administration. I will admit that, when I started, I was apprehensive about being DCM for a political appointee. I need not have been. Our views did not completely coincide, but we were able to work together practically on the business at hand. And I positively benefited from her political instincts. Many issues at UNESCO touch on controversies in U.S. politics, and the head of the U.S. delegation to UNESCO must have finely tuned political instincts for how issues under consideration will play back home.

Ambassador Oliver was the first U.S. ambassador to UNESCO since our return in 2005.

The backstory on UNESCO: It was a problem-child organization. In the mid-1980s the Reagan Administration withdrew, slamming the door as we left. For many years prior to our departure in 1985, UNESCO was led by a director-general named Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow. He was Senegalese, very lefty, the kind of guy who would tell you that Frantz Fanon's Les Misérables de la Terre (The Wretched of the Earth) is his favorite book. He had a chip against developed countries. Particularly as a Francophone, he had a particular chip against America. French leftist intellectuals in that period were also hostile to us, too. He had imbibed all of that. He did lots of things to gratuitously poke us in the '80s. What I recall that precipitated the withdrawal was his effort to have the organization embrace something called the "New World Information Order." We interpreted it as endorsing some form of censorship. As the intensity of our disagreement grew, he became paranoid. He had the entire top floor of the office building converted into his apartment because he felt it wasn't safe for him to leave the building. The Americans were going to assassinate him, all kinds of bizarre, paranoid stuff.

The key thing to remember about UNESCO is that no member state has veto power. The organization traditionally operates on consensus which should in theory give every member a veto, but there are strict majoritarian provisions for voting in its constitution. You had to get a quorum of member states to request a vote. Votes were rare, and it was a big deal when they occurred. There was always a lot of hand wringing about whether the organization should depart from its tradition of consensus, but it could be done. Everybody knew the shotgun was in the closet should a group of states want to use it. That always conditioned our negotiating there because we usually did not want to push things to the point that people called a vote. I found myself constantly maneuvering to try to prevent people from calling a vote.

Let's mention what UNESCO stands for, by the way. It's the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The constitution that governs its proceedings was drafted in 1948 at an international meeting in Paris. Eleanor Roosevelt led the United States delegation, and Archibald MacLeish drafted the constitution's preamble. It's a very elegant preamble. In the '50s and early '60s, before the decolonization movement, the United States and our Western partners really dominated the organization. After decolonization, that changed drastically. This was true all over the UN system, it's not unique to UNESCO.

There are two things that are unique to UNESCO. One I've already mentioned is the absence of a veto. Sorry, Eleanor, you drafted the constitution in a moment of high idealism, but it is not a very well drafted document from our perspective. And two, think for a moment – education, science, and culture. Those are all domestic issues in most countries. Education is largely a state issue in the United States. Up until the 1970s, we didn't have a Department of Education at the federal level at all. Science is spread out; there are numerous agencies in the U.S. that deal with science, but there is no ministry of science in the U.S. system. Culture – we don't have a ministry of culture or an official

culture policy, so we don't really have an agenda to push on culture. Personally, I think it is a good thing that we don't have a culture ministry, because it would open the door to the bitter culture wars we have in the U.S.: who's going to control, what kind of culture will you promote? I think we're much better off leaving this in the hands of the private sector essentially. We have a few agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. These are small and have limited budgets and do not pretend to set culture policy for the United States.

What agenda does the United States have to promote at UNESCO? We have just rejoined this organization a second time, but I am dubious of the wisdom. What is it that we really want this organization to do? I don't think we have thought that through. If you're just joining the organization to be there, I'd say don't do it, we can't control what happens. If we're part of the organization, then we're somehow affected by it. If we're not we can say you guys go off and do whatever you want, I'm not listening. Not a great position, but maybe preferable.

Q: A question on the organization itself. When you see in some country, say Ethiopia and Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage site. What does that mean in practice?

ENGELKEN: In an earlier era of idealism in I think the late '60s and early '70s there was a great concern around the world that developing countries did not have the wherewithal to maintain sites like Lalibela. Good example, Lalibela is a beautiful site and particularly in 1968, it was unclear whether the Ethiopians had the money to maintain it. There are many similar places around the developing world. UNESCO has convening authority to convene a meeting to draft an international treaty or convention. Lots of international organizations have this authority; very few people pay attention to this, but they should. It's a very significant authority. International conventions establish the substructure of rules that the world runs on. The U.S. has been massively successful from the end of World War II up to now in getting conventions that establish rules. Now sometimes after doing this we don't like the rules that we ourselves wrote, but that's a different thing.

In 1972, UNESCO convened an international meeting to draft what is called the World Heritage Convention. A number of mostly wealthy countries joined initially to promote conservation of vulnerable cultural sites around the world. The convention created something called the World Heritage Committee, which meets annually to both review the state of maintenance of existing sites and to consider whether any new sites should be added to the list. The wealthier countries created a pretty small fund that could be used to give grants to developing countries to maintain sites that had been identified as of unique cultural and historic value to the world. World Heritage turned out to be very popular, very successful in a way, but now is being put in danger by its own success. The international public has come to see a World Heritage Site designation as akin to a good housekeeping seal of approval and an indication that the site is really worth seeing. As a result, countries that are interested in promoting tourism are flooding the committee with proposals for sites to be designated.

Now the World Heritage Committee has two expert advisory committees, ICOMOS, the

International Committee on Monuments and Sites, and the IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Both of these date back to the late ‘40s. ICOMOS has the world’s architects and art historians – it would be a cool job if you could get to work there, it’s headquartered in Rome and IUCN is just outside of Geneva. They look at candidate lists and review them and come up with a recommendation. “This is not unique; this is unique but in terrible shape; if this was intact it would be a cool site but there’s nothing there but a few rocks and we don’t think it’s worth the effort to create something out of nothing." I remember something like that was said about a proposed site in Burkina Faso.

You could see how this could be a scene for horse-trading (you vote for my site, and I’ll vote for your site). It became a place where developing countries demanded more designations because “it’s critical to tourism and development." My talking points were “this isn’t a development convention;” this is an art convention essentially. “We’re just evaluating whether this is unique artistically, not whether it will help your development or not." That didn’t go down well.

There were regional jealousies. I mentioned IUCN; there are world heritage sites and there are natural sites. The latter were offered protection under convention in the ‘80s because a lot of developing countries said, “We don’t really have anything old, but it’s not fair that developed countries have more cultural sites; we in the developing world have these unique, natural sites that should be just as famous." Rwanda, for example, had the mountain gorillas in a national park. I think the developing countries had an argument.

This is jumping ahead but in 2009 during the interregnum between Bush and Obama I spent seven months as chargé in charge of the mission, which was a lot of fun most of the time. But I felt the pressure; you’re responsible for anything that comes out of here. We’ll get back to how easy it would have been to have something really bad come out of there. Anyway, I went to represent the U.S. at a meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Seville in June 2009. I was supported by two experts from the National Park Service, who came and helped advise me. Countries were proposing sites, we had a list of sites we were supposed to evaluate, we had a meeting in Washington to decide which we will support and which ones we won’t. There were always surprising things. “Oh, we didn’t mention this on the agenda but we’re going to add this..."

“What? What is that?”

Anyway, the Park Service officers were very helpful to me in evaluating this stuff. Again jumping ahead, culture was the source of the most intense and bitter arguments at UNESCO. It gets people’s blood boiling all around the world, beginning with questions like whose site is it? I have many examples of this. Okay; the Seville meeting was in 2009. At this point, I think the Republic of Kosovo has been in existence for about ten years. The list of sites gives a site and then a parenthesis for what country is responsible for maintaining the site. You probably know where I’m going here. There is a Serbian Orthodox monastery in Kosovo that was put on the list when Yugoslavia was united. At

the break-up of Yugoslavia, remember Kosovo was the last of the states to emerge. The name of the site was not amended; therefore, when Kosovo became independent, the site retained the name, such-and-such a church parenthesis, Serbia. So, my instructions were to put my hands up and say, "Oh there's a small error on this list, this should say 'Kosovo.'"

Well, you can imagine what happened. The Serbian representative went up like a bottle rocket. We're in this very large auditorium, the ceiling must have been fifty feet above us, and I thought she was going to hit it. She went up, red in the face and screaming. "This is outrageous, we can't do that! Let's have a vote."

I spent the day sneaking around speaking to delegations all over the room. I can't remember exactly what the voting procedures under the World Heritage Convention are, it could have been a simple majority. I couldn't count the votes exactly, as best I could tell we were coming a little short. I think ninety-eight or ninety-nine countries had recognized Kosovo, but there were important ones who had not, like the host of the meeting, Spain.

Q: That's interesting; I thought you were going to say Russia.

ENGELKEN: No. The Russians, of course, supported Serbia, but this was not an East vs. West issue. It was more interesting and complicated. Spain, at least at the time, did not recognize Kosovo. To say that the chair was hostile was an understatement. The Spanish were worried about Catalonia and the Basques and setting a precedent for recognizing the split-up of a country. They were in no mood to really give us anything on this. I kept getting rulings from the chair that were hostile. I had to call Washington and say I can't be sure, but I don't think we have the votes. I don't want to call a vote and lose, and the chair is hostile; let's wait until this is in another country that recognizes Kosovo and try it again. I don't know for certain what has happened since; but I doubt that we have succeeded in changing the name to recognize Kosovo as the country in charge of the site.

So, there was Kosovo. That was bitter enough. But the most bitter issue at the meeting was a dispute between Thailand and Cambodia, which I did not anticipate.

Q: Was that over Angkor Wat?

ENGELKEN: No. Not exactly. There was a temple complex called Preah Vihear. It was built by the Khmer, the same civilization that built Angkor Wat. They built a temple on a mountain ridge that is now right on the Thai-Cambodian border. It turns out (who knew?) that Thailand and Cambodia have disputed their border for generations. It's a border that was drawn by the French. The French, then rulers of Indochina, surveyed it in the 1890s or so, and the Thais regard it as the result of an unequal treaty. They argued the border is unfair, not properly demarcated and on and on.

Anyway, the temple was within a mile of the border, less than a mile inside Cambodia according to the border that we recognize, after a 1962 International Court of Justice

decision recognizing the Cambodian claim to the temple buildings. Our instructions were to support inclusion of the site as a monument for which Cambodia would be responsible. The Thais did terrible diplomacy, frankly. The Cambodians were all over the place, everywhere in the world for two or three years prior to the meeting lining up support for their position.

The Thais began their campaign to block inscription of the site very belatedly – this was a period of great turbulence in Thailand with the country moving from civilian to military rule and back and forth. Preah Vihear was not the top priority of Thai governments in this period. But they never gave up on it. Just before the meeting, the government of the day in Thailand, a fairly weak one at that, saw a chance to grab a nationalist issue and opposed Preah Vihear being inscribed as a Cambodian site.

Suddenly, while the World Heritage meeting was already under way, the Thai border police raided the parking lot in front of the temple. The road going to Preah Vihear at the time passed through Thai territory. It ended in a little area with shops to buy souvenirs. There was a gun battle in the parking lot/shopping area between Thai and Cambodian police; two or three people were killed. The Thais burned the shops, and there were exchanges of gunfire for days between the Thais and Cambodians all around this temple that we are supposed to be preserving. As best I could understand, this was at bottom a fight between the two countries over the tourist revenue that could be won from the site. You wanted to scream "why can't you agree to share the revenue?" But no, oh no, definitely not. So, was it a Thai temple? Was it a Thai civilization that built the temple or was it a Cambodian civilization? None of us is an expert on this.

Eventually the Cambodians won out; they had enough votes lined up. My instructions were that this was in Cambodia. We were bending over backwards to be nice to the Thais because they're good friends of ours. There are a lot of arguments like this that emerge that pit friends against each other; I didn't really want to choose between Thailand and Cambodia, but the World Heritage Committee eventually agreed to inscribe the site on the World Heritage list as a Cambodian site.

Another heritage site is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. You can imagine. The mind reels. Every UNESCO meeting I ever attended ended with a discussion about the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount is the only site that does not have a country designated to be responsible for it. The list just had a parenthesis that said, "to be determined." This issue will arise again as Israel tries to assert exclusive control in East Jerusalem. In my day at UNESCO, the Israelis were less hardline on this issue than they are now. The Jordanians argued that their bilateral peace treaty gave Jordan a "droit de regard" (right of oversight) over physical arrangements on the Temple Mount. The Israelis denied that the treaty says that. The treaty, as I understand it, permitted a Jordanian *waqf* (Islamic foundation) to continue to maintain and administer the Haram ash-Sharif, the compound on top of the mount that contains the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, as it had been doing prior to the Israeli seizure of East Jerusalem in 1967. Many Islamic mosques and religious sites are administered by similar pious endowments. The arrangement has deep roots in Islamic history.

During my service at UNESCO, the big dispute was over the side of the Temple Mount. How far down the Mount did the Jordanian Waqf's *droit de regard* extend? The Western Wall (clearly a Jewish religious site) was at the bottom, the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque were at the top. They are close but don't quite touch. Who controls the area in between and why does this matter? At some point in the early 2000s there was a tremendous rainstorm and a small landslide down the side of the hill. This undermined an old stairway that went from the Western Wall Plaza up to the Aqsa Mosque through a small gate in the wall of the Haram ash-Sharif. The Israelis wanted to rebuild the steps. The Jordanians loudly protested that they had no right to do so. The steps were Jordan's responsibility and Jordan would pay to repair them. To justify raising the issue at UNESCO, Jordan alleged that Israel's plan would somehow damage the World Heritage site, because the proposed architectural plan for the steps showed being them built in materials out of character with the rest of the site and because the Israeli plan would require the demolition of some Ottoman era ruins that had been revealed by the landslide. This, the Jordanians insisted, was an attempt to erase the Islamic connection to the Temple Mount. As you can see, this discussion became very weedy, very fast. However, at bottom it was not a disagreement over architectural plans, it was a disagreement over control.

At every Executive Board meeting and every meeting of the World Heritage Committee, there was always a draft resolution proposed by Jordan and the Arab countries that alleged that Israel's urban redevelopment plans in the Old City put the site "in danger."

At every meeting of the World Heritage Committee, there was always an agenda item about sites in danger. Jerusalem and the Temple Mount weren't the only ones discussed under this topic. Some of the sites were in capitals of the developed world. Many countries bitterly resisted the embarrassment of the Committee vote to declare their sites were "in danger," even though there was no real enforcement mechanism. At the meeting in Spain, I suddenly found myself in a screaming argument with the Germans over a bridge in Dresden. Remember there's an old city in Dresden; they were building a bridge that a local group in Dresden argued would destroy the view of the city from the other bank. The question was, should we designate Dresden as a site in danger? I think we did. The German was hopping mad.

There was a recommendation from the experts. The thing to remember is the experts were not politicians, and they can come up with the most impractical things you can imagine. I think ICOMOS came up with a recommendation to declare the Tower of London as a site in danger, and Westminster Abbey. Why? Because the British were permitting the construction of large buildings that would mar the sight-line behind them. The Shard and the Pickle, all these things. Really? The British aren't going to take care of Westminster Abbey? Who in the world has the right to tell the British what height buildings should be in London. ICOMOS similarly proposed to put Schoenbrunn Palace in Vienna on the list of sites in danger, because planned development would have overlooked the palace and spoiled the sight-line. Again, the Austrians care deeply about preserving Schoenbrunn, and I doubt they would do anything that would endanger it. You

can take a good idea and run it into the ground, and this had lots of utterly impractical people hanging around, mixed in with old-fashioned logrolling: “if you vote for my site, I’ll vote for yours."

Anyway, for something that was so high-minded, there was a lot of stomach acid expended on this. Not just World Heritage.

Q: Just to be sure, whether it’s designated as a World Heritage Site or not and whether it’s in danger or not, let’s say it’s Angkor Wat which has been pillaged many times but is still standing, if things have been cut off or removed, none of these designations protect sites against that.

ENGELKEN: No, but there’s another international effort that actually did work. There is an international treaty concluded in 1971 or 1972 on the return of cultural properties. It said basically that any work of art dug up or found after a certain date in 1970 should be returned to the country where it was found. We ratified this, and we have enforced it. So, if something from that museum in Baghdad pops up in an antique store in New York (which I think it did), we can seize it and send it back. The convention says something dug up after 1970 must be returned. The U.S. has been one of the better countries on that.

Now, another issue that keeps coming up at UNESCO. Formerly colonized countries would get up and say, “France, England, why don’t you return those things that you took during the colonial occupations of our countries?" The Greeks would, of course, get up in these discussions and demand the return of the Elgin Marbles. The French, British, and others would squirm, weave, and dodge. They frequently would ask for U.S. support as their ally, but I never had instructions to do so. The U.S. does not hold large amounts of cultural property taken during the imperial period; so, I just sat in my chair quietly and let the former imperial powers defend their actions.

You will recall that I said experts aren’t practical or politically savvy? They triggered one of the most emotional scenes I had in my service at USUNESCO. Prior to my arrival there had been a meeting of a group of art experts who recommended that UNESCO conclude a declaration saying that all countries involved in World War II should return all cultural properties taken during that conflict. This sounded reasonable to me, but it proved unworkable. It ripped the scab off a bitter argument between Germany, Poland, and Russia, and that was nothing compared to the argument triggered between China, Japan, and Korea. Someone at the time whispered to me, “You know, World War II hasn’t ended in East Asia." The Europeans for all their faults have done more to heal the wounds of World War II than has ever been done in East Asia. There hasn’t been little reconciliation between Japan and Korea, not much of a reconciliation between Japan and China. I remember coming to this meeting—like all things it met all day and now we’re going to have a side meeting at like nine at night. I’m absolutely exhausted. I have my son, at least he’s high school age and mostly independent at this point, but still have to think about him. I’ve got the Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese, and the UNESCO legal department and a couple of other people. We had a lawyer from our staff, a very nice guy. Why are we there? All three countries were grabbing us, “You Americans mediate this!"

Does the U.S. have a dog in this fight? We had friendly relations with all three countries, and our only real interest was that UNESCO not do something that would set our friends against each other.

The Japanese, faced with emotional attacks from China and Korea, were particularly on the defensive. Their ambassador, a good personal friend of mine, would literally stand behind me physically every time his Chinese and Korean counterparts came into the room. He was desperate for our support, but I had to tell him that we would support Japan on almost everything, but not on temple bells it allegedly robbed from Korea during its occupation of the peninsula.

Another thing with that. In Europe you have pretty good dates for World War II. September 1, 1939 to May 8 or 9, 1945. All right. When does World War II begin in East Asia?

Q: The Japanese and China in '36.

ENGELKEN: You have 1937, or is it the occupation of Manchuria in 1931? Then if you're the Koreans you get up and say it's the occupation of Korea in 1910. Which has the logical inconsistency of making World War II begin before World War I, but never mind. My point is they couldn't even agree on the dates. Many things I think were taken into what we would now call euphemistically private collections; I think Japanese army officers looted things without the full knowledge of their government, and the Japanese government now doesn't necessarily know where they are. And they weren't showing much enthusiasm for going to look for them either. The foot-dragging and mealy-mouthed excuses the Japanese were offering visibly grated on the Koreans and Chinese.

We met until close to midnight, finally we all agreed there was no way out of this that wasn't going to inflame, rather than heal, the wounds of World War II. The Germans were asking for the archives of the city of Breslau and the Poles were in return asking for a Madonna that had been in Breslau but was now in Germany. It got so complicated. We would have had our allies screaming at each other; there's just no money in that.

So, what did we do? At the end we had a one sentence resolution. It said the general conference takes note of the report of the experts on such-and-such a date. Period. Nothing. We shelved it.

I go home, my son is still awake, it's almost midnight, I've been trying to call him. I get home and my son asks, "Dad, what did you guys do?"

"I had a good night."

"What did you do?"

"We did nothing."

“You spent all night doing nothing?”

“Yes, it was a victory.”

This is in a nutshell why it is often hard to explain international organizations to people who haven’t done them.

Q: As you’re back to designating something a World Heritage Site, is there a collateral value to doing it because it tends to be able to draw private funds, does it bring more attention to a site?

ENGELKEN: Sure, if you want Bill Gates to help you maintain the site, yes it helps.

Q: Even if there is no practical value from UNESCO, sometimes you can say “Oh, all these countries have declared it a World Heritage Site, can you give us twenty million dollars to put up—”

ENGELKEN: Yes, sure. And having these controversies can also discourage American Express, nah we’re not going to get involved in that.

Let me back up before we spend all our time on culture. Why did we rejoin UNESCO? It’s the E, education. Laura Bush was deeply interested. She was a librarian and schoolteacher and was sincerely interested in promoting education around the world. In 2003, I am told she asked, “Why are we not a member of the one international organization that deals with education? We should support education." It was a fine idea.

That largely propelled us to rejoin. Obviously, the Bush administration was also trying to demonstrate that it was not as unilateral an actor as it appeared after the Iraq invasion. We returned in 2005 before I got there. Louise Oliver was named ambassador and everybody at the delegation was new and didn’t know the rules to the game at UNESCO. They were complicated. By the time I arrived Ms. Oliver had had to do a quick study, and I must give her a lot of credit that she did a good job of passing on what she had learned to me.

At UNESCO, the French had an agenda and as the host country had vast influence. A great many of the staff were French or were francophones from Africa. In that period, they were all—French President Chirac and the Canadian government of the day—generally to the left, and hostile to the U.S. I think a Liberal Party government campaigned to have UNESCO convene a convention to write a treaty on the protection of cultural heritage. Basically, what the treaty as drafted did was authorize governments to take such steps as necessary to protect their national cultures.

We strongly opposed this. We thought it was a French effort to legitimize broadcast quotas. I don’t know if you recall the controversy. In the 1990s, the French tried to limit how much American TV programming could be shown and at what hours; the Canadians did similar things. At the time, we objected to the restraint on trade under the agreements

that established the World Trade Organization. We thought this was a backdoor way of moving the issue from the World Trade Organization where they were not winning, to UNESCO where they had the deck stacked. We lost that argument. When it came time for UNESCO to adopt the draft treaty, we broke consensus and forced a rare vote that we lost massively. Only two or three countries out of 190 voted with us.

To my knowledge this treaty has been seldom invoked. This issue has now changed greatly with streaming. Now we have Netflix. I'm watching Netflix shows that were made in Germany and France and other places both because I'm interested in foreign programming but also because it keeps hitting me that "hey, instead of American media being devastating to your film industry, American media execs are financing it." This is a pretty good thing. I don't know where we are with this now. The issue has gone off the boil. Chirac was the big promoter of it, left office shortly thereafter and he's now deceased. I don't know where it stands, but the Cultural Protection Treaty was an example of how member states could use an organization to write the rules in a way that appeared to endanger American interests.

Mrs. Oliver and I discussed this experience at length. She felt and I agreed, either you're in and play the game and put an effort in it including having the Secretary of State and Seventh Floor lobby for our points of view at UNESCO, or don't play and leave. But being there and only playing half-heartedly leaves us implicated in rules we may not like. There are many more efforts to write the rules now using international organizations than I think people realize. I think most people are barely aware of all of these organizations.

I'll give you an example that did come up at UNESCO. The internet. Who runs the internet, by the way? How many people could tell you?

Q: I don't even know how you get an internet name.

ENGELKEN: There is a nonprofit corporation, incorporated in the United States, called the International Committee on Assigned Names and Numbers which has significant foreign participation but ultimately is under U.S. control. The master servers are still in California. The whole architecture, the keystone sits on U.S. territory. Periodically there are efforts to change that. In the mid- to late-2000s there were several countries shopping for an international organization to take over the internet. Brazil at the time under then President Lula would get up in UNESCO and say, "We should have a treaty and UNESCO should take over running the internet."

It's a terrible idea. Don't go there. But it also came up at the ITU, the International Telecommunications Union, in Geneva. There are other bodies out there you could conceivably task with this. Just as an example of the danger out there. As long as the master server sits in the U.S., I don't think somebody can take it over if we don't agree, but U.S. delegations to international organizations must be on guard at all times to fend off similar bad ideas.

We would get proposals for essentially censoring the internet, and this issue has not gone

away. I imagine it has become even more acute. What do you do if there is a cartoon hosted on the internet that depicts the prophet, Mohammed, and is offensive to Muslims? Islamic countries regularly presented resolutions that said people should not be permitted to defame the Prophet, and anybody doing it should be prosecuted. Obviously, we can't agree to that. Anyway, just to say there were all kinds of proposals that would pop up regularly to write the rules in ways that the Americans would be horrified. If we start withdrawing from international organizations, the rules will be written without us. That's what's at stake with the current WHO (World Health Organization) controversy. If the Chinese are dominating the WHO (which I have no doubt they may be) it's because we have ignored it, and haven't put the effort into it.

UNESCO's budget is tiny—of course we were always opposed to any kind of budget increase. The building was ramshackle; the staff was demoralized and not very competent. In fact, the U.S. tried to do education projects with them, they really just weren't very good at it. They did not have the talent. So, if you gave them money, they didn't know what to do with it.

There are two ways international organizations get money. One from dues, the other from what we call voluntary contributions. Somebody can give money to UNESCO for some purpose. Members are consulted on whether we can or should accept this money, and do we accept that purpose. But it's a cash-poor organization so almost always members agree to accept the money.

I remember I was talking with my ambassador who observed that this organization can be bought. If Russia or China or any country with deep pockets—Qatar, if it wants to spend several hundred million dollars here—they can curl this thing around their finger. And we're not geared to compete. This problem may have now raised its head with the WHO. It could raise its head all over the place if the Chinese decide, or another country decides, we're going to try to influence this or that organization. For a small organization, five hundred million dollars is a large amount, and there are many countries out there that have that kind of money. It is just a matter of them deciding to spend it that way.

Anyway, we rejoined for education and we got slammed with cultural protection. I arrive and to give you a sense of UNESCO, my ambassador briefs me on how you do it. This was like playing chess and she was quite right. It took me the better part of a year to realize it. For example, U.S. representatives should never speak first at a meeting. Even if we violently oppose something, never be the first to speak in a meeting. Why? Because if we are the first to speak it becomes an American issue and then typically India and China would get up and say this is now a G77 (Group of 77) issue that pits developed countries and underdeveloped countries and we, India and China, speak for the underdeveloped. And the less developed countries would uniformly fall in line. It was just amazing to me. You had to prevent an issue from becoming a G77 versus developed countries issue. It meant you had to go through the agenda beforehand and identify countries among the developing countries, or at least non leading Western countries, to speak first. And we Americans will swing in behind you.

Example. UNESCO has an executive board that meets twice a year, fifty-eight member states, and then the general conference which is like the General Assembly meets every two years with all 194 members. It's a circus when they have that. Fifty-eight was bad enough. The constitution wasn't well written, it should have been a much smaller executive body; this was like a mini-assembly. Every time the Executive Board met the Cubans would submit a draft resolution that would call for responsible media. We all knew this was an effort to legitimize the Cuban management of their media and censorship. Remembering the rule that we can't be the first to speak—particularly if we spoke out against Cuba, all the others would defend Cuba. We were the bully, they would say. So, before every meeting I had to find a different country each time to be the one to speak first. I went to Albania one time to get up. They said "The last time I heard something like this was during Enver Hoxha's period." At a different meeting, we got the Czech representative to take the lead. Referring to the Cuban draft, she said "I haven't read anything like this since 1989." We also got the Thais one time to speak up. Every time you had to get somebody to go first, then you would say "The Americans support that."

You also had to try to avoid making Latin America unite. We were divided into regional groupings, Latin American countries, Africa, East Asia, Europe – the Western Europe and Others Group, which was the U.S., Canada, and Israel and Western Europe. Then there was still a Group Two which included the former Soviet states and former East Europe. All the NATO members who were in Group Two hated it. "Why do I still have to go to meetings where the Russians are telling us what to do?" But we could never get it changed.

Fortunately, most of the issues we were dealing with were minor. The only one that got anybody killed during my time was the Thai/Cambodian temple. But we could have gotten people killed over Jerusalem, that had the potential. I was very proud. In my time there, we always got a consensus resolution on Jerusalem. That took me calling the embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman to ask them to approach the foreign ministries in their countries. We took a lot of time on the phone, but we always got it to a consensus. I am proud of that. I don't think it could be done today.

I told my staff that your job is to prevent UNESCO from adopting some kind of resolution that a talk jock in the United States could seize on, "Do you know what the UN just did?" Believe me there were plenty of proposals that could have been spun in some awful way in the United States had they been enacted. For example, there was a proposal that UNESCO should make a statement under the education hat that every child should be entitled to education in their mother tongue.

But think about the United States. We would have to teach every Native American language and every immigrant child in his native language. That would soak up a lot of resources. That's really sensitive. This proposal could have opened a real can of worms had it been adopted. I was able to get Cameroon to take the lead in opposing it. They stood up and said, "We have two hundred languages in Cameroon; we can't do it, we can't come up with textbooks in two hundred languages, some of which have never been

written." We got enough countries to back us. But that's an example, can you imagine? It would have had no legal effect in the United States, but it does create a climate that people can cite. The delegations to UNESCO often pushed things like the mother tongue education, because they were trying to get their own countries to do something. The mother tongue resolution, as I recall, was pushed by the Togolese delegate, because he wanted Togo to teach in mother tongue. He did not think about or care what problems a mother tongue resolution might have created in other countries.

We had a meeting on higher education, and I recall the Brazilians promoted a resolution that stated that higher education was a "public good" and basically there should not be for-profit exploitation of a public good. What they were proposing would have technically made Phoenix University and these other for-profit colleges, well not illegal but condemned as being outside the norm. The Brazilian resolution was intended to influence a controversy then going on in Brazil, but it would have been very controversial in the U.S. if it had been adopted.

Overall, I spent 85 to 90 percent of my time playing defense, blocking one bad idea after another from the point of view of the United States. I did spend time trying to get Americans hired; boy that was harder than hen's teeth. The two official languages of UNESCO are French and English. UNESCO's personnel department insisted that Americans be fluent in French. We just don't have many Americans who are fluent in French. I kept encountering American applicants who said, "I speak Spanish." At the Pan American Health Organization that would have been great, but it cut no ice at UNESCO. There are all kinds of hidden traps that various countries have put for us. Language skills are one of them, frankly most of us are monolingual and we can't pass these tests. Now you could argue they should ignore that and let good talent come but if you are trying to keep this reserved for other nations, then no.

I only spent about five percent of my time promoting resolution texts that we wanted the organization to adopt. A few. We had a draft resolution encouraging Holocaust education that we got adopted by the General Conference. It was a thumb in the eye of Holocaust deniers. There were a few things like that, but most of the time I received few instructions from Washington. The first year or two the instructions largely came from the First Lady's office because she was the one interested in education. The Department of Education made clear to me that they didn't want to be involved in UNESCO issues. At State I had a deputy office director I talked to regularly. At the Executive Board meetings, typically a State International Organizations (IO) Bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary would come with two or three officers from the bureau. They were helpful in keeping us from agreeing to things that would have violated policy, but it was obvious that they had not been closely following debates at UNESCO prior to arrival in Paris. Typically, they would attend the sessions with us and give us added leverage in negotiating resolution texts. "I have this guy from Washington here, you can't run this over me." With their help we could come to decisions fast. But most of the time there wasn't anything coming from Washington saying here's the text we want you to do, or here's what we want UNESCO to do. It was vague, do more on education? Well fine but how? Occasionally there were candidates for secretariat jobs that they wanted us to promote, and we had terrible

struggles over those. A lot couldn't get over the French language hurdle.

My takeaway from all this is that if we didn't have a big agenda at UNESCO to promote, the U.S. will inevitably end up being Dr. No: "No, we won't do this; no, we oppose that; no, we won't give you more money." Constantly being negative costs us influence. The U.S. is now returning to UNESCO a third time. I'm not keen on the move, unless we sit down and decide clearly what we want this organization to do; how we're going to use it; how much effort we're going to put on it. The undersecretary of political affairs is going to regularly call people about UNESCO issues, and we're really going to put a big effort to arm-twist the secretariat to hire Americans – like we're not going to pay you unless you do. Just being there is not good enough. Sad, because what's wrong with promoting science, culture, and education? Nothing.

Q: I was surprised when I heard in 2005 that we went back at least in part because of the White House interest, Mrs. Bush, in education, given that there are so many invidious forms of education; you've got madrasas that teach conservative Islam including jihad. That surprises me.

ENGELKEN: I think it was a bit naive, looking at it from 2020 and after having seen how the organization functions. Much of the time it felt like a high school Model UN but with adults playing high school students and engaging in the same sort of silly immature behavior that you would expect from teen-agers.

Q: I see that. Wow. Did your participation in this fascinating multilateral diplomacy give you skills and talents or develop any networks that were valuable to you from a career point of view?

ENGELKEN: Skills, yes. One of the weaknesses I think of the Foreign Service and of my background had been that I had never been trained to negotiate. The great question is what is the fundamental mission of the Foreign Service? Our mission I think is to negotiate the best deal we can for the United States on the issues of the day whatever they are. Service at an IO (international organization) is a good place for a young officer (I regret I didn't do it earlier) to get good experience negotiating things, which, as I just said, is a core competence successful FSOs should have.

Networks? I dealt a great deal with the Japanese ambassador to UNESCO, Tadamichi Yamamoto. He was a very senior and capable diplomat, who was sent there to support the Japanese Director-General Koichiro Matsura. The Japanese mission basically staffed and worked for Matsura. I don't think it was necessarily kosher, but the Japanese weren't doing anything to us so we didn't object. Yamamoto went from UNESCO to being the UN deputy SRSG (special representative of the secretary-general) in Afghanistan, and eventually becoming the full-fledged SRSG in Afghanistan as well as head of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). I had very productive meetings with him in Pakistan where I served in 2010 and 2011. He would fly in and we'd have serious talks about what the Pakistanis were doing. I definitely made a connection at UNESCO that was useful to me elsewhere.

One other issue that arose at UNESCO I should mention. In 2010 the term of the Director-General Matsura ended, and the Organization had to elect a new director-general. This was in November 2009. The issue of who would replace Matsura obsessed the organization for a year. Who was going to run? Who was going to get support? The Arabs argued it was their turn, that there had never been an Arab director-general, and it was time for one. We had all kinds of general concern about that; you mentioned madrasas. UNESCO's educational and cultural competences inevitably involved it in questions about madrasas, girl's education, freedom of speech, press freedom, and other hot button issues at that time. The Danish cartoons of Mohammad came out about this time, and reactions to them differed wildly depending on what civilization one came from. UNESCO Directors-General frequently issue press statements on press freedom without referring to member states. It would not be hard to imagine an Arab Director-General condemning cartoons and other public expressions that Muslims find offensive. Do we want that?

The Egyptians began pushing the candidacy of their retiring culture minister, Farouq Hosni, and convinced the Arab group to support him. Hosni was reputed to be close to Susy Mubarak, wife of then-President Hosni Mubarak. The culture minister had a decidedly unsavory reputation in Egypt, and the rumor was that President Mubarak wanted to find him a good job outside of Egypt as part of house-cleaning intended to pave the way for Mubarak's son to succeed him. This was just before the riots began in Tahrir Square.

The U.S. was not enthusiastic about Farouq Hosni's candidacy. Although he wasn't connected to the Muslim Brothers, he had that Egyptian chip on his shoulder against the West. And there were numerous allegations of corruption levelled against him. Specifically, the claim was made to us repeatedly that if a museum wanted to get one of those flashy exhibits of pharaonic art, it had to buy a Farouk Hosni painting. Hosni made some competent abstract paintings, but how many hundred thousand dollars is a Farouk Hosni worth? With Congressional support for funding UNESCO always weak, it struck us as imperative to prevent someone with a reputation for corruption from becoming Director-General.

You can't beat something with nothing, and we needed a strong candidate if we were to block Hosni. The Russians sounded us out about whether they could run. Honestly at that point I might have taken a Russian; I wouldn't today, I'm glad we didn't. Finally, we found an Ecuadoran-Lebanese woman who wanted to run. She campaigned hard and found some support, particularly among the small island developing states whose UNESCO delegations were led by Lebanese expatriates. But when it came to the voting, it was clear she would fall short and pave the way for the Egyptian to win.

The voting went through several ballots with those falling short dropping out. There were one or two others. I eventually told Washington, and at this point the incoming ambassador of the Obama administrator, David Killian, "Look, the best choice we've got among the remaining candidates is Irina Bukova of Bulgaria." A country small enough to

appeal to small countries, she had been a good official in the old regime and had turned colors at the right moment. The Russians I'm sure thought they could have influence on her; her education had been in Moscow "before", as East Europeans say, in the '80s. She spoke French, English, obviously a lot of Slavic languages. On the final ballot, it was just Bukova versus Husni. Whoever would come on top would win. The counting which was done in front of the assembled General Conference delegates was quite dramatic. As the votes were tallied the lead swayed back and forth. Finally, the result was announced showing Bukova winning by one or two votes. When we finally got to a majority for her, the whole room just exploded in applause.

Q: Today is July 21st, 2020, and we're resuming our interview with Stephen Engelken. At the end of the last session there was an electrical problem and Stephen didn't have a chance to complete his description of the election for director-general at UNESCO, so I think you'll want to pick up there to complete that tour.

ENGELKEN: At UNESCO the biggest thing that absorbed everyone's attention for my last year was the fight over who was going to be director-general. After the departure of Louise Oliver at the end of the Bush administration, there was a seven-month hiatus in which I was chargé and then in August David Killian, the Democratic appointee as ambassador, arrived. In that time there was furious maneuvering over who should be director-general. I wasn't getting clear instructions; in fact, I got almost no instructions from Washington on this. I received many calls from Mrs. Oliver who had her own very strong opinion, but she was from the last administration, and I did not know what the new one felt and they never gave me much. The nominated ambassador Killian also had a strong opinion which agreed with Mrs. Oliver's that we should oppose Hosni to the maximum extent, so he called me. But again, he hadn't been confirmed. So, what was our policy? It wasn't exactly clear.

The problem behind all of this, those of you who do international organizations know, all UN organizations are divided into regional groups when you meet. There's the WEOG group, Western Europe and Others group to which we belong. There's an Africa group. There's a Latin American group euphoniously referred to as GRULAC, Group of Latin American Countries. Then there's the East Asian group. What was called group two was the old Soviet bloc. Many of the folks in group two desperately wanted to be in group one, the WEOG; if you asked the Poles if they wanted to be lumped in with the Russians you can imagine what they would have said. But they did not seem to be able to change it. Anyway, there's also a Middle Eastern group. There had been some sort of informal agreement that the director-general should rotate around the various regional groups. I think they had a four or five year term, so every four or five years you would change director-general and the incoming one should be from a different regional grouping. Not a dumb idea, get different views around the world, in some ideal world this might make sense.

The outgoing director-general was Japanese. He had been a very active DG and I thought on the whole pretty successful. The logical next turn would have been the Middle Eastern

group. All right. That already got people shifting uneasily in chairs. Then the Middle Easterners got together, had a screaming argument, and then came out to say their nominee was going to be the outgoing Egyptian minister of culture.

Q: This part of the story you did tell.

ENGELKEN: Farouk Hosni.

Q: Yes because when you ended your last session you had gotten to the actual election when the Bulgarian was finally selected and people were either elated or disconcerted or whatever, but she somehow through hook or crook got in.

ENGELKEN: We literally had surveillance camera footage of the Libyans handing envelopes of money to the Africans to obtain their votes for Hosni. It was a very close-run thing. Irina Bukova was the Bulgarian's name. She won by maybe two votes. It was that close, very close. We were in this big room tabulating these things and as the tabulations would go, people would gasp or cheer. One of the key votes was Pakistan, which voted for Bukova because Ambassador Holbrooke was meeting with Zardari at that moment, and at that moment we were very close to Zardari, and he was looking for help from us, so he called his ambassador in Paris and overrode the instructions he'd received from the foreign ministry and told him to vote for Bukova. When you had a margin of votes of one or two, this was really important.

Anyway, the place broke out into tears and cheers when the result was announced. We'd talked with one of the Egyptian delegation's diplomats, a young poloff, very much trained in the thought process of us Westerners, Americans. He said, "Well you know, I'm not sure whether the world wasn't ready for Farouk Hosni, or Farouk Hosni wasn't ready for the world." Hosni had been a Mubarak nominee. You can imagine what would have happened. This is only months away from the Arab Spring (not that anybody had anticipated that). I have no idea how this would have played out after the Egyptian revolution. Hosni, I recall, was prosecuted for corruption but not convicted. But the fact he was prosecuted might say what people thought of him.

That was our biggest diplomatic triumph, we got a head of UNESCO we could work with and had no ax to grind with us, the way we had in the 1980s with the Senegalese M'Bow who had some immensely complicated axes to grind with the United States and permanently damaged our relationship with UNESCO.

I left shortly after the election; Irina Bukova was just getting started. She had great ambitions, it turned out later, to be secretary-general of the UN. Whenever that election resulted in Guterres becoming our current secretary-general of the UN, she threw her hat in the ring. I was asked by somebody at the time and said, "Irina is fine as UNESCO DG, I don't think she's got the skills to be promoted." She was kind of a chaotic manager, she spent most of her time campaigning for UN secretary-general and less than we would have liked administering UNESCO which like all of the UN has all kinds of management problems. Big ones, small ones, you name it.

That pretty much winds up my UNESCO, I don't have any other big stories out of that. As I was packing up to leave in July 2010, I was bummed out. I hadn't gotten promoted, so I was going to have to retire.

DCM Islamabad August 2010 to February 2011

Q: The promotion you're talking about now would be to OC?

ENGELKEN: OC to MC. I was bummed as everybody would be but not hysterical. Then I got a call from Ambassador Patterson in Islamabad. It's like within two weeks of my expected departure date. Ambassador Patterson called and said, "Steve, I need your help. Gerry Feierstein, my DCM, is leaving in three weeks. Holbrooke has f-ed this up and there is nobody replacing Feierstein. Can you come to Islamabad in the next three weeks to be DCM until a permanent replacement can be found? I can't run this Embassy without a DCM." The gap was due to some complicated Human Resources issues that are personal to the individual who should have been Feierstein's successor that I won't repeat. I had met Ambassador Patterson years before but never worked closely with her, but what else did I have to do? So, I said, "Great, but I'm supposed to retire."

She responded, "Nancy will fix that."

Really? At that time, I didn't even know that the director-general had the power to do that. Okay? So, she said "Nancy (Powell) will just recall you."

Wow, okay, sure, why not? Islamabad at that time – oh I think when you added in all the various allowances you were getting like 40 percent on top of salary.

Q: In 2010 you're at the beginning of ISIS (Islamic State in Syria) and all sorts of bad things going on.

ENGELKEN: ISIS hadn't yet really appeared but lots of bad things were going on. So, I said, "okay." Mad scramble to fill out forms. I had to fill out my retirement papers then other papers, while I'm trying to pack out and still run a mission and so forth. My last weeks in Paris are a complete blur in my memory now.

I left Paris the third week of July, flew back to Washington, and did quick consultations, to get up to date on what had happened in Pakistan since I had been office director in 2006. I also had to do training. This is about the time they had instituted "crash-bang," now called foreign affairs counter-terrorism training, FACT. At that point you didn't have to take it unless you were going to certain posts. Islamabad was one of these, and I was, therefore, taken to a raceway in West Virginia and made to drive circles and back up and things like this. We were shown lots of videos of IED attacks. Most showed incidents in Iraq and Afghanistan, but two of the videos showed attacks in Pakistan. One was of a bombing attempt on Consulate Peshawar about a year before in which the bomb-laden truck had gotten stuck as it attempted to drive over the delta barrier. There was also

another one which showed an attempt to ambush the consul-general in Peshawar in 2008. Her vehicle was driving down a roadway with a deep canal on one side and on the other side a line of houses flush with the street, broken every so often by small alleyways. As her vehicle proceeds, a pickup truck wheels out of one of the alleyways, four guys jump off with Kalashnikovs and start firing at her vehicle. Her driver puts the SUV FAV (fully armored vehicle) in reverse, drives eight hundred meters right over a little three-wheeled truck (the guy in the truck was not hurt), did a reverse J-turn, and got out of there. Later when I substituted as Principal Officer in Peshawar, this man would be my driver. He was very good at his job.

After FACT training, I arrived on the 10th of August 2010. The next seven months until my departure at the end of February 2011 were the most intense and difficult of my career.

I really felt like I had entered the maelstrom. Issues from trivial to cosmic flew at me seven days a week, requiring immediate decisions on matters that were often life and death.

Where to begin?

Perhaps the best way to do this might be to explain what had changed in the four years I had been away from Pakistan policy, then move on to the significant challenges of managing the post on a daily basis, and finally look at the main events in this period.

Let's begin with what has changed in Washington. The changeover from George W. Bush's Administration to Barack Obama's led to changes in the way Washington dealt with Pakistan. President Obama was not as hands-on in managing the Pakistan relationship as his President Bush had been. He delegated more to the next level down, Ambassador Holbrooke, Secretary of State Clinton, Defense Secretary Gates, CIA Director Panetta, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mullen.

What exactly was Holbrooke's role? His formal title was U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. And his overarching goal was to find a way to open a negotiation with the Taliban that would lead to an end of the Afghan War. That meant he had to find a channel in which the U.S. could speak directly and confidentially to the Taliban, while maintaining military and political pressure on them to incentivize them to negotiate rather than just wait us out.

Afghanistan was thus Holbrooke's main focus. How could the war be prosecuted better? This was the period of the surge begun by General McChrystal. How could the civilian development programs intended to win hearts and minds actually be made to deliver the goods in remote parts of Afghanistan? How could we build an economy in Afghanistan that lifted the country out of extreme poverty? Pakistan had a role to play in answering all these questions, but it was always in a supporting or derivative role. To those of us in Islamabad it seemed that ninety percent of Holbrooke's attention and of the USG as a whole was on Afghanistan, leaving very little intellectual headroom for dealing with the

Pakistan conundrum. The problem was illustrated during frequent Secure Video Tele-Conference (SVTC) sessions in which senior Washington officials—often Holbrooke himself—and senior officers of Embassy Islamabad and Embassy Kabul were required to participate. Because of time zone differences, these always seemed to occur around midnight local time in Pakistan and involve 60 minutes of discussion among Washington officials about policy debates that were often not clear to us at post, followed by 20 minutes of back and forth with Embassy Kabul, and conclude near the end of the scheduled time with someone in Washington remembering to ask, “Embassy Islamabad anything to report?" There never seemed to be time to discuss Embassy Islamabad’s issues.

Which raises the question: what was the U.S. trying to accomplish in Pakistan in 2010? Protecting our ground line of communication (GLOC) from the port of Karachi to Kabul and Kandahar was probably the top priority. Throughout the Afghan campaign, most of our non-lethal supplies (food, water, and fuel) were off-loaded in Karachi, put on privately owned Pakistani trucks, and shipped by road to U.S. facilities in Afghanistan. Just as important, was getting Pakistan to prevent use of its territory by Taliban seeking to attack into Afghanistan and by groups like al-Qaida seeking to move would-be terrorists from their strongholds on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border out of the country to attack targets in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world. U.S. commanders in Afghanistan keenly wanted to eliminate Taliban safe havens on the Pakistani side of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. There were other issues, like ensuring Pakistan and India maintained the uneasy peace along the cease-fire line in Kashmir and ensuring that Pakistan ceased to be a source of onward proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) technologies.

So, what was Ambassador Holbrooke’s strategy for Pakistan? I do not recall that I ever heard him articulate one clearly. I am sure that former members of his staff would vehemently disagree with that statement, but the fact was we received relatively little guidance/explanation from Washington. Holbrooke tended to keep his cards close to his chest, and he and his staff in the office known as SRAP (Special Representative Afghanistan-Pakistan) seemed to believe that including us in the SVTCs held almost weekly would keep us informed of Washington’s policy settings. I will say that I found these inadequate.

I am, therefore, forced to speak based on what I observed Ambassador Holbrooke and other members of the Administration do, as opposed to what they said. With that preface, it seemed to me that the Dems came into office thinking the key to getting Pakistan to act more forcefully against the Taliban and other terrorist groups on its territory was to strengthen the civilian government led at this point by the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP). Within the Pakistani political system, the PPP was a little left of center and stood clearly for secular government. It, therefore, had no love lost for the Taliban who were widely believed to have been responsible for the assassination of the PPP’s heroine, Benazir Bhutto, daughter of PPP founder Zulfiqar Bhutto. The Army seemed ambivalent to the Taliban rather than resolutely opposed to them. Perhaps the civilians would be more willing to go after them.

Greatly enhanced civilian economic assistance was a key element of the new Administration's approach to Pakistan. They wanted "shock and awe" to demonstrate to the Pakistani public that Pakistan's long-term interests lay in a strategic partnership with the U.S. Holbrooke and the Dems in 2009 passed what came to be known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) bill. We authorized in FY 2009-14 but did not appropriate $1.5 billion annually in economic assistance for Pakistan, and a large amount of military assistance. On top of this, Congress appropriated money for a Coalition Support Fund (CSF) to compensate Pakistan for costs incurred in supporting U.S. troops in Afghanistan and in efforts to suppress Taliban activity on the Pakistani side of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. CSF payments eventually totaled hundreds of millions in cash annually. This was a lot of money. Our assistance programs in Pakistan in the 2010-11 period that I was there were some of the largest we had anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, our public messaging about these programs always seemed to make them sound like more of a bribe than a gift motivated by a genuine desire to improve the lives of ordinary Pakistanis. A proud people, the Pakistanis were determined that they could not be bribed. Both civilians and military accepted our money and did what they were going to do anyway.

I'll return to the sad story of U.S. assistance in a little bit, but first we need to consider what had changed in Pakistan in the four years I was away from the account. The most important change was the switch from nominal military to nominal civilian rule. In 2008, Musharraf was essentially forced from office by a wave of popular protests and a decision by his brother officers that he had overstayed his welcome. His successor, General Ashfaq Kayani, convinced his comrades that the military needed to pull back from direct government while maintaining oversight of all decisions touching on security policy. It was that last phrase that was the rub. Pakistan's 1973 constitution did not accord the military the right to oversee civilian decisions, but the soldiers through fair means and foul were determined to remain supervisors behind the scenes.

This obviously posed a huge problem for the president and cabinet elected in 2009. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the 2009 elections, but it arrived in power without its historic leader, Benazir Bhutto. She had been assassinated while campaigning in December 2008. Benazir's widower, Asif Ali Zardari, took the leadership of the party upon her death and was elected president. Zardari lacked Benazir's personal charisma and arrived in office with a well-earned reputation for personal corruption. A cautious man, more comfortable in making deals in smoke-filled rooms than in making public speeches—he had a well-justified fear of assassination—Zardari was not the man to lead what would have had to be a risky public campaign to have the military accept genuine civilian supremacy. (Comment: We can now see how dangerous such an effort would have been. As this is being edited, former PM Imran Khan sits in jail facing a series of spurious charges after publicly challenging military dominance. End Comment.)

Split government greatly complicated Embassy Islamabad's efforts to deal with Pakistan. In many instances, it was not clear which institution of the Pakistani state was in charge. It was never clear to us (and I suspect to many Pakistani bureaucrats and political leaders)

where the dividing line between military and civilian responsibility lay. Ostensibly, things like the economy, foreign trade, and environmental policy should have been under civilian control, but the military always seemed to be looking for openings to become involved. The military owned important businesses and always sought to protect these interests. It also was ambivalent at best about U.S. efforts to promote trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan. From our naïve foreign perspective, increased regional trade should have been a benefit to both countries, but efforts to negotiate improved arrangements often became snagged on obscure concerns from the Pakistani side. It always took sleuthing to figure out what was really the problem, but very often it came down to military vetoes of measures it feared would allow Indians or Afghans into the country.

Another difference between 2006 and 2010 was that the opposition to government attempts to control the border with Afghanistan had coalesced into the Pakistani Taliban or TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan). TTP was formed after President Musharraf suppressed the militants controlling Pakistan's Red Mosque in 2007 and quickly set about trying to control of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Swat Valley in Pakistan's Pashtun-dominated Khyber Pakhtun-khwa Province (KPK). It took a major military operation by the Pakistan Army in 2009 to push TTP out of Swat, and as of the time of my arrival, TTP still controlled a large "no-go zone" in the North and South Waziristan Tribal Agencies. Numerous jihadist groups sought refuge there from the remnants of al-Qaeda to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to individual militants from Europe who were looking for an opportunity to perform jihad.

Another significant change between 2006 and 2010 was that the U.S. relationship with the Pakistan Army had soured. Under Musharraf, the Pakistan Army had professed support for the U.S. War on Terror and the ISI, its intelligence service, had detained numerous al-Qaida operatives trying to pass through Pakistan. By the late summer of 2010 that had subtly but clearly changed. There were fewer arrests. The army turned a deaf ear to our urging that it eliminate the no-go zone in North Waziristan. The Haqqani Group, a powerful Afghan Taliban faction, clearly used North Waziristan and other tribal agencies as a base area for operations into Eastern Afghanistan, and the Army was plainly unwilling to do anything meaningful to disrupt it.

A number of factors contributed to the Army's changed view of the U.S. First, in these years the U.S. effort to improve its relationship with India made significant progress. All of our arguments that U.S. relations with Pakistan and India should not be seen as a zero-sum game completely fell on deaf ears. The Pakistanis just did not buy it. They saw U.S. efforts to build military relations with India as a direct threat. Worst of all, in their view, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan had permitted India to open an embassy and consulates in Afghanistan. Pakistani officers firmly believed that India used its diplomatic and consular presence in Afghanistan to provide covert aid to TTP and insurgent groups in Balochistan.

Second, and just as important, Pakistani officers increasingly doubted the value to Pakistan of the whole U.S. project in Afghanistan. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan

since independence in 1947 had mostly been difficult and marked by mutual suspicion. Afghanistan never recognized the border between the two countries known as the Durand line after the British surveyor who drew it in the 1890s. Pakistani officers were none too sure that they wanted the U.S. to succeed in developing a strong Afghan state with a capable army, and they were increasingly skeptical that the U.S. could succeed in any case. I recall Pakistani officials telling us flatly that we were doomed to failure and would leave sooner or later. Worst of all from the Pakistani perspective, the U.S. effort in Afghanistan was destabilizing the Tribal Agencies and forcing the Pakistani Army to fight to restore order there. Prior to the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, the border had been relatively quiet, and Pakistan had enjoyed a positive relationship with the Taliban government. Increasingly, Pakistanis made the complaint that they were fighting a war at America's behest that wasn't theirs. I recall getting eyerolls, when I would make the argument that we were fighting a common enemy.

I am speaking here from hindsight. The hostility of the Pakistan Army slowly dawned on me as the months passed. When I first arrived, I was impressed like most Americans by Army officers' crisp uniforms, habit of showing up on time for meetings, and can-do attitudes. Doubts about the campaign along the Western border were not expressed to me in initial meetings. Rather than confront us directly, the Pakistani authorities always preferred an indirect approach. Requests for assistance would be denied. Permission for Embassy staff to travel outside of Islamabad would be denied, always ostensibly on the grounds that our security could not be assured but was there something they didn't want us to see?

Worst of all, the Army's Inter-services Public Relations (ISPR) office began to guide the media ever more forcefully. Musharraf's brother officers came to feel that he had made a mistake in the early 2000s when he abolished most censorship and permitted private television stations to operate. For a brief period of four or five years, there was an explosion of private television networks, many of which imitated the CNN format and broadcast news around the clock. By 2010, however, the Army was determined to bring this wild west scene under control. It did not reimpose pre-publication censorship, but it began muscular efforts to make sure journalists and their employers knew when their reporting had offended the powers that be. Objectionable stations would suddenly lose advertising revenue (recall all those military owned companies); station owners would be summoned and threatened; individual journalists would be briefly detained and beaten; and ISPR began to circulate to the media talking points giving the correct line to take on current events.

This was important, because it increasingly became clear to me that the Pakistani media were supposed to be putting the U.S. in a bad light whenever possible. People often ask me why public polling shows that the Pakistani public has a very jaundiced view of the U.S. Usually this comes with the suggestion that somehow the Embassy's Public Affairs section just is not doing its job. I can recall receiving calls in 2010 complaining that we were not "breaking through." The callers I don't think understood the degree to which the military was putting its thumb on the scales to influence coverage of the U.S. negatively. There are many reasons for America's poor image in Pakistan, but historians trying to

understand why U.S. efforts to appeal to the Pakistani public—especially U.S. economic assistance—failed, must factor in the Pakistan Army's efforts to ensure that the U.S. reputation remained poor.

The military's "dirty tricks" directly complicated my job as DCM. I recall, for example, that in the autumn of 2010 there appeared a steady stream of media leaks about alleged nefarious actions by U.S. intelligence agents or special forces operatives. Numerous stories appeared that claimed Blackwater agents had been observed somewhere in Pakistan, and that these men were engaged in kidnapping and assassination. I recall huddling repeatedly with the Public Affairs staff to discuss how to push back on this conspiracy theory. More concretely, the media began to report the names and correct addresses of senior Embassy officers, usually with the implication that these folks were engaged in some sort of skullduggery. The name and address, for example, of LegAtt, the senior FBI official in the country was revealed at least twice. Each time I had to work with the management section to move the individual to different quarters. But who leaked this information? The only ones who would have known and might have had a motive to do so were the Pakistani security services. From the media description of the LegAtt, it was apparent that someone in the Pakistani government saw the LegAtt as an intelligence collector rather than a law enforcement officer. As we shall see later, Embassy activities became increasingly shrouded in an atmosphere of suspicion that seriously impeded even normal operations.

At this point, let's turn to my recurring duties as DCM Islamabad and then I'll go through the major events of my tenure. Just the everyday business was enormous. If the UNESCO Mission I had just left was about as small a post as the State Department has, Islamabad was on the opposite extreme. The precise number of U.S. direct hire (USDH) personnel was classified, but it was in the hundreds. So was the number of TDY personnel. Locally engaged staff, including contract guards were in the low thousands. They worked in a large multi-acre campus with multiple buildings and temporary structures scattered down a hillside to a stream bed several hundred feet below the main chancery. Like all U.S. Embassies, multiple U.S. government agencies were represented. USAID had more than 50 persons with the Office of the Defense Representative Pakistan (ODRP) having somewhat more. State Department personnel were a decided minority of the total USDH complement in Islamabad, but they made up a significantly larger portion of the staff at our consulates in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar.

My principal function was to ensure that this vast establishment functioned smoothly and in accordance with law and State Department policy. This required in the first instance a lot of EER writing, counseling sessions, and award nominations. Dispute resolution and discipline also took time. Embassy Islamabad had a 1:00 a.m. curfew, which staff were sometimes tempted to violate. As the country's capital, Islamabad was heavily guarded. There were police checkpoints behind jersey barrier chicanes in many of the neighborhoods in which we lived. These helped enforce a sense of calm and security but also made it likely that embassy employees who might be DUI would be stopped and detained by the police. Alcohol (as well as harder drugs) was illegal but widely available in the city. Embassy employees were allowed to own and operate personal vehicles

within the city limits. A few were tempted to stay out late socializing with officers of the other Western embassies and well-to-do young Pakistanis. When they came into problems with the police in the early hours of the morning, the RSO was usually called, and I was informed in the morning. I then had to summon the offender and tell them that we had lost confidence in them and ask them to leave post immediately. It was an unpleasant but necessary duty. It seemed that the Pakistani press published a negative story every time an Embassy officer was detained by the police.

Negative stories also followed every time an Embassy vehicle was involved in a traffic accident. The Pakistani press wanted to write stories that alleged U.S. personnel had behaved recklessly and had shown callous disregard for those injured in these accidents whatever the truth might have been. I recall convening the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) several times to discuss whether Embassy policies needed to be modified. It was hard to completely ban personal vehicles because many staff members still lived in houses or apartments in town. We had already banned U.S. staff members from walking on the street. (There was a serious kidnapping risk.) If personal vehicles had been banned, staff members would have been marooned in their houses. Instead, we expanded the motorpool, guaranteed everyone residing in town home to office transportation in shuttles, and allowed staff to request motorpool to give them a ride to social events after hours, although we made no promises about availability after hours. This policy greatly reduced the number of staff members taking the risk of driving themselves.

Mentioning the EAC, reminds me that ensuring staff were safe was an important duty, one which took a great deal of my time. Every morning, I was given a book of reporting that included reports of possible terrorist planning targeting the U.S. mission. This was often voluminous and frightening. The reporting listed every conceivable way we could be attacked and some ways that were obviously preposterous. The challenge was to pick out the reports that were serious and not to become bogged down in trying to defend every conceivable vulnerability. And mixed in with the dross, there were some very real attack plans. I recall crystal clear evidence that our vehicles in Peshawar were being monitored, for example. There were many others that I cannot mention. Convening the EAC was a good way to ensure that all sections of the Embassy were made aware of the serious threats and could participate in decision-making on how to mitigate them.

Ensuring all sections had input was extremely important. Indeed, a lot of my job was to ensure that the Mission saw itself as part of a team under the lead of the ambassador. I mentioned we were scattered up and down a hill. It would have been easy for each section to go its own way. Temperatures regularly approached or exceeded 100F in the summer months. It was a long trudge up or down the hill from the consular section at the bottom. I made it a priority to walk down there and meet the consular officers regularly as well as include them in Mission-wide activities (e.g., control officer duties). I also made it a priority to ensure that all sections attended the Mission-wide meetings like the country team.

One last remark on my continuing responsibilities, and then we'll transition to events. Monitoring U.S. foreign assistance programs and ensuring that they advanced our

strategic goals in Pakistan took up much of my time throughout my stay. I have already mentioned the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) legislation that established a civilian assistance program that exceeded $1 billion a year. Most of this assistance was administered by USAID but not all. Significant funds were provided to State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau (INL) which were used for police training generally and for measures to strengthen Pakistan's ability to control its border with Afghanistan in particular. INL money was used to construct a series of border observation posts and roads leading to them through the otherwise almost roadless Tribal Agencies. USAID also had programs aimed at improving livelihoods, including road construction, in the Tribal Agencies. To ensure that all these programs meshed with each other and did not conflict, Embassy Islamabad had an assistance coordinator, an FS-1, who kept up with all of this activity and referred disagreements to me. Even so, it was hard at times to get the assistance offices to present a coherent picture of the totality of our aid. For example, INL regularly updated maps for me that showed where they had built roads. USAID did the same. But getting them to compile a map that showed all the roads that had been built with USG money took six months of insisting.

And it was very important that we be able to present a coherent picture. No Pakistani cared what appropriation heading had been used to fund something. Too often our public messaging lapsed into U.S. appropriation speak, saying that $XX.XX had been obligated from INCLE and $Y.YY had been obligated from ESF and so forth. In particular, the difference between obligation and disbursement was never clear to most Pakistanis. With the result, most Pakistanis could not see what U.S. assistance had been spent on. I received constant complaints from Pakistanis that U.S. assistance was not valuable and was probably a sham and so on. When Pakistanis thought of foreign assistance they thought of tangible things like dams, roads, and power plants. Much of our assistance went for "capacity building" (itself a jargon expression) which would inherently not be visible. Pakistan had a major problem providing electricity to homeowners. Power outages in this period were often 10 or 12 hours a day. Many Pakistanis asked us to use our aid to improve the electric supply, and we responded by rehabilitating the generation equipment at the Tarbela Dam, completing the Gomal Zam dam, and surveying the country for good sites for wind generation. It was all for naught. The impression that U.S. assistance was either useless or over-hyped took firm hold, and we failed to achieve the strategic objective of building a close partnership with Pakistan.

Let's turn now to the major events of my time in Pakistan.

Several days before I arrived, heavy rain began to fall in the Himalayas. It was the monsoon season, but what fell in August 2010 far exceeded normal. A mighty torrent poured down the Indus River which came out of its banks to cover an area ten miles wide near Islamabad. Farther downstream in Sindh, the Indus spread over 100 miles from its banks. A great deal of agricultural land already planted in crops was inundated. It was a major crisis. Peasants were made destitute by the loss of their summer crops and in many cases forced to flee their homes to become internally displaced persons. Worse still, the nation's macro-economic stability was at risk. Pakistanis were telling us, "We export rice, sugar, cotton and some wheat. This is a significant positive contributor to our balance of

payments that's going to be destroyed. In addition, there are electric generator plants being damaged and power lines coming down. Our electric power crisis will get worse.

I became immediately involved in efforts to respond to the flood crisis. On my first day in the office, I met the ambassador for my initial courtesy call, and she immediately said, "The foreign minister has asked embassies to join him on a helicopter tour of the flooded areas tomorrow; I would like you to go."

So, the next morning I boarded a Pakistani MI-17 with the Foreign Minister Shah Mahmoud Qureshi, several of my diplomatic colleagues, and spent the day with them. It turned out to have been a good use of my time. Not only did I have a chance for an extended get-acquainted conversation with the Minister, but I was able to see with my own eyes how bad things were. The Pakistanis were not exaggerating the extent of the disaster. We flew due west of Islamabad at a thousand feet meeting the Indus just south of the Tarbela Dam whereupon we turned south and followed the river as far as Mianwali. The view was staggering. I couldn't see the west bank of the Indus; it was an inland sea of soupy brown water with the collapsed remains of the peasants' mudbrick houses sticking up here and there. Next to the homes were piles of pots and rags, the meager possessions of those who had had to flee. It was hard not to feel for the suffering of those who had lost almost all of what little they had possessed.

When I returned to the Embassy at day's end, I learned that Ambassador Holbrooke wanted to mount a major U.S. relief effort. There had been a big earthquake in 2005 and we'd gotten an improvement in our poll ratings after helping them. So, we're going to help with the flood. Anne asked me to take charge of the embassy's coordination of this.

Q: It's not altogether typical that a DCM would take over when they've got a USAID mission director there.

ENGELKEN: There was a large DoD element involved in the relief effort. In my experience, DoD and USAID have trouble working with each other.

My main responsibility was to have a nightly meeting at which all agencies involved reported on their activities. We would put a speakerphone in the middle of the table and allow Washington agencies' home offices to listen into the discussion and ask their own questions.

AID was very active in meeting with the Pakistani National Disaster Management Authority and with the governments of Pakistan's four provinces, all of which had flood damaged areas to identify what assistance was needed. AID's Disaster Assistance Recovery Team (DART) moved quickly to begin procuring the relief supplies needed and to contract with implementing partners, both local and international NGOs, to deliver these supplies in areas where civilian trucks could operate. The problem was that the flood waters had washed out roads and surrounded some fairly large towns, leaving them completely cut off by ground transport.

The plight of populations cut off and isolated by the floods worried us a great deal. Early in the crisis the U.S. began moving helicopters from Afghanistan to a base in northern Pakistan close to the Tarbela dam. From there, the U.S. Army flew supplies up the Swat Valley as far as the town of Kalam and flew down the valley to stranded persons in need of medical assistance. Swat had just been reconquered from the Pakistani Taliban, and we felt it was important to show the population that the Pakistan Government could deliver services to a beleaguered population. All major roads and many bridges in Swat had been washed out by the floods. Three weeks into the crisis, we moved additional helicopters from a U.S. helicopter carrier in the Arabian Sea to a base in southern Pakistan near Sukkur, from where they could be used to resupply Jacobabad and other cutoff towns.

Honestly, I think we did pretty well. All elements of the U.S Mission worked night and day for two to three months to surge relief supplies to Pakistan and to publicize our operations to the maximum extent possible. There were few inter-agency arguments on our side, but I don't recall having to referee any big blow-ups.

And, most important, the Pakistani public was genuinely grateful for our support. Polling which usually showed the U.S. to be highly unpopular briefly ticked up a little bit.

We might have gotten more of a bounce, but the Pakistan Army began to put its thumb on the scale to limit the amount of positive publicity we received. In their mind it was very clear: the Army saves Pakistan not the U.S. or some other foreign power. Our efforts to get media reporting on U.S. helicopter deliveries of relief supplies suddenly began to run into mysterious roadblocks. I recall that we had arranged for a group of Pakistani parliamentarians to ride up Swat with U.S. relief helicopters until all of a sudden all of the MPs called to say they could not make the trip. The word was that the Army had called them all and told them in no uncertain terms not to go. At the same time, newspapers and television stations stopped publicizing our press and video releases and began instead to highlight the (much smaller) contributions of other countries to flood relief. It took the Chinese a month, for example, to send a small field hospital to the Sindh region. This arrived weeks after we had begun our supply deliveries, but for days the Chinese hospital was front page news in the Pakistani media. As I learned over time, the Pakistan Army was very effective at guiding the Pakistani media. Perhaps most emblematic of the Pakistan military's discomfort with our operations was its desire to cap the number of U.S. helicopters operating in Pakistan at 50. The U.S. would have been willing to send more, but the military did not want them however much they might have been needed. Weeks later, we finally heard that the Pak Military was concerned that we would use the helicopters to locate their nuclear weapons. (The Pakistan military has for many years feared the U.S. might at some point launch a preemptive attack to eliminate their nuclear arsenal.)

These tensions were the first signs of much deeper tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan, or more precisely between the U.S. and the Pakistan army. The army didn't want to give up the Taliban. The army wanted us to get the Indians out of Afghanistan and we obviously weren't going to do that. But the army, I think (this is me interpreting), also thought we were unhelpful because we were trying to put the civilians in charge, put

the civilians over them, and that fundamentally they were not going to accept. So, the Americans were bad on another level.

Army officers in this period were openly disloyal to the civilian government, criticizing President Zardari and his colleagues in meetings with U.S. Embassy officials. For his part, Zardari seemed quite fearful of the officers. I recall being in a meeting with him at the presidential palace in a space equivalent to the Oval Office, and the conversation turned to a controversial topic. Zardari suddenly began tapping his shoulder with two fingers. The gesture baffled me, but the person sitting next to me whispered "epaulets." Zardari was signaling that he could not discuss the topic freely, because he thought the Army had his office bugged. One of his aides at the time later asked me, "Why do you Americans always yell at President Zardari about the Taliban safe havens? Your problems are all in 'Pindi not with us."

Outside of the flood response, our economic assistance to Pakistan was largely a sad story of misunderstandings and missed opportunities. I hope future historians study the history of our assistance programs during the GWOT. None of them, I think, achieved the strategic goals we intended. Few hearts and minds were won. We were operating in unfamiliar territory and could not organize ourselves to quickly deliver the things the local populations wanted. Too often we gave them what we thought they needed but not what they asked for. This was very patronizing and made worse by our messaging which too often made it sound like the assistance was just a bribe. Proud publics did not want to be talked down to or ignored.

The Pakistani experience illustrates this point. The U.S. was extremely bureaucratic. I recall endless meetings about our assistance priorities that often produced little forward movement.

Holbrooke started a strategic dialogue with multiple baskets where the U.S. and Pakistan were to talk about energy and water and agriculture, things like that, and we'd have experts from USDA (Department of Agriculture), various U.S. agencies come to Pakistan to talk things over. Then the Pakistanis would say "Can we use your assistance money to do those things your experts have said might be useful? Your water experts said we don't have enough water storage capacity. The Himalayan glaciers are going to melt, and we're going to need a lot more storage capacity.

So, the Pakistanis would say, "Would you help finance a dam?"

"No." There is a Leahy Amendment that says, "It shall be the United States policy to not participate in hydropower projects."

And there was another serious issue. On 9/11 we had not had assistance to Pakistan for a decade, so there was no AID office in Pakistan. When I first visited Pakistan in 2004, we had a whole five Americans in the AID office trying to administer three hundred million dollars of economic assistance and saying they didn't have the staff to do it.

It took us almost ten years to ramp up to an AID office of about seventy people with all the right skills to administer hundreds of millions of dollars. We were talking about large amounts of money in a country that is known for corruption. You obviously need to check where the money went. The Pakistanis wanted us to do g-to-g (government to government), which would have had us transferring money to the Pakistani Government to enable it to carry out specified projects. Of course, that approach raised all kinds of compliance issues.

We said we'll route most of our aid through our implementing partners. "Well, who are they? What are their political views? Are they associated with the PPP?" There were a lot of NGOs (non governmental organizations) in Pakistan, some of them had political colors and some didn't. But the army wanted to know all of that. "Who are these people? How are we going to let foreigners run around?" There was paranoia about letting foreigners run around the country, who knows what they'll find? Now there were security issues, "Some of them could get kidnapped and you'll blame us," which is true. But we all felt that was a smokescreen behind the "there are foreigners out there, who knows what they're going to do and what they will find out?"

There were whole areas of the country we just did not go: e.g., Balochistan, you couldn't go. So, we had a whole series of tense encounters, sometimes shouting matches, with the Pakistanis over what happens to our aid, how it's allocated, what process we go through to use, and at the same time back in Washington there are arguments over it. Holbrooke remembered AID as it was in the '60s, I think, when we built the Tarbela Dam, and he would ask, "Why can't we do this?"

AID professionals were strongly opposed. They wanted to scatter the money in a whole series of small capacity building projects all over the country. Pakistani members of parliament would tell me, "I don't know what your assistance program does for us; we don't see anything. It's useless. We think it's all being eaten up by your implementing partners, the money doesn't leave Washington. Why should we be grateful for this, it's nothing."

It's a sad story. The U.S. assistance effort did many good things, but, if the goal was to improve the U.S. image in Pakistan, it failed utterly. Instead, a few years later we had to sit and watch the Chinese launch with great acclaim the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a $62 billion series of infrastructure projects, roads, electric generating plants, railroads, ports, and dams. The Chinese were essentially doing what we had tried to do but on a much larger scale with one crucial difference: Chinese assistance was mostly in the form of loans, whereas the U.S. provided grant aid. As this is edited, Pakistan is having significant difficulty repaying the loans. China remains popular, but the bloom is off the romance.

That takes us through much of the autumn. The period when we argued constantly over assistance, trying to make it more effective, ended on December 13, 2010, when Ambassador Holbrooke was stricken with an aortic aneurysm while meeting with Secretary Clinton and died. At that point, as far as I could tell, efforts to improve the

assistance program came to a halt. Indeed, for the following month or so, Pakistan policy drifted, while Washington searched for a replacement for Holbrooke, and we settled on a new ambassador at the Embassy in Islamabad. Ambassador Anne Patterson departed post in November and her successor, Cameron Munter, replaced her a few days later.

Q: I should have asked earlier, but it plays into the problem of dealing with Pakistan at all, which is one of the reasons I understood civilians had such problems running Pakistan, certainly the military is a big factor, and they look over the shoulder of civilians, but they also own part of the country, they own some of the productive assets. So, if a civilian comes into power at some point a civilian in the energy sector or something is going to be told "That far and no further, you don't get to know anything more about that."

ENGELKEN: Not quite. The military does own things, no doubt. The military would defend the interests of any of its enterprises. No doubt. The military also used, there's a big parastatal sector in Pakistan; the military doesn't own it, it's under state civilian control. But the military viewed a lot of senior positions in those parastatals as positions that should be given to senior officers as part of their retirement package. So, while I was there, President Zardari wanted to appoint a civilian to head PIA (Pakistan International Airlines). It had been headed by an air force officer for years. The military just put their foot down, "You will not do that," and lo and behold a few weeks later a retired Air Force general was announced as PIA's new chief

Now the PPP can claim no virtue. One of the reasons Pakistan is in a recurrent financial crisis is that the parastatals bleed money. PIA was losing money hand-over-fist even before COVID. So were the railway and steel mills. The state had to subsidize them to keep them functioning. PPP and other political parties every time the government changed had the companies hire their supporters for comfy jobs that weren't very demanding or maybe even no-show. PIA for example had more employees per airplane than any other airline in the world. So yes, the military is part of the problem, but the civilians are part of the problem too.

Moving forward in our story, about the time Ambassador Munter arrived counterintelligence became a serious challenge. After the turn of the year—remember I left on February 28, 2011, so that's why I'm going really into minute detail—in 2011 I remember our political FSN in Lahore was stopped on the highway driving to work, two cars sandwiched him in, and he was grabbed and thrown in the back seat between two guys with Kalashnikovs in plain clothes. They told him, "We're the ISI and you're going to cooperate. You're going to report on what Consulate Lahore is doing."

He replied, "I'm not going to."

They threatened him. He reported the incident to us as soon as he finally got to work that morning, but he came under renewed pressure on several occasions before I departed post. At the same time, incidents of the ISI putting heavy-handed pressure on the Mission's FSNs began to increase rapidly. For whatever good it did, I protested the

harassment to the Foreign Secretary, the number two at the MFA. He agreed that our employees should not come under such treatment and said he would take the matter up with the authorities responsible. If he actually did so, there was no change in the behavior of the ISI. Harassment was a major issue throughout the remainder of my stay in Pakistan and for many years thereafter, rising whenever there were tensions between the two countries and declining when these subsided.

In this same period, the ISI's hostility was manifested in other ways that were even more difficult to deal with. I must choose my words carefully at this point. In late December, I was to accompany a visiting senior official of the IC on some of his calls. I left the DCR, where I was staying, and boarded my vehicle to meet this official and take him to see officials who were not connected with Pakistani intelligence but with the presidency and so forth. I was startled to find a large, professionally printed poster hanging from a lamppost in front my driveway demanding the prosecution of an individual on the embassy staff by name (I'm phrasing it this way because his identity was then and still should be classified). The poster said at the bottom that it had been placed by an organization representing victims of drone strikes.

I picked up the IC official, and as we drove to our appointments, we realized to our horror that the same poster had been placed on light posts all over town. The Pakistani TV news at noon broadcast a report showing a large Pashtun guy speaking to the media saying members of his family had died in drone strikes, demanding revenge, and declaring that my colleague should be arrested and charged with murder and his diplomatic status should be ignored.

After seeing all of this the visiting senior official asked me, "Should our colleague stay?"

I responded that I did not think he could be safe now that he had been accused as a mass murderer. Pashtuns are known for seeking vengeance. The visiting official concurred and by nightfall our colleague was on a plane out of the country.

Over the past 20 years, I have had a lot of time to think about this incident, and the more I do the stranger it becomes. Who would have known my colleague's name? How did a burly Pashtun who did not speak English manage to translate and print up an English language poster and then get it distributed all over town on light posts? He would have needed a cherry-picker to hang these things. I can't prove it, but I sure don't think this was done by a bunch of bumpkins from the Pak-Afghan border. I think this was an organized effort by the powers that be, as they would say in Pakistan. Why they did it this way I still can't explain. They could have the MFA call me in and say, "We are cancelling the visa of so and so, and he must leave the country immediately." Why they did it by this underhanded method, I don't know. I think it was partly an effort to influence public opinion against us by the public, and partly because they had a cultural preference to do things indirectly.

Q: (interruption) So why did they do it and why are they deciding to demonstrate a desire to move the needle against the U.S.?

ENGELKEN: That's my only conclusion, but they never explained themselves to us. We were always left to try to puzzle out the message the ISI was trying to send.

So, let's go to January. Against this backdrop of tension with the ISI and the Pakistani military establishment more generally came the well-known incident in which Raymond Davis shot two people on the street in Lahore.

On the 27th, I went out to lunch and returned to my office at three o'clock. all the phones are ringing. I asked my OMS, "What's going on?"

"Oh, somebody in the staff shot somebody on the street in Lahore."

What! Who?

It took hours to piece together who Davis was and what had happened. As I now understand it, Davis was a security contractor who was driving alone in an unarmored vehicle moving very slowly through heavy traffic. Two young men on a motorcycle came past him and cut him off. The man on the rear of the motorcycle dismounted and pointed a nine-millimeter pistol at him and said something. Now, Mr. Davis didn't speak Urdu or Punjabi. He did not know what the man was saying. He could have worried that he was being kidnapped. Kidnapping happened in Pakistan all the time. Or that this was some kind of terrorist attack. I eventually came to the belief that it was likely a robbery gone wrong. The young men both had records for petty crimes. The police later confirmed that they had found a loaded pistol by the body of the man who had threatened Davis, and we learned that the deceased pair had in their possession an i-Phone that had been stolen from another motorist 30 minutes before Davis was threatened. It appeared that the two men on the motorcycle had been going up and down the line of cars inching through traffic and stopping and robbing drivers who looked well off. Their motives, however, were never clarified. They could have been attempting a terrorist act. Since they did not survive, we will never know.

Confronted with an armed threat, Davis reacted according to his training. He drew his pistol and shot both of the men.

Of course, it's three in the afternoon. There were hundreds of people around, and it's the era of camera phones, so people were photographing this with their phones. Davis attempted to leave the scene; a mob formed around him. He moved back into his car and called for help. His colleagues at Consulate Lahore sent a vehicle to rescue him. The vehicle tried to approach, but there's a mob around him. The rescue team, therefore, pulled across the road's center island and drove against the traffic on the other side. Unfortunately, they hit a motorcyclist who had been distracted by the commotion around Davis' car. The motorcyclist flies through the air, lands, and is killed. The rescue vehicle is then forced to turn around, and Davis is detained by the police. He was lucky not to be lynched.

Phones are ringing. We had to deal with this immediately. We lost precious minutes trying to get an accurate account of what had happened from calls from Consulate Lahore and from the Pakistani news media, which very quickly picked up the story. I'm giving the story as I know it now, but not what I knew at the time.

This incident touched a nerve with the Pakistani public and led to a major crisis in U.S. - Pakistani relations. Davis looked the part of the sadistic "Blackwater assassin" that the Pakistani media had been warning about for months. The Pakistani public was thus primed to see him as a devil. Within two hours, the story was the lead on the cable news channel I received in my office with a crawler going under the scene of Ray being led off in handcuffs that said, "American murders two in Lahore." The conspiracy theories about what Davis and the Americans were up to in Lahore began to circulate only a few minutes later.

There was a wave of popular indignation, which I believe was cleverly stoked by the army and the ISI. I never saw it explained to the public that the young men who had confronted Ray had pointed a pistol at him. His act was always made to seem vile and deliberate, as well as a violation of Pakistani sovereignty. I, of course, can't prove the Army was trying to keep the story going, but I had friends in the media who told me that local journalists were being given talking points and directions about how to cover the story by the Pakistani ISPR media office. Suspiciously, the story never left the headlines even after weeks.

To return to events on the day of the incident, in the early evening, we spent several hours ruffling through the files in the personnel section to try to verify for ourselves Davis' exact diplomatic status. HR found that some months before we had sent a diplomatic note to the MFA requesting diplomatic status for him. They never responded to the note. Because of this, the MFA later argued Davis had no immunity of any kind. Now, State/L (Office of Legal Affairs) argued that he did, that he would have had immunity unless and until the host government responded with a 'no'. It's an argument for lawyers, it didn't fly at all with the Pakistani public.

Pakistanis quickly pointed to the case some years back of the Georgian DCM who ran over a pedestrian near Dupont Circle while intoxicated. The U.S. had insisted on trying him. So, what was different? Again, a lawyer's argument: Georgia waived the DCM's immunity to permit him to be tried. Had they refused to do so, we would not have been able to try him. The Pakistanis insisted that Davis be put through the standard steps of a Pakistani judicial process. He was arraigned, charged with first degree murder, and court dates were set. Anybody who knows the Pakistani judicial system knows it goes slower than snails, so the fact that within a couple of days he was arraigned, and a court date set within a couple of weeks and a trial date several weeks after that was astonishing. It told me that the powers that be wanted the case to move at maximum speed. And every day there would be a story aimed at keeping public opinion on the boil. The one I remember most clearly came two weeks or so after Davis' arrest. I arrived in the office early in the morning to find front page stories in all the papers that alleged that Davis was scoffing and making fun of Muslim prisoners while they did prayers. I immediately telephoned

our consul-general in Lahore to ask her if this could possibly be true. She had made a mighty effort to get access to Ray on the night of the incident and had visited him every evening since then to ensure that he was not physically abused.

I asked her, “Is he seriously laughing at people?”

She replied: No he can’t, there are no Muslim prisoners near him. They’ve emptied the wing of the jail he’s in, there’s nobody there except the guards. He can’t possibly be laughing at people while they pray, and I don’t think Ray’s that stupid in any case. This is deliberately made up to make him look bad. We, of course, put out a denial that morning, but I don’t recall the Pakistani media giving it much credence or attention. It was the sort of story the Pakistani public wanted to read. It confirmed their opinion of Ray and of Americans/Westerners in general.

We went through this period of ugly planted stories about him, just made up. All were intended to whip up popular fervor against him. Most accounts I have read about this period don’t seem aware of this. Yes, Pakistanis were generally outraged about the case. But there was an effort to stoke and maintain that outrage, not entirely spontaneous. Because this stayed on the front page for the entire time I was there.

Personally, this was the toughest period I’d spent in the Foreign Service. A few days after Ray was arrested, the ambassador had to leave post for a few days. I was thus chargé. Those happened to be days we had three CODELs. I had Senator McConnell with Senator Rubio and several other senators. I had Chairman Darrell Issa of the Government Affairs Committee, and several other newly elected members of the House. And I had the older Duncan Hunter, not the one who more recently had difficulties, the old guy who was a member of Congress and at that point chair of the House Armed Services Committee. Three in three days. None had heard of this case before arrival. So, I had to explain what had happened. They were all outraged. They did express their outrage in meetings with their Pakistani officials which I didn’t mind; it was good that they did so, so it became clear to the Pakistanis that this was a big issue for us, not just on their side. And had the potential to be a relationship-breaking event.

I have a great anecdote. Sometimes you need a diversion when you are asked hard questions. I gave a dinner for Rep. Darrell Issa to which I invited all of his delegation and a group of Pakistani parliamentarians. We were seated at a large round table and talking politely, when suddenly a female MP from south Punjab leaned forward. She had a devilish grin; she knew exactly what she was doing. She laid into me about drones. Didn’t I know that drone strikes were creating more terrorists than they eliminated, and she went on and on about awful things drones allegedly did.

I was sitting there desperately thinking how to respond. At the time, we weren’t supposed to say anything about drones at all. We could only refer to them as “direct counterterrorism strikes.” How to answer this lady? I’m sure the Congressman is going to expect me to defend the flag and there’s a lot I could say but I can’t. Suddenly, I was saved, *deus ex machina*; one of the other members of parliament at the table was elected

from a constituency near the Pak-Afghan border, so the other end of the country from her. He was in an area where there were a lot of Taliban and several members of his party had been assassinated by the Taliban. He looked up and said, "I think the drones are hitting the right people. Keep doing it." (Laughter)

Q: You're right, that kind of gift from the heavens doesn't happen often.

ENGELKEN: The two of them began arguing and went on for a half hour. I could just sit there. I think Congressman Issa understood the dynamic well; he too just sat there and let them go at it. It also showed something deeper about Pakistan for another reason. When you talked to people, who was sympathetic to the Taliban? Usually, it was not people who lived in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa near the Afghan border. They had to live with these people, and they did not see them at all as Robin Hood. The coda to this is my little stint in Peshawar which we'll deal with at the end.

February was a really tense period. I had to arrange local legal counsel for Mr. Davis. There's an office in the Department of Justice that has to approve the hiring of legal counsel. Many Pakistani attorneys didn't want to take the case for obvious reasons, but I couldn't just let Ray walk into the court without counsel, even if we maintained he shouldn't be there in the first place because of diplomatic immunity. We finally identified a competent attorney to take the case, and then had to arrange for DoJ to interview him by speaker phone before we were cleared to hire him. Much of my time that month of February was spent meeting with the defense attorney to strategize on a defense strategy for Ray.

February also saw a big jump in threats against the mission, as the local media continued to express outrage at the Davis case. Most notably, we were concerned about the security of our consulate in Lahore, which was small and more vulnerable than the chancery in Islamabad. The concerns came to a head when Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan's oldest Islamist party, announced a mass rally and march on Consulate Lahore to demand Davis' execution. We were not confident of the determination of the Punjab Police to defend our post, and I had to call the Interior Minister to ask that the Punjab Rangers, a formidable paramilitary police unit, replace the regular police guarding the consulate. This he agreed to do, and when the demonstration finally took place that guard of Rangers adequately protected our premises. Just to be sure, however, we brought nonessential personnel up to Islamabad for a few days and drastically reduced classified holdings at the post.

As all this played out, the widow of one of the two shot men announced that she thought the government was going to release Davis and in protest of this, she had a minicam put in her little house and she drank rat poison and died, on camera, to protest government lack of resolve in prosecuting Davis. That was hard. This was all carried on local television and spread on the internet. Why the woman did this, of course, I do not know for certain. However, I suspect that she had fallen under the influence of one of Pakistan's many militant groups who essentially encouraged her to commit suicide for the cause, just as they induced young boys to blow themselves up for jihad. This incident with the widow makes me pause when I say that the attack on Ray was a simple robbery. The

family pretty obviously was in touch with militant groups, and I can't be certain that the two men who cornered Davis did not have a political motive.

The case went on until mid-March. I left on the 28th of February, so I wasn't there for the coda. By the time I left, however, we had hit upon the plan that eventually worked. Islamic law provides for the payment of blood money to the family of someone who has been killed or murdered. The victim's family can forgive the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator in exchange for the payment of blood money. In the middle of March (we were trying to get this set up by the time I left) we got it arranged that the family members would accept payment of blood money and forgive. Davis. So, Ray was then released, taken to the airport, and flown out of country. That's how the affair ended. His diplomatic immunity was never recognized. He was released through a legal procedure that in theory was available to any Pakistani. The government never changed its position on immunity.

I left on the 28th of February, came back to the U.S., spent several months working in the office of SRAP (Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan). Not much of anything of great interest. I was working on a project about planning for transition in Afghanistan and how to draw down our diplomatic presence. It didn't produce much, none of the plans we developed were ever implemented. The story is boring and inconsequential. Because I was there, however, I was asked – the last thing I did before retiring, this is now spring of 2012 - "would I go to Peshawar and fill in between a departing principal officer and an arriving principal officer?" The number two was a newly arrived FS-03. So, I did. Why not?

Acting Principal Officer, Peshawar, Pakistan, June-August 2012

I flew to Peshawar in early June 2012. I will admit I was a more than a little apprehensive on the way in. When I boarded the plane in Dubai, I recall being the only person in Western clothes at the gate and the object of some hostile stares. Just before leaving Washington, I had had a meeting with the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Diplomatic Security Bureau, and he warned me frankly that he considered Peshawar the most dangerous post in the Foreign Service. Having gone through dangerous moments in Beirut, I felt sure that I wouldn't be bothered in Peshawar, but I must admit that as the plane taxied to a stop in front of the Peshawar terminal I had my heart in my mouth. The Pakistani authorities had forbidden the consulate's security personnel from entering the terminal (part of the pattern of harassment mentioned earlier), so there was no one to meet me planeside. Instead, I walked across the tarmac and into the terminal alone. I went through customs and immigration, showed my American diplomatic passport, exited the sterile area, and went into the arrival hall to look for someone under a particular message board. (I had been given precise instructions where to look prior to boarding the plane.) Fortunately, I found our local engaged staff member in his *kameez shirwal* and walked out into the parking lot where I finally met the A/RSO in charge of the post and boarded an armored Toyota Land Cruiser that drove me to my quarters.

Consulate Peshawar at that point was a small and embattled post. There had been an

armed ambush directed at the principal officer in 2008 and an attempt in early 2010 to drive a suicide truck bomb into the main building. This failed only because the vehicle became hung up on the delta barrier. The local guards had fired on the vehicle injuring the driver who, nonetheless, managed to detonate his bomb. There were casualties among the local guard force but the structure we were using for offices was undamaged. When I arrived at post, there were still piles of broken masonry just outside the main vehicle gate. While the 2010 attempt had failed to destroy our building, it had caused considerable collateral damage to neighboring structures.

Peshawar's American staff was small and tightly restricted. No one was allowed to leave the premises of the consulate, or the residential area known as University Town without the permission of the RSO. This was rarely given. Travel was only in fully armored Toyota Land Cruisers with armed members of the RSO staff and usually an armed escort by the provincial police. We ate at the consulate's snack bar or at the dining area of the Khyber Club in University Town. The majority of the post's US Direct Hire staff were either RSOs or involved in some way in providing security for the post. Most of the rest were occupied with the administrative duties needed to keep the post functioning. There were rotating officers with responsibility for public affairs and assistance issues who came by road from Islamabad for a few days a month but were not permanently based there. My deputy who doubled as the political officer was the only "substantive" officer permanently at post. There were no Marines at post at that time. Security was entirely in the hands of State DS personnel.

In short, the place felt under siege. And yet, morale was remarkably high. I can't tell you how many corn-hole games I played. Parties at the Khyber Club were genuinely festive. Our humor often became dark, but we all gamely supported and socialized with each other. It reminded me in some ways of Beirut so many years before. We were all at the end of the world and in great danger, but that meant everyone had a job to do, and that we relied on each other to survive. The staff was remarkably free of the petty disputes and squabbles that normally trouble workplaces.

I should elaborate a little more on the physical premises because they were entirely the product of hasty improvisation in the autumn of 2001, when U.S. operations in Afghanistan neighboring Afghanistan (just 70 kilometers away by road through the Khyber Pass) turned Consulate Peshawar from a sleepy, remote post into a front-line redoubt. Originally, the consulate's main office building was near the center of the modern city in a building flush with the sidewalk. Obviously, this completely lacked setback, and operations were hastily moved to what had been the Consul General's residence which was just east of the Airport and adjacent to the Cantonment, a pleasant leafy neighborhood containing housing for military officers and the office buildings of many government agencies. Since the building had originally been a private house, we had spent the years since 2001 reinforcing the walls and floors to bear the weight of safes and updating the wiring to permit the operation of computer equipment. (Although the success of the exercise was still in doubt, my information management officer solemnly informed me upon arrival that "if it's electric, it will break in Peshawar.") The adaptation project was unending and continued well after my departure.

To sleep and do whatever relaxing we could, we had a group of houses and apartments in a pleasant, modern neighborhood known as University Town, because it was near Peshawar University and popular with the faculty. In keeping with the hurried, make-shift way things were done after September 11, we had surrounded the buildings we occupied with a set of walls, razor wire, and jersey barriers creating a makeshift compound for which we never had the official authorization of the Pakistani Government. Within our defensive perimeter there were still several houses occupied by Pakistani families who had to put up with being searched every time they left the neighborhood, but who in return had some of the best residential security in the city. Since the compound's diplomatic status was unclear, the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) maintained a static post within our lines not to protect us but to keep us under observation. The agent sat on a chair just outside the entrance to the Khyber Club and photographed every American who passed by.

This brings me to the threat picture. Counterintelligence issues occupied as much or more of my time as straightforward counterterrorism issues. The ISI was convinced that we were up to nefarious things and was determined to prevent us from doing much. I suspect they secretly hoped to make it so difficult for us to function that we would just close the post, but Washington was determined that we should stay open. The trouble began a few days before I arrived. The ISI had stopped several RSOs in a vehicle at the toll plaza just outside Peshawar on the motorway and demanded to search the vehicle which was registered to the consulate for weapons. Acting on standing instructions, the RSOs refused to open the door and a several hour standoff ensued. Eventually, the ISI convinced/ordered the local government television station to send a reporter and news crew to video the scene. Under the Vienna Conventions, consular immunity is weaker than diplomatic immunity, and eventually Washington said, "You can't stay there forever, you'll have to let them search the car." The ISI did so, found the M-4, and arrested the FSN driver because he had no immunity, and charged him with illegal carriage of weapons. I don't know what happened to him. I suspect they kept the case going for a long time to keep hanging over his head and I'm sure they said, "If you care to talk to us about what goes on in the consulate, we can end this case in no time."

From this point on, our locally engaged staff came under a sustained campaign of harassment that continued for years after my departure. In just the short time I was there, from mid-June to August 1, intelligence officers came to the homes of several of our FSNs and confronted them in front of their families, demanding that they agree to act as informants on consulate activities or suffer reprisals. I recall that one FSN told me the ISI threatened to block his teen-age boy's applications to universities in Pakistan. Some staff members were physically roughed up. We protested this harassment repeatedly to little avail. The Vienna Conventions are silent on the treatment of locally engaged staff.

We felt the ISI's hostility in other ways too. One day the A/RSO in charge came to my office and said, "Boss, I hate to tell you this, but the ISI has come up to the perimeter around the University Town residence area with a camera team and a backhoe."

“What?”

They knocked down a section of wall in front of a building where we were going to house four younger RSOs. The ISI then escorted the TV crew into the building and showed off a ‘secret CIA prison.’ they had found. To them it was obviously a prison because we had put bars on the window and reinforced the doors. Nobody noticed the doors locked on the inside to keep intruders out of a room and not the outside to keep people in. But no, there was a story on the local news about a secret CIA prison. Now I think the TV station knew this was nonsense, it was a one-day story and died without follow-up, a big difference between this story and the Ray Davis affair which went on daily for almost two months. Still, the ISI’s action opened a hole in our perimeter and made the building where we had intended to house staff “radioactive." I spent the remaining weeks of my stay in Peshawar trying to obtain permission to reconstruct some sort of wall to close the gap in our defenses. The Peshawar City office that handled building permits was scared to death to make a decision, and the ISI would not meet with us to discuss the issue. When I left the gap was still closed only with a barbed-wire entanglement, and we were trying to engage the protocol office of the MFA.

Our struggles with the host government security agencies at times left us with little time to focus on the very serious terrorism threat from the Taliban. This was very real. If the consulate felt besieged, the whole city did as well. The KPK police maintained roadblocks and checkpoints on all the main streets. In many cases, a nest with a tripod mounted machine gun provided cover for officers checking IDs and searching vehicles.

Still, it wasn’t enough. Firing was often audible at night as Taliban patrols descended from the hills outside of town to fire at police stations in the suburbs. Bombs were also heard regularly. These were sometimes relatively small IEDs aimed at police and army vehicles, but all too often they were large devices aimed at causing mass casualties in public places. If the goal was to instill fear in the population, it worked. Everyone assumed that the Taliban were everywhere watching everything.

Needless to say, moving around the city was extremely dangerous. I was, nevertheless, able to do a significant amount of normal consulate business. I called on the governor, the KPK chief minister, the chief of police and other senior officials, moving in a motorcade that had me in a fully armored Toyota Land Cruiser backed up by a Toyota Hilux pickup truck with six heavily armed KPK police in the truck bed. With their gray wool Pakol hats and full beards, the latter looked indistinguishable from the Taliban, but they loyally did their best to protect us at significant personal risk.

I did have to limit visits to non-official persons. The need to travel with heavy, obvious security made it impossible to meet discreetly with ordinary Pakistanis. To try and make sure that I heard voices from Pakistanis who did not work in government offices, I tried to invite people in for tea every afternoon. We still had a political FSN who was very well plugged in; he and the econ FSN would suggest people for me to invite for tea. I found out a great deal. Inviting the truckers’ association, various chambers of commerce, the Pakistan-Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce to talk about trade. It was a very interesting

discussion. I remember inviting a whole group of female NGO leaders. One was a human rights campaigner in some district up on the Pakistan-Afghan border.

I asked, “is this dangerous?”

“Oh, yeah. I’ve been threatened a lot.”

The folks who would come in and talk to the consulate were obviously pretty much on our side. They were full of stories about the Taliban. They would say things like “When the Taliban takes over a district, they throw out the criminals so they can be the criminals themselves.”

The Taliban. Here we get confused. Here in the U.S. we refer to Pakistani Taliban (TTP) and Afghan Taliban as if they were separate organizations that operated independently. On the ground in Peshawar, however, the locals just referred to both groups as the Taliban. When I asked them how the groups differed, I was told that there was no real difference, that they were all the same people.

And many of the people I talked to did **NOT** love the Taliban, whether the TTP or the Afghan Taliban. This was particularly true among the landowner class and the business community, who were frequently the target of brutal extortion attempts. They all traveled around armed and with bodyguards if they could afford them. These security issues significantly raised the cost of doing business in Peshawar as opposed to other parts of the country. A poor part of Pakistan was further impoverished by the insurgents.

Why Pakistan’s police and security services never seemed to target the rackets the Taliban were using to finance themselves I will never understand. The public deeply resented the penumbra of criminality that seemed to appear everywhere the Taliban operated, and many folks I met with felt that the government had abandoned them, that there was no one to protect them. The general, fatalistic gloom was typified by one young entrepreneur I had to tea. He arrived a little late for our meeting and apologized and said that he had had to visit his father in hospital. I politely inquired what ailed his father, and he calmly replied that, “My dad’s been in the hospital for a year.”

“What happened?”

“Oh, he was shot twenty-five times by the Taliban.”

“What?”

“Yes, it’s kind of amazing he’s still alive. I don’t know if we’ll ever get Pop out of the hospital.”

There were many stories like that. As you weigh all of this, you realize that the generalizations about the Taliban you heard in other parts of Pakistan were not true. Support for the Taliban was **not** widespread in the areas of KPK that I could access. My

experience in Peshawar provides a good example of why it's good to talk to people. I mean, I could have read the wire service reports out of the town, and I would not have understood the extent of popular disgust with the movement.

The struggle in KPK continues to the present moment by the way. The Pakistan Army launched a big sweep in 2014 and succeeded in pushing the Taliban back over the border into Afghanistan, and KPK was able to enjoy a few years of peace. That didn't last, however. What I have heard is that after the fall of Kabul in August 2021, the Pakistani Taliban began to infiltrate back over the border into Pakistan, and the situation in Khyber-Pukkthun-khwa is almost back to the way it was when I was there.

Q: In your opinion, if the Pakistanis really wanted to make a serious dent in the Taliban, could they?

ENGELKEN: Yeah, I think they could have, but they would have had to fight. I don't think the Taliban would have gone quietly. They would have had to use real military force. They did not want to because they sincerely believed the Indians were a threat and they thought a Taliban government in Kabul would expel the Indian diplomatic and consular posts in Afghanistan and take a positive approach to Pakistan. They were also genuinely concerned about what would happen if they really cracked down. I asked a businessman in Peshawar what would happen if the government went after the Haqqani network. He blanched and said, "The city would burn." He thought the Haqqanis could clean the clock of the local police and forces of order. I don't know. Maybe. Haqqanis are pretty tough guys. Since the fall of Kabul in 2021, the Army has had genuine difficulty in establishing security in the area.

Back to the summer of 2012. We had this big threat so when I would go from the residence to the office, we had a random number generator to generate the time for the motorcade. We would depart anywhere between six A.M. and four or five P.M. And we would not always return every night, some nights we slept at the consulate by our desks. We'd work from home some days and not go in at all. And we wouldn't tell anybody in advance. In the morning at six A.M. the RSO would say all right, the dice are rolled, we're going to go now or eight hours from now. Even that in the end was not enough.

A story to illustrate the problem. We left one morning, drove to the consulate, and I got out and somebody else in the motorcade came up to me and said, "Did you see that guy in the tree with a camera videotaping us as we left?"

We got into a discussion, "Do you think he was ISI, or do you think he was Taliban?" We were never able to answer that question, but the fact that we had the discussion shows how difficult the security situation was for the consulate. We had to guard against mischief from the government as well as from the Taliban insurgents.

We did not, in Pakistan, have the arguments that Mission Afghanistan did. Mission Afghanistan dissolved into this "RS-No" stuff. People came out of Afghanistan bitter that the RSOs wouldn't let them go places to do things. We never had that tension. The RSO

and I usually saw things pretty much the same way, I didn't have big gripes that he was inhibiting my movements when I thought we should do something. He gave me advice; I usually took it and didn't question it too much. The Diplomatic Security officers did try to help us do what we needed to do.

The last thing I did before leaving—-well, two last stories. We left the compound. They were going to take me to Islamabad, but I was going to make some farewell calls. We went to see a senior minister in the provincial government whose house was fifty meters outside our perimeter. I called on him, a nice older gentleman, about sixty-eight at the time. He's telling me about an assassination attempt he had suffered. He was giving a public speech and some kid comes up in a jacket on a hot day and he's standing there sweating profusely. It seemed odd. So, his security men jumped the young man and got the jacket off and found he was wearing a bomb. He was fourteen or something. The man who told that story was later blown up by yet another suicide bomber. He's dead.

My final act was to drive to the FATA secretariat. That's an agency that looked after development projects in the tribal areas. We had been doing development projects in the tribal areas since the early 1990s. It was one of those examples of what the U.S.-Pakistani relationship could have been, could be. I sat there with an officer from AID and several Pakistani officials. The years of experience really showed. The Pakistanis asked really good, crisp questions. They knew our procedures, and we rapidly came to an agreement on a small road here and a well we were going to dig. We agreed how we were going to do it, how to do the paperwork. It was fine. If we could have only let this stuff go ahead without politics intervening it would have worked, there would have been much more to show for our assistance.

Then I drove to Islamabad and left. Since then, I have taught a course on Pakistan at FSI but I've not attempted to do anything more than that.

Q: Nearly all my questions would require some answer that would probably go into intelligence.

ENGELKEN: We won't declassify for decades.

Q: There is one question. Without doubt, Pakistan is relying more on China for a variety of things. What do you see as the long-term impact of that connection between China and Pakistan? The Pakistanis know for example that the Chinese are interning Muslims and violating their human rights. I'm sure they can look the other way with sixty billion dollars, but eventually there may be some objection to that. There may be simply objections by Pakistanis more to the right religiously about having Chinese in the country.

ENGELKEN: You would think, but I didn't see it. China has managed to surround itself with this vast aura of political correctness. You can't criticize them. They've done this around the world, but they've been really effective at doing it in Pakistan. "No, we can't criticize them, they're wonderful."

The only criticism I did hear of China was from members of Jamaat-e-Islami which is the oldest Islamist party. So yes, on the Islamist side there are critics. And when you look at who's been attacked in Pakistan over the years, obviously we've suffered terrorist attacks, but the Chinese have too. They're the only other foreign diplomatic presence that has been attacked. When they launched CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), they insisted Pakistan create a ten-thousand-man protection force to protect the Chinese there. The Chinese are worried about the possibility of terrorism. But when you're talking with Pakistanis, it's like "How dare you question that?"

The army controls narratives. The army's obsession from 1947 to this present moment is India. The Chinese are helpful. The Chinese are also anti-Indian, and are increasingly so. So, the reaction in Pakistan to this clash between India and China three weeks ago was ecstatic. "Now China will take our side more forcefully." I don't know. They may be counting their chickens before they hatch. But you would think, and I suppose eventually there would be a more nationalist reaction. But it's years from now, I don't see it happening for a while.

The bigger thing, there's now a great game beginning in Asia between China establishing a series of satellite countries through the Belt and Road Initiative, corridors it dominates all around, and then India, the U.S., and a few other countries, Vietnam I guess, Japan, Korea (except Japan and Korea can't agree on anything), Australia. There's this great game taking shape and Pakistan's going to be on the China side. I keep telling my class "Look five years ahead. What happens when the Chinese want to have a blue water squadron in the Arabian Sea?" They still import a lot of oil from the Persian Gulf, they have a legitimate economic interest there. And they bridle at the word 'base' but they're doing just that; they have a refueling point in Djibouti. There's an island in the Maldives they're trying to buy. They have this port at Hambantota in Sri Lanka. They may have a refueling point at Gwadar. I think in Tanzania they are trying to get some kind of facility. They're going to be able to sustain over long periods of time a blue water fleet in the Indian Ocean, and that's going to be a challenge for us and for India. One conflict dragging to a close and another appearing.

Afghanistan, I don't know where that ends. One of my questions is, do the Chinese get sucked in?

Q: Wait, how would you see them getting sucked in? Do the Chinese have any interest in access to Afghanistan?

ENGELKEN: Afghanistan is rich in unexploited mineral resources. The Chinese have already bought the rights to a big copper mine there, and they are believed to be interested in other potential mining projects as well. But more importantly, there are elements in the Taliban coalition who are exiles from Central Asia and are determined to return in arms to their home regions. China would be alarmed if Islamist insurgencies were to begin in Tajikistan or Uzbekistan which border their Xinjiang region, particularly if any Uyghurs are fighting on the side of the Islamists.

So, could the Chinese feel they had to do something to stop it? Maybe. I think they will know their history and know this doesn't end well. But I don't rule out that they could inadvertently or not be sucked into Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Q: This may be outside your lane, but it never became clear exactly what the nature of Khalilzad's negotiations were with the Taliban. Any insight there?

ENGELKEN: I don't know. I wasn't involved in it. I know that in my time Holbrooke was trying to find a conduit to the Taliban. He had a famous failure where a guy put himself forward as a Taliban emissary who turned out to be a fake.

Q: Typically, at the end of an oral history I ask general questions about looking back on your career and recommendations for the department and so on. We could do that in a brief final session if you like or you could add your own parting thoughts; it's entirely up to you.

ENGELKEN: We can do it quickly here. The Foreign Service is irreplaceable. I'm very frustrated like all of my colleagues that we're not understood, and we're sort of barred from explaining ourselves. I was involved, as you've heard in this history, in so many things that are straight out of movies, but in any movie I ever saw FSOs are always the insensitive bureaucrat who doesn't care about anybody; we don't understand the cool CIA agent or the cool military or whatever it is, and we're the obstacle and so forth. I don't know how to get around that. I keep thinking about it. We have to think about that. I hope the next administration, whenever that may be, can put some thought to it.

Like everyone has always said, there is no substitute for actually going out and talking to people. That is the essence of what the Foreign Service does. It's amazing if you talk to people long enough, they'll tell you a whole bunch of stuff that they maybe didn't intend to tell you. Not all of it is true.

Q: That's where judgment comes in.

ENGELKEN: That's why we have other agencies, shall we say. I don't see anybody understanding this. We are reporting what people say, trying to use our judgment and asking a lot of questions to try to winnow it down to get them to say things that reveal their thinking. But that's why you have an IC, to go check on that; is that true? If the system were working well, we'd all be working together at embassies. My wife who was also a career Foreign Service officer—she was ambassador in Mauritania—we've both talked about it. On the country team level, the agencies at post usually work pretty well together. It worked well in Islamabad. We did not have big screaming arguments in the country team. All agencies on the country team worked like a team. I took their advice, they listened to me, we did not have adversarial relations. It's only when you get back to Washington that interagency tensions arise and inhibit inter-agency cooperation. When you have a military command deployed that's not under COM authority, that can also lead to tension. But, the movies show more tension than I've seen in reality. You're all in

this godforsaken country somewhere living in pretty primitive conditions and dealing with the same people and facing the same danger. It does tend to bring people together. I mentioned in this talk about Peshawar this silly example of what you get by talking to people. I would not have realized the extent to which public opinion in Peshawar was very hostile to the Taliban.

That's just an example. By going out and talking to people, I realized that what people were telling me was not reflected in the media. I think there are many places in the world that would be true. You need to go out and sit and listen. It can be boring, your interlocutors repeat themselves, they talk in circles, they don't present you a nice theme with nice talking points organized. But if you sit and listen for a while you can often figure out what's on their minds. You have to talk to a lot of people, not just one. You have a three-year tour (in many places). After three years of listening to people you pretty much know, you have a pretty good guess what they're going to say. When they say something new, that's when – that's a change of opinion I should notice. That's what you don't get when you just fly in. Lots of folks wonder, "We could just speak to foreign governments on the phone." Nobody says what they think on the phone. "We could just fly in occasionally and talk." They'll just get the standard line; they won't get anything new; it's very hard to fly in and do that.

Now, I agree with Jim Jeffrey that the primary mission of the Foreign Service is to negotiate. It is to negotiate the best deal we can get for the U.S. on whatever the subject is. If I were training the Foreign Service, and looking at my own training, we're really good at analyzing, but what we're not as good at is negotiating.

Q: Why do you think that is?

ENGELKEN: One, we have a lot of people with good university educations; academics all focus you on analysis. Me. Here's where you want to change the Foreign Service. Think about who we take in and what they come in thinking they're going to do. And then, there's the problem that the political level of the U.S. government (it doesn't matter which party) doesn't really trust Foreign Service officers to negotiate on highly politicized things. So as communications improve, the Foreign Service is constantly being pulled and constrained. Don't get into that, don't talk about that, just do your report. Then all of a sudden (again my wife and I feel this) you find yourself a senior officer. Then you look around and you're the ambassador or DCM or chargé and you're going to go negotiate that.

But actually, we're not prepared to do that, because the whole system doesn't allow us to do so. If I had to change one thing in the Department. I think we should think about how we improve people's negotiating skills. We should at least be involved earlier on.
In Pakistan, I didn't mention it but in that crazy January 2011 I had several meetings with the number two at the foreign ministry in which he talked, showed a little bit of toe on negotiating the end of the conflict in Afghanistan. I had two or three conversations with him, very interesting. I sent reports on them, but I was really afraid Washington was going to come back with a massive hook saying, "You can't talk about that, that's high

policy." I think if I had continued to do so, I would have been yanked out or sent in with talking points that covered pages and be supposed to read them. We've all seen that.

Q: I remember those five-page long instruction cables.

ENGELKEN: That's what would have happened had I continued. I certainly did not feel empowered to do that, even though I was getting a trial balloon. I did send reports in, and Washington did ultimately follow up on that. That's how we wind up with Khalilzad years later.

End of interview.