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

AMBASSADOR PHILIP S. KAPLAN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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Q: OK, well today is the 20th of March, 2014, interview with Philip, middle initial --

KAPLAN: S.

Q: S., Kaplan, K-A-P-L-A-N. It's being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. And you go by Phil, or?

KAPLAN: It's fine.

Q: Let's start at when and where were you born.

KAPLAN: I was born in Connecticut in a city called New Britain.

Q: Oh yes. So can -- just to get some background. What was your -- first on your father's side -- what do you know about your father's side?

KAPLAN: My father was born in Texas and eventually turned up in Connecticut. He was a shoe salesman. My mother was born in Connecticut. She was a housewife. She was a saleswoman from time to time in a large department store in New Britain.

Q: Let's stick to your father's side, we'll move to your mothers' side. Where do the Kaplans come from?

KAPLAN: Well, I'd say originally that the family emigrated, at least on my mother's side, from Eastern Europe and probably somewhere near the current Belarus and Ukraine. As I said, my father was born in Texas, in San Antonio. How the two of them eventually got together is something I don't know *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs) Did either go to college, or?

KAPLAN: No, neither one of them did go to college.

Q: Yeah, that's been the basic pattern. Neither of my parents did either. I mean it's our generation. The next generation practically all, they're -- of the Foreign Service officers coming in. Well, did you grow up in New Britain?

KAPLAN: I did.

Q: What was it like?

KAPLAN: It was a very ethnic city. It's one of the most densely Polish cities in the United States. There were a lot of Italians, there were some Germans, and it was a city of about 80,000 people. They call themselves the Hardware City of the World. There were a lot of factories there. I worked at a couple of factories over summer vacations from time to time when I was growing up. But it was really a melting pot with the émigrés coming almost entirely from Europe and mainly from central and Eastern Europe.

Q: The -- how did the city handle this? Were they divided up into certain blocks were Polish, other blocks were something else and all that?

KAPLAN: Something like that. Remember, I was a young fellow in those days. But I remember that there were judges and mayors that came from different ethnic communities. The Poles were very strong because there were so many of them.

Q: Mm-hmm. Why would Poles come -- I always think of Poles going towards a mining community.

KAPLAN: Well, there were a lot of -- as you know, the second biggest Polish city in the world is Chicago. And there were a lot around Cleveland and in the Middle West. But for some reason some of them congregated along the East Coast and for some reason this particularly community, where there was a lot of factory work, seemed to attract a great many. But the population was substantial; and there also were Italians, but not as many.

Q: Well now, what about -- how did your family fit politically there?

KAPLAN: Well, we were Jewish and there was a synagogue in the town. We went there, but not with great regularity. We were not very religious. My parents took it seriously but didn't go frequently.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I stayed in the formal training of the synagogue until I concluded my bar mitzvah at the age of 13. Then the rabbi and I had a little discussion *(laughs)* and we reached a -- it was my first negotiation and we reached the conclusion that I would stay in the Sunday classes that discuss the history and traditions of the religion. I no longer went often for religious services.

Q: Was it orthodox, liberal or --

KAPLAN: It was conservative, which means sort of in the middle, centrist.

Q: Yeah. How did -- in this -- did you go to public schools there?

KAPLAN: I did.

Q: How did it fit being Jewish and with a big Polish community. The Poles are not the most (laughs) you might say tolerant or liberal or whatever.

KAPLAN: Well, the Poles were never a problem for me. As a matter of fact, the most beautiful girl friend I had in high school was a Polish girl. Absolutely stunning. There was one incident that I remember from my childhood. Must have been just after World War II. I was still a little kid. I was coming home one day and there was a young fellow named Albert Warnock. For some reason I still remember that name all these years later. Well, I came around the same corner I always came around to go back to my house. Albert and a couple of his friends jumped out and beat the hell out of me.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: That was my first experience with how ethnic rivalries can cause damage. I changed my route, just as I did as a diplomat many years later *(laughs).*

Q: Oh yeah. A lot of us went through that. There are certain no-go areas that kids understand --

KAPLAN: I have no idea why this happened. I never had any particular relationship with him. I didn't even know the fellow.

Q: Yeah. I -- today the paper was an obituary of Robert Strauss that I -- when I was interviewing him he -- one time said when he was very young his mother said, 'You come from a very proud ancestry. The Jews are almost smarter than everyone else and all that. But don't let on.'

And he said he used to go around thinking, 'Gee, I'm a lot smarter than these people, but I have to be careful.'

KAPLAN: That's right. There are a lot of other communities, African-Americans, for example. I'm sure their parents have told them that more than once.

Q: Yeah. Well, were you much of a reader?

KAPLAN: I was really keen on American history as a young fellow, as a matter fact, through college. And I remember that I had a junior high school teacher by the name of Marion Hoar, but it was H-O-A-R, thank goodness. She was a rather stout lady in her advanced years. We had this circular classroom, and I would – she sat up at the top like the chairman of the board, and I was on the other side facing her. On one occasion she distributed a map with the various discoveries of the United States by the explorers. We came to the Gadsden Purchase and I sketched that in. Then you'd either pass your paper up around the circle until it reached her, or if you really wanted to make a point of it you'd walk it up. On one occasion, after I had erased it and fixed it repeatedly, I brought

it up to her. By the time I got back to my chair it was back in front of me with another X on it *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: Still, American history really mattered to me in those days. I studied it intensively and with great pleasure.

Q: Do you recall any books, particularly early on, that particularly influenced you?

KAPLAN: Well, I was a young man and I don't have that in my memory right now. When I got to college I started -- it was an American history teacher as well, we can go into that later if you'd like, who encouraged me in this direction. And you know, our family did not own lots of books so I would often go to the library and take things out. Once I discovered the library I was a frequent visitor there. We weren't in a position to just go out and buy big bundles of books.

Q: Yeah. Well, of course when you think about it probably one of the most influential persons in education in the United States was Carnegie and his libraries.

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: Which he --

KAPLAN: Tremendously important.

Q: Both in England and -- well, Great Britain -- and the United States. Was your family one that sort of listened to the news and discussed it, or?

KAPLAN: We listened to it and I was born in 1937, so when World War II ended I was, what? Eight-years-old or so. My parents were very dedicated to President Franklin Roosevelt. He was almost like a godlike figure, the person who was saving the country in the face of all the terrible things that were happening in Europe. And I remember once, the day that Roosevelt died, I was with my mother and I heard the newscast and we were downtown in our town and my mother started crying. And I looked around and everybody else started crying. It was -- I can't imagine anything like that happening in present circumstances.

Q: Yeah. Well, it -- I remember I was at a prep school in Kent and I was 10 years older and Roosevelt was a god in our family. But an awful lot of the kids there came from Republican families. And they were jumping up and down and all families, and mad as hell.

KAPLAN: It shows that there's still -- in fact the divide I think has grown.

Q: Yeah. Well then, were you engaged in many extracurricular activities and --

KAPLAN: The main one was music.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I was in the marching band in high school and we had a student orchestra, which played more classical sorts of things, although the quality of the orchestra was not classic. But we all tried hard. I was the conductor.

Q: Ah!

KAPLAN: I liked that a lot, and because it was kind of a leadership sort of thing and you were able to -- the first one I ever had -- you were able to bring together a bunch of disparate people and make them into one entity. I remember the principal of my high school always used to call me conductor whenever he saw me in the halls. We had one big concert in the large school with the auditorium. Must have been 2,000 people in there, and I was out there doing my thing. And it seemed to go well. I remember we played "Sleigh Ride" by Leroy Anderson.

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: So music was -- and I took music lessons. I played the clarinet and saxophone, and in high school I organized my own dance band. It usually had just about four people in it.

Q: Play for local dances?

KAPLAN: I played for local dances, I played for high school events, all around the town. I played at Polish weddings many, many times.

Q: Polish weddings is as extensive and --

KAPLAN: Well, I remember once, more than once where we were just exhausted with these polkas, we decided to play a set that would just wear everybody out. It went on for about a half an hour. And as soon as it was done some young woman came running up and said, "Can we have another polka?"

Q: (laughs) I always think of that polka, or the Polish wedding scene in that movie "The Deer Hunter."

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: With a large Polish community, did events in Eastern Europe, were they sort of on the front burner, or not?

KAPLAN: Well, remember, the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 I would have been 19 or 20-years-old. So I was not anymore in my hometown. I was already in college. I was never very much aware, as I recall, of, of, of people in the city being very engaged with political events outside the country in an activist way. But then again, at my age maybe I wouldn't have been aware of it. There could very well have been a good deal of that. As I said, the mayor and the most important judge were Poles at one time or another and I can't imagine that they wouldn't have taken an interest in both events. I just probably was not politically aware at the time.

Q: Where'd your news come from early on?

KAPLAN: Radio.

Q: Radio.

KAPLAN: Radio. TV came later, and then one switched to that. But as a young fellow I remember that I relied on radio to see what was going on in the world. And I remember there was one particular fellow who we heard every morning by the name of Bob Steele. He was a sort of a combination news reporter, sports reporter, all around town. And every time he made a prediction you could bet the family fortune on the fact that it'd be wrong and that if you bet the other way you'd do very well *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs) As a kid in elementary school, what'd you do after school?

KAPLAN: Well, where we lived there was a big lot across the street. We'd go out there and we'd play baseball or football or one thing or another.

Q: Well, sounds kind of like the idyllic young person's experience in America.

KAPLAN: Well, we were growing up in a city of 80,000 people, it was fairly substantial. The city was laid out in a reasonably nice way. There was a Main Street, a downtown that was more than just one street. There were two or three very nice parks and that was a good place to go. There were nice residential areas. There were all kinds of stores and half a dozen movie theaters. Movies in those days were the big entertainment.

Q: Yeah, I was going to say that I know the plots of almost every film that came out of Hollywood. It just --

KAPLAN: That's right. So we had a -- it was a real town.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And it had some of the features that I'd described. And, and there was this ethnic overlay over everything. But if -- as long as you stayed away from Albert Warnock, if you went to school and you went to high school and you did your things it

was a pretty nice existence. You could -- no reason why you couldn't grow up as a reasonably normal person.

Q: Well, as you were at high school did you find certain subjects you were better at or wanted to do, and other ones you'd just as soon as get away from?

KAPLAN: Science was always a little harder for me. But I liked history, I liked music. So more of the social sciences than the hard sciences, physical sciences.

Q: Mm-hmm. Did you have -- was sort of the military, military service something you had to be concerned with at the time?

KAPLAN: Not as a real young person. That issue -- when, when it would have arisen would have been more as I was getting out of college.

Q: Yeah. Did you know where you wanted to go to school, or?

KAPLAN: Well, the, the kind of obvious place that a person in Connecticut who was in a family without particular wealth would have been aiming at would have been the state university. And that's where I did go, the University of Connecticut.

Q: You went there from when to when?

KAPLAN: I entered in 1955. And I remember very vividly, we went up to this village called Storrs, Connecticut and there was a little sign when you entered that said, "You've now entered Storrs. Look quickly, because you'll be out of it before you know it."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: It was -- the university was an almost idyllic campus. It's the way a college campus is supposed to look in a movie. And there was a huge library there and my memories now are very good because I revisited the university just very recently to set up a scholarship there. So I remember the Wilbur Cross library and the buildings where you took classes. There were dormitories and there were fraternities and sororities. There were a couple of big lakes on the campus. The female dorms are on one side of the campus, South Campus, men were on the North Campus. There were a couple of restaurants there that you would expect on a college campus. It was quite nice. The first thing you had to decide when you got there was what you wanted to do in terms of academic subjects. When you started they had this rotational system where you had to take different kinds of courses, which I believe is a very good thing to do and which we've gotten away from to a certain extent. The second thing was whether you wanted to focus on your studies or whether you wanted to do extracurricular things. And those were the choices that every student had when they got there. But it was a very major step in my life, that I was graduating from being home, now you're on your own and you've got to decide to grow up a little bit.

Q: I remember I knew a girl who went to Connecticut College for Women. Now, is this --

KAPLAN: Different school. And a very good school, by the way.

Q: What did you do decide to do? Was it going to be music or studies, or what?

KAPLAN: Well, there were a couple things. First thing is that I met the woman who became my wife the second day I was there.

Q: Good heavens.

KAPLAN: I mean it was just an absolute stroke of good luck for me. She was in one of the dormitories and I was in one of these independent dorms for men. There were a couple of miles or so between the men and the women's dorms. The notion of mixed dorms was as alien to us *(laughs)* as outer space. There were a lot of parties the first week during orientation and I just happened to meet her. And ultimately it was a pinning ceremony, when you give your intended your fraternity pin. We got engaged and were married the week after graduation. But that's skipping ahead.

So a couple of things. I decided that I was -- not surprisingly that I was more interested in history and social sciences and things of that sort than the hard sciences. But I had to take physics and chemistry and biology and I struggled through those. I was not a brilliant student in those days. I did what I needed to do rather than what I should have done. I was getting sort of B's. And the second thing, I got involved for some reason in student government. As a freshman or a sophomore I was elected to the Student Senate, which was a big deal on the campus. By the end of my sophomore year I was the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Student Senate, which was the sort of automatic road to becoming the president of the Student Senate. And at the end of my sophomore year I sat down with my wife-to-be and with others, but mainly with myself, and I decided, "I've got to stop fooling around .. if I'm going to make something of myself I'm going to have to really hit the books."

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: And I did. I declared my major, which was a combined major of history, economics, and philosophy. So that's, that's a serious --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- load. And I loved it once I started it. That was a major turning point for me. And when I came back to campus at the very beginning of my junior year, on the first day we were back the student newspaper had a big sign on this rock outside of the independent dorms, had a headline. And the main headline on the paper was, "Kaplan resigns from Student Senate." Nobody'd ever done it before *(laughs)*. I never missed it. Instead, I simply got to work.

Q: So when you're going on this economics, history, philosophy major, it casts an extremely wide net. But I would imagine it would have to narrow down to certain elements, did it? I mean histories of some places or --

KAPLAN: Yes, that's right. But there was virtually nothing outside of American or European history in those days, at least where I was.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I eventually took such courses, but not in the university at those days. So I took my American history courses and I started taking serious courses in European history and, and I had some professors that were very kind to me. I did some independent study, some serious -- for me -- investigative studies. I remember I did one on George Sorel, the French philosophical historian, on his later influence on Mussolini, the degree to which ideology really stimulates leaders to do certain things, or whether they use it as cover, which is one of the conclusions I reached at that point. So I was really poking into a lot of different things. The focus was mainly on Western Europe, although I did take a course on Russia, which was in those days a very exotic subject.

In terms of economics it was more standard, you know, the basic macro and micro courses. Later on I took a course on international economics after I left UCONN. In terms of philosophy I remember very well the first time I took a class was in either my freshman or my sophomore year. There was a professor named T. Foster Lindley who was a little rosy-faced former priest who had turned his collar around and become secular. In the first day of our class on philosophy of religion he said quote, "What makes you think there's a God?" unquote. All these fresh-faced freshmen were absolutely horrified at the very thought of such a question.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I sat there and listened, but I was really struck by the question. And about 15, 20 minutes into the class I put up my hand and says, "Yeah, what makes you think there's a God?" I said, "Is there any evidence of it, any empirical evidence?" I thought that was a very fancy word. And then I said, you know, sort of half in jest, "Has anyone ever seen any, any fossils of God, something that would have indicated physical evidence. I loved the course. I read a number of the important philosophers and I did a paper, perhaps 15 or 20 pages, about the question of the existence of God and reached my own conclusions. I satisfied myself on what I thought and I've never had to go back to that. It didn't seem to me to be the sort of thing you had to do once a year.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: Then I took other courses on epistemology. One night I was sitting at the Hillel House at the university reading this book on <u>The History of Understanding</u> by David Hume. Suddenly it was sort of like the Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha, with the apple falling on his head.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Hume basically proved to the satisfaction of this young student, at least on an intellectual level, that you could never truly be sure about cause and effect. That was an astounding conclusion. And later on I took a course with a relatively young professor, a woman named Colleen Sterling, on Immanuel Kant. It was an independent study, just she and me. And I would read texts -- I found it very hard to read it. The concepts were complex. But I worked my way slowly through it and she thought that I had understood the basic points. And so all of this I think was very important in my own intellectual development, because I was forced to confront some of the major thinkers in the Western tradition -- a) to try to learn something and to form my own point of view about things, not necessarily correct, but it was my own point of view; and b) more importantly, to struggle with these very complex concepts and be able if not to master them at least get a grip on them. And we can talk about law school later if you like, in a sense it was the same thing. It was the discipline and the kind of pedagogical ability to come to grips with complicated things that I later found throughout my life important to me, to be able to think analytically, with rigor, to be able to understand things.

Q: Were you able to engage with your fellow students on some of these questions, or did they not show -- I mean the ones you knew showed the same interests?

KAPLAN: Well, we had discussions in class, sometimes we would have discussions in, among us, when we were having dinner or whatever. Sometimes it would be study halls where two or three people would get together and study together. The former I found interesting, to learn from others. But when it came down to the point of studying for the exams, I've always believed that's the time when you have to close the door and get serious.

Q: Yeah. I know looking back on my time the most influential thing I had was studying, they had one course was studying nothing but the French and the Russian Revolutions.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: And seeing how they played out. Was very handy later on in the Foreign Service.

KAPLAN: Of course.

Q: You know, seeing how revolutions can develop. And of course we had -- we already had done the American Revolution and seen sort of as a prime example of how it should be done.

KAPLAN: In subsequently years we've had things like the Iranian Revolution.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: That's right. It's striking to me. I've written a novel, which I've got with an agent right now, on Iran at the time of the fall of the Shah. And one of the things that struck me was it had occurred precisely 200 years in time after the French Revolution.

Q: Yep. Yep. It -- looking -- I mean things keep reoccurring, I mean the same dynamics of leaders and all. Were you -- this was before the anti-Vietnam --

KAPLAN: Oh yes.

Q: -- and all this sort of activism. Was there anything of that nature going on, or -- where -- not necessarily that, but aware of young men and young women striving to be leaders and trying things out?

KAPLAN: It was the '50s and it was the Eisenhower years. And again, we had this leader who made us comfortable.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He was a general, he helped us win World War II. He was a kind of father figure.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I was becoming a little bit more aware, although not that much more, and I noticed that he played golf a lot. Some people said he wasn't working at it that hard, and other people said he mumbled a lot, was incoherent at the press conferences. I thought about it a little bit and thought, "This guy's a lot smarter than he's letting people know."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He's mumbling and he's incoherent not because he lacks intelligence, but because he doesn't want to say more than he wants to say. And he may feel that by playing it that way that people will consider him a lightweight and that will put him at a great advantage.

Q: Yeah, and it's -- you know, people look at it again and again. And when called upon as a good military man, he could give a very concise exposé of what was happening and why, but he didn't bring this to the fore.

KAPLAN: No, these views, these little incipient baby views of mine were not based in any way whatsoever on ideology. I didn't really have a very good idea about the difference between Republicans and Democrats as they were playing out in the 1950s, even though I was studying American history and the, the perspective -- I won't use the word bias -- but the perspective of the teachers I had were very much on the liberal democratic side, and that influenced me obviously. But, but I didn't take that through as

gospel -- this was just something I was learning about history, rather than something that was influencing exactly the way I thought about things.

Q: Well, did civil rights, particularly in the south, attract your attention?

KAPLAN: It sure did, but not when I was in college. It came a few years later after I got out of law school and started practicing law in California. When I finished law school I went to Sacramento for a year as a consultant to the social warfare committee of the state legislature you like. One state assemblymen was an African-American gentleman by the name of Byron Rumford, who introduced Fair Housing legislation. Now, integration of neighborhoods in a wealthy state like California was pretty controversial in those days, and he'd been subjected to considerable harassment. I started giving speeches on behalf of the Fair Housing bill. On one such occasion I was with my wife in a school library. Someone came up and started pushing her around, calling me a communist or something. I went over there and intervened and he swung at me. Fortunately I ducked.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* But they were really angry. So that was a big issue and I took it very seriously and I engaged on it, but that came later.

Q: That came later. W ell, were there any -- during this mid '50s period were there any currents running around? McCarthyism by that time had run its course, hadn't it, or?

KAPLAN: Pretty much, yes. I was aware of it, but only because I heard about it on the radio. I do remember watching on television and seeing that occasion when the very important lawyer whose name is now escaping --

Q: Welch.

KAPLAN: Yes, Joseph Welch confronted McCarthy: "Don't you have any shred of human decency?" And that really grabbed me.

Q: Yeah. No, it was a, it was a very, was, it was a very difficult time. The -- I think New England basically got through the McCarthy period a little bit different than some others --

KAPLAN: It was -- my college experience politically was flaccid would be the word I'd reach for. I was there to go to school, I went to school. After two years of kind of fooling around I got serious and then I got very focused. I wanted to get into a good law school and get on with things. But that raises another issue which may be of interest, and it's related to my younger years. Why'd I want to go to law school, for God's sakes? I'm saying that as we're sitting here in my law office *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs) Yeah.

KAPLAN: There are a lot of people in law offices around Washington who are asking the same question now. But as a young fellow, I was once walking down the street a block away from New Britain High School. And I saw this building which I'd never been in, and a lot of people going in and out. So I was curious, I walked in. And it was the courthouse. And there was this trial going on. And it involved charges against the mayor for alleged corruption. There was this judge named Henry Gwiazda, a Polish-American very prominent in the town. I was absolutely fascinated by the trial. I'd never been in a courthouse before but I sat there for -- I think it must have been Spring Break or something -- for the entire week watching this thing. And I came out and marched home and said, "I'm going to be a lawyer." It was as simple as that. Totally unscientific and unthoughtful way to go about it, but it just caught me.

Q: Well, given the fact that we're talking about people who eventually ended up in the Foreign Service, did any country or -- during your college time -- did any country or did the Foreign Service attract your attention?

KAPLAN: I became increasingly interested in Europe. And I read Shirer's Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. And 1,200 pages, that's a significant investment of a young person's time. And that really got to me and the whole idea of appeasement and where that would lead. I've never forgotten that and I haven't forgotten it to this day. It became quite clear to me -- then I was really starting to think about this a little bit, as a result of both my academic studies and this reading I was doing on my own -- that the heart of Europe was Germany. Somebody brought me one of these board games called "Diplomacy."

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: And I used to play this with some of my friends. And what I learned was that if you played Germany that you had to stay friends with everybody until the last move. Because you're right in the heart of Europe and then you strike out in all directions.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And so I became focused on how the Germans had played things in World War I and World War II. And remember, this is the 1950s so it was barely 10 years after World War II. There was not a lot of experience on where all this would go. It wasn't that I had a bias against about Germany, but that this was a country in the center of Europe and, and one day I picked up Mackinder's thought, "As Germany goes, so goes Europe; as Europe goes, so goes the world." I put those things together and said, "That's the place that I have the greatest interest in." Now, I had not been exposed to the other parts of the world because they didn't have any courses on them.

Q: No, no.

KAPLAN: And one day I went to my American history teacher, a fellow named Bill Harbaugh who was an expert on Theodore Roosevelt. And I said, "You know, I don't know the names of people in the Congress. How do I get to know that?" And he said,

"You start reading one good newspaper every day and read it the way you'd read a textbook." I started doing that and suddenly the names of these people started to become familiar to me. Hubert Humphrey, Everett Dirksen, Lyndon Johnson and all these things. I'd never heard of any of these people before. and I subscribed to Foreign Affairs and started reading that; over time you just start to pick things up. I'd taken a class in music appreciation in college, then began buying classical recordings, even operas. At first I didn't understand it, but I started to get accustomed to all of that. I took a course in French in college and from a Pole named Obechowski, whose accent was slightly better than mine *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: There was another teacher named Gilbert Cestre, who was a real Frenchman who taught the course the second semester. He mumbled all the time and I was sitting in the classroom, and right outside on this big rock was this gorgeous coed who would sun herself there every single day and --

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: -- I spent more time looking at her than listening to the teacher.

Q: Well, I'm glad you had your priorities straight.

KAPLAN: And one day the professor came up to me in his rubber-soled shoes to try and humiliate me in front of the class and he said, "What are you doing?"

And I said, "Regarde, Monsieur—"

And he looked out there and he said, "Ooh-la-la."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: So in short college was not a planned or intentional course of thought, it was, it was sort of cumulative. This sort of thing sort of comes to you. It's part of the process of growing up.

Q: Well, try to catch the spirit of the times. Were you picking up that the Soviet Union was the enemy, evil, and it's something we had to sort of live with and confront?

KAPLAN: I didn't have any coherent views regarding the Soviet Union at that time. As I said, I took one course in Russian history, but that was in Russian history. And Stalin was a obscure figure to me. This was a -- remember, we're in a college campus, it's isolated from almost everything. It's in a little tiny town: be careful, you'll be leaving it any minute. And there were all the things that absorbed young men. And my wife-to-be and I were getting closer and were planning to get married at a certain point. And I was in the school band and musical type activities. And I was very intent to be studying by the time

I got to my junior year. So the Soviet Union was not a subject I thought about much in those days.

Q: What was the background of your wife?

KAPLAN: Well, she came from New York and, and her father was in a stocks and bonds office. Not a man of great wealth, but very nice gentleman. Her mother was a beautiful woman, as is she. A real lady. Someone who would never dream of going out without being dressed properly, with gloves and all of that. That really rubbed off on my wife. She was very close to her parents, and to her brother who eventually joined the Air Force. He had gone to Cornell and was supposed to become a doctor. He studied English with Vladimir Nabokov and was apparently a very good student there. One day he came home and dropped the bombshell that he was joining the Armed Forces instead as an officer. She came to University of Connecticut. The only reason she was allowed out of New York was that her father had great confidence in some of his relatives in Hartford who ran a jewelry store. That convinced him she'd be safe going to this very dangerous place called Connecticut. I had the good fortune to meet her right at the top.

Q: Well, did you have any particular feeling of where to study law?

KAPLAN: Well, I had the advantage that my grades were excellent the last two years, they were virtually all A's.

Q: And I might add that this is an era when grades meant something.

KAPLAN: They sure did. And not only was that good, but the stark difference between that and the sort of average grades in the first two years, anybody who looked at that would say, "This kid's come alive."

And so I applied to, to a few places and -- first I applied to Yale Law School, but I sort of thought, "Well, this is a great school" -- but I thought it'd be good to move somewhere else rather than to stay in Connecticut, get a different experience. For some reason I applied to Berkeley, about as far as you can go in the United States.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I was admitted to Berkeley fairly early on; it was considered number five or six in the country among law schools. And you could become very quickly an in-state student, so it was almost free. Yale had not responded and so I agreed to go to Berkeley. My wife and I agreed we'd go across the country and this would be a really good way to start. I think young people are best off being in a different place than their parents when they go to college or law school, to establish themselves, no matter how close they are to their families. Then about three weeks before graduation from college, Yale contacted me and said, "You're admitted." We had to give that some serious thought, but concluded it was too late, and decided to go to Berkeley.

Q: Well, you were in Berkeley from when to when?

KAPLAN: Let's see, I graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1959. I was in Berkeley until '62. Three years.

Q: How '60s-ish was Berkeley when you got there?

KAPLAN: Very. The two key words are Mario Savio.

Q: Oh, this is a -- he was a free speech --

KAPLAN: He led the free speech movement. It was certainly to the left of liberal democrats. There was a fellow man in my class who said he was a communist, or thought he was. This fellow who I will simply mention by his first name, Brian, after about two or three weeks disappeared. I never saw him again until finals. And then he came back and he took the final. I said, "Brian, how are you going to do this?" Well, he failed. The next time I saw him was when President Kennedy visited the university to speak at the Greek Theater. Brian marched through town in a massive demonstration carrying a coffin was marked American Democracy or Vietnam or some darn thing.

And then I saw him again in San Rafael, which is north of San Francisco by about 30 or 40 miles. I was a lawyer and had a trial there. He was the bailiff. I went up and talked to him and I said, "How are you doing?"

He said, "I'm a bailiff."

I said, "Brian, you were one of the smarter guys I knew in the class."

Q: The bailiff is --

KAPLAN: He's a, kind of an administrative officer of the court. And, and I said, I said, "Well, why don't you go back?"

"Too late. I blew it."

Q: Well, was the law school somewhat removed from the Mario Savios and the demonstrations?

KAPLAN: No, it wasn't. Well, it was in the sense it was near the top of a hill just down the street from the International House, but the work there was so intensive and so hard that you really had to study. And there was like a, almost like a cellar area where they had the so-called carels where everybody had a little tiny place to study. I was there all the time.

Q: Well --

KAPLAN: I found it very hard. I ended up in I think the top 20% of the class, or something like that. But I really had to work at it.

Q: You know, I'm familiar as so many people are with the movie "The Paper Chase" and all. Was this -- were the courses based on the case system or was this --

KAPLAN: Yes. Yes. And in the first -- I remember the first couple of days. One of the fellows who came in, professor, very young, he had just finished clerking for Chief Justice Warren. And it was Mike Hayman, who later became the chancellor of the university and the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Very, very nice man and a very serious fellow. There were 220 students in the incoming class, of which two were women. One was a taxi cab driver who just happened to be smart and got in, and the other was Kay Mickel a beautiful blonde who is now a justice of the California Supreme Court. She was number one in the class. There were two African American fellows; one dropped out pretty quickly and the other was Thelton Henderson who's now a federal judge in San Francisco. Very soft-spoken guy, involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and he did very well. We had our opening session with Dean Prosser who was called the King of Torts, Bill Prosser. We gathered in a large theater-like room where the seats went up and the whole room was completely full. He said, "I want you all to look to your left and look to your right; one of the three of you won't be here next year." And it happened just like that every year. He said, "If you want to take an easier course load you can go down the road to Stanford," which of course wasn't that easy *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: But he was giving us all fair warning and that really psyched everyone out. We had another professor by the name of Rex Collings, if I remember correctly, who had a course on torts. In his first class he assigned us a case name *In Nisi Prius*. I didn't have the slightest idea what it was about. It was only about five lines long. He started asking questions and no one would raise their hand so of course he called on me and he said, "What does that mean?" I said, "I don't know, it sounds like something Japanese," *(laughs).* He found that pretty funny.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And then if you would raise your hand and answer a question correctly then he'd just mow you down like a machine gunner with six follow-up questions.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: It really toughened you up. It was intellectually very demanding, but I didn't find it as interesting as the history or philosophy and all that. I remember, we had a professor by the name of Stefan Riesenfeld who taught a course in security transactions, which dealt with mortgages, deeds of trust. It was --

Q: Ooh.

KAPLAN: It was about as dry as you could possibly get. And I was sitting there and I had this newspaper, it was 1959 or so. I had this newspaper right on my table about how Castro had just reached the Sierra Madre Mountains with the revolution. I wasn't sympathetic to them, but I found that pretty interesting compared to security transactions. And that course was so hard that he would grade it so that if you'd answer a question correctly you'd get a point and if you didn't answer it he would take away a point, and if you answered incorrectly he would take away two points. This was just for one question. When he did the curve, people who had sort of like a minus 10 got a passing grade.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: There were other courses that I liked, constitutional law and contracts and property, all the sort of basic elements of the law. We learned what you needed to learn. And then in the last year there I took some courses, including one on international law with a fellow named Jackson who later on became quite a well-known expert on this, he taught at Michigan and maybe some other places. And there was another character like my friend Brian in the class who started protesting at the use of the words "international law," because in his opinion there was no international law. The professor played around with him for a while and then finally became exasperated. And he says, "Well, look, we all know that it's not perfect. But would you like to call it 'Ishkabibble' instead of international law? We can agree on some term."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: "And then we got on with it." So there was at least a certain amount of levity once you got to your last year of law school.

Q: Sort of what was your -- what were you looking at when you graduated from law school in 1962. By the way, while we're in that period, how did Kennedy strike you? Because this was often -- got people interested in government and activism --

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: Did it hit you, I mean affect you?

KAPLAN: Oh, we adored him. He was intellectual, he was really smart. He was the kind of man we all wanted to be. In subsequent years I've become less --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- less of that frame of mind. And of course there were very major issues. When I went off to my very next, my very first job after law school was in Sacramento. We can talk about that next time if you like.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I remember the day in Sacramento when in the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis when people really thought we were heading for a nuclear war and were hiding under desks and everything, I mean this was big stuff. But at the time he was just what everybody wanted to be. He was a model. And I think what you asked me was where did I think I was going as I was leaving law school. And the short word, the short answer is I wanted to go to politics and get involved at that stage. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life practicing law. I was convinced of that.

Q: OK. Well, we'll pick this up the next time.

KAPLAN: Good.

Q: Today is the 27th of March, 2014 with Philip Kaplan. And we are now out -- you've left law school and you're off to Sacramento. And so what are you doing up in Sacramento?

KAPLAN: Well, this was called the Legislative Internship Program, and it was sponsored by the Ford Foundation. And each of us went up there, we were assigned to a member of the state assembly, and usually committee chairmen. I was assigned to a fellow by the name of Phil Burton who was kind of a super liberal fellow from San Francisco, a man with great ambitions. He told me many times that he hoped to become president. He ultimately became a member of the House of Representatives, and he lost the speakership vote by one vote to Jim Wright. So he came pretty close, but he died tragically at a rather early age, maybe in his fifties, I don't remember exactly. But anyway, he was chairman of the Social Welfare Committee and I was assigned to him.

Q: You did this from when to when?

KAPLAN: Well, let's see. I got out of law school in 1962 and I went there directly and I spent a year there.

Q: OK. What were you doing as the intern?

KAPLAN: Well, it's sort of the way internships usually are. You have to make your own digs. They give you a few menial tasks to do, but if you want to really accomplish something then you have to figure out how to go about it. I studied up and noticed that there were four categories of social welfare in California, for the blind, the disabled, aid to needy children, and there was one more that doesn't occur to me right now. I asked Mr. Burton, "How about the deaf?" His eyes opened and he said, "I never thought of it. Why don't you see what you can do?"

That was enough of a mandate for me. I was young and eager to make my mark, and started going out and talking to people in the nonprofit and health care worlds and met people who had knowledge about the subject, which I certainly didn't when I started.

Q: Did you have any family or --

KAPLAN: No.

Q: -- acquaintances? Or this was just a --

KAPLAN: This was just --

Q: -- the blind, the --the deaf, but --

KAPLAN: The four categories, there's none for the deaf. And so I prepared with Mr. Burton's approval a bill that would either set up a fifth category of aid, which both he and I felt was highly unlikely because that would have been politically very difficult and there would have been political interests.

Q: Why would it be political?

KAPLAN: Well, there would have been political interests that would have been against it. First of all, the money part of it. And, and there was a risk that they would have to pay for that out of the budget for the categories that were already in existence to admit those people would have been heard.

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: And none of the usual politics that went with it. But we came up with, we came up with programs that actually did help them. I can't, I can't begin to remember all these years later what they were, but they were pretty effective and, I don't know, the speaker of the house at some point gave me a little, a little badge or award or something for *(laughs)* having done that.

Q: But you got something out of -- I mean you could say, "That's mine."

KAPLAN: That's right. That's right. That was my first public policy mark.

Q: (laughs) How did you find dealing with legislature, I mean the people you were, the people who were coming up there. Because sometimes you get the impression that, you know, you get a reporting on the Texas legislature, which sounds like a bunch of clowns.

KAPLAN: Well, these guys weren't clowns, they were, they were of mixed capabilities. A lot of them were lawyers and had training and therefore had a certain analytical capability. There were staffs of people to support them. There were a lot of incidents that would occur. I remember, Burton was a real liberal. I don't say that in a critical way. He was probably the most liberal guy I ever worked with, and very politically determined to move himself forward, and from this important city, San Francisco. And there was another guy in the legislature named Byron Rumford who I may have -- I think we talked about this the last time.

Q: I think you mentioned it.

KAPLAN: Yes, he introduced a fair housing bill, which, after I left the legislature and moved to San Mateo county, I went out and gave talks in support of it. But I got to know him. He was an African-American, maybe the only one in the legislature. And Burton was his big political buddy. Byron came from Berkeley and Phil Burton was across the bay in the big city. Mr. Rumford had a, had a very attractive secretary. It was not quite clear whether she was African-American or Caucasian. And Burton, who was a great believer in civil rights, asked me to go and take a look and see if I could make it out. I told him I didn't have the slightest idea. I wouldn't have told him even if I did know.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And he said, "I want you to really do this."

And I said to this great liberal, "You know, you're messing in something a little tricky here because there's something called the Fair Employment Practices Act," and at that point he backed down *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: Coming from a lot of other people it would have been expected. From him, no. There were other people there who were extremely bright. There were others who were less bright, just like in our Congress or Foreign Service or any other place. But the shrewdest one of them all was Jessie Unruh, from the Los Angeles area. He was the Speaker of the house and was known as Big Daddy.

Q: I remember seeing him on the cover of <u>Time Magazine</u> one time.

KAPLAN: He was very heavy when I first got to know him. I mean he could, he might have been over 300 pounds. I watched from the gallery as he would leave the speaker's platform, go down onto the floor: he'd go up to a Member, take him by the elbow, and lead him off the floor into some place just behind a door. And after the guy had voted against him the guy would come back and immediately vote for him.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: This happened all the time. The California legislature had a certain reputation for being influenced by lobbyists. The champion lobbyist was a little guy by the name of Artie Samuels, he was a railroad lobbyist for the California Railroad System. Mr. Samuels would set up in the gallery and the vote would come up and all the heads would turn up to the gallery and he'd either put his thumb up or thumb down and that's how they'd vote *(laughs).* Well, Mr. Unruh was a lot more sophisticated than that. It was also interesting that before my year ended he, the speaker, must have lost half his weight or something. I mean he went on an absolutely unbelievable crash diet and then he became

much slimmer and some people said some more ruthless as a result of it because, you know about Cassius. Toward the end of my service I told him I was interested in public policy and politics, and I would love to be able to come back to this body as a Member, and eventually run for Congress.

I was a really young guy. I'd just gotten out of law school so I was in my mid-twenties. And he said to me, "Well, young man, I saw what you did on the welfare bill. I'm sure we could find you a seat." I expressed my gratitude and he said, "There's one open, a safe seat, in Barstow, which is in the southern California desert."

Q: I know Barstow.

KAPLAN: I mean *really* in the desert, where it gets well over a hundred on most days. And he said, "Would you like that?"

I said, "Nein danke (no thank you)."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* I said, "You've got -- if you're going to represent people you have to really be attached to the people, you want to go there a lot." And I said, "I would not want to spend the rest of my life in Barstow."

So he said, "Well, I understand that." And then he got up, shook my hand and said, "Good luck, see you around," and that was the end of that *(laughs)*.

Q: (laughs) Well, how did you find -- what was your impression of the governance of California at the time?

KAPLAN: Well, we had the great good fortune to have as governor Pat Brown, not Jerry Brown, but his father.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Who did absolutely extraordinary things, moving water down from the north to the south where it was needed, massive projects really, very creative. He was not a particularly imposing man when you met him. He was just a fellow with these big moony glasses who looked like Everyman. But he was creative and he was able to relate to the members of the legislature, which we haven't seen many presidents do for a long time. And he got these things through that -- I mean to move water from one part of this state to another part of this huge state meant that the state, that part of the state, the north that was losing the water, had some real reasons to be unhappy. But he was able to broker that deal and make it work. He was also, I wouldn't say the sole father but this extraordinarily imaginative man helped make the California state education system the wonder of the world. I went to law school in Berkeley before I came to the legislature, and you know, I went almost for free. Many other people went to this great university. Now there are

something like 10 branches of the university system and God knows how many state colleges in the system. So a lot of people in California can go to college for an extraordinarily low rate, and very high quality education, although now there's all the financial crisis that's been going on, starving university budgets.

Q: Well, had proposition 15 taken place, or --

KAPLAN: No. That was later.

Q: That was later. Because somehow or another I gather that that was a crucial and a very disabling --

KAPLAN: That's right. And now the, the finances of the state a few years ago were really dreadful. California had gone from becoming the golden state to the pyrite state.

Q: Well, you had this year -- since you didn't want to sweat in Barstow where'd you go? What'd you do?

KAPLAN: Well sometime during that year I took the California Bar Exam, and there was one interesting thing that I'll never forget. I got ready for the bar exam and I was blessed with a kind of photographic memory. And so I boiled down each of the subject matters -- three years of law school -- into an outline, and then boiled down all the outlines further and further, engraining all of this without even realizing it in my memory. And by the time I came to the day of the bar it was on one page, the entire three years. It looked like Mad Magazine. But it worked for me. I went once to the official bar exam review course in San Francisco, then back over the Bay Bridge to Berkeley and decided that wasn't going to work for me, so just did it on my own. On the first day of the bar exam one of the teeth in my mouth came loose. As I walked into the exam the tooth was hanging out of the mouth. I was focused on getting the job done that this was quite a distraction. So I went up to this young woman who was one of the attendants and I said, "I need during the lunch hour an appointment with a dentist on Market Street, really near here, so I can go in there, get it done, and get back here for the second session in the afternoon." After the morning session, she said, "Yes, Dr. Ortiz is just down the street."

Dr. Ortiz's office was one of these places that you never want to enter. I walked in and Dr. Ortiz appeared with blood all over his white apron. I got out of there as fast as I could *(laughs)*. I finished the Bar Exam and that night, by pre-arrangement, my regular dentist waited for me and he did the job. And I'll tell you something, all these decades later that tooth is still right where he fixed it.

Q: Oh.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* So I took the bar exam and I was in Sacramento, and I decided to go to San Mateo County, which is just south of San Francisco. I went into a labor law firm. I had no particular knowledge of labor law, I had taken a course in it. The firm did mainly workman's compensation cases, which meant that I was in the workman's compensation

court every single day and I got an enormous amount of trial experience, questioning witnesses, making my case, and all the rest of it. There were people who, you know, were bricklayers or lifting heavy things or hurting their backs and discs were bulging. And I, you know, I didn't know any of that, but I began to learn it as you have to. And I stayed there for a year, but at the end of that year I had really learned a lot about going into a courtroom. It's a different courtroom than a civil courtroom, it's a special kind of administrative proceeding. But nonetheless, it's basically a courtroom activity.

Q: Well, what was the social contact between the, the government or between the worker and the employer? I mean --

KAPLAN: Well, the employer had responsibility if the accident occurred on the job and as a result of the work that the fellow was doing. And of course the employer would always try to make the case that this happened for non-work reasons. I was representing employees, my bosses who ran this law firm were veteran lawyers close to the unions. We were in San Mateo in a fairly pedestrian law office on the other side of the main stream, or what the British would call the high street. We were on the lower side of the street, but clients came jamming in every day. I was an associate doing this work.

Q: Well, was this the time of the labor union -- the agricultural workers --

KAPLAN: Oh yes, Cesar Chavez.

Q: Was this going on at that time?

KAPLAN: It was, although I wasn't involved with that. We were dealing with industrial workers.

Q: Ah. How did you find that -- were the courts sympathetic towards the workers or were they sort of on -- basically on the side of --

KAPLAN: There wasn't a judge. There was a referee who would hear these cases and then make his decision. My impression was that, while you can't generalize about different judges or referees, that they had heard so many of these cases, multiple cases every day 24/7, that they became somewhat immune from sympathy for pain. For any individual workman who suddenly hurts his back or some other part of his anatomy the pain can be really tough. And if he goes back on the job and reinjures he could be permanently disabled. And some of these folks had no choice but to go to work and do this heavy work again. But some of these referees had seen all this over and over and over and over, and, and they no doubt had encountered some people who put in fraudulent claims, so they were somewhat suspicious of claims being put forward. But in terms of my own personal experience, I found that if you presented the case effectively that they were fairly reasonable about their outcome.

Q: Were you -- did you become interested in becoming a labor lawyer and all?

KAPLAN: No. After that I decided well I had done that, I mean how many times can you, can you do six workman's comp hearings in a day. I have a friend who's a doctor, actually one of the great back surgeons of the Washington D.C. area. And I had the only operation really of my life two years ago, on my back, and fortunately it wasn't a major operation. But still, you know, an operation on your back is still an operation on your back. And he does five or six of these a day. It's mind boggling to me, because you have to be completely attentive and so forth.

Q: Yeah. Yea.

KAPLAN: Well no, I decided instead that my interest was, as I told Speaker Unruh, in politics. So I decided to go into a law firm and I had a couple of options. I'd after all gone to Berkeley, which was an outstanding law school. One was to go up to the big city, to San Francisco. I could live in San Mateo County and work in a big law firm up in San Francisco and begin to establish myself. The other alternative was to stay in San Mateo County and work in a law firm there and be part of the local community. Given the fact that my objective at the time was not to be in a big law firm and maximize my income, but rather to prepare myself for whatever I could find in the political realm, I went and stayed in San Mateo County and went down to Redwood City, which then was a really sleepy little place. It was something out of Washington Irving, Sleepy Hollow. Now of course it's part of Silicon Valley. I went first into a firm where there was an experienced lawyer who did all kinds of things. And I was either the only other person or there might have been one other in the firm, and so I got a lot of experience doing all sorts of different things. After that I went into a somewhat larger firm where there were about four or five attorneys, and my name was actually on the door at that point. I had no business to speak of when I went there, but the boss was an expert in mechanics lien cases, which is about as dry as you can possibly imagine.

Q: What is this?

KAPLAN: Well these were like holds that were put on a business transaction that involved industrial activity and so forth. I found it so boring I couldn't stand it. But it was starting to put some bread on the table. And then I went out and started to get some business on my own. And the first day I was in this firm a young secretary named Valerie came to the back where I was sitting and said, "There's a gentleman here who was just in court and they gave him a week to get a lawyer. Would you like to see him?"

I said, "Show him right in."

It turned out that he was a factory employee accused of hitting his supervisor over the head with a hammer. I interviewed the fellow and there seemed to be some questionable elements of the accusation against him. In any event he had a right to a lawyer and I needed clients. So I said to him, "Yes, I'll be glad to represent you and the fee will be a thousand dollars. You have to put down $500 now and $500 later." And he said OK. The next day he came back with $500. I called up my wife and said, "I've been here for half

an hour, I got $500, $500 an hour times two means $1,000 in an hour, times eight days, we're rich," *(laughs).* It didn't work quite that way.

I tried this case as the defense attorney and was able to get him off due to anomalies in the prosecution's case. Very few people in this law firm that I'm in now know this, but I tried 20 criminal cases from beginning to end, and I won 19. The only one I lost was when the policeman who testified lied. But I figure that at least half my clients may have been guilty. I got the experience of going to court and getting a taste of the judicial system. I had already been in Sacramento and gotten a taste of the legislative branch. And of course we ended up in the third branch, the executive branch here in Washington.

Q: So you kept this up for how long were you -- first place, since you were sort of hopping around as a young lawyer, is this -- I always had the feeling that lawyers are supposed to stay in a firm for seven years and --

KAPLAN: If that's your objective, to become a partner in a large firm, but it was never my purpose to be a lawyer all my life. I'm not disparaging the profession. Here I am, back in a law firm, now for some years. But I was more interested in the political side.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I was trying to figure out how I could use the training I obtained, which I considered important because it facilitated the main intellectual benefit from law school to be able to get right to the core of the issue, to really see the very nub of it. The lawyers use the word "the gravamen;" that's what it means. It's what good lawyers do when they argue a case. And as you know, that's very similar to what you do in the policy process.

Q: Yeah. So what were you doing? I mean what's this lead up to?

KAPLAN: Well, I practiced law for about four and a half years, and I started making speeches in the county, which is the way you get yourself known. It's good for getting business, but it's also good for getting yourself known if you're interested in a political career. And I had planned to run. And there was a, a congressman in Connecticut where I was born, but he came from upstate in the richer part of the state. His name was Horace Seeley Brown, like a character out of "Carousel" or something. He would distribute potholders with his to housewives in his district, and for two years they were like a billboard, right, in the kitchen?

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: It was amazingly successful. He was elected 20 times or something like that. He even beat Chester Bowles, the statesman from Essex. Anyway, the incumbent Republican congressman in my district was expected to retire at the end of this particular term, which would have been an opening, but then, mid-term. the poor fellow died in office. Instead of being a full campaign I was faced with a 60-day special election.

A few months before, I had taken the Foreign Service test as a lark. As I was waiting for the results, I was practicing law, giving my little speeches, and thinking of running. Then a couple of things happened. First, Shirley Temple announced that she was going to run for the congressional seat. And I said, "Well, I think her name recognition is slightly better than mine," *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: The second thing that happened was I got this letter: "Greetings, you have been accepted to the Foreign Service." I was amazed, because I found it very hard, even harder than the bar exam, and the California Bar Exam was not known for being an easy one. Different kinds of exams, but still.

Q: Yeah, but still.

KAPLAN: So now I really had to make a decision. And I had a friend by the name of Pete McCloskey, a ex-marine. And he and I sat down and had a talk and I said, "Look, I'm going to Washington and be a diplomat, you go to Washington and be a congressman." I said to myself, "He'll never beat Shirley Temple. Who could beat Shirley Temple? I mean she's America's sweetheart, you know?" She had the Public Relations firm that Ronald Reagan later had, Spencer Roberts, and they advised her to run a Warren Harding campaign, just sit on her porch and smile and never say a word. But Shirley decided she was going to go out and campaign every day. Pete McCloskey became congressman. I never regretted the choice. I liked international matters anyway. He became a congressman. I don't remember how long he stayed in Washington, but --

Q: Well, he was a name. I mean --

KAPLAN: He was a name.

Q: I -- when you said the name I realized that I can't remember exactly what about, but I mean he was one of the movers and shakers of the --

KAPLAN: That's right. And the great irony of all this, many years later -- we'll get to this later, probably not today -- I was ambassador at the Conventional Forces Negotiation. And we were negotiating with the Soviets with the Warsaw Pact in Vienna, and we had gone a long way toward completing the treaty, it wasn't completely done. There was something called Article 3 of the treaty, which explained very precisely how the various weapons systems that were to be destroyed would be destroyed. I was sent to Prague and met the chief of staff of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces. He was a general, and I explained to him in excruciating detail under the treaty how the aircraft and the combat helicopters and the tanks and the other equipment, armament patrol, would have to be destroyed. You know, you'd have to take the wing off this way, you'd have to do this to the tank, and so forth. And the poor fellow was sitting there just turning blue. And then he said to me, "Do you know how the Russians cheated us when they sold us this equipment? And now you're going to destroy it all?"

I said, "I'm sorry, but that's what the treaty provides for." When the meeting was over, I was escorted out of the Czernin Palace, which is the Foreign Ministry in Prague, where this conversation took place, by their military attaché at the Vienna negotiation. He told me, "You know, this is the first time we've had a talk with a senior foreign official that didn't talk down to us; the Soviets would just be brutal." And then he looked at me and he said -- this man was 50-years-old -- and he, you know, the Soviets were out by this point. He said, "You know, I just realized I just lost the last 45 years of my life." I found that a very poignant moment.

I was taken to the ambassador's residence, our ambassador's residence to stay overnight. And there was Ambassador Shirley Temple. Of course, she had *no idea* of this background. I told her this story and she laughed. She was very charming and gracious, and we became friends. We didn't have a long relationship, but we became friends. And I'm told that she did an excellent job both in Prague and in Ghana where she'd served as ambassador before. So this was what I was about. I was trying to do my job as a lawyer, earn our bread, doing a little bit of politics, I took the Foreign Service test. And it all sort of came together with a decision to go into the Foreign Service.

Q: Do you recall in the oral exam any of the questions that were asked?

KAPLAN: The only thing I recall is that they asked me about what literature I had been reading. I didn't find the oral exam particularly hard, in contrast to the difficult written exam. What they said to me was, look, you're a lawyer, you're doing pretty well, why do you want to come into the Foreign Service through the normal process? Why didn't you want to come in lateral entry? I didn't even know what lateral entry was. So what they did was they brought me in as an FSO-7 (out of 8, the lowest level). Then I was able to advance initially fairly quickly.

Q: Well, did -- you came in when? This was --

KAPLAN: Well, this is actually quite significant for everything else. I came in in late '67 and was about to go off to my first assignment in '68, a year of the youth movements in the U.S. and Europe -- it was a very tumultuous period.

Q: Yeah, anti-Vietnam and --

KAPLAN: Anti-Vietnam, the Prague Spring, a lot of stuff was going on.

Q: Yeah, civil rights, yeah.

KAPLAN: All that that helped define the kind of challenges that we began to encounter.

Q: Well, did you feel, particularly having been so involved in various matters in California, that going into the government that you were leaving the seat of combat, or?

KAPLAN: No, because I had thought very carefully about what I wanted to do in the Foreign Service. I mean we all know the way it works, you go in there and you take this A-100 orientation class and then you're given some sort of assignment and you go off and you have a rotational assignment, and where you land is a very iffy proposition. The Vietnam War was raging and, in my class of some 50 new officers, all but two went to Vietnam. There was a ceremony at the end of the A-100 course, at the old FSI in Arlington, it was one of these rooms like a theater where the seats went up.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: The wives and mothers and fathers and loved ones and everybody was there for this event. And I think it was Bill Bundy agreed to announce the assignments. He on a stage, standing sideways, and you would come up and stand sideways facing him. Then he droned on 48 times if it was 50 people, "Congratulations, you've been assigned to the Revolutionary Development Corps in Vietnam." There were groans from across the room *(laughs)*, particularly from the, you know, the wives. There were only I think two women in the class, one of whom was an young woman from Sandusky, Ohio, who was sent to Lahore, Pakistan. I was assigned to Brussels, to the mission to the European Community. Now, let me tell you Stuart, this didn't just happen *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs) I'm shocked.

KAPLAN: I'll tell you how it happened. We took the A-100 course, and one day there was a fire in the city of Washington. There were huge riots and all of that. We went up to the top of the Foreign Service Institute roof and could see the fires. I thought it was *Gone with the Wind*.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: The mayor, Walter Washington at that time, issued a statement asking for all lawyers to come into the city to help with this, and I did, representing some of the young folks who had been arrested. When the Christmas break took place, I visited office of European Community Affairs at State and found this fellow, Jerry Hellman, who was the number two guy on that desk, and said, "Mr. Hellman, I would like to volunteer to work for free for you during the Christmas period."

And he said, "You know, thank you very much, but there's really nothing that I can give you to do. Brussels will be closed during Christmas, and there's nobody here. There's no work even for a beginner like you."

I said, "There must be something."

He said, "Well, the only thing I can think of I would be embarrassed to ask you. Our filing system is a terrible mess."

I said, "I'll do it."

It took me a couple of days. He came back, everything was shiny. He said, "That's terrific! Would you like to go to Brussels to our Mission at the European Community?" I said, "Let's shake on it." *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: That's how I got to Brussels. So you don't have to be smart, you just have to kind of reach out.

Q: Well, how did you find your A-100 class? Could you characterize it, or?

KAPLAN: I thought my new colleagues were quite intelligent, and we met some very important people, including Averill Harriman. Real giants. The fellow who ran the class, whose name I won't mention, told us that the thing to be careful of was to not make waves. If you want to get ahead you have to go along. Well, that really cut across—"

Q: Yeah, yeah.

KAPLAN: Harriman came in one day and he said, "I've got just one little piece of advice for you all. You go out there and make waves all over the place. But be careful, do it diplomatically because you could get hurt if somebody gets irritated with you, there are a lot of people who have a keen sense of turf." So I took a lot of comfort from his advice. I was still young, impressionable. I'd been a lawyer but this was a whole new world. I remember the first day we got to the State Department my wife was with me and she said, "Look at those high foreheads coming out of here. They must be very smart," *(laughs).*

I said, "I've got a long ways to go."

Q: Did -- how'd you feel about the Vietnam War?

KAPLAN: Well, I was always two minds about it. I was aware of the fact that we were committed in a country about which we probably didn't know a great deal, and of course, I had seen the French go down at Dien Bien Phu. It was my impression that the Vietnamese were going to fight to the last man if they had to. They had everything to gain; they just couldn't afford to lose. Subsequently I've learned a little bit about guerilla tactics and how Asians tend to approach these things. Many years later when I came to Patton Boggs I went to Vietnam for the first time and I was ushered in to meet with General Giap and we talked for about an hour.

All right. The other side of the equation was that I saw this as part of the Cold War and jockeying for position between the Soviets and us. And I thought much the way I think President Johnson did when he finally got immersed in all this, that we were just between a rock and a hard place. If we had walked out the consequences of that would be serious. It turned out not to be quite as serious as we feared: ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was formed to counter the risks. But there was a post-Vietnam mindset

against engagement anywhere that prevailed for quite a long time. It certainly was evident in the Carter administration. And then Reagan came in and reversed it. But even then it never entirely went away; now the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and against terrorism, have led to a period now of pronounced retrenchment, with adverse consequences for U.S. interests and global stability.

So it wasn't an easy issue to grapple with and I was in my early thirties, trying to cope with this like everybody else, seeing the Watergate scandal, the rest of it. The one thing I took away was there aren't easy answers for big challenges, and when you're absolutely convinced that you've got something right, you'd better red-team your answer and make sure that you've considered the other side of it.

Q: Well, you were off to Brussels then in, what, '68?

KAPLAN: '68.

Q: What was your job and what were --

KAPLAN: Well, before I went to Brussels I should tell you that I went up to Princeton. I don't know if I mentioned this before, I met George Kennan?

Q: No.

KAPLAN: When I first arrived in the Foreign Service I had read his memoirs, I thought they were marvelous, literary gems. I've subsequently come to the conclusion that I didn't agree with a number of the things he said. I never changed my mind about that even after having read this 800-page biography of him that was published by this Yale professor recently.

Q: John Gaddis.

KAPLAN: That's right, who's a very respected scholar, and Gaddis I think had it just about right. Anyway, I asked Mr. Kennan, very naively, what's the secret to a successful Foreign Service career. And he was very gracious, he didn't laugh at me. He said, "The secret is to be in places that matter *when* they matter." I never forgot that. And I reached the conclusion -- for reasons I'll explain -- that the place that mattered at that particular point in time the was center of Europe. There was a European integration movement going on in Western Europe, there was the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the attack on Czechoslovakia, which I'll come to presently, and Germany was in a process of redefinition in the aftermath of the 1961 raising of the Berlin Wall. So my purpose was to get to Europe, and I owed that to my trip to the filing system. I was assigned to Brussels. I took French at the Foreign Service Institute, and passed the course. We had a very highly professional mission there headed by Ambassador Bob Schaetzel; George Vest was the DCM and John Renner was the economic counselor. I was put in the Economic Section as the junior officer. Investment policy was my beat. This was the time of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and the Le Défi Américain and all of that.

Q: The American Challenge.

KAPLAN: That's right. I was told, "You're going to do investment policy. Go get 'em." I had a couple of bosses. Renner was the big boss in the Economic Section. Ambassador Schaetzel was very kind to me, as was George Vest. In the economic section I worked with Tony Albrecht and Tom Summers, who did trade and finance. I went around and developed a range of contacts at the Berlaymont building where the European Commission was quartered, and among the permanent representations of the EC-six original member-state: the French, the Germans, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Luxembourgers, and the Italians. I also made contacts among some other delegations, particularly the Swiss. They had a brilliant fellow there, Benedikt von Tscharner, who later became one of the superstars of the Swiss Foreign Service. Whenever I couldn't figure something out, I turned to Benedikt.

After a few weeks in Brussels, I went up to see the DCM and I said, "I would like to apply to take German," because I knew that's where I wanted to end up. I wanted to get to Germany because in my mind -- and I still believe this -- the Cold War was essentially about who was going to have the greatest influence in Germany. Mackinder had said, "He who controls Germany controls Europe. He who controls Europe controls the world." And so Mr. Vest kindly arranged to make that happen. I had just taken the French course. So the pedagogy of learning the language was very fresh in my mind, and there were certain words that I learned you'd use a lot. For example, the French word *éviter* means to avoid; the German word for avoid was *vermeiden*, I tucked that in quickly. My teacher – one on one -- was a young German woman who would come at 8 A.M. three times a week for an hour, and I worked the tapes the way I learned to do in the Foreign Service Institute. My German wasn't perfect, but I managed to get myself assigned to Bonn and once I got there, my vocabulary exploded.

Q: Let's go back to Brussels now. How did you find -- I mean Brussels is a place -- how many embassies did they have there?

KAPLAN: Oh, a lot.

Q: Did we have there. I mean --

KAPLAN: Oh, we had our bilateral embassy, we had the mission I was in, to the European Community, and there was our mission, USNATO to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Q: And then we of course had one to Belgium itself.

KAPLAN: That's it, the bilateral embassy, that's right.

Q: And first place, were you --

KAPLAN: I might say one word if you don't mind about the bilateral embassy. I worked there for six weeks when I first got there. It was the summer. The mission was -- and the Commission were basically out of commission. They put me in the consulate for six weeks because they needed extra hands during the summer. I was taught that the key criterion for granting non-immigrant (tourist) visas is whether the applicant was going to come back or not, whether they had sufficient ties to their home country, in that case, Belgium. There were two veteran Belgian locals, elderly women who were strong traditionalists. There was only one way to do things: their way. Well, I figured this was a short-term duty so I'm just going just go along with them. On the last day, the very last interview that I conducted before I left the consulate, a gorgeous young woman came in for a visa to the United States. I asked about her ties to the (Belgian) community, and she said, "Well, I've been working here for some time."

I asked, "What kind of job do you have?"

She flashed me a winning smile and said, "I'm a dancer." It was pretty clear to me what kind of a dancer she was *(laughs).*

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I granted her the visa. As I left the consulate these two women, who I'd gotten along with, because I'd gone along with them, glared at me *(laughs)* --

Q: (laughs) Did --

KAPLAN: But your question was really about, I think about what were the conditions in Europe and how did I try to adapt to them. Well, I come back again to the fact that it was 1968 and everything was up for grabs. I was in Paris on one weekend where students were throwing paving blocks around and trying to bring De Gaulle down, and De Gaulle came back with that phrase telling them to go to the devil. This was also the time that Willy Brandt became West German foreign minister and then chancellor. He introduced the *Ostpolitik*, the eastern policy, his own kind of détente. It was basically a wager on his part that if you worked within these treaties, that over an extended period of time it would be possible to reunify the country. President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger were skeptical about his goals and anxious that they might undercut their own détente policies.

So there were two great games going on in Brussels and in Europe, one was the effort to integrate Western Europe, and that that was our mission's task, we were dealing with the European Community. We were very supportive because Ambassador Schaetzel was *really* committed. He was close to George Ball, who in turn was very close to Jean Monet, the founder of the European movement. I had the extraordinary good fortune to be working for somebody who was right in the middle of all of this, right in the fray. Mr. Ball would come to visit the mission, I would collect him at the airport. At the beginning of 1969, President Nixon came immediately after his inauguration to talk to the three missions.

Q: OK, going back, first place, '68, were you there when the Warsaw Pact essentially invaded Czechoslovakia?

KAPLAN: Indeed. I finished my A-100 course in the spring. In late July we flew to Stuttgart in Germany to buy a car. I bought a brand new Mercedes for $2,000 at a diplomatic discount. Not bad. Before we went on to our first posting in Brussels we took a little detour to Prague, where we had been a couple years before as tourists. We found the city absolutely beautiful. When we had been there in '66, Novotny, the communist leader, was still in power. A young Czech guide took us around and made critical comments about Novotny. In '68 on the way to Brussels we stopped in the *Staré Mesto*, the old town square, it was three weeks before the Red Army invasion. It was raining hard. And there was the statue of John Hus, the --

Q: Hussite leader.

KAPLAN: That's right, was almost as though there were tears coming out of his eyes because of the rain falling on the statue.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And I said to my wife, "Every single person in this square knows that the Russians are coming." We went next to Bratislava. The Slovak provincial capital, and walked around near the *Hrad*, their castle. A little old man came up to me, a World War II veteran with a wooden leg … tap, tap, tap on the cobblestones. I was wearing a blue blazer and he must have figured that I looked like an American. He said, "The Soviets are here." We spoke in German and my German was at that point very elementary.

I said, "What do you mean?" I was a little nervous, I was going in my first assignment and I didn't want my career to end before it started *(laughs).*

He slipped me a piece of paper. He said, "Those are the numbers of the Red Army units. They're going around in Czech military trucks, they're wearing Czechoslovak uniforms. But they're here. And they're coming."

I had no way of knowing whether he was out of his mind or whether he was providing real intelligence. And then this big Soviet soldier came up to me. He was with his -- I guess he was with his bride and with a couple other Soviet soldiers and their wives. And he takes this piece of medal out, I thought he had a gun. And it turned out it was a small camera. And he said, "Can you take our pictures," *(laughs).*

Well, I went back to Prague and our embassy and saw Ambassador Jake Beam, who was our former ambassador to the Soviet Union --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- a man of considerable standing and experience. And I said "Mr.

Ambassador, I'm a total novice, but this is what the man said and here's the piece of paper with the unit numbers."

He looked at it skeptically and he said, "Well, where are you assigned?"

And I said, "I'm on my way to my first assignment," *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: He said, "What do you suggest?"

I said, "Well, it's not for me to tell a man of your standing what to do, but maybe one of your defense attaches can go to Bratislava and take a look around."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: He stood up and said, "Thank you for your visit," and off I went, figuring I'd been admonished the way a diplomat would. The Soviet invasion took place about two or three weeks later; he had the good grace to send me a note thanking me for having come by. Which surprised me. So we ended up in Brussels and got started.

Q: This is a period where they were throwing rocks at our -- the Belgians were throwing rocks at our embassy, our consulate general in Antwerp I believe.

KAPLAN: I actually don't remember that, but I -- there were all kinds of anti-Vietnam demonstrations going on.

Q: Were you -- did you get the feel for the anti-Vietnam movement in where you were, or not?

KAPLAN: Well, it was aimed at policy and here was Nixon who six months later was president and not particularly popular among the Europeans, and they were dazzled by Kissinger but didn't always trust him completely.

Q: No.

KAPLAN: And so all that went together with the --

Q: You did mention there were several things with Nixon's visit that --

KAPLAN: Oh yes. Before he arrived, Mr. Haldeman came. Haldeman and Ehrlichman were the two, two fellows who were closest to Nixon. They were basically PR (public relations) and advertising executives, but they were close to Nixon. Kissinger used to refer to them as the Germans, which is kind of strange because Kissinger was German by birth. Well, Haldeman came over to advance the president's visit. I'd never been involved in anything like that before, but George Vest, the DCM, was kind enough to include me

when we went around. We had briefed Haldeman that the Belgians wanted to host a reception and to which the most important people in the kingdom would be invited, that there'd be a meeting at NATO and then the president would meet with the European Commission. Haldeman just sat there rolling his eyes. He said, "Wrong, wrong, wrong. You go back and tell the people at the palace that we'll give 'em 45 minutes." They wanted 45 minutes for the cocktail party before the lunch started. We'll go to NATO and EC people can come to our hotel for a little while." I had the sense that this was my first diplomatic crisis *(laughs).*

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: We brought him to the chamberlain in the Belgian king's palace. Haldeman was pretty brutal about it. The deal that emerged was that there wouldn't be a reception, but there would be a lunch limited to an hour and 10 minutes. The meeting at NATO was longer because Nixon was interested in that.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: With everything that was going on, the Czech invasion and all that. As for the EC, the president of the commission and two other commissioners come to see Nixon at the hotel for 15 minutes. And there were a lot of sore feelings --

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: -- as a result of that. On the way back in the car Mr. Vest said to me, "Now you've got your introduction to the way the White House treats foreigners."

Q: Oh God. Well, I'm looking at my time.

KAPLAN: Yeah.

Q: I'd like to pick this up. When you left Brussels where'd you go?

KAPLAN: Well, there's one, one last piece of that. I went to Mr. Renner, who was the economic counselor. He was a hard task master. I had reason to be indebted to him. He got me a double promotion, which I had never heard of before. My *magnum opus* on investment policy was a 12-page cable. In those days, , we had these green cable forms --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- and about four or five carbons underneath it. And this was going to the secretary of state in Washington with copies to London, Paris, Rome, and the obvious countries. My secretary was somebody who was not inclined toward a lot of hard work and I was low man on the totem pole. Eileen typed this up, I proofread it and brought it to Renner and he read through all 12 pages. He said, "This is very good. Now, I'm going to teach you something now that you'll never forget. You have to read from the top." And

the word Paris, Embassy Paris, in the info copy, instead of P-A-R-I-S, it was P-R-A-I-S. He took a crayon and drew a heavy line down all 12 pages.

And I said to him, "How are dare you? Eileen is going to take her letter opener and put it in my throat when she sees this."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: She'll have to do the whole thing all over again.

Q: Oh God.

KAPLAN: He said, "That's right, but you'll never forget what I've just taught you." And I never have.

Now I said I was indebted to John Renner. Much earlier, I told him I was studying German and wanted to be assigned next to Bonn. He told me the key man in our Embassy was Jonathan Dean, the political counselor."

Q: Who I've interviewed.

KAPLAN: Yes, in fact I read the interview. Renner advised me to send a short overnight letter to him; (there were no emails or faxes in those days). So I wrote out a letter. "Dear Mr. Dean, I've concluded my first assignment. I wish to be assigned to work for you. I would like to come to Bonn to do that. I only want five minutes of your time, and then I'll go back to Brussels."

He was astonished. It was sort of the filing system again. I arrived in Bonn by train on gray evening. And it looked like something out of Le Carre's small town in Germany. At the guesthouse they in Plittersdorf, where the American embassy staff was housed, I turned on the television and watched Willy Brandt and Leonid Brezhnev sign the Russo-German treaty which evoked memories in Washington of the Rapallo treaty of the 1920s. And it looked to me like that the fights between the government and the opposition were really vicious.

The next morning I went in to see Mr. Dean. Frances, his secretary said, "Wait a minute. There's a doctor who's coming." Apparently he had a growth on his neck and he had been unwilling to walk down to the medical unit, which was about a three-minute walk from his office. The doctor came in and Mr. Dean was sitting there reading all his files and the doctor looked at his neck, and said, "This is ugly, it's got to come off."

Dean said, "Then get it off. You've got one minute." And so the doctor *(makes slash sound),* and off it came.

I was looking at this, and they put these bandages on his neck. Dean got up, he could be quite gruff, and he said, "Go away," and the doctor slipped out as quickly as he could.

Frances said, “Your turn.”

I walked in and he said, “All right, I’ve seen your letter. What do you want?”

I said, “I want to work for you.”

He said to me, “What do you know about political-military affairs? Have you ever served in the army?”

I said, “No, I haven’t, and frankly I don’t know a gun from a rake. But inside 30 days I’ll know more about it than anybody in the embassy, because I’ll work that hard.”

He said, “You’re hired.”

I said, “Thank you, sir,” and off I went before he could --

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And that’s exactly how I got the job.

Q: Great.

KAPLAN: It was amazing. I can’t imagine it happens that way in these days. And I went back to Brussels and in due course I went to Bonn.

Q: Great. OK, well we’ll pick this up when you’re in Bonn. You were in Bonn from when to when?

KAPLAN: I arrived there in, let’s see, ’62 -- 1970, 1970 through 1974.

Q: OK.

KAPLAN: And it was a fascinating period.

Q: OK. Today is the 31st of March, 2014 with Ambassador Philip Kaplan. And we have now reached the point where you’ve made your, your mark with Jonathan Dean.

KAPLAN: Right.

Q: Who, by the way, I have interviewed so you might want to read his account. Great negotiator, he really --

KAPLAN: Yes, he died very recently.

Q: Yeah. Anyway, so you’re off to Bonn. Where did you go and what was the period you

served?

KAPLAN: Sure. Well, I arrived in Bonn in roughly July or August 1970 and I spent four years there until 1974. I arrived when Willy Brandt had been in power for about a year or so. And I departed one month after Brandt was brought down by the scandal over his aide, Gunter Guillaume, the East German spy. I was assigned to, as I indicated to work on political military affairs, about which I had very little experience. So I was determined to dig in and really try to learn the subject matter. And --

Q: You were going to learn the difference between a rake and a rifle.

KAPLAN: That's right *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And I had to do that because the first job I was assigned was to work on the reform packages being considered for the Bundeswehr, the German Armed Forces. That brought me into contact very frequently with the NATO desk of the Foreign Ministry, the Auswartiges Amt, and the Defense Ministry, the Verteidigungsministerium. The defense minister was Helmut Schmidt who later became chancellor once Brandt departed.

Q: You'd come from Brussels. How would you describe our embassy and sort of the atmosphere there? Was it different than --

KAPLAN: It was an enormous difference, and it's very perceptive of you to put your finger on it. In Brussels I was in the mission to the European Community, now the European Union. The work that was being done was considered to be important and high priority by our administration, it went to the heart of the economic element of the transatlantic relationship, It was multilateral, dealing with all the different constituent parts of the European Community. Because our work dealt with trade issues and investment and financial questions, it didn't involve sensitive national security information. We had five officers in our Economic Section, and the Political Section was similar, and then, of course, the ambassador and the DCM, and some administrative people, labor and agriculture attaches. That was the mission in Brussels. Bonn was one of the biggest embassies in the world. The first day *(laughs),* somebody walked in with a cable with a top-secret cover page. The next day I got something that said, "Top Secret - Sensitive." I went to my boss and I said, "I thought top secret was a high classification. Why would they call it top secret-sensitive?"

And he said to me, "That's to show that they really mean it."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: About a week later I got something that said, "Top Secret – Very Sensitive."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And so I went and I asked the same question, and he said, "That's to show that they *really* mean it."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: So your question is very relevant because immediately it became clear to me that this was a high powered operation, that the information I was dealing with was at a much higher level of national security sensitivity, and that the issues that were at stake went right to the heart of America's security interests in Europe.

Q: Did you feel that every German was a potential East German agent or I mean -- this was, you know, we're talking about a scandal that later came up.

KAPLAN: Right.

Q: But the East Germans under Mr. Wolf, it wasn't Wolf --

KAPLAN: Marcus Wolff was the lawyer they used; he was close to the Soviets and to the East German leadership, and he was a very smart guy.

Q: But anyway, so I mean you were up against a very sophisticated apparatus and I would think that this would have made you even more aware of espionage and --

KAPLAN: Well, Germany was -- I was there starting in 1970, 25 years after the end of World War II. Germans had become, in effect to use the long German word, *salonfaehig*: they were now considered to be fit to receive in your living room. The stains had begun to be washed away from the Holocaust and all the horrible things that happened in World War II. I threw myself into it headfirst and met a very wide-range of people. Most of the people I dealt with were decent folks, determined to move beyond what their nation had done. I can comment that I've been going back to Germany now since 1970 two or three times a year, every year, and my German had become fluent. I could not arrive, and still to this day, cannot arrive in Germany without reading in the newspapers condemnations of what happened in World War II, something that Japan has never done really. That to me is the greatest safeguard against the concerns that the Germans would go the other way. In fact, they moved more toward a pacifist foreign policy over most of the years, although pacifism isn't, isn't quite a correct description, and now, finally, the united Germany is becoming more engaged in international affairs. In addition, there's the whole East German element; the GDR regime was active during my time in Bonn. and there was one case that I'll mention. I had a good friend who was the director for West European Affairs. He coordinated consultations among EU leaders, the summit meetings, the political directors meetings, the political committee. His secretary turned out to be an East German spy. Once she was flirting with me when I was in the office and thank God I was very careful *(laughs).* He got investigated because of this, as you would expect, and he was completely vindicated. But it was part of the woodwork over there. An East German obviously did not look different than a West German; the accent might be

slightly more Berlin-ish than from Stuttgart, but the fact is that that there was East German espionage going on, and for that matter Soviet espionage in West Germany. And one could safely assume that the western powers were trying to find out whatever they could in East Germany as well.

Q: How did you feel about the, quote, Soviet menace, unquote, being in Bonn as opposed to being in Brussels?

KAPLAN: Well, I'll tell you, shortly after I arrived at Embassy Bonn, I was told that I should go to Heidelberg, which is where the U.S. Army Command in Europe was stationed. They put me on a helicopter and they took me down to Heidelberg. Didn't take long by helicopter. I landed, had my meetings, and then General Mike Davidson, the CINCEUR (Commander in Chief Europe) says, "Well, young man, we're going to give you a little bit of an education." He says, "You've heard of the Berlin Wall, right?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "We're going to show you another wall."

They put me in another helicopter and flew south down to the southern tip of West Germany and they went straight up north to Hamburg. There was a wall all the way, a dividing line between East and West Germany; in most areas it was a wire fence or, or electrocuted wire fence. While I was on that helicopter I saw a couple of kids from East Germany struggling to slip under the fence, and border guards up in the watchtowers on the East German side shooting at them. There were two that were coming under, one got through, the other got killed. So one had the immediate sense that this was for real.

Q: Yeah. Well, what was your impression of German-American relations? I mean were there points of conflict that one wouldn't think about that -- unless you got right up close?

KAPLAN: Yes. The relationship overall was good, but the relationship between Nixon and Kissinger with their détente policy on the one hand, and Willy Brandt on the other hand, was tense. It was tense for a number of reasons, but let me mention a couple. One was that, when the Berlin Wall went up in 1961 and then Burgermeister (Mayor) Brandt, of Berlin called for President Kennedy to help, he was informed that Kennedy was out sailing near Hyannis Port and couldn't take the call until he got back, and that could take several days. Brandt never forgot that, and in chapter two of his memoirs he made it quite clear that that was the point at which he realized he would have to take care of German interests himself and not rely only on the United States. It wasn't a break in the relationship by any means, because Germany could not defend itself from Soviet power. But it was a clear understanding on his part that something had changed.

The second reason was that Nixon and Kissinger did not trust what Brandt was up to. They thought that he might go too far in terms of softening the relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union. Words like Rapallo were bandied about.

Q: This is referring back to the treaty in early '20s, wasn't it?

KAPLAN: Yes. At the end, the end of World War I when the Russians and the Germans went off to this little nice resort town of Rapallo in Italy while negotiations were going on over the end of World War I. So all that was in the air. And funny things would happen. Again, one anecdote, illuminates more than analysis. I went to the Dresden Hotel for lunch. I was invited by this rather senior fellow in the Social Democratic Party, Brandt's party. Very decent guy, people had told me this is a person you should really get to know. We had lunch at the Dresden, which just happened to be the hotel where Hitler and Chamberlin had met, right on the Rhine, and it was raining cats and dogs. I mean it was a scene like you'd see in a Le Carré movie about Bonn, the *kleine Stadt in Deutschland,* the small town in Germany. And this SPD official said to me, "You know, "We have a real problem here in Germany."

I said, "Ah! What could that be?"

And he said, "Well, you know, we're really under all this great pressure because every war in Europe has always started from the east and come right at us."

I couldn't believe my ears. Every war in Europe had started in the east and come right at us. In fact WWI and WWII had started in Germany and gone in the other direction. I thought I misunderstood him; he couldn't possibly have meant that. This was not some Nazi or warmonger, and he explained how the Russians had come at the end of World War II and had raped women in Berlin, which of course we knew.

I talked with him for two hours that day. There was nothing evil or awful about this guy, but this was something that was in his DNA, in his head. And I said to myself, you know, "Nothing is quite as clear as what the obvious reality might be. People have different perceptions."

Q: Well, it's like -- there are still not many, but when I was a kid we used to hear people, and I lived in Annapolis, talk about the war of Southern Independence. You know, I -- what the hell are they talking about? It was the Civil War of course.

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: But did feel you might say -- I realize you were fairly far down the totem pole there.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: But did you feel the hand of Kissinger where you were or not, or that relationship?

KAPLAN: Look, I mean this is in one sense another Foreign Service job where we -- there are details we can go into about this, but where one moved back and forth between different government departments and reported on developments and so forth, how the

new white book that the German Armed Forces were putting together, the Bundeswehr, and then a lot of other things after about one year. But at the same time, I knew from the minute I got there, from that trip to Bonn the year before, that major events were going on, that this was about how Europe was going to be organized and what the U.S.-Soviet relationship was going to be, and the relationship between the U.S. and the Russians on the one hand and Germany in the other. Brandt was attempting to break the mold and change things in a significant way. I'll be glad to analyze that for you if you want me to.

Q: Yeah, I would like you to.

KAPLAN: Every family in Germany was divided over this. We lived in the so-called *Amerikanische Sidelong*, the American colony in Plittersdorf, which was a suburb of Bonn. I wasn't keen on living in an American diplomatic ghetto, but that's the way it was. We had this apartment. In the apartment next to us was this fellow who was the parliamentarian of the *Bundesrat*, the upper house of the German parliament, and his wife Gertrud and daughter Christa. They were very charming, and they invited us to dinner the day we got there. There was a row going on among the three of them over whether Brandt was a traitor or a savior. There on the table was a copy of Tagesspiegel, which was a Berlin conservative newspaper, and on the front page was a cartoon of Willy Brandt throwing the Berlin bear over the Berlin Wall to a menacing Brezhnev who was waiting to catch it.

Now, that was outrageous, but it was what a lot of people believed. And that immediately said to me this really was deep. This wasn't just a matter between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, this is something that's deeply internalized within the entire society. So this was not an ordinary assignment, and sensitive negotiations were going in parallel to this acute societal debate.

The role of Nixon and Kissinger and their key associates, NSC Sovietologists like Hal Sonnenfeldt and Bill Hyland and others was very important. U.S. policy was coming from the White House rather than the State Department. At a certain point, as you know, Kissinger moved over to the post of secretary of state. But in fact he rather than Bill Rogers, the first term secretary of state, was with Nixon was calling the shots from the outset.

Q: Yeah. Goodness. Did you have any dealings with Sonnenfeldt when he came?

KAPLAN: Sure. Sonnenfeldt came to Bonn and I brought him to meet State Secretary Paul Frank, who was about five-feet-one, a portly German with a bald head, striped pants and a morning coat.

Q: Good God.

KAPLAN: Yes, indeed *(laughs)*. Very smart. Sonnenfeldt came in, he was also smart and tough, and he sat down. Herr Frank was sitting as straight as a die, all five-foot-one of him, and Hal slouched in the elegant chair, legs apart, the way you see pictures of Putin

these days. I thought that was rude, but I didn't say anything. Their conversation was very substantive. Sonnenfeldt tried to lay down the law, as the Americans saw it. Frank, who was very senior, he was in fact the deputy secretary of foreign affairs, deputy minister, but he was not a part of the immediate political entourage of Brandt. The key advisor of Brandt was a fellow named Egon Bahr, who was Brandt's foreign policy guru, back to the days of Tuebingen where Bahr was a professor. Bahr was the one who designed the rationale behind what came to be known as Ostpolitik.

Q: Well, as you saw the, the -- there were -- the Germans were working on a new doctrine for their military.

KAPLAN: Called *innere fuehrung*, which means internal leadership.

Q: Were there any political overtones to this?

KAPLAN: Well, it was about whether or not soldiers or potential conscripts could bail out by saying that they were conscientious objectors. It was about the rigidities of the old Prussian system of leadership and how things had to be more open and democratic. The defense minister, Helmut Schmidt, was as I said before, brilliant. He worked within the prevailing political context as a Social Democrat to get all of that accepted but was not about to, to gut the German Armed Forces on the altar of political correctness. He was a strategic thinker and was able to go toe-to-toe with our top people. He became chancellor and stayed chancellor for sometime after Brandt left. And so he

Q: Yeah. Well, there was this -- I was in Germany in '55 to '58. I was a vice consul in Frankfurt. And I know there was -- had a movie, <u>The Captain von Kopenick</u>.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: Which was a satire, but it goes way back, of a --

KAPLAN: Way back.

Q: -- of a streetcar conductor, something like that, putting on a captain's uniform and commanding troops around a city and all. And everybody paid because they had on this --

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: -- uniform was paying, giving him complete allegiance. And the idea that no more of this sort of thing was sort of prevailing then. And but it does so short of some of the thought processes.

KAPLAN: Well, there were all these things that people would cite as examples of the German mentality. You'd stop at a street corner and the traffic light would turn yellow and nobody would dream of putting a foot into the crosswalk when an American might

dash across. No car would dream of going through the caution light, much less a red light. But you know, it was 25 years after World War II, they'd come a long way. They were blessed with a very enlightened leadership in the aftermath of World War II in Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. He was a very formal traditional authority figure who had been in a Nazi concentration camp. He had been Lord Mayor of Cologne before World War II. So he was in his eighties. The country was devastated and stigmatized but under Adenauer the German people started working hard and re-building their economy and a democratic polity.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And they turned it around, not withstanding incidents like the at the Dresden Hotel, and the fact that there was all the espionage going on, they turned around their sense of responsibility. They knew they had to earn their way back. There was deep suspicion, which prevailed right up to that point in 1989 when Gorbachev allowed the GDR (German Democratic Republic) to unite with West Germany, with our support and despite the opposition of Mitterrand and Thatcher. So it took nearly a half century.

Q: We had an intern, German girl I think, who was a graduate of the Dachau Gymnasium. And I asked her what they had done, and they, they had gone into this in great detail, you know, I mean coming from Dachau had quite a burden to bear, just the name.

KAPLAN: Quite a burden.

Q: Well, did you talk to our military about their impression of the German Military?

KAPLAN: Sure, as I said, I went shortly after I got this job down to Heidelberg, and I met with General Davidson. I made it my business to go to Wiesbaden to meet with our air force people.

Q: Air force.

KAPLAN: Stuttgart was the so-called EUCOM (European Command) base, it was the integrated base that integrated all the armed forces. So you had to get to know these military leaders and deal with them. And similarly, it wasn't just reporting. I would go to talk to sometimes on instruction, sometimes not, to some of the leaders of the German uniformed military. And some of them I became quite close to, and that became important and certain incidents occurred.

Q: Well, was there -- the feeling certainly was in my time, in the '50s, that the Soviet Army could pour through the Fulda Gap and it was difficult to see how we could stop things. What was the feeling when you were there?

KAPLAN: It was very similar. When I got there I was given a briefing that indicated -- it may have been during that Heidelberg visit -- that if the Soviet Red Army attacked in

strength and if they were not challenged with nuclear weapons, they could reach the ports on the North Sea within two weeks. Kissinger wrote a very famous book as a Harvard professor before he came into government. I don't remember the exact title, but it may have been something like Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy in which he advocated, as I recall, the development of tactical nuclear weapons, because obviously the notion of going to strategic nuclear weapons would be sort of a doomsday.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But if you could use a tactical nuclear weapon which itself would be extremely devastating, then it could take out or impede escalation to all-out nuclear war. It was at the time highly controversial but that was the thinking, and it contributed to a new NATO doctrine known as flexible response, or 14, slash, 3, which would enable us to call on any part of the defense spectrum from conventional up through tactical nuclear weapons to strategic nuclear forces. The Defense Department had war plans, as they do for anything else, but you know, a decision of that sort would be made by the president, under enormous pressure.

Q: What was the impression that you were getting from those who were dealing with it about Kissinger and Nixon as leaders in foreign affairs?

KAPLAN: Well, first of all the Vietnam War was going on. That was deeply unpopular in Germany among the young people particularly. There was one point in which Der Spiegel, the news magazine, wrote published a cover story entitled "*Amerikanische Kriegsverbrechen in Vietnam*," American war crimes in Vietnam. Now, coming from a German magazine with World War II as the backdrop, that was a very dramatic headline.

Q: Yes.

KAPLAN: All right. On the other hand, there were a lot of other people who felt that Nixon and Kissinger were very clever strategic thinkers and that they were exercising serious leadership of the alliance. In large part as a way to get out of Vietnam, they had developed the détente policy, which was taking U.S. and western policy in a direction more congenial to the German public. And then there was the factor that I mentioned earlier, that the détente of Nixon and the Ostpolitik of Brandt, while on the surface seemed compatible, there was a certain measure of distrust on both sides, which fortunately, the leaders on both sides were able to more or less manage and control.

Q: Up close, what was your impression of the work of Jonathan Dean. And he worked on the Berlin situation very -- spent a great deal of time sort of, I won't say disarming that, but certainly making it less confrontational.

KAPLAN: Well, here is how it worked. There was a negotiating entity called the Bonn Group, related mainly to Berlin. It was made up of the Americans, the French, the British, and the Soviets. No Germans. Then it related to all the eastern treaties too, including the Inner-German Treaty. Before we would have a meeting with the Soviets and the rest of

the Bonn Group, the three western powers would meet with the West Germans. We would brief them and we would consult them, and take account of their thinking. When we went talked to the Russians, either as part of the Bonn Group or on occasion bilaterally as our other partners talked to them bilaterally, we would represent not only the interest of the United States, France or Britain, but also West Germany, even though West Germany wasn't at the table. You can imagine that this made the West Germans a little nervous because they really didn't know exactly what was going on. The West Germans had an excellent representative who was their political director, named Gunter Van Well, who later on became ambassador to the United States; he coordinated with Jock Dean, the UK and French representatives. Egon Bahr on behalf of Willy Brandt had his own private channels to the Soviets.

I was not formally assigned to work on the Bonn Group. I had other responsibilities besides the Bundeswehr that we can talk about later. But I was drawn into it from time to time, because the amount of work was absolutely overwhelming. We were doing the Berlin Quadripartite Agreement negotiation, which was a very big deal. And there were linkages between what was happening on those agreements, which Nixon considered to be imperative that we get this Berlin agreement, and which would enhance access to Berlin. The Russians would put interruptions on access by the autobahns; there were occasions when it looked like they might move to another Berlin blockade. So Nixon linked completion of the Berlin agreement to any of the other Ostpolitik going through.

The way the Bonn Group worked under Jock Dean, who was an absolute demon for hard work, was that we'd come to work in the morning in Bonn, we'd do our assignments. He had a sprinkling of notes on our desk before the Bonn Group got to work, our tasks for the day. Around noon the Bonn Group would meet with the West Germans and then get on an airplane and fly out to Berlin for meetings with the Soviets, either in the Allied Kommandatura building or in our consulate general in Berlin, or in their embassy in East Berlin. Negotiations would go on until 10:00 at night, and then a plane would return to Bonn and we'd fall into our beds for a few hours, come back into the embassy, and there were all those notes for the next day's assignments. When we got to the final phase, the last few months it was 24/7. Every day. It was exhausting.

Well, that was going on. High-level negotiations were occurring between Nixon and Kissinger, and Brandt and Bahr, and the other key players. The Soviets were all over the place. The Bundestag was going to have to vote on the Berlin Agreement and other agreements, including the eastern treaties. And there was a lot of money that was being passed around. There were some important politicians in the West German Bundestag who were in Brandt's party, who came originally from the east, like Herbert Wehner, the Bundestag leader, and Hans Dietrich Genscher, was the foreign minister. He was from the Free Democratic Party, the third party. And there were Soviet journalists who were a lot more than journalists. There were Americans who took an interest in all of this, and the press, and there were all the people in the country who were agitating on one side of the other. It was a circus. But the stakes were very high.

Q: What did you think about the contribution of the representatives of the CIA and the

work that was CIA at that time?

KAPLAN: I'm not sure that I'm able to give you a thoughtful answer on that, or balanced answer. I knew some of the fellows. I didn't know them well. I was pretty busy with our own agenda. The most amusing thing that happened was once Jim Lowenstein and Dick Moose came out. They were working for the senate.

Q: Senator Fulbright's hatchet men at one time.

KAPLAN: They were the sort of fellows who were not to be denied what they asked.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* I took them on the elevator up on the second floor of the embassy where the Political Section was, then up to the fourth floor where the cafeteria was. And then I think Dick said, "Do you mind if we walk down the two floors? I've had too much to eat."

And I said, "Oh, my goodness." And we walked down. And there on the third floor he saw the office of the CIA *(laughs).* He took a keen interest in that subject. But not with me. He followed up as I understand it.

But you know, the agency, as I said, there were -- the Soviets were always over the place. I mean we didn't have anything, any kind of access in East Berlin to speak of. Although remind me and I'll come back to that, because one of the things I did in that job was occasionally to go to East Germany. This was all approved and I never showed them my passport and they knew I was coming. But it was a blip compared to what the Soviets were able to do in West Berlin and Bonn They would be in the chancellor's office, they would be in the Bundestag, and all that, and, and a couple of these guys were senior KGB officers authorized by their government to carry messages back and forth. Their contact man as best as we could tell was Egon Bahr, the principal advisor to the chancellor.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: You can imagine that the agency guys were trying to follow that as closely as they could and that when reports would hit the White House about this activity it didn't make Nixon feel more grateful to what the West Germans might be up to.

Q: It's hard to reconstruct that or to even imagine that period. A different time. I mean things were both loose but tightly controlled in the sense --

KAPLAN: Well, everything was at stake too.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Because the Cold War was basically about who would have the greatest influence on the Germans. That was always my view. It was the main reason I wanted to immediately get to Bonn as quickly as I could in my career. Then suddenly along comes Brandt and he decides if they're going to have any chance to bring about the reunification of the country, the reunification of the city of Berlin and the reunification of Europe -- because remember that line went not only through Berlin, not only the whole length of Germany, but between west and east Europe -- so if they were going to have any chance to do that they couldn't do that militarily. It had to be a political process , he had to try to normalize relations with the Russians and with the East European countries so that they would see West Germany as a negotiating partner. The Soviets still had a real distrust of the Germans, they remembered WWII and this overlay of suspicion was omnipresent, not only on the eastern side, not only by the Germans, by the British, the French, but by people in Washington as best as I could make it out.

Q: Well, I know when Kennedy came in to power, I've talked to people who were in Berlin at the time and said they were really very concerned. They thought Kennedy was talking about changes and all.

KAPLAN: He was.

Q: He might give away the store.

KAPLAN: Well, I wasn't there, I was still studying. But I heard the story many times. Basically what I was told, and not just by West Germans, but by American colleagues, is that when Kennedy came in he had all these clever Harvard guys, and they became creative. Sometimes creativity in foreign affairs can be quite dangerous.

Q: They can, absolutely.

KAPLAN: They were looking at land transfers the way some people are talking about now in the Israeli-Palestinian issue, about parts of West Germany they would transfer to East Germany, then something back, almost as though they were redistricting legislative seats. They made one fatal mistake. They never told the Germans they were doing it. When Adenauer found out about it, already remembering Joe Kennedy --

Q: Yeah. Yeah, well in reference to Joe Kennedy, during the battle of Britain and all, Joe Kennedy was basically for making peace with Hitler.

KAPLAN: On Hitler's terms.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: That's right. Adenauer remembered that and his level of distrust of Kennedy was *intense.* And he was an elder statesman and Kennedy was 43-years-old and --

Q: There was a generational thing. Which played really to the hands of Kennedy as far as popularity in the world. I mean I think far exceeding his actual accomplishments. But that's --

KAPLAN: Well, Kennedy later came to Berlin, after Adenauer was gone and the Soviets erected the Berlin Wall, and he said, "Ich bin ein Berliner," (I am a Berliner), and the crowds in the square went wild.

Q: Yeah. But speaking about this relationship, were you in Bonn when Helmet Schmidt came in?

KAPLAN: Well, I was in Bonn. I dealt with Schmidt a fair amount, although obviously I was a much lower level person than he was, to put it mildly. He was the minister of defense. But I went to see him frequently, usually with a more senior officer or a senator would come in to town and I would be the control officer and I would take him there. One month before the end of my posting, he replaced Brandt as a result of the Guillaume affair. So I was only there during his chancellorship for one month.

Many years later, in early 1981, when Ronald Reagan was president the Polish incident occurred with Jaruzelski. I had been appointed as deputy director of the policy planning staff and was involved in helping write Reagan's speech which announced stiff sanctions. As it happened, I went to, to Europe a day or two before Reagan was to give the speech, and I gave a speech in Brussels, which gave hints of what was to come. Then I went to Bonn and I went to see my old friend Otto von der Gablentz who at that time had become the head of Schmidt's National Security Council of Schmidt. And I told him -- this was just a few hours before the president was to speak -- I had informed myself what was in the speech again, and I highlighted the substance of what was to come. He said, "Just a minute," and he walked out. The chancellor walked into the office with him and Otto said, "Could you repeat that for the Chancellor," -- which I did.

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: Schmidt warned that it would be a terrible mistake. I said it was a done deal but that I thought they needed to know ahead of time. Maybe that helped a little bit, who knows.

Q: Well, there had been the tension between Schmidt and President Carter.

KAPLAN: Correct.

Q: I mean tension is probably the wrong word. Well, let's say intense tension.

KAPLAN: Yes, Schmidt detested him. I ran into it in a very specific way. It was about the so-called neutron bomb, the enhanced radiation warhead.

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: Which would destroy buildings but not people supposedly. We had a big debate over that. I was in the policy planning staff at the time and I advised in the strongest terms that we should not pursue this deployment without the chancellor's approval, and we should think hard about whether we should even ask, because the German public simply would not understand a weapon of this sort, which could only be fired on their territory. I sent a memo to a senior official who -- this was early in the Carter administration -- who said to me, "That's old think. We have to do what we have to do; we're not going to allow the Germans to boss us around." You know, at the beginning of a new administration there's a lot of bravado and chest --

Q: Oh yes.

KAPLAN: And so I said, I'm going to put this in writing because I want this on the record. I didn't publicize it, it was highly classified, but it was a formal memo. Some day it will come out. And so they went ahead with it. The one piece of advice they took was they sent Warren Christopher, deputy secretary of state, over to Bonn. Christopher said allies have to hang together, and Schmidt, after thinking about it, agreed to support the deployment on the absolute assurance that the U.S. would not change the policy. That next weekend Andrew Young visited the president in Plains, Georgia and convinced him that the enhanced radiation warhead would be immoral. The president changed and Mr. Christopher was sent back to Bonn, to say, So terribly sorry.

About three days later a correspondent for U.S. News and World Report, came to my office and showed me an article she was about to publish in which there was a quote attributed to Schmidt that said, "Jimmy Carter is the worst president in the history of the United States." I urged her not to publish that line because it would do serious damage to the bilateral relationship and the personal relationship of the two leaders; it would be a gift to Moscow. She cut it out.

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: So things take --

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: -- funny little terms.

Q: Well, how did you -- was there much difference between the SPD, as it is --

KAPLAN: SPD, Social Democrats.

Q: -- and the CDU (Christian Democratic Union).

KAPLAN: That's a very good question. Aside from the usual politics where people seize on the others' failure. The CDU was headed by Rainer Barzel, a very slick politician:

smooth as silk, he reminded me a little of this old senator who I had never met as a kid, Everett McKinley Dirksen, who--.

Q: Oh yes.

KAPLAN: people said he spoke in a mellifluous fashion. That was Barzel, and he said he regarded the Ostpolitik as a sellout to the Russians. He did not come across as, as so harsh because he spoke in this silky way.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But what he had to say was very harsh. And you know, words like traitor were bandied about all the time; there were important media and industrial interests in the country as well as conservative people in Germany who hated what Brandt was doing. As I said, families were divided on this. I got to meet Barzel a few times, with Jock Dean who had the key relationship with him. When the Berlin agreement came to a vote it, it was completely unclear whether the Bundestag would adopt it or not. As it is, it passed by one or two votes, and only because Herbert Wehner, the majority leader of the Bundestag, got down on the floor and like old Big Daddy Jesse Unruh started hauling people into the backroom and giving them the once over, and they'd come back out and vote for the government. I would not say that Wehner was passing money around, but it wouldn't be astonishing to me if deputies received rewards or punishments depending upon the way they voted. I was up there that day in the gallery watching all this, just as I used to do in the California legislature, and there were two or three Soviets up there and those two journalists were up there. So it was really something.

Q: When you talk about Ostpolitik, what was it? And what was the outcome? Was it the Berlin agreement?

KAPLAN: Well, it was a very broad array of negotiations. The Berlin negotiation came first. We were interested in getting access that would be guaranteed, that would not be interrupted the way the Soviets had done many, many times, including during the negotiations. To the great credit of Jock Dean, on one occasion when the Soviets stopped traffic, there was pressure from Washington to interrupt the negotiations, nut Jock opposed that, saying, if we do that it will take a White House decision to get them started again and then the whole superstructure could break down. The second thing we sought in the Berlin talks was to increase more contacts between the people on both sides of the Wall; the West Germans had to pay a lot to the East Germans in return for this. It was understood that, at the end of this four-power agreement, the city and the country would remain under four-power rights and responsibilities. We earlier gave West Germans the right to manage their own affairs in the three sectors that the West controlled, in contrast to East Germany and East Berlin which the Soviets completely controlled. The GDR regime had very little autonomy in their sector. There were some other nasty little issues, like whether the Soviets were going to be able to keep a consulate general in West Germ -- West Berlin, whereas the United States had nothing in East Berlin.

All right, that's the Berlin agreement. Then, remember, the Soviets and the West Germans had already concluded the Moscow Treaty the day that I visited Bonn a year before I arrived on assignment. Negotiations began with the Czechs and with the Hungarians and the Poles. So it was like a three-ring circus, all these negotiations going on and we would be consulting with the Germans, and sometimes they'd tell us what was really happening, and sometimes they wouldn't. Sometimes we'd tell them everything and sometimes we wouldn't. The Soviets were always trying to divide and conquer in every possible way that they could. At a certain point Brandt, in the face of all of this controversy, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which was an enormous boost for him and his legitimacy. Brandt was an illegitimate child. During World War II he went to Norway, he married his wife Rut, he traveled around as an anti-Nazi agent with false suitcases, with three or four different names. Frahm was his birth name, but he had three or four other pseudo-names, *noms de guerre*. He was a very complex character and in my view deserved a lot of credit, but there were Germans who regarded him a traitor for abandoning his homeland during World War II.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Even though now those Germans would deny that they had any sympathy for Hitler. I want to be very clear. I felt that what had happened during those 25 years before I took my assignment in Bonn had brought the German government and state to a point where they were a valued and worthy and reliable partner, that all of these divisions I'm talking about were in the nature of the enormous stakes that were involved and the changes that were being made.

Q: Did you see any hint of in the future what became the Helsinki Accords and the Berlin negotiations?

KAPLAN: Yes. I was designated by Jock Dean to coordinate with the German Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, and the Chancellor's Office on development of mandates for the negotiations on security and cooperation in Europe and for mutual and balanced force reductions, the so-called MBFR, which was about conventional force negotiations. So in addition to the Eastern treaty negotiations, and the U.S.-Soviet strategic arms talks (SALT) and other negotiations with the Soviets, there was this third tier, which dealt with European security negotiations. Reaching a mandate for a negotiation position on the part of NATO vis-à-vis the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact on those two negotiations, MBFR and CSCE (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe) required NATO approval. NATO approval was almost entirely dependent on the Americans and the Germans coming together. It was what my job in Bonn, to help facilitate that.

Q: What role during these negotiations and all did you think, did you feel that the, the French and the British played?

KAPLAN: Well, they had very capable and competent negotiators, very professional. They too understood that a lot was at stake. They had their own histories with Germany. And so they picked people who spoke fluent German and were German experts, which I

certainly wasn't when I arrived there. They were able to hold their own with Jock Dean and Gunter van Well and the Soviet negotiator, Yuli Kvitsinsky. We each had our own interests, of course, and beside the people in Bonn, were our leaders in capitals: President Nixon, General De Gaulle and Prime Minister Macmillan --

Q: And obviously -- World War II experiences.

KAPLAN: So beyond what we were doing in Bonn, the leaderships were having their own sets of relationships and contacts and channels, which sometimes would seep down to us and sometimes wouldn't.

Q: (laughs) Well, did you feel that -- was there concern about the, the socialist SPD? Although Brandt and then Schmidt was leading this, did sort of below that level there was a softness towards the Soviets, or not, or?

KAPLAN: I don't think that was an overriding concern. I never thought that Brandt and Bahr, for example, were soft on the Soviets. I thought that they had a set of objectives and a game plan designed to advance the cause of German interests and eventual German reunification, although I was convinced and I remained so, that Brandt understood from the beginning that this would take a long time, and he had no idea how long it would take. What he was basically trying to do was to set in motion a set of forces that over time could eventually lead to reunification.

Q: Just asking the question of, of everyone, getting about the same answer, but I'll ask you. Did you have any thought that maybe in 20 years time Germany would be united?

KAPLAN: That was Brandt's goal. I thought that the premise that Brandt was working with, that you set things in motion and then you see, was as far as any person could go. I will make this additional comment. In 1989, when it all came together the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed and eventually the reunification of Germany. I don't know of anyone who predicted that the Soviet Union was going to -- about to collapse any time soon. There was one history book that came out, where I was mentioned as having written a memorandum from our Intelligence and Research Office at the time in Washington where I said that here's a series of very remarkable things that are going on that make me wonder whether there may be something big that may be coming. I haven't reread that memo for a long time, but something to that effect. I was sitting there reading the tea leaves every day, and trying to use my experience and intuition at that stage, and that was the best I was able to do.

Q: Did you feel you were getting good temperature readings, or whatever you want to call it, from Moscow? From our embassy analyses back in Washington? Or were you paying much attention to it?

KAPLAN: I found what they were sending useful to read, but remember, they were reporting on what the Russians were telling them and the game was really going on in our town and in Washington.

Q: What was your impression of Kennedy?

KAPLAN: Well, I never met President Kennedy. I was too young at the time. I was stirred by his articulateness and his intellect. I've read a lot of history since that time and came to conclude that it wasn't always successful and that yes, he came out of the Cuban Missile Crisis very effectively in a very dangerous situation, but one wondered whether we would have ever gotten into the Cuban Missile Crisis if he hadn't been beaten up so badly by Khrushchev and then failed to follow up after starting the Bay of Pigs operation.

There's one other event that you may find amusing, though it's not the question you're asking. I was the control officer for Senator Ted Kennedy when he and his first wife, Joan, visited Bonn on the very day that Willy Brandt was re-elected as chancellor, thereby in effect legitimizing his Ostpolitik program. I brought Senator Kennedy to the Chancellor's bungalow, as it was called -- it was actually in the chancellor's office -- so that he could congratulate him. I told him to be sure to congratulate the foreign minister as well as Brandt; Scheel was head of the FDP, Free Democratic Party, and they also had just been reelected, allowing the coalition to continue. I was standing just behind the TV cameras, and *whispered)* "Scheel! Scheel!"

And Kennedy said, "Oh, yes -- I also want to congratulate my dear friend, the Foreign Minister Shield," *(laughs).*

But what was even more bizarre, I went to collect the senator to bring him back to the Cologne-Bonn Airport the next morning. And the flight was at -- I'll make this up to give you the idea -- at 11:00am. We were supposed to leave, according to the chauffer who did this all the time, by 9am to get there half an hour ahead of time; it took about 45 minutes to reach the airport. Ten o'clock arrived. He still wasn't there. Anyway, the gentleman finally came down at about 10:30. The driver was a big bald guy and he was in a cold sweating. He broke all speed records on the highway and finally arrived at the airport at about three minutes of eleven. I said, "Senator, *please."*

And he sat there finishing postcards to his sister brother.

I said, "Senator, the plane's going to take off."

He said, "Well, get in there and take care of it!"

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He said, "That's what you're getting paid for, isn't it? *(laughs)* So I went in there and I went up to the gate and somehow or other I convinced them to hold the plane for this very, very important American senator. He waltzed in at about ten after eleven.. He walked around and signed autographs. It must have been quarter after eleven and they were holding the plane. They had the doors still open. And then the, the lady at the desk

said, “Well Senator, you are so many pounds over in your luggage. It’ll be an extra $600,” or something.

So he turned to me and he said, “Pay it. You’re holding up the plane!”

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: *(laughs)*

Q: Oh God.

KAPLAN: Well, I got to meet him when I got back to Washington and he was very nice.

Q: Who took care of the --

KAPLAN: I paid it. I got paid back.

Q: Because you know, I’ve talked to people who dealt with the Kennedys, Robert and Ethel particularly. Kind of left bills behind, you know, they had sort of that deal with rich people --

KAPLAN: Living in another universe then.

Q: Anyway, one last thing. What about your feeling about Richard Nixon?

KAPLAN: Well, you know, I was still a second secretary.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: So I didn’t have access to people at that level. I saw Kissinger from time to time, but not a lot. He wouldn’t remember. And I observed Nixon, the role that he was playing in the negotiations. He had this reputation among a lot of people, they called him “Tricky Dick,“ that he was very devious, he did some rather McCarthyite sort of things when he was a young guy in a California congressional election against Helen Gahagan Douglas; he called her the Pink Lady. And then he was defeated in the1960 presidential election against Kennedy. I was in Berkeley, at law school, and he came there in 1962 because he was running for governor against Pat Brown, and Nixon was defeated. I was in Sproul Plaza, in the center of the university, when he was speaking and the Cal (California) Band started playing, “It Ain’t Necessary So.” And you know, he dropped that line, “You don’t have Nixon to kick around anymore.” So it was clear that he had some serious hangups. On the other side, he was a smart guy and had spent a lot of time thinking about international issues, and he had a strategic conception for what he was trying to accomplish to extricate us from Vietnam, improve the relationship with the Soviets, the trilateral relationship with China. There also were domestic reform programs and environment and things that people would be surprised if they went back and read the record. So he was a very complex character. On a moral and ethical level, Watergate and

all that, he'd get very low grades, and he disgraced the presidency. In terms of foreign affairs he was someone that was rather far ahead of a lot of the other people who've tried to handle these issues.

Q: I've had a number of people talking about when Nixon was an outcast he'd lost these various elections after losing to Kennedy, would travel around the world. He really paid attention to world affairs, would go to ambassadors, our representatives, and sit down and ask and take very extensive notes.

KAPLAN: And think about it.

Q: And think about it. You know, it's an impressive picture of a complicated, very complicated, person.

KAPLAN: It shows you that, that none of us are without our blemishes, and it also shows you that people with very serious blemishes can also have other attributes which are worthwhile. It makes one reticent about judging human beings.

Q: Well then, this is probably a good place to stop. You left Bonn in '74, was it?

KAPLAN: I left Bonn in '74, but there are, are two other things which we can talk about now or later --

Q: Well, let's talk about them now.

KAPLAN: -- that I wanted to mention. One was, three weeks after I got there I was made the control officer, I guess my name just came up for that week. AT EC Brussels we hardly ever had control officers because we didn't have those kind of issues.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I get a call at about 11 p.m. the first night I was control officer from the Com Center, Communication Center, saying, "You've got to come down right away, there's a NIACT immediate. I had no idea what a" --

Q: Night action.

KAPLAN: That's right. In other words, it's urgent.

Q: Yes.

KAPLAN: I said, "Can you read it to me over the phone?"

He said, "You'd better get down here, this is very sensitive."

So I got dressed and went to the embassy. There was a jumbo jet which had been hijacked down to the Jordanian Desert with Americans and West Germans on board, and others. Within a couple of days, there were going to be five of jumbo jets kidnapped, all taken down to the Jordanian Desert. I called up Russ Fessenden, who was our DCM, and he said, "You're going to have to work on this … you've got the con," which I think is a naval term.

Q: Oh yes.

"Your job is to get that over with so you can come back and do the things we want you to do," *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: My task was to make sure that the West Germans didn't cave and protect their own people at the expense of the Americans who were on board.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Cutting a separate deal. I was talking to all kinds of high-level people who I never, never would have had any access to under the circumstances, including Willy Brandt I would go to the Foreign Ministry. I was dealing with the Israeli embassy and the ambassador there, all sorts of people. It was, it was a big adrenaline push. At the end of the day, almost if not all of the passengers were released in a negotiating process.

There was a Palestinian woman named Leila Khaled who was arrested and brought to London. The Swiss were heavily involved; instead of the Bonn Group we called it the Bern Group, because apparently the Swiss had a lot of passengers involved. At the very end, after all the passengers were deplaned, one of the planes was bombed, obliterated. My ambassador at the time, a fellow named Ken Rush who was a former CEO (chief executive officer) of DuPont and a former law professor at Duke of one Richard M. Nixon, said to me, "I wonder who, who did that."

And I said, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, I checked on this and while I don't know for sure, it appears that the planes came from a direction that's roughly where Israel is," *(laughs).*

He said, "Oh my."

So this went on for only a week out of all the time I was there, but it was my introduction into the way things worked there. And I just met a lot of people at the very highest levels that I never ever, ever would have seen maybe at all most of the time I was there.

Q: And the second thing?

KAPLAN: The second thing is that after I'd been there for one year, as I mentioned, Mr. Spotts left and I was assigned to cover all of German foreign policy except the Eastern treaty talks. I had a lot of interesting experiences there and maybe we can hold --

Q: OK, we'll --

KAPLAN: -- pick up that little bit.

Q: So I'll put down on this that we're talking about your leaving in '74 but before we want to talk about your time dealing with German foreign policy.

KAPLAN: That's right, and, and in terms of where I was to go I wanted to go back to Washington. I had never served in Washington in a real job. My son was getting to a certain age and he'd been out of the country for seven years and he was just entering junior high school. So I asked for that and Jock Dean said, "No, you're coming to where I am right now, which is Vienna, right up the road. You can just drive here in a day," because the MBFR talks had begun. Since I had worked for him closely on military matters for some reason he convinced himself that I knew something about this. He in effect conscripted me. I said family comes first." The next day I received a directive from the director general that I was going to Vienna *(laughs)*, and I think I know how that came about.

Q: Oh, OK. Then we'll pick it up then.

KAPLAN: Right, great.

Q: OK. Today is April the 9th, 2014, with Ambassador Phil Kaplan. And let's start at the -- Jock Dean got you, not completely willingly, to go to Vienna --

KAPLAN: Right.

Q: -- rather than the delights of Washington. And you were in Vienna from when-to-when?

KAPLAN: I went there in 1974 through 1975.

Q: OK, what was your job?

KAPLAN: Well, there was a negotiation called Mutual Balanced Force Reductions, MBFR, with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact on one side, and NATO on the other.

Q: And what were you doing with it?

KAPLAN: Well, I was the political counselor there. Jock Dean was the DCM and a gentleman named Stanley Resor was the ambassador. He was a friend of President Ford. He'd been secretary of the army and went to Yale with Cyrus Vance and Gerald Ford.

Our political section was responsible for the working level negotiations and contact work with the other 22 delegations, all the NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries. It was a bit of a circus.

Q: OK, so let's -- where did these negotiations stand when you got there?

KAPLAN: Well, they were barely standing (laughs). They began with preparatory talks to define a mandate. The key focus on the NATO side was on Germany because most of our forces were deployed there and the Bundeswehr was one of the larger forces in Europe. Britain obviously had its own armed forces, but the British Army on the Rhine, the BAOR, was not as big as the Bundeswehr as a whole. Moreover, the main prize in the Cold War was going to be whether the Americans or the Soviets would have the main influence with the West Germany, the Federal Republic.

Q: Well, looking at this just from the outside, I mean the Soviets had such a huge preponderance, I would think, in troop levels compared to the NATO side that it would be very hard to get them to cut -- think about even coming back. Why?

KAPLAN: Well, you're absolutely right, Stuart. The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies had a preponderance, if my memory serves me, of somewhere between 200,000 to 250,000 conventional forces over the U.S. and NATO in the area of reductions, which was in Central Europe. Of course the core of Central Europe was Germany.

Our position was that we wanted to bring about what we called a common ceiling, that is to say that both sides could have no more than the same number of forces on both sides. Obviously there were a lot of sub-issues and complex characteristics to all of this. But that was the core of our position, and we negotiated this at great length. I had not the slightest doubt that the NATO consultations were leaking to the Soviets and they had a very good idea of what we were going to be coming in with. I got to Vienna after the preparatory talks concluded, fairly near the start of the negotiations. Our people were confident that, having done elaborate NATO pre-consultations and observing that the Soviets weren't showing much knowledge of the subject, that we were way ahead of them. That of course was self-deception.

When the negotiations began, the head of the legal division of the Soviet Foreign Ministry arrived as lead negotiator. Oleg Khlestov was a cheerful fellow, he was always smiling and grinning all the time, and he was just as smart as can be. He had developed their own position with full knowledge of what we were coming in with. He never budged one inch from it in the entire course of the MBFR negotiations. Basically their position was, just as you surmised, that we would take equal quantitative reductions, which would retain and legitimize by treaty their conventional force advantages. There were other issues such as collateral constraints, you could only move your forces in certain ways, and regional questions -- you could only keep certain percentage of your forces in central Europe, and but you couldn't just move them across the border of the area of reductions, from where you later could get them back right away. It was a highly complex technical negotiation. It was like negotiating the Internal Revenue code.

Q: Well, I mean what was -- OK, you've just arrived. But you've been involved with -- I mean you knew the issues and all that.

KAPLAN: Yes, I'd been working on the details for some time.

Q: So what was your thought, I mean when you discovered that OK, the Soviets have got a strong position and they're not going to move, I mean that must have become rather apparent.

KAPLAN: It was very apparent. I went in 1974 to Vienna, which is of course a delightful city; there was the opera, and I like classical music, and the Vienna Philharmonic, and wonderful restaurants and a beautiful city.

Q: Lots of spies.

KAPLAN: Right out of Graham Greene. And I told my wife that when we arrived there, "This city looks like a beautiful woman who had lost some of her cosmetics." It looked like the capital of an empire, which it had not been since the end of the Habsburg Empire in 1919. Now it didn't have any power anymore. It was, in the German phrase, the "*Gastgeber*," the host. That's what they did, like the Swiss.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: They offered hospitality, they performed that function superbly. But they didn't have any particular authority or power of their own.

Q: I mean looking at -- still, it's going into a poker game where you realize that the other guy has got all the aces and you've got all the threes or something.

KAPLAN: Well, it wasn't quite that simple. Yes, you're right, they had a quantitative advantage and no incentive to give it up. We wanted asymmetrical reductions, for the them to reduce far more than us, and we knew that was quite a challenge. So when I arrived I told my friend Jack Dean, "There's no point in driving our people crazy. This is not going to happen for a long time." I said, "I don't think we're going to get this result for 20 years." My wife reminded me of that the other night. And sure enough, it's exactly what happened. But we'll get to that later. "So therefore, I think that we should do our job in a very professional way, but show not the slightest hint that we're the demandeur or we were anxious or eager or in some urgent way to get an agreement."

In fact, there was a very famous private exchange at the time between President Nixon and Prime Minister Ted Heath of Britain. Heath came to the White House, we found out later on, and said to Nixon, "I'm a little worried about this MBFR. There's no way we can get a good result for the West. And so my question to you, Mr. President, is it your purpose to travel or to arrive?"

supposedly laughed and said, "Of course it's only to travel. There'll be no arrivals."

But Jock Dean made clear to me that he was there to arrive. So we will work." He had this system in Bonn, when we served together, that the staff at the embassy could only take off a holiday when it was both a German and American holiday, which came down to pretty much Easter and Christmas. If it was a German holiday you'd work, if it was an American holiday you'd work. They had to both come together. It was in his DNA and work ethic that you worked all the time and you just kept pressing, pressing, pressing, and maybe there'd be an opening and you'd get through. I had a lot of admiration for that philosophy, but it seemed to me that in the context of Vienna, we were just going to bang our heads up against the wall. Not only that, remember, it was only a few years since the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Q: That's '68, yeah.

KAPLAN: '68. I just didn't think the circumstances were propitious for the kind of progress he had in mind. But you see, we had just come through détente and Ostpolitik negotiations with Brandt, we had racked up these extraordinary successes. There was nothing like it again until 1989. There was the Berlin Quadripartite Agreement, there was the Moscow Treaty. There were the German agreements with the Czechs and the Hungarians and the Pole. There was the Inner-German Agreement. There Nixon's SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) Agreement. It just went on and on. Nothing had been like it for a long, long time. So he saw this MBFR as the crown jewel. This was going to be, in his mind, the de facto World War II Peace Treaty, delayed all those years because of the Cold War. Well, you know, I'll tell you Stu, it happened. But it happened in 1989, not on his watch.

Q: But, but on a treaty like this did you need the underpinnings of Jock Dean and you and others that your efforts in order to get it, or were you basically looking back on it -- this was a stalling operation?

KAPLAN: He didn't think for a minute that it was a stalling operation. He was totally serious. And so was Ambassador Resor. I was there to support him. I was a small fry compared to the two of them. But we were making an effort to make this happen. I never hesitated to tell them that this wasn't going to happen in this time frame, that it should happen, but the conditions weren't right to secure a good result at that time.

Q: Well, what was the attitude of the Soviets? Maybe not at the top, but at your level where you were dealing with -- I mean were they kind of snickering, or?

KAPLAN: Oh no, there, they were, they were quite professional. They had a line of march and they just kept going. There was a fellow named Vladimir Shustov, an immensely capable, talented, and charming man. His mother was an opera singer in Moscow. He was a disarmament expert, and he believed in it. But he was also a Soviet apparatchik, and he stuck by the positions.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: We became friends and when Resor and Dean, and/or Khlestov wanted to explore what was possible on a particular tactical issue, the two of us would get together and then each of us would report back. There was one really amusing incident where, you know, these -- the meetings were taking place in the Hofburg Palace. I looked like --

Q: Did you waltz?

KAPLAN: Well, it looked like a movie set of a European palace. And there were these tapestries, extraordinary tapestries all around the walls, and an immense chamber with the 23 nations. Delegations would sit together. At least at the outset it was dramatic to be in that chamber, participating and meeting the professionals working on national security issues from across the continent, from both alliances. The European neutrals were not in the room but they were coming around to find out what was going on. On one particular occasion Shustov and I, having heard the formal statements delivered by our ambassadors over and over, decided mischievously that he would write the American statement and I would write the Soviet statement, and not tell our bosses. (*laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: That's what happened. Resor reviewed Shustov's statement and made a couple of minor edits. Khlestov just put a check on the top of my draft, and that was it.

Q: Oh God. Well, how about the others first on the NATO side? What were some of the react -- I mean were the other people on board, or were they also saying what the hell's this all about, or?

KAPLAN: Well, there were several strands, there were human beings who had different points of view, but their governments all had a pretty good fix on what this was about. We were there to try to lend some sense of continuity to the détente process. And if it were possible for us somehow to bring the Soviets around to the idea of an equal outcome, then that would be a good thing. But there were also those who distrusted anything the Soviets said, and others who were scared to death that there could be any result because it could only be a bad result. We encountered all of those.

The key countries in our side were the British, the French, and the Germans. On the other side, it was the Soviets. The others were basically taking orders from the Soviets. Occasionally some big-wig would come in from Moscow, senior military officer or political person, and he would meet with the Warsaw Pact Caucus. I had contacts among the East European delegates and they would often come to my house directly from the Warsaw Pact Caucus and tell me what was said. There were people who were there representing their countries and whose wives were kept back in the capitals so they wouldn't get any funny ideas of, of taking off. There was a GDR ambassador who I had contacts with, and he was pretty careful. But occasionally he'd open up. So at a human level it was interesting. These people might be under instructions, they might mimic

every word that the Soviets said, but they were still people and when you got to know them you'd pick up things that you wouldn't find by reading Pravda and Izvestia.

Q: Were you seeing any differences between the countries, the Warsaw Pact countries and their allegiance to the Soviet Union?

KAPLAN: Sure. There probably wasn't a one of them who was loyal to the Soviets. These were people who were obviously carefully selected to come out there. There was a Bulgarian ambassador who was almost a total lackey, but most of the rest of them in one way or another were professionals. They were selected in part because they knew the subject matter, but probably in much larger part because they could be counted upon to tow the line.

Q: Well, did we have any card to play -- you know, saying all right, we've got this discrepancy in forces, but we can do this and something that would make it interesting for the Soviet side to say well, maybe there's something there?

KAPLAN: The president did not believe a good result was possible at least in that time frame. And therefore he and Heath and the others were not encouraging clever ideas. The issue came up in a different way, which was from the standpoint of defense policy, the strategic equation, more along the lines that we have this asymmetrical disadvantage in personnel (army soldiers, airmen and the navy were excluded0, and therefore, the question was what do we do to try to counterbalance that. That all goes back to Kissinger's book, The Necessity of Choice, where he advocated the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons along the Fulda Gap and right along the borders. That was the equalizer. If it were only strategic nuclear weapons then the credibility that we would use then against a conventional attack, well, no one would ever know for sure whether we'd do it. But although tactical nuclear weapons were extraordinarily destructive, it would be something that might be able to be used if the circumstances truly warranted it.

So we were here in the middle of a disarmament negotiation, we didn't think we'd succeed at that time, even though the leader of my delegation, the de facto leader, was determined to do it at all costs, although very professionally and he wasn't about to cut a bad deal. He was still hoping it would be able to build on his remarkable triumphs in Bonn. From the standpoint of the Pentagon, they regarded TacNucs as the balancing card -- and Kissinger I think shared that view.

Q: Well, did you find, as we were developing our position and all, that the representatives of our Armed Forces were digging their heels in and not giving you much flexibility?

KAPLAN: Actually , curious thing occurred. We went back during the recess to get instructions. At that stage I did not have all that much standing, but on one occasion Dean took me back with him. We went to the Pentagon and we met with Secretary Laird, Mel Laird. Then he – Jock went off to meet with the Joint Chiefs and he asked me to meet with a couple of DOD civilian deputy assistant secretaries. When I arrived, they were

sitting around a table, and then they said, "Great news. We think the Mansfield amendment will pass." And I couldn't believe my ears, because the Mansfield Amendment, as you will remember, would have mandated withdrawal of a substantial number of U.S. forces from Europe. The amendment was proposed by Senator Mike Mansfield, of Montana, the majority leader of the Senate, a Democrat who later became ambassador to Japan, a very smart fellow. But I thought he was completely wrong on this issue. We already had this asymmetry, that would not have exactly helped our leverage in the negotiations. And these guys in the Pentagon were saying, "Great, we think it's going to pass."

I said to myself, "This is the Pentagon. It's going to be their armies that are going to be reduced. Why wouldn't they be totally against it?" Fortunately it was not American policy. It didn't come up in our meeting with Secretary Laird.

Q: No.

KAPLAN: But it certainly had resonance in the Pentagon. And it was more that these two guys at the table who felt that view.

Q: Oh boy. Well --

KAPLAN: Be careful what you wish for.

Q: Yes.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)*

Q: Well, I mean did you have a hard -- I mean obviously you're busy. OK, you're busy. What are you doing?

KAPLAN: All right, let me give you the basic drill. We would meet two or three times a week with the NATO Caucus, to consult, to make sure that everybody was on board with the positions, to wordsmith the statements that were going to be present; the various delegations reported on their bilateral contacts with Soviet or East European delegations, or on any other intelligence that had been picked up. Second, once a week we'd get together formally at the Hofburg and present statements. The American and Soviet didn't read off these statements every week; it was the Dane or the Norwegian or the Italian or whatever, various member of the alliance. The same thing happened on the other side, with the Czechs or the Poles rather than the Russians reading off the statements. Third was bilateral contacts, informal exchanges over lunch or otherwise, with the Soviet ambassador or his colleagues or the representatives of other Eastern European countries. So there was plenty to do -- the only limitation was time.

Q: Of our allies, did you feel there were any that really wanted something out of this, or, or were they nervous that anything that happened would mean less American support?

KAPLAN: I think you've got it right. They were -- MBFR was seen by most of them, and by most of us, and by the White House more importantly, as a way to defeat the Mansfield Amendment and keep the troops in Europe. I got in the car once when I was in Bonn, and I went with Ambassador Hillenbrand, a superb career diplomat who knew Germany cold.

Q: He was our ambassador to Germany.

KAPLAN: He was our ambassador to Germany. When he first arrived he went for a meeting with Egon Bahr, the key advisor to Brandt. And he came back and he picked up a dictionary, a German-American dictionary. I said, "Sir, why are you doing that? Your German is flawless."

He said, "Well, I think I found -- I think I caught Bahr in a grammatical error in German." He wasn't joking; he said this in all seriousness. Anyway, we went up to the so-called Harthöhe, which was where the Defense Ministry was in Bonn for a meeting with Helmut Schmidt, who at that point was the defense minister; he later became chancellor after Brandt departed in the Gunter Guillaume affair.

In the car, , I explained to Hillenbrand, who had many other things to worry about, the common ceiling, that both sides would end up if this worked at 700,000 forces, personnel each in the central projection area. And he said, "Let me see if I understand this. You call that the common ceiling. But it isn't it the common floor?"

I said, "Bingo, Ambassador. You've got it right on."

You know, he had not studied this, but he was such a clever fellow and got it right away. In other words, our purpose was not so much to have a common ceiling, although we wanted that, so that the Soviets could not go over -- and the Warsaw Pact could not go over that ceiling. It was aimed more at ourselves that we and our allies would not go below 700,000. And we would then go to Congress and say, "Senators, look, we have an international agreement that says 700,000 is the minimum that we can keep in Europe," and that was the objective of it. And it remained the objective when we did the follow-up CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) negotiations many years later.

Q: Well, so you do this, you're working very hard, and you were there two years about?

KAPLAN: I was there one year.

Q: On year.

KAPLAN: Because I concluded that this could not succeed in that time frame. And about halfway through the year I got a call from a fellow named Reginald Bartholomew who invited me to come back to Washington to work for the policy planning staff, the office George Kennan established in 1947 at the direction of Dean Acheson and George Marshall. At the time I joined the staff it was chaired by Winston Lord who was one of

the closest associates of Henry Kissinger, who was then secretary of state. I was going to be the guy working on Europe, and I thought for a minute, "I'm going to give advice to Henry Kissinger about Europe? That's a joke." But upon reflection I thought it would be a fantastic opportunity and the MBFR negotiation was going nowhere, and so I agreed. That's what led me back to Washington. We had had six years before Vienna in Europe on my first two assignments, nice places, but my son was in junior high school and he'd never been an American school!

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And so I said, "The time has come." And as I explained earlier, my friend Mr. Dean decided that the time had not quite come yet *(laughs)*. And so when I got this offer from the secretary's office I told Reg Bartholomew there might be a problem.
He said, "Don't worry about it."

About 20 minutes later I got a call from John Burns, who was the director general of the Foreign Service. He said, "Your assignment is done," *(laughs)*. I never had to argue with my bosses at all. It was done.

Q: Well, OK, so you, you left you might say a situation that -- I know you'll be coming back sort of to the subject, but what was happening while you were gone? I mean was sort of the same drill going on day after day?

KAPLAN: That was pretty much the case. What made it worthwhile was that we were working amidst an enormous pool of talent, some of the top national security people in all the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. These were people who I later met many times. People like myself and Shustov became ambassadors, as did many others in the German, Dutch and Hungarian delegations. You could have lunch with a Pole and he might be on the opposite side of the table and taking orders, but in many cases he was a cultivated guy who was interesting to talk to and you could learn something about his country that way. So it wasn't bad at all on a personal level.

Q: OK. So you came back and you went to policy planning. You were doing that from when to when?

KAPLAN: I was doing that for a total of four years from 1975 to 1979, at first under Win Lord and Secretary Kissinger in the Ford administration, and then Carter was elected and Tony Lake (who later became national security advisor under Bill Clinton) succeeded Win Lord as NSC advisor. Sandy Berger and other prominent Democrats joined the staff. My specialty remained Europe, but I was allowed to work on other issues from time to time. Tony and Winston were both impressive, both bright young men, Ivy League, committed to the foreign policy of their administrations, Winston to Kissinger, Tony to Cyrus Vance who was the new secretary of state. And so –

Q: I think they both used to play football together. I mean touch, touch football.

KAPLAN: Well, the thing I remember is that Tony Lake worked for Kissinger and resigned in protest because of the Vietnam War. They were both very serious, and they were both quite different in terms of their ideologies and their view of the world and, and how you deal with issues and what's important and what's less important.

Q: I have a long set of interviews with Winston Lord, by the way, that's in our collection.

KAPLAN: Good, I'll go back and read that. It will be interesting.

Q: You know, this policy planning was started out by George Kennan, and the idea was to sit and think, to sort of have policies on the major issues of what not only were the -- of the day, but also what appeared to be just over the horizon coming up so we wouldn't be caught flat-footed. But it, very quickly -- this is very difficult to do because usually the issues you anticipate aren't the ones that happen. There's a coup or there's a -- something happens and then all of a sudden something else quite different comes up. And so it -- the policy planning -- correct me if I'm wrong -- turned into much more a speech writing and policy embellishing organization.

KAPLAN: Well, the first part of what you say is right, the second part is less so.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: When the staff was created Kennan was given instructions by Secretary George Marshall, who was then secretary of state, later became secretary of defense. Obviously war hero. And he said, "Your instructions are to avoid trivia. Don't work on inconsequential things." Kennan was a man of extraordinary literary felicity, let me put it that way. No one could write memos or cables or anything else with the same literary flare as he. It had the capacity for enchanting people. I read his memoirs before I came into the Foreign Service, and I was mesmerized, I thought it was extraordinary. As I acquired experience, I often disagreed with what he said, and there were a lot of other people, as I subsequently learned, who agreed with even less of Kennan's judgments than I. He was a deeply morose person who suffered from frequent illnesses -- not terrible illnesses, but very often -- and had serious doubts about American democracy and about the ability of the United States or the right of the United States to be a leader in the world. He possessed extraordinary intellectual capacity, he had deep insights about Russia and the Soviet Union. I don't want to get into a psychological portrait of him, but all of that came to bear in the opening years of this new organization.

Paul Nitze became Kennan's successor when he was fired by Secretary Dean Acheson. When Kennan was director of policy planning he followed Marshall's instructions and it was an extraordinary institution because they took all of the super big issues that were associated with what Acheson called "present at the creation" and the aftermath of World War II. Kennan with his small staff wrote up the big papers on the big policy initiatives like the Marshall Plan, Point Four, NATO, the new Japan alliance. He was the one who coined the term Containment and framed the policy and then objected to its military component, claiming that he had been misinterpreted. This horrified him because he

basically believed that we needed to contain the Russians economically and politically, not militarily. He didn't like NATO. He didn't like Germany coming into NATO later on.

Q: He didn't like California.

KAPLAN: There were a lot of things he didn't like. And so he was fired by Dean Acheson and replaced by Paul Nitze. The staff remained very important under Nitze. They framed polices that facilitated a huge defense build-up President Truman approved to counter Stalin's moves in Eastern Europe and to reassure our West European allies.

Now, in the years that followed the influence of the staff varied considerably. The key variable was the relationship between the director and the secretary. When that was tight, as it was between Kissinger and Lord, or to a lesser extent between Vance and Lake, the policy planning staff had a real impact. But when, when the relationship between the director and the secretary was more bureaucratic, they could be just disregarded. There was a fellow who was a capable career officer who was the director before Winston, and the staff then was largely reduced to a speechwriting function and the drafting of long-term policy papers. Well, you know Keynes said, In the long term we'll be dead."

Under Winston we had the speechwriting function for the secretary, and speeches were used by Henry Kissinger to articulate policy. The speechwriter under Kissinger was a not inconsiderable intellect by the name of Charlie Hill, who also excelled in the Foreign Service later on as the executive assistant to George Shultz. But speechwriting was one function out of the many things we were doing. So yes, speechwriting was a portion of the work.

Q: Mm-hmm. So what was your -- what were you doing in this?

KAPLAN: Well, my role was on the European side. I would try to write memos both on Western European policy, economic and political and military, drawing on my experiences to that point and framing possible policy initiatives. I would occasionally go off to Europe on trips. I remember on one occasion early on, maybe in 1975, I visited five or six countries and I came back and said things were very dispirited over there. Our allies had lost the mojo and they were very pessimistic. I came back and I wrote a memo called <u>The Gathering Mood</u>. I chose that to mimic Churchill's <u>Gathering Storm</u>. The European Bureau was *infuriated* by this, because for them the relationship with Europe was unquestioned and was the core of things.

My own view was, and by the way remains, that the relationship with Europe is of enormous importance, not only trade and national security, NATO, but common values. I believe all that. But I concluded that Europe was losing its ability to bring its fair weight to the alliance. The result was that the alliance was suffering and was deteriorating in many respects. Over the many years since that time I've seen this process continue in one way or another. But for true believers in EUR (Bureau of European Affairs) this was a horrible thing to have actually said, even in a classified document. I went to Paris on one occasion when Carter was president, and the Europeans were just tearing their hair out

because they couldn't, in their view, rely on the president to be a reliable ally that they could count on to back them up when things were going not so well.

I remember I was in the Quai d'Orsay in 1978 met this very senior French official who said to me, "We have a problem, a big problem."

And I said, "What's that?"

He said, "*L'absence des Etats-Unis dans le monde*," the absence of the United States in the world. We hear that today, by the way. And that really captured the guts of it, that's what they were worried about.

Q: Yeah. Well, it's -- with justification. Right now we're going through a crisis over Ukraine and Russia.

KAPLAN: And Syria. And Egypt. And Iran.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And the South China Sea *(laughs)*. I could continue, but we'll leave it at that.

Q: (laughs) All right. And there's not really much desire, we've been bitten by a number of small wars. And --

KAPLAN: And not so small wars.

Q: And not so small wars. And we're -- the United States, you have to say, is -- there's a fatigue.

KAPLAN: Yes, there is. There's a new book that's come out by a friend of mine, Steve Sestanovich, who worked in the policy planning staff the second time I was there, which we'll get to in due course. He's now a professor at Columbia. The name of the book is Maximalist, and what he does is he traces American foreign policy from Truman through Obama and the cycles between activism, which he calls maximalism on the part of the United States, and retrenchment. Carter was clearly a period of retrenchment, Obama is clearly a period of retrenchment. There were also activist periods, Nixon and Kissinger were activists, although in a strange way because they were in effect trying to get out of the Vietnam War with a façade of activism, and with some truly ingenious foreign policy strategies, like the trilateralism with the Chinese and the Russians. George H.W. Bush was an activist, although later in his administration he became less active. So there is this back and forth, and in the Carter period we were in one of these retrenchments.

Q: Well, during the Nixon administration the Helsinki Accords -- well, Ford administration -- were going on, which turned out to be sort of a surprise opening and very much a plus on our side. But how did you feel about them at the time? I know Kissinger was very dismissive.

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KAPLAN: Kissinger was what we call a realist in American foreign policy. His view was that human rights were important, but you had to deal with the world as it was and you could not say we won't talk to the Russians because they have terrible human rights, and so forth. When I was in Bonn a big part of my job was to engage in the preparatory talks for both MBFR and the so-called CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) talks. When I returned to Washington in the policy planning staff, CSCE (and MBFR) talks continued. And, and we sort of talked to each other from time to time, the two delegations. The heart of the CSCE negotiation, which is relevant to the Ukraine crisis right now, the main Soviet objective there was to reach agreement on the "inviolability of frontiers," a euphemism for making sure Germany would never get reunified again. Our position was yes, we agree to the inviolability of frontiers by the use of force, but that frontiers could be changed (and implicitly, Germany could be reunified) through peaceful means. That was our way of sticking close to the West Germans who wanted to retain that possibility in the aftermath of the Ostpolitik, the opening that Brandt had made, that one day it would happen. As you know, it did in 1990.

That was the so-called first basket of the CSCE negotiations. There was a second basket, which was less consequential at the time, dealing with economic interchange between the east and the west. The third basket that the Europeans insisted upon I think mainly for political reasons, was human rights. The Russians opposed it, but we stuck to it, though Kissinger he didn't exactly take the --

Q: Well, I --

KAPLAN: -- in fighting for it.

Q: I've talked to George Vest sometime ago who was working on that at the time.

KAPLAN: Right.

Q: And George was saying that Kissinger was downplaying what he was doing and all. He was telling Dobrynin, "That's, that's not of the" --

KAPLAN: He was saying, "Don't get too ideological," *(laughs).*

Q: Yeah. You know, and, and it turned out to be in a way sort of the key to unlocking the

KAPLAN: Well, there was this one amusing story that Vest told me. George was my DCM in my very first job at USEC (United States Mission to the European Community). He met with the Soviet CSCE representative, a fellow named Mendelevitch, who told him that he instructions from Moscow wind up the CSCE talks in 30 or 60 days. George of course said we can wind it up as soon as we reach agreement on the three baskets. Mendelevitch confided that he knew Washington wasn't particularly interested in the human rights basket and took out his instruction from Moscow. George laughed and said, that instruction had no impact on other delegations, or something to that effect."

Q: (laughs) Well, you know, the whole, this whole -- I mean you're right in the middle of a very complicated and really took a long time, but a very successful --

KAPLAN: It worked.

Q: Yes, it worked. d all. And now things have moved well beyond that. Well, what was ticking in -- during the time you were in policy planning, particularly in Europe, what were the things you were dealing with?

KAPLAN: Well, let me mention two or three illustrative -- I went on a trip to Germany with Win Lord and Reg Bartholomew, to meet with John Sherman Cooper, the former Kentucky senator who was then the ambassador to the GDR. We went to visit the great Pergamon museum in East Berlin, and a beautiful woman with a little leather skirt came up to Winston and said, "Mister Lord? You will come with me." And despite our warnings about East Berlin off he went. We weren't sure if we were ever going to see him again. And so we went to or Ambassador Cooper's residence, which was just an apartment. He put -- just like in the movies -- he put the radio or the record player up to such a high pitch that we could barely have a conversation. But he said, "At least they won't hear us."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Finally, about an hour and a half later Winston came in with a big grin on his face *(laughs), and h*e said she was from the Cultural Ministry. So much for the intrepid Boy Scout image of Winston Lord --

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: -- that he had at the time. That was one example. Another one was also in the GDR. I was assigned as the State Department's representative to the International Parliamentary Union, which held meetings in different cities around the world of members of Congress and other parliamentarians world, some of them democratic, others not. In this particular case I went to East Berlin. Ed Derwinski, a former congressman from Illinois was there, a big jovial fellow with a crew cut haircut who later became Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and before that undersecretary of state for security assistance. We were in the Volkskammer, the so-called East German Parliament. Bob McCrary, a congressman from Illinois was sitting with me, getting red in the face as the East Germans were making outrageous statements. Finally, he told me he wanted to make a statement they were televising this thing all over Europe, including the GDR.

I took Bob along the back of the auditorium so no one noticed us and told him to wait until the next speaker finished, then to dash out in front of the Volkskammer President, a nasty intelligence chief named Hermann Axen, who would have fit into the Nazi regime very well. Sure enough Bob ran up in the front and he gave this stem-winder of a speech condemning the GDR to perdition and Honecker and Ulbricht and all the rest of them,

and they couldn't do a thing about it. He said it was one of the great moments of his life *(laughs).* I liked it a lot, too.

That night there was a -- this is an anecdote, but it gives you kind of a sense of things. There was a reception in, in the building that housed the Communist Party and the government, there was a huge room with groaning tables laden with all kinds of food. I was standing there just looking around, and suddenly this fellow with white hair comes up to me and he said, "Erich Honecker." It was Erich Honecker who was the successor to Ulbricht --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- He used to be the head of FDJ, the *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, the communist youth groups. We had a conversation and I figured, I'm an American diplomat, they're not going to do anything to me. So we had a vigorous debate. People started surrounding us, and some of the East Germans started moving back towards the walls *(laughs)* because they didn't want to be anywhere near this. Honecker glared at me, he really hated this. So the evening ended, and the second day the proceedings went on and nobody bothered me. That night there was a, a final reception. I decided to skip it and found this Hungarian restaurant in East Berlin, Matthias Keller. I was wearing a blue blazer and, I suppose, looked like an American. There was a restaurant with tablecloths on the main floor but down beneath there was a *keller*--

Q: Beer cellar?

KAPLAN: Exactly.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I walked in there and there was this table with about 10 guys, and one empty seat so I asked in German if I could join them.

And they said, "Sure." And they said, "You American?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

And, "Well, what are you doing here? We hear there's a big reception for those guys for that conference with Honecker and all those guys."

I said, "I figured I'd feel a lot more comfortable being with you guys."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: I was their friend for life after that. They told, told me in no certain language what they thought about Honecker and his cohorts. There was a fellow named Schlemmer I think, drunk, at the next table, and he got up and he said, "Honecker is a," and then he

used a four-letter word. A big cop in a uniform came up to him and warned him to pipe down. Schlemmer squirreled his way back down into a seat. Then about five minutes later he got up and he said something much worse than he said before. Two cops came up to him and they said, 'You're coming with us, Schlemmer."

Schlemmer said, "And so are you!" *(laughs)*. These two big cops grabbed him by the elbows and lifted him up and hauled him out of the room! So there was a fairly clear sense of what we were dealing with. It was behind the wall. I walked around the city a lot and--.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I met people outside one day in the Alexanderplatz, which is a huge square, right outside the government buildings and Communist Party headquarters. I recall meeting two young people there, probably in their early thirties. They said, "You know, first there were the Nazis, and now there are the Ruskies. Our whole life has been spent living under this."

Q: Sure.

KAPLAN: "And when are you guys going to come, Americans, and get us out of this?"

I told them that that would be a dangerous thing for us to do, probably for them more than for us. But some day this would work its way out, as it did. But I knew "someday" was no answer. That was as earthy and as fundamental as it gets.

Q: Yeah, it's interesting how time and again in the eastern, in the Eastern Bloc it was shown that the education, you know, the young pioneers, the whole --

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: -- the whole, the whole business dealing with indoctrinating the next generation, it just didn't work. I mean the --

KAPLAN: No, it didn't work at all.

Q: I think actually the Hitler, Hitlerjugend and all probably worked better in Germany since this was based on real nationalism.

KAPLAN: Well, it was German. That's right. They called it National Socialism.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But it didn't take long before people understood what, what they were up against. The greatest German poet, the German Shakespeare, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, "We Germans are so estimable in the particular and so wretched in the

generality." That's the explanation for how a nation which produced Bach and Kant and Bismarck, and all these extraordinary people, could yet succumb to Hitler. Now, in my lifetime, I had had all this in my head when I first joined the Foreign Service. And in my lifetime I have seen the Federal Republic become a bastion of democracy and stability in the center of Europe. They became *salonfaehig*, ready to be received in a proper drawing room, and in fact far more -- valuable partners, the most important European country we dealt with throughout my career.

Q: All right, well let's go back to this policy planning. What about the country that seems to be the bur under the American saddle, France? During your time there?

KAPLAN: Well, well, I've always felt -- first of all, I like the country a lot. I admit that. I'm a Francophile. They can be annoying, and there are some in the upper echelons of their society who can be quite haughty. The word *hauteur* was not invented by accident in France. But all of that having been said, they're an extraordinary creative people. I like their language, I like their culture, I love their food. And what mattered from a geopolitical standpoint was they wanted to matter. They were a great power for a very long time, and it bothered them a lot that they weren't a great power anymore. I once wrote a memo to Larry Eagleburger when he was secretary, which he immediately sent back down to me saying you've hit the nail on the head, which said that the problem with the French is they hadn't won a war since Napoleon.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: They've lost every war they've fought in since Napoleon. And, and next to them the Germans, were growing so powerful. I don't know if I told you the story before. If I did then please interrupt me.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I was in Paris on one occasion and we went into an antique store. And I asked this young woman who ran the store what languages they taught you in the lycée (high school), because she spoke a few words of English. And she said -- very curious -- she said, "Spanish, Italian, and French Arabic." I asked about German and she just spit. This was 25-years-old. Totally spontaneous.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- you learn things that way. Now, I think it's gotten a lot better, as long as the Germans are getting stronger and the French are going through some very difficult times, economically and politically and you have the rise of the far right populous parties, there's going to be a problem.

Q: Yeah, well they've never learned to deal with their immigrant population. The, the -- which essentially is Muslim, from Africa.

KAPLAN: Lot of Muslims, six million, something like that?

Q: Yeah. Well, did France cross your particular radar?

KAPLAN: Well, they were partners in negotiation. They were very hardheaded about dealing with the Soviets there was not an ounce of naïveté. The Germans were more anxious to try to cut a deal, but they were also very nervous that we might use it as a justification for leaving. The Brits didn't like it at all. So they were good partners, I had no problem with them.

Q: How was --

KAPLAN: And you know, Al Haig, when he was secretary of state, he let it be known that he thought the French were our best ally because they cared about being a military power and about carrying out their responsibilities, which nobody else did.

Q: No. Well, I've interviewed Admiral Crowe at one point when he was CINCSOUTH posted in Naples, and I was consul general, and he was talking about how the French were the mainstay of supporting our military and naval presence in the Mediterranean. I mean there may have been all sorts of civil difficulties, but at the military side the cooperation was very close. Anyway, what came next?

KAPLAN: The next assignment that I had after that initial policy planning assignment was I was sent for a couple years to IO, the bureau of International Organizations at State, where I was in charge of the office that dealt with the non-aligned movement and some other things.

Q: OK, so we'll pick it up then.

####

Q: OK. Today is the 16th of April, 2014. We're only four days away from Hitler's birthday, which of course we all remember.

KAPLAN: We paid our taxes yesterday and now we're *(laughs)* --

Q: (laughs) Anyway, with Philip Kaplan. And all right, let's -- you've gone to IO. You were in IO from when to when?

KAPLAN: It was the Ford administration essentially, '75, '76.

Q: And IO for the uninitiated means International Organizations.

KAPLAN: That's right, the UN and associated agencies.

Q: And OK, do you want to talk about what you were up to, where you fit into this organization?

KAPLAN: Sure. Well, there was an assistant secretary of state, Bill Maynes. But the real head of IO was the Ambassador to the United Nations. Sometimes a little later when Elliot Abrams became the assistant secretary the youngest assistant secretary of state, at least in that bureau, perhaps ever, just barely over 30, he told me that the notion he would be giving instructions to Jeanne Kirkpatrick struck him as very amusing.

Q: Yeah (laughs).

KAPLAN: So that was the basic structure. There were offices that dealt with the whole range of UN and other IO type affairs like the Security Council and the Trusteeship Council. But the core of it was the UNP office (United Nations Political Affairs), and the heart of their interest lay in the Middle East. There were constantly resolutions that would come up in the Security Council or the General Assembly and the issue was whether the administration would back Israel or would back the Arab states: there was a constant toing and froing. Those were the early days when people were beginning to think about whether to take a bigger interest in the so-called Palestinian issue. It took until Carter became president in 1977 that the Palestinian issue reached the agenda in an operational way. Maynes and Gerry Hellman, his deputy, took a considerable interest in that question. I noticed that every time I came into the room suddenly they dropped their conversation because this was considered to be super secret, very sensitive, something that you didn't talk about in polite company.

My office dealt mainly with the non-aligned movement, which was hardly not a new phenomenon, but it was just beginning to take on a certain weight. At the annual UN General Assembly summits, in September, I'd get involved in and help write speeches for the Secretary and our senior officials. It was a small office and I would say it was one of the sleepier intervals of my time in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well now, was Jeanne Kirkpatrick the representative to the United --

KAPLAN: No, she only came along when Reagan came along.

Q: Well, that's what --

KAPLAN: Which was several years later.

Q: That's why --

KAPLAN: It might have been Bill Scranton, the former governor of Pennsylvania and sometimes presidential candidate.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But I'm not sure, I don't remember.

Q: Let's talk about the non-aligned movement.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: I had a -- I was in Yugoslavia for five years and Tito was reigning supreme, and it -- this was one of his things. And you had people like Nkrumah and Nasser and --

KAPLAN: Sukarno.

Q: Or Sukarno. I mean these were big guns in those days.

KAPLAN: They were big guns, but they had pretty small cap guns.

Q: But they, they really didn't amount to a hell of a lot.

KAPLAN: Well, it was rhetorical to a certain extent. It gave them a certain amount of cover. They were able to posture on the world's stage. I teach this course at George Washington University and compare it to the Greek chorus where they were always in the back of the stage echoing the main actors, and then suddenly they started jockeying their way forward, elbows out, trying to get to the front of the stage as well, which is perfectly natural. And now we're seeing it with the BRICS movement (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The question always is, how much clout do they really have?

Q: As I recall, there's one time when Tito or somebody was taking the stand, well, the fact that the Soviets had done a nuclear weapons test, there were sort of good, good nuclear weapons tests and bad nuclear weapons tests, and a non-aligned -- allied -- country such as the Soviet Union could have nice nuclear tests.

KAPLAN: Well, you put your finger on the core of the matter. I mean they called themselves non-aligned, and to a certain extent that was correct. They were basically nationalists rather than ideologues. And you had people like Castro and Nasser who were major factors in the non-aligned movement. Some of these folks were rather close to the Soviet Union. India, for example. the Soviet Union. I saw that during a visit to New Delhi. At bottom, however, each country looked to their own national interests rather than any feeling of non-aligned brotherhood. They didn't have that much in common.

Q: Well, I think we basically saw it for what it was.

KAPLAN: We were polite.

Q: Polite (laughs).

KAPLAN: We, we talked to them, we pretended they were important, they pretended they were important, and it didn't cause us any major difficulties. But occasionally something would happen that would cause us some trouble.

Q: Well, let's talk about this time you were dealing with -- first place, you want to talk about -- maybe some of the individual major players in this were -- these, these were states feeling their way, weren't they? I mean they were --

KAPLAN: Feeling their way, sometimes feeling their oats.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I'll give you one illustration, which you may find interesting. When I got to IO I asked when was the next meeting and I was told there would be the annual summit in Havana. So I conferred with colleagues at the agency and other places and it became clear that the Cuban leadership intended to make this a *big* deal politically and intended to get tough with anyone who threatened to mar the imagery they wanted.

After some reflection, and with permission from the Seventh Floor, I had our people in New York at the UN Mission get in touch with the Cuban delegation, with whom they had very little contact, and say that the guys in charge of the non-aligned movement in the State Department would like to meet the Cubans. They were flabbergasted, they had no idea what this was all about

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: . I went up to New York and I met with the ambassador of Cuba. I said, "Look, I have to be fairly direct with you, which is the only way for our two countries to converse. We're hearing a lot of very ugly rumors that you people intend to use some heavy tactics with countries that belong to your movement. They're not allies. But they sometimes disagree with you and talk. Then they get pushed around with you a bit." He didn't deny it, he just sort of glared at me. I said, "But I want you to know -- and I didn't have any instructions -- because our people were busy with far more important things.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: I said, "I want you to know that we're going to monitor you closely, and we have the capability to do so and we're going to make sure that any improper conduct gets publicized and it will mar your event. That's not our purpose, I just want you to know ahead of time that you're not going to be able to do this free of the kind of publicity that will spoil your party."

And he said -- sort of grunted, "Thank you so very much for coming out to tell me this," *(laughs).*

But we later on we intercepted a cable that he sent back to Havana saying essentially, They're on to us. When then the summit took place we didn't have anybody there and they did do some pretty ugly things. There was a senior Congolese leader who they beat up in the hotel. Some of the countries that had views that were different from their found that they were scheduled to speak to this illustrious gathering at three a.m. or something of that sort. The whole thing was a joke. But we then proceeded to publicize this. And they were very irritated because their party got somewhat spoiled.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I talked to the local ambassadors of Yugoslavia and some other countries, Indonesia I think, in an effort to try to mitigate this beforehand. And you know, they kind of shrugged and said, "Don't think we're looking forward to going to Havana." But that's where it was. And their leaders got up and gave their own stem-winders and it symbolized in microcosm what this movement was about. It was a lot about speeches and making the point that didn't want to be pushed into the camp of one side or the other. I don't see that the United States had any particular problem with that. The days of John Foster Dulles where you were either good or bad were long since gone

Q: Did you ever look at this, what I've always felt was a particular relationship, between India being non-aligned and the Soviet Union. Was anybody looking -- I mean why did they seem so close?

KAPLAN: Well, they seemed close because they had some common interest. India had that colonial experience with the British and they were in disputes with the Pakistani, the Kashmir issue and all that.

Q: Indonesia always seemed to punch below its weight. I mean, you know, it's a big country, it's got --

KAPLAN: Over 200 million people.

Q: Yeah. And it could be rather important in Southeast Asia. But it somehow doesn't seem to carry the gravitas that you would think would be accorded to it. And --

KAPLAN: It's the most populous Muslim country in the world and from an objective standpoint the most important Southeast Asian country I think. But know, I was in the Philippines, and we'll talk about that more in detail later, with 7,000 islands. Indonesia's a little like that. It's spread out all across the maritime environment, with different languages and dialects. When I first went to Jakarta in the mid-eighties, it looked like a colonial provincial backwater, with and slums all over the place. I went back there in the mid nineties and was astonished by the huge changes that I'd seen, modernization of infrastructure and public services; that was the case all over Southeast Asia.

Sukarno was a, a rather mesmerizing figure, a bit like Tito and Nkrumah and Castro for that matter. These were people who led countries that were not coherent functioning

political entities. And so their charisma sometimes was used to substitute for the coherence of things. Indonesia under Sukarno kind of peddled along, it didn't really advance in a significant way. The potential was there for everyone to see natural resources and all that. But they couldn't quite make it; instead they fell back on pretense, with a mesmerizing leader. Eventually things started to modernize under Suharto, who took over in a violent military coup, preempting a planned coup by the PCI (Communist Party of Indonesia. That modernization was marred by world-scale corruption at the top.

And it wasn't only in Indonesia, it was in most of these countries. The Castro brothers have been presiding over Cuba all these years. There are some bright spots like health care but by and large it's autocratic and it's not a successful country. My view has always been that the day that they pass from the scene and there's anything like a decent new government that takes over, the place will sink under the weight of new investments. Not only from Florida, but from Europe and other places as well.

Q: Mm-hmm. Well --

KAPLAN: Governing is hard. Government is hard.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And it's a lot, a lot easier to get up and make a big speech.

Q: And of course these were people -- one name we didn't mention the last time is Nasser too.

KAPLAN: Nasser. The big story there was Suez '56, but the main impact was in Europe, especially our relations with the French and British.

Q: And none of them were particularly, particularly bothered.

KAPLAN: No, but the potential -- not only from the standpoint of the people of these countries, but also in terms of our interest to develop collaborative relationships based on mutual interests was not being taken advantage of. It took until George W. Bush before the steps we took to try to improve relationship with India finally came to pass.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And even now it's not working quite the way it should.

Q: Well, India's undergoing its own problems too.

KAPLAN: It is indeed but our relations have come a long way and are on a better path.

Q: Well, did you find that, I mean in a way that you were in a backwater -- I mean you'd been dealing with major issues in Europe. I mean, at a lower level, but still you were part

of a team dealing with major issues. And all a sudden you're, you're dealing with a sort of triple A teams down in --

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: -- Toledo Mud Hens or something like --

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* Well, that's a bit harsh. I think what it means is that unless you're extremely fortunate there are times when you take a break. That's just the way the system works. And it's not necessarily a bad thing.

Q: No.

KAPLAN: You can't go win the marathon every day.

Q: Well, then were there any particular issues that you got involved with in this period in the United Nations?

KAPLAN: Well, I learned a lot there because I was dealing with some issues I hadn't dealt with before. The Middle East was one area where I really was not very expert and South Asia another. Once when there was the usual UN General Assembly fall summit David Newsom, the undersecretary for political affairs called a meeting about what the speech be about. He went around the room and nobody had any ideas that he found compelling. And so he asked for my thoughts.

I said, "Well," I said, "I'm no great expert here and most of you are smarter than me about this." I figured when you had a reason to be modest it was always a good idea to *(laughs)* follow that course. But I said, "The thing that strikes me is that" -- not that this was an original idea -- "was that we've really entered now very clearly into the post-colonial era, most of these colonies in Africa and other places have become independent. Since the forum is the United Nations, where two-thirds of the member states then were in the developing world. I think we score a lot of points if we walk in there and our president acknowledges this with approval and offers some support."

So suddenly I was told, "That sounds like a good idea," and Mr. Newsom said, "What would you call it?"

I said, "Entering the post-colonial era." He liked that a lot. He'd been in Indonesia and many other developing countries.

Q: He'd been in Indonesia and Libya.

KAPLAN: Yes, the Philippines too.

Q: Been in Africa.

KAPLAN: And he said, , "Well, that sounds like a pretty good idea. Why don't you go write it *(laughs)?"* And so to my amazement, and to the chagrin of my colleagues in UNP, with my little office I was assigned this task of writing the UNGA speech. Of course it went through 3,000 drafts --

Q: Oh yes (laughs).

KAPLAN: -- *(laughs)*, but that stuck, you know, the basic theme. And the tolerance for hypocrisy in UNGA speeches was very high and always has been. But most of the members were very happy about this. They thought that for the first time an American president, this white guy from Michigan named Jerry Ford walked in and gave this speech in which he said -- and a Republican no less -- that the post-colonial era is a terrific thing and we approve of it.

Q: Did you mention that we were a post-colonial --

KAPLAN: I think I did have something like that in -- this is a long way from John Foster Dulles.

Q: Yeah, oh yeah.

KAPLAN: So.

Q: Well, I always find -- I have real problems every time I hear the mention of Dulles Airport. Because Dulles does not strike me as being a secretary of state whose name should really reverberate by having a major airport named after him, but --

KAPLAN: Not very welcoming and receiving name to have at an airport, right?

Q: No. No. Well, did you get involved in the annual vote corralling in all our posts?

KAPLAN: Not very -- well, we -- a little of that and, you know, I would write some of the cables that were directed at the developing countries and things like that. But I had the kind of feeling that this was, you know, kind of standard practice. I wasn't -

Q: Very --

KAPLAN: I didn't have any sense that I was about to make history or anything, or we were about to make history in any way.

Q: No.

KAPLAN: I don't know if I story about when I was in Bonn on one occasion my ambassador, Mr. Ken Rush, who was former CEO of one of the big American corporations, might have been DuPont. Anyway, he was Nixon's law professor at Duke.

Q: Mm.

KAPLAN: That's why he was there, together with his contribution. He called me one Sunday morning. This is before Martin Hillenbrand became ambassador. He called me up one Sunday morning and he said, "My golf game has just gone to hell. The president called me up and he said we've got to stop Red China from entering the UN. And there's a key vote with Senegal."

President Senghor was in Bonn that day at the Koenigshof Hotel and Rush had to go and talk to him. He drafted me as his French interpreter. Well, for me the interesting part of it was a chance to meet this extraordinary African leader.

Q: A poet and --

KAPLAN: Exactly. So we went there. And this hotel was just a couple blocks down the street from the Foreign Ministry. Senghor was a diminutive fellow, black as the ace of spades, I still remember those white teeth and the most elegant French I had ever heard. The notion that I was going to be translating for this man back and forth and speaking French back to him I found preposterous. But I had no choice, that was the way it was set up. And he was a close friend of Pompidou's, particularly of Madame Pompidou.

Q: He had served in the French Parliament, hadn't he?

KAPLAN: I think so, but I don't remember that for sure.

Q: But I know he of course --

KAPLAN: Anyway, he was an extraordinarily able man, very impressive. He was sitting on this little settee. They made it look as French as possible in this German hotel, and Senghor had this woman in there who must have been six-foot-four or so, a gorgeous, Senegalese woman. We walked in there and Mr. Rush said -- I'm not giving you word by word, but essentially, "We hope that you'll support us on this vote."

Senghor just smiled and he said, "Merci."

Rush was getting us a little flummoxed and he didn't want to be there to start with, he wanted to be playing golf. And he was getting nowhere. I sent him a note saying, "Sir, you're telling him what he can do for us. Tell us what you can do for him."

I knew that Nixon had authorized the ambassador to tell Senghor that we had approved this bridge in Dakar that the Senegalese had been asking us to finance for many years, and we had finally approved it. So Rush, instead of dangling that in a really delicate polished manner, simply said, "Well, you've got the bridge." I was appalled.

Senghor got up and said, "Merci," and he started for the door.

Rush said, “Just a minute now, Mr. President.” I was translating back and forth. “How about that vote on Red China?”

Senghor replied in a soft voice, in French, “I will give that my earnest consideration.” I knew what that meant *(laughs).*

Q: Yes.

KAPLAN: so Rush got up, very pleased with himself, and we headed for the door and went downstairs. He said, “Well, maybe I can get the back nine.” He said, “Do you want a ride back?”

I said, “No, it’s OK.”

I just wanted to get away from him. I thought the way he handled it, the ambassador of a superpower, to a major country like Germany, it was just a disgrace. He asked, “Well, how did I do?”

I said, “I think you did fine, Mr. Ambassador, but he’s going to vote against us.”

He said, “No, that’s impossible. At the least they’ll abstain.”

I said, “He’ll vote against us.” And he did.

Q: Yeah. Well, you know, it’s one of the things you -- again and again I run into people giving accounts of talking to -- coming, you know, flying and talking to a leader in a country or something, asking for -- asking for something and getting a very polite response, “I’ll take it at a consideration.” Usually up to the political officer. Sort of said, “You didn’t get it,” you know. Thinking boy, I think I really, really clobbered him.

KAPLAN: Well, Rush said to me, “I hope he understands that I’ve just given him an opportunity to do the most important thing he’s probably ever done in his political career.” That’s almost an exact quote.

And I said to myself, you know, “This guy’s the president of the country, I mean this is beyond silly.”

Q: Oh well. Well, by any chance, how stood Yugoslavia at the time? I’ve always sort of followed Yugoslav affairs. I had spent five years there. So often in the diplomatic field we were getting pretty good reports, nothing fancy, but on relations say in the Soviet Union and all. Yugoslav diplomats seemed to be a pretty good and, you know, letting us peek in the door in communist affairs and all. Did you get any feel --

KAPLAN: I had a lot of dealings with them during the Carter administration. There was no particular reason why this happened except I met the Yugoslav ambassador at a concert for the young Yugoslav pianist Ivo Pogorelich. He would come by during the

Carter administration when I was in policy planning, concerned about the president changing his mind a lot. The Yugoslav ambassador would come by and ask me, "Well, what's our policy in the Middle East today?" The relationship become quite cordial. We differed on some issues, but it was -- we felt it was in our interest, given the broader scope of Eastern European policy debate, that Yugoslavia maintained the maximum degree of independence from the Soviet Union. When there was a reason to and their security interests were involved, we talked. If there was something where Tito was being really tough on the Serbs or -- because he was a Croat himself -- there were limits to how far we could go. Tito was a proud guy who had faced down Stalin and Khrushchev. He wasn't about to take a lot of lecturing on issues that didn't go to the heart of our interests.

Q: Mm-hmm. Well, on this job, how did you find -- speaking of political relations -- how were relations between IO Bureau in Washington, and the UN? I mean it's awful -- I mean telephone and a quick railroad ride away.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: I would think good cause for problems.

KAPLAN: The ambassador called the shots. If he got an instruction from Bill Maynes saying he should do X when he wanted to do Y, he would ignore it. Maynes knew that if it came to a confrontation, the Secretary would go with the ambassador; occasionally the UN ambassador was a Cabinet member.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: So he outranked the assistant secretary of state by quite a few levels, and usually it was a political person who was not about to take any guff from a career person. Maynes was not a career person, he was a former Foreign Service Officer I believe who left, got involved in The Foreign Policy Magazine; he was a good Democrat and was brought back in.

Q: I have a good interview with him.

KAPLAN: Yes. A very nice fellow, very intelligent; he reflected the thinking in that administration, which was what he was supposed to do.

Q: Where did you go after IO?

KAPLAN: Well, that was a significant move up for me, and an interesting story in terms of transition. So the election was coming up in --

Q: This is --

KAPLAN: 1980.

Q: 1980.

KAPLAN: Reagan won. I think he won 49 states. People that know about these things better than I told me that Carter was absolutely shocked, he thought he was going to win. I don't think anyone else thought he was going to win, but he thought he was going to win. Most presidents probably feel that I suppose.

The day after the election I received a phone call from a guy named Bob Neumann who was our former ambassador to Saudi Arabia. I had met him once in my life. He had come to Bonn when I was there years before, for a conference. I was the one in the embassy assigned to go to the conference. And so I met him, we chatted a couple times. He seemed like a nice gentleman, he was a senior diplomat, retired. To my amazement, the day after the election he called invite to a reception at his home on Sunday evening for the Reagan team. I wasn't a partisan and ten years had passed since the conference in Bonn.
Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* I said, "Sure." I figured this would be a chance to try to meet these people. The only other Foreign Service Officer who was there was Sam Lewis who recently died, a very distinguished former ambassador to Israel whom I knew well.

Q: Sam had been ambassador about seven years.

KAPLAN: Yes, at a very tempestuous time. He had been a deputy director of Policy Planning at an earlier time when I was first there to deal with European affairs. So I went around and I said hello to some people. Figured, "Be very careful here." And then Dick Allen arrived who was --

Q: Later --

KAPLAN: -- shortly thereafter named National Security Advisor to President Reagan.

Q: Very short time.

KAPLAN: At the end of the night Ambassador Neumann took me aside and he said, "Al Haig is going to be secretary of state and I've been told by the White House -- not by Haig -- that I'm going to head the State Department transition team. I'd like you to come and work with me there." And I knew from past experience that people who worked on transition teams --

Q: Sure.

KAPLAN: -- often end up in very good positions.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I went back home and I thought about this for a few days, and concluded, I shouldn't do it, I didn't know where the trap doors were. I knew that there were differences of view among the Republicans who were coming in and who would be on the transition team -- guys like Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz and Rick Burt – and many others I didn't really know. So I offered to write transition papers, but from my office in IO. I had been writing up papers about what we should be doing next, because I didn't really approve of the foreign policy in the Carter administration, but they were memos to myself. I had put them all in a safe; they were ready to roll. He was getting a new memo from me every day *(laughs)*, and I wasn't there. And then after one month he was fired by Al Haig, along with the two or three people he brought in with him. I figured I would have gone up in flames with them if I had gone over there.

I was approached by Richard Perle who invited me said he wanted me be his deputy assistant secretary for International Security Affairs in the Pentagon, which is a very powerful bureau there dealing with Europe and Russia and the big issues. I had met Perle in Pittsburg some years before when he was working for Senator Henry Jackson of Washington State. He gave a speech on strategic disarmament, I gave a speech on MBFR and conventional disarmament. He came up to me afterward and said, "That was interesting. He could be very charming. He was certainly extremely smart.

Q: And he developed the reputation of being the Prince of Darkness and all that at one point.

KAPLAN: That's right, that's right. He was called the Black Prince. He and Rick Burt would have gone through nuclear war with each other if they possibly could. Rick Burt was also extremely smart and landed as assistant secretary of state for Europe. Then I got a call from Paul Wolfowitz who said, "I understand you've been doing policy planning in the past." He asked me to be his deputy.

So I said to myself, I'd better stay at State or might never be able to return.

Q: Could you -- for somebody who's not too aware of the thing, can you explain what you mean? He doesn't take -- I mean he doesn't take --

KAPLAN: Let me explain it this way. The fellow that took the job Richard Perle offered me was a major general. Whenever there were meetings at the State Department called by Rick Burt, Perle would never go, he'd send this fellow. In other words, I would have been the one that would have been going. And this fellow had instructions to agree to nothing. And you know, Mr. Burt was virtually apoplectic at these meetings. The reason Pearl was doing this was because he didn't like where Burt was driving the discussions on disarmament, so he just blocked it by not attending. I would have been the foil that would have been sent out there *(laughs).* No, thank you.

Q: People would have remembered you.

KAPLAN: Oh, they would have remembered me forever. So I went to work for Wolfowitz as deputy director of the policy planning staff. My main focus at the beginning of this assignment remained on the big European security issues and relations with Soviet Union and other things. But that changed when Wolfowitz left the office a year and a half later.

Q: All right, let's talk about the Wolfowitz period.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: What drove Wolfowitz? Because it's a name that cropped up during the last Bush administration.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: But at that time, how did you see Wolfowitz?

KAPLAN: Well, he was an *extremely* intelligent man, and conservative. An intellectual. He went to Cornell, graduated when he was 16 or 17-years-old. I think his father was a scientist and he had intended to become a physicist or something, I don't know exactly. And then at Cornell his interest shifted into international political matters. He went after Cornell to the University of Chicago, which is another eminent institution which at least then had a conservative perspective. But you know, we're not talking about Tea Party sort of stuff, we're talking about conservative interests. Later on he became associated with the so-called neo-con movement. And that's another whole story with some interesting background, two of which we could talk about if you want. But in any case, Al Haig became secretary of state and as I mentioned before the relationship between the secretary and the director determined how influential the policy planning staff would be.

Paul was called into a lot of things, at least at the beginning, in the Middle East and in East Asia and other areas. The first couple of things I remember when Haig called a meeting in the first week dealt with Cuba and I was told to, to write a memo for the meeting. I literally had 20 minutes to do it. But fortunately this was something I had thought about, and so I knocked it off. Paul grabbed the memo and ran off to the meeting. I didn't go. Later he came back and told me that Haig "wants to go to the source, the implication being, I don't know, bomb Cuba or whatever. Paul never really elaborated more specifically than that, but there were lots of stories in the newspapers about it afterwards. And I have to say that as far as I could tell, Paul Wolfowitz, you know, this very well-known conservative, seemed a little shaken by this. So it's like anything else, you know, you have a set of views, you have a reputation, and then suddenly you're thrown into a specific situation and things begin to look that they're a little more complicated.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Reagan was in the White House and nobody quite knew what he was going to be doing at this stage.

Q: People were very nervous all over the world about Reagan.

KAPLAN: Indeed. Aside from this little memo that I wrote, the first major thing that I confronted when I got there related to the Middle East, a complex about which I was far from expert. Well, Margaret Thatcher was coming to visit Reagan, one of his first visitors. And for reasons I never quite understood I was called told by Bud McFarland, who was then the counselor of the Department that I should write the briefing memo for the Thatcher-Reagan meeting. My first reaction was, of course, "Why me?" And he said the new folks didn't trust NEA, State's Near East bureau.

I said to myself, I'm not going to do this by myself, and so I went and I talked to Mike Sterner, who I believe had been ambassador to Egypt and was well-known as one of the great experts in the Middle East, one of the so-called Arabists. He was a gentleman. He understood how little I knew and he was willing to help and I said, "You know, the policy's going to be different."

And he said, "Yeah, I know that."

I think Sterner was one of those who was opposed to the establishment of the state of Israel a long time before. But then again, most of the Foreign Service was at that time. And so he helped me, he taught me a lot. And when my memo was quite different than what he would have written, he went over it to make sure there were no factual mistakes. But he didn't obstruct it in any way. I brought it up to Wolfowitz and McFarland. They sent it up to the secretary who sent it to the president, and he used it. It was a very bizarre experience as far I was concerned.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I was given this task that I really was not qualified to undertake, but I tried to do it as professionally as I could, and in fact they made use of it.

Q: Well now, you were in policy planning. And for the first time since George Marshall who had had policy planning as part of his, way he is a military man, conducted operations. Here you had Alexander Haig who came out of the same background. Now, was there a change in -- did you find policy planning was different then, that it had devolved?

KAPLAN: Well, it was different because Al Haig and George Catlett Marshall were as different as they could possibly be as human beings. Haig was kind of a rambunctious kid from New Jersey who cut his teeth as the deputy to Henry Kissinger in the NSC and later as chief advisor to Nixon in the days leading up to impeachment. He was chief of staff at the White House, as sly a bureaucrat as we ever had -- and I don't use the word bureaucrat in a deprecatory way, an operator. There was this one illuminating story about

him that I heard. President Ford, who he also served after Nixon left, instructed Haig to invite UN Ambassador Bill Scranton, a college roommate at Yale, to a White House meeting the next morning at 8:00am.

Q: Yeah. Scranton had been Governor of Pennsylvania.

KAPLAN: Yes, and later almost ran for president. The story was that Haig invited Scranton to a meeting at 9:00am."

So Scranton, who was notoriously known for not rising early in the morning, struggled his way down on the shuttle from New York and got there at five minutes to nine in the morning. Haig walked out of the Oval Office and brushed by him peremptorily and said, "Sorry Bill, the meeting's just ended." He did it on purpose *(laughs).* You know, this is the White House, the Oval Office, the president, the chief of staff of the White House, the ambassador to the UN, and they were like schoolboys. Scranton never forgot that. I think he --

Q: Oh boy.

KAPLAN: He went to his grave *(laughs)* --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: George Marshall was -- I never met the gentleman of course, I was, I was too young, I was a little kid. But he was a statesman, from Virginia, he was --

Q: Very reserved.

KAPLAN: Very reserved, puritanical. Ethics and values were for him the coin of the realm. He took some positions which I didn't particularly agree, but this was a man that everyone admired. Colin Powell said he was his role model. So the two men were as different as they could possibly be.

Q: Well, did you sense a different policy planning when you came a second time to it?

KAPLAN: Yes, I did. I sensed that Paul Wolfowitz was someone who made sure that he was close to the political people, Republicans in Congress. I first met him when I was first in policy planning and he was working as a junior staffer to John Lehman who was then the deputy director of ACDA, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; later John became secretary of the navy. John and I had known each other when we worked in Vienna on MBFR together. He was the ACDA rep at MBFR. When he worked with ACDA Director Fred Iklé, we maintained a relationship. Paul was brought in as this bright young man who could provide intellectual content to the top guys. We were supposed to go on a trip to Paris and the question arose as to what day we were going to leave. The meetings would begin on Monday and Director Iklé wanted to leave on Sunday night. He was a Swiss-born, brilliant, arms control and military analyst, later on

he was undersecretary of defense. Anyway, we said, "Well, let's go over there on Friday night. We can spend the weekend in Paris."

I remember very vividly that both Wolfowitz and I -- and Lehman -- were astonished when Fred said, "What would you do in Paris over the weekend?" *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: Well, we had one or two thoughts on what we could do. Have a couple good meals to start. So I knew these guys, not as close collaborators, but we knew each other.

Q: Do you think you'd established a reputation as being a, a Republican or a Democrat or anything like that?

KAPLAN: No, I don't think so. I served both administrations. I mean I came in in the administration of Lyndon Johnson and was there through Johnson and Nixon and Carter. I was a Foreign Service Officer and that's what you did.

Q: Right.

KAPLAN: And believe me, all of my most liberal friends when Reagan came in were hustling for jobs just as they would have if it was the other way around. But if I had gone over to DOD with Perle that would have been the --

Q: Oh that -- oh, I have no doubt about it.

KAPLAN: That would have been a much different situation.

Q: Well, on policy planning, what piece of the pie did you have?

KAPLAN: Well, at that point I was deputy director. Now, there was an -- I want to address what you just asked me, but I -- there's one last bureaucratic point which should be mentioned. Paul brought in this fellow to be his senior deputy. His name was Jim Roche; later on he became secretary of the Air Force I think. This guy had a tremendous influence over Paul; he called a lot of the shots. He was one tough guy, harsh would be not too strong a word. At a certain point Paul was told from above that he had to get rid of Roche. Paul was moved to become assistant secretary for East Asia, which was a promotion, and later he was ambassador to Indonesia. And as you know, his career just kept going up and up and up. The third deputy Don Fortier. Don was a really nice guy and he was also part of this group. Later on he went to the NSC and then he died at a very early age, in his early forties I believe.

So let me come back to your question, which is what were the kinds of things that I got involved with. Well, the very first thing that happened was, you know, every administration has national security study memoranda and processes to review all of the

policies that existed before -- this happened even when, when -- you went from one Republican administration to another, one Democratic --

Q: Yeah.
. So I had done this thing on the Thatcher Middle East thing, and they seemed to like that. And so they called me in and they said, "We'd like you to write the one on Europe."

And I said, "Well, I think my friends in EUR would probably like to take the lead on that."

And they said, "Yes, they're going to take the lead on that, but you're going to do the real one." I knew this was going to cause me a lot of trouble so I went down to EUR -- this is the way you're supposed to do these things -- and I talked to them and I said, "Well, we'll try to amalgamate this, the realities." They basically wanted to continue with their same policies. I said there was an election, a swing from the left of the Democratic Party to the right of the Republican Party. That's not going to happen. So you do yours and I'll do mine and we'll stay in touch and see what we can do. And the one on Europe basically worked out OK that way.

Q: The pipeline became a big issue.

KAPLAN: But the second one they asked me to do was on east-west policy and relations with the Soviet Union. EUR had done a draft of that. And again, it was the same thing. Because people don't like to change.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: It's normal.

Q: Well, we tend to be straight line --

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: -- in thinking -- in a bureaucracy you get straight-line thinking.

KAPLAN: That's right. Permanent, permanent interest and so forth. That was the idea. And so they did a draft and the guys upstairs just threw it in the garbage pail. And that's when e was called in and said, "You got to do this." And so again I went down there and I told EUR him what was going on. I figured I had the responsibility or my colleagues to at least tell them what was happening and that I was instructed to do this and I'd stay in touch. But I said, "It's going to look very different." This was 1981. The Cold War was, was really cooking away. I knew what the president wanted. It was one or two or three major objectives of his whole presidency. And so the first sentence of my draft, which stayed in there and which absolutely horrified my colleagues in EUR, was the purpose of -- I can still quote it -- "The purpose of U.S. east-west policy is to win the Cold War."

Not to manage it, to win it. That's what we wanted. He's the president. People voted for him, they didn't vote for me.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And I didn't think it was a crazy idea anyway! We weren't talking about winning it by going to war. There were a lot of new policies that were adopted to, to back this. There was a military build-up as you remember, Secretary Weinberger. There was a focus on public diplomacy, an aggressive propaganda of public diplomacy, more covert activity. There was a whole bunch of stuff that was adopted. And obviously my draft was amended many times. But the basic thrust of it held. And, and so I really felt that this was one of those rare occasions where you really put your prints on. Whether the results are good or bad is for historians to judge, as they say, but this was one heck of a big change from that backwater that I'd just come from *(laughs).*

Q: Oh yes.

KAPLAN: Because we were right in the middle of all the big issues and there was so much going on. Paul -- one last comment on this. Paul selected his staff slowly, or maybe he selected it immediately, but it took a long time for them to get their clearances. Because a lot of them, many of them were coming from outside. I was one of a very few Foreign Service officers that was part of this operation. For the first couple of months I was just tearing around the building going from one meeting after another about all kinds of subjects I faced a steep learning curve. I went to one on Latin America that John Bushnell, a former ambassador to Brazil and acting assistant secretary, was chairing. At the time I didn't have a staff guy working on Latin America to help me. These first couple of months were very heavy, I was never so tired in my life. I was just going to one meeting after another, and meetings that were in the process of setting the new policies. So it was extremely exciting and I was learning a lot. But there were many meetings I went to where I was clearly out of my depth.

Q: Well, did you feel that this was the president directing it, setting the tone? Or were these people who were taking advantage of their president to set the tone themselves?

KAPLAN The way I saw it, the president had only a very few key objectives. One was to make America strong again after what he considered to be the feckless foreign policy of the previous administration, the naïveté that led to the Shah of Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, all these things. The second was to strengthen the American domestic economy, was just ravaged. The third thing -- this will sound curious to some people -- was Reagan wanted to do for the American people, who were feeling really bad about themselves, what de Gaulle did for France, to revive a sense of self-confidence that we can do it, that we're a great country and we can make it happen. That's why he used the phrase, "Morning in America," which was a cliché, but nonetheless it made the point. And suddenly people started feeling better about themselves, and we were flexing our muscles and so forth.

And in that connection, let me just tell you one other anecdote. I wasn't in the transition team for reasons I explained, but one Sunday morning in December Neumann called and said that Dick Allen would be in his State Department office at 11:00 in this morning. So I went down there and, and Allen asked me a few questions about CSCE and national security, and then he mentioned the name of a certain State Department official who I respected, a fellow who had worked in the Democratic administrations. Allen lifted his right thumb and said, "Up," and then he puts his thumb down, "or down?"

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He basically put this guy's career in my hands. Well, this guy was not my closest friend, but I respected him. And so of course, like any decent human being -- even if I *hated* him, under the circumstances I would put my thumb up!

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Allen grunted, and he let the fellow continue to serve for another year and a half before the fellow retired and went off. He's in the economic field, some job in a bank or something in New York. That gave me a kind of a sense of this was going to be a bit of a rough ride.

Q: Yeah. Well, you were getting really much more political exposure to, to Washington and all than most Foreign Service Officers, weren't you?

KAPLAN: Well, the policy planning staff was a more -- I mean it was a diplomatic office, but it -- by its very nature there were more non-Foreign Service Officers who were serving in it. That's the way I would characterize it. And so you get to know these people. But then again, when I worked there under Tony Lake and Sandy Berger in the Carter administration for a couple years, I saw a lot of the people from the Democratic side of the aisle. And when you serve overseas there are CODELs (congressional delegation) that come and so forth. You got to know these people to a certain extent. I mentioned Ed Derwinski, the former congressman, who I'd accompany to IPU meetings, Inter-Parliamentary Union meetings, so you'd meet a certain number of people. I also had that earlier experience in the California legislature. So all these things sort of come together. People have a fabric of experiences. And you can never know when you're doing one how it's going to bear on your perspective, but all of this has its --

Q: Well, I'll tell you. I've, I've been doing -- I work -- we're getting very close to the 30 years that I've been doing these oral histories.

KAPLAN: Really?

Q: And I, I can get bored. But I'm not bored by doing this because the experiences are so different --

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: -- of almost everyone. Because one, the countries are different and so the dynamics within the countries or the issues within dealing with those countries are different. But also, the internal politics. Administrations change and Foreign Service Officers are tossed into this and have no idea where they'll come up. I mean for me, you know, a very close friend at one point -- and we just drifted apart -- was Larry Eagleburger.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: But I knew Larry had close connections to Melvin Laird.

KAPLAN: They were both from Wisconsin.

Q: Both from Wisconsin and family and all that. And you know, Larry went on. But with him we were just a couple of guys doing language together and we took a couple field trips together in Yugoslavia.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: But he went his way and I went mine.

KAPLAN: Well, he was Lawrence of Macedonia.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Because he helped I think with the earthquakes or something there.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Yeah, so you have to be nimble. That's the --

Q: Yeah. I think this is one of the things that is particularly interesting about the Foreign Service in a way. It makes an oral history particularly important -- oral histories -- particularly important, because you're picking up these various things. I, I, I suspect, I can't prove it, but I would think military careers don't lend themselves to that.

KAPLAN: Not in the same way, no.

Q: They're much more stratify --

KAPLAN: Yes, you learn how to salute. I mean I've met some military leaders who are extraordinarily impressive. I was just up at the Fletcher School last week, law and diplomacy, and I set up a scholarship there. Anyway, the new dean, who replaced Steve Bosworth who we're going to come to very shortly, is Admiral Jim Stavridis. He was until a few months ago the supreme allied commander for Europe. He spent his whole

career in the Navy. He laughed and said, "Well, I set up my career in the broiler room." He's brilliant, an intellectual and sophisticated and he went to Fletcher himself as a student a long time ago. You know, he would have fit in as a perfect ambassador too, and he's a strategic thinker.

So whatever setting you're in, whether it's in a legislature or in the State Department or the Defense Department or the agency or in a corporation, there are going to be a lot of people who are average and there are going to be a few who are going to be movers and shakers. Whatever country you were assigned, the very best people would be as good as you could find anywhere on earth. I see this with my students. There was a young woman, Vietnamese, I don't think she was five feet high. She would sit in the class and stare at me and never say a word. And if I looked at her she would blush and put her eyes down. Well, it turned out she came from the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, and her papers were so good, the memos she wrote for me. I remember I put on one of them, "Are you sure you didn't get Henry Kissinger to help you write this?" So you can't, you can't say typecast or prejudge them because they come from one country or another.

Q: No. No.

KAPLAN: You find the best everywhere. And you find the worst everywhere, too.

Q: Well, foreign policy does basically select -- it's -- the diplomacy is what has been denigrated, but I think is true, is a pretty good club.

KAPLAN: Indeed. Well, one of the things I liked about this job -- I wasn't in an operational bureau -- but I was getting involved in a lot of interesting issues. I took what I considered very interesting trips to, to Chile, to India to South Africa, to the Vatican

Q: Well, why don't -- let's take our time. What was ticking -- I mean you're, you're -- so your first area was Europe. What was going on when the Reagan administration came in? I know the pipeline was a big issue.

KAPLAN: And he looks pretty smart right now, doesn't he?

Q: Oh yes (laughs). You might explain what the issue was.

KAPLAN: Sure. Well, the president was not an intellectual, but he would sit back and think in the common sense terms of a conservative man, about what made sense in terms of our interest. The Cold War was going on, Soviet leaders were dying: Brezhnev and then Chernenko who was basically a bag man for Brezhnev. And then came --

Q: Andropov.

KAPLAN: Andropov, who was the head of the KGB and former ambassador to Hungary when they invaded Hungary and arranged for the murder of the Hungarian leader--

Q: Nagy.

KAPLAN: Nagy. Reagan was told one day that there was this gas pipeline that the Russians were building and the West Europeans were all signing up, because it was a source of cheap energy from nearby. They didn't have to get it from the Middle East, which is always volatile and unpredictable. Reagan said this is the worst thing you can do because you're going to become overly dependent on the Soviet Union for vital energy sources. He opposed it vigorously. And I remember I was on holiday in Italy and a former colleague of mine from my first assignment had retired and he was growing wine and, and olives on his property near Florence. He was *ranting* at Reagan about this, called it the stupidest thing he'd ever heard, we're going to take on all of Europe over this, and so forth. I thought Reagan was right but didn't argue with him because, number one, he wasn't going to have any impact on the decision and, number two, it wouldn't have accomplished anything, and three, I liked the fellow. But the result was that Reagan was outmaneuvered by the Europeans who felt it was too important to them. So now we have the Ukraine crisis going on, and a lot of talk about how Europe should diversify its energy sources.

Q: Yeah. Well, did Reagan -- I mean did you find any major conflicts sort of with what was at that time our present foreign policy, and Reagan regarding Europe?

KAPLAN: Oh, yes.. The single biggest issue that emerged in the first year of Reagan's administration related to Soviet deployment of the so-called SS-20 intermediate range missile from which the Soviets could hit most parts of Europe, and particularly Germany. This was a serious threat, there was no comparable weapons system on the western side. The cry in Europe was for negotiations -- disarmament was always the magic elixir.

Reagan didn't want to start negotiations until we had built up the leverage to do this. In the State Department and Pentagon, Perle didn't want to do anything on disarmament at that time while Burt wanted to get things started and he had a lot of support in the State Department.

I gave this a lot of thought -- and reached the conclusion that you needed to have an integrated policy that would combine disarmament with a military deployment program that would show the Russians we were serious about this. I worked with a smart fellow in PM, the Politico-Military Bureau named John Hawes. We wrote this memo to Burt and Wolfowitz advocating an integrated plan that involved deployment of our own weapon system that would be the counterpart to the SS-20 and would give us the leverage and the confidence among our European partners that we were serious about this. Otherwise we'd be just going to the table with, with nothing. I remembered what Kissinger had said a long time ago, that diplomacy without power invites contempt. And that was the birth, you know, obviously a lot of people got involved in it, but this memo made it part of the birth of the Pershing II missile.

Q: Yeah, and the cruise, Pershing.

KAPLAN: And we still did not start the negotiations because the SS-20 was deployed and the Pershing II was nothing yet, just a piece of paper. It eventually was approved in the U.S. government, then in NATO, and only after steamy debates in both. The year unfolded, the Europeans were screaming for disarmament. There was the nuclear freeze moment going on. I was invited to give a talk in Boston and I debated Bill Pfaff, the International Herald Tribune foreign affairs columnist, a very smart guy. I remember that day that I walked by the local Baskin Robbins and their special was the "Nuclear Freeze Ice Cream Cone," *(laughs).* Later, I was invited to join a panel at Columbia University. There was a distinguished professor at John Hopkins SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies), a Middle East expert, a Sovietologist, and, to my astonishment, Alger Hiss.

Then Perle convinced Secretary of Defense Weinberger to advance a new disarmament position called the zero option, which meant that even though the Soviets had the SS-20s and we had only a deployment plan, both sides must end up with zero. Of course the Soviet Union considered this sheer effrontery and the European allies thought this was preposterous; columnists in The New York Times agreed. We stuck with it, and it was an absolutely brilliant idea because it took Ronald Reagan from being on the far right of the debate to the far left of the debate. We were for zero! What could be better than zero?

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Supporters of the nuclear freeze were *frozen!* And later, as you know, Reagan came up with the strategic defense initiative, which people criticized as being Star Wars. Conceptually, it was a similar kind of a thing. It didn't exist.

Q: But it did disturb the Soviet's strategy people.

KAPLAN: Oh, my God.

Q: They were --

KAPLAN: Oh, I think it changed history. A lot of people disagree with this. But we had a meeting of the NATO policy planners, whom we hosted at the Homestead in Virginia. The German delegate, Konrad Seitz, was the head of their policy planning staff at the Foreign Ministry. Well, you remember the famous walk in the woods between Paul Nitze and Kvitsinsky, the Soviet. Konrad He said, "Let's take a walk on the woods," *(laughs),* and he told me he had just gotten back from Moscow and they were totally intimidated by this strategic defense initiative. One of the Soviet leaders told him "that this thing would completely wipe out all of the *enormous* sacrifices and expenditures they'd we've made on their nuclear program for the last 20 years.

So my conclusion to that was that while I had my own doubts as to whether this thing would ever work, the perception of it was so strong and so effective on the side of the Soviets, it was much more important to convince them than to convince the folks at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The formal reaction in Moscow was to say they

would build more offensive systems to circumvent it. But in the Kremlin, that's not the way they saw it. When Andropov died and Gorbachev became president, I remained convinced that he had determined he had to sue for peace. And that's what led five years later to the end of the Cold War.

Now, I know there are a lot of people who have a different perspective on this; their view was the Soviet Union was collapsing economically, which it was, and there were other exogenous factors involved. But you asked me about how Reagan saw this. And I think that there is a line you can draw from the way he handled the Pershing deployment decision and the zero option to the way he handled the Star Wars thing.

Q: Well, also --

KAPLAN: And they both worked.

Q: Well, also when you look at the Star Wars from the Soviet point of view, we both remember the horrific pictures we saw of the failure of our rockets to launch, you know, in the Space Program.

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: But by God, we did it.

KAPLAN: We did it. They were ahead of us for a while.

Q: Yeah, but sort of when America gets a bit in its teeth it does things. And if you're, if you're a strategic planner in the Soviet Union you say well, their pattern is to have a lot of failures, each one building on to something that would eventually be successful.

KAPLAN: No, it's trial and error.

Q: Yeah. Well, what sort of things were going on within policy planning? Stick to Europe on these things. I mean was this sort of a discussion group, or were sort of you given an order and not much discussion and go ahead and justify this or what have you?

KAPLAN: There was so many things happening, it was the beginning of the administration, major changes, all the policy reviews. Paul was very policy oriented. He wasn't there to conduct academic studies, and neither was I. As I think I told you before, the office names had two words in it, policy and planning. Policy was the determining factor. We weren't planning for what was going to happen five or 10 years into the future. Occasionally such a paper would be written, but that wasn't what it was about. It was about trying to bring a more integrated, more global, and strategic perspective with all the tradeoffs of different part of the world and all of that. The sort of thing a president or a secretary of state would need. I had quite a bit of autonomy, with the one caveat about this fellow Roche, who I mentioned. And there was another breakpoint: after a year and a half Paul went to the East Asia Bureau and we had a change at the very top.

Q: Who took over?

KAPLAN: Steve Bosworth.

Q: Was there a difference in style or in clout as far as --

KAPLAN: Yes, there was a difference of day and night. Steve was and is a sober minded, extremely intelligent man, who is part of the State Department club. He rarely raised his voice above a peep, but had his own kind of strong determination to move things forward. He had a lot of experience in different parts of the world and his strongest characteristic was his solid judgment. He was able to relate effectively to other Foreign Service colleagues around the building. He was selected by George Shultz who replaced had Al Haig after Haig said, "I'm in charge," after Reagan was shot.

Haig and Reagan never got along. I was at one of the NSC meetings in the White House Situation Room when Reagan was getting ready to start the meeting. Judge Clark who had been Haig's deputy and then the NSC Advisor. Clark had very little experience in foreign policy before that. He was a California Supreme Court judge, and he was Reagan's buddy. They would go riding horses together. The third close friend was Paul Laxalt, the senator from Nevada who was Reagan's closest pal in the Senate, which became very important when I went to the Philippines, which we'll come to later. Anyway, at the beginning of the meeting before it officially began, Haig was talking to Reagan and he was saying, "We got to do this, we got to do this, we got to do this." And I could see the hairs on the back of Reagan's head standing on end. The president was a laidback, sunny disposition, Californian and Haig was, this street fighter from Trenton, New Jersey *(laughs),* ready to enter the ring!

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: At a certain point Reagan just had enough and not long after that meeting he said, "You're out."

Q: Yeah, well part of this too I mean is usually -- it's not just the president, but also sort of the White House gang was --

KAPLAN: Oh, you bet.

Q: Did you ever feel the influence of sort of the collective dislike of people within the White House gang towards the State Department or anything like --

KAPLAN: Well, there was an extraordinarily effective team there and they were very different. Jim Baker was White House chief of staff, then Treasury secretary and then secretary of state. And then there was Mike Deaver who was this politician who Reagan knew from California, and the same for Ed Meese, who was the attorney general. Deaver was very close to Nancy Reagan, who had a certain influence over --

Q: Nancy Reagan was a very powerful person within --

KAPLAN: So I'd go over to these meetings at the White House and I would see Mrs. Reagan and Mr. Deaver conferring in a corridor together and really going at it as if they were making plans for how they were going go tell Ron what the next political move was. I got to know Deaver later once I came to Patton Boggs, and he had his own consulting firm. I think he's passed away subsequently. And there were a lot of things that I encountered that -- I mean I wasn't a political figure of that time, I was a career guy. But you know, when you start mixing in those circles, even in a limited way, if you're observant, and that's what we're trained to be, you see things.

Q: Well, you have to be -- I mean you're stepping in a minefield there, aren't you?

KAPLAN: Remember the trap doors I mentioned *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: So I was very conscious of all that. And you know, a diplomat is trained to -- to speak to different people in different countries. If we can do this in another country we should be able to do --

Q: Yeah. What time -- yeah, it's probably a good time to -- because I'd like to talk about -- we're talking about policy, I'm putting here at the end, talk about policy planning early, the early Reagan administration. We talked about some of the European issues, but let's talk about some of the Middle East issues. I don't know if -- did you get involved in Asia?

KAPLAN: I was there a few times, but I was more involved with South Asia for --

Q: OK.

KAPLAN: There was a Pakistani-American born woman who covered South Asia for us, a brilliant professor at Temple university, and when she left, Steve Cohen, who remains one of the great experts on South Asia in our country and took her place. They educated me about South Asia, and I educated them about how you do things within the bureaucracy *(laughs).*

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: I had to explain to the Pakistani lady, that you can't write 10-page memos to the secretary of state. And so she'd write these long memos and I'd write it, write an executive summary, and that's what we'd use.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But after a while I knew more and she picked up the methodology. South Africa was another big issue, which we can talk about when we come back.

Q: OK, good. OK, we'll do that. Great.

Q: Today is April -- is it the 24th?

KAPLAN: Exactly, my wife's birthday.

Q: 2014, with Ambassador Philip Kaplan. And you're with the national -- you're in policy planning.

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: The second time. And you were mentioning you wanted to start out with how -- the second time around, the staff was very lean this time.

KAPLAN: Yes, I was brought in there as deputy director. There were three deputies, and I was the only Foreign Service Officer. Paul Wolfowitz was the director, he had worked for Reagan during the campaign happens. When I first got there it was the end of January, beginning of February 1981; the administration had only been in power for 10 days. We had only two or three staff experts on board; the others were going through their security checks and I found myself on roller skates going from one fairly senior level meeting to another on all sorts of subject on which my knowledge was well contained. I would arrive and be noticed as someone who was now on the team. They had no idea about the fact that once our experts would come in that they'd be the ones going to the meetings for the most part.

Q: Well, but this is something -- isn't it true in a lot of situations in policy, we get people together who really don't know the subject?

KAPLAN: Well, that can often be the case until they've mastered their briefs. The better part of valor, which I adopted, was to do a lot of listening at the beginning, and then you work hard and you're able to contribute in a more meaningful way. But when a new administration comes in, particularly from the other party, and certainly from Carter to Reagan, well, that was quite a change. Reagan himself was a sunny Californian, but there were a lot of fairly sharp-toothed people who were coming in to take some of the more senior positions. These initial meetings aimed to adopt new policies, to take a new look at our policy towards Brazil or towards Indonesia or whatever it would be and adopting new positions. And that leaves me to one other comment. I think I mentioned in our last session about the transition team, how I'd been invited to join the transition team and ultimately decided that that would not be a good idea.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: What I found out about the transition team is that their main focus was not about adopting policies. There was some of that going on, but their main purpose was staffing the government with people in the policy level positions, assistant secretaries and above, rarely below because the assistant secretaries would pick their own deputy assistant secretaries and so forth. And that area is the bridge between the professionals who were handling daily issues and the political levels of the government, which means the president and his most senior associates. The task of the transition team is to advise the incoming Secretary of State on selection of his senior staff at the assistant secretary and above level with people who can be counted upon to carry out the policies of the president, even though those policies have not been completely fleshed out. In some cases it would take a few months before that would happen, just as you know, the first batch of ambassadors doesn't get confirmed in many cases until June or later.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: So that was the picture. And simply because I was a career officer, I was just jumping around from one place to the other. There were certain other career officers -- I remember a fellow named John Bushnell, who was acting assistant secretary of state for Latin America. He knew that subject matter cold but he didn't last long because he was on the hit list for the Republicans when they first came in.

Q: Well that case is renowned for total clear out -- I mean it left -- from a, from the professional's point of view, it left a blot on the Reagan administration that hasn't gone away.

KAPLAN: Well, believe me, there were worse things that I encountered, and not only in that administration, but also in others that I served. I think what's important to recognize is that when there is an ideological shift from one administration to another, whether it's from Democrat to Republican or Republican to Democrat, that the new folks often think that they're there to save the republic from all the depredations that took place under the predecessors. They're prepared to be fairly ruthless -- I recall one transition, a shift from one party to the other. There was a fellow who was the assistant secretary of state for IO, International Organizations, and all of those officials were supposed to submit their resignations by date X. And he didn't. So somebody went to chat with him, a very affable man, and he said, "Look, we're not holding anything against you. It's just that this is the way it works. We have our own man for this job."

And he said, "But I really like it a lot."

And they said, "Goodbye." Eventually he was persuaded to -- because they would have fired him otherwise.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: It just goes with the --

Q: Sure.

KAPLAN: -- territory.

Q: Oh boy. Well, when did you say policy come more or less into the line, I mean what to do about whatever country or situation it was?

KAPLAN: It was an uneven process, unfolding over time, in fits and starts. You know, I teach this course on international diplomacy now. I tell my students when I give them a very complicated question with many aspects that you have to prioritize. In 1982 the new administration arrived and the big issue was the east-west relationship and relations with our allies, and some issues in East Asia. The Middle East is always there. Latin America and Africa often fall down a bit and there are functional issues, which are more or less important. So while I had this position as deputy director with a lot of oversight -- and that expanded over time, as we'll discuss -- my initial focus was on Europe, including the east-west relationship. That's where my background was. And I think I said the last time that for very strange reasons I got drawn into doing a full draft of the policy memo on Europe after EUR had produced an EUR memo on Europe. The people on the seventh floor and the White House decided they wanted something different. So they turned to policy planning because that was a place where they had their guys as they saw it. I was to a certain extent the outlier of the Foreign Service there. And then because they seemed to like the way that developed I was asked to do the east-west policy study. I mentioned that the first sentence of that analysis was that our purpose was to win the Cold War. That was certainly not what the new administration was getting from the professional people in EUR who considered the purpose -- I paraphrase, I hope accurately -- to manage the Cold War, which is what we'd been doing all those years. Reagan wanted to win the Cold War. And in my judgment -- I know some people disagree -- he did.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: George HW Bush came in after him and effectuated the transition in the relationship, in what I thought was an extraordinarily skillful diplomatic manner. Anyway, my priority in terms of real substance was on the broader relationships with the allies and, and the east-west area. I was attending many meetings and was being asked by senior people to draft something, either a big study or, or occasionally there would be a crisis that would come up and they wanted a pair of hands that would help deal with it. That Middle East thing with Thatcher was an example of an action-forcing event. In the first months of the new administration we provided the secretary and the president a list of action forcing events in the first 90 days of the administration -- which basically came down to trains that were coming at you, Mr. President, no matter what you.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Must deal with this. How you deal with it of course is a separate matter, that's up to you, but you're going to have to deal with it. Well, the Thatcher visit forced the president to come to grips with what was going to be his Middle East policy. The briefing

memo we did was in one sense just another briefing memo for a visit by a senior statesman who was coming in; we wrote those all the time. But in this case it caused the president and the secretary of state and the other political people to decide their policy in the Middle East. In contrast to the European business, where I had detailed experience, in the Middle East I had very little background. But I had a clear sense of where the White House wanted to go, and collaborated with Ambassador Sterner who I respected very much because he was a man who didn't agree with policy but was willing on a professional level and as a courtesy to a colleague to share with me his knowledge and not to insist on his policy predilections. That was an act of statesmanship in my view.

Q: Well, what did you see as sort of our -- these trains coming in? Which, which ones -- what were some of the most immediate ones?

KAPLAN: The most immediate thing from the standpoint of the Reagan administration was to define our policy on relations with the Soviet Union. Reagan was convinced that while the Soviets had been in a real tear in the last four or five years, winning a number of skirmishes in the Cold War and developing parts of the world, often through use of Cuban and other proxy forces, that we were far more powerful than they were and that the Soviet economy was very weak and very vulnerable. He decided that he was going to build up our defense forces dramatically after the cuts in the Carter years, the Afghan invasion, the fall of the Shah and all that, to build up our forces dramatically.

The second key priority was to rev up the home economy, which had suffered terribly in the last part of the Carter administration. Reagan figured we could do that and then be in a better position to compete effectively. Now, there were a lot of things going on. There was a general by the name of Ed Rowney, who might have been the head of ACDA at the time, the disarmament agency. I went to meet with him at the suggestion of, of someone at the political level in State Department. He had on his desk metal facsimiles of Soviet missiles and our missiles. It was quite dramatic. Whether it was accurate or not is, is subject of discussion. But our missiles were much more puny than theirs were in size, and they had a lot more there than ours; there was at least some truth in this. General Rowney told me that, by the time he was done, we were going to switch this around. So that was one very dramatic indicator.

And I think I mentioned to you that -- before that I was summoned to the State Department one Sunday morning to meet Dick Allen who was, by then had been named the national security advisor by President Reagan. And here was a real insight of the Administration's intentions. He said, "We're going to beat these guys." He meant the Soviets. "Right now we're to build our strength, we're going to build up our defense capabilities and we're going to build up our economy, and by the time we get that going we're going to really give it to 'em

That led to the first really, really big confrontation. The Soviets had an intermediate missile called the SS-20, which had the range to hit almost anything in Western Europe, certainly in Germany, France, and so forth. The West Europeans were really terrified by this, and we had nothing significantly comparable. Because of their fear, they were

calling for what they always call for, a negotiation, to try and deal with it that way. We had no leverage so, as previously mentioned, we pushed for deployment decision on the Pershing II missile and cruise missiles, and then for a zero outcome for any intermediate range missile negotiation.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: The whole nuclear freeze movement was going on at that point. And the Russian propaganda instrumentalities were really revving that up. I would go to a meeting in Amsterdam or to a talk I had to give in Boston, and they were just all over everybody. Finally I participated with a colleague from PM, Political Military Bureau, in a memo that we sent to some of the key people and basically argued that what you have to do is follow a two, two-fold, integrated approach where you have negotiations, but the negotiations would follow a decision, a real decision, to deploy a weapons system that would be the equivalent of the SS-20. And that's what we did. We persisted with this, in the face of Soviet indignation and allied protests that this position was non-negotiable, and eventually -- my friend Mike Glitman, our negotiator along with the very distinguished American Max Kampelman negotiated the zero option deal, the INF treaty.

Q: Well, why -- I mean you way we didn't have anything comparable. But what about the cruise missile and the Pershing?

KAPLAN: The Pershing was in fact the new deployment that we were advocating. It wasn't there at the time.

Q: There wasn't a Pershing?

KAPLAN: There wasn't a Pershing intermediate range nuclear missile, and that's what was advocated, and that, that was the piece of leverage. And the Soviets, their leadership and particularly their exports, understood very well American technological capability. And while they, they figured they had a pretty good piece of leverage, in that theirs was on the field and ours wasn't, they also knew that we could do it. And so the negotiations staggered along for a while, which was in part their way of testing whether we were really going to carry out this deployment. And they were working on our allies and nattering away at them to try to convince us not to do this, not to cut a deal first, that would have kept the SS-20 just enough so that they'd have that leverage geopolitically. But as a result of the consultations within NATO and, and a pretty tough position by the Reagan administration, remember, Richard Perle was talking to his counterparts in the defense ministries around Europe, and Rick Burt was talking to his counterparts in the foreign ministries around Europe, and then the guys in the White House.

Reagan took almost a year to make this decision. People were alarmed that he was going to be a war hawk or someone who was going to start World War III, and the Russian propaganda built that up. And remember, he was elected as someone who was seen as a right-winger from California. But the bottom line on all of it was that by the end of the year when he finally made the decision, there was such a sense of relief among the allies

that they now had a negotiating position and they had a, a commitment to a deployment, which would give us some leverage. And the funny thing is, it worked.

Q: Well, we had some trouble with deployment at first though, of where to put these things because of Soviets obviously were building up a lot of pressure. Don't put them in London, in England or Greece or Italy or the Netherlands.

KAPLAN: But at the end of the day it was NATO's decision where to put the weapons systems and, and the real bottom line on it was that they weren't going to put it anywhere because there was going to be a zero result.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And that was the best result you could possibly have. And so we basically -- it was a tremendous -- it wasn't a con job, because we really intended to deploy them, but it was a tremendous bit of diplomatic ledger domain because we invented a weapons system that wasn't on the field, that would take a few years to deploy, and we used that as leverage to convince them to dismantle *very* serious weapons systems that were threatening Europe.

Q: Well, and this brings up something that occurred not too much later, but the Star Wars thing where --

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: Reagan sort of dragged this thing out of his mind.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)*

Q: But it was taken very seriously by experts on the other side because they thought we could do it.

KAPLAN: Well, this is one of the great puzzlers. But what you said right now in my opinion is absolutely correct. We had a meeting of the NATO policy planners from across Europe. Not every one of the NATO countries had a policy planning staff, but the larger countries did -- the Germans and the French and the British. And then there were some others that had more modest affairs. Or they would just use their political director in the Foreign Ministry. I knew this fellow named Conrad Seitz, who was the German policy planner and close to Foreign Minister Genscher. By the way, Genscher was a very formidable force in all these things.

Q: This is German foreign minister.

KAPLAN: Yes, Genscher was the German foreign minister, he was born in what was then East Germany. There was no GDR at the time he was born, because that was before the war ended of course. He detested the GDR and what had happened there and he was

very clever. He came to head the minority party of the Free Democratic Party, which was the coalition partner of the Social Democrats who were running the government, and Seitz was one of his closest aides. He had been to Moscow the week before this planning session at the Homestead Resort, Virginia.

Now you have heard the phrase "walk in the woods," which dealt with Paul Nitze and Yuli Kvitsinsky, the Soviet ambassador. The same Kvitsinsky who had been in Bonn during the events I described earlier when I was an embassy officer in Bonn and Kvitsinsky was the negotiating partner of Jonathan Dean on the Berlin Agreement. Anyway, Seitz and I took a walk in the woods at the Homestead. He told me the Soviets had gone absolutely berserk over this so-called Star Wars, or Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI." Reagan's position was that he could not leave us naked to a possible Soviet attack and our governing strategic policy all those years where having both sides naked to the attacks of the others is what would provide strategic stability. In Reagan's view, that was immoral and ultimately extremely dangerous. He feared that an extremist like Gaddafi could consider use of a nuclear weapon. So we needed some kind of defense hedge.

Seitz said, "What you Americans need to understand is that the Soviets have invested immense resources in building up this strategic nuclear capability and the way they see it, they take this absolutely seriously, SDI would disarm them unilaterally." Because their weapons couldn't get through if it works and they would have lost the Cold War.

Now, I know that a scientist at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) could make a pretty strong case, and I may agree, that it would never work that way, and that you couldn't wager the security of your country on that working when you're not sure. But the fact is, the Soviets took it deadly seriously and what Herr Seitz was saying was that you really have to decide whether you're going to go with this or not.

Reagan was absolutely committed to SDI. And I've always believed in the face of a lot of colleagues and friends who disagreed that this was one of the factors that led Moscow ultimately to sue for peace, which is what happened when Gorbachev took over. That together with the fact that their economy was just cratering, and they couldn't keep up with us. Because when SDI was deployed, the initial reaction from Moscow was to threaten to build bigger strategic weapons that can elude our so-called Star Wars Defense." But they, they were broke. They couldn't. Not only that, the strategy Dick Allen described at the beginning, that we would spend them into bankruptcy actually worked. There came a point where that defense build-up -- a lot of money wasted of course, as always is the case -- but the defense build-up, the psychology of it, the fact that Reagan looked like he really meant it, and all those Soviet leaders, Brezhnev and Chernenko and Andropov were all dying. They were falling like flies. Then suddenly there was Gorbachev, and we had a different situation.

Q: Well, how did you feel on this? Did you feel that this strategy made sense, or was -- did you feel this was a bunch of newcomers with, you know, sort of with foggy notions always coming down?

KAPLAN: Well, I'll give you two answers. First , Reagan was President of the United States, and he was determined to do this. He announced it. That was our policy. So it wasn't a question of whether if it was going to be evanescent and disappear over time. It was done. Second, when he announced it somebody from the secretary of state's office, who I knew well, called me up and said, "You're just not going to believe this. We found out just a few minutes ago, and about an hour before the president's going to give a speech tonight, there's this absolutely batty thing in there. It's crazy. And we protested, but the guys in the White House that we talked to said, 'President's made up his mind. Have a nice night, you're going to have to live with it."

Right or wrong, this was as fundamental a decision as Reagan made in his presidency. It may not have been a system that would work sufficiently, effectively that we should bet the country on. But politically, it had a dramatic effect. And the whole idea was not to go to war and test it, and it was going to take *years* for this thing to be, to be developed.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But long before those years went by, the Soviets had basically surrendered in the Cold War.

Q: Yeah. Well then, how did you view, in talking to your colleagues, not in policy planning, but EUR, Gorbachev and company?

KAPLAN: Well, he took power in 1985. Mrs. Thatcher met with him and made the memorable comment, "This is a man we can do business with." Then Reagan met with him in Reykjavik. By that time I was in Manila, which we'll come to in due course. And we were consumed with the recent murder of Ninoy Aquino, and Marcos and Cory Aquino and all the events that transpired, that we'll come to in due course. And so while I had a continuing interest in this subject, obviously I'd put so many years into it --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- I wasn't on it on a day-to-day basis. I didn't have my fingertips on it. We'd have visitors that would come and talk about it. One of those visitors was Bob Gates, who was then the DCI, the Director of Central Intelligence. I don't remember exactly what he said about it, because he was there for Philippine business. But I gathered that there were a lot of people who weren't quite sure whether Gorbachev was for real or not. I later read that Bob, who was a very smart guy and served the country with great distinction in many capacities, was putting out the notion that Gorbachev's, quote-unquote "liberal tendencies," or more open tendencies, might be disinformation. At the same time a lot of things started happening: there was Perestroika, the opening of the economy, and Glasnost, opening of the political system. And ultimately, when Honecker, the East German leader, asked Gorbachev to save him, Gorbachev let him loose, he told Honecker (and all the other East European leaders) that he/they were on their own. Gerasimov, the Kremlin spokesman, proclaimed Gorbachev's Sinatra doctrine, each of you do it your way *(laughs).*

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: That meant they were gone. Then of course the Wall fell and all those dramatic events took place. So I didn't have a fixed view on it, only because I was just consumed, the Philippine job was 24/7. But it was clear that big things were happening over there. When the Soviet Empire imploded and the Soviet Union itself disappeared as a state, that was one of the factors that led to the Americans deciding to give up the bases at Subic and Clark, a big decision. So that would be my summation.

Gorbachev was clearly a transitional figure, but he was -- maybe just add this -- he was a complex figure. He was a Communist. He'd been brought up in all this. Even after he was kidnapped down in his resort area in the south by the generals and, and, and the more radical communists, a KGB guy, even after all that, when he got back to Moscow, and Yeltsin humiliated him and dressed him down, Gorbachev's position was the communist system should be maintained, but it should be reformed. Yeltsin's position was hell no, the communist system is gone. As you know, by the end of that year Gorbachev retired. Yeltsin replaced him. The Soviet Union collapsed and there was a Russian Federation.

Q: Well, in this time frame, when did you leave for the Philippines?

KAPLAN: Well, I left for the Philippines in 1985. But there were still a lot of other things going on in policy planning --

Q: Let's go back to the '81, '85 period.

KAPLAN: So the focus of our discussion so far with policy planning was what was I involved with in Washington, all these policy studies, all of that sort of thing. As time went on I was asked to undertake certain missions abroad. It would be arranged that the ambassador would be supportive in a particular country and that I could meet officials and others at the right kind of levels. On my return from these missions, I would file a report with the secretary, in the normal way. After 18 months of the administration, Al Haig was out after he made that famous statement, "I'm in charge." Haig was replaced by an extraordinarily able and decent man named George Shultz who was an economist and international businessman; he'd been the labor secretary, he'd been the head of the Office of Management and Budget, he'd been the treasury secretary. When Reagan decided that Haig had to go, he quickly opted for his fellow Californian, George Pratt Shultz. Mr. Shultz had worked for Bechtel, as had Casper Weinberger, the secretary of defense, but they were famous rivals.

In his private capacity, as well as treasury secretary, Shultz had traveled the world and knew a lot of leaders. He was well informed on issues right from the beginning. One of the things he did right away was to reassign Paul Wolfowitz from policy planning and move Paul to become assistant secretary of state for East Asia. To replace Paul as policy planning chief, he brought in a man who was at the time deputy assistant secretary for Latin America, Steve Bosworth. Steve was a man in Shultz's image: sound, intelligent,

non-ideological, not as flashy as Wolfowitz. Paul was constantly coming up with novel ideas, some brilliant, some flawed. Steve was sound, someone who was reliable. At the secretary's initiative, I believe, it was decided to reorganize the policy planning staff, not just in terms of specific personnel, that came in due course. A five-member Policy Planning Council was formed, perhaps akin to the structure under George Kennan, a kind of council of wise men, you know, four or five people. The policy planning staff of 25 regional and functional experts was retained, with personnel changes, and I was asked to become director, working with Steve as chairman of the council and with the council members. Steve, with support from the secretary, selected respected senior experts for the council focused on Europe, the Soviet Union, the Mideast, international economics. As staff director and ex officio member working with the council, I was the liaison, in effect, the connect between the chairman and the council and the members of the staff.

The impact of this change was less dramatic than you might think. The five council members were senior people and they were smart and they were drawn into things. For example, the Middle East hand was Peter Rodman, who Henry Kissinger once said was the most brilliant student he ever had at Harvard. He was conservative and a good fit with the Reagan people. Paul Boeker was a career diplomat who was very strong on Latin America and on economic policy. He was my counterpart in the embassy in Bonn many years before. He did economics and I did politics. He had been ambassador in Bolivia and Jordan. There was an think-tanker, Jeremy Azrael who I believe was at the agency for a while, who was the Soviet hand. There was Bob Osgood, a scholar at SAIS.

The key man was Steve Bosworth, who enjoyed the confidence of the secretary. And remember, you asked me this question on a previous occasion when I was first in policy planning. What do they do? How important are they? And the answer is, it depends how close the relationship is between the secretary and the director. With Steve, that relationship was close. Larry Eagleburger was then the undersecretary for political affairs, and Steve was close to him. Steve had been ambassador in Tunisia before, so had Middle East background. His Spanish language was completely fluent; he had served in Madrid; he'd also served in Paris, and just before policy planning he was deputy assistant secretary for Latin America. So he had a lot of experience in different fields. But above all, he had that really sound judgment and I found that it was very easy to work with him. If I had an idea and, and we wanted to treat it in a sensitive way, we'd go with it without being overly bureaucratic. We'd send a very sensitive memo to Larry and the secretary, and it would get through. The regional bureaus had the operations, operational control. But we could plug something in and it could often have an impact.

Q: Well, can we go through some of the issues that you had to deal with?

KAPLAN: Sure. Well, just to finish up with Europe, as I said, I'd be sent off on these little missions. One was to East Germany. Our ambassador was a career officer, a very able person who later became assistant secretary for Europe; she previously had been the counselor of the department. She suggested an idea to improve our relations with the GDR. Any officer who's made an ambassador in a post has a natural proclivity to want to make relations better, to be successful in his or her mission. I said, "With all respect,

Ambassador, I don't think we want to improve our relations with the GDR. We want the GDR to go away. This is the Reagan administration."

Q: Is this Roz Ridgeway?

KAPLAN: That's right. Her idea -- she didn't put it in these exact words, but this was the substance of it – was to convince the GDR leadership to contribute -- as the West Germans have -- to payments for Holocaust victims that suffered as a result of the action to the third right." After all, the eastern part of Germany was part of the Third Reich.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I said, "That sounds like a terrific idea! But will they do it?"

Her thought was that we would give them the money to do it."

And I thought about that for a second. You know, I'm in her office, I'm her guest. She's a lot more senior than I am. I said, "You're -- are you saying that we are going to pay the East Germans so they can get the political credit for making these payments, but in fact they're not going to contribute anything?"

Well, we had this discussion, went back and forth, and I decided at the time to be a gentleman, to be diplomatic and to sort of obscure my, my incredulity.

I said, "Well, I think there may be some complexities to this," or something like that. And we left it and we parted in a cordial way.

As I walked down the hall of the East German Foreign Ministry and I saw this bust of a guy at, at the end of the hall. And I couldn't really see who it was, but I saw he had a goatee. I thought, Ah, that must be Ulbricht, the former GDR leader before Honecker. And a fellow said to me, to my amazement, "Oh no, that's Lenin."

I said, "Lenin in the Foreign Ministry of the GDR, that's really rubbing it in, isn't it?"

And the East German fellow who was with me looked around to see if there was anybody there and he said, "That's the way it works here."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* So I learned something. I mean it was just a silly little incident, but sometimes you learn more that way. Then I walked outside and not too far away was the Soviet embassy in East Berlin, which occupied a whole big square block the size of the State Department. So there couldn't be any doubt who was running affairs over there.

All right. Came back to Washington and eventually the lady came back to Washington as assistant secretary for Europe and she sent a memo "out of the system" to Secretary

Shultz. Someone in the staff secretariat who I knew saw this, and since it was part of policy planning's job to comment on ideas that -- in fact, to protect the secretary against things coming out of left field or even right field that he should know about, give him another perspective. And so the memo was shared with me before it went the secretary, at 6:30pm as I was getting ready to go home. I dashed off a memo that was less than one page. It basically said, "with all respect, the substance of this memo proposes that we pay the East Germans so that they can take the credit for having" -- and Shultz saw it in a heartbeat and he just blew the other memo away. When she found out, I was not on her list of favorites. But you know, that's what you're supposed to do, I think.

Q: Yeah. Well, how were we viewing the GDR? Were we seeing this as, if nothing else as a, an economic model that might bolster the Soviets?

KAPLAN: I don't think so. I mean it was understood that among the pretty miserable economies in Europe that the East Germans being German were doing better than many others. On the other hand, it was a horrifyingly tight totalitarian state that was propped up by 20, *20*, divisions of Soviet Army soldiers in East Germany, plus a lot of nuclear weapons. In those days, I'm sure you know this, you were there, Europe was divided by a wall. A physical wall right down the center of Berlin. So Berlin was divided, Germany was divided, Europe was divided. It was an ugly, frightening place. And I took that trip many times across that wall, through these checkpoints, and the first thing you'd notice was that the East Germans left areas around the border that were bombed out in World War II, they left them bombed out. It was their way of saying, "Look what those fascists in the United States and Britain did to us." There were the watchtowers, people trying to escape over the wall and shot down by guards who were often 19 or 20-years-old and had no idea what the larger picture was. They were picked because they were trained and they were sharp shooters and they were loyal. So no one had illusions about the GDR.

Q: Well, what about -- were we seeing Poland as a weak sister in the Warsaw Pact or not, or?

KAPLAN: Well, the first thing to recognize about Poland is that they had 39 to 40 million people, and most of those states like Czechoslovakia and Hungary and Romania and Bulgaria were what, eight or 10 million people. I may have the numbers on some of them a bit off but Poland was the most serious country and strategically it was right along the Soviet/Ukrainian border. The Soviets had not forgotten that when Marshall Pilsudski became president after World War I, after Poland's liberation from a century and a half of not existing and became a state again, the first thing they did was invade Russia, or Ukraine. It was a totally romantic thing to do, and of course they were repulsed and had to retreat. So there was a natural lack of affinity with the Russians. They had been repressed. Stalin had sold them out with Hitler, had later allowed the Wehrmacht to destroy Warsaw while the Red Army was ordered to remain on the other side of the Vistula. There were many refugees who had gotten into Poland and told their stories. And the Soviets just put in leaders who would do their bidding.

In late ’80 when Carter was still there, and then early ’81, the efforts of Lech Walesa and Solidarnosc, the Solidarity trade union, started to take hold and build a reform movement. General Wojciech Jaruzelski who was running the state for Moscow was a communist, a very puritan man but he also saw himself as a was a nationalist. He cracked down on the reformers and declared a more authoritarian structure, he later said to avoid the fate that had befallen Hungary and Czechoslovakia before -- the Soviet invasions of 1956 and 1968. He was under a lot of pressure from the Russians, obviously.

I became involved in this in a small way because I just happened to be in policy planning in a senior position there. This was right at the beginning of the Reagan administration. I took one of my first trips to Europe for them, kind of a take the temperature of what was going on, starting in Brussels. After my meetings, I had been invited to give a speech at the Foreign Ministry, attended by the political director of the Belgian Foreign Ministry. My talk was pretty tough. I basically was saying that what was happening in Poland, just a thousand miles or couple thousand miles away, had the risk of really transforming events in Europe in a very serious way. I had been involved in a small way in preparation of the speech that the president was going to give 24 hours later or so and knew what the president was going to say, and it was going to be very tough. There had been a lot of meetings about what would be the nature of sanctions, and the president’s talk was tougher than the sanctions we ultimately adopted. Secretary Haig wanted to go further.

So I gave this talk and then I went on to Bonn. And maybe I’m repeating what I’ve told you before, but I met with this fellow, Otto van der Gablenz, who was national security advisor to Helmut Schmidt who by that time was the chancellor. Otto and I had been through a lot together when I served in Bonn and he been the director for European Integration Affairs. I trusted him. I told him the general thrust of what the president was going to say later that night about Poland. Otto was very disturbed by this news, he was concerned that it would shatter relations between Bonn and Moscow, that there would be a new Cold War. I said, “There is a Cold War, what do you mean a new Cold War?”

He asked me to wait a minute and left the office then came back with Chancellor Schmidt, and asked me to repeat what I just told him to the chancellor.

My German was fluent by that time so I was able to do so, although I knew that Schmidt spoke fluent English. Anyway, I laid it out and he just turned pale. And you know, he’d had some bad experiences with Americans. I told you that story before about how Secretary Christopher had to go back and forth when the neutron bomb was canceled. Schmidt, who was one of the most able leaders in Europe, he was a trained economist and he had been the defense minister. So he had both of those capabilities, and he was very sharp. But he really saw this as a devastating blow for him. And he understood that it could lead to his government falling. And it did.

Not so long afterwards Helmut Kohl, the CDU leader, became chancellor and served in that capacity for a decade. So Poland really got in the middle of all of this. Later on the Poles rallied and they were in the forefront of the activities that led to the revolutions of 1989.

One other thing. You know, all these East European states had these propped up as subsidized corrupted economies. In order to break loose and become truly open capitalist economies that functioned effectively, they had to get rid of those structures. It was a very painful austerity thing to do. The Poles probably did it better than any of the others.

Q: Were things, during the time you were still in policy planning, were things beginning to unravel in Eastern Europe, I mean more and more defections and all that?

KAPLAN: Well, I terminated my service there in 1985. What one could say is that the Soviet leaders kept tumbling into their graves and then Gorbachev arrived. By the time I left people were wondering is this fellow for real and what consequences could this have for the liberation of Eastern Europe? I would not say that they were at that stage, that anybody in the U.S. government thought that there was any near term prospect that anything dramatic would happen that would change things in Eastern Europe. In fact, I'm not convinced that anybody foresaw this in an operational way until virtually the time it happened.

Q: I know.

KAPLAN: It really took everybody by surprise.

Q: Well, it's one of these things where, you know, events caught up, I mean and people were making minute by minute decisions of whether we open the gates are not.

KAPLAN: It was an earthquake.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: You know, the history, there were some East Germans in 1989on holiday in Budapest because they couldn't go to the west. The Hungarian foreign minister, Gyula Horn, announced that he was opening up the gates, and the East German vacationers boarded a train and went to West Germany.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Absolutely amazing. And then something very similar happened in Prague, with more East Germans. Honecker's regime tried to put a decent face on it, as they allowed certain people to pass through East German territory from Prague or Budapest.

Perhaps I can punctuate all this with a personal anecdote. I had this one episode when I was in Vienna. I went to Budapest one weekend with my wife. On the return trip, we drove up to customs, which of course was what you'd expect in a communist state, and a long line of cars. Just two or three cars away from the place where you'd be checked and then allowed to go on, this car rolls up behind me and the guy jumped out and came running up to me and he said, "I've got two refugees in the trunk -- as soon as they let

you go you hit the pedal and get out of here as fast as you can, because I'm coming right behind you." When I reached the border, the Hungarian customs officers looked at me and I showed them the black passport and they said, "OK, you can go." I really hit the gas and moved out. I looked back and saw the fellow behind me, still there, his car stalled. They were hauling away the people out of the trunk and hauling him away.

Q: Oh no.

KAPLAN: It was a very graphic picture of the way things worked there. I did not think he was going to have an easy time of it.

Q: Well, looking at the other side of the, the equation, how did you find -- how were the French during this period when you were dealing? Were they much of a factor, or not?

KAPLAN: Well, it's funny you ask that question. When Al Haig came in as secretary of state in 1981, he proclaimed to all of us in the State Department that our most important ally was France, which kind of stunned people because the French had been a difficult ally, de Gaulle, Suez, all these things, and they were proud people. Haig said, "That's exactly the point, they take themselves seriously." They were the great power in Europe under Napoleon, whatever you think about all that. But if we go to them and ask them for help, they usually come through, because it often is in their security interest to do so. I thought there was a lot of truth to that.

The other side of the equation was, I once wrote a memo to Larry Eagleburger that said, "The problem with the French is they haven't won a war since Napoleon. That's a long time. And this has caused them to be bitter and it's caused them to feel humiliated. I think that the greatest thing that General de Gaulle did when he became president was to restore their sense of self-confidence. In a funny way, that's what Reagan did for us.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Now, that's what we need again. In my opinion, if you treated the French with respect -- which they deserved, they were a senior ally -- you would be able to collaborate and be able to have their support on the key things in the larger relationship involving Europe and east-west. They sometimes took positions in other parts of the world that were inconsonant with our interests. There's this book that recently came out that talks about how the French and the British were allies against Hitler, but in that entire period they were trying to cut each other's throat in the Middle East. Well, nobody's perfect *(laughs).* But no, I have always found France to be a country that one could work with if you, if you did it in the right way. And I have to admit, I have a tremendous affection for the country and for the people. I go there on holiday very often; people say that they can be haughty and unpleasant, but if you speak their wonderful language and you have a sense that you show respect, it works.

Q: Yeah. How about Great Britain?

KAPLAN: Well, Great Britain had become more of a Little England frankly. Some of the narrower, provincial attitudes that you find up in the Midlands and the north, that Gaulle cited when he vetoed the UK from joining the EEC, they remain prominent. That said, I also discovered a fundamental courtesy and decency about the British people that you also find in our South, which isn't so obvious in our northern industrial areas. By contrast, there are rather deep levels of prejudice which doubtless feed the strains against immigrants. Germany was not the only country which gave a hard time to the Jews. Some British attitudes weren't so good -- nothing like Hitler with the ovens and all that, but there were some pretty deep strains of prejudice. Remember, this is a country that until the Labor Party got active at the beginning of the 20th century was essentially the landed gentry running things. They didn't work. It was, it was inherited wealth.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Certain attitudes developed as a result of that. They entered the 20th century having to adapt to the fact that labor unions and other entities and more radical forces were developing that were challenging all their basic assumptions. Then in the '30s, at Oxbridge, at Oxford and Cambridge, there was a very heavy effort on the part of the communists to influence the Brits against the United States. Some of it really took hold. A lot of it – it wasn't just Kim Philby. There were a lot of people who either became communists or supporters, and who came to think of the United States as a deeply flawed immoral country with a terrible record in terms of performance in the world and decency towards developing countries, and so forth. I'm talking about people like John le Carré, who I admire as one of the great novelists of the last century, and who I actually -- he won't remember this, but I actually met the fellow when --

Q: Who is this?

KAPLAN: John le Carré, the, the fellow who writes all these novels, the -- he, he was an intelligence officer at the British embassy --

Q: Bonn --

KAPLAN: That's right, he was in Bonn. I'm staring right at the book right here. It's, A Small Town in Germany. And his masterpiece, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy.

Q: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, sure, sure. No, I was thinking --

KAPLAN: His birth name was David Cornwell. I was invited one evening to the home of the British political counselor, and they gave me a very hard time. One of them went so far as to say, you know, "I hate to say this, but you look a little bit like Kissinger." That was not meant to be a compliment *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And he's not the only one. But you could, you could see, you could see this in his novels. Tinker, Tailor is one of the great thriller novels, and it's more than a thriller novel; the character who turns out to be the Soviet mole really loathed the Americans. You find that in a lot of other works that he wrote, The Russia House and others. Graham Greene had a little bit of this in him, another distinguished British novelist. On a trip to London in the beginning of the Reagan administration, the embassy arranged lunch for me with a senior Labor Party parliamentarian. Well, he spent the whole lunch just pillaring the United States and comparing us very unfavorably to the Soviet Union. I was shocked. This was in Britain, our closest friend and ally.

Q: Yeah. Well, I've left out a good number of countries, such as Italy and the Netherlands and all. But did any of these raise any particular concerns?

KAPLAN: Well, you know, NATO was a house with many tenants, every member state is different and has its own characteristics. I can tell you one thing about the Italians. I was the State Department representative with the congressional delegation we sent to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the first time in Oslo and the second in the GDR. The U.S. delegates were Ed Derwinski, the congressman who later became undersecretary of state and veteran secretary, and Senator Bob Stafford, a kind of Yankee from Vermont. We needed to talk to the president of the IPU, who was Giulio Andreotti, a former Italian prime minister and defense minister and foreign minister, and supposedly close to the mafia. A little skinny guy with these great big glasses. I spoke very little Italian but we both spoke French. Derwinski and Stafford asked me if I'd go talk to him to carry out this business. And I said, "Well, I'd be glad to go and be your translator."

They said, "No, no, you go do this." So I did. I met with Andreotti and we got along famously. I learned two things about him very quickly. One, he was brilliant. In a world where we meet many smart people, he was *really* a smart fellow. And secondly, if you cut a deal with him he would keep that deal to the letter. You wouldn't have to check him, there was no verification necessary, you could turn your back, he would never stab you in the back. But he would not -- you could not count on him to go one inch *(laughs)* beyond the four corners of that agreement. I considered that to be perfectly reasonable.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: You know, he cut a deal. As a lawyer I negotiate and the deal is what you can rely on, neither more nor less. A year after the IPU experience, my wife and I visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and in comes Andreotti, holding hands with another man. It was the sort of thing in Europe that you would do.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He was the head of the Italian Communist Party *(laughs)*. And he saw me, came right up to me, said, "This is Massimo So and So," whatever his name was, he was completely open about it. Later, Andreotti went through hell with the various trials that were brought against him. They never convicted him of anything; he was too smart.

There were those pictures of him with mafia leaders down in Palermo, one very famous picture where he was kissing a mafia guy on the lips and really made a big fuss about that, accusing him of being a communist and a mafia bum and a homosexual. He was none of those things. He was an Italian politician. And if you wanted to get business done in Palermo, I suppose that you had to deal with these people, the Camorra in Naples or whatever. I'm not commenting on whether that's a good or a bad thing.

Q: No.

KAPLAN: It's the way Italian politics worked. He died recently well into his '90s. I met his son who is a business executive in the United Sates. So life takes funny bounces. Our law firm has been representing the son's company.

Q: I'm looking at the time, I think this is probably a good place to stop.

KAPLAN: That's fine.

Q: Do you think there's anything else during this period before we move to the Philippines?

KAPLAN: Well, there are maybe two or three --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- items that have nothing to do with Europe because --

Q: Well, let's pick those up the next time.

KAPLAN: That's fine.

Q: Could you just mention them?

KAPLAN: Yes, South Africa, India-Pakistan, Chile, the Vatican, and consular affairs in the State Department.

Q: OK, good.

Q: OK. Today is the 1st of May. Today is May Day and workers of the world unite. I'm with Philip Kaplan, 2014. And you mentioned in Policy Planning you'd gotten involved in more than just European Affairs. And we're going to move beyond Europe.

KAPLAN: That's right. I was one of the deputy directors. As mentioned last time, once Paul Wolfowitz left to become secretary of state for East Asia, Steve Bosworth became the chairman of the new Council of so-called Five Wise Men, and the staff remained, the experts for different parts of the world. I was made director of the staff and de facto member of the council. My responsibilities grew geometrically. One of the first things

that I was asked to do was to take a trip across Asia and subsequently another one across Latin America.

I went to Asia first, in mid-1984. I had never been there to any extent except for Japan. The thing that triggered the trip was a conference in New Delhi. Since India is halfway across the world, it was decided to expand the itinerary, starting in China. It was my first trip to China. I was hosted to a rather spectacular lunch by the Chinese deputy foreign minister, not too far from Tiananmen Square. This was one of these typical, as I learned later, Chinese hospitality lunches at a hotel with about 22 courses and swimming jellyfish and all sorts of things that had never passed through my palette before. I ate cautiously and prudently. The meal was excellent Chinese cuisine, a lot better than in a normal Beijing tourist restaurant. But what really impressed me about the trip was not so much the official talks, which I don't have any particular impression of. The relationship had a certain momentum at that point, building on the Nixon-Kissinger trips, and the visit of Carter, and Deng Xiaoping arrived in Washington a little later. What really made an impression on me was the people, masses of them, all at that point wearing a Mao suit.

Q: Excuse me --

KAPLAN: Every living soul there was wearing a Mao suit, one of these blue suits --

Q: Oh yes.

KAPLAN: -- you couldn't tell a man from a woman.

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: I found it deeply depressing, right out of George Orwell's 1984. Being an intrepid soul – I spoke to people, students … a young woman said, "You know, we've got bolts of cloths from our grandmothers, and they're buried in the attics; when this cloud finally lifts, you're going to see something different." I went back there 18 months later -- not to jump ahead -- and the cloud had lifted. People were dressed in all kinds of colorful clothes. It was the most dramatic assertion of free speech I'd ever seen, going from an anthill to a human Chinese society, one of the great civilizations of the world. I had no illusions about the nature of the state, even with Deng's regime, but it made a deep impression on me because it took many years for China to take its place in the Asian community. When I served in Manila subsequently, which I'll cover in a while, you never saw anything like a Chinese tourist. It just didn't happen. China had been a much more totalitarian state than even the Soviet Union had been, the way it was organized. And so that was the first impression on the trip.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Then I went to Japan, where I'd been on a number of occasions. I met with some senior officials and I went to the Diet and met with a couple parliamentarians, but most interestingly with senior business people. It became quite clear to me that the people

were calling the shots, yet but in many respects Japan was much more Asian than the western façade. You go to Tokyo and there's the Okura Hotel across the street from the massive American embassy complex. Down the street is the Marunouchi financial district and the Ginza shopping area. I came off the, the train there, the subway trail. And it was an amazing thing. At 7:00 in the morning, I was taking a walk to shake off jet-lag and people were going to work -- they weren't walking to work, they were getting off the train at Toranomon Station and running to work, with their little briefcases. And I decided to investigate this a little bit. That night I went to the, to the subway station at 6pm and there was no one on the trains. When I returned at 8pm the trains were packed. There were lines of people waiting to get onto the train, and pushing and elbowing and all the rest of it. People told me that oh yes, the, the rush hour in Japan going home starts around seven, and it goes 'til about nine. Since a lot of these people live way out in little villages, they may not get home until 9:30 or 10. The rush hour on the way back starts something like 5 or 6 in the morning. So they worked almost non-stop and I wondered what kind of life they might have with all their wealth, because they had to rise with the sun in order to get there that early and didn't get home until late

What I can't explain is the deep recession that started in the 1990s and continues on for 20 years. It's starting to come back slowly, under Prime Minister Abe, his Abenomics. But here was this society of smart, industrious people, very disciplined people who were *totally* committed to making this thing work, and they organized themselves as a society and through the private sector to that end. The government supported this with subsidies and was beholden to the agricultural sectors in order to stay in office politically. And yet, in many respects, the way it worked politically and through lobbying interests was more like what I later discovered in Southeast Asia with corruption and all the rest than I would have ever imagined in Japan. I'm not saying they're the same. There are big differences. But there are also are some significant similarities.

From Japan I went down to make a brief stop in Manila. Little did I know that this was going to be a place that I would spent a lot of time later on. I was so exhausted from the trans-Pacific flight and the stops in China and in Japan, and I was invited to a dinner in Manila with some embassy people and Filipino politicians at the old Hilton Hotel, not far from the embassy. Then through the grace of God there was a brown out and my eyes snapped shut *(laughs).* And the brown out lasted throughout the entire dinner. Every 10 minutes I'd say, "Oh yes, I agree with that," and they had no idea that I snoozed through most of the meal.

Q: (laughs

KAPLAN: The next day we took a tour of the city, which certainly was not up to par in terms of organization and cleanliness and governance around with some other cities I encountered in Southeast Asia. Earlier, I visited Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. At that time they were really backwaters; it was only when I returned in 1994 that I was startled at the economic progress that had been made, that there were modern huge cities that had grown up literally overnight. This was part of the, the drama that occurred in Asia, and particularly in Southeast Asia. And all this happened in a blink of an eye.

Q: What were you getting when you were in Manila from the people at the embassy? Were they talking about wither the Philippines?

KAPLAN: Well, this was just before Ninoy Aquino was assassinated. The talk was all about Ferdinand Marcos, he was the authoritarian figure who ran the place with an iron hand. He had his own group of cronies and people who supported him, his own logistics system. I later discovered, that it was a lightly authoritarian overlay in a society that was more like Italy northeast Asia. Marcos was a complex figure. Let's postpone that until we get to the Philippines.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But the whole question was, "How long is Marcos going to hang on?" He'd been there for 20 years. I just took note of that. I wasn't sure I'd ever get back there for the rest of my life, then of course I did. From Manila I went to Bangkok and Jakarta, and then finally to New Delhi. Jakarta it looked like a Dutch colonial city. I remember we went down this one street where there were trees planted that made things look rather nice and I said, "What's behind the trees?" And the driver grinned and he took me behind the trees, and there was the kind of slum that you'd see in the worst part of Africa.

Kuala Lumpur was another former colonial city that looked rather ramshackle and, and you know, I looked at it, these two places at the time, and thought it would take them a long time to modernize. I had the same sort of sense about the Philippines.

#########All right. Then I get to New Delhi and there's a conference taking place on the future of Indian-American relations, and of course on Pakistan. My first impression was that the Gandhi family had been in charge of India since independence. The question was like, "How long is this going to go on?" Like Marcos, how long is this going to go on. Sukarno was in Indonesia, Mahathir in Malaysia, Lee Kwan Yew in Singapore, single party leaders in the region, some enlightened, many not. Things have changed since that time. In Delhi I had a chance to meet Rajiv Gandhi. Everybody told me he was going to be the leader. He took over from his mother, Indira Gandhi. I didn't know her except by reputation and that extraordinary experience I'd had in Germany when she came through and told Willy Brandt to test a nuclear weapon. I reported that and of course it got quite a bit of attention in Washington *(laughs)*. Kissinger and Nixon I'm told became very agitated and a cable was sent out by Dr. Kissinger himself, the secretary of state, to the field saying, "No one, no one is to comment on this potential Indian test." Obviously he wanted to control that negotiation to the extent there was one totally by himself, and to control whatever reaction we were going to make. Rajiv seemed to be a westernized techy with an idea of opening things up in India. He later became prime minister.

Q: And at the, at the point you were there Mrs. Gandhi had not been assassinated.

KAPLAN: No, there had been attempts on her, but she was still alive in the big white house we resided in. Before I left the Policy Planning Staff, the, the assassination took

place and her son Rajiv became prime minister. We had a woman on our staff who was born in Pakistan and knew all the folks in India and Pakistan quite well. I decided to work with her and we started a series of memoranda that we sent to the secretary and I believe to Larry Eagleburger, who I think was still the undersecretary, basically making the case for attempting step by step to develop a closer relationship with India and focusing on how we could help Rajiv realize his aspirations as a modernizer and reformer of the horrendous Indian bureaucracy. I learned by walking around Delhi for a couple of days and trying to do very simple things that everything required a ton of paper to fill out before you got things done.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And so you learn things in trips like this because it reminded me of how I went to Russia for the first time and you go to a grocery store and you had to fill out forms in order to buy a little bit of toothpaste or something like that. And so we made a really major effort. There were a stream of memos making the case that the relationship with India, which had been zero for all those years since the split-up in 1946 could be better than that, we shouldn't simply allow India to consign itself for ideological reasons to the Soviet Union, where they had been all those years.

Q: I -- did anyone discuss at the time this sort of -- to me it always seemed like a very peculiar relationship, this technically close relationship between India and the Soviet Union. I mean why?

KAPLAN: Well, India then was a very poor country and there was the socialist and anti-colonial/anti-British overlay going back to Nehru and the London School of Economics and all that. Indira Gandhi was Nehru's daughter. They reached for a socialist model, and the Soviets were pitching, we were not. Nehru would come to Washington and be treated with respect, although Dulles didn't hide his disdain of Nehru, the spirit of Bandung, and the Non-Aligned Movement. The Soviets did their own diplomatic dance and gave them military weapons and steel mills. But your question is very pertinent. It didn't make a lot of sense for India or any country like that to throw themselves into either camp. India was projecting non-alignment, but in fact they were aligned. They weren't a Soviet satellite, in the sense that East European countries were, but they were aligned to the Soviet Union. If one studied the record at the UN, it would be a rare day when they voted with the Americans. I can't tell you this for sure because I haven't checked it, but in my distant memory, either they voted with the Soviets or abstained when the Red Army invaded Budapest and Prague. They certainly didn't condemn them.

Q: Well, I remember as a young GI but college graduate, in Korea thinking the devil incarnate was Foreign Minister V.K. Menon. Kind of looked that way.

KAPLAN: Krishna Menon certainly wasn't the most pleasant person *we*'ve encountered.

Q: No, from all accounts he really wasn't. And I mean he was part and parcel of the whole --

KAPLAN: Yes, he would bait us. I spent some time at the conference, but I also made it my business to get out into the country, into the city at least. I took a trip on my own to the Taj Mahal. I went there on a train and purposely did not sit in first class, but in whatever the next class was, just to see people. And you know, you run into kids and students and some people who speak English. After all the British were the colonial power for a long time. You get a sense that people want a better life. Right around the Taj somebody told me, you know, "There is a place you should see, it's the former royal capital of Fatehpur Sikri, take you about an hour or so to get there." So I hired a taxi and we started around this roundabout near the Taj, and suddenly there were people everywhere, huge masses swarming around the cab. They meant no harm whatsoever, I'm convinced, but the cab almost turned over three times. I felt like Nixon in Venezuela *(laughs).*

Q: Oh God.

KAPLAN: They weren't hostile, there were just so many of them in the --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: The poor driver was doing his best to keep the cab upward. Finally he disgorged himself from the crowds and drove down the road. On one side it was green vegetation, fields with planting , on the other, just dust. It was a little bit like the first time I went to the Middle East on the border between Israel and Jordan, the same thing. We got down to our destination and it was like arriving at King Solomon's mines, an absolutely gorgeous limestone city, the royal seat of Fatehpur Sikri, one of the highlights of my travels. I can't describe it 20 or 30 years later, but anybody who would ever go to that part of India and not go down that road for that hour or so, even at the risk of being overthrown in the car, would miss something magic.

Q: Did you talk to our people in our embassy in New Delhi? Did you sense a feeling of frustration? From what I've gathered, and I've had a few contacts with Indians in Saigon and a few other places. But it's hard for Americans and Indians, at least that year, almost to talk to each other. Because both sides tend to preach.

KAPLAN: Well, I'll tell you, the first thing that impressed me was this embassy, which I believe was built by Frank Lloyd Wright, and it's a *massive* structure. It's sort of like the Kremlin sitting there in the middle of -- behind the walls and gates. The DCM was my old friend Marion Creekmore, a former colleagues all the way back to Bonn. He served with distinction and later on became ambassador to Sri Lanka, and deputy assistant secretary for South Asia Economics. And yes, they were frustrated. The impression one got was isolation. In those days India's population was about 700 million people, and now it's over a billion. The government deigned to see U.S. embassy officers, but the relationship was strained and formal. I concluded that when I got back we really had to make a serious effort, particularly because the next generation of Gandhis seemed to have some interest in possibly doing this. I think we made some initial progress.

After I left Delhi, I visited Bombay, modern day Mumbai, and stayed at the spectacular Taj Palace hotel that later got bombed. I was there for 24 hours, en route to Pakistan. That night our consul general took me for dinner at the home of an Indian businessman, there were a dozen people there, maybe more, and all of them were yuppies -- lawyers and doctors, politicians and intellectuals. It was a crowd in which an American interested in international matters, or political/economic questions, would have been comfortable. They were *very* westernized. A couple were off to London the next day; one was just back from Paris. The image of backward India could not have been more remote. Not only that, they had a vegetarian dinner, the best Indian meal I have ever had, and the hottest. So that was another kaleidoscopic look at this emerging society. The difference between the regulators that I met around Delhi, people going through the streets, ladies holding their saris as tightly to them as they could, and this home was like day and night, much less the mobs in the street. But all of this in India looked so westernized, even the more traditional places, compared to what I saw when I got to Pakistan.

Karachi was the former PAK capital. It had only recently moved to Islamabad. I was taken to the residence of the consul general, formerly the residence of the ambassador. I met Benazir Bhutto. In those days she was a beautiful, slim woman, sort of like Imelda Marcos in her better days, and very savvy politically, pretty tough. Her ideals were well under control. She was a professional politician, the daughter of a prime minister who was murdered. We had an interesting talk and she came across as someone who wanted to help her country in the face of military dictators, a familiar story. When the meeting ended I told the consul general that over to the Consulate General, only about a five-minute walk from the residence. He said, "You're not walking." He packed me into the car with him and we went around a roundabout passing corpses on the road.

He said, "This is a very dangerous place."

I said, "I got it."

An undersecretary at State asked me whether I wanted to be consul general in Karachi. I declined. He said, "Take a look at it while you're there," and I did. Then I was sure I didn't want to *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: The impression I got was that the people in the consulate general in the embassy were trying to protect the safety of their people. Later, notwithstanding advice that I got, an embassy car took me to what appeared then to be the British club, a big white birthday cake of a building with manicured lawns in the center of Karachi. I got out to take a look. I was out for no more than five minutes and got back in. There must have been a million people in front of me. This is on the road leading the monument to Jinnah, the founder of the Pakistani state. The impression which I've never forgotten is if we were having a problem trying to go after a terrorist in Pakistan, whether it's al-Qaeda or Taliban or Islamist fundamentalists or whichever, it would be almost impossible to get

them. He could just lose himself in those mobs and in the safe houses they have. What do we do, send our guys in? I know that we have means of tracking these things. And now this administration uses drones and so forth. But it's a very ominous challenge. Things are so tight together, those drones carry a high risk of collateral damage that will create new terrorists.

I finished this trip with a brief stop in Saudi Arabia. When we landed in Jeddah, Saudi women boarded, they were all in burqas or other garments that covered them from head to toe, except for their eyes. Once the plane took off a woman across the aisle from me exposed her breast to nurse her baby. I looked at this mystified: this woman was *totally* covered to the outside world, but she was prepared to do the nursing function right in the middle of the airplane where anybody could see, and no one seemed to even notice.

Q: Another thing that many of the women -- I, I served for two and a half years in Dhahran. The women would get on the plane completely covered up, and then they'd whip off their, whatever, and there'd be the latest fashions.

KAPLAN: Oh, yes.

Q: Really, really extreme fashions. It, it's a society that you feel that's got to blow something at some point. I mean they're teaching all the males to, to run things and they don't take it very seriously. I don't know, I mean it's, it strikes me as being one of the sickest societies I can think of.

KAPLAN: Well, Arabia is are our ally, the Iranians right now are our adversary, even our enemy. Few Americans recall the basic allied structure we had in the Middle East that kept the peace for many years, more or less, until the shah was overthrown in 1979, was between the U.S., Turkey, Israel, and Iran.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And now that's gone, but --

Q: Well, it strikes me that there's a much better fit at some point between the United States and Iran than there is --

KAPLAN: Well, I would agree with you if there were leaders in Iran that --

Q: Well --

KAPLAN: But you know, the fundamentalists --

Q: Yeah, it's --

KAPLAN: -- pretty bad, pretty bad run.

Q: These things change.

KAPLAN: It's possible that it will change in Iran, that the more modern reformers will push the ayatollahs and revolutionary guards aside, and in Saudi too, where things are run by a small group of some 200 families. You've got the ingredients of this fancy word, metastability, where things look stable but underneath they're gurgling away. One challenge, however, is that moderates are moderate, they lack the power of forces in both states that control the weapons.

Q: Well, it sounds like you came away from this Asian trip with a pretty solid impression of where things were, not particularly where they were going to be. Because you, you were taking a mental picture of the way things had -- were at that time, but within a decade or so --

KAPLAN: Dramatic change, that's right. I saw the beginning of that change in a small way in Manila. The second major trip -- of three -- the second major trip was in Latin America, also an area which I never claimed to be a great expert in. I was asked to go down there and kind of canvas the place and get some impression as to, as to how things were going. This is part of the function of Policy Planning. The secretary gets reports from the embassies, he gets reports from the bureaus. And there is, as we all know, a certain amount of clientitis that's involved in, in diplomatic work. An old friend who served in Paris once said to me, "If they take you out to lunch at a two-star restaurant and they're nice to you and they take you into their homes, are you going to spit on them?" *(laughs).*

Q: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KAPLAN: You like them. They're nice, likeable people.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And this applied not only in a place like Paris, but to every other country that I've served in, or that I've been to. So anyway, I went there and I visited a number of countries, Brazil and, and Argentina and Peru, and --

Q: Chile.

KAPLAN: Yes, Chile, and Mexico too. In Peru I arrived in Lima during the presidency of Alan Garcia. He was a big fellow, about 6'6. He was an economist, a radical leftist operating in the face of Sendero Luminoso.

Q: The Shining Path, yes.

KAPLAN: It was monstrous. A week before I got there they went into a school and shot up all the kids in a classroom. They had a sheep with them, they shot the sheep so the blood would go over all the kids. You may have seen this movie "The Dancer Upstairs,"

which gives you some sense of what it was like. I had an INR Latin America expert with me, Jim Buchanan. We went to the Zocolo, the center of Lima, to visit the cathedral and palace. I saw a bookstore and decided to take a look. You don't learn anything if you just sit in the car. When I got out I saw paramilitary troops with AK-47s on all four corners of the square. A man came running out of a little shop with a bread in his hand and they shot him dead. There was a small food store and people were three times around the block waiting to get in. The scene was really tough and the choice came down to an inept Garcia and the Sendero. There didn't seem to be any kind of a middle ground.

Well, an election was scheduled and the candidates were Mario Vargas Llosa, the famous novelist, Nobel Prize winner, and this little agronomist that no one had ever heard of, with these little pop eyes, big thick glasses, named Alberto Fujimori. Nobody gave him a chance. The embassy drove me over to Vargas Llosa's magnificent manse, elevated above the Pacific Ocean, looking down at the cars that came along the road. I walked in the home and there he was, he looked like he had just stepped out of Esquire Magazine. His cufflinks were out, he had a blue suit and Italian collar with a perfect necktie. In the corner was his gorgeous wife who looked like she just came out of another magazine. I just couldn't resist it and said, "I wonder who screwed up Peru." He started laughing because he realized that I was the first American he had ever met who had quoted to him from Murder in Cathedral, the first line of his famous novel.

Q: Oh yes, that's --

KAPLAN: That was a pretty good start *(laughs).* He liked it a lot. And then suddenly the show windows on his house, that fronted on the Pacific, exploded. It must have been a missile or something that had come in, and we all went to the floor.

Finally somebody came in and said, "All clear, boss."

And so we all got up and he and Madame were as spiffy as before. We abbreviated our conversation. Our DCM arranged to have a helicopter come pick me up because he thought it was too dangerous to drive back through the streets.

Later I had rather more intensive experiences with Peru. In Patton Boggs at a certain point I represented the government of Peru during the last year of Fujimori's reign and went down to Lima on several occasions. It was always the same. There would be a meeting in the palace that would start either at midnight or one a.m. There would be a small group of men, never women, most of them were wearing dark suits and sunglasses in a dim room, like something out the film Casablanca.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I went there with a senior member of this firm. Often it would be basically a conversation between Fujimori and me, in English. I'd say my few words of Japanese that I had memorized beforehand, which seemed to intrigue him. He would sit there with his sharpened Number 2 yellow pencil with a very sharp point and an eraser on the end,

and he would take notes, asking very pertinent questions. I thought he was smart, and extremely tough. During at least one of these meetings this fellow Montesinos, the intelligence chief who got --

Q: He was the eminence --

KAPLAN: He was a very tough guy. It was unclear if he ran Fujimori or Fujimori used him. At a certain point they broke and went after each other. Montesinos landed in jail. Later on Fujimori amazed everybody, he resigned from the presidency and fled to Japan, which protected him as a Japanese native citizen. Then he foolishly tried to return was incarcerated. His wife Susanna accused him of all kinds of crimes. His daughter Keiko ran for president in the last election and lost to Humala, the incumbent president of Peru, and she may run again. He'd like to run himself again, but they probably will never let him because he might get reelected: he's the guy who crushed the Sendero. He didn't use Jeffersonian methods to do so, but people liked the idea that the Sendero was gone. So that's the kind of philosophical question you ask of an academic class and so forth.

I met and corresponded with Fujimori often him during that period. I would go to the State Department and, and coordinate closely with the relevant deputy assistant secretary of state and we managed to ease the tensions between him and our secretary of state. I'd send down my memoranda and recommendations to Fujimori, by faxes in those days; the next morning the fax was back with all of his marginalia writing down on the sides. He was meticulous to a fault and by the time I got back having had a night's sleep it was there. Even though we were more or less on the same time zone, couple hours difference, it was, it had the effect of him being on the other side of the earth since he stayed up so late. Very strange.

Q: Just for somebody reading this, Ambassador Kaplan is now -- we're talking in the offices of a very large major legal firm, Patton and Boggs. Why would Patton and Boggs get involved with this?

KAPLAN: Because Peru hired us. We have represented over the years, I don't know, 30, 40, 50, foreign governments. I've represented six of them myself. And for some reason on six different continents. It wasn't planned, it just sort of happened that way. The first one that hired me was the Philippine government after the one-year rule and all of that. Why'd that happen? Because I had a very significant service in the Philippines, which we're going to talk about in a little while. And I went out there about six to eight weeks after I joined the firm and I met with President Ramos who I knew very well as we'll discuss, and he made clear that he wanted to hire the firm. But right after my one-year rule the --

Q: The one-year rule is hands off --

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: If your job was with the government you couldn't deal with --

KAPLAN: You couldn't deal with the State Department.

Q: Matters, yeah.

KAPLAN: And then came Qatar. And maybe we can deal with some of these issues at the end of our discussions if you like. And then came the Czech Republic. And each one was, each one was a different mandate. And now Nigeria. *Q: Well, we'll pick this up at the end of this.*

KAPLAN: It may be an interesting counterpoint.

Q: Well, I think it's important for people to understand American foreign relations. This is not just a matter of State Department -- I mean it has -- I mean there are offshoots, local governors along the Canadian and Mexican borders, and entities in the States are very much about -- I mean it's very much a complex thing.

KAPLAN: It's almost endless.

Q: And so when we're talking about people, like yourself, I like to pick up all this.

KAPLAN: Sure. There's one other issue and then I think we can move on --

Q: Good.

KAPLAN: -- to Manila next time. And that is Chile. I can make this short. I arrived in Santiago either before or after Peru. I had a friend there who had served as a DCM in Manila. Pinochet's leadership of the post-Allende government was coming under pressure and it wasn't clear whether he was going to continue or not. I met with Harry Barnes, our excellent ambassador in Santiago. He told me that the junta was split with the army and air force chiefs of staff backing and opposing Pinochet, with Admiral Leigh as the swing vote. We went to see him. Harry was kind enough to take me with him; of course he was the one who really played the decisive role, not me. I had a chance to, by coordination with Harry in advance, to toss in a few words about how Washington saw things, which he thought could be helpful. Whatever may have been said, Admiral Leigh the next day announced that he was voting against Pinochet, and he was out.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He was out. I was there to see the celebrations in the streets. It's kind of rewarding that occasionally you show up somewhere and it happens the right way.

Q: Happens the -- right (laughs).

KAPLAN: I had that experience in Manila, and with these big treaties in Germany, and in some other places. A certain part of it is the result of hard work on the part of you and

others, especially others, but a certain part of it's just dumb luck. You have to work and play whatever cards you've got. And when it doesn't go so well, then you go back to work the next day and turn it around.

Q: Well, when you went -- what was the situation with Pinochet? What had -- had we pretty well as a country, the United States, resolved this guy isn't good for the diplomatic scene or not, or?

KAPLAN: This is of course a controversial topic. Salvador Allende was elected and the U.S. government took note of the fact that he announced himself as a Marxist, a friend of Castro and others in Latin America that we didn't like. The relationship got more and more strained. The military down there finally moved against him. I went to the balcony in the Moneda Palace where he was shot down, where he refused to leave. He was going to fight to the end and he did and the end came to him. People have accused Kissinger and others in the U.S. government of having been implicated in that coup d'état. The secretary denies that that happened. I have no reason to know one way or another.

Pinochet ruled for many years and it was a very authoritarian rule. But it also had the effect of lifting up the Chilean economy in ways that were ahead of most of the other countries in Latin America. He had his so-called "Chicago boys," who had studied economics at the University of Chicago. They became successful acolytes of Milton Friedman. But Pinochet's rule became increasingly harsh and eventually the people were demanding that he depart. I saw that later in Manila, I saw it in other places. We still see it all the time. Just look around us today. At the end his ouster it couldn't have happened without the junta, his own colleagues, going against him. And then he was gone.

You'll find it all in Shakespeare – in Julius Caesar, in Macbeth, in King Lear. It's the old story that somebody told me when I was a young guy in the Foreign Service. You meet a leader, he's everything one day, and he's nothing the next. But it takes a lot to get from one phase to the next *(laughs)*. And that's basically what transpired.

Q: OK, well I think this is probably a good place to stop.

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: And we'll pick it up the next time. You still have South AF --

KAPLAN: Yes, there's a logical transition there, which we can cover next time, because just before I was sent to Manila the thing that triggered that was my trip to South Africa. So the two things will go next to each other.

Q: OK, very good.

Today is the 7th of May, 2014 with Phil Kaplan. And we are off to South Africa. When did that happen and what was that all about?

KAPLAN: It was in the summer of 1985. Steve Bosworth, the chairman of the Policy Planning Council, had several months before in '84, shortly after the murder of Ninoy Aquino in the Philippines, been sent as ambassador to Manila. He was replaced by Peter Rodman as director of the reconstituted policy planning staff, who was very close to Henry Kissinger. He had served with Kissinger in the NSC, in the Middle East, in the China initiative and the Vietnam negotiations. Brilliant man.

So here it was, the summer of '85. The Eastern Cape of South Africa was aflame and apartheid was under the most serious challenge it had ever been and Mandela was still in Robben Island Prison. My knowledge of South Africa was, to put it generously, limited. But the secretary of state, Mr. Shultz and Chet Crocker, the very able assistant secretary for Africa, went to Rodman and suggested that I go out there and take a look. I of course agreed to do so and was accompanied by our Africa man in the Policy Planning Staff, Bill Kontos, who was the former ambassador to Sudan, a terrific guy, knowledge and modest, a combination which is all too rare in Washington. I studied up before I went and we had what Richard Helms once called a "marshal's baton," we could see everybody.

We visited Pretoria, Durban, Johannesburg of course, Cape Town, the major population centers. We met with blacks, whites, Indians, mixed race, full range of people. We met with communists, Nazis -- I'm using these words with precision -- the full range of opinion in the country. The only ones that we didn't see was President de Klerk who was on a trip at the time, and Mandela who was incarcerated.

It was the most interesting trip I've ever taken. We met with novelists, like Nadine Gordimer and Andre Brink. So it wasn't just politicians, it was a very full range of society. Went up to Wits -- the university there, Witwatersrand, and went to a couple of plays. We really tried to get inside the society. All kinds of things happened that I would never have imagined. We had lunch at the top of the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg, in a rooftop restaurant, with two South African blacks who called themselves communists. They told us how in World War II the barracks of the South African Armed Forces were integrated, in this society governed by apartheid. Ours weren't, as I recall. There was a palpable growing pressure for change and determination by the white community to keep things the way they were, because everybody saw this as a zero sum game.

I went to meet with, Andre Brink, who I think was one of the great novelists of the 20th century. A white man, but many of his novels were about what happens when change comes and then what happens to the whites afterwards. He wasn't writing from the perspective of the poor whites or the disadvantaged, it was the sort of ineluctable forces that were in play against each other. We visited the home of Nadine Gordimer, the Pulitzer Prize novelist, a white woman who opposed apartheid. The next night we went to a playhouse in Johannesburg and saw a play by a South African dramatist about a black chain gang in a prison. The warden and the guards were treating them in a bestial way. Finally one of the guys snapped the chains and then the lights went out in the theater, and everybody just gasped, just seeing the inevitable bloodshed that would follow. The woman sitting next to me, who was gasping in horror, next to her husband, was Nadine

Gordimer, one of the great liberals of South Africa. These incidents told me more than what a politician would say about South Africa's reality.

We called on the minister of Own Affairs, as in our Own Affairs, in other words keep them out of our affairs. He was very handsome and his secretary was gorgeous. Both of them were highly intelligent, and they were Nazis. There's no other word for them. It was all done with a smile and a wink. At the end of this trip, we got back on the plane to go back to Washington and, and Bill was scribbling away. He had taken elaborate notes and he had this long report that I thought was going to take 20 pages or so. I wrote my own memo to the Secretary, only two pages long. The first page contained "Analytical Conclusions," 10 declaratory sentences with no independent clauses. Just straight. The second page offered 10 policy recommendations, the same way. I wrote it without notes, drawing from my overall conclusions while everything was fresh in my mind. The thrust of the analytical memo was, "Change is upon us, it's about to explode, we've got to get ahead of the curve or there will be a terrible calamity." The policy recommendations pointed to moving away from the policy of so-called "constructive engagement" in South Africa, and moving toward a policy directed at bringing about change.

This was not a revolutionary document, but it clearly urged the administration in that direction. Reagan was still the president and there were still a lot of conservatives in the Congress who weren't too keen on this. So even though I drafted it right on the spur of the moment I was prudent in the way I phrased some of the conclusions.

We stopped in Rome for a day because it was a very long trip. When we got back to Washington at five in the afternoon, I gave the memo to my secretary and said, "Type it and send it, I'm going home, I'm tired." I figured if we ever got a call on it would take weeks and probably we'd never get a call on it. I sent it in a very high classification with just a very limited number of copies, one to Chet Crocker, and to the secretary of course, and to my boss, Peter Rodman, and that was it. At night that night when I was asleep a phone call came in saying, "The secretary would like to see you at eight in the morning about this memo," *(laughs).* I was astonished.

And we went in there and he said, you know, he said, "I've never read a memo like this in the State Department. You didn't hedge at all, you just told it straight. Whether I agree with you or disagree with you, I know what you think."

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: He assembled two or three really top people in the department for this meeting and we went through this. Chet Crocker was there. It was always my thought that these were shifts that he would actually welcome, and perhaps would try and move the policy forward. Maybe that's the reason he figured he let this maverick without any real knowledge of South Africa go out there and experience the reality. All I can tell you is that it led to some significant policy shift in the directions that I've outlined. At the end of the meeting, the secretary said to me, "We've got a hell of a problem in the Philippines. We've got an excellent ambassador out there, but we need all the firepower

we can get. Ninoy Aquino was murdered and the place is ready to explode. In a certain way it's a bit like what you were writing about. I'd like to send you out there to work with Steve and work on this.

Steve and I obviously knew each other well from our work together in Policy Planning. He was all for it and, and about a month or so later I was in Manila.

Q: Well --

KAPLAN: With not much more knowledge of that than I had of South Africa *(laughs).*

Q: But I want to go back to South Africa. I've had a long set of interviews with Chet Crocker.

KAPLAN: Good.

Q: And one thing that really struck me was a very peculiar thing there was a, essentially it was when we were dealing with the KBG (komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)). The CIA, under --

KAPLAN: Helms?

Q: It wasn't Helms, it was -- was it Helms? Who spoke with the, a -- very, very quietly but he -- anyway, one of the major CIA directors.

KAPLAN: Oh, well if it was the Reagan administration it had to be, you know, Bill, the guy with the gravely – Bill Casey.

Q: Yeah, Casey.

KAPLAN: Very close to the president.

Q: Very close to the president. And Casey's CIA operatives were very close to -- this is according to Crocker -- were every close to the white South African --

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: -- operatives, the security people. And he felt that everything he did was being leaked by the CIA at our embassy to the South African intelligence service. And so he had his own almost say operatives. I mean it was a real battle with the embassy on this. And did you have any contact with our CIA, or did you have any impression of how, of the embassy, of dissidents with the embassy, or what?

KAPLAN: I don't have any memory of that. They were running me around several cities. And every day was eight in the morning until 10 at night. I did meet the ambassador and

some of his staff, and but he basically said to me -- he was not a career officer, but he was -- he also was a serious man.

Q: Nichols or something like that.

KAPLAN: Herman Nichols. That could be it.

Q: Yeah. Yeah.

KAPLAN: And so I did not have a feel for the dynamics inside the embassy, but look, whenever you have a regime, a government that we worked with for many, many years -- and of course Marcos who I was about to meet was a perfect example of this --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- and you've got a stake in that country that matters to you, and you've got people clamoring for change who you really don't know well, and it's a fault of, of our embassy and of our government if we don't know these people well.

Q: I was consul general in Seoul when Park Chung-hee was in charge. Somewhat the same --

KAPLAN: Absolutely, absolutely important. And we'll come back to that in Manila because that was a lesson I drew from all this. Whenever that happens there's going to be a constituency in a government who is going to be an advocate of it ain't broke, don't change it. Because you never know what you're going to get afterwards. I ran into that in the Philippine case too. The apartheid government in South Africa, the Marcos people in the Philippines, many in many other places, are going to play this to the hilt. You don't know what you're going to get next. That's inevitable, it's structural, just built into the situation. I didn't run into it there, but I ran into it among the South Africans that I was meeting. And I can well imagine that Chet had to deal with this every day.

Q: Well, I can remember, I was in INR in the African -- we were actually dealing with the Horn of Africa back in the '60s. And we were at that time talking about a Night of Long Knives in --

KAPLAN: It's like that play where the chains got broken.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

KAPLAN: Everybody was scared to death, even Nadine Gordimer, the archetype liberal white person who wanted to bring about constructive reform

Q: Yes. Well then, all right, well let's turn to the Philippines. We're talking about when you went out -- what, what was sort of the date you went out there?

KAPLAN: It was July of ’85.

Q: All right. What was the situation in the Philippines in July of ’86?

KAPLAN: Ferdinand Marcos had been president for 22 years. He got himself elected a second time. There was a major incident in one of the public squares in Manila that the opposition branded a massacre. Ninoy Aquino and a lot of opposition leaders who I came to know very well after I got there, the reformists, were all thrown in jail. Ninoy, Ramon Mitra who later on became the speaker of the house, many others. I think they gelled as a, a unit to a certain extent through their common jail time experience.

Marcos was able to stay in power. He was quite a clever man, perhaps the shrewdest Filipino politician I met. He was determined to feather his nest and keep control. But I learned almost from the day I arrived that it was a light authoritarianism. He was the guy in charge, the one who called the shots, even when he was sick, and he was quite sick while I was there. It wasn’t his wife who was doing it, I got to meet her quite a bit. It was Marcos. The opposition had one objective, which was that he would go, and he had one objective, which was he would stay – not much common ground there.

Before I flew to Manila, two funny little things happened. The first was I stopped in Rome for some European type business, sort of the end of my tenure in Policy Planning staff, before I was going to go off. Since I was going to the Philippines, I visited the Vatican because the Philippines is not an Asian country. It’s a Catholic country in Asia.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: So there I was, marching between two Swiss guards, like something out of a movie. Up to the level of the Vatican where the pope’s office is, I didn’t know who I was going to see. We stopped in front of the door where the Holy Father was. I said, “My God, this can’t be.” And it wasn’t. They brought me to the next office to his chef de cabinet, a little fellow guy about five-foot-four, from Lithuania. We were right across the common wall from the pope. On two or three occasions I heard the pope’s famous voice summon him and he dashed through this little door that --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And he came back and, smiling, and he says, “OK,” he says, “You’re going to Manila.” They had the intelligence, they knew what was going on. And he said, “I have a message for you.” He said, “You have to oppose sin.”

I thought, This is crazy, I’m in the Vatican and he’s telling me to oppose sin.” And then it came to me. He didn’t mean sin in a generic sense. He meant Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, whose last name was Sin.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And he said, “This guy is not trustworthy. He wants to displace the Holy Father and become the first Asian pope.” I had never met this fellow in my life!

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: I was astounded that he would say these things to me. Then he went on about Marcos saying, you know, He’s a good Catholic boy, he’s served the church well, his family and his wife, they’re people we rely on.” I took it all in and left a bit dumbstruck.

And I said, “This is going to be quite an assignment.”

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: And he said to me, “You ought to meet someone at the bank.” Later I was told he meant the Banco Ambrosiano which allegedly was laundering Marcos’ cash.

After I returned to Washington, I received a call from the Philippine ambassador, Kokoy Romualdez; Kokoy was his nickname, *everybody* in the Philippines has a nickname. The chief justice, a good friend, signed his letters Ding Dong, his childhood nickname. So the country was blessed with great charm but perhaps the accompanying laxity enabled the corruption and lack of discipline that even Marcos could not ensure. The armed forces were a shambles. We used to have breakfasts with our MAAG (Military Advisory Group) chief once a month; Steve and I would go there to Quezon City. General Teddy Allen and his staff would relate horror stories about how the AFP would burglarize and disassemble military equipment that we had sent them in order to get spare parts for something that just happened to go missing at the time.

All right, so Ambassador Romualdez said, “Were looking forward to your arriving in Manila, would you like to come by for a courtesy call?”

I said, “It would be my honor to come by, Ambassador.”

Kokoy Romualdez was the brother of Imelda Romualdez Marcos, a totally unscrupulous character. He spent almost all of his time in Manila, and very little time in Washington because that’s where the real power game was going on.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: We were having this little courtesy call and it’s just a lovely place and these pretty little girls are running around on five-inch heels and all of that, looking like little butterflies. And we’re having coffee and it’s just the sort of sociable call you would expect for that sort of a call. And then he said to me, “I’m terribly sorry, but I have a serious subject that I have to raise with you.”

I said, “Please.”

And he said, “We have intelligence ranked A1...” (What is A1 intelligence?) “that one of your aircraft planes shot down one of our planes yesterday.”

I figured he was just spooking me. So I said, “Well Ambassador, I find that *extremely* unlikely given our commitment to your country, the *very* substantial amounts of aid that we give you, our total backing.” I said, “This just seems counterintuitive to me. But I want to assure you I will check this thoroughly as soon as I get back to the Department.”

He said, “Well, I really wish you would because the president is concerned about this.”

So this was clearly an initial test to see what I was like. I made a couple of phone calls. It was clearly just nonsense.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I phoned him back, waiting purposefully until the next day, and told him he had my full assurance having checked this out in the most complete way, that there’s absolutely nothing to that at all.”

And know what he said? He said, “Well, that’s a relief. I’ll be sure to tell the president.” That was my first experience *(laughs)* with Philippine diplomacy.

Q: Well --

KAPLAN: *(laughs)*

Q: -- now, you went out there what, you’re, you’re -- were you the ambassador --

KAPLAN: No, I was the deputy chief of mission.

Q: And Stephen Bosworth was still --

KAPLAN: He was the ambassador, he’d been there about a year, and I’ll always be grateful to him. As soon as I got there he said he wanted me to function in the fullest possible way.” He said, “When I go to see the president, you’re not coming with me. You’re not going to be a note taker. You’re going to be someone who can sit in and play this role fully if I’m not here. But what I want you to do is to move around and meet everyone. We’ll have some lunches at my house, you’ll meet a lot of these people. But I want you to go out there and do your thing.”

Q: But it seems that meeting the chef de cabinet and the pope and the Philippine ambassador and all seems a bit odd for a DCM.

KAPLAN: Well…

Q: Yeah, I mean were they -- did you have the feeling that they had you pegged for a hatchet man or --

KAPLAN: Oh, I think I knew exactly what was going on. I didn't know it at the time, but I found out very quickly when I got there. I met Mrs. Marcos, Imelda Marcos, after about three weeks. There was something called the Philippine Cultural Center there. It was a huge white elephant that was built to foster her image as the cultural mother of the country. It was not very far from the embassy, right on Roxas Boulevard. During the intermission of this performance, I was in effect summoned into her presence and we talked a little bit, very friendly. The next time I met her she said to me -- and there were quite a number of people around, this was in the ambassador's residence. Steve and she didn't like each other very well and I had encouraged him to hold a dinner in her honor. She was the first lady of the country. If our purpose was to ease Marcos out, by no means clear given our president's affinity with Marcos, we still needed to deal with him and Imelda until that moment came and to have some level of confidence and trust. I advised Steve to charm her. It was a pleasant if somewhat bizarre evening. Cecile Licad, the Philippine classical pianist, performed, key people from Marcos' entourage were there. Then she came up to me apropos of nothing, there probably were a dozen people standing nearby. And she said to me, "I know you."

I said, "I know you too. You're the first lady. It's my pleasure to meet you again."

She said, "Oh no, I know you."

I said, "Really?"

She said, "I knew your father, Harold Kaplan."

He was apparently the post's USIA director guy 20 years before and he was involved in creating NAMFRE, the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections. She was sure he was the station chief. She therefore had me pegged as his son who was brought back to finally get rid of them. She must have added up one and one and gotten nine!

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: But she was absolutely convinced of it. I had some of her thugs on subsequent occasions tell me this. When she was taken out of the country with her husband at the very end, which we'll come to in due course, General Allen accompanied them on the flight out and he later reported that she spent a fair amount of time on that plane cursing me out. She said, "I knew this guy from the time he got here was going to be here to get me out, get us out. And now it's proof." So this was an idée fixe.

Q: Well, what were you -- before you -- I mean sort of develop the atmospherics. When you were told OK, we've got a lot of problems with Marcos, but was anybody talking to you, or was there any group that was saying Marcos must go and all? I'm talking about back in Washington.

KAPLAN: Well, there was a mix of opinion, as you'd expect. There were people who felt that our interest in the Philippines centered on keeping the bases at Clark Airbase and Subic Naval Station, our core military presence in all of East Asia, and very few people disagreed with that. But there were other people, human rights groups and others who felt that Marcos was a repressive dictator who had been in power too long , that he was mismanaging the economy, all of which was basically true. So there was this balance to strike. In addition, there was the New People's Army, the NPA, a communist guerilla group which was murdering about 100 people a week in the Philippines, and in many cases very near Manila, or even in some cases in Manila or in the outskirts. So these competing interests.

Q: Well, was there also a Muslim --

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: -- movement too?

KAPLAN: There was and still is. It's --

Q: The Moros --

KAPLAN: That's right, it's the Moro Independence Group, there were two factions in the large southern island of Mindanao. To set the scene, you've got three -- seven thousand islands, a lot of them are just rocks, but they're three kind of island groups. In the north there's Luzon, the main island, where Manila is. Up in the north of that island, at the very north not so far from Hong Kong is Laoag, Marcos' fiefdom, where his family came from. Heading south down that island you get to Tarlac, about an hour and a half, two hours by car to Manila, which is south of Tarlac; that's the fiefdom of the Aquino family and some others, including a man who was very close to Marcos. And then you hit the sea and there's a group of islands called the Visayan Islands, the largest of which is Cebu, including Cebu city, the second largest city in the country. Finally you have Mindanao in the south, a very large island, which most consider to be a Muslim populated island, but in fact is about 80% Christian. In some parts of Mindanao, however, there are majority Muslim populations and even control. I felt that it was our business not just to sit in Manila and go to talk to people in the Foreign Ministry who largely didn't have a clue as to what was going on. Foreign policy was run by Marcos and subsequently under Cory Aquino, in the palace.

Our task in a country in a state of upheaval was to get around the country. I did a lot of that myself but we also set up a structure, which I think was one of our management reforms. We had this huge consulate, one of the biggest in the world. Every day the line would go around the consulate about three times, winding around. The vice consuls had about two minutes per applicant, that's how many people there were. It was a deadening and very intensive experience. And these poor Filipinos who would come all dressed up in their Sunday suits and would get only two minutes, and there'd be a glass between

them so they couldn't inflict any damage on our people. It was not a good experience. Anyway, we selected every few months one of the consular officers to come up to be kind of the deputy staff assistant in the front office, which would give them some front office experience, so they wouldn't have to just sit behind this glass all the time. I came up with the idea that at some point the political confrontation was going to come to a head and there was going to be some kind of an election or something. I had no idea when it would be. So we started assigning provinces to every one of those consular officers, and they were thrilled that they would have a chance not only to do their job but to be political officers in the provinces. They would go out from time to time and meet people in the provinces that we could never have met, just too many places to go. This had a big payoff at the very end when Marcos called the snap election that we'll get to later. The senators and the congressmen and people like Dick Lugar and a certain John Kerry came out and had these young consular officers who *knew everybody* in these little provinces and took them around! That was very dramatic and very important.

Near the beginning of the time I got there, in the first week, Steve handed me a thick file and said, "You've got the con on this one," a naval expression, you're in charge. It was a kidnapping, two men in their twenties, an American and a German who were seized by the Moros on the southern tip of Mindanao, in the province of Sulu. Our task was to get them out.

My first move was to go see the sultan of Sulu. My car took me to this place in Manila and his apartment was over a striptease parlor. I thought, this is where a sultan sits? *(laughs).* I went up there and he looked like a pretty shady character to me. I told him this would be a opportunity for your people if you could do something constructive here that would bring about the release of this young American and young German fellow."

And he said, "Well, I know some of those people." He then proceeded to try and shake me down, he wanted a bribe.

Q: Oh.

KAPLAN: I said, "We don't do that."

He said, "Well, then I don't do it."

I said, "You're my first sultan, it's been a pleasure," and I left.

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: Well, I had a strategy session with the German ambassador, and the Pakistani ambassador, who so far had been the intermediary to the kidnappers, and then made an appointment with President Marcos. I said, "Mr. President, these two innocents, they've been here almost a year and I understand they're in pretty bad shape; it would be a very humanitarian act for you to try and help on this."

So he said to his aide, “Get me Mahathir on the phone,” the prime minister of Malaysia. Sulu is right there on the border and there was a possibility they could slip across the water. Marcos spoke to Mahathir in front of me and the two ambassadors. He said, “I think we can deal with this.”

I told him that once before a deal was arranged and his top general in Mindanao, a fellow named Castro, started shooting at the Moros, nearly hit the Pak ambassador who was there to collect the hostages, and we lost the opportunity.” I said, “We can’t have that happen again.”

Marcos said he’d give instructions for General Castro come to see me at my office. Sure enough the next day Castro turns up. He was about 5’1, solid muscle. We had a frank conversation and I basically said, no fooling around on this one, General. I said, “You're a tough guy but we need to do this in a little more subtle manner this time.”

He said, “I’ve been instructed.” He didn’t look happy.

So the date came that the Pakistani ambassador went down there, which was very brave of him I think. I had a helicopter at the helipad at the embassy ready to roll. The deal was that, as soon as they had the two hostages on the plane that was sent down there to collect them, I would get on the helicopter and we’d speed up to Clark, I’d get there just before them, welcome them in front of the cameras, and we’d all live happily ever after. That’s exactly what happened. My helicopter fell out of the sky about one minute before theirs did. The two freed hostages looked like hell, as if they hadn’t shaved in a year, their skin was bad. I told the American that we had arranged a call to his parents, that his mother had a heart attack because of all this but was beginning to recover now. He said something to the effect, “She can go to hell,” after all the time and resources that we expended to get these kids out.

We brought him in there and he refused to talk on the phone. He said, “I’m going to tell you something. You think you did us a big favor. We’re going right back there as soon as we clean up and rest up.”

I said, “No, you're not.”

I called in our consul general, Vern McAninch, was a big John Wayne type character --

Q: Yeah, I know --

KAPLAN: -- from Texas and who got himself into trouble --

Q: Trouble, yeah.

KAPLAN: That’s another story we can go into if you like. But I said to him, “Mac, how long have these kids been in the country?”

He smiled. “A year and a month.”

I smiled. “They’re out of here. Their visas expired,” *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: That’s what we did. Now, it’s possible that they could have flown to KL (Kuala Lumpur) afterwards and then crossed the sea back to Mindanao. But that was the last penny we were going to spend on this particular case. Anyway, that was the first thing I was assigned to do when I got to Manila.

Q: Well, you get to the Philippines, how did you find the -- an embassy as large as our one in the Philippines is like -- it’s a court, Byzantine or not. How did -- what were some of the political currents that were swirling around that as DCM you’d have to sample and find out.

KAPLAN: Well, the first thing I did was to hire the best administrative counselor I could, because I knew, I knew that I was going to be on roller skates all the time and that there were all these big issues that were going on. Jim Mark was given the job. He came in the Foreign Service with me. He later became an ambassador in Africa, and --

Q: Jim Mark.

KAPLAN: And I said, “Jim, you’re going to run the administration of this embassy.” I said, “I want you to just have one rule. If there’s going to be a crash landing I want to be in on the takeoff, not just the landing. You’re going to meet with me every Wednesday at 3:00 even if the world’s collapsing, and you have total access to me any time you need to for anything that’s important. I’m not going to be giving you rudder orders about how to run the boat. You run it and you keep me informed and I’m always here for you if you need anything.” And it worked out quite well. There were some people in his section who I wasn’t too crazy about, but nonetheless he managed to handle it in our enormous embassy. We had something like 2,500 employees.

Q: Oh yes.

KAPLAN: It was one of the biggest in the world, certainly within the top three. When I first got there I made up my mind that I wasn’t going to be able to be managing every single thing that was going on from the day-to-day -- there were 25 different agencies, the Graveyard Commission, I mean everything you can think of. So I devoted the first month or so, to the extent time permitted, to go around and shake every single hand in the embassy. I went from one part of the embassy to another. It was sort of draining, an acte de presence. I’d show up, I’d meet people, and I’d smile a lot, and all of that. And, “If any of you ever have anything you need, you know how to reach me.” I wanted them to know that I wasn’t some distant presence up on the Hill there. I had heard that there were some complaints about the embassy functioning that way, not under Steve, but under some of the predecessors.

Then the third thing I did was I went up to Clark and Subic within the first few weeks. It was 1985 and had in mind 1985 the 1979-'80 hostage crisis. Once in Washington I had been put in charge of a review of the Yugoslav succession contingency, following Tito. All they had at State was a 200 page document, which of course was worthless. We needed a two or three page executive summary, with specific contingencies and options for response. It never really got done, there were bureaucratic clashes. They didn't want to commit themselves ahead of time. The agency had one view, the Pentagon another.

Well, in Manila, where I had some authority, I said, "We've got to have a usable plan. I had already seen these people holding demos outside of the embassy gates and could imagine them coming over the gates with Marcos' guards standing there watching. I wanted to know, when do we do something? Is it when they come over the gates? Is it when they get to the locked double doors? If they breach the embassy. What happens when we go into the Comm Center at the top and lock the doors?" Like what happened in Pakistan, leading to disaster. When do our marines, if ever, use firearms to resist, with all the risks that entails?" Well again, it was very hard to get this done. But I had a particular interest in it, because I just imagined myself being the one who would have to give the orders. Fortunately, we never got to that stage. But it was not an implausible or unlikely scenario. So we worked on that a bit.

I went up to Clark and Subic and I became very close to Rudy Kohn who was the admiral at Subic, and to Gordon Williams who was the three-star at Clark. I made it my business to include them in a lot of events and for me to get there from time to time. Rudy assured me that his forces could be at the embassy in 20 minutes. So we had a kind of hotline which enhanced our ability to react to this sort of thing.

These were some of my initial steps internally: meeting with people, reforms, the consular officers, the provinces, the commands, a full array of activities designed to get things going. Steve was obviously meeting the president and with his encouragement I started meeting everybody else. It's not that he wasn't meeting them too. Sometimes we'd do it together. But I had a small dining room in my residence with a circular table; it could seat 12, everybody sort of close to each other. It was an ideal room in which to meet a lot of people. We'd have a lot of these lunches and they'd all come. My rule was I'd met anybody there, people in the government, people in the opposition, lots of opposition folks. Labor unions, artists, this full range of people in the society as possible. We gave a dinner one night for poets and artists and writers, including Frankie Jose, a famous Philippine novelist at the time. Another one for Labor Union leaders, and when Cory eventually became president, there was a function at the main Labor Union Hall. I was invited and took a seat unobtrusively up in the balcony; they called me down to sit on the stage with the president and the head of the unions. So all this really had a -

Q: (sneezes)

KAPLAN: Bless you -- had a pay off. I mean it was working. What we were projecting was that we cared, which was something that Filipinos aggrieved with Marcos would not

just assume. When the transition finally came, everybody knew in the new government that they could count on us. So I think the, that's kind of the overall background. The next focus was our strategy for dealing with Marcos, and the potential; transition.

Q: Well, when you got to the embassy -- knowing that you had a very strong man in head of Central Intelligence, you had a president who was very much, well, I think he was attracted to Marcos' --

KAPLAN: Indeed, he and his wife both.

Q: So I mean it had to be a difficult situation back in Washington of where are we going. I mean you're seeing it in the field. What were you getting from the various elements in the embassy? Military, the station, and your political officers.

KAPLAN: Well, let me give you a little sense of it. the first and most important thing is that before -- Steve told me about his -- I asked him, "What was your guidance from the president before you came out here?"

And he said, "Well, I went to the Oval Office," the kind of kickoff that you get when you go to a really major embassy and where there's trouble and a lot at stake. He said, "And the president said, 'I understand that Marcos has become part of the problem. I want you to make him part of the solution.'" That was the guidance, full stop.

Well, Steve is clever enough not to ask, "What happens if you can't make him part of the solution?" He said, "Yes, Mr. President," and off he went. And he and, and we would give speeches around town saying, "I know that President Marcos is committed to the following reforms." We knew darn well he wasn't committed to anything of the sort. But it was a way of putting pressure on him to do these things and in a way though that did not cause him tremendous loss of face. Everyone knew what we were doing, and that was scoring points.

All right, now, in terms of inside the embassy. We had a strong station and the station chief was fully integrated into our activity and therefore showed loyalty. He had Casey to deal with. There was a conservative government in Washington who was dubious about these so-called reformers and the risk of losing the bases, which is what it was really about for them. The Political Section was headed by a bright fellow who was a China expert. We had a good guy in the Economic Section who basically reported to Steve, because I was doing a lot of the political stuff at that time. I later got to know him a lot better. We had a Commercial Section that was sort of moribund, in part because the economy was moribund. We had the Military Advisory Assistance Group, MAAG, which was headed by General Allen. They worked with the Philippine Armed Forces (AFP) getting them some equipment, advising them on how to run it, and all of that. We had relationships with Cardinal Sin, who I saw a fair amount, with General Ramos, who was at the time the head of the AFP, but constantly harassed by General Fabian Ver, the closest crony in the military to Marcos. Ver resented Ramos who was a highly intelligent man with an illustrious family in the country; his father had been foreign minister.

Then there was Juan Ponce Enrile, who was the Secretary of National Defense for 20 years and very close to Marcos. Johnny was the adopted son of a very wealthy guy in the northern part of the Philippines who sent him to Harvard Law School. He was involved in a lot of Marcos' activities that weren't the most salubrious. But he was a survivor, he stayed on and on under Marcos and then under Cory and then as senate president.

And of course there was Imelda Marcos, who projected a kind of flamboyant Evita personality and who had a certain influence. She was obviously the wife of the president. She was not shy. She liked to insinuate herself into as many things as possible. Her brother Kokoy was the part-time ambassador to the United States.

Then you had the opposition groups. There was Cory Aquino, who was the widow of the slain leader, a kind of diffident Joan of Arc in waiting. There were marches through the city where she might turn up wearing her yellow dress.

Q: You're talk -- I'm always struck by the fact that these families --

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: I mean these are big families, but I mean it sounds like England during the time of Shakespeare, you know, the --

KAPLAN: I would think it's a little bit more like Italy at the time of Garibaldi. That's the way I always thought of it.

Q: Oh yeah, right (laughs).

KAPLAN: And one of the reasons is that it's a weak state, or was a weak state, is because it was feudal. You have these families, and corruption and money were the lubricant that kept things going. It wasn't only Marcos that was like that. He once warned me that when I'm gone the next president will have his own cronies. Cronies is just a nasty name that the opposition attributes to the people who are in power, but you need your support networks in order to make these things work. It's like that in Washington, too."

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I once had this private dinner with Marcos. And I said to him, "Mr. President, you know, the thing that's got you in so much trouble is all the corruption."

He says, "Yes, I know that."

We were able to speak quite frankly with one another, and I said, "Why do you put up with all these cronies?" I asked, half facetiously, "How many Cadillacs can you drive to work in one week?"

And he said, “Actually, I don’t need any because I live here in the palace.” But he added, “These guys you’re calling cronies, that’s my support network. If I get rid of them, I’m gone.” He didn’t say it’s feudal, loyalty up and down. But there’s this Philippine phrase “utang na loob,” which basically means “mutual back scratching.”

So Stu, I’m sitting there in the first week in Manila, and I’m invited to this dinner at this building in the center of Manila at Makati, which is the business district, which is where the old airport was before the city expanded and they built the present airport. At the dinner a guy on the other side of me asked, “Do you like shrimps?”

I said, “Everybody likes shrimps.” I didn’t even think of it.

And then my gate guard at the residence calls me up about a week later and says, “There’s a truck out here, and there’s a ton of shrimp that they want to deliver.”

I said to myself, “Utang na loob.” I said, “You send them away,” *(laughs).* So all these funny little things were --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- were kind of happening and were giving one an insight to the way the place worked. And you had to make a judgment as to how far you’re drawn into it, what’s tolerable, what’s the right and decent way to do things, and what can get you into a lot of trouble?

Next to me was Ramon Mitra an opposition leader who became a close friend, and later became Speaker of the House under Cory. He invites me to Baguio, a resort town in the north where it’s much cooler that toasty Manila. We went up there that weekend and found that he had checked himself into the hospital. As soon as we finished in there he took off that little ID tag they put around your wrist and he took off. Stopping by his hospital room, and dinner that night with our wives, began an important relationship.

Q: Well, did you -- I’m a professional consular officer, and I spent time in Seoul, Korea.

KAPLAN: Tough place.

Q: And I know, I know the, the problem. And I heard all sorts of things about the Philippines. I mean over the years, not just any -- but did you worry about the influence of money on -- or not just money, sex is a major instrument and if you’re an antique dealer or something, I mean everybody’s got weaknesses. And did you worry about that sort of thing and what did you do about that within the internal organization --

KAPLAN: We talked a few minutes ago about the embassy being like a community, and that in a sense was administratively the right way to think about it. The wife of one of our political officers who was in business went to the PX at Subic and she walked around the PX and started putting them in her purse. Trivial things that would have cost nothing.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: One of the PX staff saw her doing this and waited until she started to leave the shop and then stopped her. They opened her purse and she was humiliated. Well, we worked it out and she obviously returned the stuff and decided to take a vacation for a few week somewhere, and she went away and came back. We didn't want the officer's career to be blighted by this. I mentioned Consulate General McAninch, the most popular guy in the embassy. He was John Wayne and in the Philippines John Wayne was a hero. Mac was one of these guys who played it very close to the edge of the envelope. He used to play poker games with Marcos' speaker of the house while we were seeking to combat Marcos' corruption and the possibility he might have to step down at some point. The last thing we needed was for Marcos to be in a position to hit us, saying that our CG was somehow implicated in their corruption. Then a young man in the embassy, a consular officer who will go unnamed, came to me and said, "McAninch is corrupt."

I said, "That's a very serious charge for you to be making, and you work for him as well."

He says, "I'm sorry. Right is right and wrong is wrong. He's corrupt."

So I said, "Well, you're going to have to face him. You just can't do this with me. This man's been in the Foreign Service for over 30 years, he's very popular here. This can cause us a lot of difficulty. You're going to have to face him in a private setting."

So I went to McAninch and I told him that this fellow had leveled his charge. I said, "I think you should get yourself a lawyer."

There was an American lawyer in Manila who was quite good and knew the way things worked in that country. We had a meeting in the residence in which Mac was able to confront his accuser. I would say that there was smoke, but no visible fire. I spoke to George Vest, who had been my DCM in Brussels at the beginning of my career; he was then the director general of the Foreign Service. George suggested that we send Mac to Washington for consultations for a week or so and agreed to talk to him. George being George was able to work it out that Mac would retire after 60 or 90 days, to save face. Mac was engaged to a beautiful Filipina girl from a well to do family. So it looked like everybody was going to live happily ever after. And then the inspector general of the Foreign Service, who will also go unnamed, had the same kind of ashes to ashes, sackcloth to sackcloth, right is right and wrong is wrong approach that the young consular officer had, and without telling anyone at State, he referred the case to the Department of Justice for prosecution. I was horrified. And McAninch committed suicide. What do you do in a case like that?

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: This should not have happened. It never had to happen. We had it worked out so a person who had had an honorable career was going to retire in a dignified way. He had never really crossed a line in any significant way. I felt like I was the mayor of the city and some maverick outsider had come along and just messed up the whole thing.

Q: Yeah. It's --

KAPLAN: It's tragic.

Q: It's tragic, absolutely. And I -- it was and may still be the most difficult consular post because of the pressures.

KAPLAN: You just got to tell yourself -- I mean I did, and I had the great good fortune to have -- and have -- a wonderful wife with her head on right. Barbara was a great asset in the country, everybody loved her. She and Steve's wife Chris got along splendidly. That was a great strength to both of us. If I had an idea that sounded a bit off base, she'd tell me. And thank God.

Q: Yeah. Well, we had a major case of corruption. It was in the ranks of the, of the Korean staff. But it's endemic to those areas.

KAPLAN: There was one other thing of the same sort that happened. Marcos called a snap election. We'll get to this later, but there was a fellow in our embassy, fairly low ranking, who had served in Manila before when he was younger, about 20 years before. When Marcos wrongly announced that he had won the snap election, this fellow went up to the Comm Center and handed them a congratulatory telegram, and asked them to send it to General Ver, Marcos' top crony in the AFP. Fortunately, the Comm Center officer had the presence of mind to phone me. We did not send the telegram and I told the fellow that he was going to be on a plane out of Manila the next day. I didn't take any pleasure in that, but we just couldn't allow that kind of thing to happen. So that was the sort of mayor of Embassy Manila function, which falls to the DCM.

Q: I'm looking at the time and I'm thinking this probably is a good place to stop because we want to get -- we want to talk the next time more about dealing with Imelda Marcos, of course.

KAPLAN: Well, the meat and potatoes, dealing with Imelda Marcos, but dealing with Ferdinand Marcos.

Q: Yeah, absolutely.

KAPLAN: And, and how all of the events transpired that eventually led to his departure.

Q: But also I'd like to talk about the relationship with our military there. Because I mean were we beginning to be dubious about the bases or were the bases of such importance that we felt we had to -- no matter what we were doing the bases were uppermost?

KAPLAN: We wanted to keep them, and that didn't change until the revolutions of 1989 in Europe had collapsed the Soviet Union. That's when it changed.

Q: All right. Well then, we'll pick this up about develops in -- we've talked about sort of the initial impressions you had and all.

KAPLAN: Yes, we talked about the dramatis personae, the players, in general terms. Now, the focus very much was the country was going down, the economy was cratering, we had a terrible security situation with the NPA. I would be driving around in three different cars, at different times, and I knew the NPA could take me out any time they wanted. I took trips out to the provinces, which illuminated the security situation. There was the whole business about the corruption issue, and Marcos' hidden wealth and all that. All that was going on and then we started getting visitors coming in, like Jack Kemp and Phil Habib and some senior officials. Always, the question was, "Is Marcos going to have to go? Is he not going to have to go? What's the president's attitude going to be about all that? How do we play this in a way so that if that has to happen, the president will be on board?

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: These were big issues. And how might that compromise the bases. If Marcos went, would the people who came in be supportive of keeping the base arrangements, or not? All these issues were, were at play. I think maybe we can pick up with what our general approach was and how we tried to deal with this. I started to get to meet Marcos a lot more because Steve sometime in the fall took home leave and he was away for about three weeks. That was in the midst of all kinds of stuff going on so I had rather intensive conversations with Marcos at a certain point. So we can do all that.

Q: OK. Today is the 21st of May, 2014 with Ambassador Philip Kaplan. We left off in the Philippines, and you're going to talk about, maybe obviously other things, but particularly dealing with the Marcoses.

KAPLAN: Right. Well, I remember flying back in a helicopter from one of the bases, with Herb Hoffman, a career Foreign Service Officer who had spent many years in Asia, which I had not and he offered me one piece of advice, "Don't hustle the East. Don't think you can kid these guys." I knew that what was going to be needed would require quite a bit of hustle *(laughs).* He was smart enough to know.

Q: When we say hustling, there's two hustles. One is hurrying and the other is putting something over on them.

KAPLAN: It was the latter he was talking about.

Q: Ah.

KAPLAN: The first meeting I had with President Marcos was that fall, '85, when Steve Bosworth was on home leave. I was chargé d'affaires and went to see Marcos in the Malacañang Palace on the other side of Manila. You enter a large park enclosed behind tree lined fences and drive around a semi-circle to the front door of the palace, then pass up some stairs. It's an impressive scene. At the top of the stairs and you're brought into a room where there are portraits of Philippine heroes and former presidents, including several of Marcos to be sure. We met in the Study Room, which was effectively the Oval Office in the palace. The room was set up with a desk that was elevated on a platform so the president, as subsequent President Ramos who was a cousin of Marcos once said, "The bastard was always in a position where he could look down on you and put you in your place." There were two ranks chairs running run from the desk straight out parallel to each other. I was alone and was seated in the first chair to his right, just the two of us.

The first thing I noticed was a large Sony tape recorder on the corner of the desk, with the microphone pointing up at me. The green light was on. I mentioned this to Marcos and he grinned sheepishly. He said, "A gift from President Johnson."

Before I went to the palace, our staff guys told me that Marcos would want to make my visit appear to be an endorsement, so don't smile. So I put on my best poker face and we had this conversation. He was very cordial but appeared to be quite frail. Then suddenly he said, "Just a moment," and got up with considerable difficulty, and dignity, which he took seriously. He kind of shuffled into the back room behind a curtain and then he came out as if he was ready to take on Manny Pacquiao, the boxing champion.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He was, just came roaring out from behind the curtain. And obviously he'd been given some injection, I mean it was just palpable. Our conversation continued and I am not an automaton. There were a couple of moments where I smiled. The next day in the papers were front-page photos of the two of us, side-by-side, smiling and shaking hands, a scene which never took place. But they just pasted the thing together.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Well, all this gave me another sense of what I was dealing with. But he was also, it was obvious that Marcos was quite a smart guy. He knew the lay of the land, how politics worked in that country, very feudal, what he called support groups, what we called cronies,. Every Philippine president has had their own groups of cronies, even the more liberal ones. And when I told Marcos at a private dinner we had once subsequently that the crony issue was killing him and he really ought to do something about it, he said to me, very frankly, "This is my support base and my logistical base and my voting base. And without it, I'm cooked. All the guys Washington liked so much before all had them, the people who come after me will all have them." He was right about that, although he may have developed this to a higher level of refinement and corruption.

I don't think he himself was as much interested in the money as the wife was, but it was a family corporation, so to speak.

So that was my first encounter with Ferdinand Marcos. I came away with the sense that his regime was shaky, the country was in political and economic difficulty. There was great concern back in the Pentagon about the bases, and that was a legitimate concern because they constituted our main military presence in East Asia. President Reagan felt strongly about that, and so did we.

Q: In talking in this initial go around, did you have a chance to sound out our military commanders? I mean were they pretty much focused on just staying in the, on the territory, or were they concerned about developments?

KAPLAN: We made a point of working closely with our base commanders. There were lots of problems, mismanagement of the economy and loss of popular support the NPA insurgency. The middle classes were not that big, but were expanding and by now have expanded quite a lot, into a rather modern business class, played a major part in the shift of power. Viewed from Washington, it was Marcos who was there for 20 years and who protected us on the bases. He got his in return, very substantial aid, I think it was the third aid budget in the world in size. I used to go over and sign these things all the time. And, and then there was the opposition. And I don't know if I've gone into this yet, but my first meeting --

Q: Well, would you go into it?

KAPLAN: -- with the moderates. I was invited to a reception in a very expensive lovely home in Forbes Park, which along with Dasmarinas are the two major enclaves where the wealthy people lived behind high walls, with guards and all that. Security was a serious concern. A hundred people were killed a week by the NPA, the communist guerilla group.

I was invited alone to this home because they wanted to eyeball the new American and take my measure. The very attractive and affluent hostess had assembled the crème-de-la-crème of the opposition and they started pressing me for what we were going to do to help them get rid of Marcos. I responded that President and Mrs. Reagan liked Marcos and Imelda – it was well known so I thought it was better to get that out there -- and they you expected us to be able to be supportive of your concerns, I'd need to have some idea that I could share with Washington about what their program would be, if they suddenly were in charge.

A senior opposition leader said, "I'll tell you what our program is. Our program is to get rid of Marcos. That's what we want you to do," which of course just turned my question on its head.

I said, "Well, I understood that actually before you said that *(laughs)*. What I'm really looking for is what you're going to do if you take over."

And somebody in the back of the room shouted, “Oh, you mean the bases.”

I said, “No, it’s not just the bases. I just want to know what your program is, economic? Political? Military? The whole thing.”

And they just repeated, “Get rid of Marcos and then we’ll talk about that.”

I said, “You’re making it harder for yourself.”

When I left that house that night I liked all the people I had met, the food was fine, they were very sociable, as Filipinos are. But I thought, The problem with moderates is that they’re moderate. If you’re too moderate, you never win. And that, by the way, is exactly what I think happened in Iran. The moderates were squeezed between the Ayatollahs and the Shah.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I mention that because I’ve written a novel about Iran. The parallels were there but there were obvious differences between the Middle East and Southeast Asia, a Catholic country, Shia country. But in that respect, they were right on. And so we had a real problem. These folks were really nice, people you’d meet em at a liberal democratic club meeting in California, but Marcos was relentlessly focused on power.
Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: So that joined the issue for me very quickly.

Q: Well, over time what were your relations with and how did you view the role of Imelda Marcos?

KAPLAN: I didn't meet her right away. I’d been there about a month. And there was an event at the Philippine Cultural Center in Roxas Boulevard, which was a huge white elephant which she built to show the world that the Filipinos were a cultured people. They had classical performances there and things of that sort. They gave away tickets so that the crowd would be respectable. The first time we attended we met Imelda Marcos at the intermission. She was very sociable. But it was just feather talk.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: At the end she said, “We’re going to have to meet.” What became obvious was that Marcos would never allow her to be in any of my meetings with him, so she made it a point of showing up. The first time this happened was at a large dinner-dance. I noticed that chair next to mine was empty. My friend Richard Haass, now the president to the Council on Foreign Relations, was in town. I took him along. In Philippine culture if you’re invited to a dinner party and you want to bring along someone from your family, you often do so without telling them in advance. We constantly had to rearrange the

tables all the time before -- when the guests were coming. So I put Richard at the head table. Finally she showed up and sat next to me in the seat which obviously had been reserved for her. There was another guy from a Washington PR (public relations) firm, who must have had a contract with the government at the time; he was interjecting, telling me we should support the Marcoses, they're reliable.

I introduced Richard to Mrs. Marcos and said he was at Harvard. She said, "Oh yes, go to Harvard and turn left." He finally got to dance with her and no doubt lived off that story with his academic friends for quite a long time.

This happened all the time. Whenever I was invited somewhere the chances that she would show up and sit next to me and try to work her magic and influence and all that was, was there. She was not a prop and she was not just a wife. She was a little bizarre in some of the things she said. She had this, like a, like a recording in her head, like a disc that she would just insert. And then she'd start talking about love and happiness and all the good things in life. And whenever she was at a loss for words, as she sometimes was, boom, the disc went in and it all came in. I could have repeated it myself. It's sort of like a guy who's a dean at a university and has to attend dinners with his university president who keeps saying the same thing in the speeches all the time until he could repeat it himself by heart. So I saw a lot of her and her main objective was to convince us to, to support them. So let me take this out of turn, since you asked the question.

Q: Sure.

KAPLAN: At a certain point we needed to decide whether our objective was to get Marcos to reform or to get out. President Reagan told us, "Marcos is part of the problem, I want you to make him part of the solution." I think I mentioned this before.

Steve or I would get up and give speeches about how, "I know President Marcos intends to do the following reforms." We knew very well he wasn't prepared to enact those reforms, but by saying this before business clubs and others we were sending a message. They understood it exactly. They liked it a lot. No one had said this before, at least that's what they told us. And so the strains on the relationship grew --

Q: Well, what -- when you got there what was the problem from our perspective?

KAPLAN: Marcos was destroying the economy. The National People's Army, the NPA, was growing to the point where they were killing a hundred people a week. There were human rights charges against the military, which was run by a crony general named Ver. The country was just sinking, a country that was after World War II the second most prosperous in East Asia (after Japan), and it had become a basket case.

I took many trips to the provinces. I went once to a province called Negros Occidental and met a lot of people there. Their main crops were sugar and coconuts. I was taken to the home of a some growers for dinner and asked them to explain the situation. They laid out the feudal crony system in graphic detail. We grow our sugar, we go into the fields

and break our backs. In order to grow the crop we must borrow money from a particular bank, which is run by a Marcos crony. Since the payments for the previous years' crop don't come in until after the time when we have to plant the new crop, we have to go to that bank and borrow money which should already have been paid for the prior crop. It's staggered this way on purpose, and the interest rate, they told me, was 52%.

Subsequently, Mrs. Marcos arranged a dinner for me and my wife. (I'll discuss this dinner in a minute, it's worth going into.) I told her about Negros and her friend who runs the bank and the 52% interest charge. She said, "That's outrageous! I can't believe he would do such a terrible thing. I'm going to call him right now." And she said, "Let me see if I can remember his phone number." You know, she must have been talking to him three times a day. She scribbled it out on the expensive tablecloth with a crayon and called the number, then slammed down the phone and said, "He's not in. I guess I'll call back tomorrow." It was an Oscar-worthy performance.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: She invited my wife and I to this dinner to have a real shot at us, because they were getting increasing concerned that we were trying to squeeze them out. That day, before the dinner, Foreign Minister Pax Castro had lunch with me. At the end of the lunch, it was very sociable, very -- lot of fun. And at the end of the lunch Pax gave me a painful smile as if he knew that he had to carry out the instruction he had been given by the president. He said was just with the president and then he gave me this cock and bull story that our CIA station was plotting to kill Marcos the next day in a particular province.

And so I said, "This came from the president?"

He said, "Yes," he says, "it came from the president." And then he rolled his eyes, as if to make it quite clear that he didn't believe it either.

I said, "Well Pax, this story cannot possibly be true. But because it came from the president I'm going to check it out."

And he said, "You know, the president's going to Cebu tomorrow and he's concerned that, that these people could try to kill him while he's there and that your guys, your CIA guys are coordinating with the people who could be about to commit this terrible crime."

I said, "Look, I'll check this immediately as soon as I get back to the embassy. And secondly, let me assure the president that we're prepared to provide him with all the security he needs about it."

And Pax said, "Oh, that won't be necessary."

I called in our station chief, then waited about an hour and I phoned President Marcos and assured him that our people were not involved in any way in the report he passed on.

He respond, almost with a chuckle, that the assurance was a great because the report was classified as an A1 security report, supposedly the highest report, if such a thing existed.

I again offered any help he might wish and asked if he would be joining us for the family dinner that night which Imelda was hosting. He said he'd try. Of course he had no intention of doing that, because this was Imelda's party. You can see how this -- on the one hand it's politics, and this guy's fighting to stay in power; on the other hand, it's part of Philippine culture -- it's a show, it's like a circus almost. What a way to run a country.

So we go to this party at the Maharlika Hall, which I had never heard of. Maharlika was supposedly a battle that Marcos had fought in as a soldier and demonstrated his heroism. Many people disputed that it ever happened, or that he was there. In any case, it was a magnificent hall a mile or two from the palace; later, I was told that no American had been there before. Imelda was dressed to the nines with five-inch stilettos. She gave us the exclusive tour. At one point she said, "George Hamilton (the movie actor) slept here, but not with me." And then she takes us from one room to another showing us rather extraordinary artworks.

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: I was taking mental notes, because I figured this was going to be a most interesting cable. She takes us downstairs to a room where her treasures were, including a seventh century Cambodia princess in ivory. She says, "If we ever have to leave, the princess is coming with us."

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: This later on became of some relevance. We go back upstairs and we're seated under vast chandeliers. It was a scene out of the Élysée Palace; the waiters didn't have powdered wigs, but they came pretty close, white gloves costumes with knee britches. A magnificent meal was served. She was really working it for all it was worth.

There was one other couple there who were supporters of the Marcoses. The fellow was her deputy minister and I knew him well; my wife knew his wife as well. It was just five of us, because Marcos didn't show up. Over dinner she made a strong pitch for our support given all they had done on the bases and their friendship with the Reagans. Her disc went in and we heard about love and art and all the rest of it. It was exhausting. I'd had a long day starting with Pax Castro. At 1:30 in the morning I rose and said, "Mrs. Marcos, I want to thank you for an evening I'll never forget," which I meant but in another way.

Q: Yes.

KAPLAN: She just sort of stopped her routine as though *boom*, the record stopped. She became very friendly and we went down the magnificent stairwell. We got to the front door, all five of us together, then suddenly she took my arm and pulled me aside, and the

other three backed up, because they knew that this was going to be another round. She said, "I want to tell you very seriously, I know what you guys are up to. This cannot be. We will protect the bases, we will protect the relationship. The other people (she meant the opposition) don't know what they're doing. You're going to lose the bases, you're going to lose your security position in Asia. Please don't do this." She -- it was embarrassing, because she was on the verge of tears. It was an undignified presentation that she felt that she had to make. We were standing on the veranda outside the building and my car pulled up. My wife and I thanked her again and went to the car. She looked defeated, she was on the verge of tears. We got in the car and she waved goodbye.

We got in the car and off we went. The next morning I found out that she had called up Nancy Reagan to get Steve and I fired. They had waved goodbye as many a U.S. ambassador had left over the 22 years that he was president. They felt a moment of extreme danger that they had to do address. To his great credit, George Shultz, the secretary of state, backed us.

Q: Well, what was going on that you were able to discern in Washington? I mean obviously the Marcos regime had lost its allure, to say the least, in the United States.

KAPLAN: Yes.

Q: But how did you read the mood in the United States? This includes in Congress and in the White House.

KAPLAN: Well, I'll tell you with an anecdote, because it really will capture it. Before I went out there the assistant secretary for East Asia was Paul Wolfowitz, who had moved from the policy planning job. Paul had lunch with me in the State Department cafeteria and told me that the cables from Manila were the first cables he read every morning and on the seventh floor the secretary wants to know what's going on. If you have a meeting don't send a cable in the next day, even if it's late. Get it out that night so we can see it in the morning." That told me right away that there were a lot of eyes. So the first time I became chargé, I sent in a highly classified cable with a very limited distribution because my assumption was that while they were all watching it that most of the people in the Department didn't want to touch this thing. It was like fire brand, they'd get burned.

Q: Because of the president particularly.

KAPLAN: Because of the president and because they just figured that they didn't know how the thing would turn out, that if Marcos went we might lose the bases. *T*hey didn't want to have any responsibility for that. Well, I knew the risks but recalled what Lyndon Johnson once said, "What's the presidency for?"

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I sent in this cable with two paragraphs to the undersecretary for political affairs with the request, "Please pass to the secretary." Paragraph one said, "This is what

I've been doing over the last few weeks since I've been chargé," and wrote out five bullet points. Paragraph two: "Please let me know if you'd like me to do anything differently." I didn't expect ever to hear a response. And I never did.

Q: Well, of course you didn't --

KAPLAN: *(laughs).* But that kept me covered.

Q: -- the equivalent thereof, "I will do such and so unless otherwise instructed"

KAPLAN: That's right. I also knew that even though Steve and I were on a big stage and if they had to blame anyone, they had a couple of evident candidates.

Q: Well, was there anything -- this is Marcos -- what could you say? She says, "I know what you're doing, you want to get rid of us." What could you respond?

KAPLAN: I said, "That's ridiculous." I said, "You're the elected government here. We've had cordial relations with you for many years. There are some issues and problems, which the president and I have discussed on many occasions. He knows exactly how we feel about them. We very much hope that he will follow up and deal with these questions." That was it. What's she going to say?

Q: Well --

KAPLAN: *(laughs) It* would have required him to break some crony networks. I was once invited to the palace for a dinner that was arranged by a Marcos crony to get by our very appearance de facto endorsement of the coconut levy, which was very much to the financial advantage of this guy, and the Marcoses. I knew that it was a set up. I wasn't the ambassador. I was a DCM and chargé. But it was a setting where I was stood out so declined to attend. I wasn't going to be used by this guy. He was enraged and Marcos wasn't very happy either. Soon thereafter, the former embassy station chief who was close to this crony was sent to meet me in my embassy. He taken my wife and me to lunch before me arrived in Manila, and when we arrived in Manila there were flowers on the table of our residence that were sent by him. They were working it, before I even got there. So he comes to the embassy and he says, "I have a message from Mr. X. If you ever try to pull a stunt like this again I'll have you killed." Blatant threat to murder me.

I said to him, "I have a response and I want you to take out your pencil and paper and write this down so you get it absolutely right. It's very brief." And then I gave him the response -- I'll use the two-letter initials. It was F-U. I said, "You go back to Mr. X and you tell him that's my response."

He looked stricken. "You don't really expect me to do that, do you?" I said, " You came here, you had a message to deliver, I've given you a response." And I believe he did it.

About three days later the crony had his secretary call me up and invite me to lunch at his corporate headquarters. He said, "Look, we need to make amends and discuss the issue in a civil fashion. You'll be greeted here with respect, given your position in the country and all that. I've told the president I'm going to do that. He said it's a good idea." So of course I went. I went and I took the economic counselor with me. And we had a long discussion. We totally disagreed on the issue of substance. Once he saw that we shifted to a very sociable conversation and it could have been like two best buddies.

Q; Yeah.

Q; Well, what about, were there -- I would think with the Philippines there would be, oh, strong allies of the ruling power within our Congress, either at the senatorial or House of Representatives level.

KAPLAN: Well, they invited Jack Kemp --

Q: Who was from New York.

KAPLAN: -- who was a Republican from New York, quarterback for the Buffalo Bills, an All-American football player before that. We helped arrange the tour. He arrived from Washington, got off the plane, went right up to Clark and Subic. It was 100 degrees and he was wearing his Brooks Brothers suit, striped tie and white shirt. He just looked peaked when he arrived in Manila for a lunch hosted by Prime Minister Cesar Virata. At lunch, I thought Kemp was going to fall into the soup. We were all wearing barong tagalogs, you know, the formal white shirts outside the trousers.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: At the end of the lunch Jack came up to me and said, "Where do you get one of those shirts?" *(laughs).* I still remember that. He was so hot and bothered.

That evening there was a dinner in the palace that must have been one of the great social events that was ever hosted there. There were several tables that went on and on with fine glassware and tableware from Germany and France and champagne, and a magnificent dinner. I was at the head table with them. One of my embassy colleagues who was at another table came up to me afterward and said, "What a horrible meal."

So it became clear. At the main table where Jack and I were served, the food was exceptional, at the other tables it was quite another menu. Jack finally leaned over to me -- I'd never met him before -- and he said, "I'm enraged. I'm going to go to see President Reagan and tell him what I think of these guys. She tried to bribe me. She said, 'I want you to run for president and we'll finance it.'" Now, I never heard that, but I heard what he said. And he was really angry.

I said, “Jack, calm down. Judge this from a total perspective, you put the pluses and minuses and then you tell the president whatever you think you should for that. And I think you should tell him exactly what you think.”

So they had this terrific opportunity. Kemp was important and Reagan liked him a lot. Later on, I recall with Bob Dole in ’96, he ran for vice president. But they overplayed their hand. I was seated next to somebody at the table, a Marcos loyalist in a formal barong and all the little buttonholes were filled with two-carat diamonds. Revolting. Kemp went back and reported back to Reagan. How he put it exactly and what the president’s reaction was I don’t know.

Q: How about Senator Lugar? Was he an important figure at the time?

KAPLAN: He was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And he took an active interest. Fast-forwarding now to early November 1985, I was chargé at the time. Marcos felt growing pressure and announced a snap election, that is to say an election that would be held out of the regular four-year term cycle. This was perfectly legal. It was his way, I thought, of saying, Look, I know what you’re up to. I’m not going to let you get away with it; there’s going to be an election. I’ll win by hook or by crook and then I’ll wave goodbye to you just as I did to all your predecessors. That is sort of the executive summary of what I think he was up to. Before we get to Lugar’s role in the elections, I received an instruction to see Marcos and tell him what we expect in terms of conduct of the election. The instruction was quite detailed: equal treatment for journalists, access to TV, to the polls, no abuses. This instruction came from the State Department but I thought the president hadn’t changed his mind that Marcos was still the horse we had to ride.

I went in and I shared this with Marcos and he nodded, said he’d do it all. No problem. I didn’t believe him at all. I said, “Well, could we start with just one thing, Mr. President? Equal access for journalists. It would be great if you could make an announcement to that effect. And maybe even add some of the other points.”

“I’ll do it. Watch TV, tonight, 7:00, the news TV cast.”

I said, “Thank you very much.” I put it on and of course there wasn’t a word about it. He wasn’t on. Called him up the next morning and I said, “Mr. President, I missed you on TV last night.”

And he said, “Oh. Yes, it’s going to be tonight.”

And so I said, “Mr. President, you wouldn’t be kidding me, would you?”

And he said, "I would never do that." And so that night, nothing. On Friday I finally saw him again for some reason and I raised it again. He banged the table and he said, "*Damn it*, they must have lost the tape!" Finally he got on TV and he made some half-hearted statement to this effect. Throughout that month of November while Steve was away, and while the Department was urging me to push him hard on this, hard, so the elections wouldn't be a fraud. I met him on a range of election issues one-on-one for 23 one-hour meetings.

Q: Good God.

KAPLAN: Every day, sometimes on the weekend. It was as though when we called the palace for an appointment, they were gripping onto the sides of the chair. Imelda and Kokoy and the others were very angry that we were putting so much pressure on them. Eventually they announced that the election would be February 14th, so it would be --

Q: '86.

KAPLAN: Yes. So it would be double sevens, because they believed in numerology and seven was their lucky number. The question was how the election would be conducted and it became clear that we needed to talk to the opposition. You may recall that I had been doing that since my arrival in Manila. So by the time we got to the snap election I knew the opposition leaders and the institutions they represented. The one person I never tried to meet was Cory Aquino because we had a policy in the embassy that we were going to keep her "pure." She was Joan of Arc. Her husband was assassinated. People accused the Marcoses or General Ver of being responsible for it. I have no idea whether they did or not, but that was the general impression in the population. Ninoy had come back, he got off the plane from the United States and they shot him while he was coming down the steps. There was a huge pilgrimage through the city that was led by Cory in her yellow dress, the color of the Aquino clan.

So we had gotten to this point where the snap election was going to be held and I invited Cory Aquino to come to my home for lunch after breakfast with the other opposition candidate, a veteran politician who they called a trad-po, a traditional politician, which was a term of opprobrium. Senator Salvador Doy Laurel. His father was Philippine leader during the Japanese WWII occupation, but they were still a family of a certain lineage. We thought that these two might run on the same ticket or Marcos would just divide the opposition they wouldn't have a chance. So Mr. Laurel came to the house for breakfast and I told him there should be a joint ticket. He readily agreed but said that he should be the presidential candidate because he had the experience and Cory was just a housewife and so forth. Cory came to lunch directly from a convent where she had been reflecting for about a week on what to do about all this. The first thing she did was say, "I want your wife to join us at the lunch."

I said, "Of course," and my wife came out and Cory said, "I want to tell you something. You're the first persons I'm about to tell this to. I haven't even told my brother yet. I'm

going to run. I owe it to Ninoy." And then Doy Laurel calls up in the middle of my lunch with Cory to ask what's going on in the lunch *(laughs).* So I had to get rid of him.

I really worked her hard to get her to agree to take him as her number two, her vice presidential candidate. I said to her, "Look, you're going to be the president, you're going to get elected. The vice president only does what you allow him to do. Keep him in the tent. And if you don't do it, you're not going to win."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And she said, "He's a dirty politician. Not like my Ninoy." And you know, she was the embodiment of the Virgin Mary and Joan of Arc rolled into one. I liked her a lot. She wasn't analytical, but she had an intuitive sense of the country. She and Ninoy had been at Harvard together. This was an intelligent woman with good instincts.

Toward the end of the lunch suddenly strolling across our garden comes their 13-year old daughter, Kris, who later was an actress. She was eating an apple, it could have been a scene in Iowa. And she says, "Mom, we've got to go to the dentist."

I said, "Cory, I have one last question for you. "How are you going to do this unless you get together with Doy? How will you get over the bridge?" I recall those exact words.

She said, "Oh, Ninoy always told me that the CIA would take care of it." And so here's this innocent blushing bride who's telling us she's going to rely on the CIA, who they totally distrusted, to make sure that they actually won the election. Pretty good?

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: *(laughs) L*et me just jump ahead with this one addendum to that. Once she became president, Bob Gates, a name you know, was then the DCI.

Q: That's the director in charge of Central Intelligence.

KAPLAN: Yes. He announced that he'd like to come out and be helpful and I recalled the she had made to me about the CIA will take care of it. She was wary at first but I told her she should see Gates, that he was brilliant, Jack Armstrong, the all American boy. She said, "If you recommend it and if you really think this is important then I'll see him. But not for a dinner and not to be publicized. It would be a private meeting in her home, not in the palace. The only other guy in the room was her executive secretary, Joker Arroyo who was well to the left and didn't have much use for the United States. He didn't like the idea of Gates coming at all.

But the meeting took place. Bob showed up and he looked like Mr. Brooks Brothers, clean-cut and articulate. He started by saying, "My sole purpose here is to see if we can identify ways that we can improve the Philippine economy. I've studied this carefully and we've looked into the interstices of the economy and think there are certain sectors where

we can do this and this that could make a difference. We're willing to help you." He just charmed her. She liked him a lot.

Joker Arroyo made one snide remark and Gates just dealt with that diplomatically, very skillful. Cory started laughing and said, "I guess he got you on that one Joker."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* So there was a real distrust of the CIA, and Gates comes out. Kind of an interesting combination of events.

Q: What was the relationship with our CIA with the Philippine CIA? I'm saying this having been in Korea where our two CIAs were very close to each other.

KAPLAN: Well, I didn't have the impression that the Philippine Intelligence Services amounted to much at the time. I might be wrong. I didn't talk to them directly. Our guy was a very effective station chief and they handled that. When I first arrived I requested a meeting with the station, the whole group. I went said the obvious things, We're counting on you, this is really important work, you're a key part of the country team.

And I saw the station chief often, we were friends. We relied on him. And he played an important role in the final days before Marcos went, which we can talk about later.

Q: Well then, how did things develop? Or do you want to stop at this point?

KAPLAN: Let's see what time it is. Well, it's 11:00. I can go on for a little bit longer.

Q: All right.

KAPLAN: How did things develop. Well, the election cycle began. And Marcos was very sick, had lupus. He had to have treatment all the time. His doctors told him, "You daren't go out and campaign. You're going to kill yourself." And you know, whatever else you thought about the guy, he had enormous courage. I was in attendance at one rally. And remember I told you about the consular officers who were assigned to different districts?

Q: Mm-hmm.
KAPLAN: They were all over the place. They provided valuable reports. But I was up in the north at a Marcos rally and he appeared to have some blood on his barong. He withdrew behind a screen on the stage and there were doctors working on him, injecting him. Then he came back out and finished it, even though he was obviously in bad shape. Cory was moving around the country, very popular, doing well, looking like in an honest election she'd win.

New Years Eve came, 1985. My wife and I went to the palace. There was a huge crowd all over the palace grounds. It was quite a scene. It was well up in the nineties. Marcos

was there, wearing a double-breasted wool, 100% wool blue suit instead of his usual barongs. I didn't recognize him at first. He came up to me -- I was talking to Cardinal Sin, and he came up to me from behind and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Aren't you going to say hello?"

I did a double take. I said, "My God, Mr. President, you're so formally dressed," *(laughs).*

And he said, "Don't you believe what this priest is telling you about me."

And then he sort of shuffled away like in the last days of Pompeii. The cardinal mumbled, "Such an evil man." You may recall that I went to Rome and the Vatican before Manila and the chef de cabinet to the pope warned me not to trust Cardinal Sin. About two weeks after arriving at post, I met the papal nuncio, the diplomatic representative of the Vatican. His basic message was the same. You should stick by Marcos, he's a good Catholic, he will see things through and so forth. These other people, these innocents, they don't know what they're doing, the country will go to hell. Ashes and sackcloth.

I was invited to meet with the cardinal in his little villa there. After some polite patter, which you'd expect in an opening diplomatic conversation, he said, "Imelda was here."

I said, "Really?"

He said, "Yes. She came by a couple of nights ago and she threatened me, saying that I was not playing the role compatible with my standing in the country, that I was engaged in politics, that I should stay out. She was wagging her finger at me. I gave her the sternest look I was capable of. Suddenly she went down on her knees and said, 'Forgive me, Cardinal. I should not have said that. I only want to work with you.' And she started weeping."

Cardinal Sin, who I met several times, is, his interest was in seeing a fair result that would lead to a democratization in the country. At one point he sort of admitted to me that he wanted to be the first Asian pope. He didn't say it in so many words, but I said to him, "I've heard that some people think that you could be the first Asian pope."

He smiled and said, "Perhaps a nice idea, but how could that be?" He was Chinese by birth, Philippine or Chinese, I don't know.
Q: Was there any Muslim group with whom we could deal?

KAPLAN: Not really. There was the two rebel Moro groups down in the south, the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front). This rebellion in Mindanao had been going on for a very long time. I read a biography of Theodore Roosevelt much later that said the biggest foreign policy issue in the campaign of 1902 was the Moro Rebellion.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: We had our hands full dealing with Marcos and the opposition, trying to deal with the politics of Washington, the NPA killing many people. I went to the provinces a lot. I saw this. Maybe I should tell you one other anecdote about that. In one of my provincial trips, in Mindanao, I visited a barangay, a village where there was only one telephone and people would access it and a radio. The villagers were scratching an income off the land. I asked to see the mayor and they took me to his modest house. The fellow was frightened, he said, "I really can't talk to you. It's just too dangerous."

I said, "Would you like to tell me why?"

He said, "They came a week ago, the NPA. My brother, the mayor, they murdered him right down there on that bottom chipped step. You can see his blood still on his step. I'll be next." I found that one of the more graphic moments of the time I was there.

Q: Oh boy.

KAPLAN: How do you, how do you deal with that? What am I going to do, try and send another cable? I said, "Of course not." I said, "If there's anything we can do in terms of economic support or anything, let us know, we owe you this."

And he said, "If you want to be helpful just go." He said, "I'm sorry, I don't want to be rude, but please. Go."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And that was a scene that I saw more than once when I was there.

Q: Well, I'm just thinking because I imagine there's still quite a bit more about the election and its aftermath.

KAPLAN: Well, the, the, the major thing is the election, how it unfolded, what the results were, the revolution that took place, and then the entire period of Cory's government. But I'll just tell you one other thing about Imelda, which is kind of a funny incident. I'd been there for a couple months or more. I told you the story about Harold Kaplan who she was convinced was my father, and the former CIA station chief who was really USIA and helped create NAMFREL, the Citizens Free Election Movement. Any way, we went to Tacloban, the scene of the city which was devastated by earthquakes this year. We were in bleachers right on the beach where MacArthur returned, it was the fortieth anniversary.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Steve couldn't go so it fell to me to attend and to give some remarks. The Japanese ambassador and I walked down to the shore where MacArthur returned. We came back and Marcos spoke first; he looked terrible and they took him into a helicopter

and flew him back to Manila. Imelda stayed; Tacloban was her home town; there was a big museum celebrating her beauty. Then I was asked to speak and I said to the Japanese ambassador, "Would you like to go first?"

He said, "I'm not talking," *(laughs).*

Q: Next time (laughs).

KAPLAN: So I got up and I gave this talk. I didn't criticize Marcos directly. It was the same kind of thing we had been saying against the backdrop of how McArthur's return provided the opening for democracy -- I know that the Philippines -- I didn't use Marcos -- is determined to realize liberty, this is why we're here to celebrate on this occasion the return to freedom of the Filipinos. Now the task is to carry that into the next generation so everybody in the Philippines is free. Imelda's face just was frozen, she was so angry. A couple of their thugs came up to me afterwards. There was a big picnic like social event and, and they said, "We know you're the center of hell, Kaplan, and we'll see you get yours some day." It was pretty direct. Then they had this game called the Tinikling. A slight beautiful Filipina girl in native dress danced in bare feet in between two logs that were clogging together.

Q: Oh yes, I --

KAPLAN: She did it with total aplomb, there was no chance that she was going to be hit.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Imelda came up to me and said, "Would you like to do the *(laughs)"* --

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: I think I said something like, "Not this time," *(laughs).*

Q: I clapped, bamboo clapping,

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: That's kind of scary.

KAPLAN: So all of this happened in Tacloban. In the Imelda Marcos Museum there are portraits of her from when she was a young girl, one of the most breathtakingly beautiful young women I've seen.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Even when I was there, when she probably was in her fifties she was still a very attractive woman. She wore those high heels and she knew how to dress; she was shrewd in her own way, even though she was, as I say, rather bizarre.

One more anecdote about Imelda and we can break for today. An American senator from Texas came out, a person of standing in the Senate. You'll see why I'm not going to mention his name. We took him to the palace, he met the president. On the way back he says, "Let me see some of the back streets, let's see a little bit more about the way the country works." So I said uh-oh, and we go up this street where all the girly clubs and strip shows are. At a traffic light we stop and this pretty girl comes out of her club. She sees the Cadillac and American flag and he sees her and starts to roll down his window. She comes up to the car and starts to try to squeeze herself through the window into the car. And he says, "Come, come, come, come," *(laughs).*

I reached forward and just pushed her head gently so that she was out. The driver rolled up the window and I said, "Senator, never know, she could be NPA."

Q: Oh!

KAPLAN: *(laughs)*

Q: Handy to have.

KAPLAN: And off we went. That night, my wife and I hosted a dinner for the senator at our house and invited nice clean people from the opposition. About 10 minutes before dinner's going to start, and people are already gathered, I get this call from the senator saying, "I'm sorry to do this at the last minute, but I've just been invited to the palace for a dinner with Imelda Marcos. I know where the power lies. I'm going." And so he did.

I said to myself, "What a fool. He thinks that's where the power lies. They were on the verge of being thrown out." These people I had there were the people who were going to be the next governments for years to come.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: bout a month later we get this letter from Washington signed by the senator saying, "I want to thank you for taking me around, but I want to particularly thank your wife for arranging one of the most sumptuous meals I've ever enjoyed," *(laughs).* I guess an aide must have put it in front of him and he just signed it with a bunch of other things.

Q: Oh boy.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)*

Q: Such is diplomacy. OK, well I think this is probably a good place to stop. We'll pick this up the next time.

Q: One just question --you mention these death threats and all this. Do you think that the Aquino thing could -- was there any analysis of -- was this Marcos that said, "Get this guy?" Or were these thugs around Marcos doing what they felt they should do?

KAPLAN: Well, I don't think Marcos did that and I don't think she did it. She was very distrustful and at the same time she's just all over me, both. And there were her thugs and they just burst out and said things, which they didn't have the authority to carry out. Although, you know, after all, Ninoy was killed.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: Then there's the NPA. I got written death threats from the top commander of the NPA. I can tell you, since you asked the question and we'll probably forget about it later, when Cory was elected at one point one of the NPA people, one of the top guys, asked for a visa because his mother was dying in the United States. There was no way I could conceivably have given the visa given the fact that this would have been illegal. It would have just been out of the question. On another occasion the most leftist member of the Philippine Senate, who was anti-American for years and years, but not as far as I could tell a communist, asked for a visa and I was about to reject that one too until Cory called me on the telephone, as president, and said, "I'm asking you as a personal favor to give this guy a visa, because his mother's dying and this family and this country and they're very, they were very close to Ninoy, please."

I said, "You're asking me to break the law."

She kind of twinkled over the phone and said, "I'm not asking you to break the law. I would never do that. I'm just asking you to take a constructive approach towards this," or something. I had a conversation with the consular officer. I didn't do --

Q: (laughs) OK. All right.

KAPLAN: -- it myself. And then finally, the end of this is many years later after Cory's term was over, after President Ramos' term was over, Joseph Estrada became president and invited my wife and me to the inauguration. By that time I was out of government and practicing law. We went there and were seated -- this was his idea of humor -- right next to this former NPA guy who'd come in from the cold, the new land reform minister. The minister said, "You know, you rejected a visa for me at a time when it really mattered with my family," and so forth.

I said, "Well Minister, I couldn't have done anything else. The law was -- there was no flex whatsoever."

He looked at me in a kind of a sinister way and he said, "You know, I was the guy who signed that letter to you threatening to take you out."

I said, "I know that."

Then he said to me, "Well, then was then and now is now," *(laughs).* Very Filipino.

Q: OK, we'll pick this up the next time with the election and during and after.

KAPLAN: Good.

Q: Great, all sorts of interesting things.

OK, today is the 29th of May, 2014 with Phil Kaplan. And we're moving towards the end of 1985 and forces are beginning to move in the Philippines. And let's take our time on this, because you were there in a very interesting time diplomatically speaking, and so we want to cover as much, you know, really get into what you were up to and what we were up -- they were up to and all.

KAPLAN: Well, that's fine. There's one little anecdote that will give you the spirit of the times. I told you the last time that every time there was a dinner party, or often when there was a dinner party, there was a vacant seat next to me and her Nibs would show up.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: It was part of my job of course like any other person in the Foreign Service, to meet the widest possible array of people, in the opposition, in the palace and the Batasang Pambansa, which was the parliament. One day I went to see the majority leader of the Batasang in his office in Makati, the business center in Manila. Jose Roño was close to Marcos and got things through the parliament for the palace. We had a cordial chat and he was making comments that indicated he wasn't quite as loyal a lieutenant as imagined; any good politician has always got one finger to the wind. Suddenly the phone rang and he said, "Yes mum." In the Philippines they don't say "ma'am," they say "mum."

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: So I knew exactly who was on the other side of the phone *(laughs).* He pointed to the extension phone. And I said, "Sure?"

He winked, and I got on the phone, and there she was, ranting away, part of it was in English, part of it was in Tagalog. But what she really wanted to know was, our guys were tracking him and suddenly he disappeared somewhere in Makati. Do you have any idea where he might be?" Roño said, "Oh no, mum, no idea whatsoever," *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: "I haven't seen him for weeks!" *(laughs).* So it's was just a silly anecdote, but it gave you a sense that they knew that they were getting close to the end game.

Q: Well, did you get any feel for who was giving them information from Washington? In other words, their equivalent to you in Washington. And you say President Reagan didn't want -- Nancy Reagan particularly -- didn't want to oust them. But what was happening -- who was reporting and how accurate do you think --

KAPLAN: Well, it's sure that it wasn't their embassy because Kokoy Romualdez, their ambassador and the brother of Imelda --

Q: Oh.

KAPLAN: He was the guy who pulled that little stunt before I first went out there telling me about the planes were being shot down and all that.

Q: Oh.

KAPLAN: He was almost always in Manila. The thing I remember about him was he had this shock of white hair and he never wore socks, ever, to the most formal event. He could be wearing a formal barong tagalog or he could be wearing a blue suit, but he wouldn't have socks on. So they weren't getting it from the embassy particularly. They had their own guys who were flying in and out of Washington and meeting officials, some of whom were sympathetic, maybe in the Pentagon or in the agency because, although the defense attaches and the station in Manila were on board with our approach, there were people in Washington who saw this with a Univision, which was the bases. That's all there was for them, that flakey opposition guys would come in if Marcos left and we'd lose the bases.

Q: Well, did you get a sense of what sort of -- I mean my, my feeling is the American public was -- through news reports and all -- was, had really sort of reached the end of the line with the Marcos'.

KAPLAN: Well, the word Marcos evoked the notion of an Asian dictator. And the Philippines was our only colony which we gave independence to. There was a kind of sentimental view of the Philippines.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: There were families, lots of Philippine nurses in the homes of people who had influence, and a robust Philippine community in Los Angeles and New York and Illinois and other places. I don't remember, three or four million of them. So that's --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: That's not trivial. But, but you know, the world has always got a lot of stuff going on and most Americans, like most people anywhere, focus first on whether there is a job, college for the kids, all the normal things, and the Philippines was far away. So while they had that perception of Marcos, and while that was growing, and while most

importantly the murder of Ninoy Aquino really brought all this home, I suppose President Reagan had a fair amount of latitude. He had an affection for Marcos; as governor of California he went out there and the Marcoses really knew how to do a party: they treated him like gold. It doesn't mean that Reagan, who had a lot of stuff going on, like the Cold War, was impervious to reason. I think he had a very successful presidency. But there was that affection. Remember his guidance, "See if you can make him part of the solution." Didn't say, "Damn it all, he's going to be part of the solution." It wasn't that.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: It was, "Let's see if we can make it work." Because he, he didn't know, frankly, we didn't know after having asked all those questions, whether the moderates, would be able to govern and would be inclined to respect our interests. Had no idea.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I found them to be really nice people, I liked them a lot, many of them were friends I still have.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But I didn't know what they were going to do.

Q: And you didn't even really know if once things got uncorked whether the moderates would really come in. Or did you?

KAPLAN: No, I didn't know. Because as I said to you before, I have this view of the world that moderates tend to lose because they're too moderate.

Q: Yeah, oh yeah.

KAPLAN: But that having been said, there was no risk in my opinion that the NPA and the communists were going to take over, or the Moros down in Mindanao. They had the capability and were doing it to kill a hundred people a week. That's not trivial, and often in metro Manila. They issued death threats to me, which I can tell you that the security people back in Washington took more seriously than I did. On one occasion I was driving around in this Mitsubishi Gallant, the car. There was no protection whatsoever in terms of being bulletproof or the glass or anything like that. My head was sticking up there as we drive along, anybody could have just taken me out in a heartbeat. I had this big fella in the front seat riding shotgun. But what would he have done? Nothing. I think he would have taken a bullet for me if he had to, but he wasn't in a position to do it.

So on one occasion -- I remember this quite well -- the regional security officer came to me and he said, "This is getting very dicey." He says, "You're riding around in a death trap." He says, "We, we've got to get you another car."

I said, “How long does that normally take?”

He says, “Months.”

I sent a cable in and put all the kind of slugs on it that would make people pay attention. I said, “My regional security officer tells me that the car I’m riding in is totally insecure. Request that armored car be sent to the embassy within 48 hours.” It arrived, on time, from stateside. Because you know, it was official, it was a written cable. VCA.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: They probably didn’t care much about me but they didn’t want to be blamed.

Q: No, no.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* 48 hours.

Q: Huh.

KAPLAN: The ambassador had a white Cadillac. They sent me a black one, and then we started alternating between those two and another car and, and changing the routes. I found the whole thing rather comical because it was clear that while they were doing everything they possibly could that there’s no way they could have prevented it if --

Q: Yeah, you have to get to a place.

KAPLAN: That’s right. I think in the Filipino culture it would be contrary to their view of what would be appropriate, perhaps even for NPA revolutionaries.

Q: Well, then how did things play out?

KAPLAN: Well, the very next thing that happened was I got sick. I was really going 24/7 because everything was up for grabs at the time and Steve Bosworth was away at the time with his father’s passing and all of that. And then I found that I couldn’t stand without a lot of pain in my leg. I didn’t have a back problem, but finally my secretary and my wife made an appointment at Makati Medical, the best hospital in town. I had a very good doctor who took me in for an examination and I remember this very vividly -- it’s not something you forget. They had to inject dye into the bottom of my foot so that the machine which by the way had arrived from the United States five days before could view the problem. If it wasn’t there, I might have been gone. Anyway, the techy who injected the dye didn’t know what he was doing. And putting a needle into the bottom of your foot is not a pleasure. He did this twice and he messed it up both times. In the Philippine culture, when you make a mistake. I saw this smile and wasn’t too happy about it. Finally I got the doctor to do it, then they took me to an examination room and they used this new machine. A gorgeous nurse held my hand while the doctor was doing what he was supposed to do with the machine. He raced through the whole test and he

said, “There’s no problem here. I don’t see a thing.” So I was very relieved. Then he said, “You know, let me just look one more time.” And he did it again and he said, “I’m very sorry, you have phlebitis.” Well, phlebitis is what almost killed Nixon.

Q: Yeah, I remember that.

KAPLAN: I didn’t know anything about phlebitis, but I knew I didn’t want it.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* And so he said, “You’ve got to check in now into the hospital; we’ll get you a private room on the top floor, tenth floor. And we will make you better.”

And I said, “Well Doctor, I’m terribly busy, but I understand what you’re telling me, that this is something I have to do, there’s no choice.” I said, “How long will I be in the hospital?”

He says, “Probably 10 days to two weeks. And then you’re going to have to be off your feet.” Fortunately, it was approaching the Christmas season, so things tended to slow down even in pre-revolutionary Philippines.

I told him that my mother-in-law, who had never been to Asia and was 77-years-old was landing tomorrow morning at the airport, that I really should meet her and then I’d come right back to the hospital.”

The doctor looked at me in the eye and he said, “Ambassador, I don’t think you quite understand. You guys like to talk in terms of options. You have two options. One is you can check in now, and two is you can die.”

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I said, “What room?” *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: So they put me in this room, it wasn’t lavish, but it was probably the best room in the hospital on the top floor. They put all kind of wires into me, to inject meds. I tend to get a little claustrophobic but you have to do what you have to do. Two days in I was still in bed with these medicines doing their work. Suddenly Imelda Marcos shows up with enough flowers to sink the whole hospital, put all around the room. “I’m so worried about you, and the president is so worried about you. It was heartrending, and perhaps there was a certain measure of sincerity on her part, because you know, Filipinos are still Filipinos, they’re warm and cordial. Then she came back the next day with a full course meal and stays to eat it with me -- pepper steak cooked in French sauces. The doctors would have been horrified by this, but I really dug in.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: The next day Steve Bosworth's wife came over, Christine, with another lavish meal. And there were other visitors. They started walking me up and down the halls and, after 10 or 12 days, they said, "OK, you can go home now, but not to the embassy. You have to go to stay in your, in your residence and see Christmas season through, I'd say another couple of weeks." So I had our staff assistant was coming across town bringing me cables to read, properly locked and secured and then taking them back; probably the security officer would have gone out of his mind if he knew about it. But it was all done in a very secure fashion. On a couple of occasions things came up where I was told that since I was a chargé I was the only person who could make particular phone calls. So I did, from the bed. Had all these wires and everything *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: There's one last piece of this, and then we'll go on. After I was back on the job again, a couple of months later I had to go for a checkup. I went back to Makati Medical and all the hospital staff were wearing Cory's yellow ribbons, the whole hospital had yellow ribbons all over it.

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: I went to see a doctor who was a specialist in my field. She was talking on the phone rather conspiratorially about how they had to get rid of Marcos, how they were going to meet that night and they'd have their group; it was that sort of thing.

Q: On the telephone?

KAPLAN: On the telephone. When she put down the phone I said, "I know who you were talking to."

She said, "How do you know?

I said, "It was Joy Virata, wasn't it?"

She said, "My God, how did you know?"

Joy Virata was the wife of the prime minister of Marcos. She ran theater productions, a wonderful woman. It was an insight about how Cesar Virata, the prime minister, felt about his own president. He was an honorable man who got a lot of useful things done. He deserved better than to serve Marcos. I sent in a cable called General Hospital.

Q: Well, what at this point -- can you talk a little bit about the appearance of Corazon Aquino on the scene? I mean she'd been obviously there, but all a sudden she became a personality. What were you getting from the embassy? What were you thinking about her initially?

KAPLAN: Well, remember, I had had the good fortune to meet with her once a snap election was called and she told me that she was going to run. , remember, she went out to, to some convent. She's deeply religious. She had pondered it and prayed about it and then made the decision. She didn't know how to do it at that stage, but she decided that she owed it to her slain husband and to the country. My take was that she was intelligent, interested in literature and the arts, certainly as intelligent as many leaders in the world who have been considered successful. She had little political experience, except that she was the wife of Ninoy Aquino who ate, drink, and slept politics. She adored him. She came from the family of Aquinos in Tarlac province, which had a considerable presence. They owned the Hacienda Luisita, which I visited. She had a Filipina's intuition, she knew the culture that made the country run; she knew many of the power brokers in the country and put that to good use. But she was not a brutal person, and in the often-tough combat that took place in politics, particularly in the revolutionary period.

I remember very well that when I left Manila and I went for my farewell call and asked how she was doing. She replied by reciting the number of years, months, days, and hours before her term would end. So this was not someone craving for power, but who did it because she felt this was something she had to do, decent person who the country then saw as a potential Joan of Arc who would save them. It was a big plus for her that she wasn't a politician because the country was looking for a kind of savior to take them away from Marcos. You know--

Q: What's that?

KAPLAN: Doy Laurel was close to Ninoy Aquino, he was part of the gang, but he was a politician, alternatively charming or oily, and she found him the latter. I eventually was able to convince him to run for VP, and then I went to see Cory Aquino's allegedly best friend in Manila, Cecilia Muños-Palma, a Justice of the Supreme Court. I went out to her house in Quezon City and got right to the point. I said, "They're going to lose, they won't have a chance unless she takes Doy as number two

She asked, "Will Doy take it?

I said, "Let me take care of that."

She understood completely that I wanted her to talk to Cory and --

Q: Well, I mean was our hand there in the development of the opposition? I mean --

KAPLAN: Was there?

Q: Well, were we involved in supporting the opposition to Marcos?

KAPLAN: No, I wouldn't put it that way. I would say we were involved in supporting a free election. We could not have come out and simply supported the opposition without the approval of our president and, of course, frankly --

Q: Wouldn't have been appropriate.

KAPLAN: Wouldn't have been appropriate, and I wasn't in favor of doing that. I wanted to have a free election, with a strong opposition able to make its case. There were things that we did to support NAMFREL (National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections), which was the free election movement. And clearly the elections were not being handled in a fair way. Marcos were getting funds from various places

Q: Well, did we have problems with our military during this election? Because you say their obvious priority was keep the bases.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: And Marcos was the best bet to do that.

KAPLAN: Well, he said, "Cross my heart and hope to die."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But he would have been perfectly capable of shifting if he want --

Q: Oh, but having been in Korea I know sometimes the military gets a little out of line.

KAPLAN: Well, we didn't -- look, there were quite possibly some people, either with or without authority from above who were close to Marcos over the years and may well have been providing support or advocacy within the U.S. government, which is perfectly legitimate, that we should at least not oppose Marcos, or maybe even back him. Because of the bases consideration. I didn't have a sense that there was some organized campaign on the part of the military that he must to stay in office. Nor did I have a sense that we were getting any direction from the President of the United States that Marcos must stay.

Q: Well --

KAPLAN: That may have been his preference, but that wasn't our policy.

Q: Well, how did the election run?

KAPLAN: Well, first of all, from the standpoint of the embassy you may recall that I had set up a system with Steve's approval to have our very large Consular Section, each one of those folks were, officers were assigned to a province in this vast country with 7,100 islands. Many islands were stones, like the ones we're reading about in the South China Sea today. But there were a lot of provinces and come the elections they knew the folks,

the governors and mayors and others. They were beating the bushes, trying to learn what we could, and there were increasing signs that the elections would be a travesty. I pressed Marcos on this multiple times, in any way I could without getting thrown out of the palace. The relationship between us on a professional level, and even on a personal level, remained cordial. I listened carefully to what he had to say and communicated it back to Washington, which was I think important. But I also brought to his attention the concerns that people had in our Congress, the American people, and for that matter in our administration. I said, "If you win this thing improperly, it won't be worth winning."

He smiled, as if to say, Better than the alternative. He never admitted he was doing something wrong but the signs were piling up. They were trashing campaign material of the opposition, and the opposition wasn't getting to talk to the media.

On Election Day, the top U.S. network anchormen were in Manila and they shone a light on what was going on. As a lawyer I remember what Justice Brandeis said. "The best disinfectant is light." The networks were doing it, they were illuminating the dismal electoral scene. They were all over the place.

And so the, the contest was set. Cory was traveling around the country in her yellow dress. Marcos was traveling around the country increasingly weak. I think I told you about the episode where on the stage one day I saw him with blood coming from his, all over his barong and being treated. His doctors, who we were able to talk to, told him, "You must not campaign, Mr. President, or you will die." He did it anyway, like Nixon when he went to Cairo and all that with his phlebitis. Election day was a travesty. There were photographs of ballot boxes being thrown into the Pasig River, from barangays in which the opposition was expected to win. People were beaten up, a couple of people were murdered a on school ground while people were voting. People would show up at a proper voting place and their names weren't on the list. There was not only retail cheating in terms of these incidents but wholesale fraud as ballot boxes were passed on to the Committee on Elections, the so-called Comelec, with NAMFREL watching the count being abused. Ballot boxes en route from the voting place to the counting place often never arrived. In short, this a concerted, well-managed effort to win the elections by fraud. Marcos wasn't about to change the instructions to his cronies and some of the cronies no doubt acted ultra-virus, outside of his instructions

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Marcos announced that he was very gratified that the people had endorsed him for another term that he was looking forward to cooperating with his good friends in the United States and other parts of the world. The opposition was crestfallen, they knew they were cheated, the odds were very high that they had won the election. We issued some protests, but everything was sort of suspended. Then George Shultz sent out Phil Habib, who was of course a legendary American diplomat. He went out around with Steve or with me and we saw all sorts of people. They would be talking to Marcos or Cory and I'd be going to see Cardinal Sin at the same time. It was that sort of thing. It

was a bit like the Phony War in Europe, where the thing just went on and on and the opposition was getting very angry. We had to win their loyalty.

At one point Cory, who adored Steve Bosworth, summoned him to her office and dressed him down in the way that Cordell Hull dressed down the Japanese ambassador over Pearl Harbor. He was shaken when he came back because, you know, they had a tremendous relationship. I had a very good relationship, but it wasn't qualitatively in any way with his with Cory Aquino.

Then suddenly it was February 22nd, 1986. I was hosting a lunch one-on-one in my house for a young fellow named Rene Saguisag, who was on the left of Cory's entourage. He started out as her press secretary and later became a senator, then a prominent lawyer who defend President Joseph Estrada when they made an effort to impeach him, which did not succeed. I received a phone call in the middle of the lunch, from Steve, asking, "What are you doing?"

I said, "I'm at lunch with Rene."

He said, "OK, you finish it, but then come *immediately* to my residence."

I said, "Yes, sir."

Rene told me that he and his leftist friends had debated whether he should come to lunch with me. I invited him because I tried to reach out and I tried to make him comfortable. The lunch went very well. When I got to Steve's residence, he said, "I think the balloon has just gone up." He meant that a revolution was started.

Now, one thing I learned, and I've seen this in other places subsequently, is that you don't get to see a scoreboard that says "Revolution has just started," *(laughs).* You're in the middle of a situation. We learned the next day that Johnny Enrile, who was the defense minister of Marcos for 20 years, was on the list of people that General Ver was going to pick up. He was at his usual lunch with his cronies at a local hotel. We phoned him and told him he better get out of there and he took off to the Camp Crame, the main military camp. Later, a similar conversation took place with General Ramos, who also was on the list. Cardinal Sin entered the fray, broadcasting from Radio Veritas, which is the cardinal's station. After about a day, the key players had lined up. The opposition was opposed. Marcos found that his principal power opponents, as opposed to civil society opponents, were holed up out in the camps, military camps, out on the so-called EDSA, which was the big street leading from Makati to Quezon City, a large suburb. Marcos had to figure out what to do. Did he attack the camp and end this before it got out of hand? But he knew that that would have a, a tremendously negative effect on public opinion and in the United States. We strongly urged President Marcos to resolve this in peacefully and not to use any force.

He said he'd like to send General Ver to the camps to negotiate with Enrile and Ramos.

We said we'd tell them about his proposal and get back to him. Of course we advised Ramos and Enrile that Marcos wanted Ver to conduct an intel operation, to see how many troops they had out there. Not many. We said, "Don't do it," and they totally agreed. But rather than going back to Marcos and saying, "No," we said, "Well, we're reflecting on it." We were buying time for them to pull together whatever they could.

There then ensued -- and we were getting hysterical phone calls from Enrile's wife and from Ramos' wife, who by the way was a close friend of my wife, they both taught in the Manila International School, one room next to the other. The country was in an uproar it now was a revolution going on. The back and forth continued. We were talking to the opposition people out there, we were talking to Marcos every day. After about the second or third day it increasingly looked like Marcos would have no choice. He sent the military finally out there to try to end this thing. There were some three million Filipinos in the streets.

Q: Good God.

KAPLAN: Surrounding military camps. I think the greatest tribute you could pay to the Filipinos is that this genuinely was their revolution, not something the Americans or anybody else invented. They went out there and put their bodies in the path. There were nuns out there and priests and a lot of praying going on. When the tanks rolled up, ordinary civilians got up on the tanks, and the nuns started putting flowers in the turrets and in the gun placements. Finally they coaxed the soldiers to come out above the parapet and invited them to join the revolution. These kids came scampering out in their military uniforms and joined the people on the street. A senior general ordered the tanks to get off of the road and into kind of a ditch on the side of the road. At that point I turned to my wife and I said, "I think it's over."

It wasn't fully over, but that was a decisive moment. Marcos saw that too. The military went over to the opposition. At that point Ramos and Enrile had the horses that they needed. And they were shut -- one was in Camp Crame, the other in Camp Aguinaldo right across the street. They shuttled back and forth for meetings. There was none of the modern communications we have now, people were using walkie-talkies.

We got a, a call from Imelda saying she wanted to talk. We sent the station chief who knew her; he was a clever guy. She recognized that it was over but said that Marcos wouldn't leave the palace, that we needed together to convince him to leave. The scheme they worked out was that Marcos' kids would take the grandchildren --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- to him and beg him to leave for the good of the family. The word he passed back to us was, quote, "I will go down like Allende."

Q: This is Allende of Chile.

KAPLAN: Of Chile, that's right. And, but we kept this process up. And I think the impact of the little kids was decisive. Imelda had already made up her mind, however reluctantly, that the game was up. And our station chief and I were working her intensively. She was the best channel, with their family, to convince Marcos to leave.

All right. Then came the historic day where he staggered out onto a helicopter, was taken up to the embassy, and from there was another helicopter that brought them out to Clark Air Force Base. That night, people were about to break through the gates at Clark threatening to break down the gates and tear them to pieces. Steve called Cory Aquino and for the first time called her Madam President. He told her that Marcos and Imelda were under our control and that Cory needed to tell him whether she wanted us to hold him there or to put them on a plane and take them out of the country."

She said, "What do you think?"

Steve very wisely said, "Madame President, that's your call now."

And she said, "Take him." Something to that effect. And he was taken to Hawaii.

On the fixed plane trip to Honolulu, we put Major General Teddy Allen, the head of our MAAG group on the plane to escort them. As soon as they got to Honolulu, Teddy told me, "She was ranting about you for a good part of the trip."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "Remember how you told us how she and her guys thought that you were the son of Harold Kaplan and you were there to get rid of them from the start?"

Q: Uh-huh.

KAPLAN: She said, "I *knew* it."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: "That he's the guy that did this to us," *(laughs),* which I repeat was completely wrong. But it's --

Q: These images, I mean people get tagged.
KAPLAN: Now, I took you through all of these steps leading to political transition, but to get there we as an embassy had to develop a strategy for the extraction of Marcos and his family and his closest allies. I'll talk to you about that for a minute if that sounds interesting. We met with Admiral Kahn, the head of Subic, and General Williams, the head of Clark -- two very fine officers – and they put together a military plan under Steve's direction. It was his view, in which I fully concurred, that, unlike the Carter rescue plan in Iran, we provide the military general policy guidance, they submit their plans to us for approval and then we give them the green light to execute it without our

micromanagement. There were some issues. There was a negotiation with the Marcos people about how much they could take out. Remember that little Cambodian statuette, and a decision on the total weight of the physical objects. We limited the number of palace personnel they wanted to come out on the Admiral's barge. Our navy had to assess the height of the bridges along the Pasig river under which the barge must pass

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: The Marcoses regarded their palace staff as their protectorate, in a feudal way. They had a moral responsibility, these people.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And so all of them were going to be put on the admiral's barge, Subic admiral's barge, which is not a barge in the sense of Huckleberry Finn, but a real --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: We finally reached agreement that there were to be no firearms on the barge en route to the Army and Navy Club, which was just five minutes from the embassy. All this was going on during those four days. Some of the preparations had actually begun, at our request, during that period when everything was uncertain after the election. We were standing on the veranda behind the ambassador's office, right on Manila Bay, and there was this one ship that I noticed out there the first day that I got to the embassy. It never moved for the entire two and a half years I was there. It was like a marvelous movie set. When I was chargé I received General Westmoreland there

We had an open line to the State Department during most of those four days. The barge started its way up the river with a – no surprise, a vastly overcrowded load of people and baggage – and we got a call on a walkie-talkie from the barge, and Admiral Kahn said to Steve, "We have a problem here and I've stopped the barge. There's a couple of guys holding firearms and getting a little menacing." It turned out that they were probably majors in the Philippine armed forces, were part of the president's entourage at the palace. Rudy Kahn had told them that they had to give up the weapons so they could be stored and locked up; it was part of the deal but they declined to do so. They were very polite. They said, "We decline to do so, *sir."*

Steve got on the wire and, and he said to them -- and of course all of Washington had this open wire, they were listening to all this. As best as I can recall Steve said, Major, I understand you have some firearms. That's contrary to the arrangement that we worked out with your president, and this could endanger his departure and so forth. I'm now formally asking you to hand those weapons over to Admiral Kahn so he can store them in, in accordance with our agreement. There was utter silence, because obviously the major was considering what he should do. This was way above his grade level. A couple of minutes went by, that's a long time when you're waiting for a response. Steve prompted him again: Major, I await your response.

After another several minutes of this the major agreed to hand over the weapons and they were stored. That was the leverage that we had, because the palace people wanted to get out of there. The barge resumed and it then was relatively uneventful. They arrived at the Army Navy Club. The Marcoses got to Clark by helicopter and then were flown to Hawaii. Cory Aquino became the President of the Philippines; it was declared that she had won the election. A couple of days later I decided to go talk to some of her people in her brother Peping's office at the Cojuangco Building in Makati. Cojuangco was her maiden name, it's a Chinese derivation because they were Chinese-Filipinos, as were many people there -- it's this whole overseas Chinese phenomenon we've all heard of.

I went over there to meet one of her officials who I had knew; (we had made it a big point to meet as many people as we could in the opposition). When I came in, her secretary ran over to me, gave me an abrazo (hug), and said, "Do you want to see President Cory?"

Well, I had no instructions to go see the president. I said, "I think it would be better to let the ambassador be the one to call on" --

She said, "Oh no," she said, "She'll be furious if you" --

It was just a human situation. So I went in there and we talked, she was very happy and grateful, and then I saw her other people. The process began, it was the payoff for all those meetings we had with the opposition. We didn't miss a step, there was no transition. She was now the president, we did business together.

Cory stayed in that building for, I don't know, a few weeks, maybe a month, and then she went to the palace. She would not hold office – that's a Philippine expression -- in the Study Room where Marcos held office, which was sort of their White House Oval Office. She held office in a much less formal building called the Guest House, which was part of the Malacañang complex, right across from the main palace. That's where we would meet her. When there was a formal reception or Lee Kuan Yew would come into town, or something like that, or George Shultz, the social functions would be back in the palace. But she was never comfortable there because she basically felt that it still had the stench of Marcos there.

Q: Well, did you have problems with our military or the embassy staff of showing either joy or discontent during this very tricky period?

KAPLAN: There was one fellow -- I may have mentioned this before -- who served in Manila before, was close to General Vera when he was a colonel. Maybe I mentioned this earlier.

Q: He sent a telegram, but your code clerk --

KAPLAN: That's right.

Q: But other than that --

KAPLAN: Not much. There was a new government of the Philippines and we worked together. But there was one other thing, which I neglected to address which is important. One of the people who came to Manila during these hectic times was Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada. And --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- a horse riding companion of Reagan when Reagan was governor of California and Paul was governor of Nevada. They were very close, and that's why Reagan sent him to meet Marcos, to check out the situation on the ground, because the president knew things were getting serious. It was a brilliant choice actually. I went to Marcos to tell him that Senator Laxalt would be coming to see him. And you know what Marcos had said? Because he'd been around the United States. He said, "Ah, Reagan's best friend in the Senate." He understood completely. They had a good talk, and then Laxalt left. When it got to the point where decisions had to be made, Laxalt played an important role.

Here's what happened. We were in the third or fourth day of the revolution and we had gotten to the point where we had to bring the president around We were facilitating the factual background. But Marcos had so far refused to bite the bullet. we weren't we couldn't make the final decision. And so I said to Steve, "The time has come."

He said, "Let me see what you have in mind."

So I said, "Give me five minutes."

I sat down at this little table and I drafted up a one-paragraph cable to go directly to the president and to the secretary of state, saying Marcos has lost all legitimacy in the country, that the country could come under tremendous violence, which would be exploited by the NPA. The time had come for the president to pass the word to President Marcos and say it was time for him to leave. Something to that effect, I don't remember the exact words. And I handed it to Steve, and to his great credit he said, "Send it."

I looked at him and I said, "You know, within 48 hours we're either going to be heroes or we're both going to be fired," *(laughs)*. We had no idea what Reagan's reaction to that was going to be! I believe that Reagan's reaction to that was supported by George Shultz, who made a huge difference, because the secretary was committed to this outcome. He had wanted a fair election, but there was no fair election and it was a complete travesty.

It was arranged that Senator Laxalt would call Marcos and I informed Marcos that the call would be coming and what time it would come. He said, "Well, what's it about?"

I said, "Mr. President, I have *no* idea what he's going to say to you." I didn't. I knew what we wanted him to say.

And that was a very famous phone call, and people still quote it. Laxalt said to Marcos, "Mr. President, you have to cut and cut clean." Those are the exact words.

Marcos just felt the whole world fall on him, and he said, "I'm so terribly disappointed," something to that effect. He knew that was the final word. That's what led him finally to conclude that he could not remain as president and he decided to leave.

Once Cory came in it was the policy of the administration very clearly with the secretary of state strongly backing us, and that President of the United States went along, that's the point. Reagan was a man very loyal to his friends, and he understood Marcos had to go. I'm sure that there was a bit of anguish in all that, but he did. So Cory took over and, after a certain period, she announced that there would be now a period of one year that would be a transitional period that she called the period of "Revolutionary Government." We wondered, as did Washington, now what was that supposed to mean? Remember, there were some lefties and innocents in her administration, particularly her executive secretary, who was in many senses the most powerful advisor she had. He'd been one of Ninoy's lawyers days when Marcos put him on trial. The new attorney general came to my home for dinner, and we had a lot of people there. Neptali Gonzales was his name. And when I got up to make my toast I said, "Well, here's a toast to the new government and to President Aquino. We'll be keeping an eye on your revolutionary government," *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: I said it with a smile. I sat down. He turned to me and said, "That was very naughty of you," *(laughs).* In fact, it never was a revolutionary government, it was rather chaotic.

Q: Well, what was the Marxist movement doing during the election?

KAPLAN: Killing people.

Q: I mean was that all they did, or?

KAPLAN: Well, they didn't want a legitimate government. They were much better off with Marcos than Aquino, because he was the devil that everybody knew.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And she was Joan of Arc.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: It was pretty hard to rouse the people against her. There were charges under Marcos that the military was engaging in terrible human rights depravations; it was harder to make that case against Cory, even though the military was still the military.

Q: Well, what about these people, say in the hospital and other official positions, wearing the yellow thing? I mean this was quite something, wasn't it? Within a society like this?

KAPLAN: It was.

Q: To have people showing their overt opposition while holding --

KAPLAN: They were very angry.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: They had this, this one chance after 22 years. They had what they considered the ideal candidate and all the decent people were for her, as they saw it. Then Marcos robbed them of the victory. The mayor of Makati under Marcos was just a gangster. We saw coffins being put into ambulances during the elections, and his son was driving around in a truck with his name on it. He had his own company, you know. So there was a lot of bad stuff going on. And the people figured this had to work.

Q: Yeah. Did you have these consular officers out in the provinces?

KAPLAN: Sure. And the one thing I didn't mention before was that there was a commission, a congressional monitoring mission that came out to help monitor the elections, chaired by Dick Lugar, the senator from Indiana. Terrific guy. I believe that John Kerry, the present secretary of state, was a younger senator at the time, and he was with the delegation. There was a very experienced congressman in the defense and national security field, from Pennsylvania, he's now retired from the Congress. So it was a really good group. Our consular officers accompanying these congressmen. Senator Lugar was an outstanding public servant, but of course he didn't know these mayors. So he was escorted by Joe Consular Officer, who, who took him up to Province X and he met everybody and spent a couple of hours. They got on a plane and went up to the next -- it was all divided up. We had a completely concerted strategy so that that these people could see for themselves.

Q: How did you and Steve Bosworth, the ambassador, divvy up things?

KAPLAN: We established a kind of ex-com, executive committee. Our criterion, it had to be small, non-bureaucratic, we wanted our brightest. We had the two base commanders and our MAAG general, the USAID director and his deputy, We were going 24 hours a day during the four days when we were functioning. One of the ways Steve and I and others divided up the work was occasionally we had to get some sleep. It was a round robin; he'd go to sleep, I'd be running it, I'd go to sleep, he'd be running it. But he was

the boss. We got to the point where we didn't have to finish sentences with one another. We both were able to communicate in shorthand.

Q: Was the military calling most of the shots?

KAPLAN: No. Marcos was calling the shots. Some people felt that because of the lupus and his sickness and frailty that Marcos was out of it, and that Imelda and her brother were running things. I never believed it.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Never. Marcos would dismiss them, especially Kokoy, just *pshh*, as though he was an ant under his shoes. Now, privately I think he paid a lot of attention to her.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Despite the fact that she was a little zany in some ways, she was shrewd and tough. She had seen him through many crises.

Q: Yeah. Did she have much of a following with, quote, the people, unquote?

KAPLAN: She had the Blue Ladies, as they were called -- these were society ladies who relied access to the First Lady and invitations to the palace dinners. They did for her what she needed to have done.

Q: Did -- I hate to ask it, but it would come up. Did the shoes ever, you know, there was this --

KAPLAN: Well, she'd go around in these, in these high heels that were, I don't know, five inches or something. I mean very dramatic. And in those days she was still quite a beautiful woman. That senator from Texas I mentioned earlier was just besotted by her.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: And she knew how to use her sexuality for political gain. When she was a young girl in Leyte, I told you I went to the museum and I saw the photographs of her. She could have been the most beautiful woman in the world.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: There's another thing. Marcos was a philanderer and earlier in his presidency he was supplied with an American Hollywood B actress who nobody's ever heard of. She came out there and they had quite a hot session. And it was taped, then broadcasted on loudspeakers in the middle of Makati. Can you imagine?

Q: Oh God.

KAPLAN: Dovie Beams, that was her name. Imelda went crazy. What a tremendous loss of face. But they got over it and they put it back together. And *(laughs)* it was said that the Philippines' background was 400 years in a convent and 50 years in Hollywood, reflecting the Spanish tutelage and then the Americans before the Philippines became an independent country. And there's something to that.

Q: Was there any Republican-Democrat, sparring from the American perspective, point of view or positioning on this whole business? Or was this pretty much --

KAPLAN: I don't recall anybody, leaving aside that Texas senator, I don't recall anyone who had the gumption to stand up and say we should be supporting Marcos as opposed to the other people. There were people that said we need to hold the new people to support for the bases and for the defense treaty, mutual defense treaty. But I didn't hear anybody saying that we had to stick with Marcos and block these new people from coming in.

Q: Was there any problem at our bases, demonstrations or?

KAPLAN: Only that demonstration up at Clark against Marcos when he was very briefly residing there. We got him out of there. There was concern about whether or not the bases would stay and base renewal negotiations were due in a couple years after she took office. That was very much on our minds.

Q: Did other embassies play any role?

KAPLAN: Not much. Occasionally I would to work with the Germans and the Malaysians at the time of that hostage crisis I mentioned. The EU group would have a lunch with ambassadors once a month and when I was chargé I would go to those. They usually spent the entire lunch asking me questions. They had no access. I included European ambassadors and other ambassadors at dinner parties time to time. But they really weren't players.

Q: How did the media react during this time with the elections and all that?

KAPLAN: They wanted her to win. They were convinced that she won. There were some Marcos newspapers who told a different story. Once Cory was president, everybody, including the people who were against her for a while, were for her. Everybody likes a winner.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Some publishers or editors were removed, some of the more flagrant people who just disseminated whatever propaganda Marcos wanted. They were out, but the same newspapers published with the same names, more or less. .

Q: How about TV? I mean Marcos had control over the TV, hadn't he?

KAPLAN: Well again, there were personnel changes, but everything seemed to go along normally. She was the one who saved them.

Q: How about the church and Cardinal Sin and --

KAPLAN: Well, he was a big supporter of hers. I don't know if I told you the story, maybe I did, about Imelda coming to his villa, one nigh, saying the president demands that you do this, this, and this. The cardinal basically shamed her and told me that she went down on her knees to beg forgiveness at the end of the conversation. Another example of the church and the state.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: He was a big supporter of Cory. I used to go to see the cardinal at his villa for breakfast, and he served the most disgusting food *(laughs)* that I've ever seen in my life. It wasn't that it was Filipino food, it wasn't particularly. It was what he served. I found out later he had lupus, too. Isn't that amazing? He and the president both had the same disease, even though they were mortal enemies.

Q: Is there a Philippine connection to lupus at all, or?

KAPLAN: I don't think so. They were both elderly gentlemen and --

Q: Yeah. What about the military during this thing?

KAPLAN: Well, there were professional officers appointed to key positions. General Ramos, who helped her get through all that -- became -- he had been the acting chief of staff of the army under Marcos, but Ver was always tormenting him. Cory appointed him chief of staff and, once Enrile was ousted, we'll get to that later, Ramos replaced him as defense secretary. Ramos' protégé, Rene De Villa, became the new chief of staff of the AFP in the army. There were other generals close to Ramos – Joe Almonte, Ed Ermita and Joe Magno – who were assigned to key positions. But it was Ramos' defense (and political) establishment.

Q: Did Cory Aquino, as she came in, did she bring women with her? I mean in political positions and all?

KAPLAN: Some. There was a close friend of mine who held the formal title of social secretary, but was much more because they they'd been through a lot together.

Q: But I mean this -- but you weren't seeing governors and --

KAPLAN: Not at first, that came after Cory settled in. There were some members of congress, there were some ambassadors.

Q: Ah.

KAPLAN: So it clearly was a change. It wasn't a radical change, but it was a change. The process began. She had a lot of things on her head then, but she still tried to encourage that.

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop because then we can pick up Cory Aquino.

KAPLAN: That's right. And the next really most traumatic thing that happened, which we'll talk about next time, were the coup d'états against her.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: There were seven of them. I was there for six.

Q: I remember one after another.

KAPLAN: That's right. And that was pretty dramatic. After the sixth was when I left.

Q: Well, we'll pick it up then.

KAPLAN: OK.

Q: Today is the 3rd of June, 2014 with Philip Kaplan. And we are, we're going to the Cory Aquino years.

KAPLAN: Yes, a part of them.

Q: A part of them anyway. So do you want to -- where can we start? How did -- I don't think we really talked about what happened, how she came to power.

KAPLAN: I think we did to a certain extent, but let me just summarize. There was this interregnum between the time when Marcos won the election, nobody really believed that, and the time that Cory became the president. There was tremendous tension in the city. At the embassy, we were meeting with a lot of people. Cory was disappointed that the United States allowed Marcos to perpetrate what she considered to be a fraud. Marcos had declared himself president an no one knew how this was going to end. So we had to stay on top of the Marcos people, and we had to be in touch with Aquino.

Phil Habib, a legendary American diplomat, was sent by George Shultz to Manila and we brought him around to meet key people at the top ranks on both sides. It was a listen and report back sort of a mission, rather than a you must do this sort of a mission. At one point Cory summoned Steve Bosworth, our ambassador, into her entourage and spoke to him in a very forceful way about how America was not doing what they promised. There had been threats against her at the end of the campaign just before the election when she

was down in Cebu and we offered to put her in a safe house for her physical protection for a while. She appreciated that but declined, because she didn't want to look like she was -- you know, there's a saying in the Philippines that you're an "amboy," that is to say you're a puppet of the Americans. Because we were the colonial power a long, long time before. Well, no one said she was an amboy, but it was I think the concern. Her advisors were mainly centrists, but there were a few that were well to the left. Then Habib came by a second time and returned to brief the president at Camp.

Cory appeared to us to have the upper hand in terms of public support, but it wasn't quite clear how she was going to push it to the top. And I recall what she had said to me at my residence with my wife. "Ninoy always told me that the CIA would take care of it."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: Well, they were waiting not for the CIA, but for the Americans to act and they were getting impatient because as time went by they were afraid that they were going to lose the thread and all that. Then, on the 22nd of February, 1986, Filipinos went into the streets around Camps Aguinaldo and Crame, out on the EDSA, a big highway that went out toward Quezon City, a massive suburban city. General Ramos was out there with Secretary Enrile. Mrs. Enrile called us up at the residence and said she was afraid her husband would be killed that day. It was a highly emotional sort of situation. The revolution had started. We formed an ex-com and for four days with the phones on around the clock to the State Department State Department Op Center we played it out.

Two factors were really critical. One was that we were able to communicate with Marcos and we had Senator Laxalt, the president's closest friend, call him and tell him it was time to cut and cut clean. He understood that was a message from Reagan. That came after we sent a cable in to, in to the president and the secretary saying the time had come to break with him. We also talked to Mrs. Marcos and, however reluctantly, she grasped that the time had come and worked with her daughters and son and their grandchildren to try and convince Marcos to go. I think I mentioned last time that he said he was going to die like Allende in the palace, but eventually all this had an impact. Meanwhile, there were three million Filipinos near the military encampments on the EDSA. Tanks were sent out to quell this -- far more than a demonstration, it was a movement – and the tanks moved over into the ditches after the nuns put flowers in their turrets and embraced them. The military went over to Ramos and Cory really -- against Marcos. So all these things led Marcos eventually to agree to board a helicopter to Clark Air Base and then when demonstrations at the gates of Clark threatened him physically, he agreed to board a fixed wing plane and fly to Hawaii.

Suddenly Cory Aquino was president of the Philippines.

Q: So then what? Did you have the press coming at you and saying, "What are you doing?" and all that sort of stuff?

KAPLAN: Well, the, the Department very wisely asked Steve Bosworth to handle public statements, and Steve is able to say nothing at great length when he wishes. But he provided appropriate public comment. The overriding thrust was this was a triumph of the Philippine people. Not us.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I issued an instruction to the embassy staff. Anybody who claims credit for this will be on the next plane back to the United States.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I had done that once before, you may recall, so they understood that I was serious. This was important. Here's a country that had been a colony of the United States, that had been independent since 1946, for 40 years. The last thing we wanted to do after they put three million people on the street was for us to claim credit for it. We just basked in the sunshine of their success. Then the question was, "How was this nice lady going to govern?"

Q: So was it completely hands off, or advice, or what?

KAPLAN: No, it was, it was kind of sui generis (of its own kind). She was an intelligent woman, interested in literary things. She had been with Ninoy at Harvard, and she had seen dozens, hundreds of politicians pass through their home over the years. But she was never involved, she was the housewife. Suddenly she was president, this power thrust upon her. So she surrounded herself, not surprisingly, with Ninoy's friends.

Some of them were terrific. There was a fellow named Ramon Mitra, a former senator from Palawan, a close friend of mine who became speaker of the house and then the agriculture cabinet secretary in the Cory administration. Cory's brother, Jose Peping Cojuangco, very important, was took care of the politics. You may recall in Connecticut when Abe Ribicoff was governor, a guy named John Bailey was the party boss.

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: Bailey once said, Abe takes the high road, I take the low. That's how it works.

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: Well, it was something like that. I got to know Peping quite well. One of my successors didn't want to deal with him because he thought he was dirty. Well, in the world that we live in he was very far from such a bad guy and she needed his advice and political experience, her brother handling the more practical side of politics. She had a couple of guys on the left who were in the palace with her and there were the civil society people, a lot of her women friends. She was not programmatic but she was intuitive. She saw her central calling as being the one to ensure the change to democracy. She didn't

have much use for traditional politicians like Doy Laurel, the vice president and foreign secretary who was frozen out.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I brought a fellow named Ed Derwinski, a former congressman and subsequent secretary of veteran's affairs to see Doy. Ed then was undersecretary of state for security assistance. I knew him for quite a long time, because we attended inter-parliamentary union meetings together. And I went to two of them and was the advisor to the group from the State Department. So said, "Well, what am I going to ask him?"

I said Doy Laurel was vice president and foreign minister but he and Cory didn't get along very well. I said, "Ask him what's new in foreign affairs."

He said, "That's a dumb question. Why would I ask a foreign minister what's new in foreign affairs."

I said, "Just do it, Ed. You'll see." Because Ed was a politician essentially.

And so we went up there and he looked at me and he rolled his eyes. He said, "Mr. Foreign Minister, what's new in foreign affairs?" *(laughs).*

Doy said, "Frankly, I don't know. you'll have to ask at the palace." Which is quite an admission.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And then he said, "But I'll tell you what's new in foreign affairs. Elections are coming up. There's X number of governorships, Y number of mayoralties and Z number of congressmen. That's all he cared about.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: American visitors stated coming out. Remember, the whole Lugar delegation had been there monitoring the elections. The Philippines was popular again. Cory went to Washington and met with President Reagan who before she went she mistrusted. Then she went and Reagan was gold. He gave her a lunch. They put her up at --

Q: Blair House.

KAPLAN: Blair House. We worked on all of this to make it happen. At the lunch he was just cracking one joke after another, and she was in stitches. I mean he just charmed her right out of her chair. And this was the guy who really preferred Marcos. But you know, he was -- in his own way he was a realist. She was there now. So --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: All he had to do was do a soft shoe, and he did. Then she gave an address to the Congress --

Q: Oh yes, it went very well.

KAPLAN: And it went *very* well. And Bob Dole, Senator Dole, said to her, "You are terrific."

And, and because the Filipinos are basically so Americanized her immediate, spontaneous reaction was, "I hit a home run with the bases loaded."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: That just charmed everyone. She was somebody who's like one of us.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Now, that's the atmospherics. Now, we get to the substance. Cory didn't have a governmental program. Some of her cabinet members did. But she was intuitive and she knew how the Philippines worked, because she'd been sitting in all those meetings with her husband and with the politicians. Then suddenly there was a coup d'état attempt, at the Manila Hotel, the landmark hotel just down Roxas Boulevard from the embassy. The ones who occupied the hotel for what turned out to be a day or two made threats to blow it up. The vice president under Marcos, Arturo Tolentino, was well into his eighties, and an acting foreign minister under Marcos, were part of this keystone coup.

It was a joke and it got cleaned up, but you don't laugh until the joke is over. There then ensued a period that, before I left, involved six coups or mini-coups attempted against her government. We were supportive throughout all these incidents. I remember on one of these occasions Steve and I and our wives were in a restaurant with some very nervous Filipino friends. Suddenly I got a call from the embassy. Another coup had just started."

I went back to the table, Steve looked at me and I just nodded. The Filipinos said, "What's going on?"

I said, "Nothing to worry about." Which made them even more worried of course.

The most serious development was that Marcos' defense secretary, Johnny Enrile, who remained in the new government to ensure stability and support the new government, was involved with some of the coup planning. He thought the new people were flaky and that he was better able to run the country We were able to trace the fact that he was involved. How did we know this? Well, I felt that I enjoyed a good relationship with him and he played a key role during the revolution when he was in great danger. So I went to see him at his house. I still remember the scene. He had this big backyard, we were sitting on the terrace. At the next table was his wife who was listening as keenly as she could, and a

couple of his quote-unquote "boys." Not sons, but aides, listening and glaring. There were grandchildren in the backyard kicking a ball around. Enrile got up and kicked the ball and I caught it and threw it back out. He sat down and said, "OK, what's this about?" He's a *very* tough guy.

I said, "Johnny, we have information that links you to the last coup."

He said, "Ridiculous."

I told him that one of the ladies from civil society, close to Cory, had been jogging at five in the morning by his house toward the end of the last coup. She saw an SUV-type van clamber back into his house with his boys, and some of them looked like soldiers. I said, "You know, we've been friends a long time, and more importantly, Washington knows the *enormous* contribution you've made to U.S.-Philippine relations. They value that very highly. Don't ruin it. Don't." I think those were more or less the words that I used. And his eyes kind of narrowed *(laughs).*

Finally he said something like OK. He didn't acknowledge that he had done anything wrong, but he indicated that he received the message. No one had ever authorized me to talk about his "wonderful relationship" with the United States, but it struck me that that was the right way to do it.

And then finally, to shortcut this, I was ready to leave the country in late summer 1987. Nick Platt was coming as the new ambassador. I had a series of despedidas, or farewell parties, one after another, morning, afternoon, breakfast, lunch, dinner, afterward. These went on for a couple of weeks. I was supposed to leave let's say on a Saturday, I don't recall the exact day. On Wednesday evening the most serious coup of them all broke out. Nick had just arrived --

Q: Who's behind the coup?

KAPLAN: There were groups from the army called the, the RAM, the Reformed Armed Forces Movement. Missiles were being fired at, at the defense ministry and I was out there with General Ramos while these were coming in. When I got back to the embassy I reported to Washington and to Ambassador Platt. I had just taken Nick for presentation of his credentials to President Aquino and planned to leave a couple days later. We hosted a welcoming party for him in the residence. Then this coup erupted in his first few days in Manila. He didn't know anybody. So I phoned president. Speaker Mitra answered the telephone in the palace, they were in crisis mode. I told Mitra, whose nickname was Monching, that Ambassador Platt would like to speak to the president. He said something to the effect, She'll get to know him but right now we're busy. I said, "Monching, the American ambassador in the middle of this coup is calling you up to try to be helpful. She cannot not talk to him." She wasn't trying to insult him, she was just busy. And so she came on the phone and they had a brief conversation. O his credit, Nick asked me to continue to take the lead on the coup until my departure, because he had just arrived and he didn't know the people yet.

Q: Sure.

KAPLAN: Finally I had this farewell dinner with the Japanese ambassador and the attendance was much lighter than it would have otherwise been because people didn't want to move around the city at that stage. While I was there a phone call came in from the secretary of state. And he said, "I understand you're about to leave."

I said, "Yes sir, I'm supposed to leave tomorrow."

He said, "You're not going anywhere until you put this thing down," *(laughs).* And fortunately, working with embassy staffers, the palace and the Philippine military, we were able to accomplish that. And I left her standing after six coup d'états on my watch.

Q: When you said you were able to put it down, how did you do --

KAPLAN: Well, I certainly didn't do it myself.

Q: No, but I mean you --

KAPLAN: I did what you do. I got on my horse and went around and talked to everybody involved. I knew all the guys involved in the coup planning. In some cases I asked the station chief to go talk to his contacts.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: We knew about this Reform the Armed Forces movement, which was getting out of hand. There was a young officer in our defense attaché's office who was much too close to them. When the coup was over he was reassigned. He was providing some intelligence, but I think he was being used more than he was being useful.

Q: Well, what were they trying to do?

KAPLAN: They wanted her out. They wanted to bring about a reform government as they saw it, maybe military led, which wouldn't be unusual in a country like that. But it would have been a catastrophe. I mean, after all we went through, after a democratic transition you bring in a military coup? That would have been very unfortunate. It was one of the first democratic transitions in Asia, coining the people power slogan that resonated across the world. So we were engaged in crisis diplomacy. You have to meet everybody and try to jiggle all the forces together so that eventually it comes together. When we went out and spoke for the United States people paid attention. They didn't just jump to it, but they paid attention and things tended to work out. It got resolved.

I boarded a plane the next day and flew out with my wife and my son. My son had just finished undergraduate school at Berkley and come to Manila. He had a Filipina girl friend. I had to pull them apart when we left.

Q: Usually a pitcher of water helps.

KAPLAN: We flew to Tokyo where the Japanese government was primed to receive me at the appropriate levels so I could brief them in real time about what was going on. The Philippines was very important as an economic and security partner.

Q: Oh, of course.

KAPLAN: From there I flew to Honolulu and visited with the CINCPAC (Commander in Chief of Pacific forces) and his top officers, including the former head of Clark Airbase, a general, who was my host in Honolulu. We then returned to the States, landing in San Francisco where I stayed for a couple of days with Lupita Kashiwahara, who was the sister of Ninoy Aquino, and her husband Ken, a radio journalist.

Q: Ah.

KAPLAN: Sister-in-law of Cory. We stayed in their house in a city called Pacifica, just south of San Francisco on the ocean, which is why it's called Pacifica. It was a Sunday morning and Lupita came rushing in saying, "Listen to this." And there was Johnny Enrile on "Meet the Press," being questioned about what happened, did the Americans play any role in putting down this coup. He said, "Well, there was this guy named Kaplan who was the chargé and he came to see me and said we had to stop this. Of course I wasn't doing anything."

The back-story was, remember, I went to see him once before and told him to cut it out. And when I called him in the midst of this final coup on the eve of my departure, one of many people I called, he wouldn't take the call because he knew what I was going to say. So I called up a first term senator by the name of Joseph Erap Estrada, who later became president. He was a movie star, an action star and his idol was Ronald Reagan, as he told me on many occasions. He was very pro-American. In any case, he was a senator and it was part of our job to know all the senators. We invited him soon after his election to my residence for a dinner with a number of the Cory civil society elites that he'd not met before. He'd been a mayor in an adjacent town and he was a big rough-hewn movie actor. And I seated next to my wife, who can get along with anybody and his wife, a doctor, was seated next to me. My wife came up to me at the end of the meal and said, "You know, we had roast beef that we purchased at the PX and he loved it. He said roast beef is his favorite dish." The next day we sent him some roast beef from the PX and he always remembered that gesture, always mentioned it even after he later became president.

Q: Ah.

KAPLAN: So I called him during the coup and said, said, "Senator, I need you to call up Johnny Enrile, your colleague, and tell him I need to talk to him and tell him I'm calling on behalf of President Reagan." He called Enrile and about half an hour later Enrile called me and I delivered the mail. That's what he was referring to in "Meet the Press."

Q: Well, was Washington making any noises other than "Do something?"

KAPLAN: This coup was going on and the secretary of state passed on the president's comment that, "I want to solve this problem. We don't want to lose this thing." We didn't hear much from other people in Washington, we did our thing. We were sending in all kinds of cables and reporting on anything that was going on. They didn't really need to instruct us because we were covering the situation like a blanket. And nobody wanted to put themselves in a position where if this thing went bad their fingerprints were on it. I found that from almost the beginning of the time I was out there.

Q: Yeah. Well, how many coups were there before you left?

KAPLAN: Six.

Q: Six.

KAPLAN: Some of them were silly little things, but one or two, including this last one, were very serious.

Q: Well, what about the officer corps? What did this do to the Filipino Officer Corps?

KAPLAN: They were under the leadership of General Ramos and General Rene de Villa, was his closest associate and deputy. But there were a few junior officers, lieutenants, majors, maybe even lieutenant colonels, who veered in the other direction. Fortunately, this was resolved in a way that ultimately it came back together. There was one coup after I left; it was sufficiently serious that Vice President Quayle ordered fighter jets over the city of Manila to make quite clear that we were against what was happening.

Subsequent to my departure negotiations began to renew the bases. They failed for a variety of reasons. I wasn't there and I don't know all the details, but one of the reasons was that Cory appointed a foreign minister named Raul Manglapus, who really didn't want them to succeed. He made one demand after another. Cory did not lean in heavily enough to back it. Then the Cold War ended and at a critical point in the negotiations it's my understanding that the top people in the Department decided that if Manglapus was going to be such a nuisance and if the president of the Philippines wasn't prepared to throw her full weight behind this, then we didn't really need it as much as we did in the past. We just were unwilling to make the fairly outrageous concessions that Manglapus was demanding. That was more or less the bottom line, and that's what happened. Now, of course, the great irony as we sit here in 2014 is that the Filipinos and other Asians are intimidated by China's activities in the South China Sea and are anxious to have a closer military relationship with the United States. That's developing as we speak.

Q: Well, did we see the Chinese in this at all?

KAPLAN: No, in the mid-to-late eighties, Deng Xiaoping was focused on opening China's markets and the Chinese were not real players at that time. I made it my business to go call on and to receive the Chinese ambassador. He was just observing. That's all.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: That changed about in about 2001 when. Beijing sent an energetic woman ambassador once Gloria Arroyo became president.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: When I moved to Patton Boggs, which we can talk about in due course, I was asked to represent the Philippine government in the United States by then President Ramos and went back and forth maybe four times a year. I did this for six years and had other clients that I brought to the Philippines and elsewhere in Asia, so had an aisle seat on what was going on.

Q: Well, how did you feel -- you left when, what year did you leave?

KAPLAN: I left in roughly, if my memory serves me, roughly Labor Day of 1987.

Q: Did you feel that by this time the Philippines was fairly well inoculated against coups?

KAPLAN: No. As a matter fact, there was that seventh coup that Dan Quayle sent the jets up to help end. President Aquino was continuing to govern, gaining more experience and so forth. But this was a male oriented country. There were some people who didn't feel a woman should be president, some thought she wasn't tough enough. But to her great credit, she was able to serve her entire six-year term and to hand over the baton to a democratically elected successor, General Ramos, who by the way governed not as a general, but like a CEO. He was a great promoter of investment in the Philippines.

Q: What was your impression of Ramos?

KAPLAN: I liked him a lot. I think he was the best president since the Philippines gained independence after WWII. He was intelligent, I doubt that he read works of literature and things of that sort, but he had a vision for the country and did a great deal to achieve it. He connected with people and was tough enough to get things done.. Any American would have liked him. He spoke the lingo. He was capable of taking decisions, and very forceful. If a problem came up he was going to deal with it, he was going to tackle it. He had a cabinet of technocrats and his main focus was economic. He helped bring the country back. He was the opposite of Cory Aquino in the sense that she was intuitive but Eddy Ramos was a problem solver. He was a military guy. He saw a problem, he developed a strategy with his advisors, and then he went out and tried to resolve the problem. And he sustained the democratic transition. I thought he was an excellent president and at the end of his term he gave way to the next president, although that took

a little bit of coaxing because he was tempted briefly by some of his advisors to stay on, but in the end he had the wisdom not to do that.

Q: And where'd you go?

KAPLAN: Well --

Q: First place, when you got back did you get credit for holding things together, or did anybody debrief you, or?

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* Oh, a lot of people debriefed me. I made my farewell call on President Aquino at the palace. Before I left, one of her people who was a close friend of mine said to me, "There's, there's a parade of press waiting outside. You're going to have to run through the gauntlet to get out of here."

My car came right to the door but I had to get through the media people. They asked a lot of questions, including, "What are you going to do next?"

I didn't know. I said, "Well, it's not finalized, but I think I may be in Europe dealing with disarmament issues." I made that up just to get into the car.

I went back and I was assigned for a year or so to INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) on a kind of a global basis. Mort Abramowitz was the assistant secretary. He sent a memo to the secretary the day I got back saying, "He's going to be our guru on East Asia and other issues." And so I had, with Mort's support, a mandate to write to the secretary on almost anything. I took some trips, Latin America, I took an expert with me from INR and reported back. Sometimes it would have certain impact.

And then the strangest thing happened. I was getting ready to leave the Department. I had had a good run, just had this wonderful Philippine experience and couldn't imagine getting a better job than that. When I came out of Manila Secretary Shultz said to me, "What would you like to do next?" I said, "I'd like another Philippines."

He understood immediately. He said, "You want another tough job."

I said, "That's right, sir."

He said, he said something to the effect of, "I've got an open embassy in Copenhagen." He said, "You've worked hard here."

I said, "What would I do there? Sit on the porch and watch the fish go by?" *(laughs).*

He said, "OK, I understand,. And told me he wanted me to go and learn Spanish." I didn't ask him why but it became clear that he was interested in was sending me as ambassador either to Panama to deal with Noriega, or to Nicaragua to deal with the Ortega brothers. I was told that Mr. Shultz planned to recommend to Jim Baker, when the George H.W.

Bush administration came in, that I and a small number of other people he considered capable should be used to responsible positions -- something to that effect. Later, I was told that the transition meeting between Secretary Shultz and Secretary Baker did not go well, that some of the new people thought that Shultz was taking too much credit during the Reagan period. The word came back that Shultz did not raise my name, or any of the others, because he figured it would be the kiss of death. And this was one from one Republican administration to another.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Much less across the aisle. I got in touch with a senior official in the Bush State Department administration and he said they wanted to use me. I'd passed the FSI Spanish test and he again mentioned Nicaragua or Panama. I waited a few month and then was told they had decided not to send any ambassador to either Nicaragua or to Panama because it would legitimate the Ortegas and Noriega. So I said to myself, "Well, that's enough of this."

Q: You become a corridor walkers.

KAPLAN: Well, I didn't walk the corridors of the State Department. I walked the corridors of several law firms and started interviewing.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I was offered a partnership, which isn't such an easy thing to get, in a prominent law firm. Not this one. And I was ready to go. Suddenly out of the blue I get this call from the secretary's office saying they want me to go to Vienna with Jim Woolsey. Well, Jim and I got into a series of conversations and the upshot was that I was going to be his deputy at the Conventional Forces in Europe Negotiation (CFE), renamed from the old Mutual and Balance Force Reductions, (MBFR) talks, which I had been in you may recall 20 years before. In short, my off-hand comment to the media in Manila was about to come true.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: MBFR had been a complete flop, they'd gone nowhere. But President Bush and Secretary Baker were determined that CFE was going to be a lynchpin in the whole east-east dialogue. Lot of things were going on, in Germany and on the entire east-west agenda, in good part due to the presence of Gorbachev who appeared ready to deal. Then word came down from the secretary's office and from Woolsey, they really wanted me to do this. With some hesitation I called up the law firm and respectfully declined their offer. I went to Vienna with Jim and we stayed together in an apartment they set up for him there because neither his residence nor mine had even been established at that point.

Our first round of talks began in the fall of 1989 and ended just before Christmas. In this brief period all of Eastern Europe fell from Soviet control and became independent states.

The Berlin Wall fell on the second day I was in Vienna. People came pouring into Vienna as tourists from Eastern Europe -- Hungarians and Czechs, Poles, Romanians, Bulgarians, Yugoslavs, all shopping in the Mariahilferstrasse, the second-tier shops. Europe was being reborn.

We held our negotiating sessions, as we did 20 years earlier, in the Hofburg Palace. But this time it was real. We were told before we went to Vienna that French President Francois Mitterrand wanted an agreement in one year because he had already rented out conference centers and major hotels in Paris to accommodate what would be a massive event. Analysts and officials opined that CFE was going to be one of the most complex diplomatic negotiations in history. We faced extremely technical issues related to the weight of main battle tanks, exactly how to destroy aircraft and other military equipment. There were sensitive allied interests to consider and of course the hard slog with Soviet diplomats, generals and KGB operatives, not to mention Eastern European concerns.

After a few weeks, I received a luncheon invitation from the Czech ambassador who was an old KGB hoodlum. For the first half hour the ambassador said nothing and allowed his deputy, who had written a biography in Eisenhower, to rant on what a great man Eisenhower was. Finally, apropos of nothing, the ambassador slapped his hand on the table and said, "Genug." He said it in German, enough, stop, and his deputy stopped on the beat. Then the ambassador leaned forward to me and he said, "What would you and your government say if we asked our comrades from the Soviet Union to pull all their troops out of Czechoslovakia?"

Well, right now that sounds like an innocent question because they're gone and we all know that. Then it was like a bolt from the blue.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Without instructions, and with no fear of contradiction, I said, "We will strew their path with roses," *(laughs)*. I reported that and no one from Washington objected.

There were all the technical issues and political issues to be dealt with, and this was going on at the same time that the institution known as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (which led to the Organization and Cooperation in Europe) was going on in parallel in Vienna. Then the coups started happening, or the changes of government. All over Eastern Europe. Gorbachev made it quite clear he wasn't going to intervene. Gerasimov, his, his assistant said, "Our philosophy is Frank Sinatra, you have to do it your way. We're not going to intervene." Gorbachev went to East Berlin and Honecker, the communist leader, literally begged him to save the GDR regime. From demonstrators in Leipzig and Dresden and then East Berlin. When the Russians didn't intervene, and when a border guard near the Wall understood maybe incorrectly that he was not to intervene, the Wall came down.

Europe was transformed. As George H.W. Bush said at the time, it was, "A new Europe, whole and free." Well, as we look back in 2014 it's not quite as shiny as it was then. But

at that time it was dramatic. And even with hindsight it's a much freer Europe than it was before. We're now experiencing these events in Ukraine in 2014 and there is fear in Eastern Europe and the Baltics again. The European Union is facing a serious economic and financial crisis and the threat of a British exit. Darker right wing forces are growing in strength in Western Europe. Nothing is forever unless we are vigilant.

The CFE treaty led to dramatic reductions of military equipment in the center of Europe. There was one occasion in which a CODEL came out while I was chargé, following the departure of Jim Woolsey. I met with this CODEL led by Newt Gingrich and briefed him on how the Warsaw Pact tanks would have come down from 20 something thousand to about 12,000, and we were going to come down from roughly 13,500 to about 12,000. There were going to be similar asymmetrical reductions in the other kinds of equipment. Knowing conservative distrust of the Russians and focus on verification, I said, "But don't worry, we're very focused on making sure the verification provisions are air tight."

Gingrich said, "Wait a minute. Are you telling me that they're going to reduce from 20,000 to 12,000 and we're going to reduce from 13,000 to 12,000?"

I said, "Yes sir, that's about rig, and we're going to –"

He said, roughly, forget verification, you'd better sign that before they change their mind.

So this was a, this was a major treaty, in my view essentially the World War II peace treaty delayed 45 years by the Cold War. It was possible was because a) Gorbachev was in power and was not going to prevent it; (as you know, there was a coup staged against him as well); and b) President Bush was a very skillful diplomat who managed the transition and in particular the German-Soviet relationship in a way that enabled Gorbachev to do this and Chancellor Helmut Kohl to go along. I think that President George HW Bush will, in the cool light of historical reflection, be considered to have been a very strong president, particularly in the field of foreign affairs.

Q: Yeah. I'm just trying to think about with all this going on, you know, for example you're trying to balance tanks off. Our tanks were far more capable than the Soviet tanks at this point.

KAPLAN: They were. I traveled through these countries and, only slightly facetiously, the tanks along the road in Hungary look more like flowerpots than tanks. Well, it was our objective was to bring about symmetry, to bring about parity, because that was something that would register with the congress and that the people would understand. The fact is that the Soviets, some people will disagree with this I know, the Soviets lost the Cold War.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Reagan came in, he built up our defense budgets and launched the strategic defense initiative. Gorbachev recognized that he must cut a deal with the west and bring

Russia into the broader international community. That's what he tried to do. He lost the Eastern Europe buffer zone. Russia went into a steep decline and he became the most hated figure in the Soviet Union and in the Russia that came afterward.

Q: Yeah. Did you have a problem with your staff and others, all those dealing with it, not to interject sort of spirit of triumphalism?

KAPLAN: No, most of the large delegation was comprised of technocrats from Defense, CIA, DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency), State and ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency). We were reporting to an NSC interagency group which monitored and coordinated every policy aspect of the negotiations. It was quite different from the Philippines in that respect. They were experts in the weapons systems, in defense policy, and senior inter-agency officials as well as cabinet secretaries were paying close attention.

Q: I'm not sure -- the timing can be important, but you've been around a long time, negotiations and all. But all of a sudden in an era where everybody has -- or were they -- basically cell phones, and they -- in other words they can communicate without going through a controlled apparatus back to their home office.

KAPLAN: They were just starting during that period, during that --

Q: Was this a problem?

KAPLAN: Well, you always have to be attentive to security considerations. We were negotiating with the Soviets and the East Europeans every day. I'll give you a couple of anecdotes. An East European ambassador was in Vienna while his wife was kept back at home. When a senior Soviet leader would come to Vienna to talk to the Warsaw Pact caucus, he'd leave the caucus, get in his car, and drive directly to my home and give me a readout immediately before it got cold. My cable would go to Washington before he had time to send his to his government.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Another example. I went to East Berlin when I was on the Policy Planning Staff and talked to an official in the East German Foreign Ministry and I might as well have been talking to Neues Deutschland, the GDR communist party newspaper; he didn't deviate from the party line by one inch. Well, in Vienna, this chap turns up as the East German ambassador. I took him to lunch, and suddenly it was as though he was Pavarotti singing the first act of Pagliacci. *Everything* was fair game, he would tell me anything. I met him several times and he also told me a lot of things that we wouldn't have known otherwise. We spoke in German which seemed to make him more comfortable. When German reunification negotiations reached fruition and East Germany was no longer going to exist as an independent entity, and therefore this guy was going to be out of a job, he invited me to lunch for the first time. "I have some money available, might as well use it rather than give it back to the West Germans. And then it got to a human level. I

asked him what he was going to do next. He said, "Well, for a couple of years I'll drive a bus, I'll be a postman, something. Then they'll figure out that I know stuff, and they'll hire me." His wife, by the way, I think was with the Stasi. Tougher than him.

Well, said, "You know, but if we had won what we would have done to the West Germans would be *much worse* than what's going to happen to me,"

New ambassadors were appointed by the new East European governments. A couple of the sitting ambassadors were still hanging on. One was a Pole and he actually came to Woolsey and me when his new minister came to town and asked us to talk to the minister on his behalf. Well, we said some friendly words when we were all together, but later on we passed the word back that this guy wasn't going to be helpful, which he wasn't. He was a pretty sleazy character. So we had all these new East European ambassadors, except the Bulgarian, who insisted on calling everybody comrade. Even the Russians didn't have the nerve to do that anymore.

I met often with the top Russian KGB general in the negotiations. Like me, he had served in Asia. He was very smart, an aficionado of classical music. His wife would visit from Moscow and we would invite them to dinner at our house. The Russian ambassador was Oleg Grinevsky. Everybody called him the Grinner but I rarely saw him crack a smile. He was a product of the Gromyko school. So as the technical talks proceeded, these personal relationships enabled us to get our work done, but we never doubted who we were dealing with.

One more anecdote that comes to mind that makes this point. The Luxembourg ambassador was a diffident fellow who had a mistress he squired about town. His wife would come by from Luxembourg. One time while he was chairman of the NATO caucus that met before our meetings with the Russians, the German ambassador interrupted someone else who was speaking because it was an issue sensitive to his foreign minister. The Luxembourg ambassador said, "You will wait your turn." And everybody sort of stood up in their chairs.

The German said, "No, no, this is very important"

The meek Luxembourg guy said -- This is 1990. Once, 45 years ago when I was a young man I was admitted to Harvard. That was interrupted because your soldiers invaded my country." This was in the NATO caucus. Everybody was just stricken.

Q: (laughs) It's there, it's there.

KAPLAN: It's always there.

Q: Did you get involved -- you were talking about your -- the Soviet who said, "What will you do?" And you said, "You'll strew roses."

KAPLAN: It was actually the Czech ambassador who said that. He was talking about

ejecting the Soviet forces from Czechoslovakia.

Q: Did you get involved in the negotiations to get troops out of Eastern Europe?

KAPLAN: Not troops, because our negotiation was about equipment. It was about main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, combat aircraft, combat helicopters.

Q: Did you get into, you know, going in and kicking tank treads and things like that?

KAPLAN: No, we had guys who could --

Q: You had other people.

KAPLAN: There were inspectors that were part of the whole agreement and so forth.

Q: Yep. Well --

KAPLAN: There were technical issues like collateral constraint. If the Soviets were forced to move this equipment out of the defined zone of Central Europe, and they just put it right across the border so they could come right back in, that, that wasn't allowed. And these were all highly technical issues.

Q: Was there a lot of sort of cat and mouse playing around, or were you -- you know, I mean concessions which weren't real concessions?

KAPLAN: I don't think so, but there was one thing that was actually important. At the end of the negotiations there was a ceremonial event in the Hofburg palace. It looked like a movie setting of what a big negotiation would be, with all the tapestries around it. At the closing ceremony each ambassador initialed the agreement. And there was then this extraordinary scene, almost beyond imagination where the Pole and Dutchman would exchange their highly classified military force data, and the Italian and the Russian would exchange theirs, and then all the rest.

When the Vienna ceremony was over, we all got on planes to Paris for the signing ceremony at the summit level in the Elysee palace. President Bush was there, Gorbachev was there, all the top leaders from the 22 NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, the largest such diplomatic gathering since the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Plus, there were all the leaders of the 13 observer states, neutrals like Sweden and so forth. We had a meeting with President Bush in the embassy shortly after we arrived. And on my credenza over here you'll see --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- I was with him. He was passing out State Department cufflinks and taking photographs. We had just our senior people there. Jim
Woolsey and I asked to speak to him privately. Jim said, "We got a problem." It was the

night before the signing ceremony. All the world press was there.

The president sort of squinted his eyes and said, "What kind of problem?"

We told him that we just come on a plane from Vienna after initialing the treaty and our CIA and DIA guys had informed us that the data the Russians passed us was dummied up. It was inaccurate, and since the data determined the force reductions the whole thing would be a fraud."

So I think the president looked at me and said, "Well, how serious is this?"

I said, "Medium rare," *(laughs).*

He asked, "What do I do about it?"

So you know, when you send a memo to the president you have to get it cleared by lots of folks, often inter-agency, but we were talking in real time to the Man. I took an envelope from the piano in the ambassador's residence and wrote three short talking points, and I gave it to him. He jabbed it into his breast pocket and ran up the circular staircase, which is such a contrast to the way he was looking at his watch in the presidential debate that took place not too much later. He wanted those talking points because he was having dinner with Gorbachev that night, about 45 minutes later.

Next morning Grinevsky, the Grinner, the Soviet ambassador came up to me at the ceremony and said, "What did you give your guy? He just beat the hell out of Gorbachev last night."

Well, what we had the president say, and he agreed to say it, was, We've discovered that the data has been presented is inaccurate. It was done by the Soviet Military, we don't think that the diplomats knew about this. I'm going to sign this treaty today but I'm not going to submit this to the Senate until this problem is resolved.

I had to stay on another nine months, the time it takes to give birth. Jim Woolsey went back to Washington and I became chargé d'affaires during this extended period. My position was very simple: "This treaty isn't going anywhere until this gets resolved." Virtually all of the Eastern Europeans agreed with us. And I think that privately the Soviet diplomats agreed with us. So we also talked to the Soviet Military and got that message very clearly across. It took nine months to get it done. The treaty was approved. Gorbachev went back to Moscow and basically I suppose he must have said, "You're humiliating me and the country."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But it took them a long time to --

Q: Did news of this leak out?

KAPLAN: I believe that it must have. I don't remember.

Q: I think it'd be hard --

KAPLAN: It would be hard not to, and besides, I think it was in our interest to put as much pressure as possible.

Q: Yeah. So during this time how was -- I don't mean to be facetious, but the social life, I mean when you've got a big conference like this, dinners are quite important, I mean people getting together.

KAPLAN: Oh sure, there were dinners, there were private lunches all the time. I would occasionally have people to my residence for dinners. We were able to get 12, 14 people around our big table. But I did it rarely. Cost a lot of money and we were so busy. It was much more efficient and we were invited lots of things. I found that one-on-one lunches was where you could get more done. And with our allies sometimes I would just drop by the Norwegian ambassador, or the Turk or the Greek -- because they all had interests and you had to keep them on a friendly basis and with a sense that you were apprised of their interest and cared. Sort of like NATO diplomacy. And of course it was Vienna, there was the opera and the Vienna Philharmonic and the ballet, all kinds of cultural events, and good restaurants. It was not a bad place to live.

Q: No, no, mm-mm. Well then, when you finished that did you -- how about coming back to, to Washington? I would think with the Senate and all there'd be a lot of equivalent to negotiations, or at least explanations?

KAPLAN: When I left the negotiation it fell into other hands. People on the Hill would call me up and I explained what it was about. It was a very complicated treaty. There was one interesting incident, just to backtrack a l bit, I went out there as the DCM and I was told I was going to be appointed as ambassador. As usual, it took some months to work its way through, while the negotiations were going on. Finally, they scheduled ambassadorial hearings and I returned to Washington for two days. Senator Biden, now Vice President Biden, was Chairman of Foreign Relations Committee. He had some hesitation about having more than one ambassador on the delegation but was informed that the Soviets had two or three. Senator Lugar, who was a friend from the Manila days, even though he wasn't on the European Subcommittee attended the whole hearing just to make sure that everything was handled properly. Biden was getting questions from his staff as the norm. There were three other guys who were also up for confirmation that day, one of whom was my friend Tom Simons who was going to Poland, Another guy was going to Bulgaria and there was one other. But most of the hearing involved questions for me. because CFE was really hot at that time.

Senator Biden was plying me with questions and finally he asked about whether we would include combat aircraft among the force reductions in the negotiation. We had not agreed to do that. There were some people who wanted to do it as, as a concession to the

Russians. Our aircraft were superior. Anyway, I certainly wasn't going to get into that in an open hearing. I figured there must be some Russian in the room. So when Biden asked me this question, I went into a long prolix statement about aircraft, and his eyes were crossing., I didn't say a darn thing, but I said it at great length and with great complexity. Finally I stopped. And he said, "Well, that was really complicated. You certainly deserve to be an ambassador." That's how the confirmation took place.

So it was a very complicated negotiation, both technically and politically. We had very strong leadership from Washington, deep involvement at the technical level, and finally we made our way through. The Russians were caught cheating on the data and we had to sort that out before the negotiation would end. It was all part of the complex end of the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, the new CSCE apparatus, all the other détente things that were happening at that time. It was a vital part because it altered the military balance in the center of Europe. And that was a big deal.

Q: Oh boy. Well, did you -- how did you view the unification of Germany? I mean you'd been a German hand and found that it wasn't happen -- well, I mean it was getting ready to happen.

KAPLAN: Well, NATO had been pledging from the time that West Germany was created that we supported the eventual reunification in the peaceful way of Germany. When the opportunity came, Chancellor Kohl seized it with both hands. How could we possibly have walked away from that; it would have, it would have led to Revanchist tendencies in Germany. They were our very close ally. We had developed a close relationship with the Germans. They were no longer aggressive. Some would say they're too timid as a result of their horrendous Nazi experience in World War II.

Thatcher and Mitterrand hated it. Mitterrand flew to Kiev to try and convince Gorbachev to block it. Thatcher also was very opposed.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: But at the end of the day this was an irresistible force that could not be prevented. President Bush handled it with enormous skill in a way that kept the Germans as our friends. The Germans never forgot that he did that.

Q: Were there forces -- we're really concerned -- I mean obviously Germany had been involved in two major wars of -- you mean people -- we really -- I mean were there, sort of within the American structure, was there concern about a revived Germany?

KAPLAN: Well, I'm sure there were people that felt that way. Everybody was aware of the past. I was very aware of the past *(laughs).* I lived through it.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Not -- I didn't live through the war or the Nazi era, but I was in Germany for

four years.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And I was in Austria twice. I was going back to Germany two or three times a year for 20 years, I spoke the language, I knew a lot of people. But the choice was either you try to prevent this development from occurring, which was the trajectory that we had all been on for all these years, or that you proved that it was all a fraud and then you would have given the Germans a real reason to say once again that we betrayed them, as they felt we did in World War I when they fabricated the Dolchstoßlegenda, the "Stab in the Back Theory."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Playing it straight and embracing them within the allegiance, I think, was a kind of statesmanship.

Q: No, the ending of World War I left an awful lot to be -- well, I mean it set up the World War II basically.

KAPLAN: Well, that together with the hard times the Germans went through, the fact that they were distrusted, the various treaties, Locarno and the other treaties that were adopted, and there were very hard times economically. This gave room for Hitler and his people to gain more and more influence. Finally he pushed aside Hindenburg and it was just a matter of time. Once he took over, people thought he was an erratic politician from Bavaria, but nobody ever imagined that he was Frankenstein.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: You never know until they become Frankenstein.

Q: Yeah. Well, this is probably a good place to stop.

KAPLAN: I think so.

Q: And where do we pick this up the next time?

KAPLAN: Well, after the disarmament negotiation I spent at year at Brown University as an ambassador in residence. And then --

Q: Which university?

KAPLAN: Brown, Providence.

Q: Brown.

KAPLAN: And then I went to what turned out to be my last assignment back in policy planning, this time not as a director or a deputy director but as a kind of a free agent with the right to say anything I wanted. After that I came to the law firm.

Q: OK, well I would like to have one more session. We'll talk -- I'd like to get your impression of Brown and the student body there.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: And we'll start on the policy planning and then talk about how your talents were used by a major law firm here in Washington.

KAPLAN: I'll be glad to talk about all of that and we'll see if we can finish it next time.

Q: Great.

All right. Today is the 11th of June, 2014,with Philip Kaplan. And we're really at the end now. You have left the Philippines and you've come back for -- you had a short assignment and then you went on to some other things, to Brown.

KAPLAN: Well, I first I went to Vienna and we did the Conventional Forces Treaty.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And that was in 1989 when all the revolutions were starting and Eastern Europe was finally liberated. At Brown, I was for a year an ambassador in residence. I taught a course to graduating seniors on Europe and America after the Cold War. And obviously I spent a good part of the course talking about Europe and America before the Cold War -- or during the Cold War.

Q: What was your impression of sort of the student body and their interests at that particular time?

KAPLAN: The students were terrific. The course had a maximum of 20 students in it, and 40 signed up. I was so impressed by them that I let them come in and -- which meant more work, but it was worth it because it was part of the experience. In fact, some of them left the course being taught by the president of the university *(laughs)* to join my -- but he was fine. That was Vartan Gregorian, who subsequently headed the New York Public Library and the Carnegie Institute in New York, a terrific guy. Anyway, I treated it as though I were going to a new post. I went around and had lunches and met with professors from all over the university, not only political people, but renaissance scholars, scientists, the whole nine yards.

Brown is a great university, one of the best. Frankly, I found the teachers less interesting than the students. The students were idealistic, they were determined to contribute to society, and they were scared to death. It sounds a little bit like today because of their

fear that the economy was going to just sink. I remember vividly that there was a jobs fair and a seminar with four Brown professors, and they threw me into the pot as the fifth who spoke to the students. The first four said their lives would be worse than that of their parents. (This was just before Bill Clinton became president.) I said, "With all respect, you should ignore everything you've just heard from the other professors. This is going to be a great decade."

And of course the nineties were a very prosperous time.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Some of these students came in to see me and asked me to teach the course in the second semester that I was there. I still am in contact with some of my students who have gone on to impressive careers. In my course I didn't give exams, I assigned complex law school type memos where you had a political, military and economic factual situation and you had to disaggregate it and put it back together with policy options. I still teach and find that the two main problems with even bright students is that don't know how to write and they are basically ahistorical, which I attribute to lack of priority for history courses by our universities. When graduation came and I was asked to hand out the diplomas for my class, and I was honored to do so. One mother came up to me after the ceremony and told me that she had fallen in love with a Foreign Service officer many years before. I won't mention his name, but he was a well-known Middle East hand and she married someone else. Her daughter had never had anything but an A since third grade. When she received a C from me on her first memo she was devastated, but she had the composure not to complain or to whine about it, but she just buckled down to work and got an A in the course. Her friend did the same; one is now a Treasury official, the other a lawyer in a prominent firm. I found the whole experience extremely satisfying.

Q: Did you find that they had, I think you mentioned somewhat, but a real commitment to public ser -- I mean not all of them, but a stronger commitment to public service than one might imagine?

KAPLAN: Oh, I think so. Now, the economy was a little shaky, but there were also a number there who really wanted to go into public service, and some of them did. There was a young man I remember who was the son of the cellist of the Guarneri String Quartet. Brown is a terrific school, it's very hard to get into.

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: A number of these students came from families who had achieved a lot already and others came from families that were sort of on their way up. Some of the professors I met were a little disappointing. The economists spoke in jargon. I met a 30-35 year old woman who had been teaching political science, focused on the Middle East. She was one of the hardest working people on campus, she took on more student mentees and gave them counsel on advanced projects. The head of political science, another

woman, resented her and blocked her tenure. It was pretty bad. I visited the admiral at the Newport Naval Station; they had a college there.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I had a nice talk with him and asked him to tell me about the war college.

Q: Navy War College.

KAPLAN: At the end of it he just said, "Well, we have a problem. We need someone to teach Middle East studies." I just said a word and she had the job. You know, it was that simple. I didn't have any particular influence. It was just dumb luck.

There were other little experiences there that were interesting. But the larger point is I had a year at the end of the Cold War. I had just gone through the CFE negotiations and Germany being reunited and the Two Plus Four Talks, the Soviet Union collapsed as a state. I had a year to think about where we were going afterwards, to do some writing and to talk to a lot of interesting people who were not part of the government that I'd been involved with. I first arrived in Vienna with my wife after weekly meetings in the Hofburg Palace. The next thing I knew I was in Providence, Rhode Island. Brown was up on College Hill; it was an iconic place where students were crossing a classic square college green at this Ivy League school. We lived in a carriage house right across the street from the university.

One night I had only been back a short time. I love classical music and we hadn't been buying very many CDs or anything because the prices in Europe were about double the prices in America. So we went to a Tower Record, and I was told be very careful. We drove down the hill and parked near a hotel and then walked down a couple of blocks to Tower Records. En route, we saw people shooting drugs, and a couple of corpses on the ground. Providence then was a big crime scene. In Tower Records I must have bought $200 worth of CDs because it'd been such a long time. I noticed a big brawny fellow guarding the store. After paying for my purchases, the store manager said, "You've got quite a bit in there. Would you like our guy to walk you back to your car?"

The woman at the cashier said, "Oh, that's OK, they're classical records. No one would want those."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* Well, we got back to the car. One other thing. I remember that I went to call on Bruce Sundlun, the governor, a Democrat. He took me one of the many Italian restaurants in Providence and there were all these guys dressed as though they were in Mussolini's Italy with black shirts and/or brown shirts with black neckties and all that. The whole place just had an air of another era. The governor just smiled and said, "Oh well, that's Providence." Then he said, "You know, Bill Clinton's going to be the next

president. I know him very well. He's the best informed governor in the nation on domestic policy. He knows those issues *cold*, like the back of his hand."

I said, "Well, how about foreign policy?"

He said, "He doesn't know a damn thing. He's never paid attention to it." And this is coming from somebody who was praising him quite a bit.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I recall that when Clinton took over in the first year he rarely attended any NSC meetings, *any*, because he was focused on "the economy, stupid," that phrase of his campaign advisor James Carville.

I also went to see one other local politician, Buddy Cianci, the Mayor of Providence and a very colorful American folkloric type figure. He *allegedly* was in with the mobs. He also was very popular with the people. He was a kind of American Boris Yeltsin type, if I can put it that way. One day, the newspaper reported that he burst into the home of his former wife and found her with another guy. Buddy punched the guy out. Charges were brought against him. He was prevented from running for another term because he was convicted. He went to jail for a while, he came out, and then in the very next election he was re-elected by an large majority. So that was the Providence that --

Q: Oh yeah.

KAPLAN: We went up to Boston often. So it was a terrific year.

Q: Yeah. As you and others were looking at this, maybe the view from Brown, but did you see this conflict with fundamentalism and all that later is consumed as fundamentalism Islam mainly, as being a problem, or?

KAPLAN: Not at all. It was before that time. The best answer I can give you to that is there were no demonstrations by the kids. I remember very specifically that the only demonstration I saw in Brown in the almost entire year we lived there was on a rainy day and there were three kids who were soaked and rather bedraggled walking up and down the street holding up some signs. All the other kids went by and didn't even look at them. This made an impression because we had lived through volatile times and then nothing was going on, absolutely nothing.

Q: Well, then after this where'd you go?

KAPLAN: I went back to the State Department. I had decided that the time had come to, to move on. The way I looked at it, Stu, was that I had come into the Foreign Service at the time of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and played a role in the negotiations that certified the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union had collapsed, the Germans had reunified, Eastern Europe had become free. I'd been in the Foreign Service 25 years. That

seemed to be a logical time to make a change. If I were ever to have a second launch -- actually a third career, because I'd been a lawyer for five years beforehand, this was the time to do so.

So I went back to Policy Planning and they made me a senior advisor. Sam Lewis, the distinguished former ambassador to Israel was appointed director by President Clinton and Secretary Christopher. I knew Sam from when I'd been in Policy Planning my first time. He was the deputy director in fact, a job that I later held. We were friends and he basically gave me a mandate to write on anything I wanted to. Occasionally he'd ask me to take on a particular project or the secretary would make a request. It also was a year of reflection on what I would do next and taking preliminary steps to prepare for that.

Turning to substance, the administration began the customary process of policy review memoranda (PRIMS). I'd been involved in that process before. The secretary wanted to know after two or three months how it was going and I was asked to conduct that review. I was assured that I would have access to 25 ongoing studies, to assistant secretaries and to senior policy officials managing the studies. I wrote a memo to the secretary and was told that it was useful. But I made the point that there were two of the listed studies for which there was no documentation. I went to speak to someone who was in a position to know what was going on and he also gave me a quizzical look as though he didn't have the slightest idea why there was no documentation. He was the official in charge of the documentations; if anybody would know, he should have known. Well, it turned out that the missing studies were handled, quote unquote, out of the system, done by a fellow in the NSC and an undersecretary in the Department. In both cases it was a complete foul up. One of them dealt with Bosnia policy, which was tragically wrong in my opinion. The other one was -- if I recall properly, dealt with Haiti.

Q: Haiti.

KAPLAN: In both cases the policies were horrible, particularly Bosnia. Those wise guys thought they could do it themselves, completely outside the system, without consulting with any of the professional experts.. Nobody even knew what was going on.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: They made quite a hash made of it.

Q: Now, something that I've noted, that in doing these interviews over 30 years that every once in a while a policy, a situation gets hot. And it's grabbed --

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: -- by basically a political operative. And it's taken out of the hands of those people who know what the hell they're talking about. I mean all you have to do is think of Iraq before we went in there. I mean, and so you have people who are trying to show their muscle or their clout or whatever it is.

KAPLAN: Right.

Q: Who really don't know the subject, but they're making their bones, as they say, in, in the Washington context.

KAPLAN: Right. In the case of the Bosnia study, I'm quite convinced that it was an undersecretary -- I don't want to name the name -- but an undersecretary who had been in the Foreign Service before and then left and was brought back in with the new team, and he worked with a White House official. I'll come back to the Bosnia aftermath, which precipitated my decision to retire from the Foreign Service after all those years. I was ready to do so, but I was really dismayed by that.

There was another event related to Bosnia. We had been having discussions with the Europeans about what the policy should be toward Bosnia. During a mission to the foreign offices of the key countries -- the Brits, the French, the Germans – we were told, Look, if you guys want to intervene, then you have to tell us; don't come here and ask us what to do. You know, the whole notion of you have to consult, that's fine. But you're the leader of the alliance. This is a big decision, tell us what you want to do and we'll try to sell it.

I was impressed by that. There was this talk about a policy of lift and strike -- lifting the embargo of giving weapons to the Bosniaks so they could deal with the Serbs and the Croatians which were hitting them from every side; and strike ourselves via air power, as necessary, rather than deploy troops on the ground.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: Sarajevo was a war zone and civilians were being murdered mercilessly.

Q: It was terrible.

KAPLAN: It was terrible. And I remember on one occasion -- well, first let me finish this. We briefed the secretary and then the secretary went to Europe. He walked in to the FCO (British Foreign & Commonwealth Office) and he said, "Tell me what you think we should do." Our hearts sank. And they all ducked, which you would expect them to do. Europeans are very good at ducking.

Q: But there had been, when the Bosnian thing initially erupted, this was -- I remember saying, "Now at least this is a European problem, and we should handle it." I mean this was --

KAPLAN: There was a Luxembourg prime minister, Jacques Poos, who was said, and I quote, "C'est l'heure de l'Europe, pas l'heure des États-Unis." This is the hour for Europe, not for the United States. When the Bush administration arrived, Jim Baker, who

I thought was an excellent secretary of state, went there and with the advice of somebody who had been in Yugoslavia for a long time, said, "We don't have a dog in this race."

Q: Sounds like Larry.

KAPLAN: You might very well say that. I couldn't possibly comment *(laughs).*

Q: Larry and I came in to Yugoslavia together and started serving together.

KAPLAN: Of course. Of course.

Q: Larry Eagleburger.

KAPLAN: He was the deputy to Baker. Anyway, when Secretary Christopher asked what should we do, the Europeans ducked and we didn't do a damn thing. Then one day the Serbs bombed the World War II Jewish Cemetery in Sarajevo. Whether it was Jewish or not, this was a sacrilege to bomb a cemetery. This was the Balkans, and the Serbs were on a mountain top and shooting down into the city. People would dart out of their homes and run 100 meters to a well to bring water back to their family, and they would never make it, they would be killed.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I saw the desecration of the cemetery as a bridge too far. I detested the policy anyway. So I went to see Sandy Vershbow, who is now Deputy Secretary General of NATO; he was then the acting assistant secretary in EUR and later ambassador to Moscow, to NATO, and to Korea. I mean really a terrific fellow. I just said, "This just goes too far. We've got to hit them."

Sandy and I called the executive secretary of the Department who was in Asia with Secretary Christopher. We said we would a cable to the secretary recommending in the most urgent terms an air strike tonight, to blow the Serbian killers off the mountain. The response was, "Oh my God, the M word." Because the secretary was from the generation for whom the Vietnam War had been a scarring experience and they didn't want to be drawn into military conflict. The Clinton administration had a number of people like that. Anyway, the secretary with the greatest of reluctance I was told, approved one strike. It was effective, but then we stopped and then the killing started all over again. I didn't resign in protest. I sent a one page memorandum to the secretary that made the case for why we had to act. I was basically trying to shame them, to point out..

Q: Hm.

KAPLAN: That the reputation of the United States is such that we can't just stand by and allow this genocide to be taking place. To my amazement the secretary called a meeting. I was summoned into his presence and there were all the top seventh floor guys, all of

whom were in my view complicit in this policy. The secretary turned to me and he said, "It's your memo. You have the floor,"

I just laid it out. By this juncture I had decided I was leaving. So I said, "What the hell? I'm going to really lay it out. I was respectful and diplomatic, but it was very direct. When I finished, the secretary, who was always so neat and cufflinks --

Q: Who's this?

KAPLAN: Warren Christopher.

Q: Yeah, Warren Christopher.

KAPLAN: And the pocket-handkerchief and different colors.

Q: Oh yes.

KAPLAN: He looked like he had just stepped out of Esquire, although he was rather gaunt; he had grown up in North Dakota and had the values of the prairie and all that. He said, "Wow, he's made quite a case." He turned to his senior associates and asked them to comment. They all kicked the hell out of me -- this is not war ... the Balkans since 1453. The secretary turned back to me and said, "Well, you have the floor again." So I took them through it like a lawyer. Every argument they made, I thought I countered effectively. At the end he said, "Thank you." That was the end of the meeting.

About two weeks later I got a call from the assistant secretary for Africa, who I knew well, "The secretary would like you to go as ambassador to the Congo," or Zaire, whatever it was then called. Mobutu was still the president there.

I said, "Why would he want me to go there?" I said to myself, "He just wants me out of town," *(laughs).*

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: I wasn't important enough for him to be worried about that. I went to Chet Crocker and asked why would I want to go to the Congo. Chet said, "You don't. Read Conrad's Heart of Darkness," *(laughs).*

So I asked the assistant secretary, "Well, why does he want me to go there?"

He said that Christopher understood that I was instrumental in getting rid of Marcos, so therefore I could get rid of Mobutu.

It was absolutely extraordinary. I pointed out that Mobutu and Marcos had only one thing in common, the first letter of their last name *(laughs).* They were two very different guys. I was being asked to go and to stage a real provocation against this bloodthirsty character.

Not only that, the Congo was 10,000 miles away from anything; there was no Subic or Clark who could come in to rescue us if we got into trouble. I would have the responsibility for the entire American official and expat community." I said, "Why would I want to do that?"

And he said, "I don't know. You tell me." And -- because he wasn't pushing.

And so I said, "All right, I'll tell you what." I didn't have any interest in going there.

He said, "You speak French."

I said, "So do quite a few other people in the Foreign Service."

Q: (laughs)

KAPLAN: So I said, "I have one question I'd like you to ask the secretary if you'd be willing to." I described the situation on the ground and the risk that if I did what I think I knew how to do, because we'd done it before, that Mobutu could retaliate against the official community and the expats and I'd have my wife there, I wasn't willing to be separated. I asked, "What will the secretary do if the balloon goes up?"

He said, "That's a pretty reasonable question."

So I said, "Good, you tell me."

He called me back a week later and said, "I raised this with the secretary."

I asked, "What'd he say?" And he shrugged his shoulders. I said, "You find someone else," *(laughs).*

Q: You know, something I heard. I remember when I heard that Sam Lewis was going to Policy Planning, I thought, "Well, Sam's got a lot of clout and, you know, something should happen." And then I just -- I heard basically through a rather dim grapevine that it didn't work out very well. He wasn't really very well used.

KAPLAN: Well, actually something happened. I'm not sure that he was that well used there. Sam Lewis and Warren Christopher were two very different human beings, and the chemistry may or not may not have been right. I don't really know because I wasn't as into all this as I was when I was deputy director. What happened was that Sam went on a holiday with his wife who I spoke to rather recently to give my condolences. It may have been in Bermuda. He went bicycling and had an accident; he was incapacitated for some months and finally it was decided that he would be better off leaving. He wasn't fired, he wasn't dismissed, he didn't resign. He was physically hurt and he had to leave the job.

Sam's successor was a young fellow who had been a protégé of Madeline Albright. At the time he was serving as deputy assistant secretary in INR, Intelligence and Research.

This was Jim Steinberg, who in Clinton's second term became deputy in the NSC to Sandy Berger who had moved up from being deputy to Tony Lake in the first term. In the Obama administration first term, Jim was deputy secretary of state, after having been dean at the University of Texas School of International Affairs; he resigned in the second term and is now dean at the Maxwell School in Syracuse. So he had quite a remarkable career, and it may not be over yet.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And so when Jim was there he and I, he was, he was the boss and he knew I had been deputy there before and knew my way around. Like Sam, he gave me free reign to write whatever I wanted to. It didn't last for a very long time because shortly after he got there I told him I was thinking of leaving. He said, "Well, you know, while you're here, glad to have you."

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: And that's sort of the way it worked. I retired after a full Foreign Service career. I interviewed with a number of law firms and with some nonprofits. Early on I was offered a job as president of a non-profit dealing with European economic and business issues. They were going to pay me a lot more than I was making in the Foreign Service. It became obvious that they weren't willing to pay me that money because of my alleged expertise on Europe. They wanted me to do fundraising. I went to see my friend Steve Trachtenberg, who was president of George Washington University. I said, "Steve, I'm going to ask you a naive question. What's the secret to fundraising?"

He laughed, and then he said, "The secret is you have to ask. If you ask for too much, you may get nothing. If you don't ask for enough, you'll regret it.

I thought about that and concluded, "Well, if I have to ask, I'll ask for myself rather than for this organization which probably isn't going to accomplish much anyway." I started interviewing with law firms. This was a major career change, so I said to myself, "I'm going to do this in a very disciplined, careful way." I had some nice offers and I decided after a lot of consideration to come to Patton Boggs. I've been here now for 20 years.

Q: Could you explain the role of Patton Boggs in the Washington scene?

KAPLAN: It's changing, but for many years it's been the number one law firm dedicated to public policy practice in Washington and in the United States. It also has a global footprint. We are a full service law firm. We have four offices in the Gulf and the Middle East, and we do business in some 80 countries. I and others get on airplanes and go to one place or another to cope with issues for clients.

Perhaps a word about lobbying. The image in the public is that, that lobbyists are heavyset guys with big black cigars who pass around bags of money. That is inaccurate. There are of course exceptions, like Abramoff who was convicted. Or approach is to hire

top students from guys from the best law schools and to recruit experienced lawyers from senior government positions. We write short memos that we make sure are factually accurate and get them to members of Congress or their staffs so that they can draw upon them in, in doing their work. We advocate, which is what lawyers do; it's what diplomats do, too. We do problem solving, sometimes on the international front. I try to help clients make deals sometimes. I try to help clients get out of trouble overseas.

I'll give you an example. I'd been here for three weeks and a very major corporation came to me. They had made a contract to supply a Russian space agency with telecom equipment. It was supposed to be paid for through a Swiss bank. They had an guy in Rotterdam who was their agent for the transaction. Payment had not arrived. I told the client not to ship the equipment until payment was made. I knew a former colleague who was in our embassy in Moscow, and his wife was in the Commercial Section. So I called up my friend and he got his wife on the phone and her Russian local joined the call. I gave him the name of the space agency and Boris called me back the next day with the wife on the phone and, and says, "The Space Agency does not exist. It's blue sky."

The client was very grateful. We then called up someone in the Rotterdam Police, and they nailed this so-called middleman agent in Rotterdam who was telling him that he was in touch with the Russians on a daily basis.

Also, when I first got here I started meeting with every partner and with associates, the younger lawyers, and everyone else in the firm. I did what you do when you go to a new embassy. After a few weeks, one of the partners called me back with a problem in pre-Chavez Venezuela. Caldera was then the president.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KAPLAN: There were a number of large corporations in a trade association that leased shipping containers and the Venezuelans owed them 60 million dollars in back payments. The Venezuelans claimed that the containers, when they were asked to send them back, were lost or damaged. The corporations sent their Wall Street lawyers down to Caracas and the Venezuelans wouldn't deign to meet with them. So they came to me. I remember meeting in our conference room with about 30 lawyers with hooded eyes who regarded me, a former diplomat, with suspicion. They asked me what I could do and I said, "Well, I think I know how to get to meet with these people. I can't give you any guarantees." So they hired me. And the first thing I did was to call up our ambassador in Caracas, one of our best diplomats, Jeff Davidow, who later became assistant secretary.

Q: Who I have interviewed.

KAPLAN: Terrific guy. Jeff introduced me to Carlos Bernardez, a former president of Banco de Venezuela. I went down there on a Friday and I met with him, very civilized, very decent, smart guy. I started out by telling him what a strategic position Venezuela was in and it might be possible to help them improve relations with the United States and to bring in investors. He was then now the head of the Venezuelan foreign investment

promotion agency and seemed quite interested. Then I said, "But there's one s little thing that's out there, we got to get rid of this. I'd like to come back and meet with whomever you designate to negotiate to try to resolve this problem." I figured that he'd appoint some shady lawyer from Houston but to my surprise he said, "OK, I'll tell you who I'm designating. I'm designating myself."

I returned to Caracas a week later and he introduced me to this rather tall, lanky guy with sunglasses. It was a dark day in Venezuela *(laughs)*. He appointed this fellow to be the working level negotiator with me reporting back to him. It took nine months to solve the problem. We had negotiating sections in Caracas, New York, Miami and Washington. Finally we cut a very good deal, but it was very hard and I learned a lot about negotiating tactics and Venezuela, about which I had known nothing in the past.

Patton Boggs and I have represented many foreign sovereigns in the United States. I personally have helped represent the Philippines, Qatar, Peru in the last year, Fujimori, the Czech Republic, and now Nigeria. But there are many others that the firm has represented, particularly in the Middle East. The single most interesting one that I was involved in was with Qatar. Once my one-year rule has passed -- you know, you have to wait a year before you can start representing anybody in the State Department -- my partner who had been representing Qatar for many years asked me to help recover a large sum of money that had been taken from the national bank by the former emir, who had been deposed. We went to Doha and met the top people and, on my return, I met the Swiss ambassador and then went to Bern for a meeting with very senior officials. We then visited seven or eight countries in Europe, as well as New York, and hired top lawyers in each. After we met the legal niceties the Swiss froze all of the former emir's assets in Switzerland and the other countries did the same in their jurisdictions. after journeying to a number of other different countries the Swiss went in and froze his assets. The former emir basically sued for peace and we negotiated a very substantial deal.

Every representation of a sovereign involved different mandates. For the Philippines we bought investment missions. Under Fujimori pursued ways to reconcile the positions of the United States and Peru in a meeting with State Department officials. My colleagues, spend a great deal of time on Capitol Hill talking with members. In the last few years we assisted in securing congressional approval of major trade agreements with Korea, Peru, Panama.

When you represent a sovereign you're basically doing what you did before except that the national interests you're trying to protect are the interests of that country. My approach was always to try to find win-win solutions and I always tried to coordinate with U.S. officials consistent with my fiduciary duties to the particular client.

Q: Well now, have law firms developed to such a point -- I imagine they have, have for probably a long time, but to have not quite an ombudsman, but to have a guardian angel to make sure they're not going beyond the bounds? I mean we have these scandals from time to time and I would think you'd need somebody to be sitting there, taking a very hard look at everything that's being done.

KAPLAN: Well, you're absolutely right. We don't, in this firm, and I think in most large firms, we don't accept a case or a matter to handle without going through a structured review process to make sure that there are no ethical issues involved, to make sure there's no conflict of interest with other clients that we have

Q: Do you have a problem with young men and women coming out of schools? They certainly appear to have had a problem with them coming out of financial training institutions. You know, cutting very -- sailing very close to the wind on, on financial matters. And I mean --

KAPLAN: You mean appropriating the funds of their clients or --

Q: Well, not appropriating the funds of the client, but insider trading?

KAPLAN: I haven't seen that here.

Q: And I was just wondering, you know, there's been over the past few years been a lot of concern about, there's too much effort put into the, say the bottom line being --

KAPLAN: Well, it's a business, but you must comply with legal and ethical criteria. You have to pass the Bar Exam and the bar has a ethical and legal strictures which you must comply with, or you may be disbarred. There are many competent lawyers working hard on behalf of their clients. Some are better than others, just as in the Foreign Service. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that the is about life. It's about all the things that people can do to each other, and how you try to regulate that. There are disputes between people as there are between states and there has to be a system to work this out. We have a set of courts with judges to do that and lawyers who have to be trained and must to pass a Bar Exam in their state. There is a better chance to be doing substantial interesting things in a larger firm. In a smaller firm you are meeting people all the time. As a young lawyer out in California I knew my clients intimately. Some of them were clients that I wouldn't particularly want to socialize with, but they were dependent on me. So it's, it's interesting because you deal with a whole different set of aspects of life.

Q: Well, how do you find in a firm such as Patton Boggs the revolving door of congressional staff members? People who've had their -- I mean I realize there's a certain gap that you have to wait before you can take on things, but it still is a little bit bothersome. Same people who make the law later are hired to unmake the law.

KAPLAN: Well what you're advocating for is your clients who have a right to be defended and to be represented in commercial and other kinds of disputes. On policy issues, we have gone to Capitol Hill to advocate for our clients who want to change the law. If you are in a dispute and can't resolve it within the four corners of the law, there's a huge body of law, stare decisis *(to stand by things decided)* and all of that, that people have to take into account and uphold in most cases. Or you can go to the Congress, petition on behalf of your client to change the law in ways that will in your view be more

fair and more appropriate. There are 435 congressmen and 100 senators who are rather savvy guys and you must make the case and advocate for it.

In the policy arena, money has a real impact. Congressmen and senators to get elected must engage in fundraising. It's perfectly legitimate and legal for people in a law firm or people anywhere else to contribute to campaigns, but we must register to do so, report the to Department of Justice when we lobby on behalf of clients with the congress. There is no member of Congress, Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative, hard-left, hard-right, or in the center who doesn't receive money for campaigns. Otherwise they just couldn't run them.

Q: Yeah. Well, sort of a last question. After you time in the Foreign Service, you got these bright young people coming out of Brown or elsewhere.

KAPLAN: Sure.

Q: And they say often it's the case of law or Foreign Service. What do you recommend?

KAPLAN: *(laughs)* I usually say, "It's up to you." Or, "What do you want to do?" There are pluses and minuses to both of these professions and to all professions, and to all jobs. The first issue at least as we sit here speaking in 2014 is can you get any job. Because things are very tough.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: I teach at the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington University. I've taught at Brown and the American University. These are adjunct jobs. It keeps me in touch with young people, because every generation has a different set of interests and values. So the first task is to get a job. Is the student interested in public service or in accumulating wealth? In stability or diversity? there's the gender issue. A lot of young women who never could have gotten into the Foreign Service, or at least in a position of any seriousness, well, three out of the last four secretaries of state have been women. I go to the State Department now and see every other office or more is headed by a woman. If there are 20 students in my class on international crisis diplomacy, maybe 15 want to go in the Foreign Service, in just one university, one class! That's impossible.

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: As for the women, if they ask, I point out to them if I feel I know them well enough, that they must think carefully about the impact that this is going to have on their life. Do you want to get married? What happens if you get married and it's another Foreign Service guy and you're separated? What happens if he's not in the Foreign Service and he wants to go be on Wall Street and you're in Ecuador? How do you manage all that?

I see the same thing in this law firm. When I first got here there were just two women partners, and now it's changed dramatically. When I went to law school in Berkeley there were two women in the freshman class of about 220. One was a truck driver who didn't last very long, and the other was the former administrative assistant to Clark Kerr, the president of the University of California. She was first in the class and now is an associate justice of the California Supreme Court. Her boyfriend at the time she was in law school later became governor and appointed her to the Supreme Court, although she married someone else. So life takes funny --

Q: Yeah.

KAPLAN: -- funny little bounces. Everybody's got to figure it out. And may we close with this, I think, because I mentioned it before. I had never heard of the Foreign Service, and I was practicing law out in California and thinking of running for Congress. Remember, I would have had to run against Shirley Temple. And someone said, "Hey, you ought to take the Foreign Service Test."

I said, "What's that? I thought it was the Foreign Legion. Just on a lark I took the Foreign Service Test and I found it hard. I was getting to the point where I had to make a decision about whether to run for Congress or not and the letter comes from Washington saying, "Congratulations, you're admitted to the Foreign Service." I was amazed. I had forgotten about it completely. I made a decision to come in, which I've never regretted. My friend Pete McCloskey ran, and he beat Shirley Temple in a 60-day election. Now, , who can predict such a thing? No matter how disciplined you are, no matter how carefully you plan things, who could predict that things would turn out exactly like that?

Q: Oh no, absolutely.

KAPLAN: That's what life's about, and that's why there are lawyers to handle all these things *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs) OK, well we'll finish this off now. Now, you'll be getting a transcript and I hope you will edit it. Once it's done we give a copy to the Library of Congress where it'll be posted on the internet, and we'll also post one on our website. Thank you very much.

KAPLAN: I want to thank you, Stu. This has been terrific.

End of interview