

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

THOMAS KRAJESKI

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: February 23, 2016
Copyright 2017 ADST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background

Born, Groveland Massachusetts, 1950
BA in Russian language and literature, University of
Massachusetts at Amherst, 1975
MA in Russian language and literature, University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1977
Entered Foreign Service, 1979

Kathmandu, Nepal Foreign Service Officer	1980-1982
Madras, India Chief of the consular section	1982-1984
State Department Press Office	1985
Warsaw, Poland Deputy Chief of consular section	1985-1988
Bureau of Near Eastern and Asian Affairs Political desk officer on the India Desk	1988
Operations Center during the first Gulf War Senior watch Officer	1990
Foreign Service Institute (Arabic language studies)	1990-1992
Cairo, Egypt Political Officer	1992-1997
U.S. Consulate, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Principal Officer and Consul General	1997-2001

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Deputy Director then Director	2001-2004
Baghdad, Iraq Political Advisor, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer's staff at the Coalition Provisional Authority	7-10 2003
Republic of Yemen Ambassador	2004-2007
Baghdad, Iraq Senior Advisor to Ambassador Ryan Crocker on Northern Iraq Affairs Received the President's Distinguished Service Award (2008)	2008-2009
National Defense University (NDU) Senior Vice President	2009
Bahrain Ambassador	2011-2014
Senior Advisor for Partner Engagement on Syria Foreign Fighters	2015-2016
Retired	2016

INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 23rd of February, 2016, with Thomas ...

KRAJESKI: Krajewski - we pronounce it the American way. "Krai-yefski" is good Polish. "Krai" is border, like Ukraine. It also means country in Polish; in Polish it translates as countryman or patriot.

Q: K-r-a-j-e-s-k-i.

KRAJESKI: The 'y' is the Russian way.

Q: I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Tom, I take it? Where were you born?

KRAJESKI: Salem, Massachusetts, 1950. My father was the son of Polish immigrants who for reasons - who knows why immigrants settle anywhere, but there was a Polish community in Salem, so his mom and dad literally came up through Ellis Island and had connections in Salem. That's where they met and married. My dad was born in Salem in 1918. My mum's family is much more diverse; Quebecois from Quebec, Leveques and Laformes, and then her father's family go back to the Mayflower in New England.

Q: Let's look at your father's side first. What do you know, where do they come from in Poland?

KRAJESKI: One of the great things about the Foreign Service, as you know, Stu, is sometimes you have the opportunity to go back. I served in Warsaw from 1985 to 1988 as deputy in the consular section. My dad came to visit us (my mom had died), he was there for three months and part of that was going back to the place where his mom and dad were born. His mum was from a small town called Novi Bielun, just north of Warsaw. We actually drove up there, visited the church where she was baptized. Tried to get her records, but when the Nazis occupied Poland (1939-45), they destroyed thousands of birth and marriage records deliberately. So we weren't able to find her birth record. We did meet with an old priest who said they used to go down to the basement and copy the records before they gave them to the Nazis. My grandfather was from Łomża which is in the southeast of Poland, southeast of Warsaw, a rather depressing industrial town. Both of them left at the turn of the century, when part (of Poland) was controlled by the Russians, the other part by the Germans. Poland has had very few periods of independence in its history, now being a great one. So they were part of the great migration of Slavs and southern Europeans who came to the States.

Q: When they got to the States, your grandfather, what was he doing?

KRAJESKI: It's not as clear with my grandfather except there were Krajeskis in Salem, Massachusetts. So he had some kind of a relative in Salem, so when he came it was a deliberate plan to take the train (I guess) up to Boston and up to Salem, which is just north of Boston, where he had a job waiting for him. He worked in a small factory. He was not uneducated, but he was by no means a professional. He worked at a number of things. Then my babcia, my grandma, followed a few years, maybe seven, eight years later. She didn't know anyone, just had an address in Salem. She came up and they were introduced in Salem. They didn't know each other before then.

Q: Your mother, she came from...

KRAJESKI: She was born in Salem as well, my mother was. But her family, her mother, my nana's family were all Lavecques and Laformes from out of the eastern provinces of Quebec. If you know New England, there are lots of French Canadians who have settled in New England. They came to New England sometime in the 19th century, I'm not precisely sure because there were no border controls, no immigration, basically...

Q: I know that. My grandfather was born in Prince Edward's Island.

KRAJESKI: I also have relatives from Prince Edward's, McDonalds, this is on the other side, her (mother's) father's side.

Q: The Scottish side, this is where Celtics come from. Did your mother have much of an education?

KRAJESKI: High school. Both mother and father only high school. Mom is born in 1920, so they're in their teens. It's the Depression, though the families did not do badly. Both had jobs. Large families, my dad comes from seven kids, my mom from nine kids. In Salem. I don't know much about my mother's father, a businessman, for that period reasonably well-off - well, not well-off; for that period they weren't moving around, they didn't lose their house, they survived the Depression intact. They went to Salem High School; both graduated in the same year, didn't know each other. My dad wanted to join the Navy, that was his goal. This is 1937. He worked for the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), one of the jobs programs that Roosevelt put into place.

Q: The WPA (Works Progress Administration)?

KRAJESKI: This was called CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps. He built a lot of the Appalachian Trail and the huts on the Appalachian Trail up in New Hampshire. It instilled in him a love for the mountains. As kids, he took us out to the White Mountains every year, that's where we went, we camped, we hiked. So he joined the Navy, and then of course the war came along so he was very much in the Navy.

Q: What sort of career did he have in the Navy?

KRAJESKI: He was an engineer in the Navy.

Q: Sea Bee or?

KRAJESKI: No, he was a stationary steam engineer, he ran the power plants of the ships. He spent his war down below decks on the *USS Iowa* and the *USS Newport News* too. The *Iowa* was a battleship and the *Newport News* a heavy cruiser. Mostly in the Atlantic, almost entirely in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the invasion of southern France, off of the Anzio invasion. He was not in the D-Day invasion. He may have been back in the States refitting. He said he didn't see a lot of action, but basically everything was going on above deck. You can hear the big guns going off, you knew things were going, it was hard work. He was in the Navy till '46. When the war was done he went into the reserves. My mum was a WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) in the women's navy, worked as a clerk in New York City and Salem, Massachusetts. They had met each other during that time somehow. They were never very clear. They claimed they didn't know each other in high school even though they graduated from the same class. They didn't live that far apart in Salem, which isn't a very big place. But they met and married immediately after the war - met during the war then got married in '45.

Q: You were born in Salem?

KRAJESKI: I was born in Salem in 1950. Only lived there a few years. Again, I mentioned the huge families. My dad's ambition was to move a little bit away from the family. Plus he had a job at a big power plant. He worked his whole life for New England Power in their generating plants. He wanted to be a farmer; he loved farming, even

though he knew nothing about it. So he bought a small farm in the Merrimack River valley north of Boston, a big 250-year-old colonial house with about 20 acres of land, and he moved us all up there. Eventually there were seven of us, seven kids, and I grew up on a small farm in the Merrimack River valley in Massachusetts.

Q: What did you raise?

KRAJESKI: All kinds of animals because he was always experimenting with different animals, and a lot of vegetables. He learned as he went; he was always looking at books. Of course, it was a farming community that in those days was transforming into a suburban community, Groveland, Massachusetts. They built a big Western Electric plant near there so a lot of farmland was being converted into suburban tracts, "Beaver Cleaver" housing was what we called it. So the town was changing as I was growing up. His ambition was to grow everything on the table; the table was ours. The only thing, he couldn't do was dairy; he could never keep a cow pregnant. I have lots of stories about the vet coming over attempting to impregnate another cow; it never worked.

Q: Pop over to Vermont...

KRAJESKI: He used to barter. We had a lot of chickens, We'd have three or four hundred chickens, so we would barter eggs for milk and for dairy products.

Q: What was it like being a kid on this farm?

KRAJESKI: It was a very happy childhood. My mom and dad were terrific. We worked all the time. My dad had his day job, which was actually a 24-hour job; it was shift work, the power plants ran all the time. He was a shift manager, so he worked different hours. My memories of him are almost all on the farm. As kids we had to get up early in the morning, five, six o'clock in the morning, go out and gather the eggs and feed the animals. We always had pigs, we had turkeys, chickens. One time he had goats - we didn't like the goats. We had rabbits; my mom decided we weren't going to eat rabbits. He used to sell them at Easter time. Then we had a vegetable stand, huge vegetable gardens - four, five acres. Mostly the vegetables were sold out front in a farm stand we used to work at in the summer time. Then we just ate lots of vegetables. It's been a real struggle for me until recently, the quality of produce in the stores has really improved. When you were growing up, going out and picking the corn and flinging it into the pan 20 minutes later to be boiled, there's nothing like it. It was a small town, small elementary school. The savior for me was the regional school; it was such a small town, we didn't have a high school. So we fed into Pentucket Regional High School, where three towns made up the student body.

Q: Let's talk about elementary school first. What religion was your family?

KRAJESKI: We were Polish Catholics. Poland is 99% Catholic. We were Polish Catholics; there was a Catholic church in town. Of course, being a small New England town there was Episcopalians, Congregationalists were the biggest, and the Catholics.

Q: I'm familiar with the Irish Catholics...

KRAJESKI: And you're familiar with the Polish Catholics. Very similar.

Q: Were things almost dictatorial?

KRAJESKI: We had Father McGuiness, an Irish priest, who was a tough old tyrant. One of my early memories, I was nine or 10 years old. Father McGuiness came to the house, we were in the living room. He had the five boys - Steven, Michael, Thomas, Lawrence and William, ranging in ages then from about 13 to six. And Father McGuiness said "Chet" (my father's name was Chester, Czeslaw in Polish) and he said, "Chet, one of these boys is going to be a priest. You're going to give one of them to the church. We want Tommy, he's the smart one." My father, God bless him, said "Not going to happen, Father. The boys are going to decide their own futures and whatever they want to do, I'm going to support them in doing it. If one of them wants to become a priest, God bless him, but I am not going to make that decision for them." Thank God for that. And he wouldn't send us to Catholic school, which Father McGuiness was very unhappy about. He wanted us to go to public schools. This regional school in the 1960s was really an excellent high school.

Q: And of course, being in Massachusetts, too. The state cares about education.

KRAJESKI: It did. I remember we had doctorates, guys with Ph.D.s in high school teaching us. A couple of them, not a whole lot. And then for me, familiar story, there was one teacher. His name was Albert Lauritz von Rasmussen. The "von" was an affectation, he was actually born in Newton, Massachusetts. He affected a kind of a German/Danish accent. He drove around in a black VW Beetle with a German flag and an American flag, kind of like an ambassador, on the front of the Beetle. He wore a little beret with a German flag on it. He spoke fluent Russian, fluent German, French which is what he taught at the high school, and he spoke Turkish of all things. He was one of these - he would have been a great Foreign Service officer except he was crazy. That may not have disqualified him either. When I started seventh grade at this school, I just loved languages, and he taught me German and Russian.

Q: Go back to elementary school first. Were you much of a reader?

KRAJESKI: Oh, yeah. We had a tiny little library, the Bradley Library in Groveland. Everything was walking distance or biking distance from the house, and I used to go up to the library constantly. I think I read everything in the library.

Q: This is one of the advantages I think of growing up with a small library, you really spread yourself all over rather than go with one overly endowed and end up concentrating on one kind of book.

KRAJESKI: It was just constant. My mom and my dad were readers, but what I remember mostly are the Reader's Digest books; they subscribed to Reader's Digest. So they had...

Q: They had about five books in ...

KRAJESKI: In one volume. I remember reading all of those. I remember memorizing books as a little kid and sitting on her lap and reading to her, even though I really didn't know what I was reading. Memorized a particular book.

Q: Do you recall any books that particularly struck you at an early age?

KRAJESKI: Honestly, it's the Hardy Boys. The whole series of adventure stories, whether it was Tom Swift or the Hardy Boys. I loved those stories, and I loved those characters, I got to know the characters. I still love to watch serials on television; I'm a *Game of Thrones* addict. Terrible confession to make. I also remember Richard Halliburton. He had a book about the seven wonders of the world; what an amazing traveler he was. Always bigger books too, with lots of pictures. I remember going through Halliburton's books. Of course, I never traveled anywhere.

Q: Halliburton hit me, I remember him swimming in the Bosphorus.

KRAJESKI: That's right! What a crazy man.

Q: I've spoken to a number of other Foreign Service officers who were grabbed by this man; he got you out there.

KRAJESKI: Great adventures. Then I loved Jules Verne as well. I really liked the good story tellers. And Halliburton combined these great descriptions of the world - and when you're in Groveland, Massachusetts, the world was a small place. You begin to realize how big it is. My mom and dad always got the Boston Globe; they subscribed to Time magazine - they were Time not Newsweek folks, there was somehow a divide between Time and Newsweek folks, I'm not quite sure what that was. They really encouraged us.

Q: Where did your family fall politically?

KRAJESKI: We were Kennedy liberals. This is 1960, again my first political memory is the Nixon-Kennedy election of 1960. Even though my father, of course he was a military guy and my uncle was an Army guy who worked for Eisenhower during the war, he was an officer, so there was a lot of respect for Eisenhower but they didn't like Nixon. They were from Massachusetts and it was Kennedy. He was young and handsome, even though he spoke a very strange accent, it was not an accent any New Englander associated with. He was kind of one of us, so that was important. When I was ten years old, you just chose sides.

Q: My father in law was from Massachusetts, used to call it mid-Atlantic Choctaw.

KRAJESKI: I'm not sure what the Kennedys spoke. It certainly wasn't in my ear growing up; I can do the accent if you want that I grew up with. We were very much Massachusetts liberals. The school was too; the philosophy at both my elementary school and the high school was very liberal and open. It was not dictatorial at all. I'm a left-hander, and in those days they often took the pens out of the left hand and said, "No, you're going to write with your right hand." Never. I wish they had, it would have made it a lot easier to take notes as a Foreign Service officer later on; taking notes like this (with a left hander's hook) is really hard.

Q: With the large family, were there a lot of discussions about the world at the dinner table?

KRAJESKI: My father encouraged it, but not so many. We were kids. We'd be outside playing, working, whatever the season was. You came roaring in, my mom had a huge dinner on the table. You ate as fast as you could so you could get outside again. It made my father nuts. He said, "No, we're going to have a conversation, we're going to talk." He'd bring up an issue, whatever it might be, and we just weren't the least bit interested. We were more interested in going out and getting another couple of innings in and playing baseball before it got dark.

Q: I'm still interviewing men and women who grew up during the feral youth stage, now as a helicopter parent who takes kids to the various classes...

KRAJESKI: I've got three of my own.

Q: ... sports events. I assume in your time, "Dinner's at 6:30, you be back then, but get out of the house."

KRAJESKI: "Feral" is interesting. Particularly for summertime; summer - I'm saying "summa," I can hear myself getting the accent back as we talk. We'd get up early in the morning, and my father had already gone off to work then, and he would leave a list of chores. "Weed the peas, clean the chicken pen," whatever it might be. For two or three hours, we worked. Then the rest of the day was ours. I actually grew up on Main Street and we used to swim at the Old Mill Pond. We would take our bikes - it was maybe a 10 minute bike ride away. The ball field was up a hill, so that was a struggle - that was maybe a 20 minute bike ride away. You play ball, jump in the pond and swim. We were surrounded by woods. We were right on the Merrimack River. We were forbidden to go near the river, mostly because it was terribly polluted in those days and if you fell in, they'd take you to the hospital to give you shots. The river bank was no more than 500 yards from our house, but we were forbidden to go near it. Now they swim, they boat, they catch salmon! The river has changed. In those days it was all Lowell and Lawrence and Haverhill, all mill towns, all had shoe factories, leather tanneries - it would all get dumped in the river. The river was a mess.

Q: High school. Did you get involved in activities there?

KRAJESKI: We did a lot. It was a small high school, wasn't huge even though it was the three towns - Merrimack, West Newbury and Groveland that made up the high school. They offered a lot. So as I said, they had languages beyond French and Spanish. They had German and Russian. He tried Turkish but nobody was interested in doing Turkish with him, not even me. German and Russian were it. We had great history and literature teachers. We had - we called them English teachers in those days - she had a club that I loved, where we would do outside reading. In the eighth grade you had a certain reading list, but she introduced me to Ralph Ellison and Invisible Man, to Huckleberry Finn, to Thomas Wolfe. Her name was Wolfe and her son's name was Tom, she loved Thomas Wolfe. We did this after school. Then on the weekends she would take us as a group down to Boston and we'd go to the private library in Boston, the Athenaeum, it's right on Beacon Hill. We would go to Boston University with my German and Russian teacher to go to German nights.

Q: I went to Boston U. GI Bill.

KRAJESKI: I couldn't afford to go, I really wanted to go to Boston University, but they wouldn't give me a scholarship and I couldn't afford it. It was Vietnam as I was going to college. The school offered a lot. Then sports; I did cross country, tennis.

Q: Any particular movies or TV shows?

KRAJESKI: I have a memory of the TV being on during the day quite a lot. My mom worked around the house of course and she was constantly cooking, cleaning. I learned later on that she had serious bouts of depression; as a kid I never even had a hint. My sisters - there were seven of us, five boys first then two girls were the youngest. Only in the last 10 or 15 years did my sister say, "Mom had terrible depression." But the TV was always on. She loved soap operas, although frankly every time I saw her she'd be sleeping in the chair with the soap opera on, taking a break. Maybe the sleeping was depression, I don't know. So the TV was on. And at night there were certain events, whether it was the *Walt Disney Show* - I forget what night that was, everybody loved *Disney*, the cartoons. My mom and dad loved it, it was on about seven or eight o'clock at night, Saturday night maybe? That was a television event. My father adored *The Flintstones*, for some reason I remember watching that when he was home. Otherwise the television wasn't on a whole lot. Movies, they were over in Haverhill, you had to take your bike across the river to Haverhill, which was even then on its downward slope, becoming a depressing place. They didn't like us going over there; it wasn't dangerous. In high school I had friends in Haverhill. That's where movie theaters were; we didn't go very often.

Q: Do you recall majoring in anything in high school?

KRAJESKI: Nah. My strengths were languages, so Russian and German were my two key courses. And I did history and literature. I was not a science guy or math guy.

Q: Was the school commercial or job-tracked, that sort of thing?

KRAJESKI: They tracked kids according to their testing, so you were placed in a division in the seventh grade. I remember they were marked as 72, 72A, 72B, 75, and then 77. The smart kids were in 72. Not so smart kids were in 77, and they were the ones who did woodshop and metal shop and mechanics, automobile mechanics. We got Russian and German and literature. It was considered a kind of a natural thing; as you look back on it, it's hard because once you were pegged, it was really hard to move from 77 to 75 to 72. Even if maybe you just tested badly, you were tracked. So the kids in 72 were expected to go to college, kids in 77 were expected to go to trade schools or join the military.

Q: In high school, was it obvious you were going to go to college or not?

KRAJESKI: No one (in my family) had been to college. My older brother Steven went to college, he went to Salem College for teaching for four years. He was the first to get a B.A. (bachelor of arts). It was expected I would go to college right from the beginning. Certainly the school expected me to go. My mom and dad did, though they never put a lot of pressure, it was never like "You have to go to college, you have to apply to college." I don't recall my father sitting down and saying, "You have to work hard so you can go to college." They expected us to work hard, to do well, but there wasn't this enormous pressure that "You've got to go to college, that's the only way you'll succeed."

Q: Did you have any particular goal in mind?

KRAJESKI: Story of my life here. Nah, I never really had any particular goal in mind. Rasmussen, this teacher, he said, "You know, you're good at languages. You should look at the Foreign Service." I'd never heard of the Foreign Service before. Two things he got me. He got me George Kennan's book, his autobiography. And he got me this weird book about diplomacy; I'd love to find it again, I don't know what the title is. I've asked him, he doesn't remember it, but it was sort of "what is a diplomat?" and it was guys in morning coats and tails. And then there were stories about Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams, famous American diplomats of the early days in it. Then there was Kennan's book. And I thought, "This seems like a cool thing to do." But I didn't focus on it. I loved literature, and when I went to school - the only one I could afford to go to was the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, they gave me a full scholarship - my focus was literature and languages. But with a goal in mind? I didn't really have one.

Q: What was the University of Massachusetts like when you went?

KRAJESKI: It was an eye opener. (Groveland was a) tiny little town, maybe 3000 people, 160 in my graduating class. University of Massachusetts was 20,000 students out in Amherst, in the Pioneer Valley, the Connecticut River valley, and it was overwhelming. I was in shock when I showed up there. It's 1968, which is a tumultuous year. Vietnam literally exploding, the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, of Martin Luther

King. The Chicago convention, Johnson deciding not to run. Vietnam is very much in the focus. In my high school years, we had talked about Vietnam in civic courses, but it was all a very objective discussion of it. When you got to college, it became emotional, visceral. Vietnam was part of your being, and I fell right into that crowd, the group who were protesting Vietnam, who were unhappy about the school's policies. We started our own university, Free University, that was out in a field. We built geodesic domes. I frankly indulged in all of the stimulants of that time as well. It was a wild time. In high school, I had, literally, before graduation, one can of beer. I pretended to be an athlete, that's part of it. Marijuana? The only marijuana I'd seen had been a plastic leaf that the school nurse showed us, saying "Watch out for this stuff." It was plastic, and I thought, "What the hell is that stuff?" I did college in September of '68 and the whole world...

Q: How did that work?

KRAJESKI: It didn't work. I only lasted three semesters, I didn't do that well. I loved my writing and literature classes but I didn't go to a whole lot of classes. My grades were poor, they took the scholarships away. I spent a lot of time protesting, marching.

Q: Was this just something fun to do or did you feel in a protest mode?

KRAJESKI: I don't know. I felt a little directionless, I felt as though I was being swept up in these events that I didn't really understand, I was doing things that I didn't particularly like doing. I met a lot of fascinating people, I have friends from that period who are still some of my best friends. I married the sister of one of them. After three semesters, a couple of things happened. One, I had done poorly in school. Two, the war was getting more intense. My brother Steven had been drafted out of teaching, he was teaching and they drafted him. I was more and more protesting - and Norman Mailer came to the campus and talked about how this was a urban/black war, and "You" - he's looking at an audience of people who look like me - "You guys are cop-outs. You got your student deferments, you don't have to go. You can protest, you can hold your signs, you can grow your hair long, but it's an empty protest." So I decided I would quit school, become eligible for the draft, and I would refuse to go. So that's what I did. Part of it was I couldn't afford to go to school anymore because my scholarship was gone. I had realized I really wasn't going anywhere, this wasn't good for me. The third was this almost convenient political excuse to say, "I'm going to protest the war. I'm going to quit college, I'm going to refuse to go to the draft, I'm going to go to jail." This is 1970.

Q: Did you have people who looked up to who were doing this?

KRAJESKI: Not really. I didn't have any particular role models. I remember talking to my father about it, my father was a very solid guy. He said, "You have to do what you think is right," but he was not happy.

Q: While you were doing this, I have to say, I was consul-general in Saigon.

KRAJESKI: Going into the Foreign Service then, that's where a lot of us went. So I did that. I was immediately eligible. The lottery had just happened and my number was quite low; I was going to be drafted. This is actually a telling moment, when I realized I was good at persuasion. I went into my draft board, and I applied for conscientious objector status - even though I'm Catholic and technically that status is granted only to the relatively few people who are ethically, morally opposed to killing, to fighting. I was not, I was a Catholic. I was opposed to the war. I wasn't going to go to the war, I was not going to fight in this dirty war. You're 20 years old, you know everything and everything is much clearer. "I'm not going to fight in this dirty war." I sat there, in a room like this, with the four guys on the draft board in Groveland, Massachusetts. One of them was my former history teacher; one is my former Scout master - I was very big into Scouts, by the way, I loved Boy Scouts and camping. One of them was a friend of my dad's and the other guy, I forget. Four men, about your age. I'm sitting there talking to them, and I said, "You've got two options here. I'm not going to go to Canada. I'm not going to join the military. So either you're going to grant me conscientious objector status that I technically don't qualify for, or I'm going to go to jail." I knew, sitting in that room, those guys were not going to send Chet Krajieski's kid to jail; they just weren't going to do it. My dad wrote a letter to the board, saying "Tommy has always done what he thinks is right and I've supported him." My brother who was just finishing boot camp and was going to be assigned to Vietnam sent a letter, saying "He's his own self." Within 24 hours they gave me conscientious objector status and I went off, took a little trip, worked in a factory, bought a motorcycle, rode across country - and then got drafted. Did two years' alternative service.

Q: Was there if you were a conscientious objector, an alternative - "if you're not going to do that, we'll put you teaching Pueblo Indians English or something?"

KRAJESKI: What I wanted to do was join the Peace Corps; that's what I was looking at, but the Peace Corps would not take conscientious objectors. They said, "We don't want to be seen as a haven for draft dodgers." Now, had I applied to the Peace Corps before I had applied for conscientious objector status and got accepted to the Peace Corps, they would have taken me and I could have done my alternative service in the Peace Corps. I didn't know that. So they said "No." And basically it was, "Find your own job and get it approved by the board." So it had to be in certain areas. So I went and worked in hospitals in Boston for two years; that was it.

Q: What were you doing in hospitals?

KRAJESKI: I was a surgical orderly at New England Deaconess Hospital, and then I was a file clerk at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. One year of each. Relatively useless work.

Q: What does a surgical orderly do?

KRAJESKI: That was fun, except I had to get up at six o'clock in the morning, which was really a struggle when you're 20 years old. A surgical orderly goes off to the room where

the person to be operated on is drugged out and waiting, and you wheel them through the hospital to the surgical suites. Then you prep them for surgery. You shave whatever part it is that's going to be cut. You work with the nurse, the chief surgical nurse, to prepare the patient for bringing them into the room. Then you bring them in the room. Then you're kind of free. You may have another patient you're working. Then I would watch the operation. Which was fascinating, I'd never seen this stuff before. That was very interesting. Then after you'd take the patient back to the recovery room, wait to take the patient back to their hospital room. It was interesting; I thought about medicine at that point, but as I said I was never a science guy. Biology was my weakest subject in high school. Again, I had no particular goal. I will add here, Stu, that in June of 1970 my brother had been in Vietnam for two months, and he was killed by a landmine in Vietnam. It tore my mother apart, and it made me into a very cynical person. Not only was I opposed to the war, I now hated the people who brought us in to the war. I hated Richard Nixon, I wanted nothing to do with anything. For those two years in Boston I basically went into hiding.

Q: Did you find being, were you identified as a conscientious objector?

KRAJESKI: I still have my card.

Q: I mean, did people know that, did this attract attention, plus or minus?

KRAJESKI: It's really interesting. As I applied for the Foreign Service, I thought about two things. One, I thought about smoking marijuana in 1968. And two, I thought about being a conscientious objector. Would those be two barriers that I would have to cross, after I had passed the written exam and the oral exam and I was preparing for all the security stuff. It was not at all. Indeed, it was looked upon as honorable service. "You didn't go running to Canada" - frankly I didn't do some of the things that our recent past presidents did, get a cushy job with the National Guard, keep your college deferment up. It actually helped me with the military for the last 10 or 15 years as I worked very closely with the military in Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain. There was a sense that, "Yeah, you did an honorable thing. You did what you thought was right." As you know from your work with the military too, military officers have a very high, keen sense of personal integrity. To do what you believe is really important to them. So, it was not a problem. The marijuana thing was no problem either, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) guy just said, "In 1968, college? OK. Forget about it."

Q: Did you inhale?

KRAJESKI: Yeah, I sure did.

Q: A joke of the era where President Clinton was asked if he smoked marijuana and said, "Well I didn't inhale."

KRAJESKI: Sort of told you something about Clinton, I think.

Q: What was the second job you did?

KRAJESKI: I was a file clerk. A file clerk at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, down in the basement of the hospital, shuffling papers around. It was really boring. At the end of it, couple of good things happened. One, I met the woman I subsequently married and am still married to. It was during those two years. She was the sister of a guy I had known in college, we had gotten very close. And two, I really wanted to get back to college. I didn't want to go into medicine, and I sure as hell didn't want to be a file clerk. So you talk about motivation and goals, my motivation was "Go back and finish your degree." I went back to the University of Massachusetts in '72, and three years later, graduated with my degree. Did much better by the way, those three years.

Q: When you went back, was it a different university?

KRAJESKI: I was a different person. I was much more mature. I knew what I wanted, I wanted to study Russian - the language and the literature, and do Slavic linguistics. The university had a good program. Like all these big state universities, if you know what you want, you can find it. Find the people who are engaged in it. The university became a very small university for me. It was all in one building, Herter Hall, that's where the Russian and German departments were, that's where the history department was, that's where I spent my career. Instead of living on campus, in these enormous dormitories that UMass had at the time, we lived off-campus in a little farmhouse over the hill, beautiful farmland, reminded me of growing up, rode my bicycle to school. It was a much more manageable place. So it was a different university for me.

Q: I went to school in Massachusetts, I went in Williamstown to a college, Williams.

KRAJESKI: Nice school, got a good reputation. It's really isolated up there.

Q: It really is.

KRAJESKI: We used to hitchhike down to New York or drive down there, you could get to Boston in two hours.

Q: How was Smith?

KRAJESKI: We had what was called the five colleges there, if you went to any of the schools you could take courses at any of the others. So I took a couple of courses at Smith, in Northampton. We liked Northampton a lot, it was a very cool little town. Then Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke, and Amherst were the other four. UMass was the behemoth.

Q: What attracted you to Russian studies?

KRAJESKI: Mostly the language. I just found that the language was both beautiful, and its structure was something I was endlessly interested in. I went all the way back to Old

Church Slavonic; I went to grad school after, did two years of Slavic linguistics and literature. There was something about that. Then the romance. Russia is a very romantic place. You don't think of Putin being romantic, and he ain't. But Russia is a place in which romance is important. So it was very attractive. I loved Tolstoy and Pushkin, Lermontov and the stories that they wrote and told. I loved to be able to read them in Russian, that's a great thing. The poetry is truly beautiful, Russian poetry. I still have a lot of it in my head. It's a fascinating history, and in those days of course it was the Soviet Union so it was an interesting place for many aspects.

Q: Did University of Massachusetts have the campus Marxists?

KRAJESKI: That's interesting. I took a couple of economic courses; I didn't want to do just literature and I knew I'd have to find a job eventually. I did history, and then I did economics as well. I remembered my Marxist economics course. It was taught by this Czech guy whose basic point when he began the course was, "Marxist economics is a joke. It's a system that cannot work. In the course of this three or four months I'm going to explain to you not only why the system doesn't work and won't work and can never work, but why it will bring down the Soviet Union." This is 1973. He said, "Their economic system will eventually cause the Soviet Union to collapse of its own weight." Which I think, with other things in the 1980s, is what happened.

Q: I recall so many people coming back from the Soviet Union, saying "The damn thing doesn't work, but why are they 10 feet tall?"

KRAJESKI: I think, I don't know if this was a conscious decision of Reagan in '81, '82, you know the "Evil Empire," but one thing he did was ramp up our military spending in a deliberate provocation to the Soviet Union, to make them do the same. Was it because he figured it would bust them economically? Or was it just Reagan being Reagan, being tough and standing up to the big bad guy? But it worked. I was not a Marxist, I was not a Communist, I had no particular interest in that. I had not a lot of interest in politics except for supporting George McGovern in '72 - I'm from Massachusetts, and I voted for McGovern, the only state he won. Otherwise... that stuff drifted away a little.

Q: Were you very interested in the Cold War or was it more Russian rather than Soviet Union?

KRAJESKI: Oh, it was more Russian. One of the reasons I left grad school, just as I was going into the doctoral track I decided to cut it off, was partly because I was getting a little tired of Russian literature. We had moved more into the modern era; if you were going to write your thesis and do doctoral work in Russian literature, you really had to focus on somebody in the modern era, and I was not nearly as interested in them. Solzhenitsyn.

Q: I find it interesting, coming out more recently.

KRAJESKI: Couple of writers out there, I don't follow it much more.

Q: I don't either, you think about the music and the literature of the bygone era, just incredible.

KRAJESKI: I was just reading Chekov the other day, one of the most brilliant writers. So that was part of it. I was not interested so much in the Soviet Union or in the political system as I was in the literature, the history.

Q: You got your B.A. when?

KRAJESKI: In '75. Then I did two years of graduate work at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, with the intention of going on to get a doctorate in Russian literature, or Slavic linguistics or comparative literature - when I first started I wasn't quite sure what track I'd be on. I was in the Russian department, and I did two years toward the master's. I had literally taken all the courses, passed all the exams. I was in the library researching my thesis. I was again looking at a fairly modern Russian writer, who had written in the 1920s. And I went into the back stacks of the library at the University of North Carolina. I went back to find a volume of criticism that had been written about this poet's work. The book had been written in 1937, the library had purchased it in 1937. This is 1977, and I was the first one to take it out. I looked at it, and I said, "I have to do something more real with my life." I went home that day and I said, "Bonnie" - we were married then, she was working in Chapel Hill - "I'm not going to do this." And I left.

Q: Two things. In the first place, what was the background of your wife?

KRAJESKI: She is born in Boston, Jamaica Plain. Grew up in Boston. Her family's Jewish, reform Jews. They were either very wealthy or very poor. Her father was a businessman, he had successes and failures. He died when she was quite young, 14. Her mom was left basically with a big house in Boston but not a lot of income. She went back and got her degree in teaching dyslexic children how to read, and worked at a private school. Bonnie had a couple of older brothers but both have died. She went to the University of Mass, too. I didn't know her when she first went, I met her when I went to Boston to do this work, and my friend, her older brother who passed away shortly after that, he introduced me to his sister. She grew up in a wealthy reform Jewish community, but not very heavy on religion at all.

Q: Boston is a very ethnic city. Irish are very strong there.

KRAJESKI: Oh, they are. My daughter married an O'Connell, we're very happy.

Q: Boston Irish are not usually overly tolerant towards Jews.

KRAJESKI: Actually, Boston - the Jewish community had moved from Dorchester and Blue Hill Avenue, Franklin Park - if you know Boston at all, these are not far from Jamaica Plain where my wife grew up. But they gradually moved out in her father's generation in the 1950s and 1960s. They had moved from Dorchester as that became

more of a black area and Hispanic. The Jews had moved to Brookline and to the suburbs. I was never aware and Bonnie was never aware of any big conflict. She went to Girls Latin School which was the premiere girls' high school in Boston. She hated every minute of it, to this day she will not speak a word of Latin, except when she's drunk she sings, "Santa Claus ad opidum wenit." (Laughter) She and her friend from high school, whatever you think about Facebook it connects people, she reconnected with her best friend from high school who still lives in Boston. They went to their reunion, 40th must be by now, last year. She still hated it, didn't like walking into it, didn't like high school at all. The Irish kids, they ran the city. Boston is a great city. We like the north end, that's our favorite.

Q: I met Michael Curley once.

KRAJESKI: Really? The famous Boston mayor? Was he in jail or out of jail?

Q: He was well retired by this time, this is '54 I think. My teacher in political science asked him to come up and talk to us.

KRAJESKI: He's a famous Boston mayor. He was elected from jail; he was in jail and won. That's the story anyway.

Q: Well he was elected from jail, but he was sent to jail for taking an exam for somebody else, for one of his constituents.

KRAJESKI: Gotta serve your constituents!

Q: Did you find the attitude at the University of North Carolina different than the University of Massachusetts? Were you in the South, really?

KRAJESKI: We thought we were. I had never lived anywhere but Massachusetts. Hadn't traveled anywhere. I'd been to Canada; Canada doesn't count when you're in New England. I had never really been anywhere. Once we took a trip to New York City. So North Carolina for us was a little exotic. Chapel Hill's a university town, so it's a lot like Amherst. Smaller, but the university is why the town is there. We thought we were in the South but frankly the Carolinians considered themselves "Carolinians". They're not like the Mississippi and Alabama and Georgia folks, "This is Carolina, it's special." I liked it very much.

Q: It has accepted an awful lot of industry from Europe.

KRAJESKI: The Research Triangle was just starting when I was there, '75 to '77. It was all about Carolina. One thing that was different - at UMass, I never paid any attention to sports. I never went to a basketball game, I never went to a football game, didn't really know how the team did from one year to the next. It wasn't a big part. Carolina - EVERYBODY cared about basketball, you lived and died for the Tar Heels and how they did. Of course, they were always in the top teams. My big memory was riding in the car

with a couple of new friends I had met. I'm 25 years old now, in graduate school. They were talking in the front seat about Dean Smith - "Dean Smith this and Dean Smith that." I wasn't paying a lot of attention. Do you know who Dean Smith is? I found out, because I said from the back seat, "Who's Dean Smith, what school is he dean of?" And they stopped the car and they opened the door and they said, "Get out and walk. When you learn who Dean Smith is, you can ride in this car again." He's the coach of the basketball team. His name is Dean Smith and he was coach for 35 years, he was God on campus. They painted the streets Carolina Blue during the basketball games. The town was deserted, you were either at Cameron (Arena) watching - Cameron? That may have been Duke, the arch-enemy. But sports was big. At grad school you didn't have to pay as much attention to it. But that was a difference. We loved it, we loved Chapel Hill, just a beautiful place.

Q: At that time, how stood your feeling towards civil rights?

KRAJESKI: That wasn't something I thought about very much, frankly. I was doing Russian literature, I was immersed in Crime and Punishment and Pushkin's poetry. I used to ride my bike back from our little house out in the woods, right next to where James Taylor was born and raised, the singer. Gorgeous place, we had a dog, walked in the woods, were just married, doing Russian literature. Wasn't really thinking about it (civil rights). We had friends from the area, so peripherally you got a sense. There was also - Chapel Hill is divided by railroad tracks, between Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Carrboro, which is technically part of Chapel Hill or not depending on who you talk to, Carrboro is the black section of town. Carrboro, folks worked in Carrboro, they didn't go to the university. There was a real split that I was only vaguely aware of, being a Russian literature major, kind of a dumb Northerner. It just wasn't (on my scope). I remembered going visiting a friend who lived in an old slave cabin that had been refurbished into a little house; I thought it was a very cool place, where he lived. I remember visiting a friend of my wife's, and her family who lived in the eastern part of the state which was very divided and racist, and they were - there was a lot of talk around the dinner table that was very upsetting. For them, it was very natural talking about "the blacks;" it was really quite shocking. Then of course, there was the big sign. As you drove out to the beach, there's an enormous sign, "Welcome to" - I forget the name of the town - "Home of the Ku Klux Klan." So, it was there. But I frankly spent my time on campus. I was still very insulated.

Q: Well when did going into the Foreign Service hit your radar?

KRAJESKI: It had always been in the back of my mind; it had fallen pretty much by the wayside as I was doing Russian literature. But we left school, we decided we had to get serious, 27 years old, it's time. William Buckley said, "A man at 24 has to decide what he wants to be at 27," I don't know why that was in my head but it was. So I figured, "I've got to figure out what it is I want to do with my life, and it's not going to be teaching Russian literature. Not going to be an associate professor at the University of Southern Alabama teaching Russian literature." We took a long trip across country in our Volkswagen Bug, drove all over the U.S. and Canada and ended up back in Boston. Literally the first week I was back in Boston, we're living with Bonnie's mom in the big

house in Boston. I went downtown to the federal building and walked into the lobby and there's a big poster saying, "Sign up for the Foreign Service exam." Was only once a year in those days, in December. This is probably July that I saw this. I looked at it, and I said, "Hey I think I'm going to take the exam." I signed up to take the exam. I took it at Boston College in December of 1977. And passed. Boom. In those days, it was hard to find a job, too. This was high inflation, this is Jimmy Carter. Inflation was running at 12 and 14 percent - 12% inflation! Unemployment was high, interest rates were through the roof. Remember the days of stagflation and Whip Inflation Now, this is Jerry Ford. It's amazing, we have no inflation now and our unemployment rate is down to what, five percent? Bumps up occasionally to 10. It was high, it certainly was hard to find a job for a kid with my limited experience, mostly grad school and things with Russian literature. I was offered a job as an assistant Slavic bibliographer at Boston University. I was just about to take it when the Foreign Service came through.

Q: When did you take the oral exam?

KRAJESKI: In June of '78, six months after the written exam.

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

KRAJESKI: I sure do. I still raise them from time to time. Essentially a different exam process now, and I think a more effective process. For me, it was four Foreign Service officers in a room like this, me sitting here, them sitting there, and they could basically ask you anything they wanted to as far as I can tell. This is 1978. "Compare the reaction in the United States to the recent deaths of Elvis Presley and Bing Crosby." That was one question that I got. I also got, "Compare Marxist economics with Keynesian economics, and tell us which of those systems is most likely to succeed." I knew very little about Keynesian economics, only stuff that went back to my undergraduate days; Marxist I had a better sense of. The Bing Crosby one, by the way, I just - I figured all they wanted me to do was just bullshit, see how articulate I am at bullshitting. That worked out. I remember those two questions quite specifically. Then I remember the in-box test. You had the in-box test?

Q: I didn't have the in-box test.

KRAJESKI: This was their attempt to be a little more modern. So after the exam, literally after the oral which was three-and-a-half, four hours, it was long, interview, they brought me out into another room and there was a desk with an in-box and an out-box. The in-box was piled high with various stuff, papers, clips, those little yellow phone messages. They said, "You have one hour. We want you to go through and prioritize your in-box. What are the things you have to do right away? What are the projects that you can pass on to somebody else to do? What can you leave in your in-box a little while longer?" I remember having to do that as well. That may still be part of the oral exam, something like that. It was really very interesting. Then they came out at the end of that hour and said, "OK, you passed." I said, "OK!"

Q: When did you come into the Foreign Service?

KRAJESKI: June of '79. Eighteen months after I took the Foreign Service exam which I learned after I became the director of the Career Development and Assignments in 2008, is still the amount of time it takes to bring somebody in that's passed the written exam. We lose a lot of people because it takes us 18 months from that written exam until we give somebody a job.

Q: We lose so many people who say, "I've got something else going."

KRAJESKI: I had literally two months before the Foreign Service called, accepted the job at Boston University. I didn't really want to do it, but it was the first professional job I had been offered. I was substitute teaching, I was working in a computer magazine in 1978 in Boston. I worked for the Census Bureau doing housing surveys. I had all these jobs as I was trying to find something I could establish a profession in. Then they called, and I told Boston University, "No, I'm going into the Foreign Service."

Q: What'd you do in this interim time?

KRAJESKI: While waiting? This is what I did, a substitute teacher at Newton High School, which is a hard job. Did the housing survey for the Census which consisted of knocking on doors in some really rough sections of Boston and asking people how many toilets they had, how much they got paid, how many children there were, whether they had plumbing problems. They do this every five years with the same houses, so that we have this sense of what housing in the U.S. is like. It's a really interesting survey. I didn't like that job very much. Then I worked for a crazy editor, who published a magazine called Computers and People. This is 1978, so personal computers are just beginning. They were huge, I remember being trained on one, a word processor, in 1978.

Q: They were sort of Wang type...

KRAJESKI: This one was bigger than the Wang. The processor itself was as big as these cabinets, and it had keyboards attached to it, and a screen. It was amazing that you could write and then edit on-screen, shift things around. His name (the magazine editor's) was Ed Berkeley. Ed had this magazine that was gaining in popularity because people were getting more interested in this notion of personal computing. I was one of his editors and there was a small staff, and we were pushing, and I thought, "This could develop into something." But Ed was crazy, Ed believed that everything is a conspiracy. He believed that the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy were all connected. He had another magazine called People and the Pursuit of Truth. This is what he really liked to do - write about the Mexican conspirators who sheltered Lee Harvey Oswald before the assassination. He gradually fell off the edge of the table, and I joined the Foreign Service.

Q: I don't think you can go wrong by underestimating...

KRAJESKI: Oh that was by far the more popular magazine! Subscriptions on that were going through the roof, while Computers and People, which he wasn't paying any attention to, was suffering.

Q: OK. You came in when?

KRAJESKI: June of 1979.

Q: What was your A-100 course like, how did it go?

KRAJESKI: A-100 was six weeks in those days. It was under the old (law), before the Foreign Service Act of 1980 which came into effect in '81 or '82. So we were the 141st A-100 class. There were 45 of us in it, 12 or 15 of whom were USIA (United States Information Agency) officers. Effectively we had about 32 generalists. There were eight women, the rest were men. There were four minorities - one African-American woman, three African-American men. So mostly still white guys. From all over the country, different universities. We had a couple of Harvard guys, couple of Princeton guys but otherwise UMass, University of Minnesota. A variety of folks. I was 29 years old, and 29 was the average age of the class and the average age of Foreign Service officers entering the Foreign Service; it still is today.

Q: I think it was 29, I came in in '55.

KRAJESKI: Yep. It's amazing how that has remained constant, even at a time we took people as old as 55 into the Foreign Service. Those days, when I came in I think 45 was the upper limit and 21 was the lower limit. There were a few of my class right out of undergrad; most of us had done other things, grad school or worked at something, often NGOs (non-governmental organization). We had our share of Peace Corps volunteers in there. It was an eye opener. There were some really interesting people in the class. I was very excited by the way - they paid me \$16,000 a year. I could not believe that I was going to make \$16,000 a year, that was just astonishing.

Q: I got \$3500. It was a different time. It went farther but it still...

KRAJESKI: Another great thing is, in the six months before that, Bonnie got pregnant. She loves it when I phrase it like this. And we had no health insurance. I was working all these part-time jobs. Bonnie had some health insurance through the job she had. We were really concerned about how we were going to pay for the birth of the baby, let alone having a baby. So suddenly we're in the Foreign Service and not only do I have a steady job with a salaried income, we've got health insurance, too!

Q: How did you find the course?

KRAJESKI: I loved it! I was so excited. I was excited about getting a job. I was excited about doing something that I had always been kind of interested in although it had been sidetracked for a long time. I was excited, the more I read, the more I learned about it. I

was incredibly excited about the travel, about the prospect of going to a place like Katmandu, Nepal, which is where I went for my first tour. So I was thrilled. Anything they did, I was happy with. As I look back on it and talk to others, there was a lot of useless stuff in the A-100 class. I do think they do a good job of trying to give you a sense of what the Foreign Service really is, now that you're in it. I remember Steve Dawkins, the head of our A-100, saying "It's foreign; you're all going to go off to foreign countries, you're not going to stay here, your first assignments aren't going to be in the United States. But the big word here is 'service,' and I want to talk to you about service." That's something that has run through my whole career, "You're now going to have an opportunity to serve your country." And this was big for me. I was very excited about it.

Q: Did you have a sense of you were representing a country that really has something important in the world to do?

KRAJESKI: No question, yeah. There was a sense of mission. Now, this is 1979. The last year of Carter. The hostages hadn't been taken yet. But there was a real sense that we were going to be representatives of one if not the leading power in the world. Not only were we powerful economically, powerful militarily, we were powerful socially and morally. It was very interesting to develop that last point, both in A-100 and through the course of your career - are we really in a position of moral leadership and what does that mean as you approach some of the issues that you're going to confront in your career? But there was always a sense, if not moral than ethical in what you do, that you could do good. Serve your country and serve the world. I don't want to overplay that either, but it was there and it was part of it.

Q: As I do these interviews, I'm amazed but not amazed, I accepted the fact that our people get involved in things, "Gee, these people don't have a vote in such-and-such a country, we've got to do something about it." Other countries, their representatives sit on the sidelines and say, "That's the way it is."

KRAJESKI: Most of my career has been spent in the Middle East where the notion of one person, one vote, the notion of being able to change your government through a political process that is fair and open and relatively accessible, this is not an idea that resonates mightily through-out the Middle East, and has not and still does not today. There are points in a career, and I think that happens with a lot of officers, where you say, "OK, that's good. But we need to think about what the priorities of the United States are, here today, this year, and frankly we're going to put the human rights and democracy stuff a bit to the side and we're going to focus on that base in Bahrain."

Q: So for example the role of women in the Middle East.

KRAJESKI: Yes. We can if we do it right, if we're careful and we're self-conscious, we can have great effect. When we go in with, "We're the United States, we're the greatest country in the world, we're going to tell you how this works," then we fail. We see this so often, yet still you hear the political leadership in this country saying, "We're the best, we're the smartest, we're the biggest, we're the strongest, we're the example, everybody

should be like us." Doesn't work. That message just doesn't sell in Bahrain, in Iraq, in Brazil, it just doesn't. Other people don't want to hear that diplomat in the other room saying, "Too bad you're not American, I'm so lucky I'm an American."

Q: Huge debate. We're still, there's something in the American psyche that wants to prod, not to accept. We might not do anything about it.

KRAJESKI: I think that's important, we do have to stand up against injustice, we have to point out violations, abuses of human rights. Bahrain was a perfect example of trying to balance this I think not only natural but rightful tendency. There is at times a vacuum of moral leadership in the world and sometimes we have step into it.

Q: Back to A-100. What did you ask for?

KRAJESKI: You know, I came in with almost 4/4 Russian, I tested only at 3/3. I took this damn MLAT test. Do you remember the MLAT, the Modern Language Aptitude Test?

Q: I got a 65.

KRAJESKI: I got an 85. It was a perfect score, they only saw one of those a year. The reason I did it was completely coincidental. If you do linguistics, if you study Slavic linguistics, you go back to Old Church Slavonic and Proto-Indo-European. And the language that is closest, according to linguists that I was working with then, to Proto-Indo-European is Kurdish, because the Kurds have preserved more of their basic structures, living up in the mountains and fighting off the Arabs and Turks and Persians for centuries and centuries. So, the MLAT, the vocabulary and some of the structures the MLAT uses as an example for you is Kurdish, or Proto-Indo-European. If you're a linguist, the MLAT is nothing. I don't know if it really measures how well you can really learn a language, which is the purpose of giving it to folks. So anyway, when I got the 85 in it, it influenced my assignments, influenced my career. I've done a lot of languages.

First, I wanted to go to the Soviet Union - "I've got Russian, I want to go to Moscow, that's where I'm going to spend my career." This is 1979, 1980, this is the defining relationship for the United States, "I've got Russian, I've got some background in the history and the culture and politics of the place, that's where I should go." I remember the counselor saying, "We do not send first tour officers to criteria countries. You need to go out and prove your loyalty first so we trust you. Otherwise, not going to go. Don't even think about it, there's none on the list." There were none on the list. There was one job on the list for the Russia desk; there were only two or three jobs that were in the States. I was not at all interested in staying in the States. Bonnie and I looked at the list and said, "We're going to pick the places that we think are the coolest, that are the most interesting, that we know nothing about, or we just like the name." We chose Katmandu, Lahore, Ouagadougou (which I still can't spell). Recife, Brazil was on the list, mostly consular jobs, visa jobs. The one in Katmandu was a general services officer job; I had no idea what a general services officer was, none, zero. I came in, by the way, with cones; we

were the first class to come in coned - admin, consular, political, economic. I had no idea. I was coned admin. I remember talking to my A-100 guy and saying, "What is this?" He said, "Don't pay any attention to it, it's HR (Bureau of Human Resources) trying yet another system, it won't last, ignore it, just come in." He was right actually. It was what we called a JORP position in Katmandu, junior officer rotational program. I did all the work in the embassy including GSO (general services officer) and budget and fiscal, I did consular. But that's how we chose, we looked at it and "OK, what are places we think would be cool to go to in parts of the world that are more unlikely." We didn't want to go to Manila, lots of jobs in Manila. Mexico City, oof, a big chunk of them, all visas. London had a lot, London in those days was a big visa mill. Bombay, another big visa mill. We just didn't want to go. We wanted to go to a smaller place in an exotic locale, and we got Katmandu.

Q: This is a good place to stop. We'll pick this up when you went to Katmandu, Nepal. How long were you there?

KRAJESKI: Two years. I came out of A-100, did six months of Nepali - again, that's the reason they said they were going to send me to Nepal, I had to have Nepali and because I had a perfect score, I was good at languages so you'll pick up Nepali in six months and we'll send you off. It turns out the assignment didn't start until June of 1980, so I ended up doing the budget and fiscal course, the consular course, the general services officer course. I worked on the Nepal desk for two months before I went out, and I did Nepali. Went in June of 1980, the last year of Carter.

Q: Do you remember where we left off?

KRAJESKI: We left off just before my first assignment to Katmandu. We probably have to pick up the pace a little bit. Katmandu in 1980.

Q: Today is the 4th of March 2016 with Tom Krajeski. I have a hard time, my Serbian comes in. "Krai" means "and"...

KRAJESKI: "Nash krai" means "our country" in Polish.

Q: You left A-100 when?

KRAJESKI: I finished A-100 in July of '79 and then I went off and did a couple of months on the Nepal desk and then started language training. I did six months of Nepali language training.

Q: Where does Nepali fit into the language spectrum?

KRAJESKI: It's an Indo-European language, very close to the Hindi, Urdu, Farsi branch of Indo-European. The far east of Indo-European. It's fairly closely related to Hindi. A lot of Farsi. I actually found other Indo-European roots in it, too. It's a very accessible language, kind of a simple language. Verb tenses are straightforward, they have no real

future tense because they're reluctant to discuss the future, that's for the gods to decide. It's a link language in Nepal; there's a lot of tribal languages. If you're educated in Nepal you speak Nepali, but you might also speak Hindi or even English - there's a small contingent of English speakers because of the Brits and the Gurkhas and that relationship.

Q: You went there when?

KRAJESKI: 1980. I did six months of Nepali, then I did the general services officer course, the budget and fiscal officers course, ConGen Rosslyn, as we called it in those days, the consular officer course. I may have done political training; they basically filled up another six months and I arrived in Katmandu in June 1980.

Q: You were there for two years?

KRAJESKI: Yes.

Q: Who was the ambassador there?

KRAJESKI: When I first arrived, it was a Carter political appointee who had also just arrived in an election year, a guy named Phil Trimble. He was the head of the American Bicentennial Everest Expedition in 1976. He had summited Everest. He was a deputy mayor of New York City and also a lawyer, a UCLA (University of California - Los Angeles) law professor. I'm not sure how those all connected at a certain point. He was known to the Democrats and because of his mountaineering and his love for Nepal - he really loved Nepal - he was appointed in Carter's last year to be ambassador, and he arrived only a few weeks before I did in June of 1980.

Q: I interviewed a lady who was ambassador to Jamaica who had climbed Everest; she got almost to the top but they had a storm that came up and they came down.

KRAJESKI: Smart move.

Q: How did the embassy strike you?

KRAJESKI: There was a lot about the embassy that really appealed to me. First, I was the only junior officer - we called them JORPs in those days, junior officer rotational program, so I was a JORP. I was fortunate enough - I had studied Nepali before I went with Nancy Powell, who went on to have one of the most illustrious careers in the Foreign Service. She was the consular officer. She had arrived at post a couple of months before we did. I arrived with my wife and a six-month old baby. The administrative officer, Herb Deremer, was a real professional, a wonderful man. He took me under his wing first. I was the budget and fiscal officer, I was the assistant GSO (general services officer), I was the vice-consul in the consular section - Nancy was the only consular officer - and I was junior political officer and the ambassador's aide. But for the first six months I had to learn budgeting. I had to run the motor pool. I was a Russian literature major; I could barely balance a checkbook. I had the six week course in budget and fiscal

and budgeting, and I had the three week course in contracting and general services stuff - all of which I found really interesting but quite outside of anything I had done or studied before. Herb was just a delightful man. He was like a 25-year admin guy, knew everything inside-out.

Q: What was the local employee admin staff like?

KRAJESKI: They were actually very professional, thank God! You remember your first tour, you come in and you really are green. In the budget and fiscal section there were eight or nine clerks headed by Mr. Gorkhali who was a tall, thin, very traditional conservative Nepali. Nepalis wore a suit jacket over a folded shirt with a kind of a dhoti, sandals, what they call their topi, these jaunty little hats they wore on their heads, sort of sideways. Mr. Gorkhali - his English was perfect, he'd been trained by the British - he kept me out of jail frankly; I didn't know what I was doing. Gorkhali could have taken every penny!

Q: One of the greatest things we have in the Foreign Service is the local staff who handhold the junior officers coming through. They must say, "Oh God here comes another one."

KRAJESKI: They were so generous with me, especially Mr. Gorkhali. I remember the cashier because I had to do the cash counts. There were a lot of banks in town but a lot of Americans came to the embassy to cash their travelers' checks and get cash, so I had to do cash counts. Between Herb Deremer and Mr. Gorkhali I survived and even learned how to do it which I found really valuable in my subsequent career, that I had a sense for money in and money out. "What do we spend it on?" I had to negotiate rental contracts with landlords. Work with the motor pool. First day I arrived, literally within 24 hours of my arrival, the DCM (deputy chief of mission), a guy named Dick Boehm - Dick went on to become ambassador, I think to Cyprus. But he was an older vet, probably had 20 years in the Foreign Service, maybe more. And he really didn't like the new ambassador, he thought having a political ambassador was kind of a slap. He was an old Foreign Service guy. Plus, the ambassador had replaced a guy named Doug Heck who was one of the most respected of the South Asia hands.

Q: I knew his wife Ernie.

KRAJESKI: Ernie was still there.

Q: She and I were in Saigon together. Ernie took care of my cat.

KRAJESKI: Ernie's part of this story. They were still there when I arrived. They were being transferred. Doug had fallen quite ill and had a long, lingering illness. I don't know if he had been diagnosed then, but Ernie was still there when I arrived. Within 24 hours of my arrival, Dick Boehm called me into his office and called in the head of the motor pool, the dispatcher T.B. Lama, and he just laid into this guy, just cursing at him, shouting at him, what an idiot he was because one of his drivers had taken Ernie Heck out

to a village two days before and had run out of gas. It was serious business in 1980 to run out of gas. There are no telephones, there's no village nearby that you can walk to and use their telephone to get help. The radios that we had in the vehicles had limited range. So they were kind of stuck. Eventually a truck came along and they got some gasoline, siphoned it, and got themselves back. But Boehm was furious with the dispatcher for allowing a vehicle with insufficient gasoline to go out, to take the previous ambassador's wife out on a visit. I'm just standing there, jet-lagged. I had met Boehm like two minutes the day before, and he is just howling. The dispatcher is shaking, there are tears in his eyes. Then he turns to me and says, "Krajeski, you're in charge of the motor pool - you fix this! Dismissed!"

Early impressions. The ambassador, by the way, was a delightful man. He was about 45 years old, recently divorced. He was an avid mountain climber. When he arrived he made it clear he was going to climb mountains and he was going to sleep with as many young women as would have him. All consensual of course, thank God. But he paired up with this beautiful young Peace Corps volunteer and went off on a trek, so when I arrived, he wasn't there. A week later, he hadn't come back. So Boehm called me to his office and said, "All right kid, you speak Nepali. You're going out with Prem Singh" - Prem was the senior local in the defense attaché's office, an army guy, spoke good English, good Nepali. Boehm said, "You're going out to find this dumb son of a bitch." We jumped into an army jeep and drove out of the valley and down into the hills, we had a chanting Buddhist monk sitting in the back seat and these army guys and we rode till the road ended. Literally, a landslide had knocked it out, so we had to walk. We walked for a day to a village to where we hooked up with the ambassador, who had hurt his foot. He and his gorgeous Peace Corps volunteer were being feted by the locals, waiting for somebody to come get him. Which is what we did. I can remember sitting - we had a big dinner for the ambassador that night, the chief of the village slaughtered many goats. I remember sitting and eating with my hand, squatting on the floor - which is really hard to do, how the South Asians sit on their haunches. I had to put a piece of wood under my heels to keep the balance. And I thought, "I love this job." I'd been in-country one month and was just fascinated with it. So first impressions were good.

Q: How'd the ambassador treat you, calling him back to duty?

KRAJESKI: Oh, he was quite happy to see us. He had these wire-rimmed glasses. He was a good looking guy, kind of thin, goofy smile. He was just as happy as could be. He loved being ambassador to Nepal. We went whitewater canoeing together, the Marines, on the Sun Kosi River that comes out of Mount Everest, it runs along the Chinese road, from the Chinese border. Four or five times on a Saturday we loaded up the Marine van with inflatable canoes and rode up the road to whitewater canoe. The DCM just wanted me to go with him, "I want you to go with him, keep track of this guy." I went trekking with him a couple of times. The second best part of all of this was Nancy Powell in the consular section. Let's face it, Nepal was not a very busy place diplomatically.

Q: Was the haj for drugs pretty well ceased by this time? This used to be the Shangri-La of drug trade.

KRAJESKI: No, it hadn't. It was one of the stops on the hashish trail that went from Luxembourg - used to take the cheap flight, this is my cohort, I graduated from high school in '68, - but you'd take the cheap flight to Luxembourg on Icelandic Airlines, then rent a van, hitchhike, take the trains, make your way down to Istanbul, to Tehran, to Kabul, to Katmandu. And then to Bangkok. And this is 1980, so that route had been cut - the Iranian Revolution had cut that road. So people that were in Katmandu, unless they had the wherewithal to get to Bangkok and fly out, they were kind of stuck there. There was a large community of European, Australian, and American hippies. They were still in that 1960s hippy mode.

Q: I was consul general in Athens in the '70s, and the Greek police would pick up vanloads full of stuff and put them in jail, we had to go visit.

KRAJESKI: It was similar. The Nepali police would run scams sometimes and plant drugs on unsuspecting tourists and then arrest them, come to us and say "We've got Americans," and then they'd want to negotiate with me on how much the American could pay for bail in order to get out. Marijuana was illegal in Nepal at the time, but we'd walk down this one street that was called "Freak Street". It had hashish brownies advertised on sideboards on the side of the street. Bonnie and I were walking down there once, we were a young married couple. I'm a Foreign Service officer now so the hair is trimmed, and we're walking down this street and Bonnie looked around and said "My God, we're back in 1968, except this time we're the Young Republicans."

We had the WT's, the world travelers, and people came to Nepal to climb mountains, to seek nirvana, for the drugs, because they were adventurers. They came to Nepal because they were crazy. We had a lot of people who were just out and out mentally unbalanced, who would come to Nepal just because Katmandu had this attraction. My point here is of all the sections of the embassy including the ambassador's office - and as much as I like budget and fiscal, it wasn't particularly exciting - the consular section was the most active, exciting place in the embassy. So I spent a lot of time working with Nancy Powell on these citizen services cases. Lost passports, people who'd get drugged out and get into accidents. We had a crazy heiress of the Parker Pen company, Penny Parker, well known to any consular officer in South Asia because she used to bounce from Bangkok to Delhi to Katmandu to Karachi. She had a trust fund, and a lawyer who paid her money out of the trust fund. But she was seriously mentally imbalanced. She would come in and live in a little room in Katmandu for like a hundred rupees a week, that's like five bucks a week. She would prostitute herself to cab drivers. She was once arrested naked, riding the king's statue - the king on a horse in front of the 1`1111` - naked. Because of the way our system worked - there were no psychiatrists, no practicing medical psychiatrists in Katmandu. There was one British guy who'd kind of do it but nobody would declare someone incompetent. The Nepalese believe crazy people are blessed. Riding naked on the king's horse, that was a little too much, but people who were a little off were somehow touched by the gods.

Q: Folk tales in the United States talk about Indian tribes, if they'd run across an American who was pretty nuts, they'd give him or her a pass.

KRAJESKI: There was this belief. The police also didn't really want to mess with them, they didn't want the hassle of dealing with crazy Americans. So they would call Nancy or me, and we'd go down to the jail and bail Penny out. There were a half dozen others just like her, I can tell consular stories. You know how it is in the Foreign Service, your consular tour - and I had three of them, I was a consular cone officer later on - you can tell consular stories forever. But the work I really enjoyed in the embassy was the consular work.

Q: Talking about the constraints. When I was a consular officer early on, back in the '50s and '60s, we could get a local doctor who may or may not have been a psychiatrist to declare somebody incompetent and then we would get somebody to travel with them, give them a shot of something to make them sleepy until we got to New York where the public health service would pick them up. I was in Yugoslavia, and we had a number of people there. Then the lawyers got in and said, "You can't do that anymore." So that meant they were freely wandering around.

KRAJESKI: We used to get them to the next consular district and let your colleague know in Bombay that "Penny's headed to Bombay." There she is, she'd have to deal with Penny for a while.

Q: Also in Yugoslavia, got a call from somebody, "Oh something awful happened." And I'd say, "Where are you located?" Maybe they were in Zagreb's district.

KRAJESKI: "I'll call the consulate in Zagreb!" It was interesting work. We had a large Peace Corps contingent, my first dealings with the Peace Corps. We had a huge AID (United States Agency for International Development) mission. One thing that struck me as a junior officer was - "competition" would be the friendly word - between the ambassador and the AID director; probably the truer word would be "conflict." These two guys didn't like each other. The AID director had a budget 10 times the ambassador's. Trimble by the way didn't last very long because Carter lost the election and Phil had to go home. I remember he wept on election night when he realized he only had a month or two left in Nepal, he was very unhappy. [The next administration] appointed a Foreign Service officer, Carleton Coon. Carleton and Jane Coon were the first ambassadorial tandem couple.

Q: They were heavy in the academic world.

KRAJESKI: Carleton's father's anthropology textbook was "Anthro 101" in every university in the country. I never met his father, but I liked him [Carleton] very much. He was an experienced, professional officer.

Q: I have to ask. The woman ambassador -

KRAJESKI: Marqarita Maytag, of the Maytag fortune.

Q: What stories can you tell of that?

KRAJESKI: She was still there when I arrived in 1980. She had been Ford's ambassador, and she stayed on, she refused to leave when Ford lost the election to Carter, she loved being ambassador so much. Not only did she refuse to leave, she didn't want to leave the residence! She finally was persuaded to leave the residence - all these stories are second-hand, by the way. She finally left the residence and then she stayed on. She rented a house (she was wealthy) and she still from time to time would put a flag on front of her car as she was driven around, and she acted a lot like the ambassador. Apparently she was a little off as well; spoiled rich kid I guess. I never met her, she may have been gone by the time I arrived.

Q: The stories about her are many. She apparently went through the Marine guards.

KRAJESKI: I heard this too. These are second- and third-hand stories. Apparently she lived next to the defense attaché who made these assignments, arrangements for her. I don't know how true that was, but it's part of the folklore of the Foreign Service in Katmandu. We also got a new DCM by the way, Peter Burleigh. One of the best as well, it was his first DCM, he went on to be ambassador to Sri Lanka, he was deputy ambassador at the UN (United Nations), a real South Asia guy. He's retired for some years now but was chargé in Delhi again recently, they keep calling him back. Peter was a wonderful guy.

Q: I'll have to look him up, I'm not sure whether we've interviewed him.

KRAJESKI: I don't know. He was one of the first, not openly but not closeted, gays in the Foreign Service as well. Wonderful guy. I used to go to his office first in the morning and say, "Peter, what do you want me to do today? I've got the budget done, I've negotiated this lease" - we got a new assistant GSO so I didn't have to do a lot of GSO work after a while. We'd talk about what Nancy was doing in consular. It was a small embassy; you're very tight with people, you tend to have dinner with each other, you play softball together and tennis. If you've got kids, the kids are all playing together. We had a larger AID community. If I hadn't already been enthusiastic about the Foreign Service -

Q: What was the political situation? At one point it really got messy.

KRAJESKI: It was after that time. When I was there the king was very much the king, the "young king" as he was then, he was King Birendra, the one who was killed by his son, the son killed both his mother and father in 2001. Diprendra was just a boy when I was there, 10 or 12 years old, it was a big story. Birendra was the king. The Parliament was active, the king's power was limited by the Parliament. Parliament was controlled by the Ranas and the Shahs, those were the two big families in Nepal, wealthy educated

families. Ninety-five percent of the country was illiterate, uneducated, and dirt poor; five percent ran the country. There were no Maoists.

Q: Did the ex-Gurkhas play any role?

KRAJESKI: In Gurkha they did because they were relatively rich compared to the rest of the residents. When we traveled in that region - Gurkhas by the way are not just Nepalis, they come from a particular region in Nepal, and were recruited specifically by the British because it was a Gurkha army that defeated the British in 1824 or '25. The Brits being real smart said, "OK, we won't fight these guys, we'll recruit them." Which is what they did. When I visited Gurkha, which I did a couple of times when I was there - it's not too far from Katmandu, about an eight or 10 hour drive then maybe an eight hour walk. In those days you measured distance by how many days to walk; you still do in many parts of Nepal. When you went into a village in Gurkha you could tell immediately which houses were former Gurkha officers. They were often the equivalent of a mayor, influential people in their district. I didn't get a sense that they were influential beyond that; it was considered a very prestigious thing to do. All those who were in Gurkha military units did not come from Gurkha, there were others, too. The Brits still had a big training center in eastern Nepal where the recruits went through basic training.

I remember the Falklands War when I was there. The Nepalese were really conflicted about it. On one hand, they were very much part of the Non-Aligned Group, led by India, which Argentina was a member of so they were supposed to support the Argentineans in their attempt to liberate the Malvinas. On the other hand, they had a close relationship with the Brits which they valued, and they really loved their Gurkhas. And the Gurkhas were fighting in the Falklands and apparently doing some pretty deadly stuff with the Argentineans, and they're really proud of this. So it was interesting talking to the Nepalese during this war -

Q: I shudder thinking about the Gurkhas coming against the Argentineans who never really fought a war.

KRAJESKI: Nepalese were in general a very peaceful, relatively calm people. When they got their blood up, it could get pretty awful.

Q: Very good book, Bugles and a Tiger by John Masters who wrote Nightrunners of Bengal and that sort of thing, on the Gurkhas. Masters had been an officer with the Gurkhas.

KRAJESKI: If I hadn't already been in love with the Foreign Service, Katmandu did it for us, Nepal did it for me.

Q: Did you get any feel towards how Nepal fitted into the Indian, Pakistani, Non-Aligned Movement? An active area politically.

KRAJESKI: This is 1980 to '82. Nepal was fiercely independent; they resented especially being considered a kind of extension of India. They were stuck between India and China. The border with China was closed because of our mucking around in Tibet in the 1950s and '60s, so you couldn't get across the border. When was the China-India War, the brief border war?

Q: Around '62.

KRAJESKI: The border had been closed since. The Chinese had built the road to Katmandu from the border, it was known as the Chinese road because it led to Tibet and because the Chinese built it. It was one of the best built roads in Nepal. Building a road in Nepal is no easy task. The half-joke was the Chinese built it strong enough to carry tanks. Maybe that was so. You could drive up to the border, to the bridge that looked over to Tibet, but you couldn't go across. Politically, the Nepalese felt kind of squeezed by these two regional powers that completely overwhelmed them, and they're trying to maintain their political and actual independence in this situation. They're very poor, very dependent on aid. The population growth is way too high. They have disease, malnutrition, illiteracy. Still a very remote place to move around in. A lot of relief agencies. UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) was big, we had a big AID agency, the Japanese did as well and the Brits. They were constantly playing this balancing game. They liked us because they somehow felt we were if not neutral, equally opposed to the Chinese and the Indians. In those days -

Q: It was aligned on most matters that counted with the Soviet Union.

KRAJESKI: Exactly. So we had a good position. We weren't as politically charged as we are in some parts of the world where I worked. We were popular among the Nepalese. I'm really talking about the Nepali elite, but we're also popular among the Nepali population because of the Peace Corps. I would trek around the country doing political work, visiting AID projects - the ambassador thought AID projects were a rip-off, and the AID director didn't know what he was doing, so he would send me to talk to my colleagues in AID. Any time you went into a village and there had been a Peace Corps volunteer within the last 20 years in that village, they remembered everything. They'd have to show me where he lived, show me the bridge he built, show me the clinic or the fields or whatever it was. They were just so proud to have had one, and they loved America. They assumed that everybody was American by the way, anybody who was called a "kveri" - pale faced, blue eyed - was an American. So we often got consular messages - not calls, there were no phones - through a telegram into the police station that an American had fallen sick or broken his leg, and was out in X village. Which would be a full day's trek to get out there - a helicopter ride, a walk to get out to the village, and it would turn out to be an Australian. We'd say, "Well good luck!" No, we would do our best.

Q: I talked to people who were in Peace Corps and people would drive up to a certain point and say, "It's a couple of days that way, take off."

KRAJESKI: Peace Corps loved Nepal. One of my great adventures in Nepal was searching for a Peace Corps volunteer who went missing and eventually was found murdered, a very unusual occurrence in Nepal in those days. He had fallen in with a bad group of porters, he was hiking on his own which we never recommended, and they whacked him on the head with a rock and killed him, threw him in the river and stole his boots and the few rupees he had. It was quite an experience.

Politically the country was not overly important to us, but it was a useful place to be. The Russians were also active, the Chinese embassy was active. The Nepalis liked having the Chinese embassy; the Chinese liked it because, 1980, they could talk to us for the first time. We were talking to Chinese diplomats, we were talking to the Russians. I spoke Russian, I think I mentioned. I used to play chess with the Russians. I remember the chief of station, that was interesting - my first chief of station, I was learning a little about how the agency ran its operations. I fell into a really terrific place. I am a decent chess player, still am, I would go and play chess and drink vodka. At the Russian's house or our house. I once beat the Russian DCM; he never showed up again, never. The Russians take chess very seriously. The Chinese would always be trying to figure out which of us worked for the agency and who didn't. It was a lot of fun. Katmandu is the perfect place to start a Foreign Service career.

Q: How'd your wife do there?

KRAJESKI: She liked it very much too. Neither of us had done very much traveling growing up. Bonnie had been to Europe. I had never even been to Europe. I'd been to Canada - that was it, that was my travel. And we had a six month old when we arrived in Katmandu. First we came to Delhi. I remember getting off the plane in Delhi at one in the morning, we had to overnight in Delhi and wait till nine in the morning to get the flight to Katmandu. So we stayed at the rest house at the airport in Delhi. It's June. Hot. I'm holding my baby and we're stepping over people on the sidewalks and there's cows everywhere. Bonnie looks at me and says, "What have we done?" But when we arrived in Katmandu Nancy Powell was there waiting for us and Herb Deremer. We had this nice house, we had servants for the first time in our lives. We had an ayah for the baby, we had a cook, we had a gardener, and we had a washer-man or a dhobi, and a guard that was provided by the embassy, at the gate. Chowkidar, I remember that word. She [Bonnie] said, "I don't want anybody in the house during the day. It's an intrusion on privacy. They can come and clean when I'm not there." I said, "No, that's not the way it works. Let's give it a try." It took her a couple of days before she said, "This is pretty good."

The climate in Katmandu is fabulous. It's up in the mountains about 5000 feet. It's in a valley. We arrived in the monsoon season, which is really unusual. I don't know if you've lived in a country where they have a monsoon.

Q: I was in Vietnam.

KRAJESKI: So you know what that rain is like. It's unlike any rain I had ever seen. Solid wall of water that washes down for half an hour and then boom, the sun comes out and dries everything out. The next day, same time - 5:00 in the afternoon. We used to get out of the embassy and go to the recreation complex where I loved to play tennis. I had a tennis game scheduled almost every afternoon, often with Peter Burleigh, others - this Jesuit priest. But at 5:00 it rained for 20 minutes during the monsoon. Then it dried out, by 6:00 you could play tennis. Then I'd go home, whatever we had to do that evening, I'd do that. She [Bonnie] liked it, she was the Community Liaison Officer - actually it was called the Embassy Mental Health Officer. She'd been a teacher. She didn't want to teach with the baby, it was a part-time job at the embassy, she liked it very much. We had lots of good friends, we still have really good friends we made at Katmandu. So she liked it a lot. She's an adventurous sort. As I think I said at the last session, we chose Katmandu because it was the most exotic place on the list. And we were really happy to get it.

Q: After this exotic time, whither?

KRAJESKI: Next assignment was India. One thing I decided to do - as is still true today, your first or second tour has to be a consular visa tour, and my first tour was not considered that. We hardly did any visa work in Nepal, I think we did three immigrant visas the whole time we were there. So I looked at visa jobs, consular jobs, for the second tour. I cast my net around. But there was one political job that I really wanted and that was in New Delhi. Guy named Harry Barnes was our ambassador there, he'd been DG (Director-General of the Foreign Service). He'd been ambassador in Nepal, so he knew me as a junior officer because I was the guy while he was DG who'd been assigned to Nepal. So I sent him a note. It was half-time political officer, half-time ambassador's aide in the front office in Delhi, I thought it would be a great job. But Harry said, "You've got to do your consular tour, you can't take this one. I want you to go to Madras, Chennai, and be the consular officer there."

At that point I really couldn't say "No". Even though it was not really number one on my list; I'd have rather gone to Fiji and done my consular work there, that was a possibility. I was looking at Melbourne, Australia. There are other places I'd have been happier going than south India. We kind of felt we'd been in South Asia, we wanted something different.

Madras was different. It was my only consulate until I was CG (consul general) in Dubai some years later. It was a very small consulate in a very large building. We'd built these enormous consulates in India, anticipating a much bigger relationship; in '82 we were still kind of mired in the Cold War India relationship. The consul general there whom I didn't like very much, his name was Doug Cochran; he was OK personally, but he was one of these officers who was very unhappy about the way he'd been treated. Felt he did not get the jobs that he deserved. He was consul general and he thought he should be ambassador. He was smart. It was one of these reasons I supported changing the way our personnel system worked, everybody came in as a generalist and then as your career progressed you were sort of pushed to political or economic or consular or admin. Consular and admin were considered, "Well, if you can't really make it as a political

officer, this is what you do." Being CG in Madras, Doug was not happy. He had also been recently divorced, though I'm not sure if that's true, so personally he was not particularly happy. He had an Indian girlfriend who he married, and he stayed in Tamil Nadu after he retired out of that job. Again, he was not personally bad to deal with. I can remember when I first arrived there, maybe I'd been there about a month. I was the only consular officer; now there are something like 23 consular officers in Chennai. I had 12 of these wonderful people (foreign service nationals) working for me. All the work I did, 150 NIVs (non-immigrant visas) a day, I did 20 IVs (immigrant visas) a day, I had citizens' services. The busiest job ever, still until today maybe the busiest I've ever been just managing a workload, knowing I'm going to have to interview 70 people, then I'll have to do IVs, I've got guys arrested in Trivandrum, I've got the woman who died at the ashram south of the city. Thank God for these amazing people who'd been working there 15, 20, 25 years and who knew everything. I liked managing that office and being in charge.

But after about a month, I was up talking to Cochran up in his office and he said, "You're too good for consular work. That's not the real work of the Foreign Service. Why don't you, what I'd like to do is, I don't like Roy" - he had flip flops about who he didn't like at the time, and they (he and Roy the political officer) were butting heads with each other. Roy was a real smart guy, a friend of mine. And he said, "I'm going to have you and Roy switch jobs." I said, "No you're not. You're not going to do that. First of all, I don't want to. Second, Roy will rightly grieve it to the rooftops. He's been trained for his job, I've been trained for my job. That would be a mistake." He didn't bring it up again, but that kind of galled me, this notion that consular work is not the "real" work of the Foreign Service.

Q: You're talking to a professional consular officer, and do I know that.

KRAJESKI: That's when I changed cones by the way, I became a consular officer.

Q: When I came in, there were officer jobs that were considered "substantive" which were political and economic, and "non-substantive", which were consular and administrative. Can you imagine trying to explain to an irate American citizen who's had problems that his problems are not of the substance?

KRAJESKI: We changed that by the time I arrived, they were "substantive" and "functional." Those were the two differences, you had "functional" and "regional" bureaus, you had "functional" and "substantive" work. You had "support"; they tried all kinds of things. I think it created some ugly situations.

But I was there for a year, we had another guy named Dan Waterman came in, second year. Young guy, this was an opportunity to be consul general. He viewed it as a leg up in the ranks. I really enjoyed working for him. India was just a fascinating, endlessly fascinating place.

Q: Let's talk first on the work. What was the immigration at that time?

KRAJESKI: Bombay was our biggest post by far. The immigrant visa quota, such as it was, was completely filled, so there was a long waiting lists for a lot of the immigrant categories, if you remember your categories. They've changed now. Had P1s and P2s and P3s, had IRs - immediate relatives. We had the whole gamut in Madras, 20 cases a day. Now Bombay did something like 100 cases a day or maybe more, they were the biggest post and until recently stayed the biggest visa post; now Chennai is the biggest visa post. Most of the immigrant visa work that I did were parents of immigrants or parents of American citizens. As NIVs, the Indian cohort had gone in the '60s and '70s as students and had been very successful. They were now settled in the U.S., had become citizens, and they wanted to bring their brothers and sisters to the United States, to petition for brothers and sisters to come - but the waiting lists were eight, 10 years long for brothers and sisters. So what they would do would be petition for their parents to come, who were immediate relatives as parents, so they had a very short waiting list - two, three, four months, however long it took to process the visa. Once they arrived in the States and got their green card, they could petition for their unmarried children. Any child who was unmarried could go as a P-something, there was no waiting list, six or eight months, it was a way of speeding up getting your brothers and sisters in.

Needless to say, there was a lot of fraud attached to this. So I spent quite a bit of my time investigating fraud. Traveling around, determining were people really unmarried. A 25-year-old woman who's not married was pretty suspect. If you're not married by the time you were 25, you were an old maid, whether it was the Christian, Hindu, or Muslim community. All three had large communities. On the immigrant side, that was the busiest. On the NIV side, it was students. Quite a few businessmen and tourists; not as many as today, but enough. And the tourists and businessmen were pretty easy to determine wealth and connections, those cases weren't hard. The students, we knew from past history that 90% of Indians who studied in the United States stayed in the United States. They graduated, they got jobs, often were extremely successful in tech, in medicine...

Q: One notices when they get their experts on the TV, a significant number of technology or medicine, or finance.

KRAJESKI: The banking software that ruled the world in 1982 was developed in Bangalore, in Hyderabad. A friend of mine ran the company, a guy I played poker with. They were sending...

Q: You had Bangalore? That's a tech...

KRAJESKI: It was just beginning. In 1982, Hewlett-Packard was the first American company to move big-time into Bangalore, and it was while I was there, '83-'84. Just taking off. There were all these Indian software guys who'd been trained at IIT, which was the Indian Institute of Technology, one of the world's best technology schools. They were developing this banking software that was hugely successful. They would send teams of eight or 10 or 15 guys to the bank in Buffalo, New York, for six months to set

up the software and train the employees on the software. Well, there was no visa for this in those days. No visa that allowed people to go for four or six months and work in this technological field. So we were doing B1s for them, annotated B1s. It was a really interesting time as we were developing, "How do we get these people to the States and back?"

Back to the students. You knew sitting down across from that guy - some women, mostly men - who were interviewing that the odds were enormously weighted towards his staying in the United States once he graduated. But of course to get a student visa, you've got to persuade that officer that you're not an intending immigrant, that you're going to come back to India when you finish your studies.

Q: All of us know, no student - American or any kind - knows what the hell they're going to do when they get out. Depends on the opportunities, they are at loose ends.

KRAJESKI: Not all, but a large contingent of them were going for graduate studies. They had done their studies, often at IIT or an equivalent Indian university. They had been accepted at some of the best schools in the United States, in their graduate programs - Stanford, Princeton - often on full scholarships. There was no way I was going to turn them down. There's one story of a kid who's sitting in front of me, I'm looking at his record - IIT graduate, top of his class, full ride at Stanford, computer electronic engineering, and he walked into my booth. He was kind of pale and small. I looked at his papers and I just looked up at him and said, "OK great, come back at 3:00 and pick up your visa." Didn't even ask him a question. He fainted, he just fell to the floor in a dead faint. "Nurse! Nurse!" We brought him out, his family was waiting out in the courtyard - in those days we'd allow families to come into the embassy grounds - they were waiting out in our courtyard to see. So we've got the family and he was revived, and his father said, "He hasn't eaten in two days. He's just been praying, because all his life he has worked for this moment and he had no control over your decision, he didn't know how you made your decision." I felt terrible, just terrible that I had this kind of power over this kid's life - and yet there's no way I'm going to say "no" to him. I know that if he stays in the United States, great! We'll get some incredibly smart guy who's going to start Sun Tech or something.

Q: I was consul general in Seoul. One of my file clerks came in and said, "Mr. Kennedy, my brother has two scholarships offered to him, I wonder if you could tell me which he should take? One's at a place called MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and the other is Cal Tech." I said, "Go for the weather!" This is one of the delights. Even in places - also doing it in Greece, we had the most unprepossessing people come in, and the Greeks do extremely well in the United States.

KRAJESKI: It was then that I looked at our laws, and said "We really need to clean this law up somehow." I ran into it again when I was deputy in the consular section in Warsaw a couple of assignments later, my last consular assignment, where we were turning down Poles by the dozens. We need to figure out how to do this where it makes

more sense for our country, whether we're talking about students or tourists or immigrants or refugees, our laws are still very difficult to interpret.

Q: When you look at it, we were dealing with one of the major aspects of making America the number one country in the world today, with all its problems we're still recruiting very fine people through immigration.

KRAJESKI: Through immigration and through our universities. I saw this in the Arab world most recently. If you're still looking for the best in college education, come to the United States.

Q: What was the political situation in your area? This is southern India, Tamil and all that?

KRAJESKI: Yep. There are four languages: Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, and Malayali. I did not speak any of them. I didn't speak Hindi; I tried to learn a little Hindi but I discovered early on, much better to speak English with that group of people. They didn't like Hindi. There had been language riots in the '60s when the central government tried to impose Hindi education on them. Typical in India, once they start rioting, 10,000 people are killed; it was quite bloody. So even in 1982 when I arrived, that still lingered, this notion that Hindi was a northern requirement that we had rejected, even though all the business guys that I knew, like this guy that ran the computer company, he spoke Hindi. If you're going to do business in India, you need to speak Hindi as well as English. Tamil Nadu was very Christian. There was a very large Catholic population both in Kerala, which is the largest of the Christian areas, and then in Tamil Nadu. St. Thomas' Mount was very near my house, that's where supposedly St. Thomas, one of the apostles, after Christ's death sailed to spread the word and he landed in south India and started the first Christian community. Factual? That was certainly part of the belief and the lore. The Christian community was very strong. Hinduism is a fascinating religion as well, but there is also a great political element to this, both Muslim-Hindu, the Christians, southerner versus northerners, there was a real sense in the south that they were separate, they were different and they were better than the "Persians" in the north.

Q: The Sri Lankan problem?

KRAJESKI: It started while we were there, the one that just finished. The big riots in Colombo were in '83 or '84. We went to Sri Lanka just after them, after things had calmed down, my wife and I we went for a visit - first time we left our two little girls, we had a second girl born in Boston while we were in Nepal, so we had two little girls. The Tamils of south India had been recruited by the Brits to go to Sri Lanka to work. Tea factories, and as clerks. The Sinhalese were the ruling Buddhists of Sri Lanka. The Brits did this deliberately in many places in the world. They also set up that conflict to keep things a little shaky so you need the Brits above you, "We keep control here." And India's a remarkable place with the dozens of ethnic groups, linguistic groups, religions. It was very much a factor when we were there although the Tamils of Tamil Nadu did not like the violence; they did not support the Tamil Tigers, the violent groups - some did, but

most did not. India actually sent troops to Sri Lanka; they sent troops to the Maldives and they sent troops to Sri Lanka. Not a very successful move.

Q: When did Rajiv Gandhi get killed by a Tamil?

KRAJESKI: That was much later, that was like '90 (May, 1991). I was India desk officer in '88 when he was re-elected. In '84 by the way when I was there, he was considered the golden boy, especially among the businessmen. He was the one who was going to change the business climate, change the taxation system, enable Indian business to boom. Which happened. But when I was there, they were still very much in flux, still socialist.

Q: Feeling the central Indian dislike of the United States, was that apparent where you were?

KRAJESKI: Not in Madras. There were demonstrations against the consulate, I can't even remember why there was this massive demonstration. The governor of Tamil Nadu was a movie star, very famous - south Indians love movies, all Indians love movies. Bollywood stuff. I still have pictures of the hustings, these huge ads. Movie theaters had 5000 seats, you had to buy a ticket and reserve your place. We went to see the opening of *Gandhi* when I was there in south India. Not a very comfortable experience. You'll recall the movie, the Brits are the villains. There's this terrible massacre scene in Amritsar in the north where they literally machine gunned the crowd; it's in the movie. And right after that scene, which was pretty horrific, they had the intermission. Lights came up in the theater. And Bonnie and me and my friend Chris Datta who I still know, his wife, may have been another - we're the only "Europeans" in the whole theater. And Chris, he's a writer now, he stood up and said, "God damn those Brits. We Americans gave them what for!" and the audience goes "Yeah!"

Q: Incidentally, the guy who played the general who ordered the thing was a USIA (U.S. Information Agency) man whom I ran across much later. We were election monitors in Bosnia. He was saying how he looked the part, he was from Kansas City.

KRAJESKI: One more thing on the movies. They love movies, they're constantly making movies in Madras. Everywhere it seemed you went, somebody would be filming a movie. We used to go to Kodaikanal, which is an old British hill station; the American school was there. In the summer time it's really hot; Madras is the hottest place I ever went until I went to the Gulf, to Dubai and Bahrain. For May and June, before the monsoon, we rented a little stone house on a lake in Kodaikanal. Every time we were up there, they were filming a movie. And they loved our daughters, one was sort of blonde, the other had darker features - they're just cute little American girls. So they would always write a role in for the cute little American girls! I have to find some of these movies. I never even knew if they got made, they were constantly doing it. It (Madras) was a quieter place, they call themselves the "garden city," only six million inhabitants, it was considered a small city, Madras.

The south Indians just felt they were more civilized, life was at a slower pace. When you went to visit someone you didn't call them to say, "Hey Krishna, I'd like to come over and say 'hi' tonight;" you just dropped in. He considered it almost offensive if you let him know, because you were welcome anytime, all the time. We had a group of friends there - it was our only post really where most of our friends were Indian, were residents. We would travel to their houses to have dinner, we would bring our kids with us, not bring our kids with us - we had lots of servants, we could leave our kids at home. Just socialize, a quiet socializing. We played tennis together. I learned cricket there - not to play it, just to watch it, figure it out because they were crazy for cricket. There would be 60,000 people for a five-day test match against the West Indies, they were the best in the world at the time, the Windies. Sixty thousand people, and 20,000 of them are standing room only. They would stand for the six or seven hours of a cricket match each day. Now, one day is a day off so it's two days, a day off, and two days. If you watch cricket, it's kind of like baseball - I love baseball. It's kind of slow moving, you have to know the details, appreciate the subtleties and nuances of the game. Enormous stadium, like a football ground in the U.S. They loved cricket. It was a dry state; no alcohol sold in Tamil Nadu. Unless you were an alcoholic; you had to go to the doctor and be certified. I lost mine, I had a certification that declared me an alcoholic. That enabled me to buy alcohol. At the cricket matches we would drink scotch in teacups. "Would you like tea, sir?" and I'd say, "Well..." "We have special tea." "Oh I'll have special tea, thank you very much." And drink the scotch.

Q: How about the food? Pretty hot?

KRAJESKI: Oh, I love the food. I still make the food, I learned to cook a lot of it while I was there. Yeah, some of it could be very, very fiery. The hottest food was up in Hyderabad, in Telangana. It was quite spicy but I love it. Sometimes it was so hot you felt like you were self-immolating, you would explode into flames at any moment. Drank a lot of beer, they make great beer. Bangalore had excellent beers, and that was sold world-wide. The food was wonderful. We ate vegetarian. Our children ate a lot with their hands, I remember going home and my mother was just appalled that Alix and Jenna who were then two years old and four years old, their first instinct was to eat something with their hands.

Q: Did the politics of Delhi intrude on your operation at all?

KRAJESKI: Not so much on the work that I did. Both consul generals, Doug (Cochran) and Dan Waterman, both complained about Delhi a lot and the demands of Delhi. We didn't get a lot of visitors; I frankly cannot recall an official visitor. The ambassador came down a handful of times while we were there, maybe five times to visit. We had the pouch run, the non-pro pouch run, which once every couple of weeks, maybe monthly, one of us who were cleared would fly with the classified pouch up to Delhi, pick up the classified in Delhi, and come back to Madras with it. It was an opportunity to visit Delhi, visit friends, and have folks come down to visit us in Madras. Certainly for help with the consular work, I relied on Bombay and Delhi. The consul general, the head of the consular section in Delhi, the consul general, she was called, (Barbara) Watson. She was

a professional consular officer, I often went to her for advice because other than ConGen Rosslyn, I hadn't had any visa experience at all. Nepal was no visas. I had great citizen services experience, I knew about passports and citizenship and how to deal with dead bodies, but I didn't have much idea on the visa side. I was on the phone with them or I'd send, remember the official-informals, the OIs, up to her staff and get advice. We did some regional stuff, focus on consular, fraud conferences. But I felt pretty independent. That fed into the southerners, too - the southerners considered the consulate to be their embassy; that's the way we played it.

Q: How about one of the provinces, Kerala, was known as Communist at one point?

KRAJESKI: Yeah, they were at one point. The big one of course is West Bengal, that was where there may still be a Communist government. There was [a communist government] in '88 when I was the India desk officer. Kerala had that reputation, they were all sort of semi-socialist. Kerala was a south sea island paradise sort of place; that's the way it looked. The beaches are all coconut fronds. It was a much more rural place than Tamil Nadu. They did have a big port, Cochin, south of Bombay. That was known for smuggling; it was also where a lot of fraud happened, visa cases, so I went to Cochin a couple of times. I didn't really deal with governments and I didn't deal a lot with the politics directly. I was very much a consular officer; there were 400 million people in my district. We had ashrams, we had the famous, the crazy ashram south of the city [Auroville]. We had Sai Baba. There's a whole culture of holy ashrams. We had a lot of Americans who came to the ashrams. We had a lot of really sad cases, people who were terminally ill and they came to the ashram as their last hope of a cure. Even Sai Baba never claimed he could cure people. I would often go off to the ashrams and collect bodies. I attended a lot of cremations and shipped a few back home as well. The politics? It was kind of nice actually, probably the least political of all the jobs I had.

Q: Were there any elections when you were there?

KRAJESKI: Yep, there were local elections. The governor who was a famous actor had had a stroke; he was a big guy and had a stroke. His movement and speech were really restricted. But his girlfriend, Jayalalitha, who was manipulating him, she basically put him up for re-election anyway. When he died by the way she became governor, and she was governor of Tamil Nadu for a long time, until just recently she was still active. She was the Lady Macbeth of Tamil Nadu. Elections in India are unbelievable, they are so much fun. I did do a little work because I traveled a lot, often the political office would say, "Hey, you're going to Hyderabad, can you meet with this local politician and ask him about the election?" So I'd do that. I remember one guy, there was the Congress Party and the local parties. And the local parties like the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) was still very much just forming then as the challengers to the Congress Party. The Congress Party, seen as the northern party, was not hugely popular in the south. The elections were fun. Lots of people vote. They're very proud of this democracy and how they've held onto it and strengthened it in India. And it's still remarkable, of all the places in the world it's still hard to understand how India preserved and strengthened democracy.

Q: It really is. Was there much talk about Pakistan?

KRAJESKI: Not in the south, no. In the south it was considered a northern issue. Among the politicians the few times that I engaged with politicians, they had the necessary anti-Pakistan rhetoric. Of course in those days we were very much supporting Pakistan, we were seen as being on Pakistan's side against India. It did not impinge much on my work or on the work of the consulate; the southerners were very much focused on southern issues.

Q: You mentioned when you were first going to Nepal, getting out the airport, stepping over the bodies of people sleeping on the ground. I've heard of people who were completely overwhelmed in Calcutta or Bombay about the mass of people. Was that apparent in Madras?

KRAJESKI: India is relentless, India doesn't let you go while you're there. If you're lucky enough to be able to afford a really nice house, which we had - we had a beautiful house with a compound in Madras - or you paid for a really nice hotel, you can't escape the sights, the smells, the sounds, and the crowds of India. Coming from a small town - even Boston, by comparison. I rode a Chinese bike while I was there, I bought it in Katmandu and brought it down. It was big, heavy, one-speed with a basket on the back, perfect for the bad streets of both Katmandu and Madras. I used to ride it from my house to the tennis club, usually at 5:00 at night when I got out. It was maybe a 15 minute bike ride. A couple of times, I counted the people that I saw - and this was in a garden city, supposedly not very heavily populated. And I got to a thousand each time, no problem. The same distance from my wife's house in Boston to the park where I used to go walking, I would see one person, two people? The population in India is astonishing. When we're driving - the streets are chaotic, and you've probably been in places like this where you've got bicycles and bullock carts and these little three-wheeled things called tempu, these two-stroke engine cabs with the driver in front and two people can sit in the back of them. I took them everywhere, they were really cheap. So the streets are a mess. We had a Toyota, a right-hand drive Toyota. This is the only place I've ever lived in where you had to drive on the left side of the road, though it didn't really matter in much of it because you just drove wherever you could. And you'd stop at the light and the beggars would come up. They would be just the most desperate looking people - at first, until you realized they were dressed and trained for it. The ugly side of it is, they would take babies and cut off an arm so they would be more compelling, so you'd have an amputee child being pushed at your window. At first, it's awful. After a year, you ignore it. After two years, you're annoyed by it and you know it's time to go. I got used to the crowds. Fortunately, I'm a tall person so if things got really crowded, [I was above the crowd.] My wife is not as tall and there were times when the crowds would really get to her. If you're out on the city street, kind of like New York at 5:00 when the streets start to fill up and you've got to move with the flow and understand how to get through it. There'd be people living in the streets. Calcutta was worse than Madras. Delhi of course had big wide avenues; they purposefully kept the crowds over in Old Delhi, New Delhi was different. Bombay... I did love India, but you really have to confront India; you can't escape it, it's right there.

Q: One of the things that struck me, I've never served in India, but I have run across Indian diplomats. Americans and Indians tend to preach to each other. Where each is sure we have the holy word, it doesn't seem to be a good match.

KRAJESKI: Later on in my career, two assignments later, I came back and I was the Indian desk officer, political officer for India in what was then part of NEA, (Bureau of Near East Affairs), the India, Nepal, Sri Lanka office - INS. I had really good friends over at the Indian embassy. But one of the things we did right off the bat was say, "We're not going to change each other's minds. I'm not going to persuade you of the rightness of our policy, you're not going to persuade me of the rightness of your policy. We're going to see where we have areas that mix." And I found that in Indian diplomats, once you got through that preachiness that Americans can have as well, "We know best, we're the best" - once you get through that you can work with Indian diplomats, you can get things done. When I was in Madras it wasn't that much of an issue because there were no Indian diplomats there, we didn't deal with the government except for the local governments and that was different. The bureaucracy of India is overwhelming; the Brits taught 'em good. They are supreme bureaucrats, between the Moguls and then the Brits, these guys can do paperwork like nobody's business and in those days it was all done in paper, in triplicate...

Q: Stitched together. I remember in Bahrain going into whatever it was and seeing these piles on the desk, huge piles.

KRAJESKI: I remember in Madras, we were looking for - we would often get these cables from the department saying "Joe Smith's family hasn't heard from him in three weeks, he's traveling in south India, can you find him?" You recall these kind of messages. "Jeez, there's 400 million people here, and an area that's half the size of the United States and you're telling me, 'can I find this one guy?'" But you do your best. One thing I often did - if you arrived at the airport in Madras, you had to fill out your arrival card - is to go the immigration at the airport and say, "Do you have a record of Joe Smith arriving in the last two weeks?" I walked into a room, and the clerk shook his head and said, "You know I don't know why we still do this," and he opened the door and it was a room about this size with a narrow corridor and stacks of these arrival cards. "You're welcome to look through." (Laughter) Sometimes they did it right. When you bought anything - Marks & Spencer was the big department store in Madras. We'd go there shopping for shoes for the kids or clothes or gifts. When you walked into the store, you had to talk to somebody about what it is you wanted to buy. And he would fill out a little chit and you would take it to that department. You would look at the things you wanted to buy. The clerk there would fill out another little chit that you had to bring to a cashier to go pay. Cashier would take your money and give you a receipt which you would take back to the clerk who sold it to you who would just sign it, and then you had to take it to another desk where you could pick up what you had bought, get another little chit from another person, and then walk out with your purchase. It was like five people all signing or producing pieces of paper, all to buy the kid's shoes. Quite interesting.

Q: Were there any major events?

KRAJESKI: This is '82 to '84. I can't recall off-hand. Of course Ronald Reagan is president. He's going after the Evil Empire. The tensions between New Delhi and Washington were at a fairly high point. Indira Gandhi was still the prime minister, she had come back after being arrested and jailed, the Congress had won again. The relationship was fairly cold. I do recall, there was a spy scandal in which an Indian, he may have been a diplomat or an employee of the consulate in New York or the UN office, their representative's office there, was arrested by the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and accused of spying and was thrown out of the country unceremoniously. There was a scandal, the Indians were pissed off at us and we were unhappy at them. This big flurry. As a consequence, this American kid who was an electronics smuggler who I had known in Katmandu (he was a smuggler there, too) got caught by the Indians smuggling VCR (video cassette recorder) motherboards or circuit boards in 1983 or '84. Very hard to get a VCR in India at the time. He would buy these things in Sri Lanka, smuggle them oversea into the coast of Kerala, and then sell them to dealers there. The Indians picked him up and they were absolutely convinced he was a spy, and they touted it - "We've caught this big American spy who is spying on the electronics industry of India." Interesting case. But as far as major political events, nah not so much. Certainly nothing that I can recall washing over us in Madras.

Q: Well then where did you go next?

KRAJESKI: The mid-level training course. I was coming out of Madras, in those days two tours overseas and then you were supposed to come back. I got tenured while I was in Madras, I'd been promoted to 03, so everything was moving along as it should. The next step in my career building was to come back and take a desk job in the department. So I put my name in for the Nepal desk job in INS in 1984. I was all set to get the job but the personnel system said, "No, he is a newly tenured, newly promoted 03, he's going to the mid-level course. Don't even bid" they told me, "Don't put it in, the system will reject it. You are starting in September, you're going to the mid-level course." So for six months, we were in this course, about 85 of us. All of us quite unhappy we were in this training course - some parts of it were interesting, quite useful, most of it was not.

Q: What was the training course? What were they trying to inculcate?

KRAJESKI: A big part of it was the Washington interagency process. The policy process. We learned about the NSC (National Security Council), which most of us knew about. We learned about the different agencies. We had lectures - there were lots of talking heads. There were big sections on management - personnel management, time management, life management. We had to take the famous Myers-Briggs, the personality test, which I hated. It was a lot of talking heads, a lot of consultants. The most useful part to me then as a newly minted consular officer - I had undergone conal rectification and changed from management or administrative officer to consular officer. The most useful part was the section focused on visas, immigrations, citizen services. First time I met an immigration lawyer. It was quite interesting. It was six months. Supposedly they

guaranteed us jobs, "Take this course and you're guaranteed a job in the department when you leave the mid-level course." It was one of the many personnel system lies that we hear throughout our career. When I arrived at the course, I had not yet been given an onward assignment. So I talked with my colleagues and it turned out that of the 80 of us who were in this course, five or six had onward assignments and the rest of us were basically left to forage in January and February to try to find a job in the department.

Q: I had the same thing happen when I came out of the Senior Seminar, supposed to be the top training course and everything's assured, and they said "I don't know where you're going to go" and I ended up in personnel.

KRAJESKI: I was very unhappy. There were only a few desk jobs available, the Saudi Arabia desk was one I tried for, along with about 15 of my colleagues in the mid-level course, all of us competing for these very few good jobs available in February of any year. So I signed up for another consular tour in Warsaw. I'd do a year of Polish - I already had good Russian - I'll do a year of Polish and I'll go off to Warsaw in '86. And so I was looking for a bridge assignment to get me to language training, so I worked in the press office under Ed Djerejian who was the head of the press office. Bernie Kalb was the spokesperson. I was a press officer for four months, and I liked it, it was lots of fun.

Q: What were some of the things you dealt with?

KRAJESKI: You dealt with the press, which was really very interesting. There were four or five press officers, and the focus of the day was that daily press briefing. In the morning you worked with all the bureaus that were producing the press guidance, with the officers on the China desk to produce the guidance on the China missile test and have it ready by 11:00; the briefing was always at 11:30 in those days. You had to have everything cleared and ready for briefing the spokesperson Bernie Kalb at approximately 11 A.M. Bernie would go through everything, ask lots of questions so you would have to frantically go back to the desk officer and say, "Kalb wants to know why you're saying this and not that on the China missile test, he thinks this is dumb, why can't we say more?" And then at 11:30 you'd sit in at the briefing, and in the afternoon you handle the follow-up questions. You know how the briefing works, he'll often say "I'll get back to you on that, I don't have an answer for you now." Then we'd work on the follow-up questions.

It was a fairly busy day. Once a week you were the duty officer, so you took the book home with all of the press guidance over the weekend or for the night, and if something happened in that night - a coup in the Philippines or somebody gets assassinated, there's a natural disaster, all the reporters call you saying "What's your reaction to Brezhnev's statement, blah blah blah," you'd have to call somebody at home at night and try to get a reaction, they were all working deadlines to try to get it into the morning papers. It was all done in the news cycle then, they didn't have this 24-hour news cycle we have now. It was an interesting job, I liked it. I was going to do it for six months but a number of officers were PNG'd (declared persona non grata) out of Warsaw, those were the Communist days, martial law days. There was a big demonstration, the Poles were

unhappy with us and threw two of our officers out. One was the consular chief in Krakow, so they took the guy I was going to replace in Warsaw, the deputy in the consular section in Warsaw and moved him down to run the section in Krakow, and they told me, "You've got to get out there." So, they put me in one-on-one Polish language tutoring for about five months, I got my 3/3 in Polish and we ended up going in December of 1985 to Warsaw.

Q: How did you find Polish?

KRAJESKI: I was frustrated with it. Partly because my Russian was pretty strong. At a certain point, if you do languages that are closely related, they begin to encroach on each other and you're not always sure - "Am I using the Russian word or the Polish word?" There's significant differences in the languages, but there are significant similarities. I remember calling my father who I might have mentioned grew up speaking Polish, both his parents were native speakers so at home as a kid his first language was Polish. I said, "Dad this would have been so much easier when I was two years old than when I was 35." My Polish was pretty good. I never shook the Russian accent, and Poles would pick it up when I got into Poland. There wasn't much English, I used Polish quite a bit, and they would look at me and say, "You know your name is Krajewski" - which is 100% Polish - "and you speak Polish like a Russian pig." I remember telling one lady, "What do you want? The only other language I know" - I was in Poznan, which used to be an old German city - I said, "the only other language I know is German. Surely you don't want me speaking German with you?" And in German she said, "The Germans treated us like shit for six years. With the Russians, it's been 600." Having the Russian made learning Polish faster, but I never really reached the level where I was confident in Polish. And I dropped a lot of it. I've only recently taken it up again. You needed it. There are countries where you really have to have it [the language]. If you're doing consular work in Poland, my line officers had to have good Polish, my immigration officer, my refugee officer - we were doing a lot of Solidarity refugees in those days. You had to work with police, with the courts, we had to do the interviews which of course you could learn fairly quickly. The political officers needed it; if you're dealing with Solidarity, those guys didn't usually have English. I was dealing with an old Solidarity priest who brought me passports to give visas under the table for Solidarity workers who were in hiding. This guy was so slick.

Q: I was going to say as soon as I heard a priest showed up...

KRAJESKI: "Hold onto your wallet." I've got to tell you Stu, his name was Father Jankowski, he was Lech Walesa's priest, the head priest at St. Brygida's up at Gdansk, Walesa's church. The ambassador and I didn't do this on our own, this was all cleared with Washington, that we would establish a program where we would give visitor visas to two, three, four, five Solidarity guys a month. They would go to Germany where they would contact our guys working in Belgium, that's mostly where the Solidarity office was. But Father Jankowski; he was a large, pasty-faced big guy, very full of himself, reeked of aftershave and cologne when he came into my office. He carried a briefcase - a very nice leather briefcase. He'd put it on my desk and open it up, and inside would be

two or three passports and a bottle of perfume and maybe a carton of Marlborough cigarettes - the American ones, not these fake European ones. I'd look at the passports, they'd be "Jerzy Biorominski from Bialystok who'd been underground for such and such time, we've got to get this guy out." Great. Then it would be Stanislaw Lewinski. Then there would be Elina Popovska. And I'd look at Elina and she's 22 years old and a blondie. I'd say, "This is a Solidarity worker?" "Oh yeah, she's very important to the organization." I've never been a good Catholic, but I knew what this guy was up to, I knew what he was getting for that visa. And I still did it. I used to take careful notes, with these cases. I'd go upstairs to the classified area where I kept this file, I'd show it to the DCM, David Schwartz, a wonderful guy who passed away some years ago. He and I would go through each case. I was covered, I was cleared on them all. But I'm issuing visitor visas, smuggling them out. When '88 rolled around and Jaruzelski went down and Walesa was elected president, they threw Jankowski out. They had nothing to do with the priest anymore; he was an embarrassment to them. I don't know when it happened, it happened some years after that. I was told by a friend who was working there, "They disowned the priest."

Q: We can pick this up when you went to Poland.

KRAJESKI: This was the first real political job. Even though I was deputy in the consular section, this was the most politically charged place I had ever been. The last three years of martial law; it was fabulous.

Q: Today is the 11th of March, 2016, with Tom Krajeski.

KRAJESKI: "Krai-eski" is the Polish way as we discussed. (Laughter)

Q: You put that 'j' after an 'a' in any Slavic language, it just comes in...

KRAJESKI: For the Poles, it was painful to hear it pronounced "Kraj-eski". In Polish, not in Russian, the word for thief is krajesh. So when they hear "Kraj-eski" they hear the thief instead of "Krai-eski" which means the patriot. Another story about Krajewski because you mentioned it means the end or the edge of the border - Ukraine, at the border - when Poles were exiled and in Poland's history this happened many times. The Russians, the Swedes, the Germans, the Austrians, everybody came in and whoever was in charge of Poland at the time was exiled, the noble families. You could take the name Krajewski which also meant "I am a countryman, I am a proud patriot, and I'm on the edge, I'm exiled" - Krajewski. There are lots of Krajewskis, look in the Chicago phone book and there are 10 pages of them.

Q: At one time in the Senior Seminar we called on Chicago, for my project I did an article on foreign consuls in the United States. I remember the Polish consul in Chicago saying, "Next to Warsaw, we have the biggest Polish population anywhere."

KRAJESKI: Yep, that was true when I was in Poland in 1985, which is where we left off

last time. I was deputy consular chief in Warsaw. Boy, that Chicago Polish-American population - what was it, Rostenkowski?

Q: He was big on money.

KRAJESKI: He ended up going to jail. But in 1985 he was very influential, he was a Democratic Congressman. When Dan Rostenkowski sent you a note you sat up, and the ambassador would say, "Pay attention to this one!" And I'd say, "You know, jeezus, Rostenkowski's got 25,000 blonde Polish female cousins, what am I going to do?"

Q: Where are we now?

KRAJESKI: We were just arriving in Poland in the winter of 1985.

Q: How long were you there?

KRAJESKI: Two-and-a-half years. Till summer of 1988. I was consul, deputy in the consular section which in those days was pretty big. It's probably bigger now. We had eight Americans and 30 Polish FSN (Foreign Service national) staff. I had four line officers doing NIV interviews. We had 400-500 a day.

Q: What was your refusal rate?

KRAJESKI: It was 65%, which the ambassador, John Davis, a wonderful guy - John and his wonderful wife [Helen], too, they were terrific. He was only chargé; he had been sent out there after the Solidarity movement was crushed in '81 in the military takeover when Jaruzelski came into power and arrested and killed a lot of people. We withdrew our ambassador in protest, I forget who it was in 1981. Reagan appointed another ambassador and the Poles refused him, said "No, we don't want this guy." He had a Polish name. I was off in Nepal at the time. Reagan said, "If you won't take him, we won't send anybody. You won't get an ambassador." And they sent John Davis as the chargé. He was the director of the Polish desk in EUR (Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs). Fairly low-ranking for an ambassador, it was meant to be telling the Poles, "Look you're just going to get this guy." Davis was a remarkable man. He arrived sometime after '81, martial law was imposed I think in December of '81 and Davis arrived after that. When I arrived in '85, John was very much there. Still only a chargé. He was finally formally made ambassador in 1988. he had done such a good job and we were looking at the Poles and thinking, "How are we going to make this arrangement work? It's too important a country for us to just have a chargé."

The Poles liked Davis. The government, not so much, but Solidarity loved him, he was Solidarity's hero. He protected Solidarity during those years, and they were hard years. When I arrived as deputy [in the consular section], we still had a fairly robust refugee program where we granted Poles who had either worked for Solidarity or had some connection with the opposition, and we gave them refugee status and they went to a camp in Germany, where they were processed and admitted to the United States. By the time I

got there in '85, we were still doing it. It had slowed down considerably but we still did it. We also had a massive NIV load, visitors - the economy in Poland was in the toilet. Poles were incredibly unhappy. They didn't like their government. They loved the United States of America and Ronald Reagan, which surprised the hell out of me. As a Krajewski in Poland, I was welcomed everywhere I went by the Poles. They didn't like the government, they liked Ronald Reagan because he stood up to the Russians and was tough with the Soviet Union - of course, they hated the Russians. You'd go into a Pole's house, which I frequently did though it was risky for them to have me come to their house. There'd be three pictures on the wall - the Polish Pope John Paul II of course, that'd be the first. Then there'd be a picture of John F. Kennedy. And then Ronald Reagan. Those would be the three pictures you'd see. Reagan never visited Poland; George Bush the vice president did eventually. He [Reagan] was quite a figure to the Poles, they looked on him as a protector because he was going after the Russians. John Davis channeled that beautifully through Solidarity.

Q: Talk a bit about how you observed Jaruzelski regime, how it operated, how it impacted on Poles? It wasn't KGB (the Russian acronym for its state security agency), Soviet Union.

KRAJESKI: No, but it was a pale reflection of that. The SB (Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) - the Polish KGB, were very much feared. They were hated in Poland. They were Poles first of all though they were close to the NKVD (KGB's predecessor) and KGB. They would snatch people out of their houses, people would disappear. There was the famous assassination of Jerzy Popiełuszko, the Solidarity priest, who was very vocal in his opposition to the government, and he was assassinated, probably by SB. It was never really determined, maybe it has been since. When I was there, Popiełuszko was a hero. Jaruzelski had mixed reviews. Jaruzelski, if you know anything about his history, had been captured by the Russians in 1939, maybe into '40 after the German invasion of Poland, the Russians came in from the east and captured a lot of Polish officers, and Jaruzelski was one of them. He was not in the Katyn Forest where the massacre occurred. In 1985 the Polish government and the Russians adamantly denied that they had any responsibility for the murder of these Polish officers, around 10 to 20 thousand; they blamed it on the Nazis, which still had some credibility, but the Poles knew what had happened.

Q: There were observers.

KRAJESKI: There were. Jaruzelski was not in that group, Jaruzelski was sent to Siberia with another group of Polish officers, where he and other Polish officers formed a Polish brigade to fight with the Russians against the Germans. He was considered to have been quite honorable, to have done that to fight against the Germans; even though they hated the Russians, the Nazis were raping the country. Once they [the Nazis] invaded Russia, the Russians enlisted a lot of these Polish officers and Jaruzelski was one of them. Indeed, as I recall, during one of the winter campaigns, Jaruzelski was snow blinded. If you recall a picture of him, he always had dark glasses on and he was mocked for wearing them, but people who knew the story said, "No, his eyes were incredibly light

sensitive because of this snow blindness." In 1981, in December when Solidarity was crushed, Jaruzelski took charge of the military - he was the senior guy of the Polish military officers, and he basically according to his story and others said, "Look the Russians said 'enough of Solidarity; either you do it or we'll do it, and if we do it, it won't be pretty.'" So Jaruzelski decided as a Polish patriot - this is how he portrayed it - he would reluctantly but necessarily end the Solidarity demonstrations and imprison its leadership, which he did. Not for long, he didn't keep a lot of them in jail for long. He exiled some and outlawed the movement. Poles hated him for it, but many Poles also understood that if he hadn't done it, the Russians would have and they hated the Russians. There were still Russian military camps in Poland when I was there, the counterpart to the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), American bases in Germany. The Russians tended to keep to themselves. I remember driving outside of Warsaw, to the Chopin homestead where every Sunday in spring and summer they would have concerts. Someone would play the piano in his sitting room, they'd open the windows, you could sit in the garden and have a picnic and listen to Chopin. It was beautiful. There were many beautiful things about Poland despite it being a very repressed place, economically almost destroyed. There was a Russian base near there, it was known, one of the villages near there. The Russians would occasionally come into the stores. But the Poles really disliked them, they didn't want any confrontations with the Russians.

Between '81 and '85 there was an attempt to create a more representative government, the Polish Sejm, the Parliament. Solidarity would have none of it. We thought it was a sham but there was an attempt within the Polish ruling party, the PZPR (Polish acronym for PUWP, Polish United Workers' Party) to widen its representation to include people who represented working unions. It was largely for show. Jaruzelski, with Gromyko and Brezhnev on his shoulders, this is pre-Gorbachev, Gorbachev hasn't come in yet, he does a couple of years later. So we in the consular section were still doing Solidarity refugees. I don't know if I told you about the priest, the Solidarity priest who would come in with his briefcase with four or five passports where, because we couldn't do the refugee route for these particular people, we would give them NIVs and they would go to Germany. The Germans knew, I would inform the Germans what we were doing and they would let them into Germany and go into Belgium where Solidarity European headquarters was. They were basically couriers. This priest was real slimy, his fingernails were perfectly manicured, he smelled of cologne. In his briefcase he would have these passports for me, he'd come into my office in the embassy, he'd have the passports and a bottle or two of cologne, women's perfume. Four or five of the passports would be working-class looking guys, couriers for Solidarity. And one or two would be this young blonde woman, 24, 25 years old. I'd say, "Father Jankowski, this is also Solidarity?" He'd say, "Yes, yes, it's important. They won't look at her as closely." I suspected Father was being well paid to get this young lady out of Poland. So we would do it. I'd keep all the records in the classified section.

We had a fairly large immigrant visa section as well.

Q: The non-immigrants - how many returned?

KRAJESKI: It was rare. Not unheard of. In those days, we didn't have as good records. It was a tiny percent. Most of the 400, 500 applicants a day we interviewed, we turned down almost 90%. The issuance rate was made up more of people going to universities, professors, government people who were going, government/private business people (a lot of whom we didn't interview) who would go back and forth. Of the people going for "temporary visits," we turned away almost 90% because they were either fraudulent or they did not have the money. If a Pole stood in front of you and said, "I'm going to go to Niagara Falls, then I'm going to go to Disney World," and you looked and said, "OK, the airline ticket is going to cost you 1500 bucks round trip. Five days at Niagara Falls is going to cost you 1000 bucks. Five days at Disney World is going to cost" - you're looking at \$3000-\$4000, you can't buy this stuff in zloty, you're going to need dollars. No Pole - they just weren't rich enough. If they had the money - sometimes they'd show you an account, sometimes they'd take out a wad of cash which really scared the hell out of me - "I've got \$5000, I've got it right here, how much do you want?" We ran into that, too. No Pole in their right mind would spend that money [on a tourist trip]. Zlotys were worthless. The official exchange rate for zloty to dollar was 150 to one. The black market rate was like 1000 to one for dollars. If you wanted to buy anything of substance - nice clothes or shoes, Irish whisky, a nice Polish ham that you couldn't get on the market, you could go to the dollar stores which were legal and buy. But you had to have dollars.

Q: Did we have a veterinary unit in Poland at the time? In the '50s when I was in Yugoslavia, we had a veterinary unit in Yugoslavia and one in Poland, because they were sending Polish hams to NATO.

KRAJESKI: I don't think we did at that time. There was a big market, a private market for Polish ham. There was a lot of export. This is kind of sad; one of the nicest gifts you could give to your Polish friends or my Polish staff was a canned Polish ham from Chicago. We could get them through the commissary, we would order a bunch of them and present them as gifts. The Poles would weep and say, "We can't get this on the market unless you have dollars, and even then it's hard. This is our pork, our ham sent to Chicago and now we're getting it back." They hated the idea, it's such a screwy system. Even though I'm not an economist, you look at it and go, "How can this economy work?" The answer was, "It didn't work."

Q: I've interviewed a number of people who were in Poland in this period. They'd say, "We were convinced at the time that there were probably at least three or four convinced Communists in the country!"

KRAJESKI: And I'm not sure if Jaruzelski was one of them! I'm not.

Q: He was a pragmatist.

KRAJESKI: He was. There were those within the party, the youth group in the ruling party who very much wanted to open up the economy. They saw the economy as the great weakness of the government, they claimed to be supporters of the government and they probably were otherwise they wouldn't have survived in the party. They were

looking to create a more rational market economy in Poland because they just saw what was happening wasn't working.

There were lines. We arrived in the dead of winter, December 14, 1985. As I mentioned before, I got accelerated and pushed into the section early. Poland in winter is gray, cold, dark, it's north, not a lot of sunlight. We had temporary quarters because our house wasn't ready for us yet. It was a nice townhouse, but kind of dark. Bonnie came back home once, and said "There are lines in the street, people waiting to buy." It was a grim time for Poland.

That generated this pressure on visas. People would buy these fraudulent packages of support from somebody in Chicago or Michigan, think it was Dearborn, or New York. There would basically be a package of papers that they could present to the consul to prove they had a cousin in Skokie near Chicago who was going to provide all their support and with whom they were going to stay during their visit. But they were all fraudulent. The documents were fakes, and they mass produced them. These people would spend \$100, that was the cost for one of these packages, and present this package to the consul who would take one look at it, say "This is fake, go away." [The applicants would just] shrug their shoulders. Poles are amazingly accepting, after traveling from Bialystok or Łomża, some fairly grim place, by train. Stood in line in the winter in front of the embassy pre-dawn, let in about 8:30 into the waiting room, get interviewed around 11:00, literally a 30 second interview in which the consul would say, "These documents are not real, you don't qualify, go away." We would see hundreds and hundreds of these.

Q: What was this doing to the officers? Two types of visa officers - one is brand new, never been lied to before, right out of university. And then one who's been doing this a long time.

KRAJESKI: We had a good program in Warsaw. We had four line officers, and all were rotational. They'd spend one year in the consular section and one year in either political, economic, or public affairs. Sometimes they'd spend the first year in political and then come to the consular section. They were almost always first tour officers, occasionally a second tour officer. We also had an immigrant visa section and of course citizen services section with a couple of more senior consular officers in each. I was the deputy, at that time an 03 then 02, and we had a consul general who was an 01 consular officer. The more experienced folks weren't on the line. I worked the line a lot; I'd go out there all the time. Often I'd fill in for somebody who wasn't there or because we had a bigger crowd that day. I was behind them all the time and I watched this very carefully. It was fascinating how people handled it differently. You had to do all this in Polish, so your Polish had to be good enough to do a visa interview, which they all were to varying degrees. Some of it was quite funny actually. All confronted first this weight of people. This is winter and it's cold and damp and Poles like many Europeans don't bathe all the time. That waiting room, probably 150-200 people sitting in their wet overcoats - if you've been on a tram in Eastern Europe, when you get on, it was overpowering sometimes. Then you've got these sad people coming up with these false documents and getting turned away.

Then you've got people coming up to you and lying. Often it would be this young woman with her "American cousin." After a while we would not allow it, if you weren't a visa applicant, you couldn't come and sit in the waiting room let alone come up to the window with your "cousin." It would be this newly-minted resident or citizen, Polish-American, big guy, big belly usually, gold around him, reeking of the aftershave. And he wanted to sponsor his cousin, he guaranteed she was going to stay for just one month, "Help out my wife who's having a baby, and then she'll be back, I guarantee it, I'm an American citizen, give her the visa." And we'd say, "No. She's not going to come back, she doesn't have any money, we're not even sure she's really your relative."

He would go through the roof. "I'm an American citizen, I demand to see the consul." They would bring him back to my office, or if he was an American citizen, David Boerigter's office, who was the consul general. David would bring them into his fairly large, nice consul general's office in the back and explain, "Your cousin's not going to get a visa. Sorry." If they insisted on shouting, I remember they'd say things like "I'm an American citizen, I pay your salary!" David would take a nickel out of his drawer and kind of flip it at them and say, "There's your share, get the hell out of my office." Which was not particularly good politics, but David was a good guy. He wasn't an active manager but he did support his people on the line, he didn't overturn the visas and neither did I.

The hardest thing was when they tried to pay. This was a society that was largely broken and corrupt and to get things you had to pay. Had to pay the officials at the hospital to get your kid into be x-rayed, you had to bribe somebody to get your driver's license renewed - everything was you had to pay a little bit here, a little bit there to do it. So it was almost routine. Let's say you were going to issue a visa, it's a grandmother who's going to visit her daughter who's going to have her second baby, she went for the first baby, stayed a few months and came back, she's going for the second baby to help out her daughter. You're probably going to issue the visa. I used to say, "If the person's over 60 they're not going to the States to work really. Go ahead. If you're convinced of the relationship, go ahead and issue the visa. Even if she can't really afford it, the family can."

Then to say, "Thank you," into the passport the lady would slip a hundred dollar bill, "Just for you, thank you so much for helping me today." What do you do? I tried to say to the guys on the line, just give the money back and say, "No ma'am, that's not necessary." Make sure everybody hears you doing this, say "That's not appropriate, you pay the fee over there at the window when the visa is issued." Try not to humiliate her. If they insist, deny the visa. Say, "That's bribery, I'm not taking it." Poles want to thank you, so they would send us flowers. Flowers, our office sometimes looked like a florist's - Poles loved flowers.

Q: I used to have people bring their home-made slivovitz (laughter) and after a certain point I put it under the couch. When I left I mentioned it to one of the drivers, I think it put the motor pool out of commission for a couple of hours. Horrible stuff.

I had a deal with these young American officers who'd never been lied to, in our normal thing you don't have people come up and lie to your face. I'd explain to them, "Look this is terribly important for them, they've had to do it all the time. In Yugoslavia, their grandparents lied to the Turks. You need to forget that, don't take it personally and don't take it out on the people, this is what they think is necessary."

KRAJESKI: It was always hard for that young officer to get through that first crisis of honesty. "Why don't you just be honest with me?" Well they [the Poles] know if they were honest, they wouldn't get the visa. Plus, you're a government official, and government officials are venal, greedy, and corrupt. So they assume you're along that line, so you can be bribed and you can be lied to.

Q: But try not to turn it into a federal case because that can be the kiss of death for life.

KRAJESKI: I would often just pull somebody off the line, say "Go take a break, I'll take the next 10 interviews. Go have a cup of coffee, go outside and smoke a cigarette. Just go take a break." I remember one young guy, Ken Miller. We were working with one of the FSNs, may have been working on the fraud files. These were the early days of computers, the Wangs. We actually had an Excel-kind of program where we were entering in statistics and names to develop a program where it would be easier for the line officers to determine that a document was fraudulent. But suddenly Ken started to shout, he was standing up and shouting, "This is insulting, how can you do this? You're a priest!" In front of him with this young lady was a priest who had tried to bribe Ken, slipping money through the window, to give a visa to this young lady. He just exploded. He had been there for a while so he was fairly experienced, but that sent him over the top. It's a tough job to do. They're expected to do a hundred interviews a day, and I watched and reviewed all of their cases. It was all paper and at the end of the day I was supposed to review all of their cases, which I really couldn't do, it was almost impossible. I was supposed to review all the issuances and denials. I would do all the issuances, that was required as we were stamping the visas. But I couldn't do all the denials. It was a very hard job. We also had a lady, Pani Kasha, who was like a 25-year veteran. She smoked, in those days you could smoke in the office, '85 - sometime around then we stopped it. She was the one who took all the documents in for us. She was a great asset, she knew every rule, every law, so line officers would go to Pani Kasha with a question about a particular case that might be out of the ordinary. She was a tough lady.

Then we had a big immigrant visa section. Citizens service, still in 1985 though the population was diminishing, there were a lot of American retirees. Polish-Americans who'd gone to Chicago, worked for 20 years, got their Social Security checks, and they came back. The Polish government actually built very nice housing complexes trying to attract American retirees, who brought dollars with them. That Social Security check, maybe it's \$800, \$1000 a month, was enough to live on in 1970s and 1980s Poland. So we had quite a few thousand American citizens living in Poland. We had a big citizens services, we had a big passport section because Poles were applying for American citizenship. The laws of transferring and transmitting citizenship, there were a lot of Poles who went to the States in the early 1900s, my grandparents being among them.

When Poland became independent right after World War One, a lot of American Poles returned to Poland and brought their children who had been born in the United States, who were citizens. Those children then got stuck in Poland so by the time I was there in 1985 those kids are anywhere from 65 to 85 years old. They're American citizens. They have not gotten a passport since they were 10 or 12 years old and returned to Poland, but they were still eligible. We had to confirm they were citizens; I remember I had a Polish lawyer working for me, Pani Danusha Andropovska, one of the smartest people I ever worked with. She was an expert in citizenship law, so once you could confirm this person was a citizen, they could then petition for children, for brothers, they could bring other Poles. We had quite an active section.

It was a very busy job, it taught me about managing people, managing time, managing the ambassador who was John Davis, whom I loved and admired and respected, but he thought we should issue visas to everybody. He said, "These are Poles, they're trying to escape this repressive government, why are you denying visas at 65%? I want you to start issuing these visas now." And I said, "Mr. Ambassador, I love and respect you but I can't do that. If you can get Joan Clark," who was the assistant secretary for Consular Affairs, and Rozanne Ridgeway who was the assistant secretary for European Affairs, "if you can get a cable out of Washington telling me to issue visas to Poles for political reasons, I'll do it. Absolutely. But right now, I can't do it." I remember he got so upset with us, David Boerigter and me, he called us up and said, "I'm the ambassador, I can issue visas." Technically not true, but we're not going to tell the ambassador that outright. He said, "Starting tomorrow, I'm going to issue the visas." Boerigter was a curious character, he said, "OK, fine with me." The next day he took the 400 or 500 applications in cardboard boxes and we brought them up to the ambassador's office and put it on the secretary's desk. John sucked on a pipe, and he came out of his office, and David said, "OK, here's all the visa applications, and Tom and I have tickets [home] next week, you don't need us any more, we're out of here." I didn't know this, I looked and said, "What the fuck? I'm not going anywhere?" (Laughter) "I got a career to build here." But I had to stand up. Ambassador Davis said, "No, no, no. I know you guys have a problem. I'm working with Washington to try to figure this out, go on back downstairs." So we did. He never got the cable, Ridgeway sent us back a message which he showed us, saying "Look, you have to follow the law." It used to anger him, he would call and say, "What's the refusal rate in Dublin?" And Ireland in those days was the same. I'm from Boston, you couldn't walk down the street without bumping into an illegal Irish in Boston. Every waitress, every bar, it was all Irish. The mayor of Boston said, "We need you, come and work, this is an Irish city, too." The refusal rate in Dublin? Four percent. And Davis would bang [his fist], "Why is this happening?" Well it was a Kennedy who was an ambassador [to Ireland] at the time, a woman. I said, "Get one of those out here. I bet we get this thing changed."

Q: How about Communist Party membership as a disqualifier? Was there a difference between the ruling party in Poland at the time and people working for the government?

KRAJESKI: You did not have to be a member of the Communist Party to work for the government. If you were, any time we were issuing visas for somebody like that, it was for official business, official travel, trade related, or sometimes university, senior people

at the university could be party members. I'd have to check, but I do not think it was required to be a member of the party to be head of the chemistry department at Warsaw University. It might be.

Q: It was a certified Communist Party?

KRAJESKI: It was the Polish United Workers' Party, and it was associated with the parties of the Soviet Union, but the PZPR was by far the biggest. If you wanted to get somewhere... it was widespread. If you were an ambitious young man and wanted to get somewhere in government, you were a member of the party. The other way if you were an ambitious young man, you became a priest and joined the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was the only organization outside the U.S. embassy where you had semi-permitted dissent. The Polish Catholic newspaper out of Krakow which was the center of the church, the Tygodnik Powszechny, was the only independent newspaper in all of Poland. It came out once a week, we all read it. It was truly an objective, independent, anti-government newspaper. Made the government crazy. When they went over the edge, like Popieluszko did according to the government, they took action.

But Karol Wojtyła - who then became Pope John Paul II - was part of that whole society down in Krakow before he went to Rome and became pope. Once he became pope, the Poles, the government was screwed. They couldn't go against the pope, he was the most popular man in Poland. Poland's a 95%, 98% Catholic country. Poles in those days were particularly devout, less so nowadays I'm told now that the country is free and open, you don't get as many priests - a lot of young men left the priesthood after the fall of the government. I know our political officers were often in Krakow, talking to priests; they were the only semi-legal opposition to the government.

Q: Was there a lot of travel to Rome and elsewhere for the priesthood?

KRAJESKI: I think so, I don't know. I know that the pope came to Poland while I was there. I remember going to the Mass. I'm a severely lapsed Polish Catholic, but I went to the Mass in the big square in front of the "Wedding Cake," this is the Stalinesque building in downtown Warsaw [the Palac Kultury]. They said there were a million people at the Mass. You can't go against the pope; even Jaruzelski was a devout Catholic, sure he was a Communist but he was a Catholic. It was an interesting dichotomy, the church and the government in Poland. I don't know if that was true in other Eastern European countries, I don't think so. The church semi-protected Solidarity as well, although they had to be very careful in how far they went in overt support for Solidarity; Solidarity was an illegal organization. You could be arrested if you were overtly working for Solidarity, and many people were. The only place we saw Solidarity leadership and the government [together] was at John Davis' house at the Fourth of July reception; there was another occasion during the year where he would invite the government and Solidarity. They would be at this magnificent house the ambassador in Warsaw had, this Virginia manor up on the hill. We'd have Lech Walesa. Not Jaruzelski, he wouldn't come, but fairly senior people in the government designated to come to the ambassador's house for this particular Fourth of July reception. Of course, as {I was} by now a mid-grade officer, you

worked that event pretty hard. Those of us who spoke good Polish took care of the Solidarity guys because this was a big party, at the American ambassador's house. A lot of drinking going on. And it was our job to make sure the Solidarity guys didn't stumble into the pool, didn't pee on the ambassador's blueberry bushes in the back yard. I remember John lecturing us, "If you see any of those bastards going back there..." He had a swimming pool, he was worried somebody was going to fall into the pool.

Poles can drink. I'm sure you ran into this in Eastern Europe. I have never seen so much drinking. Public drunkenness in Warsaw. At noon, to walk down the street near the embassy on a nice day and see a very nicely dressed woman, quite respectable looking, absolutely blotto, stumbling down the street, slumped against a lamp-post, drunk. You'd go to a party, I'd swear the object of the party was to get drunk. It wasn't to socialize, it was to get drunk. The toasts - vodka's potent stuff. I was quite surprised. So this event was a big event, it would be late at night. The party would start at seven, the government would leave at eight at the latest. Then the Solidarity guys would stay till nine and 10 and 11 and finally [we] pushed them out of the house.

Q: How was the Katyn massacre treated?

KRAJESKI: Carefully. There were articles in the West that were proving that it was the Russians that did this, so it was fairly well known and accepted, certainly by the Poles we knew and hung out with, that "the Russians did this." But even in the Catholic newspaper, you didn't see this. You didn't go up against the Russians. So long as the Russians denied it, which they did - I don't know when they admitted guilt on this, or if they have, though the record now clearly shows. It was interesting. That was an event that Poles felt very strongly about but had to be careful.

Q: I saw a Polish movie called Katyn, which...

KRAJESKI: When was it made?

Q: It had to be fairly recently. It also implicated the church, the church would not publicize.

KRAJESKI: Have you seen *Shoah*, the semi-documentary of the Holocaust which is mostly set in Poland? Interviews with people. Watching the trains [of Jews on their way to the camps], waving at them as they went by? It's a conflicted history. More interesting to me than Katyn was how Poles viewed the Holocaust. One of my duties as a Polish-speaking officer was to escort American delegations who came in. I arrived in '85; by the end of '86 into '87 we were starting to open up again. American officials were coming to visit. We were letting other delegations in. I remember particularly since I'm from Boston, the cardinal of Boston, and the wife of the governor, Kitty Dukakis, Michael Dukakis' wife. The delegation included Billy Bulger, the brother of Whitey Bulger if you've followed that story; Billy was the head of the Massachusetts Senate. He came with Kitty Dukakis, Cardinal I've forgotten his name [Law]. I was one of the designated concentration camp guys. I would take them to Majdanek, to Treblinka. Not down to

Auschwitz, the consulate in Krakow handled Auschwitz when they went down there. They would always want to go to these places.

So I learned a lot of the history, through the eyes of the Poles who were maintaining these camps. I always wanted them to go to Treblinka, because Treblinka had been completely destroyed by the Germans, they tried to cover it up. Treblinka was just a killing camp, you went on a train to Treblinka you were dead within 24 hours of arrival. They hadn't yet perfected their killing machine. I remember going to a conference once in Poland on this, in which they talked about how the efficiency of the Germans, how they "improved their efficiency" of murdering people. In Treblinka they basically used carbon monoxide, which is very inefficient, or bullets which are also very inefficient; they massacred tens of thousands of people there, buried them. Then when the Russians were coming - this is to the east of Warsaw - they [the Germans] tried to destroy it, cover up their tracks. So all there was, was this rather beautiful woods with monuments, the camp was sort of marked out - but nothing was really left of it. Majdanek, which was quite close to Warsaw, had been abandoned as it was, and the Poles kept it. They didn't change anything, they left it exactly as it was when the Germans and the others fled. That was really a shocking place to visit, I'm sure it's still the same today. The piles of clothes and shoes and eyeglasses; I hated it.

The Jewish community in Poland was numbered in the thousands when I was there. Slightly larger now. The Warsaw ghetto was considered to be a war monument. But the Poles, you know - they didn't really get it and I don't know that they still don't. They resented that we Americans and others viewed the Holocaust as a Jewish disaster, that "the Jews were the only victims." We said, "No, but they were the only ethnic group except perhaps for Gypsies who were actually designated for death." They would say, "Non-Jew Poles died in these camps, too. Many thousands. And we were marked for slavery." Which was true; the Slav was going to be the slave. They resented this world-wide focus on the Jews, "always the Jews." They still had this anti-Semitism that would often bubble forward. They were also quite racist, the Poles. It's the only place I've been to in my entire career where everybody was white and blue-eyed. You walk down the streets and I saw myself everywhere. And I did. When my dad came to visit he put on a Polish worker's cap and his Polish was quite good, he brought it back from his childhood. He stayed with me for two months. I couldn't tell him apart from the crowd. If you were a black officer at the embassy... I remember we had a couple of African-American Marines. We had a GSO or someone in public affairs, a black woman. We had a couple of Asian-Americans who worked at the embassy. They said it was quite rough as you walked around the city, the Poles were quite racist, and they remained anti-Semitic. It's changed a bit now I'm told, as Poland has really opened to Europe. But you hear in this latest refugee crisis the Poles, "We don't want any of these Arabs in Poland."

Q: It's overwhelming.

KRAJESKI: It is but there's still no excuse to say, "No, none." For our government as well, what we're doing is shameful. Maybe more so because we are a nation of

immigrants and we should be welcoming refugees like Canada is doing. But we won't do politics here.

Anyway it was an interesting place to be. It was my least-favorite tour because my wife was not happy there. It was gray and grim, it was cold. You couldn't buy anything. We could buy food because we had the commissary. We would drive to Berlin once a month or two, take our Volvo station wagon and two girls, soon to add a boy who was born at the military hospital in Berlin, and stay at this lovely apartment near the Grunwald up near where the American consulate is and where the headquarters was. Do all of our shopping at the commissary and the PX (post exchange), buy our shoes at the PX, buy our toilet paper and paper goods and things you couldn't get easily, we'd buy and fill up the back of the car and drive the nine hours back to Warsaw. Have a lovely meal. The kids were seven, eight years old and Aaron was born there.

First thing you had to do when you arrived in West Berlin was go to the McDonald's. I swear it was like opening the gates to the Emerald City when you went through - we didn't go through the [inner city] checkpoint, we had to swing around the city and go through the Potsdam gate into the city, that was the official entrance way for us. You had to go through the East Germans with the barbed wire and searchlights and German shepherds. They would take your passport and you would wait and wait and wait... finally you would get through. As you soon as you got through that road into Berlin, my wife would laugh, the sun would come out, there was color everywhere, and the first stop on the way to the Grunwald would be the McDonald's. I was happy because they served beer at the McDonald's, it was a civilized place. We would always go to a Chinese restaurant or a Thai or Indian restaurant, because those didn't exist in Poland, you only got Polish restaurants in Poland.

Q: Back to consular stuff. What about protection and welfare, did you get involved much, were Americans hassled, have problems?

KRAJESKI: There was not government harassment of Americans that was particularly widespread. The harassment problems we had were more from other governments who weren't happy with us, the big one being the Libyans. When I was there Reagan ordered the attack on Qadhafi as retribution - partly - for the bombing of the discotheque in Berlin, in which a number of American military had been killed. This is before the Pan Am bomb. We attacked Qadhafi's residence in Tripoli and one other place. The Libyans had an embassy in Warsaw; they started following us around and harassing us. They would follow like ten feet behind your car, with their diplomatic plates - we knew who they were - and park out in front of your house. I remember [Ambassador] Davis went to the Foreign Ministry and said, "This has got to stop. These threats are serious, I'm concerned something's going to happen. You've got to stop it." This is perhaps indicative of the Poles' racist attitudes as well; the next day they closed the [Libyan] embassy and threw all the Libyans out.

There was a real desire on the part of the [Polish] government to reestablish the relationship with the United States. They lifted martial law in '86 or '87. Edward Kennedy

came to visit, then the vice president, George Bush, came to visit. We started conducting more business with them. There was a recognition - not by John Davis, who was still a supporter of Solidarity - that "we're going to have to deal with this government. We might as well deal with it in a rational way, especially economically." That was starting in '87, '88 when I left, this re-engagement with the Polish government. The vice president came on a visit. You know what an embassy is like when the vice president comes, it's a "whole of embassy" participation. At the same time he was there we had an even more important American visit - Stan Musial. And a guy named Moe Drabowsky, who had been a relief pitcher.

Q: You might explain who Stan Musial was.

KRAJESKI: Stan Musial was born in the States but was of a Polish background - Stanisław Musiał.

Q: He was a major baseball player for which team?

KRAJESKI: The St. Louis Cardinals. He was probably the greatest Cardinal. You can argue he's one of the greatest baseball players, top five, top 10, average, home runs, defense. In the early days of our stay there we played a lot of softball like Americans do. We'd go to a soccer stadium across the river and mark out the bases and play softball on a Sunday or Saturday afternoon, the Marines, a bunch of us younger guys - I was 36 at the time so I could still play softball. One day after the softball game this group of Poles with a Cuban [man] came up to me and said, "We're looking for help with our baseball." A guy named Tim Sandusky was there, he was a consul from Krakow who used to come up to play softball with us. They said, "We play baseball, we're from Wroclaw" which is in the south of the country, "and we play baseball there, we've played ever since the Americans came in 1945 and taught us to play." This true in Czechoslovakia and Poland, there were groups of GIs (American soldiers) who were there till it was decided how it was all going to be divided, and they played baseball. "We continue to play baseball, we want to make it an Olympic sport in Poland, and we need your help. Our equipment is awful, we need coaching." There was a Cuban who was their coach, he had married a Polish girl and settled in Poland.

So we went back to the embassy, there was a guy named Cameron Munter and his wife Marilyn Wyatt. Munter, who went on to become ambassador to Pakistan (he just retired), Cameron was a first tour officer. He had just worked for Peter Ueberroth who was then the commissioner of baseball. When Cameron worked for him, he had been running the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. So he got in touch with his former boss Ueberroth and said, "What can you do? Can you help Polish baseball?" The major leagues have a big campaign to promote baseball all over the world, so they sent out Stan Musial and Moe Drabowsky, an official from MLB (Major League Baseball), and about \$30,000 worth of equipment. Catchers' equipment which was particularly invaluable, bats, gloves. For a week Musial came out, and me and Cameron split it up - we were happy as can be, we were both fanatic baseball fans. I still have my autographs - a ball autographed to my son whose name is Aaron Henry - kind of slipped that one by [my wife] if you know Henry

Aaron, Hank Aaron, one of Musial's compatriots and arguably a better ballplayer than Musial; you can go back and forth. I have a "To Aaron Henry from Stan Musial" baseball. As we traveled around the country we did clinics. Stan was in his 60s then (he just died a couple of years ago). Wonderful man; he brought his wife with him; wonderful lady, they were so pleasant. And we played and taught baseball. This is the greatest achievement of my diplomatic career by far. Poland today is the center of Little League baseball in Europe. The run-up to the Little League World Series is often played in a town [Kutno] just west of Warsaw where they built a baseball complex. Also the Netherlands is big on baseball, and the Italians, three centers. And they often play the main tournament in Poland. They never really got an Olympic team up and baseball's not an Olympic sport anymore; it was in '85. It was quite fun.

Anyway, when Bush came to visit, Musial was there, and all Bush wanted to do was meet Stan Musial. So at the ambassador's house we had to set up a meet for the vice president and Stan Musial. Bush used to play first base for his Yale team, he was quite a good baseball player himself. That was a good time.

From Warsaw, I'd always felt I'd go to the Soviet Union, serve in Eastern Europe, serve in Russia. Bonnie was so unhappy, she so disliked being there, that she basically said she didn't want to go to Moscow, she didn't want to do all this. So I came back in '88 and I got the India desk job.

Q: I want to point out, one of the things that's not always so evident. The wives who come with us. You go to a Communist country, you have a wonderful time. You've got an office to support you, you've got real challenges. The wives have to learn to go out on the market, how to shop, stand in line. It can be pretty dismal.

KRAJESKI: And unlike other countries we've been in, the level of English language was very low in Poland. So Bonnie actually picked up a lot of Polish, she worked at it very hard. But she had two little girls, Alix was first grade, Jenna was kindergarten. She was pregnant with Aaron, and Aaron was born in Berlin [in 1986]. We first lived in temporary quarters for a month. Then we moved to a house. It was very nice, a duplex near a park. It was actually a beautiful house with a nice garden but right next to it was a factory, a bottling plant. The big diesel trucks pulled up to be filled with bottles, spewing this black diesel smoke which would drift across our lawn and into our house. She found that she was pregnant. I think the vodka had something to do with it because we thought we'd only have two children. Just as she discovered she was pregnant, Chernobyl hit. I remember the day of Chernobyl was a beautiful clear spring day, one of the first warm days in Warsaw after winter. So almost everybody was outside. Bonnie was not because she had morning sickness, was not feeling well and spent most of the day in bed. And you didn't know it happened until the next day. The cloud had already passed over Warsaw before people knew what had happened. This was a lesson for me; there was a great discussion at the embassy. Should we evacuate? Should we send families out? The first time I'd gotten involved in that discussion - being in NEA I've had that discussion many, many times since. Do we send people home, let them go home, what's the threat? Bonnie was very unhappy that we weren't sent out immediately. It took Washington three

or four days to come back and say, "OK if people want to leave," they did an authorized departure for folks, if they wanted to leave. Bonnie did not leave. As it turned out, the people who left probably got more radiation than we did because the cloud lingered over Germany and Sweden, and it rained and brought the radiation down. Warsaw - we had all these experts come in and do this testing, we got very little radiation because it was such a clear, beautiful day. Radiation passed over the city without affecting it very much.

Q: I might just point out, Chernobyl was a nuclear energy plant in the Ukraine that blew up.

KRAJESKI: It exploded.

Q: It was a major thing.

KRAJESKI: Huge release of fallout. Probably the biggest nuclear disaster, certainly before the Japanese tidal wave disaster of a couple of years ago. As you read the history later, it was a very dangerous time. The other reactor at Chernobyl could have blown at any time. The Russians, the Ukrainians - the Russians blame them for the poor maintenance, that they let the reactor go, they could have stopped it but didn't see what was happening. It was a heroic effort in which many people died, to seal that site. It is still uninhabitable for miles around. Villages were abandoned, all these stories of weird animals with cancers living there, it's being repopulated by animals. The combination of all of this - if you ask Bonnie today, "What was your least favorite assignment?" she'll say "Warsaw."

When we left to come back to the States, it was relief. We stopped with the three kids at Disney World in Florida. We say we went from the "grim regime" to the "Magic Kingdom." If you want two opposite ends of the social universe, you go from a place where the operative word whenever you went to get anything, the word was "Nie ma", don't have it. Then you go to Disney World where everything is "Yes sir, absolutely, no problem, sir." It was quite a transition. Then we moved up here to Falls Church, bought the house we're living in now.

The last story of Warsaw, I'll tell. As I was leaving I was writing a report for the ambassador on how the consular section was going to develop. Were we expecting refugee populations, what were we looking at doing. I said, "We really don't expect Solidarity to be generating very much by way of refugees, Solidarity is a dying organization, it's mostly a romance for us." John didn't want to hear it. "We're going to see more work generated from official channels, government, have to deal with that." This is July of 1988, and two months later Jaruzelski's government collapsed and Lech Walesa became president of the country and all of Solidarity was released from jail, it was just this amazing occurrence.

Q: Did you get the feeling that Communism didn't work?

KRAJESKI: It was obvious from day-to-day life.

Q: I ask because at the same time, we were claiming two things: that Communism doesn't work, and that it's a terrible threat to us.

KRAJESKI: Yeah. I wonder about that. Those years I spent in Warsaw, the end of Communist government in Warsaw, there was never a sense of it being Communism in the Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' interpretation of what Communism is. Not even close to that. It was a repressive autocratic regime in which a small group of people ran the government and economy. Many of them recognized that the economy was failing and they had to change it, and they were looking at a capitalist model of change. In the '80s. I remember going to the Ursus tractor factory south of Warsaw, taking a member of Congress or some U.S. government official. We walked out onto this massive floor where all the machinery was, to make these tractors - they were fairly high-quality tractors, the Poles sold them into Western Europe. The factory floor was pretty much empty. It was 10 o'clock on a Wednesday morning and there are maybe 25 workers on this enormous floor, where clearly there should be hundreds. And he said, "Well, most of the workers don't bother to show up because they're not getting paid. They all have side jobs where they can make dollars or make more. They only show up periodically so they can keep the apartment and their kids are in the schools. If they're not working here the kid can't go to school and they don't get the subsidized apartment and the other subsidies that go with being a worker at the factory." This is a supervisor, a senior guy in the factory. He said, "We get maybe 25% of the workers who show up each day. Actually, that's not bad because we overproduce." He took us out to the back lots where the finished tractors are, and there were hundreds of tractors lined up as far as you can see. "We can't sell them all anyway."

Q: Why couldn't they sell them?

KRAJESKI: The market wasn't there. They wanted to ship to the U.S. - this is why he's taking us on the tour, they want to sell these things in the United States, looking at us as a market. Very much a businessman saying "I've got to market this tractor. It's a good tractor, I can sell it in the United States. But I need the licensing and agreements to do that." I don't think that ever developed. Not the same factory but near it, they made golf carts, and those were sold in the United States. I remember going to a couple of courses and seeing them. I don't know if they still do it, I don't think so. But they were selling golf carts. They were selling other things besides Polish hams. Strawberries. Kraft Jam bought all of its strawberries from Poland until Chernobyl, when they got contaminated although they weren't really contaminated; I remember we could get strawberries that year basically for free in the markets. There were other things. They were really looking - and this included high levels in the government - at how to reform the economy to make it work, because it's breaking.

Q: How did we view Poland as a military power in the Warsaw Pact?

KRAJESKI: I really don't know. The Russians had their large bases there for a reason and one of those reasons was, if there was a confrontation in Europe, they couldn't rely on the Poles.

Q: Poland was the entrepôt to Western Europe as far as the military goes yet you couldn't rely on this big hunk of territory to be friendly to you.

KRAJESKI: Poles were determinedly "Western Europe," they didn't even like this term "Central Europe" we used in those days, or "Eastern Europe." They were Europeans, they wanted to be viewed as Europeans.

Q: It's obvious the detestation of the Russians, but how about modern Germany and the Germans at the time?

KRAJESKI: There was a fairly sympathetic relationship among Poles I dealt with every day. The Germans had a program where they let tens of thousands of Polish workers come and work in Germany for six months. The deal was, "You come, work for six months, you go back to Poland for six months, you can come back again in six months." Germany needed the labor, mostly unskilled but not all, some was skilled labor as well. The money they could make in Germany in those six months, Poles would then invest in small business. Poland unlike in Russia never collectivized its agricultural land. Some state farms, but there weren't many. It was mostly privately owned land and privately worked. One of the things they would do with agricultural land or near the cities was build greenhouses and grow flowers. You could then have a flower shop in Warsaw or Krakow or another city and make money. It was purely business. Long as it didn't get beyond a certain size, it was legal to do it. So the folks that worked in Germany would come back and take the money and build a greenhouse. Or in Germany buy a used Mercedes and bring it back and start a taxi business; also allowed.

Q: Very peculiar.

KRAJESKI: You could own a restaurant.

Q: Was there any attempt to make restaurants palatable?

KRAJESKI: Yeah, we had a couple of restaurants that we liked to go to. One was down in the basement of the Old Town. The Old Town was beautiful, by the way, they had completely rebuilt it; Germans had destroyed it. It was rebuilt using pictures people had taken before the war, they used the same bricks from the rubble to rebuild the city. As a tourist attraction, it was quite beautiful; they tried to attract tourists. There was a restaurant down in a cellar, it was a beautiful place. They had to charge in zloty - if they wanted to run the restaurant, the meal had to be paid in zloty. So what you would do was go in, pay for it in zloty, and give them a dollar tip - and they didn't care about the zloty. The prices. We'd get 10 people in there for dinner including vodka - sometimes wine, though wine was a little expensive - would be \$20 for the 10 of us, \$20 tip at the end, the zlotys they didn't care. It was always Polish food, sausage and kielbasa and cabbage, they

love game - pheasant, boar, wild duck. They loved duck, they would just cook the hell out of the duck. Or this boar would be a big hunk of wild boar. Their appetizers would be caviar, some of the best Caspian Sea caviar; blinis and sour cream, with ice cold vodka. Wonderful. Then we'd skip the main course. They're not big on vegetables; everything is boiled or pickled on the plate. Then they'd have a fabulous dessert. These French pastries, cakes. Good coffee. So we would do appetizers and dessert, skip the main course. We went out a number of times. We had a wonderful cook who came to the house twice a week; that's when we would have our dinner parties. Or she'd just cook for us. We'd buy everything at the diplomatic meat store or the commissary and have a great meal at home with this marvelous cook.

Q: Any comments on relations with foreign embassies?

KRAJESKI: We had good relations with the German embassy. I mentioned earlier, I had this visa program, we'd send them into Germany with their American visitor visa, then they could get either to the States or out to Belgium. The Germans also had this program that I thought made sense, we should have done something like it, which was the six month worker program. The Germans kept track of them better and it was understood that if you stayed beyond six months, you were never getting another one [a visa]. A lot of Poles did stay; there's a fairly large Polish population in Germany today and in Western Europe, England especially, Great Britain, up there working. Politically, well the Germans were more cautious than we were. They were very much part of NATO, part of the anti-Communist. We had fascinating relationship with the Russians, who were constantly trying to figure out who was who at the embassy, which was big for them. I was "recruited" by the KGB, with full knowledge of the RSO (regional security officer) and the station chief and the ambassador and DCM.

Q: How did that work?

KRAJESKI: It was at a visit, we were at the Foreign Ministry, and the Russians were there. I met a young Russian guy who worked for the embassy. My Russian is better than my Polish, so we were talking about Pushkin, about how I had studied Russian literature, and he was talking about how much he loved America. No more than two or three days later I got an invitation to lunch by this guy. It was a big room full of people we were sitting in. I went to the RSO, regional security officer, and said, "Hey I've been invited by a Russian diplomat to a restaurant for lunch." He said, "Go and see him at the embassy first, go and pay an official call." He was a consular officer, at least he claimed, like I was, when we were talking. I went with one of the political officers, and we paid an official call on him. They wanted me to go back and report, "Where did you go in the embassy? Who else was in the meeting?" I've got the station chief, the RSO. I came back and reported on that. Then they said, "OK, go to the lunch." The lunch was in a popular restaurant, lot of people in it, nice restaurant. We went and sat and had a nice lunch together. Didn't talk anything except America, sports, he liked sports, his family, I talked a little bit about my family. He wanted me to drink a lot more than I wanted to drink, but he's a Russian so that's not necessarily a - They can really drink. I used to say, "Jestem tylko pół Polakiem, I'm only a half Pole," I can only drink half. You know how they

drink, glasses filled with vodka, they just knock them down. So I stumbled back after the lunch and gave a full report to the RSO and my buddy who was in the station, one of the cover guys there, and we talked about it.

Sure enough, about a week later, I get another invitation. "You must come to dinner at my house." We looked at the invitation, and the station chief, who knew the "resident," his Soviet counterpart at the embassy, through the resident went "OK, who will be at this dinner that our consul has been invited to?" And they gave a list, who at the Russian embassy was going to be there. A German guy from the embassy, some other embassy maybe the Czech. There'd be a Polish official there too. Representational dinner. So I went to the dinner. Also they invited - interesting because by now this guy's been identified as part of their office, clearly a recruitment effort. I'm thinking, "I don't really want to do this. This is as far..." And they said, "No, we want to know how they do this. We want to follow this. We won't take it too far." I read spy novels; I'm a little wary about something in my drink and waking up in a small room somewhere. Maybe overly dramatic. Went to the dinner. My good buddy who I still keep in touch with, with the agency, came with me along with one other embassy official - the assistant GSO who maybe knew the wife of this Russian diplomat? There were three or four of us from our embassy, maybe 12 of us at the dinner. Sitting there talking to the Russian after dinner and he was talking about how the bread in Poland was so bad. "Can't get good bread here. The Russian black bread, that's what you need." They eat it with vodka - olives, bread, and sharp cheeses. "This bread, need real Russian bread." I said, "Yeah, khleb russkie, chorosho." "Russian bread is the best black bread, my babcia made the best bread." He said, "Look, we can get on the train at midnight and be in this town in the Ukraine for breakfast at my mother's house, and my mother can serve us breakfast. It'll be a real Russian breakfast, and you spend the day there and come back the next day."

I was still sober enough to say, "No, sorry, I really can't do that." I came back, we had another meeting, and I said, "That's it, I'm not going any farther." The Russians were - the relationship was changing now. When did Gorbachev come in? Would have been '86, '87 - because Reagan met with him. '85? [1985-1991] It was a big event in Poland, when Reagan decided to meet Gorbachev. The first meeting was on ships in the Mediterranean Sea, and then they had another in Iceland, Reykjavik. I remember the Poles were so unhappy that Reagan agreed to meet this Russian. Was he being seduced by the Russian, not the great Ronald Reagan? Because they worshipped Reagan, loved him. Things were changing, things were happening there in Poland. Of course, over the next couple of years, it really played out dramatically. The Wall went down. I haven't been back to Berlin or Warsaw since then. I'm told, "You would not recognize the place now."

Q: That's a good place to stop.

KRAJESKI: That's just one assignment. We just going to do one assignment every time?

Q: Oh absolutely.

KRAJESKI: Is this how you usually do it?

Q: Oh, yes. Working with Skip Gnehm, I just finished my 54th session. He kept extensive notes and I'm using him as a model you might say, what does a busy person do.

KRAJESKI: I have lots of letters. I kept most of my diary as letters that I sent home, and I always kept a copy of the letter. Of course, once word processing came in, it was very easy to keep them on disks.

Q: Where did you go?

KRAJESKI: I finally came back to Washington. After the assignment in Madras, the wisdom was you did two assignments overseas and came back to Washington to be a desk officer. But I couldn't do it because of this midlevel course. So after Warsaw, I said, "I've got to go back." I got what I thought would be a great job, it turned out to be a great job, which was senior political officer on the India desk. I got it mostly because of Peter Burleigh who had been my DCM [in Ne[al]. I got it because I worked for Ed Djerejian. Ed was the head of the press office when I worked those four months, then he became assistant secretary for NEA. There were a couple of other people who knew me from my India days. I ended up getting the India desk officer job, I came back in August of '88 to start on the India desk.

Q: Today is March 17th, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, we're off to the India desk; when?

KRAJESKI: 1988. I came out of Poland where I was the deputy in the consular section for two and a half years. In June of '88 we left Poland and came to Washington for our first real Washington tour. We had a shorter one previously for the mid-level course, but this was the first - I got the India desk job. There was quite a large India desk in those days. It was right next to the Pakistan desk; indeed, the two suites were open to each other in this long row on the fifth floor. So on one end was Scott Butcher, the director for India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka (INS). And at the other far end of the suite was Bob Flaten who was the director for Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, PAB. So it was INS and PAB. We were all in NEA in those days, part of what was then called Near East and Asia bureau. Now it's just the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau, so they kept the NEA. But in 1988 India was literally the rump section of NEA.

Q: You started and left what years?

KRAJESKI: 1988 to 1990, two years.

Q: How stood relations with India in 1988?

KRAJESKI: As it turned out, they were on the cusp of opening up. There were many people on both sides, certainly people I knew on the India side and many in the States from business people to academics to government people, who were frustrated that American-Indian relations were as cold, distant and unproductive as they were in 1988.

Largely a result of the reality of the bipolar world in the 1960s and 1970s, into the '80s. The Indians always claimed by the way that they were completely impartial. They were the head of the Non-Aligned Group, they and Yugoslavia I think were the founders. They very much considered themselves in the center. They resented political pressure from the United States. We on the other hand saw them as much too close to the Soviets. We had a closer relationship with Pakistan. It was a complex relationship that had a lot of unnecessary stresses on it.

As I arrived on the desk, there were three factors that played in. One, we had a new president - George H. W. Bush who had just come in and like all new administrations they wanted to take new initiatives. Although Bush had been Reagan's vice president for eight years, especially when he brought Baker in as his secretary of State, there was a sense of "Let's take a look at some of these relationships around the world and see if we can't improve them, 'make them more productive.'" I remember that phrase particularly because we looked at this enormous market for American goods, the Indian middle class which is larger than the population of the United States - everything in India with people is big. They have more poor people, more rich people, more middle class - and there was a rising middle class in India. Now, that has burgeoned, but the strains are back again. The middle class in those days, they wanted washing machines, cars, better housing, to be able to travel, open options of education. Especially on the business side, there are some great Indian businessmen.

Q: What were our concerns with India at the time?

KRAJESKI: The close relationship with Russia, still very much in 1988 even though the Soviet Union under Gorbachev was showing considerable signs of moderation, countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia were distancing themselves from the Soviet Union. There was still a lot of suspicion about the Indians, particularly in our military which still valued its relations with Pakistan. There's a constant state of hostility up in Kashmir, occasionally it breaks out into rather vigorous fighting. They exchange artillery fire, maybe a little push here and there. The history, it had been going for some time, but there were also some violent demonstrations and terrorist attacks in Kashmir. It was a real hot spot. We were close to the Pakistanis, the Pakistanis and Indians were quite far apart, so there was suspicion on our military side. On the intelligence side, both sides were highly suspicious of each other. We were pretty sure anything you told the Indians went straight to Moscow, and the Indians didn't want to tell us anything. The Russians were still in '88 all over the place, the influence was quite keen.

Q: And the Bombay attack happened?

KRAJESKI: Oh, that was much later. The terrorist attack in Bombay was 2000-and-something. In '88 these were mostly smaller attacks, in Srinagar. Oh, you have a map up there [on the wall of the interview room]. I hope it's a correct map! Just a side story - I had an office that was about the size of this [interview room], as the India desk officer. I had a big map of India-Pakistan on the wall. One of my first weeks there a Pakistani diplomat came to visit, he'd been down talking to my buddy Bob Boggs, who was the

Pakistan political officer. He sat down, turned around and looked at the map, pointed and said, "I will not sit in this room so long as that map hangs on the wall." He got up and left. Then about a week later I went to the Geographer and I said, "How do you do it? How does this line of demarcation run up in Kashmir?" He said, "We do it according to the UN settlements and the cease-fire in '72, we do a dotted line." He said, "The Pakistanis don't like it. But neither do the Indians," and sure enough, two weeks after that the Indian political counselor from the embassy came in, and he looked at the map and said, "That map is wrong. You know that, and you should really change that map." He wanted to take a pencil and draw in the correct border. It was a sensitive issue, and we were considered to be on Pakistan's side. There was a lot of bilateral suspicion; the Indians wanted to buy a supercomputer to do monsoon weather prediction. The supercomputer was I'm sure less powerful than the iPhone 6 I have in my pocket right now, but in those days it was the big thing. Only America made them. It was basically a combination of eight or 12 large computers, but it could process far faster. It was used legitimately as a weather predictor. It was also used for other research, including nuclear research. So there was a great suspicion that the Indians were going to use the weather computer [for other purposes]. So this is the sort of thing, that was the atmosphere.

The third factor was in NEA, then headed by Richard Murphy, there was very little interest in India. Murphy was an Arabist, he was an NEA guy, the focus is on the peace process, it's on Egypt and Israel, Syria, the Gulf, the '80s are the war between Iran and Iraq in which we flagged tankers with American flags. Indeed, there was an Indian vessel I think we sunk. So NEA leadership wasn't particularly interested. It would do it only under duress. Howie Schaffer and Tezi [Teresita] Schaffer, two married Foreign Service ambassadors eventually, they were the two DASes (deputy assistant secretary), Howie first then Tezi. It was kind of fun because we got to do India policy. Baker - I don't know if you ever worked directly with Baker's staff. He was very much an issue-focused secretary of State - "what is the issue we're dealing with today? That's what we're going to work on." He didn't like the "dogs and cats" of foreign policy, the half an hour he has to spend with the Venezuelan ambassador then the 45 minutes with the Bangladeshi foreign minister, so it was hard to get Baker's attention [on India].

On the other side of that we had two powerful forces. One, a guy named Stephen Solarz who was the chair, if not the chair he was the head of the Near East committee on the House Foreign Affairs committee; he was a New York congressman.

Q: I spoke to his wife Sunday.

KRAJESKI: Really? Because he's dead now.

Q: She said, "You interviewed my husband." I had three sessions with him. Very powerful figure, very good too.

KRAJESKI: I agree completely. He was very much interested in India, promoting U.S.-Indian relationships. He liked me; I was just a junior guy. But like many doing India, [I wondered] "Why the hell don't we have a stronger relationship with the world's largest

democracy, with this huge potential market, with this powerful military?" India had and has one of the most powerful militaries, particularly their navy. Their army and navy are very strong. There was a sense that this doesn't make sense, why aren't we deeper engaged? Solarz pushed hard. He would get very frustrated. He would call Murphy up for a hearing and Murphy wouldn't go, he'd send Howie Schaffer or Tezi Schaffer. Solarz got so frustrated, he demanded that we create the South Asia bureau which happened just as I was leaving the desk in 1990 (transcriber: actually created in 1992). The South Asia bureau in those days was just South Asia, INS and PAB were the whole bureau. That's a later story.

And then we had the Indians who are the Indians. The Indians have one of the world's oldest civilizations. When we were chewing tree bark and painting ourselves green, the Indians were reading and writing. I heard a lot of this, from the Indians and later the Egyptians when I worked in Egypt, too. So the Indians, particularly the northern Indians, had a very high sense of self. So they were offended often that the United States was not paying attention. They bristled at the notion they would somehow become dependent upon or owing to the United States, or that we would force them to do something. They sent an ambassador who I remember was a Kashmiri poet, he was the last of the Kashmiri princes. At independence, remember, each of the princely states in India held a referendum to determine whether or not they would become part of the union. All of them did except Kashmir - that referendum was never held, although they did agree that the ruling family would no longer rule.

Q: As I recall, the ruling family was Muslim -

KRAJESKI: No, they were Hindu. Karan Singh, they were Singhs, Punjabis, they were Hindu. Karan Singh was the crown prince in 1948 when this happened. He was just a kid then. He became the ambassador to the United States in 1989. Fascinating man. A genuine poet, a gentle guy, an ego as big as all outdoors. He came in basically with the same mandate that we had, which is how do you improve relations? I remember a meeting with Bill Clark who was going out to be our ambassador in India; he had not yet been confirmed.

Q: He was political counselor when I was in Korea.

KRAJESKI: Right. He had been assistant secretary for East Asia, for EAP - I think, maybe he was principal deputy, when he was appointed to be ambassador to India. A big jump. Bill's a terrific guy. As a young desk officer I have this very experienced officer going out as ambassador, he treated me very well. You know how that relationship is when you're waiting to be appointed - you don't have anybody really except your desk officer. Your desk officer is your staff, [keeps] your schedule. Bill was very tied in with people like Margaret Tutwiler and [others on] Baker's staff, from his year previous with EAP. Bill was going out; Karan Singh had just arrived as ambassador. So we went out to do a briefing with Singh - introduce the two of them, talk to Singh, see where we were going to go. The Indians have one of the most beautiful residences in Washington, overlooking Rock Creek Parkway, close to the zoo. Gorgeous house. We went to have tea

with Karan Singh and the deputy chief of mission, the political counselor who I knew well, and Bill Clark. Singh was genuinely interested in how do we improve relations. How do we get through some of this stiffness and coldness that prevents a more productive relationship? Clark said, "I'll be frank with you." Diplomats like to say, "I'll be frank with you;" sometimes we are. Bill said, "You have a terrible relationship with Congress. The Pakistanis eat your lunch on the Hill." I don't know whether Karan Singh understood that phrase. "Pakistanis are up there all the time. They have friends all over the Hill. When there's an issue, they've got people who will deal with it on staff. They have members whom they court and [who] know Pakistan. You've got to do the same. India does not have that kind of influence and connections on the Hill. It's extremely important in this town; you need to get out and do it."

Q: In some interviews I've done, I talked with people who dealt with India. They said Indians had a sense of dignity, they'd only talk to somebody of conferrable rank. And they wouldn't talk to Congress. This was killing them.

KRAJESKI: Let me give you the punch line of this story, it fits exactly what you said. Singh thought about this and said, "This is a very good idea." He turned to his DCM and said, "Find me 15 or 20 of these fellows and invite them over for tea." I think Clark just went, "No, no." Any smart ambassador in this town - and there are many - know you go after the staffers. You go and see those senior staffers in the congressmen's office, you pay visits on the Hill. India had a huge advantage in this - you've got an Indian community in New York or Detroit. Or Los Angeles, they were hugely wealthy and influential in California. Take advantage of it. If you want a congressman to listen, talk about that community, how you were "out in the community, they're so well-settled here, that's such a great way of building our relationship, blah blah blah." That congressman will listen, because now you're talking votes. "Now, you don't want to get involved in elections Mr. Ambassador, but you have an influential wealthy community who can give contributions and votes."

Singh didn't get it. The second story on Singh, as we start on the desk. Their one big and influential supporter on the Hill is Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former ambassador to India, still very much involved in India. I got to meet Moynihan a number of times, fascinating character. One of the first meetings we have with Singh is with Moynihan. We persuade Singh to go up to Moynihan's office - this is the Senate, this is a big deal, and he's one of the senior Democratic senators. We have a very good meeting. Moynihan says, "I'm going to host a reception in the [Capitol] dome" - I don't know if they still do that - "to welcome you, Karan Singh, to Washington, and introduce you. It will be a great opportunity for you to meet my colleagues, make some contacts. We'll invite a lot of your staff." This is a big deal, good thing, I'm delighted. That reception is incredible, the only one I've been to in the dome. There's a lot of senators and congressmen there, quite a crowd. Lot of staffers. All chattering and talking. Moynihan takes the podium, gives an eloquent speech even though this is six o'clock at night; if you know Moynihan he wasn't often sober at six o'clock at night. He was one of the most brilliant speakers I have heard. So he gives a nice speech, welcoming Karan Singh, says all the right things. The Pakistani ambassador is there as well. Great moment. Karan Singh gets up, and he recites

poetry for about 30 minutes. Oh, God, you could just see the air go out of the room. He talks about the greatness of India, the culture. And you could just see everybody go, "Who the fuck cares? Who IS this guy?" It was badly timed. He didn't have the touch.

Now, things eventually broke with India and during those two years, Rajiv Gandhi has taken over the Congress Party and he's very business oriented. He wants to open up business, he's pushing to change laws to make it easier for businessmen to move currency around, to hire and fire people. There's a big change going on in India that's liberalizing the business climate that literally exploded in the '90s and 2000s, so you watch the Indian economy grow, not quite as fast as the Chinese economy did. You watch our relations grow with it. Just a tremendous amount of interest in American business in going to India and trying to do business.

Q: Did you run across the residue of the London School of Economics Fabian socialist thing that Indira Gandhi brought up?

KRAJESKI: More than a residue. This was still very much part of Congress' political mantra - socialism, high taxes. There was still Communism there, especially in West Bengal, Calcutta - I'm trying to remember the name [Jyoti Basu], he was chief minister there forever. In 1988 I took that wonderful trip that desk officers get when they send you out, in my case for almost three weeks. I went to Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Calcutta, Islamabad, Karachi. I didn't go to Sri Lanka but all over India. I remember the meeting in Calcutta. First of all, have you ever been to Calcutta? India has some cities that are imposing, the shock of walking out of the train station or the taxi ride to your hotel is just unbelievable - the mass of people, the seeming chaos of the place. Calcutta has it in spades. Although Calcutta also had one of the first metro lines in India that I rode on, to go out to the tennis club.

I went to my meeting with the government, and you're right about the protocol thing; they looked and said, "What level are we going to do this desk officer at?" I didn't get the top guys but I got some senior people in the Communist Party. I walked into the room and they were seated, four of them on a raised platform behind a table, rather sternly dressed in the Congress Indian fashion, although they were Communists. I sat lower than them, looking up at the four of them. They gave their little talking points and I gave mine. Behind them was a picture of Jyoti Basu, the chief minister. And next to Jyoti Basu, a picture of Josef Stalin! In 1988! I stared at it. So we naturally got into the relationship with the Soviet Union, which they cherished. I asked them what they thought of Gorbachev and glasnost and perestroika, the changes in the Soviet Union. One of them shook his head and said, "We understand that change is inevitable and there has to be progress. We can always make things better for our people. But when they drag the good name of Josef Stalin through the mud, they've gone too far."

I had no talking point for that. I think my mouth was wide open.

Fascinating place. A guy named Ken Brill was the consul-general when I was visiting. I don't know if Ken was with me at that meeting, we were trying to get a higher level of

people. I think he was. It was quite stunning. India is an amazing country, as I said when we were talking about Madras. I was instantly fascinated, seduced, taken in. I wanted to do more on India. I was really happy with the job I had.

Q: Were we concerned with the BJP-

KRAJESKI: Not particularly.

Q: There's this religious, racial component.

KRAJESKI: The BJP's more moderate. There also was a party that was a Hindu nationalist party, they were often involved in some of the violent clashes with Muslims. The big thing is, they would walk by a Muslim mosque and throw a shoe made out of pig's leather into it, and the Muslims would throw a shoe made out of cow's leather into the Hindu temple. That would quickly escalate into violence and people being killed. There was concern that this nationalist party, like Europe today the anti-immigrant parties, the new nationalism - this is similar. It had a wing that was very almost National Socialist/Nazi sort, training young people to be good Hindus, strong Hindus, to fight for Hinduism. The BJP walked the line with these parties the way a lot of European parties are walking the line with these more radical nationalist parties.

Q: You were on the India desk when things fell apart in Easter Europe, '89 and all. How did the Indian Communist Party react?

KRAJESKI: I would have to look. I know that Jyoti Basu and the Communist Party of West Bengal stayed in power well into the '90s [actually until 2001]. There were still remnants of Communist parties around, the national Communist Party was weak. India, unlike some of the Soviet Union's other client states like Cuba, South Yemen - India was not overly economically dependent on the Soviet Union. They did sell a lot of Indian goods in Russia, Indian clothing, food - it was a big market for the Indians, so as turmoil hit the Soviet Union and markets changed, that affected some Indian businesses. On the military side, the relationship remained quite strong through the whole transition because India had invested in Russian, Soviet-built equipment for decades. Once you make an investment like that you've got to keep it going, it's really hard to make the transition to French or British or American equipment.

Q: I often wonder. You're a military planner and all these little wars have broken out. The Soviet equipment doesn't hold up as well as the American or British...

KRAJESKI: It depends. The Kalashnikov is the best rifle in the world, astonishingly durable and versatile. The planes? Again, you've invested so much in the supply train for whatever version of the MiG you have - it's enormously expensive to either buy from somewhere else or to build your own. The Indians have now quite a large defense industry, they build a lot of their own equipment - tanks, ships, I think planes. Don't know if they're building them on the same level as the MiGs and F-16s and Mirages, the top-line world fighters. They have a large army. I think they make their own rifles. Most

everything the army needs, even tanks - that may be General Dynamics that went in and helped with the tanks.

Q: When you were on the desk, did you get involved in potential military sales?

KRAJESKI: Not many. The big sale as I said was the supercomputer sale. There was some military - we were trying. The [US] military was interested, but cautious. There was a sense that the world was changing. By 1990 that had grown into a very large sense, that things are changing, that the Soviet's ability to project power and maintain these relationships was clearly weakening. I still don't think people saw it fracturing in the way it did by 1990. So there was interest in the [US] military to see if they could come in, fill a few gaps, make a few offers. The Indians were suspicious, and we're expensive compared to the Russians. We're much better, our argument when we're selling things is "We're a whole lot better."

Q: We're back now. How do we feel about Rajiv Gandhi?

KRAJESKI: He was the next generation, the young, business-friendly international leader. His mother was still - when was his mother assassinated? [Oct 31, 1984] He was assassinated after that, trying to remember. He was considered the guy who was going to take India into the 21st century. He was big on hi-tech and business, and we were big on hi-tech and business. There was enthusiasm among the business community especially, but also the political and military guys were looking beyond Indira, beyond Congress, the Nehrus.

Q: Had the system developed where today you have a technical question and dial a number and get somebody who's in Bangalore?

KRAJESKI: That wasn't there yet, but it was coming. I saw this in Madras, this growing community of Indian software engineers and software companies who were designing programs for the banks and communications.

Q: Why are the Indians so good at that?

KRAJESKI: I don't know. The Indians are good at a lot of things. The main reason I think is education. While they didn't have a comprehensive education system for the one billion people that lived in the country, if you were rich enough or not so poor as to be able to go to school, and you lucked out and were in a place where there were pretty good government secondary schools, you could then compete for the Indian university system. If you got into the Indian universities, and IIT is the big one, the Indian Institute of Technology. If you could get in, you got a really good education. That education was in English, and it was top-notch. They focused on the sciences - engineering, tech, medicine. Indian-trained doctors, went to medical school in India, were scarfed up by the big medical schools and hospitals in the United States. They were prime applicants for

residency programs, specialty programs in medicine. In the still-new but exploding field of computer technology, the Indians were right up there. They were establishing companies in India, American companies were establishing partnerships with them, Indians were traveling to the United States to take up technical jobs and to do technical contracts. They were also less expensive than American-trained software engineers though that balanced off very quickly; Indians are not dumb and they realized, "We may get our foot in the door because we can underprice another company that's bidding, but once we're in, we expect the same amount that anybody else gets."

Q: When you look at it, you think the Soviets should have been able to do that. They're a mathematical people.

KRAJESKI: I met a number of Indians, not so many in the south when I lived there and on the desk where I ran across a few through the government, who instead of going to an Indian university - which is what most of them wanted, that was their first choice because it's expensive to go outside, so a lot of [them studied] engineering and some in medicine went to Moscow and studied at that enormous international, Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, their international university. They had to learn to speak Russian to do it - most of these folks had been educated in English up to that point, sometimes in Hindi or another language, but if you were going to go into university you knew at age six that you had to be fluent in English, reading, writing, comprehension, if you're going to get into the top Indian universities. The option of going to Russia - the immediate language barrier. Those who did it I think would say they got a good engineering education and a good medical education, but they almost always were negative about the experience. Russians are racists. The Indians were considered second class. Living in Moscow as a brown-skinned individual is not a happy thing to do, even today. Back in the '60s and '70s and '80s when this was happening, I rarely heard a good word. While the folks who went to the United States, predominantly grad students though they did a lot of undergrads too, in the sciences and medicine and engineering. Most of them stayed, they liked it so much. They had opportunity, got welcomed into the communities, most of them stayed. In the '90s, after my desk job, many of them were coming back to India to establish companies, take advantage of the great opening of business. When you look at immigration flowing back and forth and trade - I'm not going to get political here but I saw it first hand, starting as a visa officer in 1982 in Madras, India, to the desk officer and then following it in the years hence. "How can you argue anything but this is a positive trend, the building of this relationship, building business. Some of the most brilliant scientists, doctors and engineers in the United States are of Indian birth or heritage, born in the States." This is great for both countries.

Q: At two o'clock I'm seeing my doctor, she's Pakistani. We go a long way.

KRAJESKI: They have a real respect for education, including at the level where they're not getting a good education. You go out into the villages in India, working with the poor, in the slums - there's still this drive towards learning. Some amazing books about the slums of Bombay and the informal schools that come up in the slums that occasionally produce a brilliant student that makes it.

Q: Were we at all interested to do something about the Indian poor?

KRAJESKI: These were the days when USAID had its own policies as to what we were doing internationally, engaging with countries. Aid was not, I don't think they had an AID mission in India.

Q: Had a huge bankroll in India which I think was more than the Indian budget.

KRAJESKI: I mentioned Daniel Patrick Moynihan. When I met him, he showed me a picture of himself when he was ambassador, in the '70s. They've [India] had some big [stars as US ambassador] – [John] Kenneth Galbraith. I think Moynihan was ambassador under Nixon. There's a picture of him with the Indian minister of Finance, there's one of these large checks. It's like 10 billion rupees, [16 billion rupees, approx. 2 billion dollars] and they're throwing it into a furnace, they're going to burn it. [Correction: The check was deposited into Indian government accounts to write off debts.]

Q: Moynihan was '73 to '75.

KRAJESKI: So the last years of Nixon. They recognized we had so much Indian currency on reserve, it was affecting the value of the currency in the country. Now, it was not internationally exchanged until the '90s, I don't know when they went to selling it on international currency markets. So the exchange rate was set. You could only use rupees in India. There was a black market of course like there are in most countries with currency restrictions. There were severe penalties for trading in dollars and smuggling goods. We had beautiful housing when I lived in India, because what else could we do with the rupees but buy land? Indeed, they prohibited us from buying more land after a while; we sold some of it back to them. I got to float home on the *QE2* (*Queen Elizabeth 2*) from Southampton to New York because Cunard had an office in Bombay, we could buy the tickets using rupees. So the budget officer in Delhi said, "We don't want to fly you home. If you're willing to take the boat, take the boat - it's cheaper for us. We've got this roomful of rupees that we're trying to spend. You want to go first class on *QE2*? Boom! It's cheaper than flying you home on Pan Am," which was the other option. Pan Am didn't take rupees, we had to pay dollars.

Q: Were there any problems with Indian students or tourists in the United States that came to your attention?

KRAJESKI: Not so much on the desk. It was interesting being a desk officer because you do get the whole gamut of issues that are involved in a relationship. A couple of cases with Americans in trouble in India that came to the attention of the desk. Often these were judicial cases where an Indian had absconded from the United States to India. We had an extradition treaty with India that went back to 1927 when India was still part of the Raj, but the Indians still honored it. It was a very difficult process to extradite someone from India to the United States. It was also extremely difficult to extradite from the United States to India. The cases I remember most were the property cases. The

Indians wanted to rebuild their consulate in San Francisco, they wanted to expand it; they had a large Indian community there. The property they owned was a historically recognized house in San Francisco, and the Indians decided they were going to make the changes anyway, because "We've got diplomatic immunities, you can't prosecute us if we decide to put an office wing on this property." The community, the San Francisco Preservation Society or whatever they were called, took them to court and sued them, which they can't do.

It all comes down to the State Department and the Office of Foreign Missions. They wanted to build a consulate in Houston, so we said, "We're not going to give you permission to buy property in Houston until you settle in San Francisco with the Preservation Society." In the end they had to take down the addition because they wanted property [in Houston]. I was surprised we would leverage like this, back and forth. We also did on personnel, the Indians would want to add personnel to their New York consulate; we want to add personnel to Bombay. There'd be an exchange, "How many do you have?" That was kind of interesting.

There were a lot of Americans traveling to India. Michael Jackson was going to India when I was on the desk, and Michael Jackson traveled with a monkey in 1989; everywhere he went he brought his monkey with him. This is going to be a huge tour, go to Delhi, sing, perform, the Indians are all ecstatic - like most places around the world, they love American music, culture. This is the biggest rock star, the biggest pop star in the world, coming to India. I remember talking to his managers as they were making arrangements for him to fly. The embassy got involved with a couple of things. Then literally a week or two before the concerts were to take place, the Indians got wind of this monkey and said, "No monkey! We have enough monkeys in India, they're a real problem for us - rabies and disease. If he comes in with a monkey, we're going to quarantine the monkey." The quarantine was a British-style six-month quarantine; Jackson was going to be there for seven or eight days. In the end, the Indians held their ground, and Jackson canceled everything. He didn't go without his monkey.

A wonderful woman named Marcia Bernicat who's our ambassador to Senegal, I believe. No, she's in Bangladesh, she was in Senegal. She was the Nepal desk officer and she also did Indian political-military affairs. Another guy named Joe Barnes was the Sri Lanka desk officer - we were really good friends, you make great friends when you're in a small team like that. In Washington you tend to work long hours, much longer than necessary almost always. So you really do develop strong friendships. Marcia and I were just roaring over the monkey; I think Joe Barnes may have written a poem about it.

When you're on the desk, every day is a different thing. This is before email. We did have Wang computers, which were an incredible boon - I loved them because you could keep your talking points there on the system so that when somebody was coming in to meet with Tezi Schaffer or Murphy or even higher up, you could go and click your talking points quickly, but them into the briefing paper or background memo, update them as necessary. Then if people had edits or changes - you still passed it around in paper in those days, you couldn't send it electronically - it was easy to make the changes and

produce the final. I loved it. But we had telephones, and you remember we used to call it the "yellow rain," those yellow phone message slips. While you were out, your secretary would take phone messages and there'd be a little stack of them on your desk. And you'd call people back and leave messages and have this exchange going on. You used to have to wander the halls with your papers to get them cleared.

Q: Did you have problems with NEA or farther up the line getting stuff cleared?

KRAJESKI: It depended who was in the chain. For us, the most important person was our director. Scott Butcher was the director of our office, an EAP [East Asia Pacific Bureau] guy who was brought over to run the India desk. He was a wonderful leader, great human being. He cleared things very quickly. You'd show it to him, sit down and talk about what you were trying to do; he might have a suggestion, he might say "You really need to go to PM (Bureau of Political-Military Affairs) and get a clearance from PM on this," and you could do all of that. Then it would go to the staff aide on the sixth floor who would first give it to the deputy assistant secretary to look at. I had two of them, Howie Schaffer, then his wife Tezi Schaffer. First year it was Howie, he was a South Asia hand, became ambassador to Bangladesh I believe. Tezi got Sri Lanka. He was a very meticulous man.

You get everything done, you find out in the morning what your assignments were going to be as far as writing and preparing memos and papers for folks up the chain. By 2:00 pm I had it drafted and had the preliminary clearances from PM or IO (Bureau of International Organization Affairs) or whatever bureau I needed to go to depending on the issue. So by 2:00 or 3:00 I had it upstairs. With Howie, around 5:00 you get a phone call - phone would ring on your desk, he'd say "Come up here." Click. He was abrupt. We were on the fourth floor in those days, the India desk. We would walk up to the sixth floor where the assistant secretary's suite was, right above us. You'd walk into Howie's office and he'd be there with his silver Cross pen, and he'd be sitting with your draft, and you'd sit in your chair opposite the desk, and he'd go through your points with his Cross pen, marking perfectly - his handwriting was impeccable. Every once in a while he'd look up at you. Sometimes he'd ask a question. Sometimes he'd shake his head. This is like 20 minutes, you sit in front of this guy while he's doing this. I brought other stuff to do, I'd be reading, working on something else while he was going through this [draft]. Sometimes his remarks were kind of harsh. I remember, he's reading this piece of paper, and he looks up and says, "Can't anybody write down there?" By 5:30 or so you're back down in your offices making the changes Howie wants you to make. In some cases you have to call people to say, "Howie just made a change, I need to make sure you're OK with it before I pass it back up to the staff aide to go to Murphy or Murphy's successor, John Kelly. Kelly cared even less about India than Murphy did, so we knew once it was through Schaffer and to the staff aid that Murphy or Kelly would have almost no changes to it. And then it would go up [to the seventh floor principals] and you were free to go home. I was a member of a softball team, the last years I played competitively, I was 38 years old. They played up at Tacoma Park, the games would start at 6:30 in the summertime. I loved playing softball. I would get changed in my office into my softball duds and get ready to go and jump into my car or with my buddies (we had a carpool)

and get up to Tacoma Park in time for the ballgame. There was a number of nights I was delayed. That angered me more than anything. If we had like the foreign minister in town or a new ambassador or somebody and there's a lot going on, you worked as many hours as you had to work. But routinely, I disliked being delayed by that.

Q: Any state visits or close to state visits?

KRAJESKI: We did not. [There were a] number of senators who went to India, I recall Kennedy going. Nobody above Congress. The secretary of State did not. Baker dealt with the big issues, he's working Soviet Union probably 24 hours a day, peace process, Israel still very much on his agenda - 1988 to '90, until Saddam invades Kuwait which impacts Israel and results in the Madrid talks. You really couldn't get Baker's attention.

I'll go back to Karan Singh, the new Indian ambassador. He wants to pay a call on the secretary of State beyond the presentation of credentials which he's already done - that's a very formal thing. We're trying to persuade the secretary's staff that this is a good idea; the secretary needs to spend 15 minutes, that's all we're asking, with Karan Singh. Exchange of views. Bill Clark was with me then, he talked to Margaret Tutwiler, Baker's spokesperson, talks her into doing it. So they agree, Karan Singh will get 15 minutes of the secretary's time. I've never prepared more for a meeting, because the secretary was basically "Why am I meeting with this guy?" Got to tell him right up front, "Here's why you're meeting with him, here are the three issues we need to raise with him." One was the nuclear issue, probably a trade issue, and there may have been Kashmir points, too. Get it all prepped, one page for the secretary.

I meet Karan Singh down at C Street, he's there with his political counselor. He [the political counselor] was such a good guy, he went on to fairly high positions in the Foreign Ministry after that. He was a Singh as well. Jovinder Singh, I believe. I tell the ambassador as directly as I can as a desk officer, "You've got 15 minutes. Don't waste them. Make your points. Baker doesn't like small talk, he likes a quick, efficient exchange; this is a great chance to do that." We go up, wait in that beautiful room outside the secretary's office. We're a little bit late, waiting. We walk into the secretary's office, we sit down. Right after the "Hello and welcome to the United States, Mr. Ambassador," literally the 30 seconds of small talk that Baker would tolerate, Singh launches into a 20 minute monologue on the importance of India and criticizing the United States for neglecting India and not understanding [them]. He's a fairly mellow guy, but it's a 20 minute rambling monologue on the importance of India in the world. Baker listens politely; his face is hardly moving. I'm thinking, "I'm going to get killed here." Tezi may have been at that one or Howie, one of the deputy assistant secretaries. Tutwiler was in the meeting too, first time I met her. She's a stern figure. She's kind of looking at her watch. At one point she says, "Thank you Mr. Ambassador." And the secretary literally just says, "Very interesting. Bye."

I escort him out of the office. We got nothing out of that, nothing. And I'm sure Baker afterwards thought, "Wasted 20 minutes of my day!" I never heard about it but I'm just a desk officer. It was a difficult relationship [US and India]. One that should - and still

should be - a lot easier. It's much broader now, much more intense. Clinton went for a visit, Obama's been for a visit, we've had their prime ministers here on a number of occasions. Obama got invited to the national day parade two years ago, a big deal. I remember it poured rain during the entire parade. The relationship's much better. It's fascinating and it was fun as a desk officer in those days because of the lower level of interest in India, whether it was the White House or DOD (Department of Defense) or State - desk officers, that network you build as a desk officer, we were really kind of running the policy. It was fun.

Q: How were relations at the fourth floor level with Pakistan?

KRAJESKI: My colleagues on the Pakistan desk were great fun, and we were very close with each other. Bob Flaten [was director], and I had Bob Boggs as my counterpart, a woman named Mary Anne Peters was the deputy. Some great people on the Afghanistan desk. When did the Soviets pull out of Afghanistan? Around that time. It was a very active place to work. There was a sense that relations with India were changing, beginning to [get] close with India and that was unnerving to the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis had a number of things going on that we were not happy with, particularly their nuclear program. It led to the total embargo of all military sales to Pakistan sometime in the early '90s. I'm trying to remember the senator [Pressler, D-SD, 1979-97] who was responsible for pushing this through the Senate and Congress. So there was real apprehension on the side of the Pakistanis. We were getting a little closer to China as well, which was not pleasing the Indians. And then the Soviet Union was collapsing. A real sense of uncertainty. We had one serious dust-up on Kashmir when I was there, when artillery fire [led to] troop movements, gunfire across the borders. I do remember going back and looking at the 1972 Simla Agreement that Benazir Bhutto's [Zulfikar Ali Bhutto] father had signed, he was then prime minister of Pakistan. We in that period were also very apprehensive about which way the world was going. As Americans, we were looking at the positive results of the Soviet Union's break-up, of its loss of influence in Eastern Europe. We over-reacted to these events, sometimes without thinking clearly. We did this in the Arab Spring in 2011.

After this desk job, I went to the Operations Center. But I really was focused on India, I thought this was where I'd make my career.

Q: Let's talk about the situation at the time and how you felt about the nuclear issue between these two powers, Pakistan and India, at that time.

KRAJESKI: With India it was a fascinating dance. They, as had the Pakistanis, had refused to signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968. The Non-Proliferation Treaty was enacted in the '60s, when the nuclear powers agreed they would restrict the development of nuclear weapons to the five who were currently producing them. The Indians resented it and refused to sign. So we knew they were developing a weapon, they had a program aimed at developing a nuclear weapon - they denied it, said that their engineering was for nuclear power. I told you about the supercomputer, which was also valuable in the production of weapons grade uranium.

Q: What did we do with that?

KRAJESKI: Eventually the sale [of the supercomputer] was approved. About the end of my stay there. The economic officer for India, Warren, he worked hard at that. There were restrictions and inspections and it was only supposed to be used for monsoon predictions which as I said, was a valid use of this computer, weather prediction. So the sale did go through.

The nuclear issue - we knew through other sources at least some of what the Indians were up to, similar to the Iran situation today. We knew what the Pakistanis were doing though not to the extent they were.

Q: Had the Indians tested?

KRAJESKI: I don't think so. The tests were much later, for both countries. The Indians may have conducted - I have to go back and take a look, in my mind before the Non-Proliferation Treaty, they may have conducted a test. You'd have to check the history on that. [The first test was in 1974.] That's where I first heard the phrase, "Turn of a screwdriver away." Everything is in place, if they make the decision to do it, they just have to turn that screwdriver, and they've got a bomb. They can conduct a test - which eventually they did [Further tests in 1994 and 1999.] Pakistanis as well. There were those in Congress who were very vocal about the need to do more to prevent India and Pakistan from developing nuclear weapons. We as a matter of policy thought it was extremely important to keep them from becoming nuclear capable. They were shooting at each other, off and on. There had been three wars, '47, '61, and '72. War was very much a possibility, and the idea of them having nuclear weapons just scared the hell out of everybody.

Q: When you left the desk, how did you see India vis-a-vis its two neighbors, Pakistan and China?

KRAJESKI: There was a border clash with China as well during that time. Like the Kashmiri line of control, there was a similar arrangement following the 1961-62 Chinese-India war on the eastern borders. There were Indian troops confronting Chinese troops and there was an exchange that caused us a lot of worries as well, since our relations with China were just starting to deepen a little bit so we'd actually be able to talk to the Chinese; same with the Indians. As happens in Kashmir now mostly, they quickly come to an agreement to stop the aggression, whatever it is. We've got India and China, and the Pakistanis were probably looking at themselves as the odd man out, as the United States was focusing on both China and India as the Soviet Union is losing power and we're becoming the single power in the world. We're looking at India and China and Pakistan is thinking, "You used us when you needed us, and now..." I think the coup de grace on that was the passing of this legislation in the early '90s that among other things, stopped Pakistani officers from studying at American schools. Something, from my almost-last job at NDU (National Defense University), that's an enormously valuable program that

we have, bringing in these foreign military officers with their families for one year to our military schools. We make connections around the world that you just can't put a price tag on. Pakistanis for I don't know how many years - when I got to NDU in 2009, Pakistanis had come back and we were trying to bring more, we were allowing Pakistan double the number of other countries because we recognized, we lost a generation of Pakistani officers because they were prohibited. Or the Pakistanis may well have done this, said "We're not going to send anybody to your schools, if you're not going to sell us anything." There was a period where our military relationship with Pakistan really bottomed out. The Pakistanis never really forgave us; even today, there's a sense that when we were confronting the Soviet Union, Pakistan was there shoulder to shoulder with us. But as soon as the Soviet Union went away, we said, "Thanks for all the fish; bye."

Q: Did you find your dealing with the Indians - Indians have a tendency to preach to other people, and we do the same. Sometimes it's like two rival Baptist ministers thumping their Bibles at each other.

KRAJESKI: Yeah, yeah. That's a good comparison. This occurs more at the senior level than at the desk officer level, which is where I was. When I had lunch with Jovinder Singh, the Indian political counselor, we didn't do this with each other, it was much more practical. We were both in the same position - these are two great countries, why can't we get along better, why aren't we doing more with each other? The world's greatest democracy with the world's biggest democracy? India was the world's biggest democracy, we were the world's oldest or greatest. Sri Lanka was like the "smallest democracy" and Pakistan was the "fledgling democracy." Everybody had a phrase for it. But at the senior level, I mentioned the Karan Singh stories already. There was a tendency among senior Americans and Indians to talk at each other rather than have a practical exchange.

Q: Did you get any feel for the state of Indian studies at U.S. schools and universities, and American studies in India?

KRAJESKI: Of the latter, there wasn't a lot. We saw Americans going to India for business and for quasi-religious purposes. There's quite a large contingent of Americans at ashrams and studying with the gurus. Indian universities wouldn't admit foreign students, the good Indian universities which were all state run. I don't think they admitted foreign students, period. Indeed, if Indian students wanted to go IIT, say, and they had been born in the States (and there were many), they had to renounce their American citizenship. As a consular officer, I had young Indians coming into my office renouncing their American citizenship. I don't know if that's still the case. The largest community of Americans again were business people and these quasi-religious tourists. Quite a few regular tourists, go to the Taj Mahal, etc.

Q: At the time, the Indian population in the United States was not a major political force.

KRAJESKI: I don't think so, it was just beginning to get a sense of its own political weight in places like California. That was largely because it was a fairly wealthy community. Like all first-generation immigrant communities, people who are doing well and settled were born in India. Their children were just starting to go into college and beyond. I think - I love that as Foreign Service officers, we're always "expert" about things we really don't know a whole lot about - among first generation immigrants there is a reluctance to engage politically in the United States.

Q: It's a little later they discover that there really is power.

KRAJESKI: We'll get into the Arab phase of my career next time, but I used to go to places like Detroit, Michigan where there are large Arab communities. Always a talking point among the leadership of the community would be, "Why is AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) so powerful? Why does Congress listen to this Israeli lobby all the time? Why don't they listen to us?" And I'd say, "That's because you don't talk to them. You haven't organized. You have enormous power if you organize and use it to lobby Congress, to get your point of view across to administrations. You don't do that. The American Jewish community does." I'd always say AIPAC isn't an Israeli lobby, it's an American Jewish lobby. "You can be an American Arab lobby." They're better at it now. The Indians I don't think have ever taken that on, it's a large community but I think the largest of the Indian communities are the so-called Patels, who came out of Bombay. If you go down in the South (a couple of movies have been made on this with these as characters) all of the motels at one time were "Patel motels."

Q: I've seen them.

KRAJESKI: And the Sikhs all went into gas stations, everywhere. Arabs too, by the way, Arabs like to own gas stations. That's true I guess of a lot of immigrant groups, the first focus is business. Making enough money to send your kids to become doctors.

Q: AIPAC, obviously Israel is a major cause. There isn't a uniting thing around Indians...

KRAJESKI: Kashmir would be one of that sort, it's not as important. For the Indians, you're right. That's interesting because as you look at the development of Indian involvement in American politics, it is basically the second generation that's doing it. They're all over the map politically. You've got guys like Bobby Jindal of Louisiana who's a pretty conservative Republican. The governor of South Carolina, Nikki Haley, she was just all over the news because she endorsed Cruz, maybe Rubio. She's a more conservative Republican. You've got Indian-Americans in Congress, local as governors. But yeah, right there's not a mass of them whether it's an issue or a particular, "We're all liberal Democrats, we're all conservative Republicans" - they seem to be all over the map.

Q: Whereas you had groups such as the Irish, the Greeks on Turkish issues, and the Armenians on Turkish issues. There's something that makes them coalesce.

KRAJESKI: India's such an amazing country. Something like 75 languages spoken. There are 15 I think official languages. Ethnic groups are along ethnic lines. Most of the states in India are drawn along linguistic-ethnic lines. One was just readjusted. There is a real difference in Indian attitudes or personality in the south to the north. A real difference in physical appearance among different Indians. Indian experts, whether anthropologists or just Indophiles, can tell "Oh, that's a Gujarati, he's a Punjabi, this guy is probably a Telugu from the south," you can tell almost by looking at someone... Now, there's been a lot of intermarriage, blending of that.

Q: Did you find that you were dealing with a significant number of academics who were involved in Indian affairs?

KRAJESKI: Not so many. There were a couple of focal points; University of Pennsylvania was one, it had a very large graduate program on India - mostly anthropology, culture, literature, languages. Again in 1990 when I left the desk, India still wasn't a major political relationship with the United States. While I'm sure there were academics. One of the things, I don't do a whole lot of reading of academics. I will read some of the think tank stuff. I tend to read the books about a place after I've been there or worked it. Part of it is you're just so damned busy.

Q: That's something that gets to me. You have these think tanks turning out so much on foreign policy and all...

KRAJESKI: These days it's a deluge.

Q: ... the question I ask my clients such as you, "How much do you read this?" The answer is usually "sparsely." I find too that when I look at something coming out on political science these days, you get an awful lot of charts and really has no pertinence to a working person.

KRAJESKI: You use the word embarrassment. As the desk officer and as you move up, you're invited to these sessions, and I find some of them quite useful. During the sessions, whether at Rand or the Washington Institute or Carnegie, whatever it is, they're presented by these people - you've just spent an hour or two talking about an issue - they give you their monographs. Or the latest publication. Or they email it to you. Of course you're polite, express interest - but it's an enormous amount of material. When you're actually doing the job... When I was on the Iraq desk, I had a shelf next to my desk filled with stuff advising us what to do on Iraq, as we were getting ready to invade Iraq. Some of it I'm sure was pretty damned good and if we had listened to it and absorbed it and pushed it, maybe it would have made a difference. It becomes a deluge. You have five or six folks you trust and like - I'd just go and have lunch with them and talk to them. At this point, on India there's a lot being written but it was not a big part of my desk operation. I paid more attention to what INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) and the agency was writing. We would have at least monthly sessions where we'd sit down with the intel community and talk about Kashmir or...

Q: How did you find the intel community's work?

KRAJESKI: We had a couple of really sharp people working over at Langley on India, particularly on the nuclear issue which was probably their number one priority. But also on Kashmir, trying to decide is there a possibility of war? They worked on other issues, too. I was in touch with them almost weekly. They'd call, say "We've got something interesting coming out, we'll send it over through INR." INR had a guy named Walter Anderson - Walter went out as a political officer while I was on the desk, he got one of these excursion assignments, as an analyst he went to the post for two years. Incredibly knowledgeable about northern Indian politics. Spoke Gujarati, spoke Punjabi. He was being wasted in INR though we really liked having him there. He had great contacts in the academic and intel communities. He was out there during this big election when the BJP won; he was an enormously valuable asset to the desk and the policy community because he was able to both report and synthesize. I read embassy reporting all the time. The OIs, official-informals, the cables that went back every day from the desk to the embassy and from the embassy to the desk. Because of the time difference it works fairly well; you get in in the morning, they're finishing their day in India.

Q: Was this on the internet?

KRAJESKI: No, this was all done through cables. The official-informal; every embassy had one. The DCM was in charge of it at the embassy, Scott Butcher back at the desk. We'd always send little pieces. So if Walter had written something interesting on the election, we'd say "That was great" and ask him questions within the OI, next day he'd come back with some answers. We had two or three people at the agency as well in their analyst group who were really good. So I tended to read their stuff. They had a wider net among the academic and think tank community than I did, because I'm going off to meetings trying how to figure out how to tell the Indians they have to demolish the new wing of their San Francisco consulate! That took so much of my time. I'll never forget meeting the head of the Office of Foreign Missions. He says, "We just won't approve the land in Houston until they do it!" Boy were the Indians unhappy, I don't think we made them unhappier on anything else, it's expensive building in San Francisco. It did not conform to the roofline that the Preservation Society would approve. It was a non-conforming addition. I don't think they had to tear the whole thing down, they had to adjust the roofline and make some other adjustments to make it blend in to the old building that they owned.

Q: I think this is a good place to stop.

KRAJESKI: Sure. We're moving slowly. Is this a good pace? Tell me if I'm talking too much.

Q: No, no, no. I am trying to milk as much as I can out of each position, because I don't know how people are going to be using these.

KRAJESKI: Well, the next position is senior watch officer in the Operations Center. They have a one-month program where you're trained by the previous senior watch officer. Did you ever do the Op Center?

Q: Yes.

KRAJESKI: Op Center's a great place. I literally had my first solo two days before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I couldn't have been in a better place. I loved being in the Op Center while we were preparing for the first major military effort since ... I watched - literally on the phone, as the senior watch officer you're the senior phone operator for the secretary of State. In those days it was all phones. Emails were just starting. So you get to listen in to Baker talking to Shevardnadze as they're putting together this coalition to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. I have enormous respect for James Baker for that if nothing else, his diplomatic skills.

Q: OK. We'll pick it up then.

Q: Today is the 25th of March, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. We passed the India desk, and you're now up in the Operations Center. You were in the Operations Center from when to when?

KRAJESKI: I started in early July 1990 and was there until July of the following year. It's a one-year assignment as you know. You work shifts.

Q: But the Op Center has the reputation of being the place where talented officers go. It teaches you the wiring diagram of the State Department.

KRAJESKI: Like no other job in the department. It really is the catbird seat for seeing how the department functions - how the paper flows, how the meetings go, how the trips are planned, how we react to crisis, how we don't sometimes react to crisis. In the Op Center you spend almost four weeks teaming with an experienced SWO (senior watch officer) to learn how to run the center.

Q: A WO is a watch officer.

KRAJESKI: And a SWO is a senior watch officer, which is what I was. They manage the shift, so on each shift you have a senior watch officer, usually two watch officers, an editor, then an operations assistant they were called then, think they're called something else now; basically the secretarial position. Then there's a military guy from the Pentagon there 24/7 on each shift, and someone from INR and someone from the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, set up as a result of one of the treaties. Instant communication between the Soviet Union and United States regarding nuclear testing, nuclear incidents. It changes every eight hours. You go in an hour early to be briefed and stay an hour later to debrief the new team coming in. I think a half hour. It's terrific because unlike most jobs in the department you don't have to put 12 hours in; at the end of your shift you go home. You also do not have an inbox. You take everything you're working on in those eight

hours and hand it to the person coming to take your desk and you forget about it, you go home. Fabulous job!

Q: What were some of the issues you dealt with?

KRAJESKI: Throughout my career, Stu, I swear I have had the uncanny knack and good luck frankly of stepping into jobs just as they get interesting. In this case, I literally soloed - that is, took my first shift as the senior watch officer - three days before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. During the weeks before that when I was working with Steve Mann, who went on to be ambassador a couple of times. We were seeing what was happening in southern Iraq, as Saddam was rumbling troops down there and threatening the Kuwaitis, who he claimed were stealing his oil. There were different international efforts going on to try to defuse the crisis, including one by Hosni Mubarak and the Arab League. Baker, our secretary of State, was very much active, but had also decided if the Arab League thinks they can resolve this, we'll give them a chance. April Glaspie was our ambassador [to Iraq], and she was on leave - as often happens to ambassadors when there's a crisis in their country, they're back on R&R (rest and recreation) and the poor DCM's in charge. I remember a woman named Janice Jacobs, went on to be assistant secretary for CA (Bureau of Consular Affairs), ambassador for a couple of places - she was replacing me the night of the invasion, I think it was August 4, 1990 [correction: August 2, 1990]. I remember briefing her, saying "The secretary's on the phone with Shevardnadze, with Mubarak, it looks like nothing's going to happen, they're going to talk him down [Saddam], military's pretty confident that Saddam is not going to move into Kuwait." So I turned the shift over to her, I remember it was a midnight shift, I had had the three to 12 shift, so she came on at midnight. [Checking back, I had the day shift 0800-1600, so Janice had the afternoon shift 1600-midnight. The invasion occurred at 1800 pm EDT on Aug 1, 1990] I turned it over to Janice and said, "Probably going to be a quiet night." Literally on the radio on the way home, the announcer said "Iraqi forces are invading Kuwait."

Q: I talked to an INR person dealing with that. He was convinced this was Saddam Hussein saying, "Oh let's go in," because the forces weren't too well briefed on what to do.

KRAJESKI: He kept his military out of the loop almost always, he didn't fully trust them. He didn't deploy his Republican Guard, his elite forces, unless he was really serious. They just walked into Kuwait, Kuwait didn't have the defenses to stop them. The Kuwaiti ruling family just fled. I don't know how long it took them, it couldn't have been more than 24 hours. The real fear is he wouldn't stop at Kuwait. He's not a very good tactical thinker, not a good strategic thinker either. Had he been better, politically more astute, he would have just moved into the oil fields. Not the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, not that far. Right along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border there are a number of oil fields and what he claimed the Kuwaitis were doing was driving pipes into reservoirs that belonged to Iraq. Had he used his military to just come in and take those facilities, I don't think we would have done anything. I think there would have been a long drawn-out negotiation in which Saddam would have probably gained the advantage. But he probably said, "Eh, nobody

likes the Kuwaitis." And nobody does, they were not the most popular Arabs of the Gulf or the region, rich guys who were poor like us until they discovered oil at their feet.

Q: Nouveau riche.

KRAJESKI: The Egyptians, where I was going to go from '93 to '97, they really disliked the Kuwaitis. We forget there were demonstrations on the streets of Amman, Jordan, of Cairo, of Damascus - probably not Saudi Arabia because they don't allow demonstrations - in support, celebrating Saddam's occupation of Kuwait.

Q: So what were you up to?

KRAJESKI: As a senior watch officer, you basically were a glorified phone operator in those days. This is before email and certainly before smart phones and instant communications. So you were the communications node for the seventh floor, specifically for the secretary. Wherever he was, you always had to be aware of where the secretary was, what he was doing, who he was talking to. On these big consoles, these old-fashioned push-button consoles, there was a button set aside that the SWO had marked "S"; when that button went red, you dropped everything, hit the button and said, "Hello, Mr. Secretary." Usually he wanted to find somebody, talk to somebody. This was the most interesting place to be as Baker built that coalition that eventually drove Saddam out of Kuwait.

Q: Just trying to get an idea of how we think and operate. Is there any need for you to go back? You're going home, they invade...

KRAJESKI: Never. They don't want you back. They would often take one of the watch officers and say, "We need an extra watch officer on this shift because of the volume of phone traffic," because of meetings going on where they want a watch officer to take notes. So the watch officers sometimes pulled double shifts. But the senior watch officers, never. I never did. This was a crisis that went on from August all the way to March so for most of my tenure there we were dealing daily with this issue, and I never pulled an extra shift. If someone was sick, they would switch schedules around sometimes. But it really wreaks havoc on your sleep schedule; you do two days eight to four basically, 8:30 to 4:30. Then you did two days 4:30 to 12:30. Then two days 12:30 to 8:30 in the morning, shift three. Then after that you had close to three days off. Which was kind of nice. You'd finish at 8:30 in the morning, go home, try to sleep and have that day off and two more full days off, then go in for an eight A.M. shift on the third day. It was okay but after about six months you're really kind of discombobulated as to sleeping. They want us watch officers to try to remain fresh.

Q: Let's go into some of things you were participating in, observing.

KRAJESKI: You get to listen in to most of the secretary's phone calls. Baker in particular and people like Tutwiler, Eagleburger who was deputy secretary; he became secretary of State the following year as the election heated up. They used the Op Center all the time.

Rather than dial the number themselves at home, they would dial (202) 647-1512 (which every Foreign Service officer should have memorized, still the Op Center number, even in these days of other phones), and say, "Can you get me Shevardnadze in Moscow?" Actually for guys like Shevardnadze, his staff would set it up. They would call us and say, "OK at 8:00 the secretary wants to talk to Shevardnadze."

Q: Shevardnadze was the Soviet foreign minister. Extremely close to Baker, an interesting relationship.

KRAJESKI: They worked very well. Here's a little known fact. The night of the invasion when Saddam went in, Baker had been on a hunting trip to Mongolia. His first visit to Ulaanbaatar. Our ambassador there literally had set up the embassy in a hotel suite. Baker was coming in to hunt this particular big-horned sheep in Mongolia, and there was a controversy about this, "Why was the secretary of State hunting an endangered species?" Well it's not an endangered species, although these are the last days of the Soviet Union and places like Mongolia are developing their own independence, and there was no confidence that the Mongolians cared about anything except making money letting people kill their sheep. It got so bad that Baker agreed he wouldn't hunt; he was just going to go and look for the sheep. When he landed there - on his way there, Saddam went in. Finding Baker in Ulaanbaatar - communications were not as good, you were looking at satellite phones. If you wanted to talk secure, it was nearly impossible to make that connection. You could do it thru the STUs (secure telephone units). So he got on the plane and he had a list of the 10 foreign ministers he needed to talk to, Shevardnadze being at the top of the list. He went right to Moscow, stopped and met with Shevardnadze on his way back. So as a senior watch officer - and the watch officers, too, you'd assign a watch officer to listen to the conversation, take notes, and produce a memorandum of conversation for the secretary. Often the SWO would do it if it was the secretary. And you had assistant secretaries and deputies and under secretaries, you had members of Congress. There was a lot of people talking to each other over what to do about the invasion of Kuwait. Over the course of those first two months, you're in the perfect spot to observe a guy like James A. Baker as he negotiates with the foreign minister of France, with the Brits, the Italians, the Russians. And then the Syrians and Egyptians and Saudis. It was a remarkable performance.

Q: What did you draw away from this experience?

KRAJESKI: One thing, and God knows you don't learn this lesson well - to my mind, it's if you're going to make a decision that's going to lead to war, you had best have the largest contingent of allies on your side as you can. If you can't, if you can't persuade the Europeans and the Arabs that this invasion "shall not stand" as George Bush said, you'll probably have to figure another way rather than going it alone. Baker was brilliant with this.

Q: And the British were particularly strong on this.

KRAJESKI: You remember Maggie Thatcher...

Q: "Don't get wobbly."

KRAJESKI: Somebody said she said something about "a little lead in your pencil, George." Which I don't think is true, I think they made a lot of it up. But it was true that they had some very tough meetings. We don't listen to the White House in the Operations Center, they have the White House Situation Room, their 24 hour [watch]. so you're often talking to your counterpart in the White House. He did all the president's communications. Working the console was a bit of a technological challenge. You had all these switches where you could take people, do a group conversation, put six or seven people in one conversation. Then you could cut somebody out of that conversation and him talk alone to someone else. You could put people on hold, waiting in line. It was a fairly delicate procedure. All of us including myself occasionally screwed it up. I remember getting a call from Tutwiler, who was speaking with a journalist.

Q: She was Baker's top public affairs...

KRAJESKI: She was assistant secretary of public affairs.

Q: Also very close to Baker.

KRAJESKI: Very close to him. Very defensive of him. He had a number of senior women around him who were very devoted to him, and she was at the top. She was on the phone to a journalist, guy from the Post or Times maybe, and she called me and said "I've got Bernie Schwartz (I think that was the guy) on the phone. I need to talk to the secretary, can you get the secretary for me? Keep Mr. Schwartz on hold while I talk to the secretary, and then put me back in." So I split her out of the conversation, I found the secretary - all I had to do was push the "S" button, he would pick up usually. Sometimes the DS (Diplomatic Security) agent would pick up but usually the secretary would. I put him with Tutwiler and then I went on to this other call I had going on, and I put Mr. Schwartz into their call by mistake. So he got to listen to their conversation. He didn't say a word. I realized it about 45 seconds later, so I immediately cut him out again, and I talked to him and said, "You weren't supposed to be in there." He said, "Yeah, I know that. Don't worry, I won't burn you." I don't know if Miss Tutwiler ever knew that.

There were a lot of times where that's what you did, you were a phone operator and you took notes. You also got calls from ambassadors. We had crises going on in different places, things would happen. I remember a coup in Trinidad & Tobago. I'm not entirely sure where Trinidad & Tobago are, but there was a coup and the prime minister had been kidnapped by the foreign minister. It was quite a deal. The ambassador at the time was on the phone. She was quite excited; there was a coup in her country. The political officer - it was a first-tour political officer; it was a tiny embassy. He had just left the embassy, transferred out. He literally came up to the Operations Center in tears, said "Two years I was there, nothing happened. And now you have a coup! You have to let me help you." And he knew everybody, he knew all the players.

Other issues. There are natural disasters. You're dealing with a lot.

Q: Just listening to this, did you figure we were going to make a military response early on?

KRAJESKI: This is before I became a so-called NEA hand. I had been doing South Asia, it was my full intention after this job to go back to South Asia. Tezi Schaffer and Jock Covey, the NEA brain trust for assignments, were already looking for slots for me after the Op Center - it's a one year job so you're constantly looking for your next job. I was kind of baffled by why Saddam would have done this. It didn't make sense to me to invade the country. I remember a guy named David Satterfield. Satterfield I think is retired now too, was our ambassador to Lebanon, a few other places. Satterfield then worked on the Line. The Op Center was the telephone, communication center. The Line did all the paper. We all worked for the executive secretary, he was our boss - Stapleton Roy. And David was on the Line. He came up - he's a brilliant diplomat. He's one of these people who can speak in complete sentences and paragraphs with punctuation.

Q: I interviewed Chas Freeman.

KRAJESKI: I never met Freeman but from what I hear, he sounds similar to Satterfield. Satterfield speaks very good Arabic. He came up and was in the Op Center one night when Saddam was giving a speech. It was one of these, "if these Americans dare come into Kuwait, they will be met with rivers of fire, I will burn their bellies". The secretary always wanted us to listen to the speech with a translator; we'd call FSI (Foreign Service Institute) and get the Arabic translator on, so he could have an immediate translation of it. Sometimes he'd call during the speech to say, "What the hell is he saying." Because they were waiting for him to back down. They really thought - you'd have to read Baker, which I'm going to do again if I teach this course at American University. Was there a point where military action was inevitable, or did they think right up to that point that he would back down? I think there were a lot of people who thought he was bluffing, that in the end when he was faced with this huge American military, the British, the coalition, the Syrians, the Egyptians, Jordanians, Saudis all going after him. The Russians, French - the whole god-damned world. You think, all right he's going to back down. There were people who believed that. Myself, I was just a telephone operator.

Q: How'd you feel about, what was the feeling within your group, about the Jordanian response?

KRAJESKI: That was very interesting. Who was the ambassador then?

Q: It was Egan or...

KRAJESKI: I had "Hamilton" in my head, that might not be right. [Roger Harrison, 1990-93]

Q: I've interviewed him, the very difficult time for him.

KRAJESKI: I used that incident as how ambassadors, their first responsibility is, best they can, tell the truth about what's going on in their country, and why. When the secretary of State calls and says, "Why the hell are the Jordanians dancing in the street celebrating Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, and the king is out there with them?" Or trying to manage the situation in a very political way. "This is our best ally in the Middle East and he's not going to be with us on this?" He used to be called the "plucky little king" because Hussein wasn't very tall? PLK? Well it wasn't Baker who called him this, but they called him the FLK, "fucking little king." They were very unhappy that Hussein was not immediately jumping on board the coalition, but was trying to manage his own domestic situation. So the ambassador was basically explaining, in writing and on the phone, to Baker and senior staff, the pressures on the king. You'd have to talk to him for more detail; I suspect he thought the king was going to eventually going to be part of the coalition, which he did. But he had to play it very carefully. Baker was angry with this. I remember - in those days we had NODIS ("no distribution") cables, "NODIS - Secretary's Eyes Only". It was a joke because senior watch officers saw it first and senior watch officers decided whether or not it went "only" to the secretary. And "only" to the secretary meant it went to three or four people around the secretary as well. I never sent a NODIS cable as an ambassador because it's kind of a sham. These days of course you pick up the phone and talk to them. He sent in a NODIS cable for the secretary's eyes only in which he very clearly and precisely, I thought, pointed out why the king was hesitating. The reaction as we picked it up in the Op Center - you really couldn't pick up things in conversations, you're reading all the cables, in some cases there's meetings going on in the classified room, the only SCIFs (Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility) in the department were up there then, where you would sit and take notes. There was a lot of criticism of this ambassador, that he didn't fully understand how important it was that Jordan stood with us, he wasn't making enough effort to persuade the king, he'd been there too long [He actually had just arrived on August 7, 1990.], was he taking the king's side? They were quite critical of him. This is a lesson I kept with me when I became ambassador - you've got to do this [tell it like it is]. The contrast to that, Stu, was the guy in Tehran in 1978-79 who deliberately because the shah told him they didn't want him mucking around in politics, he said, "Fine I won't do it." And he didn't have a clue what was going on as Khomeini came in.

Q: We were forbidden in Iran to report negatively on the shah.

KRAJESKI: Ridiculous.

Q: This is one of the things. I found people in Washington get very Washington-oriented, aware of all the politics. Even experienced people have a tendency to dismiss the problems of other countries. King Hussein probably would have lost his throne...

KRAJESKI: Or more - his head. Abdullah still has a lot of the same issues. That was very interesting. Another example, a guy named Warren Zimmerman was our ambassador in Yugoslavia, as Yugoslavia is starting to fracture. By 1991, the early part of '91 when I was on the watch, there were signs of this happening. Milosevic doing things within the

army... When did Tito die? In the '80s I think. There were all these ominous signs coming out of Belgrade, and Zimmerman was reporting them all. We were reading them and keeping them.

Q: He was a junior officer when I was there. He knew the country very well.

KRAJESKI: He was coming back to Baker directly, and to other senior officials - Eagleburger I remember, he knew Europe fairly well.

Q: Eagleburger had been ambassador to Yugoslavia. And Warren and Larry had served together.

KRAJESKI: Eagleburger was great, by the way. The cables weren't ignored. But it was interesting, Baker was so fixated on what was going on in the Middle East. If you remember, after the successful war that drove Saddam out of Kuwait, Baker immediately started organizing the Madrid Peace Conference, which plays into my career when I get to Cairo. Another amazing tour de force for a secretary, getting Yitzhak Shamir and Yasser Arafat and Hafez al-Assad - wait he may not have come, I think his minister of foreign affairs did. Getting them all together in Madrid and hammering out a Middle East peace plan. Baker was a guy, to us as desk officers looking up to the seventh floor, he had a set of issues that he would deal with each day, and he didn't like to dilute that with lots of meetings and different other things. I remember distinctly, and Baker writes about this later on, as they were looking at Yugoslavia - they were paying attention, they did see signs of real trouble coming up. They're looking at an election too, getting into mid-'91 with the election the next year. When the Europeans said, "This is a European problem, we will deal with this," Baker said, "Great." Zimmerman for one said this is a bad idea, we need to be more active. He was quite direct and very well respected. Again, I'm an 02 senior watch officer, picking up pieces of this, reading different cables. Very interesting. I learned from this that ambassadors in the field when in crisis especially, have an absolute 100% obligation to tell it the way they see it. Don't sugar coat it because you know somebody in Washington doesn't want to hear that, don't leave things out. If it means your career as it did in the case of the guy in Jordan, so be it. Zimmerman was proven right in the end. Maybe had we listened and been more active - great hindsight questions. We have a new administration in '92, the Democrats come in and they don't want to go to war with anybody, so it was different. That transition I think allowed Bosnia...

Q: There were two things. The pope supported independent Croatia; anybody who knows Yugoslavia knows the Catholic Church played a very nasty role in World War II in Yugoslavia. Another one who didn't play exactly a benign role, the Germans weighed in on that.

KRAJESKI: Another popular group of people in the Balkans.

Q: The Germans and the Catholic hierarchy supporting independent Croatia for their own domestic political reasons.

KRAJESKI: Yes. All in all I found that year in the Operations Center one of the most interesting in my career and also kind of fun. I also had a four-year-old boy - three children, the girls were in school, and a boy who was going to a preschool in Falls Church. Having that schedule where after you woke up on Tuesday morning, the rest of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday off. I could do things with my son, could do shopping. It's great in the middle of the week to do that because weekends are hectic and crowded. I could pick him up at school a lot; it was a very measured schedule. You don't get that a lot in our business, where you know you're going to leave the house at eight A.M. and be back at 5:30 P.M. I really enjoyed it. It was a wonderful place to learn how the department worked, how it engaged with other agencies because you had op centers at the Pentagon, at the White House and at the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) who were all hooked together in something called something like AWAX or EARWAX, there's an acronym for this group of operations centers and there was a special phone on the SWO's desk for when you wanted to engage all four of them at once - get the agency, the Pentagon, White House and State together.

Q: Did you get any feel for responses from these various places? Were they quick, slow?

KRAJESKI: I was always impressed with the level of cooperation. It was very business-like. These were all, I don't know what they were at the Pentagon, probably a major or maybe a lieutenant-colonel, running the op center there. The White House sit room, they took people from the Operations Center, they'd come over and cherry-pick watch officers. A woman named Mary Draper who was married to Jeff Feltman, she was on my team, she was very good. The White House said, "We want her at the White House," picked her over there. At the agency, they were always as they still are most concerned about the security of the communication. So we didn't have connections to cable traffic with them. I only had this one phone. Or you go through INR, you go to the INR guys, they had a way of communicating with them. It was very operational. And again, from my view, watching Baker work with the rest of the team, it was clear that there was a great deal of collegiality. There was very little that I could see of political competition between State and Defense, White House, the agency. Now maybe I missed all of that...

Q: You're still talking about a high point, the George Bush I administration. As competent and successful an administration as you can think about for foreign affairs.

KRAJESKI: Scowcroft at NSC. I can't remember who was at Defense. [It was Dick Cheney!]

As you're looking at communications with the field, then and now. When we're about to invade a country - the coalition's set to go, it's March whatever the date was, start with the air war then the troops were going to go in. There's a number of ways you notify embassies of action like this, because you want everyone to take heed of their security situation, maybe hunker down a little bit when we're about to start a war. You send "flash" cables. They're very rare, but "flash" is basically - the communicator in Swaziland, the communicator in Panama City, he's off to the embassy at a run, in his

pajamas, if you get a flash cable, to see what it is. We made the mistake of sending it out as a NODIS flash, which meant it went directly to the ambassador only. So the communicator wasn't even supposed to read the damned thing; he was supposed to get it and bring it to the ambassador who under the rules of flash had to respond within 12 hours that he had received the cables and what actions he was taking or not taking. There are 140-odd posts around the world; we sent this to everybody, and send it flash NODIS. And the system broke down, as all of these messages were now coming back at us through the flash NODIS channel. It literally broke down, it seized up. We had to tell everybody don't send us anything. It was a nightmare. When a flash cable comes in there's a critic alarm in the Operations Center and it goes off on the SWO's desk. You have to go to another room, unlock the room (combination lock) and get this message that's coming in on the critic system. This has all changed now, I'm sure. So there were 140 critic messages coming in the SWO's office all night. It was a disaster.

Q: How did you find the people working for you? In a way, these are a highly selected group of people, there can be some heavy hitters. They may be young, but they're on their way. I would think it might be a little hard keeping them under control.

KRAJESKI: You had a team, every SWO had a team. Team members were somewhat flexible; you had a core of people who were with you on each shift. You had the watch officer, the editor, the second watch officer. You built a little esprit de corps with your team. There was some competition among teams, there were sly ways we could compete with one another. They are really good people, smart people. I had one wash-out on my team, a guy who just didn't seem to get it. Part of it was you have to be part of the team and have to be willing to do things like answer the damned phone. The watch officers did it much more than the SWOs did, I usually didn't answer phones unless it was the secretary, or all the phones were ringing because something was going on. The SWO would pitch right in and start picking them up. You had to be able to do that. Often they would sit there - crank calls you would get, there were calls from the deputy assistant secretary for funny walks who wanted to be put in touch with his dog watcher, he's worried his dog is at home and the guy watching the dog isn't answering the phone, can you find him. And you have to say, "No, we're not going to do that for you." Actually we had a rule - if it was below under secretary we did not have to do it. So assistant secretaries would call and we'd say, "Sir, I'll find the number for you, you call." We generally tried to accommodate. But it's trouble because of a very famous incident that happened after I left. The woman who was the assistant secretary for Consular Affairs [Elizabeth Tamposi, a political appointee].

Q: She went into the Clinton files.

KRAJESKI: Right. And she made the call through the Operations Center. There was a woman on the other side who had been assistant secretary for Legislative Affairs Janet Mullins, she called the assistant secretary for Consular Affairs. Through the Operations Center - and we stayed on the line. In those days, we did not say "Ops will drop" which they do now, or "Ops will stay on the line." We would often stay on the line. Eagleburger who was secretary at this time gave us instructions, "Stay on the line." There may be a

point of information where you need to say to them, "You need to inform so-and-so," or "Let me make a call to..."

Q: Elizabeth Tamposi - she was the assistant secretary for Consular Affairs.

KRAJESKI: Tamposi. They deposed me as a former senior watch officer because she sued for breach of privacy after that scandal broke. What happened was the senior watch officer who was listening in to this call about how they were trying to get hold of Clinton's passport records. He [the SWO] called the then-acting secretary of State, Larry Eagleburger, and said, "You need to know this." It was Eagleburger who went public with it. Eagleburger was a man of great integrity; I kind of liked him, too.

So with your team it was all about, we've got a job to do. The SWO has a special notebook that only the SWO got; everybody else used the spiral steno pads. What you learned to do, everything that happened, you made a note. If there was a follow up, you followed up, you did it, you crossed it off. If the watch officer said, "I've got Assistant Secretary Kelly who's trying to reach the ambassador in Jordan," he would just announce that "I'm putting him through," and you'd make a little note. Afterward you'd say, "What did they talk about? Is there something else we need to do?" Constantly keeping track of a thousand details. I remember, there was a fire in the Indian consulate in San Francisco. It went all the way to the prime minister that the consulate in San Francisco had an electrical fire. You're keeping track, you call the fire department in San Francisco, "Is it serious?" You often just passed this all over to the desk officer or you called the NEA duty officer and say, "Here you go, here's this little mess in Morocco, it's all yours. Good luck." You had to do that. Some Foreign Service officers aren't as detail oriented as a good consular officer has to be. And some of them just - they lose focus. One guy would just kind of forget things, he didn't think it was that important if he failed to follow up on a particular call, "The next shift can do that." It's the only time [on the watch] I told someone, "Find another job." Mostly it's really good staff. People like Masha Jovanovic who went on to become ambassador. Elizabeth Richard, a deputy assistant secretary, I think she's going out to be ambassador. Some really smart people.

Q: Where'd you go?

KRAJESKI: I really wanted to go back to south Asia. I'd decided that, and Tezi Schaffer was really pushing me. I wanted one in Delhi, the head of the internal political reporting, an 01 political position in Delhi. I wanted another one in Sri Lanka, political job. They wanted me to go to be deputy principal officer in Karachi, which was an 01 political job. It was an "out of cone" assignment, and I was an 02 consular officer so it was an out of cone stretch [assignment]. There's not a huge bidding war on the deputy principal officer in Karachi, and Tezi and Jock said to me, "Yes, it's a stretch, but you're a lock. We and the bureau want you for this job, that's what we're penciling you in for. Will you take it?" My wife was a teacher, she went to the school there and they said, "Yeah, we'll hire you in a second." This is 1991, so Karachi is still a big consulate. They had a lot of communicators there, it was the communications center. There hadn't been a lot of trouble - it happened in the next couple of years because of security reasons, the

communicators all moved to Frankfurt and they closed their big hub in Karachi. So I said "OK."

If you'll recall stretch assignments, if you did that you got assigned at the end of the season. They did not do stretches until after everybody else had been assigned. So I'm an 02 consular officer with good consular experience. There's a hundred consular jobs in CA. A guy named Jim Mahoney, was my CDO (career development officer). He's a good guy. CA has always taken care of its people. Especially once Maura Harty came in - they really tried to build the consular corps. So they agreed, "NEA wants you to take this job, it's good for your career to take it." So they protected me from being dragooned into an 02 visa job in Manila or something like that. So I hung on. The director-general, a guy named Ed Perkins at the time, was the head of HR (Bureau of Human Resources). I worked for HR as head of assignments at one point later on. HR is kind of like this, "The bureaus don't make the assignments; we make the assignments. We're developing the careers, so we'll make the assignments." And Perkins was a strong DG (director-general), HR guy. "CDA (Office of Career Development and Assignments) is going to make the assignments, and there aren't going to be any out of cone stretches." He basically told [NEA PDAS] Jock Covey, "It's not going to happen." Covey, who was a smart player inside the system, didn't believe him. He said [to me], "This is your job." So I hung on. There were a couple of other jobs that weren't bad, they went away.

We're into March, most people have been assigned in December or January. So we're into March; they find another candidate for the job. HR goes out and finds an 01 political officer in Venezuela [or somewhere in south America] whose assignment had been broken. She's looking for a job, and she's perfect for Karachi. NEA is furious, they're jumping up and down. I'm stuck in March with the only jobs left in March, the pickings are slim. I remember trying to get a labor job in Austria, I couldn't get that one. Even the 02 consular jobs, the ones that were left were in awful places, awful jobs. This is probably the lowest point in my career, without a job in March. I thought I was pretty hot stuff, you know? NEA, to its great credit - Jock Covey, whatever else anybody thinks about Jock Covey, he's a hero of mine because he went to Tezi and said, "We're not going to be able to keep this kid in south Asia." He came to me and said, "OK, Tom. The Karachi job is gone, we have to give into Perkins. But I'm going to make you a deal. Part of that deal is two years of Arabic, and then you're with us." He actually said, "Come over to the dark side." He took a job in Cairo, the external job that did Egypt-Israel relations, Arab League, a political job, and he made it language designated. Perkins himself said, "We need more language designated jobs in NEA and around the world." So Perkins was delighted. So I started Arabic training in August of 1991 at old FSI over in Rosslyn. The job was in Cairo, we [my wife and I] were really happy, one of the best [international] schools in the whole system.

Q: Let's talk about Arabic training. How did you find it? I talk to people who had Arabic training in Tunisia, no matter where they took it they say they were taught the wrong dialect.

KRAJESKI: Arabic is a wonderfully rich language, and the dialects across the Arabic speaking world are quite varied, quite different. An uneducated or moderately educated speaker of Arabic from Rabat or from Casablanca cannot understand his equivalent from Tikrit in Iraq. They could sit in a room and be mutually unintelligible. If they're educated then they learn newspaper and news Arabic, so both can speak it. It would be a slightly artificial Arabic, depending on how well educated they are, then they can communicate fairly easily. But speaking a house dialect, your grandma's dialect - can't do it. I did a year in Rosslyn. I was 41 years old when I started Arabic.

Q: Age is a factor.

KRAJESKI: I never believed it because languages came easy to me - German, Russian, Polish, and Nepali, the four I had done before then. Arabic was unbelievably difficult. I can remember pounding my head, trying to get the Arabic in. There are no cognates. Well, there are things like taxi and computer. The structures are completely different. Arabic is a mathematical language, built on three-letter roots. Every word in Arabic goes back to a three-letter root unless it's a foreign word that's been taken into Arabic, and there aren't many of those. It's a very old language, one that's highly developed. You can tell from looking at a word whether it's a noun or a verb, you can tell which tense it is, you can see all of that. But to find out its meaning you have to know the three root letters. That's how the dictionary is organized, on those root letters. So it will give you a word like fajar; it means to explode. It also means dawn. So fajar is the explosion of the sun, the rising. So in'fjaar is an explosion, mufajar is an explosive. But you have to know the root letters F-J-R to find it [in the dictionary]. It's tough. Plus they didn't teach us how to read the script, because it is difficult. Right away they started with oral communication. I was going to Egypt so we had an Egyptian teacher. He said, "I'm going to teach you the Egyptian dialect." There are other folks in the class learning the Syrian dialect, some learning Moroccan and Tunisian dialect, though they were basically speaking French, that's what you need. It was hard. Then they sent us to Tunisia, a beautiful place, Sidi Bou Said on the Mediterranean coast, north of the capital. One of the most beautiful places I've ever lived. If you can picture Greek Mediterranean towns, this is what Sidi Bou Said looks like. They have a small school there. You'd walk out of the classroom where I had an Egyptian instructor. By then you were learning the script, how to read - something that frankly you really don't need to waste a lot of time on, I think, but that's another story. Then you'd walk out after four hours of classroom instruction. The whole purpose is to go out, go to a bakery, have a cup of coffee, play a game of chess, and speak Arabic. And you couldn't do it. In most cases they would look at you as a blue-eyed ferengi - that's actually the Persian word for a foreigner, the Egyptians used it as well. They'd look at you and they'd just speak French at you. I would say in my best Arabic, "I don't speak a word of French. If you will, I would like to speak Arabic with you." They would look at me and say in Arabic, "Magnificent, you're studying Arabic," and then they'd start in French. It was almost impossible for them to engage you in Arabic because Arabic was what they spoke at home. If they were educated in Arabic - and often they were, along with French and English - they could understand my Arabic. But they didn't really want to speak it. And if they spoke their kitchen Arabic - nobody else can understand the Tunisians and Moroccans, none of the other Arabs do. So you either had

to spend hours learning the dialect specifically for that one spot, or you had to ignore it and speak Arabic with those folks at school, the teachers. We had a wide range of really good teachers there. One thing I discovered, I lived in La Marsa which is the town over from Sidi Bou Said, and I could walk from my house through the ruins of Carthage (there's not much left by the way, the Romans did a good job of it) to school, and walk back to my house. In my neighborhood there were about 20 Palestinian families, all loosely associated with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) .

Q: This is after the transfer out of Beirut?

KRAJESKI: The school had left Beirut because of the civil war, they had been out of Beirut -

Q: But the PLO also sent many of its people...

KRAJESKI: Yasser Arafat had houses in Tunis. It's where Ambassador Bob Pelletreau - before John McCarthy, McCarthy was ambassador when I was there - prior to that, Pelletreau who went on to be ambassador in Egypt, where I was going, he held meetings with PLO guys in those quiet times, part of the Madrid process was in Tunisia. So I'd be in my neighborhood market and I'd strike up a conversation with Palestinians. Their Arabic I could understand, Palestinian and Jordanian and the Levant Arabic is to me the general, most clear Arabic. You've done languages, you never tell anybody your language is the "pure Arabic," because the Arabs fight over whose dialect is closest to what they call fuṣḥá, it's like Shakespearean Arabic, the Arabic of the Koran, of the great poets. Everybody from the Egyptians to the Tunisians to the Tikritis claimed that their Arabic was the closest [to fus-ha]. Actually, Yemeni Arabic is the closest, most linguists will tell you Arabic probably began in Yemen and then spread up through the peninsula.

Studying a language to me had always been a joy. Arabic was hard, hard work. At the end of like a year and a half, I had been doing this language for a year and a half non-stop, and I still don't speak it. Still not fluent. I'm not comfortable in a conversation with it. It was ugly. I managed to get my 3/3 after two years, but the best I ever scored in Arabic subsequently was 3+ - I never could get to four. I felt like I had failed. I had to get over the whole sense of failure. You see this when you do language at the Foreign Service Institute, you get all these smart people in - really smart people, "give me a job and I'll do it" Foreign Service officer. "Put it in front of me, give me a week, I'll learn it, I'll do it." And then you give them Chinese or Arabic or Hebrew or Russian or even French, Spanish, German, and it's like "Holy shit! I can't do this!"

Q: I really feel my language inability, something like six or seven different languages, is one of my black marks on my personal agenda.

KRAJESKI: I'm actually reviving all of my languages right now. As a primary means I'm using an app (of course) called Duolingo. Duolingo's a great app.

Q: An app is an application on the smart phone.

KRAJESKI: They'll know what an app is. It's given me an opportunity to revive German and Russian. They don't have Arabic on it yet because of the script problems, they haven't been able to work it out yet. Which is good because nobody can spell Arabic. It's almost as hard as French is to spell. Arabic is really difficult, only the best students learn how to write in Arabic. I can read in Arabic fairly fluently. You only write long vowels like "aahs" and "eehs" and "ooo", you only write "ooo" but the "uh" and the "ah" and the "eh" you don't write. You just know them. They do have little diacritics, little apostrophes they'll put up and below the letter to indicate it's an "uh" sound or an "eh" sound, but most Arabs don't write with those. And when you read a newspaper, they're not there. Unlike Russian or even German (not French) where if you read and don't know the word you can still pronounce it fairly clearly - Arabic you have to know the words in order to pronounce them in the correct way. Even now, when I give speeches, I would have them write it out for me in Arabic but I would often in some of the words do a phonetic English above it, because I would be afraid as I was doing the speech, I would forget - it's a word I'm not entirely familiar with, and instead of an "eh" I put an "uh" and for the Arabs, that changes the meaning entirely or it makes me sound like an idiot. My coaches, when I was ambassador both in Yemen and Bahrain, would say "You're the ambassador, you can't sound like an idiot."

The Arabs take public speaking very seriously. They love poetry, they love the Koran of course, the formal language of Arabic is their highest form of art. Both calligraphy, but also the spoken word - singing, poetry, speechifying. If you're an ambassador you have to speak proper Arabic when you're giving a speech. My Arabic is kind of Egyptian dialect Arabic, that's what I learned the best. I'm an American, when I talk I just want to talk, I don't want to have to read a speech. Arabs read their speeches. Mubarak when I was in Cairo, he used to be mocked - the Egyptians love to tell jokes about Mubarak, there are reams of jokes. One thing they would laugh about him - he's an air force guy, not particularly well educated. He had the equivalent of high school and of course had military training. His English was not bad, not great. His Arabic was basically Egyptian. He would start his speeches in this more formal fuṣḥá in front of the parliament. But at some point he would break - "The hell with this, I'm just going to talk." A lot of people, more the elite, educated, didn't like it. "He's the president, he should speak so." Arabic for me remains today not a failure - I could do it, I used it, I worked with it. I had to reconcile after about 10 years, I was not going to be fluent in Arabic.

Q: At that time did they give you money and opportunity for a trip?

KRAJESKI: One of the last groups that did it. The school's in Tunisia because that's the only place they could put it after Beirut. They wanted to go to Cairo, but this is 1981-82, Embassy Cairo is in the midst of an enormous expansion after the Camp David Accords, so the ambassador there - Skip Gnehm knows this story, he's the one who told me, he was a political officer there - he said the ambassador said "No" to FSI; "We just can't handle any more." AID was building an enormous program. They wanted to go to Damascus but that was Hafez al-Assad still. Amman was another spot - I wish they had chosen Amman,

Jordan - but Tunis was where we could be supported and you could send families to live, they had a school. So this trip was really unbelievable.

First of all, Tunisia is a beautiful country, traveled around Tunis a lot on different tours. But for this one, I had three weeks and I went to Damascus, Amman, and Cairo. Damascus was particularly great. One because I could immediately sit down with a guy in a park and talk to him and understand him. This is 1993, Hafez's boys are still very much in charge, there's these black leather thugs on every street corner watching everybody. So I was very cautious. A lot of folks stayed at the nun's dormitory as we called it, it was a Catholic hostel right in the center of the old town of Damascus. God forbid what it looks like today, but in those days it was a genuine old Arab city, relatively untouched by tourism. It was a genuine souk where the Syrians and Damascenes, the people of the sun, all came to do their shopping. Lots of cafes, little shops, beautiful park right off of it. I stayed at the Sheraton because they [FSI] paid for it, was right down the street from the embassy. I would walk there and then walk into the old town and sit and talk. I was surprised at how Syrians were quite engaging. I would always tell them, "I'm an American diplomat, I'm studying Arabic in Tunisia, and I'm here to visit your country and practice my Arabic." I thought that would drive people away, but almost never. Occasionally one of these black-coated thugs would come and sit in the next bench and the guy I was talking to would get up and leave. That happened once.

Another time a man said, "Hey you shouldn't just see Damascus. My family's house is right on the edge of the city, come let's take a bus and we'll go visit with my family." There are some places where I wouldn't have done this and maybe Damascus was a place where I shouldn't have, but I took the chance and I rode for half an hour and spent all afternoon and most of the evening at his house with a huge Arab family, who were all delighted to see me. We talked about America, they had someone who studied in America. We didn't talk about politics, I stayed away from the politics. A wonderful meal. They invited neighbors over to meet the American. After this enormous meal - if you've had Arab food, they serve huge quantities of food, and it's delicious stuff. I love it. Baba ganoush and hummus and great breads. I'm not a big fan of lamb but if it's cooked well, it's OK; I got used to it after a while. In the Arab world, you learn to eat lamb. At the end of the meal, you wash up because a lot of the eating is done with your hands. Not all of it, but some is. So you wash up and take a nap - everybody. So they gave me a nice little bed in one of the rooms and I took a half hour nap and at the end of the nap I had to get up, refresh, wash. We were all going to go back to the city, they were going to drive me back into the city and drop me off. The Arabs love perfume, Arab men love scent. They started spraying me! Rosewater on the hands I can deal with but they started spraying me with Dior and other stuff, and as my dad used to say, I smelled like a French whorehouse when I left.

Q: My wife's eyebrows used to go up when I came back from eating at Saad bin Juli's ...

KRAJESKI: The bakhoor is that incense they burn, they'll fluff it under their gowns or their suit, it's good deodorant. The bakhoor is popular in the gulf, in Saudi and Yemen. When I was in Dubai, the same thing, I would come back and Bonnie would shake her

head and say, "Where the hell have you been?" Sometimes she'd say, "Can you take your jacket off in the hallway and leave it there? The cook tomorrow will air it out for us." But they do love scent. They love poetry and they love perfume. Arab men, these big, tough, strong, violent men.

Q: Holding hands is another...

KRAJESKI: They did that in south Asia as well so I was used to that by the time I got to the Arab world, but in India too, men hold hands. I got used to holding hands. They also talk, they get much closer than Americans are used to - we want a little space, they get much closer.

Q: One of the things we were trained in in the Foreign Service about how Latin Americans particularly, the space between your head when you're talking would be much closer. An American would back away and progress around the room.

KRAJESKI: A-100. Maybe we all did this in A-100, have a bunch of folks come over playing the foreigners, host country nationals, do a little cocktail party and laugh at all of us trying to keep that space.

Q: Jim LaRocco who I talked about, he had a motorcycle and went on his trip and went into Iraq at a time -

KRAJESKI: He told me about this, this would have been in the '80s. Jim's an amazing linguist, he did Chinese and Arabic. His Arabic is quite good. He was ambassador in Kuwait when I was in Dubai, and deputy assistant secretary when I came back to work on the Iraq desk. Just had lunch with him, lives over in Alexandria. Finally retired completely. Good guy.

Q: How stood the United States from what you gather being in Tunisia and on your trip. Had we blotted our copy book over Kuwait or what?

KRAJESKI: Like anything, you have some basic conceptions about the way people view us, about what the relationship means to the Tunisians or Syrians or Egyptians, who I'd be working with for four years. When you arrive, you discover you have to perhaps be a little more subtle in your thinking. One thing you always heard, and I often heard this from Arabic speakers visiting Washington when we were doing language, was "We love the United States, the American people, your culture. We can't stand your politics or your policies." The focus was always Israel, "You are beholden to Israel, you have sold your national soul to Israel, you are prejudiced and biased in your policies." It would always come back to Israel.

Kuwait was considered a bright spot, even among those who had initially supported Saddam's invasion. There was still a great sense of common purpose once the coalition had been formed, driven him out of Kuwait, liberated Kuwait. The Kuwaitis still use the word "liberation." There was a sense, more deeply felt in the Gulf than in Egypt or

Tunisia or Jordan, that the United States had sided with the Arab world and liberated Kuwait. That was considered a plus still in '93 when I was about to go to Egypt. Israel was and remains just a really tough nut for both countries to crack, wherever you are.

As an American diplomat, as I moved up in rank, it was always necessary to explain, and I would try to be as candid as I could, that the United States-Israel relationship is one of the strongest and most important relationships that we have in the world and in this region, and you have to understand it goes beyond mutual security interests. There are many reasons for this; if you know the United States you know that different communities are more politically effective than others - I think we already talked about Arab communities. I said, "This is a relationship that was cemented" - some would say "romanticized" - "in the Seven Day War, when Israel stood up and defended itself." It was all over the papers. I was a 17 year old kid, it was a big event and a sense of "This is the right thing, that Israel had defended itself. Aren't the Israelis amazing for what they did?" That was really the beginning of the close military and security relationship. "It's not going to go away, we're not going to change our policies toward Israel, so you're going to have to accommodate that." And we have to accommodate that as we pursue our interests - in Bahrain, Yemen, wherever you were. It remains a sticking point, you get a government like Netanyahu's government, it's harder than ever to do that [accommodate]. The occupation of the West Bank, basically the annexation of the West Bank and the Golan remains an insoluble barrier to an Israeli-Palestinian agreement and will remain a very tough factor of our relationship with Israel and the Arab world. The Palestinians have been treated really badly and they deserve some kind of justice. They can't seem to get it. Now sometimes they've thrown away a good deal; they had a great deal at Camp David. In 1979 as part of that Camp David agreement, the Palestinians had a chance to sign on and it would have led eventually to [a Palestinian state on] the West Bank and Gaza. Probably the Golan would have gone back to Syria. Israel was willing to do this, but the Palestinians said "No." They wanted it all, they wanted Haifa back - they're not going to get Haifa back.

In my next assignment in Cairo I became closely involved in the negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis in what's called the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, and then the administrative agreement that brought Arafat back to Gaza and Ramallah as head of the Palestinian Authority. That was a fascinating time.

Q: I interviewed Ed Abington.

KRAJESKI: Ed was the consul-general in Jerusalem during that time. A woman named Maura Connelly worked for him, Maura was our ambassador in Lebanon most recently. She was my counterpart in Jerusalem. Ed was the consul-general, I met him a couple of times during those four years. I would go to Jerusalem and then with Maura out to the West Bank. I never went into Gaza, even in those days Gaza was considered a little too risky to go in unless you had a purpose. One time I drove with my family - including my mother-in-law - across the Sinai through Rafah, the border crossing point, into Israel. And then drove up to Jerusalem and down to Jericho and all along the Jordan valley in my little Peugeot. No security, just my mother-in-law, one of my daughters, my son and

my wife and me. We went to Galilee and drove back through Tel Aviv, through the Sinai again and back to Cairo.

Q: I wanted to ask you, how did the time in Tunisia sit with your wife and kids?

KRAJESKI: They loved it. My wife in particular considers Tunisia to be one of her favorite places. First it was a beautiful place. We had a nice house, we were minutes away from the sea. All three of our kids were in this very small school (it's much larger now). It was Bonnie's first full-time teaching job. She taught third grade, there were seven students in her class, she loved it. The food was terrific. Tunisia is still - certainly it was 20 years ago - a fairly liberal, open place. You could see a woman in full veil on one street corner, one in short shorts and a tank top could be on the next corner. You go to the beaches, including the one where they had the terrible attack a year ago, I remember sitting on the beach and there'd be a group of French tourists, and the women are topless. Then there would be a Tunisian family on the other side and the women are veiled or they're swimming in their burkas. The Arab men are going crazy with the bare-breasted French women of course. Arab men - even the Tunisian men who are quite sophisticated mostly, they were in those days. I had two young daughters, they were both in junior high in Tunisia and into Cairo. Arab men can be a little uncontrolled around an attractive female who's not "properly dressed." There was a big problem while we were in Yemen, I'll talk about that when I get to Yemen. So my wife and I were a little worried about this when we got there. But we eventually made friends with Tunisians; it was tough, Tunisians were a little more standoffish, more French I would say, than most Arabs we met in our subsequent career who were very friendly and hospitable. The Tunisians were a little colder.

Q: How did the Tunisians feel about their neighbors?

KRAJESKI: They were not happy with either of them. I didn't do a lot of political work, but living with Tunisians and as part of the FSI courses you talked about it. The Algerians of course were going through, I think this was the first year they had the Islamists win an election and we looked the other way as the military crushed them and took over. Algeria was unstable, and it's right across the border. Beautiful border by the way, it's all mountains. It's like driving from New Mexico up into New Hampshire. In the space of maybe six hours, suddenly you're in pine forests with trout streams, hunting lodges - the French built these lodges, they were hunting wild boar up there. Then on the other side they've got Gadhafi and the Libyans. It's a massive smuggling border; any time you've got an economy as dysfunctional as Gadhafi's was, the neighbors take advantage by smuggling consumer goods across the border, so the Tunisians were making a bundle by smuggling. We didn't go to that border. We went close, it was a desert, quite barren.

There was an island called Djerba quite near that was very beautiful, had beaches on it. Then in Tunis there was Tatooine from the first *Star Wars* movie, the planet that Luke was on at the beginning. They have the cave people - Luke's family did, they lived in a big hole in the ground. And the famous bar scene? That's all filmed in Tunisia. That's why he called it Tatooine, that's where they lived when they were filming *Star Wars*. A

lot of the desert scenes, you can visit the bar where they filmed *Star Wars*, this is 1992-93 so it was still kind of cool. The first time I had real olive oil was in Tunisia. Growing up in New England, even with the Italian populations in the north end of Boston, we still didn't understand just how good olive oil is. How varied it is, it's like wines, different kinds, different tastes. Tunisian olive oil was an eye opener. You'd drive through these olive plantations, as far as the eye can see are olive trees. Dates - the only dates I remember growing up were the block dates, dried and mashed together. My mom used to make something date-nut bread - really delicious. But the dates themselves are mashed, you didn't really eat them separately. October is date season in Tunisia. We were taking a bus ride as a class and stopped along the side of the road where they were all selling dates - wow, I've never had dates like that. I ate too many of them, my stomach nearly exploded. Olive oil and dates. We really enjoyed Tunisia, as we did Cairo. These were not particularly repressive places. Politically they were, you had Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak. But for an American diplomat and his family...

Q: How stood religion?

KRAJESKI: Well Tunisia was the first time I heard the mosque's call to prayer. The call to prayer is everywhere, but in Tunisia there're different customs, ways of doing the call. Traditionally the muezzin, the cantor - I'm not sure what the Christian or Jewish equivalent of the muezzin is. He goes to the top of the minaret and calls [the community] to prayer, "Come to pray, come to pray." But most mosques use loudspeakers. The Tunisians had the tradition of finding the best, most musical muezzins. They are famous throughout the country. Each mosque would have a recording. So the call to prayer was beautiful, it was lush and lovely. When I went to Cairo, I remember you could hear it, it could be pretty harsh. In Yemen, they shout as though they're angry at top volume. But in Tunisia they sang it. It took 20 minutes to walk from our house in La Marsa to the school in Sidi Bou Said. One little village I walked through, [had] a beautiful mosque. And in the afternoon if I timed it right, the call to prayer would be there - just beautiful. There was an Islamic party then that was outlawed; they're now the minority party in the current government, but in those days they were outlawed and their leaders were arrested, disappeared in some case. There was this core of Islamists who were not yet overly violent - they weren't bombing things or going after foreigners or trying to enforce a stricter religious code on everyone else. That was coming and there's more of that now. It was a pretty liberal place. They relied heavily on European tourism, and that's where you'd see the radicals now, whether it's ISIS (Islamic State in Syria) or others going after tourism centers in Tunisia. The museum that was hit, they killed a number of people there. The beach that was hit - tourism's a huge part of Tunisia's economy and you can see why, it's a beautiful place, lovely beaches, two-hour flight from Paris, maybe three from London, to get there. Charter flights would come in, 200 pale Brits would climb out, go to the beach, turn themselves beet-red, stay in the hotels - it's a lot of money.

Q: Would you and your classmates go to mosques for the Arabic?

KRAJESKI: No. In most of the countries I lived in, you didn't go during prayer time if you weren't a Muslim. Some mosques forbid it. I would go into mosques only if

permitted and never during sermons or prayer time. We did have colleagues who would do this; usually you'd ask your FSN staff particularly if you're in a place where you want to know what they're saying in the mosques. So we'd do a whole review of this, but they were almost always the Egyptians, Yemenis, Bahrainis - they went to the mosques. I would not do that. However, I did find as I met imams, the senior religious leaders at each mosque. Sometimes there's more than one in a mosque. I would meet them and talk to them. They had the most beautiful Arabic; they were very well educated in the language. May not have been well educated in other things, but they knew Arabic better than most Arabs did, and spoke beautifully, clearly. It was lovely to talk to an imam in Yemen, in Tunisia, in Egypt. Egyptians speak really fast, they're slangy, throwing words all over the damned place. They tend to shout a lot, they're really Mediterranean, they wave their hands around. So to talk to an imam...

Q: They're the New Yorkers of the Arab world.

KRAJESKI: I loved the Egyptians, I really did.

Q: We'll talk about that next time. You went to Egypt when?

KRAJESKI: August of '93.

Q: Today is April the 15th, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Going to Egypt I think in '93?

KRAJESKI: '93.

Q: So want to talk about how that assignment came about and then let's talk a bit about Egypt's place in the world, politics and all and relations with the United States before we begin what you're doing.

KRAJESKI: As I mentioned last time, the assignment had been a last minute arrangement by NEA, which at that point was splitting into South Asia and what became Near Eastern Affairs. I was supposed to get an assignment to Pakistan, in Karachi. It fell through at the last minute and NEA, which off and on is the best bureau in the building. Takes care of its people – mostly, sometimes. So they turned to Jock Covey and Tezi Schaffer who said [to me], “We’ll make one of the assignments in Cairo language designated but it means you’re going to do two years of Arabic, and then you’re in the Middle East – that’s your commitment.” I agreed.

The assignment was Cairo – everybody wants to go to Cairo if you’re in Near Eastern Affairs, and most everybody in the bureau has been to Cairo. It was our biggest embassy until Baghdad came along. We had a huge AID mission there. It was Egypt which then and one could argue now was the principle player among the Arab nations, whether we’re doing peace process or not. Of course Camp David was 12, 13 years old in '93 when I arrived there. I did a year of Arabic here at FSI, which was then in Rosslyn, and then I did a year in Tunisia, where FSI had its Arabic language school. Beautiful country, lovely year.

Arrived in Cairo in August of '93, and my portfolio was external relations, primarily Arab League and Israel. And also something that Bob Pelletreau, the ambassador, described to me as the multilateral peace process. He said this was somewhat in abeyance, there were ups and downs in it, that it wouldn't take a whole lot of my time, and he expected [there would be] more [in my portfolio] to go along with the Arab League, which nobody really wanted, it was a boring institution. And then the Egyptian-Israeli relations, which were very important to us but were largely frozen in place after Camp David. They hadn't necessarily deteriorated, but attempts to try to warm them – we called it “warming the cold peace” – attempts to warm them were largely frustrated.

In '93 we've got Mubarak as the president, in his third term. Those who know Egyptian political history know that when Mubarak took over after Sadat's assassination in '82 (my dates are never always perfect), he made a promise to the Egyptian people that he would be only a two-term president, eight or 10 years. He would be a two-term president and then he would turn it over to the next elected president. A promise made. I don't know if we put any pressure at the time to keep that commitment, but certainly in '93 he had decided that he needed another term and I believe had just been elected in '92 to his third term as president. Now the election in Egypt, the parliament is elected first. The ruling party dominates parliament, they're the wealthiest and have the most members, they're supported by the moneyed class and the military, they do dominate. There are opposition parties, including a somewhat quiet Muslim Brotherhood party. The Muslim Brotherhood did exist in Egypt; they were not illegal per se although its leadership was often harassed, sometimes arrested. They were not permitted to run for parliament; what they did was run independents. Many of those independents had loyalty to the Muslim Brotherhood. There were two or three opposition parties, a labor party, a quasi-Nasser-socialist party, but they were small. Permitted; they each had their own newspaper. But the elections if not rigged didn't need to be rigged because the ruling party was just so potent a force. If anyone challenged it – we saw this more in later Egyptian elections than the one I witnessed in '95 – the government was very quick to make sure any legitimate opposition was squelched. Anybody that might have a chance of actually building a base in parliament, let alone taking on senior positions – they quickly found themselves in trouble with the law, forbidden from running, something would happen that would push them aside.

It was a relatively open society. Egyptians were quite direct with us, certainly with each other. Criticisms of the government, criticisms of Mubarak. You weren't supposed to criticize Mubarak publicly but it happened all the time. Mubarak frankly had a large base of popularity as well, which strengthened while I was there due to an assassination attempt against him in Addis Ababa I believe in 1994. He had a genuinely strong base of popularity. We of course had a very good relationship with Mubarak and the military as a result of Camp David. Egypt is our second largest recipient of aid in the world; Israel was number one. It was supposed to be an even split under Camp David, each country would get the same amount of military and economic assistance. But there was a qualitative difference in that we basically wrote Israel a check and said, “Spend it as you care to,” I'm exaggerating a bit.

Q: That's quite true.

KRAJESKI: With the Egyptians we were quite specific with how they could spend their money, and we managed a lot of it, both military aid and the economic aid. My numbers are never good Stu, but it was in the vicinity of \$2 billion a year; about \$1.2 was military and \$800 million was economic development aid.

Q: Correct me if I'm wrong but both those, Israeli and Egyptian aid, mostly was spent in the United States.

KRAJESKI: The military spent almost 100% [in the U.S.] but with some exceptions, there are always exceptions. Maybe buy a French helicopter for a specific purpose. The Egyptians also bought other equipment with other moneys as well. In those days they had basically four sources of income: oil, which was considerable, remittances from Egyptians working abroad. Interestingly this changed later on mostly in Iraq – after the invasion of Kuwait, Egyptians came back, it was a big problem when I was there in '93, so many Egyptians had returned after the invasion in '91 because the Egyptian army had supported the coalition to drive Saddam out of Kuwait. They were doctors, lawyers, engineers, and a huge group of teachers, university, elementary, high school, secondary teachers in Iraq were Egyptians prior to the Kuwait war. Economically they had taken a hit. There were still lots of Egyptians working in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. So remittances were big. The third one [source of income] was the Suez Canal, they took in something like \$400 million a year (again, my numbers – whoever is listening to this, check numbers!) in Suez Canal receipts. Very expensive to go through the Suez Canal, we paid a lot because we had ships going through there all the time. They would allow only one nuclear-powered or -armed ship to go through there [at a time]. We never told them and they never asked, it was a don't ask, don't tell policy if there were nuclear arms aboard the *Polaris* class submarine – I don't know if the *Polaris* could go through there, they may not have, they can't operate in the Red Sea anyway. But the smaller ones, the attack submarines which may or may not have nukes on board. The fourth one [income source] was economic assistance, in which the United States was by far the largest donor. It was an important country for us. They had a peace agreement with Israel, the only Arab country to have a peace agreement with Israel at the time. Jordan's agreement came about while I was there. They were still very influential with the Arab world. We considered them to be counterweights to crazy folks like Gadhafi or hard-asses like Assad in Syria. The Suez piece was considered a very successful arrangement in which Egyptian forces had specific places where they could be in the Suez. Then there were the multi-national observers, still there although there are some questions about it now, it's dangerous – still there in the Suez. Most of the demining had taken place. Camp David was rightly considered an extremely successful peace agreement and treaty.

In '93, the major issue in Egypt as we went there was economic development. We had a very large economic office at the embassy, largely trying to open up the economy. It was still a controlled economy, the major industries were either state run or were managed by the state, there were parastatals.

Q: You mentioned sources, tourism must have been a big factor.

KRAJESKI: That's probably the fifth source of income, it was a huge one. Tourism is important because of the employment – it employed tens of thousands of Egyptians. As you know from your experience, in tourism you have a huge range of skills including relatively unskilled people going up to bus drivers. They had marvelous tour guides. The people who take care of the sites – and Egypt obviously has some of the most magnificent archaeological sites on Earth; a fabulous place to live. And in '93 – I'll make this last point before I get on to what I was doing – it was relatively safe to be there. My family came with me, my three children. My wife taught at the American school there. We lived in Maadi, a suburb of Cairo just about 10 kilometers south of the embassy along the river. Everything's along the river in Egypt; if you're not along the river, you're in the desert. The school was fabulous, it's one of the reasons we wanted to go there. My wife taught there, three kids were going there. At one point I had one in elementary, one in the middle school, one in the high school. Alix, my high schooler, was just starting high school, so she was 13 going into 9th grade. Jenna was 11, going into 7th grade, and Aaron was a first grader. Beautiful campus. It was considered by NEA hands one of the best if not the best school in the region. We were very happy to be there.

We could travel. The only restriction we had is you couldn't take the Nile cruise boats from Cairo down to Luxor, through Upper Egypt. This is where the Gamayat Islamiya, the Islamic groups, precursors of Al Qaida [operated]. These folks developed out of the increased repression of the 1980s, particularly in the areas south of Cairo, in Upper Egypt. A lot of people had been jailed. They were responsible or claimed responsibility for the assassination of Sadat. Any association with them led to knocks on the door at midnight and folks being hauled away and thrown in jail. Lots of stories of abuse and torture in the jails. And as we should learn some day, all that does is create more terrorists. Because when your brother is picked up by the police and disappeared, you get angry. You get angry at the guys who did it. It is true in every society, I think it is especially true in an Arab culture where it's not only your brother, it's your cousin as well. Your uncle. You get angry. So by 1993 these groups were still somewhat active. So many of them had been arrested, the activity had slowed down. What they used to do, they came out of the cane fields, the sugar cane fields along the river. Cane is about eight, 10 feet high and very dense. They'd come out, wait for one of these tourist boats to come by and with AKs [Kalashnikov automatic rifles] they would pop at the boat. I don't know if they ever really killed anybody; they might have before I got there. By the time I got there we were forbidden [from taking the cruise boats from Cairo]. We could take tourist boats from Luxor to Aswan and Aswan to Luxor because there were no cane fields, those banks were down more in the heavy desert. Upper Egypt was very fertile, the start of the delta – we couldn't take the boats. They had a couple of terrorist attacks while we were there including a bus load of poor Greek Orthodox tourists who were mistaken for Israelis. The attackers thought they were a bus full of Israeli Orthodox, and they killed a bunch of them, shot them up, threw hand grenades at the bus. There were a couple of small bombs at banks. They would call in advance because they didn't want to kill Egyptians or Muslims.

Q: That shows the change in attitudes now.

KRAJESKI: They'd go after the tourism industry because they figured they could hurt the economy and the government that way, and these were foreigners on these boats – it was OK to kill foreigners, but couldn't kill Egyptians, weren't supposed to. There was not a lot of support, certainly not in Cairo, for these groups. They weren't able to operate with impunity outside of that area in Upper Egypt. (Look at my atlas, my map.) In places like Beni Suef and Al Minya, go down to Asyut halfway down the river – there we weren't allowed to go. My colleague Alan Misenheimer – don't know if you've run across Alan yet, he's just retired. He was head of the internal political office, I was the external guy. He went down there a number of times, usually with security, things taken care of in advance. I never got to go down to Asyut and go down to Upper Egypt – it's called that because it's higher [in altitude than Cairo. It's "up" river].

Q: One of the things you mentioned, so much unemployment. People came back from Iraq and all. As a man with a wife and two daughters, were Egyptian young men a menace to ladies?

KRAJESKI: I have a couple of great stories on this. First of all, Cairo then – not now, unfortunately [was safe]. My second daughter just spent two years living in Cairo as a reporter during the Tahrir Square revolution, or whatever it was. Then, in '93, Cairo I would argue by far was the safest place I've ever lived. There was virtually no street crime, no robberies, no muggings. There were occasional purse-snatchings and pickpockets in the Khan el-Khalili which is the big souk with lots of tourists. We'd always advise folks, "Hold on to your purses". There was a big mosque near there, the Al-Hussein Mosque, I think. During Ramadan in particular there would be large crowds of people, and fasting changes people's behavior dramatically. Then there would be episodes of harassment if you were a woman walking through those crowds, you'd get your butt pinched; someone was going to grab your breasts. So we had incidents like that. But by and large I felt very confident, and I don't think it was unjustified, that my daughters were not in danger.

As I said, they started off being 13 and 11; when we left they were 17 and 15, we stayed four years in Cairo to get Alix through that wonderful school. We'd hire a car for them, our taxi driver with a very nice Peugeot 505 taxi, and Alix and her friends would be picked up and taken downtown to a dancing club. There wasn't much alcohol at all – thank god, at least as parents we didn't hear about it; there was a little but not a lot. To illustrate, one evening – they were supposed to be home at midnight. It was midnight, they got out of their club and their taxi driver who was very reliable wasn't there. So they were standing on the street in downtown Cairo, four girls, all dressed probably beyond their age, they're 17 year old American girls and my daughter is dark-eyed and blond hair and is beautiful – every father's daughter is beautiful, but Alix is truly a beautiful young woman. She's with her friends and they look around, "What do we do?" This is the days before everybody had a cell phone, one of the girls might have had one. So they're wondering what to do and Alix says, "We'll just find a cab." A man walks down the

street and says, “You young ladies looking for somebody? Are you in trouble?” They said, “Our driver was supposed to be here.” He said, “I’ll take you home.” They all piled into his car, and he took each one of them home, Alix said he walked each one of them to the door to make sure they were safe. He was an older guy, in his 40s.

Beyond the incidents of harassment during the fast, there was very little. So the long answer to your question is, it was a pretty safe place. It’s too bad it’s changed; Jenna [my second daughter who worked as a journalist in Cairo in 2010-12] said when she was there you had to be much more careful as a single unveiled woman, obviously Western, walking and moving around. She said the stories [of harassment and violence] were exaggerated, but it had changed. There were more housebreaks. The ones I recalled that affected the community were almost always Filipino, Thai, some Africans who were workers or were illegals in the city. Cairo had a lot of illegals, mostly Sudanese and Africans who were illegals. There were other illegals as well.

The last story on this is Jenna, she was [almost] 16 when we left. We were down at the souk – Jenna also extraordinarily beautiful. And she speaks very good Arabic and understood Egyptian Arabic quite well. She was walking with one of her friends and these two Egyptians, young guys, began hitting on them. You know, they were good looking women. One of them said something like “I’d like to see you naked,” and Jenna just stood right up and in her perfect Egyptian Arabic said, “Would you say that to your sister? Would you say that to your mother? How do you think you would feel if someone said that to your sister?” She said the guy almost broke down in tears he was so sorry, and he didn’t know that she was Egyptian and didn’t mean to insult her. All he wanted to do was meet her, and he was mortified. Another time she said these guys came up, they were talking. She couldn’t quite hear them, and her friend said “Oh these guys are mouthing off.” Jenna said, “You know what this guy said? Something like, ‘Your eyes are like lakes of azure and I want to drown myself in them.’” It was poetry. She lived in Brooklyn and Manhattan and said she heard a lot worse things on the street there than, “I’d like to take you home to meet my mother.”

Q: Let’s talk about the embassy first. It’s a huge embassy.

KRAJESKI: The largest in NEA and one of the largest in the world at the time.

Q: How did it fit together, who was the ambassador, what was the environment working there?

KRAJESKI: The ambassador when I first arrived was Bob Pelletreau, who is an NEA legend and rightly so. He had been ambassador in Tunisia during the secret talks with the PLO, had been in Cairo maybe two years when I arrived. It was less than a year when he transferred back to be assistant secretary for NEA in ’94, and Ned Walker came in after that. DCM when I first arrived was Edmond Hull. Edmond was another NEA guy. Not sure where he had been before that but he had been around NEA. Went on to be deputy in counter-terrorism and then ambassador to Yemen, my predecessor in Yemen.

Bob Pelletreau really is one of the stars of NEA. He made a personal effort to get to know everybody in the political and economic sections, [in the] consular section. He knew the managers. There were I think 2200 people working at the embassy of which approximately 800 were Americans. Now a lot of that was AID, and AID had its own building a block away from the embassy. The AID director was mighty and powerful, the USAID mission was the largest in the world. At least half of those 800 Americans were USAID, contractors and direct hires. It's a big embassy. It's a new embassy [building]; the tower had just been completed and we worked in the 10-story tower. The ambassador's residence was almost completed and the second building, a low-rise which had the management offices and the consular section and I think public diplomacy, and the ambassador's residence was attached to it. It was a compound really in the center of Cairo, very close to Tahrir Square where the demonstrations took place, close to the Egyptian Museum, close to the Arab League – I could walk to Arab League headquarters, though walking in Cairo was always an adventure. Close to a number of five star hotels, so for visits – [there were] constant visitors to Cairo. Cairo traffic is unbelievable. It was sort of on a side road, so security was very good, although you rely on the Egyptians for a lot of security and some of those guys holding guns outside the embassy, I don't think they knew which end of the gun the bullet came out of. We were once told, "Don't worry they don't have any bullets, they're given one and they keep it in their pocket" like Barney Fife did. I don't know if that's true or not, but we were always assured...

Q: I'm talking to Bob Silverman, leaving NEA today, his last day there he retires. He was saying they were really concerned about these folks in the Sinai, the Bedouin apparently have been co-opted into the Islamic terrorists. And the Egyptian military who were supposed to protect them just isn't capable.

KRAJESKI: The Sinai is a different place, it was even when we were there, the Bedouin could occasionally do something violent. They don't consider themselves to be Egyptians, they didn't consider themselves to be under the authority of the central government – they were Bedouins, living in the Sinai. I have heard it's gotten increasingly more dangerous in the Sinai. The military, like all militaries - not all, maybe not ours, though we sure had a hard time securing the streets of Iraq after we took over Iraq, doing security, policing is a lot different than riding in tanks and blowing things up. The Egyptians are pretty good at riding in tanks and blowing things up and flying F-16s; they're not really good at street security, and the forces in Cairo assigned to that are badly paid and corrupt. When I was there, we drove across the Sinai multiple times. Getting into what I was assigned to do – but going back to the mission. Edmond was very big on mission statements. I was there the first year we did these MPPs, the Mission Program Plan which then became the MSRP (Mission Strategic Resource Plan) and the MRP (Mission Resource Plan) and all these annual exercises in what is our mission, how do we accomplish it, what do we need to accomplish it in the way of personnel and budget and facilities. That was the first year. Cairo was a prototype embassy, indeed Alan Misenheimer was the nominal head of the embassy efforts to do this.

Our mission in '93, certainly the peace process was high [priority] on it. So I was in a position of working on one of the ambassador's main parts of his mission. Economic

development really was the centerpiece. Clinton was elected in '92, and Gore took on as his mission economic development around the world, developing business partnerships around the world. So the Gore-Mubarak partnership was one of the centerpieces of the embassy's activities, we were looking at increasing American investment in Egypt and opening Egyptian markets. It [the Egyptian economy] was quite closed. It was difficult to buy imported goods on the market. They were quite expensive. Egyptians had had bad experiences as many governments had back in the '70s when they borrowed through the kazoo to bring imported goods in and had some real debt crises. They may have been under IMF (International Monetary Fund) debt supervision when I was there, I'm not sure; I was a political officer not an economic officer even though it [the economic section] was right down the hall from me.

Gore visited a couple of times, Mubarak went to the States. Clinton came twice; once for basically an economic visit, and the other time on the peace process. So we had two presidential visits, multiple vice presidential visits, the secretary came to Cairo, Christopher then Albright, it seemed like every week. It was a common occurrence that Christopher and his team would come in to meet Mubarak on the peace process. He'd go between Israel – it wasn't exactly shuttle diplomacy but he was there a lot, as are most secretaries of State. It was very active on the peace process. I swear, every single member of Congress, major cabinet folks. A lot of time and effort spent taking care of visitors from Washington. Those were the pillars of the mission – the peace process and all that entailed, the multi-lateral peace process that had been the result of the Madrid talks in '92, I believe. These were four or five sets of negotiations, everything from security to water, economic development, public diplomacy – a PR thing I got involved in.

Then there was what developed in August '93. I arrived in August of 1993, Pelletreau graciously spent quite a bit of time with me, telling me "Here's what I want you to do." The political counselor at the time was a guy named Bob Maxim. He had been our last consul-general in Alexandria before we closed the post – foolishly, we should not have closed it. So Bob transferred from being consul-general, principal officer in Alexandria down to being political minister-counselor in Cairo, the number three in the embassy. There were 10 political officers in the section and I was given the external portfolio: relations with Israel, the Arab League, and this multi-lateral peace process, although pieces of that – Sharon Weiner was the deputy in the section, she did the political multi-lateral peace process.

Q: I would imagine the peace process would be pretty well taken out of your hands and done in Washington?

KRAJESKI: I spent a lot of time taking care of Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller, I just saw him, he's over at the Hoover Institute. And various others, including Dan Kurtzer who went on to be ambassador to Egypt and to Israel; in those days he was a deputy assistant secretary. Tony Verstandig who was a deputy assistant secretary. You're right, the actual negotiation between the Palestinians and Israelis was handled out of Washington with support from Tel Aviv and largely Cairo. Pelletreau, the last thing he said to me was "These multilaterals are kind of hit and miss. There's something going on up in Oslo that

the Norwegians are working on, but we don't think it's going to develop into anything." Literally three, four weeks after that they announce the Oslo Accords and a commitment by the Israelis and the Palestinians at the highest level for face to face negotiations, one of the first of many roadmaps for how a negotiation would take place. The first bilateral negotiation was in September, they came to the White House and did the signing of the [Oslo] agreement I think in early, mid-September of 1993, then negotiations began almost immediately after that in Taba. Taba is at the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, right next to Eilat – you have Aqaba in Jordan, Eilat in Israel, and Taba in Egypt.

Q: Big tourist area.

KRAJESKI: Taba had a Hilton Hotel. The Palestinians would not agree to hold the negotiations in Eilat and the Israelis would not agree to Aqaba – this is before there was a peace agreement with Jordan. So they compromised on Taba, which the Israelis could get to very easily, it was just a drive over [the border] from Eilat. It was much more difficult for the Palestinians to get to Taba because they had to rely on the generosity of the Egyptians to fly them from Cairo, which is where Arafat spent most of his time once this began. Arafat and Nabil Shaath, who was one of the chief negotiators; Saeb Erekat, Salem [?] Hussein – out of Jerusalem, a couple of other Palestinians out of Ramallah. They would go to Cairo and the Egyptians would fly them [to Taba]. Or they would have to rent vehicles to drive to Taba for negotiations. The Israelis only had to drive across the border back to their lovely hotels in Eilat, less than a half-hour drive. The Palestinians were stuck at this hotel. Taba didn't have much else in it except this Hilton Hotel. When they [the talks] started, I was the observer, the reporter. So I drove with an embassy driver – we didn't need any security in those days – across the Sinai, and I spent four or five days for the first negotiations in Taba.

My colleague Andrew Steinfeld – still in the service I believe – Andrew came out of Tel Aviv down to Eilat and then we would meet at the hotel in Taba. He would do the Israelis and I would do the Palestinians and the Egyptians, who were the moderators. I was not in the room during the negotiations; part of the agreement is the Americans would not be in the room. So I'd hang around this hotel while they were talking and then when they came out I would spend three, four hours with the Palestinians, and Andrew would either see them [the Israelis] at the hotel there or go back to Eilat and talk to the Israelis. Sometimes I would go with Andrew and talk to the Israelis in Eilat; sometimes he would stay with me, although he didn't speak Arabic, and we would do the Palestinians in Taba.

It was 1993, I don't know if they've been declassified yet, I would love to go back and read some of the reporting, because we [Andrew and I] would laugh [about our reports]. I would spend three hours with the Palestinians and easily get four different versions of what happened in the room. And all four guys are in the room. One guy's talking to the press giving his version. Another guy's talking to me, giving his version. Someone else is sitting waiting. I'd get two or three versions and try to piece together exactly what had been agreed on, what had been negotiated in the room. Andrew would go to Eilat with the head of their delegation, a guy named Shahacht [?] who was an army general. I'm not sure if he was retired. He tried to run for prime minister at some point after that. And he

[Andrew] would get one version; it didn't matter who he talked to, he got exactly one account from the Israelis. It would be far less detailed than I was getting from the Palestinians, but also what I was getting was less reliable. And we would send our reports each night back to Washington, one out of Tel Aviv and one out of Cairo. I would telephone it back. We're talking about the use of private emails [today]; I would telephone it back using open lines, and then they would put it in the classified system. That was the only way we could do it.

This went on for three weeks; I would go back for a couple of days to Cairo, the Palestinians would go back and complain bitterly about how hard it was to get to Taba. I'm not sure when, at some point maybe in November they moved the negotiation to Cairo, and they were held at the Sheraton Gezira Hotel right on the river in Cairo. The Israelis weren't as happy about that because it meant they had to fly into Egypt – which they could do, they had a peace agreement. So they could fly in and stay there. Their embassy there was small and of course security was a huge issue for the Israelis, so they were less comfortable; they got to sleep in Eilat when they had it in Taba. For the Palestinians it was much better, Nabil Shaath had a house in Cairo. Arafat was given by Mubarak a small palace to use, nice place. It was much easier for the Palestinians to get from Ramallah across the Sinai into Cairo. The negotiations pretty much were constant until the first agreement which I believe was April or May of 1994 [May 4, 1994], the so-called Gaza-Jericho Agreement which allowed for a Palestinian Authority to be established, it allowed Arafat to go back to Gaza first and then he went to Ramallah shortly after that. It created basically, I won't use the word 'autonomous', but certainly a Palestinian-controlled – with a lot of caveats by the Israelis – area in Gaza and in Jericho. You had to go through Jerusalem to get to Jericho which is closer to the Jordanian border. The borders were very carefully [negotiated]. Where does the Palestinian Authority end? Where does it begin? Where is the gray zone? They talked about things like right of pursuit, joint police patrols. The Palestinians had no right to go into Israeli territory, the Israeli had some very carefully defined rights in this agreement as to when they could pursue a suspect into Palestinian controlled territory.

Q: You're saying, you were interviewing these people coming out of negotiations, and they had four different stories. But did you see things begin to coalesce?

KRAJESKI: Oh yes. After a month or two of really flailing around, the Palestinians were much more disciplined. Saeb Erekat, who remained a negotiator – he still may be doing it, he's a remarkable man. I saw him recently on television, apart from losing all his hair he looks pretty much the same as he did when I used to meet him. Nabil Shaath was a wealthy Palestinian businessman who was the economic guy, he got pushed aside and guys like Abu Mazen, [Mahmoud Abbas], he was not a negotiator but he became part of the decision-making core around Arafat. And Arafat made the decisions. Whenever they were close to an agreement on any particular point, whether it was the boundaries of the territory or certain authorities – they had huge discussions about the right to tax and collect fees. The Palestinians wanted the Israelis to subsidize them and the Israelis were willing to do this, but there was a lot of negotiation about how much, so that the Palestinians were paying taxes to the Israelis, the Israelis were reimbursing the

Palestinian Authority for that. There was lots of discussion how we and others, the Europeans, would support, once areas of Palestinian control were established. The negotiations focused on security, both Palestinian and Israeli. Then bringing in outsiders; you might recall the Norwegians actually sent peacekeeping or security forces, unarmed, wearing these ridiculous white hats in places like Hebron, which was a very sensitive spot where these ultra-conservative Orthodox Jews have set up an enclave in the center of this Palestinian city, over the tomb of Abraham I think, they're fighting over some religious site. The negotiations quickly became much more detailed, and the Israelis were disciplined – they were committed to it. Rabin had made the commitment of Israel to reaching an agreement with the Palestinians that would in its final stages include negotiations over the most sensitive issues – status of Jerusalem and the refugees, returnees – the right to return. Both of which have yet to be resolved, and probably never will be.

Q: Right to return – it's like giving the Indian tribes the right to return to their villages in northern Virginia.

KRAJESKI: There are members of our Native American groups who would like to have that. There are certainly many Palestinians today – the symbol is holding the key. Those who were driven out of Jaffa, who left of their own accord in 1947, '48, or who left in subsequent wars – they still hold the key to their father's house in Hebron, in Jaffa or Haifa as the Israelis call it today. They pass it on from generation to generation. They still live in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan, and "someday I'm going to go back and reclaim that property." Most Palestinians know that's just not going to happen. So the negotiation, which never really took place, but as it was formulated, it was going to be about compensation. Compensation for people who lost property during that time, with limited right of actual physical return. The West Bank was very much under discussion – what part, how much of the West Bank the Palestinians would get. Under Rabin's original plan, quite a lot of it. The major settlements were going to be closed in the West Bank, leaving only the so-called military security settlements which were along the Jordan River. Once the agreement with Jordan was signed there was an argument that we (the Israelis) don't need these either, they would be gradually disbanded too, and the Palestinians would control a great section of the West Bank. Much of the subsequent negotiation [was about] the administrative authorities. Once Gaza-Jericho, the first one, was signed they began a much more complex negotiation about where would the border run and what authorities would the Palestinian Authority have. With the [implied] notion it would become its own state.

Q: What were you getting from the Palestinians when you were talking to them? Did they think something was going to happen?

KRAJESKI: This is the only time in my career that I was directly involved in the central issue to the Middle East and to our relationships in the Middle East. I would argue that this was the most positive – I'll even use the word "optimistic," it's hard after 36 years in the Middle East to use the word "optimistic" – but there was a real sense that an agreement could be reached. That the Israelis and Palestinians were going to reach a

negotiated agreement, including on these very hard issues including Jerusalem. Jerusalem was by far the toughest. But it was progressing. Remember, I'm talking to Saeb Erekat, university educated, a very urbane, sophisticated negotiator, excellent English. Nabil Shaath who I think his degree is from Wharton, a first-class businessman. These guys understood negotiation, and that in negotiation, you're going to have to give and take. They hated negotiating with the Israelis – not because they hated the Israelis, but because the Israelis were the toughest negotiators on Earth. The Israelis give very little, and once they do give it they put walls around it so you don't get any more. They sometimes redefine –

Q: I'm told after the accord is signed, the real work starts.

KRAJESKI: There were numerous times during those two years of negotiations – three years, really – that I would walk into Saeb Erekat's hotel room, not a fancy hotel, right next to the Semiramis, the InterCon, where we put all our people right next to it, a three-star, an older hotel right on the river, which I kind of liked, had a great restaurant [Shepherd's Hotel]. He would just be fuming. He would lay into me, knowing that I would go back to the embassy 500 yards down the street and write my report on the perfidy of the Israelis. "Yesterday we had agreed to this, that there would be two policemen in each car, that they would be allowed to carry handguns and have ammunition, that there would be right of pursuit to this area outside of Jericho and now they come back and say, 'no, no, that's not what we agreed to at all, we only agreed to one policemen and only one could be armed and they had to be in cars with Israelis...' ", and he would just be pounding the table, angry at the Israelis for what he considered to be reneging on what yesterday's agreement had been. The biggest problem the Palestinians had was, they were sincere negotiators so they had a problem negotiating with the Israelis. The Israelis were honest negotiators; once a deal had been agreed to, they stuck to it. They give very little as you move forward.

The head of the [Palestinian delegation to the] Arab League was there and was often part of the negotiation. Of course the Palestinian ambassador who was Arafat's man, he was there and sometimes part of the negotiation. The problem Shaath and Erekat had was they would reach an agreement with the Israelis in the room. They would come out and tell me about the agreement – or sometimes Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller were there, and Kurtzer. So everybody would say "Great, this is huge progress. We've made an agreement about the boundaries around Ramallah, moving up the West Bank." And then the Palestinians would go back to Arafat and Arafat would say, "I never agreed to that. We're not going to agree to that." He would sometimes publicly announce "There's no agreement on this particular point." And the Israelis would go nuts, jump up and down, "Has he no confidence in his negotiators? Don't the negotiators have pre-clearance to go this far?", as most negotiators do. And Shaath and Erekat would have that agreement. Abu Mazen (I only remember their noms de guerre, don't remember their real names) – and they would be very unhappy. They wouldn't want to express it to an American directly that Arafat had pulled the rug out from under them, but he did. Arafat didn't trust them, he trusted no-one. He controlled all the money and let them know that he had the final decision-making authority on every point of the agreement.

Q: I've never been involved in negotiations of this nature, just what I read in the newspaper. Arafat, he has a reputation as a guy who always missed the bus.

KRAJESKI: I think that's unfair. We think so because there are good deals that he didn't take. This guy saw himself as a freedom fighter. He took up arms against the occupiers, the people who had invaded their country – this is the Palestinian viewpoint – and occupied it.

Q: It's true.

KRAJESKI: Absolutely. And in 1972, Black September, when the king of Jordan, in the nick of time according to many analysts and historians, tossed the Palestinians and the PLO out of Jordan – on the verge of taking over Jordan. Famous line from a future prime minister of Israel, the Palestinians don't need a homeland, they already have one and it's Jordan. Jordan after all is the East Bank. I don't know what the population figures are but if you look at the Hashemites, the Jordanian Bedouin tribes, and the Palestinians who have some cases always lived on the East Bank – there's a lot of Palestinians in Jordan. And more after the wars, after 1948 and 1967 especially when Jordan lost the West Bank and Jerusalem, there were lots of refugees. Then [in 1972] Arafat went to Beirut where of course he and others – I think you could make a case that Arafat didn't support terrorism. He didn't support the hijacking of airplanes and ships, he didn't support the killing of civilians. His guys were the kind who would get on their rubber dinghies and go down to Haifa and try to attack a military post. There's a fine line; there were certainly other Palestinian groups who were blowing up ...

Q: I just finished a book, a set of interviews with Ed Abington who was consul-general in Jerusalem –

KRAJESKI: He was consul-general while I was there

Q: Very close to Arafat...

KRAJESKI: Too close.

Q: Many people think too close. I raise this; he doesn't think much of Dennis Ross, too close to the Israelis. This is a thing that permeates both sides. "Those plucky Israelis, those poor picked-upon Palestinians", it's divided the Jewish community in the United States.

KRAJESKI: And the Palestinian community is divided, and the Arab world is divided. If you ask any Arab up front about the Palestinian-Israeli issue, they support the Palestinian people who've been treated unjustly and deserve a state of their own. You get into more nuanced arguments as you move forward, but their fundamental position is support for the Palestinians. Among the Palestinian community, there's a lot of controversy. Palestinians in Kuwait for example were furious with Arafat for siding with Saddam

Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. They were apoplectic because they all got thrown out, they all lost their good jobs. They got thrown out of the gulf, out of Dubai – Palestinians suddenly became untrustworthy in the eyes of Gulf Arabs. No community, as we know well as Americans, has a united front. Even when we were fighting Germany and Japan – we make this great myth now about how all America was on the march and on the go, supporting – there were a lot of people opposed to war before it occurred, and were reluctant participants. So I think that Arafat, you can view him both ways. Certainly there's a strong argument – the old saying, "He never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity." You've heard it a thousand times I'm sure, certainly from Ed Abington.

That's true, according to Aaron Miller who's probably one of the most knowledgeable of all about the different legal structures that have been set up since the establishment of Israel regarding the Palestinians. Aaron carried this black notebook, a small ringed notebook with a leather cover – you don't see them anymore. They had the lined pages with holes punched, about as big as your hand, maybe a little bigger. He had photocopied the Camp David Accords, UN resolutions 242 and 338 which basically said depending on how you interpret it, the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 was illegal or it was finite, it was not meant to be a permanent status. He had them all in his book. He could read them – the type was tiny. His eyes were better than mine.

I remember sitting in the back of the car and he would make these arguments. His contention was – Camp David was a huge opportunity for the Palestinians because they had Egypt willing to back them, and the Israelis in a position of compromise, something they don't do very often. But with our guarantee at Camp David, the Israelis were willing to take a look at the West Bank in 1979, 1980. The Palestinians said "No, we want it all." To the Palestinians, that meant they wanted Haifa back, they wanted it all. "The Jews can stay" – the Muslims always believed they treated the Jews beautifully throughout history; Jews always believed they treated Muslims fairly throughout history. It's only the Christians that really get rapped by both sides because Christians treated neither Muslims nor Jews fairly when they ran the Holy Land; it's a long story.

As you look at these negotiations... we come to 1993, and you really have another great opportunity. What the Palestinians are going to get is more limited than what they might have gotten in '79 under Camp David, but it's a real opportunity. In this particular case I would not put all the blame on Arafat at all. He did after all sign Gaza-Jericho. It's a great scene. April, May I believe of 1994. We had been negotiating non-stop for seven days in Cairo. Christopher had been in and out. Dennis Ross, Dan Kurtzer, Aaron Miller were basically living there. Occasionally going to Israel. The Palestinian team is there, Arafat is there. Rabin has a senior guy. The last points of negotiation were hammered out at the Semiramis Hotel and at the Gezira Sheraton. I remember the last points being agreed the night before. Must have been 150, 200 pages. The embassy is providing all the photocopiers, printers, workstations to keep this agreement in shape. Then we had to print it out, and we had to print out at least five copies because Rabin was coming in, Christopher was already there or coming the next day, Mubarak was the center, the Russian (Andrey Kozyrev) was coming in, then I think someone from the UN. I can see it on the stage at the conference center where they did the signing. We had to use these

enormous clips to hold the pages together and put it into some kind of book where it could actually be opened and signed. There were maps and appendices showing detail around Ramallah where the line was between Israeli and Palestinian authority. They're all standing on the stage. I hadn't slept in three days, maybe caught an hour or two. I was sitting next to an Israeli who I had become good friends with, Danny – never seen him since but we bonded and both of us were sleep deprived, sitting in the audience. Mubarak is giving his speech, Christopher is giving his speech. I'm going to say Kuznietsov (note: it was Kozyrev; fixed on subsequent mentions), the Russian...

Q: Soviet.

KRAJESKI: Yeah, still Soviet in '93, '94?

Q: I think they weren't.

KRAJESKI: Russian Federation. I think Yeltsin was in charge. Anyway. And Rabin is on the stage. Rabin by the way is one of the toughest people. The only reason this agreement was sold in Israel was because of Rabin. He had the stature and he had the chops. He had been a military commander, one of the toughest the Israelis had ever produced. A major factor in the success of the '67 war and in the '73 war. He's a war hero and a prime minister. The Labor government in those days was fairly strong, not a coalition as I recall – Israeli governments are often coalitions with smaller parties.

Q: Usually religious.

KRAJESKI: But Rabin was very much in charge. The Israelis I knew, and I got to know quite a few of them through the years, through the embassy and I visited Israel three or four times. We could drive across; my family and I drove across the Sinai through Rafah, the border crossing in Gaza. Around Gaza, we didn't drive through Gaza, to Jerusalem. Seven hour trip, door to door including the border crossing which took two hours. One hour with the Egyptians as they smoked cigarettes and looked for papers and stamps and tried to figure out who the hell you were. One hour with the Israelis, who were chop-chop-chop. I'm looking at the stage. Mubarak I think signs first, then Kozyrev, and then Rabin signs the agreement. And then Arafat walks up. Arafat has a sense of drama and a real presence. Fascinating man, I could talk a lot about Arafat. Ed Abington probably knows him better than any American diplomat. He goes up and there's this big discussion. He's looking over it and he's got one of the maps out and he's shaking his head. Shaath or Erekat, one of the negotiators is up there with him explaining to him. There are no chairs. The only flags are the Egyptian flag and I think the United Nations, or maybe the Norwegian flag, this is after Oslo. They had a big fight over flags. Dan Kurtzer spent hours negotiating flags on stage, because the Israelis were not going to allow a Palestinian flag on stage. The stage is basically bare. There were these chairs, boom-boom-boom, for each of them, but they're all standing. I'm watching them, this is going on for 10 or 15 minutes, and my Israeli friend elbowed me and said, "Look at Rabin." There was heat coming off Rabin. He is stiff, cold-eyed. He said, "Rabin is really pissed, Rabin is going to explode." Then Rabin makes a gesture to his security standing

at the door, and my buddy sat up straight and said, “Oh shit, he’s going to leave. That’s the sign to go.”

At this point, our secretary of State – god bless him, a very nice man and really very easy to handle as a visitor; he had no demands on the embassy, all he wanted was to have dinner with his wife in the hotel. He hated going out to the formal dinners which made the Egyptians crazy. He’s the secretary of State, of course you have to have a dinner. A very smart guy, but a lawyer. A quiet negotiator. I don’t know if you’ve had other stories about Warren Christopher. He was not a real presence. He was just kind of standing there, looking back and forth. Kozyrev was talking to Mubarak and Arafat is talking to his aid and Rabin is steaming on the stage. Finally Mubarak goes over to Arafat, “What’s the problem, buddy?” It turns out there was a point on the map, the map did not accurately reflect where the line was. I’m sure Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller know exactly where this line was supposed to be. So they had this negotiation on stage, took about 10 or 15 minutes, in which they agreed they would circle that tiny little area, and all would initial it, noting that it was for further review. This satisfied him.

All of this was show, it was just drama. Others will know better, but the area was not important to anybody. It was just Arafat wanted to make a point, “I decide whether this agreement goes forward or not. I’m not going to sign it until I get my little performance.” Just in time before Rabin left, it all got done and signed. After, Arafat went back to Gaza, which he didn’t like. He had a house in Tunis, and a place in Cairo. He used to spend more time in Cairo than Gaza, which used to piss the Palestinians off because guys like Shaath and Erekat all had to go and try to set up the Palestinian Authority, which would then be negotiated in detail over what authorities they would actually have.

My job after that was to help fulfill some of our commitments to the agreement, which had to do with observers and money and equipment. We had pledged to provide the Palestinian police with vehicles. A guy named Michael Corbin who went on to be our ambassador in the UAE (United Arab Emirates), good friend of mine, he was the political-military officer –

Q: Who was it?

KRAJESKI: Michael Corbin. He’s retired now, lives in Abu Dhabi, has a consultancy in Abu Dhabi, he’s doing quite well. He was ambassador to UAE when I was in Bahrain. Most recently he had been deputy assistant secretary for Iraq and for the gulf I believe. Couple of other jobs in Washington, really smart guy, good guy. He was the political-military officer. Interestingly in that crowd too, Barbara Leaf who is our current ambassador to the UAE, was the human rights officer in the political section. Then Alan Misenheimer. Strong group, Alan never got an embassy. So Michael, working with the military, got 200 vehicles – may have been fewer than that, may have been 40; I’m terrible with numbers, it’s why I’m not an economic officer. He had identified this whole warehouse filled with Broncos, a General Motors car I think a Chevrolet. The military had purchased [them] years before, they were seven or eight years old and had never been driven; they were simply warehoused in Germany somewhere for future use. We had

arranged through various financial packages – the military has this excess military equipment that can be part of a military support agreement. I used it in Yemen, we use it often. Sometimes it's used equipment; in this case they were all new, but hadn't been driven so they had to be checked. Michael did a great job with the military. We shipped in all of these vehicles then drove them across the Sinai into Jericho where they became the first Palestinian police vehicles. There were lots of things like this that we did.

As I said, the negotiations continued as they got more into the West Bank. Eventually they established Ramallah as the "temporary capital of the Palestinian Authority." We couldn't call it anything but that; it was very awkward. "I'm going to go visit the Palestinian Authority" which meant Ramallah "and talk with the Palestinian leadership there." As the negotiations for the Palestinian authorities were going on – I think this took another six months, it was towards the end of 1994 when those were finalized – that's when Rabin was assassinated. I have in my head August of 1994, it may have been later than that. (Note: November 1995) Rabin was killed by this Israeli extremist, this settler – I believe connected with settlers, who thought he was going to give away the West Bank, which was part of the deal. A book has just come out on this called Death of the King or something like this (note: Killing A King), by an American journalist, about Rabin's assassination and the effect it had.

Q: It took a significant player out of that equation.

KRAJESKI: To me it took the guts out of it, the nerve, the steel out of it. As I said, Rabin was trusted by the Israelis that he wouldn't sell them out. Peres who was then I believe foreign minister, who became leader of the Labor Party and led the party until the election of '96, when Netanyahu and his coalition came in. The Israelis liked Peres, but Peres didn't have the military background of Rabin. Peres was considered to be a diplomat, he was soft; they didn't fully trust Peres. Maybe that's not fair – but he couldn't bring together the hard-line Israelis with the peace crowd and say, "This is the time to do it for the security of Israel. For the long-term security, prosperity of Israel, we need to make this agreement." Peres couldn't do that, and that weakened the negotiation. Plus Arafat kept playing his games. Ed Abington would know more about it.

About this time, we were getting into '96 now, I was frankly tiring of it all. I had just gotten my next assignment, which was going to be consul-general in Dubai. The agreement was I would continue in the external office doing these negotiations. I also worked on what was called "warming the cold peace," Egypt-Israel relations. One of the more frustrating parts of my portfolio. I would sit with Ned Walker and say, "What are we going to do? We'll have an exchange of journalists. We'll bring Israeli journalists in, and we'll back it, we'll fund it even. And we'll have Egyptian journalists go to Israel, exchange them for a month." That would sort of work once or twice, but only one or two journalists would make it through. They'd come and their stories would be negative and then they'd get thrown out. One thing I remember, I actually talked to Zubin Mehta, who was then the musical director for the Israeli Philharmonic. We were going to have a concert tour. The opera hall in Cairo is magnificent, one of the most beautiful and

acoustically perfect venues that I've ever been in. I saw many performances there, including Shakespeare.

Q: Was this the one put up for Aida?

KRAJESKI: No, the venue for Aida was a temporary one down in Luxor itself. They would perform Aida at the Temple of Hatshepsut – we used to call her “Hot Chicken Soup”, because we couldn't say her name. That was where in 1997 they had the terrible terrorist attack where all the Swiss tourists were massacred by Al-Gamayay, a real turnaround. That's where they did Aida. I never saw it, I always wanted to see it. I'm not a big opera fan, but they did it outdoors, it was magnificent. In the opera house, it was a modern, beautiful venue. The centerpiece of my work is to bring the Israeli Philharmonic to perform. But it didn't happen, the Egyptians didn't want it.

The toughest negotiation I had that I conducted personally had to do with Israel and Egypt as well, more with the American Jewish community, and that was the ring road around Cairo. They were building a beltway around Cairo (traffic in Cairo was unbelievable). They had built it at some distance, including down where I was in Maadi, a ring road. They were mostly complete except a mile section that was going to run through the Jewish cemetery. The cemeteries around Cairo are enormous. You hear about the cities of the dead, where people live there, live in the tombs down there. There's a Muslim section, which is the largest; a Christian section, which was quite large; and a Jewish section, which was large – one of the largest Jewish cemeteries in the Middle East. It was huge. Before 1967 there were tens of thousands of Egyptian Jews, who considered themselves very much Egyptians. When I got there, the community was maybe 300, and one of my jobs was liaison with the Jewish community. And a major part of that was how to build the road through the cemetery, because these crazy – excuse me, I don't mean that – these dedicated leaders of the American Orthodox community out of New York, who with great credit to them have dedicated themselves to preserving Jewish cemeteries around the world, especially in Europe where many were destroyed during World War II. They got wind of the fact that they were going to build this road through the Jewish cemetery which would require moving a number of graves. Now the Christians and the Muslims all agreed; with compensation, they were given cemetery sites elsewhere, and the grave sites were moved. Some of them were just plowed under. This Jewish organization in New York said, “No, no, no, you do not move Jewish graves. You do not move them for eternity. You do not move them until the messiah comes and raises us all up and we all go to heaven.” So you have to keep the bones intact until the messiah comes. That's a long way away I think; it could be tomorrow...

Q: For planning, it's a little difficult.

KRAJESKI: I'm dealing with these Egyptian engineers and the Ministry of Roads and Transportation guys. They're engineers; they want to build the road. They get the political imperative right from the top, from Mubarak I suppose, saying “We're not going to do this until we have an agreement with this organization that it's acceptable to build the road in whatever fashion you guys can agree to.” The Israelis would have none of it. I

remember going to the Israeli embassy early on, and they said “We will not talk about this, we will not deal with it. We do not talk to the American organization. If we get involved in this, it will effect what we’re doing in Israel. Every time you put a damned shovel in the ground in Israel, you hit a bone so you couldn’t build anything.” What they do in Israel is, when they want to have a major project they don’t tell anybody, they just do it. Then the next day, these groups go crazy. “Oh no, there are bones, this is an archaeological, yadda yadda yadda...” Too late, it’s already dug. So they wouldn’t touch it. They would laugh with me (they were friends), and say “Why are you Americans so wrapped up with this? Build the god-damn road!” They wouldn’t talk to the Egyptians about it.

So I would have this group come in. It was wonderful. They were New York, Orthodox. Not always Hasid, but they had the black hats, the ringlets, dark suit, big beard – like a Jew. I would meet them at the airport sometimes. We would go over to the Ministry of the Interior, down the street from the embassy. It was much quicker to walk than to take an embassy car because of traffic – you had to go around in circles to get to it, while walking it was about 10 or 15 minute walk. So we would walk down these busy streets in Cairo and I’d have these two guys beside me. Cairenes are really sophisticated, even the poor guys on the street. They see everybody. So a foreigner doesn’t attract attention on the streets of Cairo. But these guys (laughter), these guys did. We would work on them and reach a deal. The first deal (and this is outrageous) was that we would build a suspension bridge across the Jewish section of the cemetery. A Golden Gate style suspension bridge, so that pylons would be driven on one side and the other side and the bridge would go across the cemetery, leaving the cemetery untouched. At incredible cost. It was really expensive.

The Egyptians agreed to it. They actually started construction; they were going to do this. These guys from New York, they had observers in as construction began with pylons on one side. To sink these pylons for the bridge, you’ve got to go really deep into the desert. Huge pile drivers, enormous machines that were going to dig the holes and set the pylons for the bridge. I get a call. It had just started, two or three days of construction. The New York group has its observer, a young guy out at the scene. I get a call on my cell phone. A Nokia; cell phones changed our lives at embassies. Managing a visit with a cell phone was so much easier. I don’t know how we did it before, but we did. So I get a call (he’s got a cell phone). He calls me and says, “They’re disturbing the bones! The bones are shaking! I’m seeing bones! I’m going to stop this!” Click.

I get a call, 20 minutes later. I’m trying to call him back, I’m setting up a car to go out to the site which is out in the desert about 10 miles from the embassy, to see what’s going on. Then I get a call from the Egyptian engineer, who says “You’ve got to get out here right now. He’s lying under the pile driver.” He literally put himself there where the hole was to stop the pile driver, because they were shaking the bones too much. And worse, worse, they were cutting another section where they were building the ramp up to the bridge, so they were bulldozing away – it was not in the cemetery, the Jewish part of the cemetery. But there were graves there, and as one of the big pieces of equipment had sheared off the side of the dune – this was desert, this was not Tunisian desert, this was

sand – he had cut coffins in half, and there were bones hanging out of coffins and coffins had fallen down and there were dogs (all these wild dogs in Egypt) running into this and grabbing the bones and dragging them away. When I got there I had this American Jew – not screaming, he was actually quite calm – going “There’s dogs, bones, dogs are taking the bones.” The pile driver had stopped, and the Egyptian engineers were gathered around, smoking as always, going “What the fuck?” They just want to build the bridge that had been agreed to.

They stopped the bridge. I couldn’t believe that the Egyptians just didn’t say, “Those aren’t Jewish bones. This is terrible, we’ll take care of that. Yeah, they’re getting a little shake” – because pile drivers go “boom boom”. “Yeah, probably shaking things up a little bit but you know, with the folks lying in the graves, waiting for the messiah.” I couldn’t believe it. They’d gone to great expense and begun construction on this ridiculously expensive bridge to go across, and then they simply agreed to give it up. That was our position; “This isn’t going to work, you can’t do this.” And the Egyptians, instead of telling us to all go jump off a bridge, said “OK, let’s see if we can’t come up with another plan for how to do this.” About this time they finished the bridge across the Nile, which was a big part of the project, because the traffic out to Giza where the pyramids are, along the Giza road out of town, was among the worst in Egypt. When Hillary Clinton came to visit, the First Lady, she and her daughter Chelsea, we took them by helicopter rather than drive them along the road. Terrible road. But they finished this bridge which was going to allow people who worked in Giza and lived in Maadi to cut an hour off their commute. And then it was going to allow the developments that they were building in the western desert, including new schools, a golf course I used to play on; USAID had opened new office out there. Other companies were looking. This was going to be the new development as Cairo spread to the south and to the east. And you had this one mile of road – less than a mile – that wasn’t done.

Know how they solved it? A genius Egyptian engineer – this man to me is a hero. He said, “Look, what if we build a berm? What if we simply bury the bodies deeper? Is that a problem? We’ll build a berm, we’ll build a road over it, nothing will be disturbed.” And the rabbis come back, discuss it, and say “Yeah, that’ll work. No problem.” There was a very small Jewish community there, a couple of hundred, old folks. They were unhappy. The road wasn’t going to cover the new part of the Jewish cemetery, which is where most of their relatives were buried and where they would be buried; that was separate. The road was going to cover an older part where there weren’t any families left. But they were upset because the gravestones had markers. It was OK to move the markers. So they had a section – I’d love to see it, it wasn’t finished when I left – where they put the markers of all the people who were buried under this giant berm. Built a berm, built a road over it and... Why didn’t somebody think of that earlier? (Laughter)

Q: Tell me. The Arab League. I can remember, going back to the ‘50s in Saudi Arabia, the Arab League had this “We can’t deal with this country because it’s dealing with Israel...”

KRAJESKI: The Arab boycotts.

Q: I remember there was a case, they were putting IBM (International Business Machines Corporation) under their interdict, because IBM had in those days punch cards and they were producing punch cards in Israel. They really getting ready to stop all dealing with IBM, somebody from the Egyptian military said, "You know, our mobilization plans are based on IBM punch cards; don't do this!" And that ended that. It was a very complicated problem.

KRAJESKI: Part of the Camp David agreement was a commitment by Egypt not to abide by the boycott. It was difficult for the Egyptians to work this. The agreement with Jordan was the same. Gradually we made it a point with all countries with whom we had any kind of a military or economic, state-to-state financial arrangement that they could not enforce the Arab League boycott if they wanted to do business with us. We would go after them in courts and we were actually sanctioning and refusing to carry out an agreement if an American company came to us. It was called the boycott language; it would be in a contract that an Arab country like Saudi Arabia or the UAE would require of an American company to do business in Saudi Arabia, said "you can't do any business with Israel." We made that illegal. American companies could not have the boycott language in their contracts. It hurt business to some degree, but the boycott gradually faded away. There's talk now of renewing it because everybody's so unhappy with Israel and Netanyahu in the Arab world, there's talk of renewing it. I don't know whether it will come back again. Of course, most Arab countries don't do business with Israel directly. Most of the ones I've worked with do a lot of indirect business with Israeli companies but not directly.

The boycott, that was one of the few things the Arab League did that had teeth in it. Mostly it was a toothless organization. Like a number...as a reflection of Arab majlis. Everybody in the room has to agree before the Arab League can do anything. Have to have unanimous agreement among its members, that means usually what it agrees to has no real meat, let alone teeth. I found my time at the Arab League to be deadeningly boring most of the time. I had to go over there when they had their sessions, which they did frequently. They loved to talk there, I'd have to go sit in the central chamber and listen to the speeches and meet some of the delegates and do a reporting cable that nobody in Washington read, I was sure, about what the Arab League was thinking and doing.

Whenever Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller came, they had to go meet the head of the Arab League, too. There were four must-dos whenever they came in. They had to do Moussa, the foreign minister, of course – and they wanted to do that, because he was quite influential. Mubarak would always see them, and they really wanted to do that. Then they had to see Abdel-Meguid who was a former foreign minister and the head of the Arab League. The fourth was, they had a parliament which they sometimes had to see. They hated seeing Abdel-Meguid, who was a has-been. He was an influential foreign minister when he was minister, but he was old and the head of the Arab League. They had to do an hour, always an hour. Dennis Ross and Miller would complain bitterly about dragging

them over there, always get stuck in traffic. The Arab League was right off of Tahrir Square. I could walk over from the embassy, if I had to go for the sessions.

Last Arab League anecdote – none of them are very interesting – is Arafat. This is shortly after Gaza-Jericho was signed, and Arafat is being invited to be the principal speaker at the Arab League summit. So you've got all the leaders coming in. I had a seat in the diplomatic section of observers that was fairly close to the table, a UN-style U-shaped table, a dais where the speakers talk. It was a hot day as often in Cairo. It was hot in the chamber, and Arafat spoke for an hour. He could really go on and on and on. And while my Arabic is pretty good, I don't always follow the flowery Arabic speeches. Public speaking is an art form, you have to speak a more formal style of Arabic than you would normally talk. And like you, I was just starting to go... I fell asleep. I got back to the embassy later that afternoon, I'm writing my report, and I went down to see my FSN. We had a wonderful crowd of political FSNs, very smart people who could really get out into the community in ways we couldn't, had great insights. I went down and – she was so lovely. She saw me as I came into their suite of offices and she just started laughing. She said "Come quick," and there was the Egyptian evening news. "I know they're going to show it again," and they show Arafat speaking and then they pan around the crowd and you know where they stopped. The American! (Laughter)

Q: There you are.

KRAJESKI: We had video recorders, maybe my FSN... I was mortified, just out completely. There's no question, I'm snoring, flies are buzzing in and out of my mouth. But that describes what the Arab League was like. They've done some good work. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Mubarak had tried to mobilize the Arab League into pressuring Saddam Hussein into backing off through negotiation. I remember one time Baker said, "OK let them do it. If he thinks he can do it, it would be great if the Arabs could solve this themselves, it would be terrific." Didn't work. When Syria exploded in 2011, the Arab League really fell apart. The GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) became the effective inter-Arab organization, much to the Egyptians' distress.

Q: Did you find that Egypt – I'm talking about the Egyptian government – got anything from its great community of doctors, lawyers, engineers, throughout the Gulf States and elsewhere?

KRAJESKI: It's amazing how many Arabs I have met – Iraqis, Yemenis, even Gulf Arabs. There aren't so many in Bahrain or the UAE as in Saudi, who had Egyptian teachers, who when they got their engineering degree there were Egyptian professors at Baghdad University. Or they went to Cairo University, which was considered one of the best. One of the things that Nasser did, then Sadat, Mubarak to a lesser extent, continued was this real diminution of the professional middle class. They didn't trust them. They considered that they were a serious political threat, opposition coming out of that liberal middle class educated community. One of the reasons many of them had left to go teach elsewhere was because of policies on land ownership, on advancement in Egyptian institutions being based on party loyalties than on abilities or experience, education. I

sense that the Egyptians were conflicted about this. On one hand they were proud of this contingent of Egyptians who were educating the Arab world. An exaggeration, Egyptians are wont to exaggerate. Then they were unhappy, frustrated that these people couldn't work in their own country. They saw their own university suffering, they saw their hospital care declining. "We need these people here, why aren't we attracting these people back to work in Egypt?"

That was part of that whole development program I was talking about, opening up the economy so you could attract Egyptian businessmen and build a private economy. It was starting; it's still very corrupt. I remember a big hospital was being built when I was there, it would be one of the first private hospitals, with doctors who had been trained in Europe and the United States, who had been working abroad, to come back and staff this private hospital called the Apollo. There was a real sense of frustration that went along with this notion. "We're Egyptians, of course we're educated. Everybody depends on us. We lead the Arab world." Not so much.

Q: In medicine here in Washington and elsewhere, got a great many Middle Eastern doctors. I just saw an eye doctor who had taken, when my Jewish doctor retired. She, Yasmin Khan, is from Pakistan. This is so typical.

KRAJESKI: It's one of the great strengths. It's why this talk about immigration is so stupid and foolish, misguided right now. One of the huge strengths of our country is our ability to continue to attract talented, ambitious people who want to come here and build a business, become a doctor. It's a huge advantage that we have, and this notion that somehow we can shut it all off because they're Muslims and Arabs and Mexicans and rapists?! What kind of stupidity is this?

Q: Where'd you go next?

KRAJESKI: After Egypt I went to Dubai. I spent my fourth year in Egypt, I shifted jobs with Alan Misenheimer. He took over the external portfolio, and I took over the internal for six months. Really interesting, I really loved it. I got to meet Muslim Brotherhood guys, go down to some of these places up in the delta that I hadn't been to before, and I went to schools. For six months. And then I did six months of Farsi. I found an Iranian journalist who had fled Iran in the 1980s. Later – he had hung on for the revolution and like many of his educated middle class friends had actually supported the revolution and the overthrow of the shah, but then found himself targeted by these new extremists coming in. He had fled to Paris. He then went to Cairo where he was going to run a Farsi language radio station. News, kind of a VOA (Voice of America) thing, that would be beamed into Iran. The station failed, I'm not sure why. He made his living writing for Deutsche Welle, doing the Farsi program for Deutsche Welle, and teaching. He was the best language instructor I've ever had.

We did one on one tutoring in Farsi for six months. Washington wanted me to come back for a whole year of Farsi. My daughter, it was her senior year in high school, and I said "No, I can do it here. I'll do six months of internal and then six months of Farsi." The

embassy was very supportive. Vincent Battle had come in, went on to be ambassador in Lebanon. He was the DCM, was very supportive. He lives in Beirut now; Vince loves Beirut, bought an apartment there. He comes back here now and then, I'm told. So I did the six months of internal work. Jamshid lived about 10 blocks from me in Maadi, so I would get up on a beautiful morning and walk over to his apartment and we would drink tea. His wife Faradi would make the most amazing things to eat, she was an incredible cook. Iranian food is unbelievably good. Very Mediterranean, mixed with... it was great. For four hours a day we would talk, and then I would go home and study a bit. It was a wonderful six months, I just loved it. The problem was, after about five months I found – Farsi is a much easier language for a Westerner to grasp than Arabic. It's an Indo-European language. It shares roots with Slavic and German, and I knew these languages and I could make all kinds of connections with it. But it has a huge amount of Arabic in it; now the Persians will say "No, no, that's Persian, the Arabs took it from us." But if you know Arabic, you can tell which words are Arabic because they're based on that three-letter root system. The words would be pronounced slightly different, and have a slightly different meaning – sometimes a very nuanced, sometimes an embarrassing difference in meaning. I found that after four months, my brain could not keep Arabic and Farsi separate. I would get into a taxi cab and as I would always do, start jabbering away in what I thought was my Egyptian dialect with the taxi driver as we were going off somewhere. It was four months into this training when a taxi driver looked back at me and said "Inta meneen? Inta Arabi? Farsi? Amriki? – "where are you from? Are you Arab? Are you Persian? Are you American? I cannot understand a word you're saying." I thought, "Shit." What I was doing was just mixing them both.

I went back to the PDAS (principal deputy assistant secretary) and said "I'll finish the Farsi" – I ended up with a 2+/2 in Farsi at the end of the day. They also gave me a score in Dari which upset me, particularly when they started recruiting for Afghanistan less than 10 years later, it was like there on my record, 2/2 in Dari. I guess Dari and Farsi are very close together. But when I got to Dubai, my next assignment as consul-general, I focused on Arabic. I decided the Persian speakers at the embassy, at the consulate, could handle that part of the community. I'll talk to the Iranians and the business community who all spoke English; I want my Arabic for when I go up to Ras al-Khaimah and when I go out to Sharjah and places where the Emiratis didn't speak English well or at all; in Dubai everybody spoke English. Dubai is Dubai, the biggest language in Dubai is Urdu or Hindi, and Persian too. So I kept a little bit of it, but most of the Persian went away. Deliberately, I deliberately pushed it to the side. You know, you always regret putting all this time into a language, but when I got there I recognized what was important. My position was Farsi-designated. Not anymore. Now of course they have a big Iranian office in Dubai that's part of the consulate, but it's a big operation on its own.

Q: OK, well we'll pick this up. You go off to Dubai when?

KRAJESKI: 1997 to Dubai, left in 2001. Four years in Cairo, four years in Dubai.

Q: Today is the 21st of April, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, where did we leave off?

KRAJESKI: I had just finished six months of studying Farsi in Cairo with an Iranian journalist who had got stuck there after the revolution. One of the best language instructors I've ever had. Then we headed off to Dubai, where I was principle officer and consul-general, my first management/leadership position. My first and only – no sorry, Bahrain was not a hardship post, my last one – my first non-hardship post in the Foreign Service, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. We have the embassy of course in Abu Dhabi, and the consulate in Dubai. In 1997, Dubai was unlike any place I've ever seen, Stu. I don't know if you've ever wandered by one of these Gulf cities...

Q: I was the vice-consul in Dhahran and we covered them, I used to go down there.

KRAJESKI: It was probably nothing when you were there?

Q: Well, a couple of mud huts and a lot of trading activity. Smuggling.

KRAJESKI: In Dubai the two are often equated; trade is smuggling. I'll tell you a story about that a little later on. I learned a lot in Dubai about things I really had not worked on before and haven't done much with since. Mostly focused on trade, smuggling, commercial relations, oil.

Q: Let's start – you were there when?

KRAJESKI: 1997 to 2001, four years.

Q: '97 when you got there, what was the situation in Dubai and in the area?

KRAJESKI: As far as the region goes, it was a fairly calm period. The tanker war, the great Gulf War of the 1980s, Iran and Iraq, was long over and both economies had recovered from it. The effects of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in '91 had largely subsided – lingering effects having to do with the sanctions regime in Iraq and the continued smuggling of Iraqi oil, something that we were very much interested in stopping, something that the Emiratis especially the guys in Dubai and the northern emirates – by the way, as consul-general, there were seven emirates, and I had six of them.

Q: Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah...

KRAJESKI: Ajman, Fujairah, and my favorite one, Umm al-Quwain. Umm al-Quwain had maybe 20,000 people in it; it was tiny, stuck in between Ajman and Sharjah. The largest emirate was Abu Dhabi, and the wealthiest by far because of oil. Dubai is the second-largest in land size, and certainly the second in population, maybe even the first in population now, in those days it was second. Each of the emirates is a little bit different. The Emirates as you know is a relatively new federation, 1970, '71, '72 [December 1971] when they formed.

Q: When I was there it was the Trucial States under British protectorate.

KRAJESKI: Right. Interestingly, when the Emirates formed, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman were also offered membership in the United Arab Emirates. Those three turned it down, Oman very quickly. But Qatar and Bahrain apparently considered it for some time but as you know from your time there – it hasn't changed very much – it's all about the families. Nobody liked the Al-Thani in Qatar, and the Al-Thani didn't like anybody.

Q: In the Trucial States as I recall, it was usually sons or nephews murdered their fathers or uncles...

KRAJESKI: Well, it wasn't always quite that violent, but yeah there's a lot of intrigue. There were a couple of palace coups, including one not so long before I got there, in Sharjah in which the Dubai crown prince Mohammad bin-Rashid, who is now the ruler of Dubai and the prime minister of the UAE, he backed I think it was the uncle of the current emir. My point is, even in '97 the emirates were still more than nominally independent of each other. It was very much like the relationship between Massachusetts and Pennsylvania in 1780. There was a connection; they considered themselves part of this new confederation. But there was a lot of jostling for position, a lot of jealousies. And you throw onto that the families, because each of the emirates is ruled by a separate family. Some of them related; the Qasimis in Sharjah and in Fujairah for example have a relationship. But the Maktoums in Dubai and the Al Nahyans in Abu Dhabi were sworn enemies for generations. They fought against each other. Not huge wars, you know what they were like. Somebody would kidnap somebody, somebody would be killed over water rights or smuggling rights; there'd be a little shooting going on, and then they'd reach an agreement. Somebody would marry somebody's cousin or daughter and patch things up. But up until the time I got there – I was quite surprised by this – Dubai had an independent army that answered only to the ruler of Dubai, not to Abu Dhabi. They did not allow UAE military into Dubai without special permission. There was a tiny navy contingent at Abu Dhabi. When I left in 2001, Dubai had dissolved its defense force into the UAE army. They had established an air force base which soon would have American F-16s in it, just outside the city of Dubai. And the navy presence at Port Jebel Ali had grown. In the course of those four years and certainly since, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have a much closer relationship.

I had to drive from Dubai to Abu Dhabi once a week for the country team meeting. Ambassador Ted Kattouf insisted that I come down.

Q: I interviewed Ted.

KRAJESKI: Ted and I had a complex relationship. Ted insisted I come down every Sunday for the country team meeting, which I did. The drive used to take about two or three hours, depending on the traffic and on whether or not you got stopped at the border point. There was a border point between Abu Dhabi and Dubai manned by customs and border officials. There were speed bumps in the road so you had to slow down as you went by; they rarely stopped anybody and it disappeared while I was there and they built this enormous six-lane divided highway and nowadays people whizz by at 100 miles per

hour, they drive fast. We had a close relationship with Abu Dhabi and I would say we had a closer, different-quality relationship with Dubai. Part of the balancing act I had as consul-general was both working for my ambassador and working for Washington as his deputy in Dubai, but also in placating the Dubaites that we also treated them special. We didn't treat them as underlings of Abu Dhabi. I would never have said this, but I was ambassador to Dubai – "I'm your main guy here." They rarely wanted to deal with the ambassador in Abu Dhabi which kind of ticked Ted off a little bit, and he didn't want me being an "independent operator." And then I had all the other emirates too. I have great stories of the other emirates that I will someday write. It was the last days of the old emirs there. You were there almost in the heyday of the emirs and the Saudis... it was all fading.

Q: The big issue when I was there was the Buraimi oasis, which the Saudis were claiming and I'm not sure who...

KRAJESKI: It was Abu Dhabi. They only resolved that when I was there, in '98, '99, they finally drew the border line. The Abu Dhabians used to have farms over the oasis, sucking the water out at an alarming rate, they really depleted the aquifer tremendously. They grew fruit and vegetables in the desert in order to lay claim to this land. My commercial officer, a really good guy named David Rundell, took me out there once. He was the commercial officer in Dubai and there was a big commercial office in Abu Dhabi. We went down to see these farms. They were growing tomatoes that were as big as pumpkins, and they were inedible – they had fertilizers or pesticides on them, so no-one would buy them. They would grow them, load them into trucks, take them into the desert and bury them. All to claim the oasis and its water. They finally did resolve it; oil was involved, too.

It was kind of fascinating to get there and the first thing you had to understand was this relationship between and among the families. The family for example, the sheikh in Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan bin-Mohammad al-Qasimi, he was very close to the Saudis. Because his emirate was not as wealthy as Dubai or certainly as Abu Dhabi – everybody was dependent on Abu Dhabi for money, even Dubai though they didn't like to take it then; they have since taken multi-billions from them. He had a close relationship with the Saudis in order to maintain some independence from Abu Dhabi, so they sent a lot of money his way and in return – it was a very dry state, the mosques had a lot of Wahhabis in them, it was a conservative place. It was spitting distance, it was like Arlington to Washington DC. There wasn't a river between them, it was like Arlington to Falls Church. Because the housing prices were so low in Sharjah compared to Dubai, a lot of folks lived in Sharjah (they've got very nice houses) and commuted to Dubai, where they worked. Ajman was kind of like Georgetown to Washington, DC. There's no border marking it, you literally walk across the dry stream – they weren't really streams – from Wahhabi Sharjah to Ajman to the liquor store run by a bunch of Indians in Ajman. It was 50 yards away to buy booze if you lived in Sharjah. Dubai of course was wide open, the sheikh in Dubai, Mohammed bin-Rashid, told me when I first arrived, "This is Dubai Inc., and I am the CEO (chief executive officer). You just watch what I'm going to do with this city." He had in his mayor's office, the mayor of Dubai, a very large room with

a panorama of Dubai. They would light the first section of it and there would be the mud huts you were talking about, along the creek, with the wind towers and the smuggling dhows, smuggling pearls and silver and diving for pearls.

Q: When I came there, the dhows were either sailing at high tide or were beached; dhows were built to be beached.

KRAJESKI: When were you there?

Q: It would be '58 to '60.

KRAJESKI: It was sometime around then that the Kuwaitis invested the first of their oil money - the Kuwaitis have had a close relationship with Dubai – in dredging the creek, to prevent this. They dredged a much deeper channel and then they built Port Rashid which was a modern port, right at the mouth of the creek. This might have been the early 1960s. I know it was the Kuwaitis who did it, flush with the oil cash of their oil boom. They dredged the creek and built the first modern port. That was really the start of commercial Dubai. They became not just a pearl and gold hub, but an entrepôt for Iran, for Iraq, for Saudi Arabia, even for Abu Dhabi. They had an open customs system, it was very much on world standards. They established a fairly high standard of care for the ships coming in. They offered good prices. The insurance companies came in and said “this is a good place to do business.” They very quickly – I’ll say late ‘60s, early ‘70s – began Jebel Ali, which is still today the largest port between Singapore and Rotterdam. I’m not sure if Jeddah – there’s another one that sort of competes with it for size.

They had a knack for business that stunned me. Mohammed bin-Rashid had a vision for how he was going to build this place. I spent a lot of time with him. Now of course he’s king of the world. In those days, he was still trying to make it and he wanted the United States as his commercial partner. Along with the usual security and oil interests, we had great commercial interests that were growing in Dubai and in the United Arab Emirates. Those were the pillars of our relationship with the UAE – military security, oil, and commerce/business. In the Middle East you don’t get much opportunity to work on the commercial side. I think Jeddah always had a reputation for being a commercial center in Saudi. But boy, Dubai stole Bahrain’s bacon – that’s the wrong metaphor for the Middle East, but they literally stole the business out from under Bahrain, which up until then had been the busiest commercial capital.

He [Sheik Mohamed] said to me, “I have two models for the city. My first is Singapore, and that’s all about ports and commerce and fair, honest government.” He was very strict on corruption when I was there. Like every place, a certain amount of corruption was tolerated, including in the United States of America. But boy, if you overdid it and it was for selfish reasons, Mohammed bin-Rashid would come crashing down on you. You’d find yourself out of work, you’d find yourself in jail, you might find yourself with welts from a camel stick across your back. You’d be exposed public ally, which of course in that part of the world is huge.

Q: This is about the Persian Gulf.

KRAJESKI: The Arabian Gulf, Khalij el-Arabi. If you're on that side of the Gulf, you do one of two things. Either call it the Arabian Gulf – our cartographers all say, “No it's the Persian Gulf.” Not to the Saudis and the Emiratis and the Bahrainis and the Omanis, it's the Arabian Gulf.

Q: When I was there they were pushing the Arabian Gulf, but it hadn't entered the vocabulary.

KRAJESKI: Like true diplomats, we simply hedged our bets and referred to it as “the Gulf”, to which some would smile at us and say, “You mean the Gulf of Mexico?” I'd say, “Naah, you know what I mean.”

Mohammed bin-Rashid said, “My models are Singapore, all about the ports and business and fair and honest government” – which for that part of the world was unusual, but he was very strict. His customs guys were well-trained and well-paid and if they took bribes they ended up in jail with a few camel stick welts across their back. That happened once or twice because there are lots of temptations in that part of the world, I guess everywhere.

His other model was Las Vegas. The city in the desert. Glitz, steel, glass, tourism. He brought in the golf and tennis tournaments, everything – they were mad for The Guinness Book of Records when I was there. They would take every opportunity to have the largest cake, the world's largest sofa, the world's largest chocolate chip cookie – anything they could do to get into the Guinness Book of Records. They built the world's tallest building after my time there. He was all about pushing that envelope.

Q: Where would they have a golf course?

KRAJESKI: They have about 10 of them out there now. When I was there, the Emirates Golf Club had two eighteens on it. They were designed by PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) professionals. They had the European tour come into Dubai once a year for the Desert Classic in February. It was like Palm Beach or Arizona, you think of the golf courses there, you fly over and it's all desert and suddenly you see this oasis of green in the middle of the desert. They got the water two ways. One was the aquifer, although the aquifer had been pretty much drained and was briny. The second way was through distilled sea water. They had an enormous desalination plant at Jebel Ali which produced all of the drinking water for the UAE, the bottled water. We all got our bottled water from there. They had excess, they produced so much they couldn't sell it. The only option was to dump it back into the sea, which is bad because it upsets – you could dump only a certain amount because of salinity. They had a huge aluminum plant; aluminum manufacturing requires huge amounts of water and electricity. They could produce electricity because of the oil and gas, so electricity's cheap. So converting your sea water to fresh water is cheap. Making aluminum – they shipped bauxite in from Australia and they'd run the aluminum trains in Dubai. Actually all – Bahrainis have got big aluminum

plants, the Saudis have big aluminum plants. Major producers. The excess water would go to irrigate the golf courses and the parks. Abu Dhabi is now one of the greenest cities in the world, not just in the Gulf. So many trees.

What happens when Iran decides they're going to take the Emirates, to take Dubai if this happens? What happens to those desal plants? It's really easy to shut down a desal plant; all you have to do is tow a barge of crude oil over the intake valves and dump it. The desal plant shuts down immediately, or else you lose the desal plant. It happened in Sharjah when I was there. It wasn't deliberate; smuggled Iraqi oil, bad weather, the barges were in bad shape and they always filled them to the brim with smuggled Iraqi diesel oil in '98, and it was a bad storm. Tipped over right near the intake valve. They had to shut down the intake valve near Sharjah. Sharjah had three days of water; that was their water supply. They ended up shipping water up from Dubai to drink. They had to turn off the taps.

The third way – and now this probably produces more water for things like golf courses and parks – that's recycled. Recycling water was still considered "dirty" when I was there in '97, '98. People didn't want to use it – it was from your toilet, it was sewage. Recently there have been recycling plants they were building out in the desert. They used enormous amounts of water because of the hotels and tourists – tourists take lots of showers, they don't conserve their towels even with the little signs in the rooms that say "Use your towels again." So they were producing enormous amounts of gray water from showers and sinks, and sewage. I remember this British guy coming to the sewage plant, we had tours of the sewage plant, sheiks where there, this modern plant the Brits had designed. There's the scene at the end of it, the output, this clear water, and he drinks a glass of it. And I thought the Emirati sitting next to me would throw up, he looked physically ill that this man would drink this water. I believe that attitude has changed now, and if they're not drinking it, they're certainly using it to irrigate their parks and golf courses, and they're probably using it for commercial and industrial uses as well.

Q: I had a cousin who used to say that drinking water here in Washington has probably been flushed at least three times.

KRAJESKI: Have another drink. All the atmosphere, everything, it's all part of us.

Q: Talking about living there. The prices must have been tremendous.

KRAJESKI: It wasn't bad. It was expensive to live there, we had a cost of living allowance to help. There was plentiful food and groceries. It wasn't too expensive to buy basics. Restaurants, there were a range from cheap to incredibly expensive. Everything from mid-town Manhattan to back-street Washington. That's an old comparison, Washington – you used to go up to U Street and get really cheap places. Like any great city in the world, you could find expensive ones, and good cheap ones. Housing prices were high, but they were building at such an astonishing rate. In those days, the population of Dubai was about 900,000. I think it bumped over a million. It's now over two million. He [Sheik Mohamed bin-Rashid] was anticipating this; "We're going to

double the population and triple the physical area in ten years.” And he did it. But that meant there were constantly nice housing complexes coming on the market. So prices weren’t bad if you were there renting. Interesting note – when my wife went to visit; we were in Cairo and she went on a school trip (she was a teacher) to Dubai for a sports tournament I think. She spent a day with my predecessor, a guy named David Pearce, who’s currently our ambassador in Athens. He took her out to dinner and was showing it [Dubai] to her and she said, “Jeez, David, where are the poor people?” And David said “In this car.” If you were poor, you weren’t allowed to live there. If you were Emirati, of course you weren’t poor.

Emiratis had guaranteed health care, education, housing – if you got married to another Emirati, you got land and a house. If you married somebody else, there was a lot of negotiation. Some people were independently wealthy, but this is from the government. And you got a job if you wanted a job. That was about 10% of the population of Dubai. The other 90% all had to work, and came from somewhere else. The great majority of them Iranian and Pakistani; there were more Pakistanis than Iranians. The Pakistanis would run the range from unskilled laborers living in labor camps in the desert and building buildings, to very wealthy businessmen. Ownership was difficult for a foreigner then. It’s now through various schemes – 99 year leases and other things – they can now own property pretty much. But if you got sick – if you were say managing a Pizza Hut...

Filipinos ran the Pizza Huts; it was interesting how the national groups would have certain sectors of the economy. Filipinos ran the Pizza Huts and Kentucky Fried Chickens and McDonald’s – of which there were many. The Indians were, kind of like the raj days, were the clerks and middle managers; every company had Indian managers, sometimes the chief manager would be Indian as well. Then there would be above that the Canadians, Australians, South Africans, Americans, and Brits – big contingent of Brits – who would be running the companies. Every American company that you could name that had an international aspect to it had an office in Dubai. Often it was its biggest office in the region. Now it is; in 1997 they were coming from Bahrain, out of Cairo, and just forming. So you had this atmosphere of making money; everybody’s making money. But with that the Las Vegas atmosphere with the huge golf tournaments – I got to meet Tiger Woods, to meet Colin Montgomery (if you play golf, these are big names), Ernie Els, they all came to play golf there. Tiger Woods got paid \$2 million just to show up and play. He almost won the tournament which would have been another \$1 million, he was really pissed off that he lost on the last hole to Ernie Els I think; maybe it was [Thomas] Bjorn, the Dane. The tennis tournament attracted the best tennis players in the world. It was always a lovely event.

One of the advantages of being consul-general was you got good tickets. I always paid for them, but you got really good seats. Every night – some nights we were going out to two or three events – receptions and dinners and tournaments, American company openings. It was a part of the Foreign Service I had never done before, the promotion of American business. And it was really fun. I played golf with the CEO of General Motors. I was a member of the American business council. Business, business, business.

Q: I would think between Dubai and Abu Dhabi there would be a lot of competition?

KRAJESKI: In those days, '97, in the commercial side of it, Dubai just overwhelmed Abu Dhabi. The Dubaites considered the Abu Dhabians, who they called the Abu Dumdums, to be not real smart, rural. The Beverly Hillbillies – often they'd been educated in the United States, if they knew the United States they called them that. "Oh they were just a Bedouin tribe grazing their camels and they saw this black stuff coming out of the ground and said, 'Oh golly, what's that' and they got rich." Obviously, that's a gross understatement. But there's a difference. The Abu Dhabians did not think business was something a sheikh should do. They looked down on the Dubaites because they muddied their hands in filthy lucre and commerce.

Q: Like the British.

KRAJESKI: The Abu Dhabians were much closer to the Brits than the Dubaites were. There was a great deal of jealousy on both sides, because the Abu Dhabians had all this money, just billions of dollars invested there. When I got there in '97, oil prices were \$12 a barrel, had plummeted from \$40 a barrel. It was a huge crisis, just like today seeing the price cut by half. One of our first tasks in the UAE out of Washington – one of the nice things by the way of being consul-general, Washington doesn't task you, they task the embassy, so I never had folks harassing me saying "We need X, Y, and Z." I would get it from the embassy. I remember there was a "How is this disastrous drop in oil prices going to affect the UAE economy?" Unemployment, etc. That was a big issue in Saudi. Anyway, it was a blip because they had invested billions in ADIA, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. They made more money from their investments than they did from oil. They owned office buildings in Phoenix, they owned farms in Germany, they owned ports in Korea. They put their money everywhere. And they had their own ports generating money. I remember a banker friend of mine in Dubai had a project in Dubai he was trying to finance. He was going around to different banks and individuals, saying "Invest in this project," a \$100 million development project in Dubai. He said, "It's so frustrating going to Abu Dhabi where they have money literally falling out of their windows and pockets, and they don't want to do it. I was with this one guy, and I said 'I guarantee you a 10% return in the first year and we can go to 20 and 30% if it takes off.' Who wouldn't take an investment that guarantees 10%?" And he said they said, "I have enough money, I'm not interested in more money, I'm sorry."

That changed while I was there a little bit, because the sheikh in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed, who was in his 80s and dying, embraced Mohammad bin-Rashid, with whom they had formed the United Arab Emirates in 1972 I think [December 1971]. When Rashid died, Mohammad bin-Rashid as often happens in these societies became Zayed's son, and he called himself "Zayed's son." Zayed said to the other of the Nahyans, "This guy knows business. Instead of investing in Phoenix, Arizona, let's invest in Dubai." So a lot of Abu Dhabi money started to come in. Abu Dhabi itself has become really huge capital, lots of hotels and different attractions, competing with Dubai. So it was business.

The second part of being in Dubai was the Navy, it was the first time I worked really closely with the U.S. Navy, an organization that's really remarkable. Of all the services, they're my favorite, partly because I dealt so much with them in Dubai and then again in Bahrain in my last tour. Jebel Ali was the only port in the Gulf where a carrier could come up quay-side and drop its whatever it's called. And the sailors could just walk off, go into town. The town was very welcoming, they had movie theaters and restaurants. Liquor, girls. The last two...

Q: Where'd they get the girls?

KRAJESKI: All over the place. Mostly Russians, Ukrainians. Remember, this is 1997; the Russians were roaring into Dubai literally with bags full of money. I had to buy a car when I first arrived there, and I wanted to buy a Ford – I'm the American consul-general, I'm going to buy a Ford and drive an American car. It's desert, I wanted to go driving in the desert a little bit, so I bought a Ford Explorer. Big four-wheel-drive truck. I went to the Ford dealer and like you always do you look at the sticker price, you talk to them, you kick the tires. You say, "OK what's your best offer?" And he said, "That's my best offer." I said, "No, no, no, come on – that's the sticker price. Where are we?"

He said, "No, no, you don't understand. Tomorrow a Russian will come in and he will have \$400,000 in \$100 bills in gym bags, and he'll put them on the table and he'll say, 'I want 10 Ford Mustangs and 10 Ford Explorers' and he doesn't care what the cost is. And he'll say, 'I want them delivered to the port on this day to be on a ship to go back to Russia.'" They were nuts. This was all the oligarchs cashing in on the collapse of the Soviet Union. In addition to that, you would have in – and I knew the head of the airport very well, he runs Emirates (Air), Sheikh Ahmed, and he was also the manager of Dubai International Airport, which was doubling in size. I knew him well because Bechtel had the contract to build that big terminal, and we had other American companies out there. And he wanted to buy Boeings, and he had Boeing and Airbus always in his office. He'd have the British consul-general in one day and me in the next day, lots of fun. At the airport once, I was sitting out there with Sheikh Ahmed, and he was really involved in the airport – he loved it. And he said, "Look at this plane over here;" it was Russian, not an Antonov, one of these converted bombers to passenger planes. I've flown on them before, an Ilyushin. There's about 250 people on it, and you could see – this was before the new terminal had been built, so people would get off on a gangway then into a bus. We were looking out his window, and out of the bus is just woman after woman after woman; young, blond, nice-looking woman after woman. They're carrying bags with them. Bags about this big, round, just very simple looking gym bags.

Q: Like duffel bags.

KRAJESKI: Yeah, duffel bags. He said, "Those bags are stuffed with \$100 bills. The women will have a list of things they have to buy while they're in Dubai. Twenty Maytag washers. Thirty-five Sanyo VCRs. One Ford Mustang. They'll have a list, and they'll have the money in the bag from their sponsors in Moscow to buy. They get a one-month visa to stay in Dubai. They stay in one of the two-, three-, four-stars, sometimes the five-

star hotels depending on the class of trade. And they'll work the hotel for a month and make their own money, and then they'll take that money and buy Maytags and Mustangs. So they'll have a portion of the loot. Then a month later, a big Antonov freighter will come in; they'll load all the goods onto it, the women go back to Moscow and everybody makes tons of money."

And Sheik Ahmed looked at me and said, "Especially us!" (Laughter)

Smuggling, I talked about smuggling. In those days we were trying to stop smuggling of Iraqi diesel oil. It would be produced in their refineries in Basra and then – diesel oil was very close to crude, it was one step away from crude. But it was the first burnable oil you can use, as Volkswagen did, burning diesel. The sanctions were very strict; you could not purchase Iraqi oil products. You could not deal in it at all; it all had to be done in the UN program, in which the money went for food – the Oil-for-Food Programme of the 1990s that was set up under the sanctions regime after the Kuwait war. They were breaking down. There would be these rogue oilers, tankers – small ones – would go up to Basra, fill up with Iraqi diesel oil. If you know the contours of the land, you can skirt the southern border of Iran without going into international waters. Our ships, our Navy ships were out there lurking, and if they went into international waters, we could stop them. "Smuggled Iraqi oil, we're confiscating the oil, you're going to be arrested," blah blah blah. You only had to be in international waters for like 100 yards. Then you go to the Iranian coast, stop at one of the ports in Iran. Either off-load the oil into another ship, or for a price the Iranians would give you the papers that said, "This is Iranian diesel." Then you would – it was an hour or two from Iranian waters to... (Consults maps) You'd come in at Basra up here, which is where the refineries are. Then you'd skip right around here you'd have to go in international waters – it's really treacherous sailing here, we just had a U.S. small Navy ship that the Iranians took because they went into Iranian waters here. Then you scooted along in through here, and somewhere around here you could do the paper or ship switch, then you went bang across to Dubai, to Ajman where the pirates were big. Or to Ras al-Khaimah, but the port wasn't very good. It was Ajman and Dubai, and sell your diesel oil.

One of my first jobs, the first demarche I ever delivered as a diplomat was a set of talking points to Sheikh Mohammed bin-Rashid that he had to stop this trade, that Dubai was one of the points of sale of the smuggled oil. It was illegal under international law, under the UN sanctions regime, and he was responsible for stopping it. His oil minister was this old British guy, Michael Barkley, one of the old British generals who still survived. He took me out afterwards, and I thought he was going to beat me up. He's a big guy – he was old, and I was younger. But he was really pissed off at me, that I had treated the sheikh with such disrespect. The sheikh could have cared less because the sheikh was going to do it anyway. He said, "It's Iranian oil." And I said, "It's not." We had chemists – I learned a lot of things. I'm sure you know this from your days there; you can analyze gasoline here and determine where the oil to produce the gasoline came from. You can tell "That's Nigerian oil, from this oil field." So we could tell, this was Iraqi oil. We analyzed it. I would bring these little vials – the State Department gave me these little

vials, little test tubes with a cork in it filled with Iraqi diesel, that I could bring around with me and demonstrate. We had chemists that could show it.

After that I went to see the head of customs, who was in charge of the port, because we're going to stop this trade. And I put the vials on his desk. First he took out a big box of Cuban cigars and asked if I wanted one. (Laughter) Then he had a big bag of Iranian pistachios, which I'm told are the best pistachios in the world, which were also forbidden items for me. He put them on there and said, "This is a little present for you, Tom." And the box of Cubans is probably a \$500 box of cigars, and in those days I smoked cigars. And he said, "So tell me about this oil." I'm looking at three forbidden, smuggled items in front of me, and he said, "Here's my point. Come with me down to the old port" – the port you may have seen along the creek, the old dhow trading port. They had done a great job of rebuilding it in 1997. It was kind of a tourist attraction, but it was also still an active port for the dhows that went across from Dubai up to Iran. They would go to Pakistan, to Kuwait, elsewhere. But everybody knew their main customers were in Iran. He said, "Here's this big dhow. Look what he's putting on the dhow." He's putting on Marlborough cigarettes. Johnny Walker – green label, not quite as expensive as blue label, but way above black label, so it's good scotch whiskey, cases of this. And Pampers diapers – these lift vans filled with baby diapers, all being loaded onto his dhow. And he [the customs director] said, "Tom, are you seriously going to tell us that that's smuggling? Are you seriously going to tell us that pistachios and cigars are smuggling?" He said, "Look, you need to understand" – this is the head of customs who fell out of favor, got involved in a scam with the Pakistanis a year later, ended up with camel welts on his back and fired. He said, "This is Dubai. Welcome to Dubai. Here in Dubai we have smuggling and illegal smuggling. Smuggling is trade. Illegal smuggling is drugs, weapons, and people. THAT we'll work with you side by side to stop. The rest of this? It's just business."

Anyway, the other thing in Dubai was the Navy. The ships would come into Jebel Ali regularly. We could have 7000 sailors on the streets of Dubai on a Saturday night. NCIS (Naval Criminal Investigative Service) was busy, although I was always amazed at how well behaved these kids were. And they are kids; the average age on an aircraft carrier was 20, when I was there. And there were 5000 people on an aircraft carrier! Though they wouldn't all come in at once. And NCIS had a deal. NCIS would go out to the ship as it was coming in – I had four NCIS officers who worked at the consulate with me; they're not at all like the television show by the way, I don't know where they got the television show but it's nothing like the NCIS I ever worked with. They would fly out to the carrier on a helicopter, come in with the pilot, and they would have meetings with all the ship's company and say basically, "You get in trouble in Dubai, and we'll get you out of jail. But you'll come back on the ship and you won't see the light of day until you get back to Everett or Norfolk" – the two main ports of call for carriers coming back here, home ports. And the captain and the admiral and the execs would all be there, saying "Listen to this guy. If you get arrested in Dubai, you will not see Singapore. You will not see Perth" (and they loved Perth); "You will not see" – what's this one in Italy, if they were going through the Atlantic on the way home, there was one...

Q: Naples?

KRAJESKI: Might have been Naples?

THIRD PERSON: Sardinia?

KRAJESKI: Actually, it was Sardinia where the Navy would call. These were apparently fabulous liberty ports, where they had a good time. So they had a deal, they said to the kids, "If your object is to drink" – because they can't drink on ship, that's forbidden; British navy thinks that's nuts that the American navy won't allow its sailors to drink. "If your object is to get off the ship and get hammered and drink as much beer as you possibly can," they set up what they called the sandbox right there at Jebel Ali. It was a huge area – two or three football fields. It had vendors, it had a Pizza Hut and an amusement park. And it had lots of bars set up, all run by the USO (United Services Organization), supervised by the USO. They had carpet dealers, knick-knack dealers, silver and gold dealers. And they said, "Just stay right here. When you've had too many beers, your buddies will drag you up to the ship and put you to bed, and that's cool. But if you go into town" – they had shuttle buses, Jebel Ali was about 10 miles south of the city, so they had shuttle buses going into the city all the time – "if you go into town, you get two beers. That's it." If you're an officer, you were allowed to stay in a hotel. They had one sailors' club at the old Port Rashid, run by these two Brits, a man and a woman who rode around on Harley-Davidsons all the time, they had a big Harley-Davidson club there. And they were allowed to have a little bit more there because they had special shuttles that would go from this bar back to the ship, and NCIS would be there. The only problem they had was this was an international bar, and if a British ship was in port, the Brits and Americans would be drinking together and there'd be a fight. If there was a French ship in port, the French and the British would be drinking together and there'd be a near war. If it was French, British, and Americans, the bar owners said "We close down, we can't have the three of them in here." Sailors are sailors still.

For the Navy it was a hugely important port. They could get anything they wanted there, they could restock. They would get – 5000 people, four meals a day. They would go out for two or three weeks, into the Gulf and then come back again. So imagine stocking the galleys for 5000 people, four meals a day. They have the midnight meal – usually sailors had three meals a day, but if you're 20 years old and you're capable of eating four, you'd eat four. They worked their butts off, they worked 12 hour shifts. The Gulf is 120 degrees. I have been on the flight deck of a carrier, watching flight ops and these kids – I'll call them kids – are amazing. The discipline, the hard work. They come into Dubai, folks are having fun, and they're stocking the ship. The providers in Dubai loved the U.S. Navy – what a great customer. Twenty-thousand dozens of eggs, boom, delivered tomorrow, no problem. They could get their most sophisticated machinery offloaded and shipped out to be fixed. F-18 engines. They would do crew switches there, new crews would fly in and have relief there. Jebel Ali was really important to the Navy, and the Navy was important to Jebel Ali. It was not their biggest customer by any means, but first of all we were a good customer, and second we had lots of guns, and the sheikh said, "That's my security. You guys are my security, I want you here." Every time I saw him

he'd say, "Tell me what the American business community wants, and tell me what the Navy wants."

Q: Right across the straits was Iran. How did they live with Iran? First place, at least in my time on Bahrain, there was terrible concern about too many Iranians illegally coming in, tipping the balance. How are things going?

KRAJESKI: Of course, this is post-revolution now. Attitudes in the Gulf changed dramatically, particularly after the mullahs decided they were going to export Shia doctrine around the Arab world. But in Dubai, like so many things in Dubai they had this ability to have a bifurcated attitude, whether it was smuggling or Iran. As I mentioned earlier, of the million people approximately in Dubai in 1998, there were probably 250,000 who were Iranian. Some of those (very few) may have gotten citizenship. Some of them had been there for a couple of generations and were very well established in business. The great majority of them still had very close ties to the mainland. Iranian businessmen flew into Dubai constantly on business. Dubai continued to be Iran's entrepôt, some folks called it Iran's Hong Kong. It wasn't anywhere near that kind of a relationship, but Dubai was very important as a trading entry and exit point for Iran. Which caused us great difficulties because of our own sanctions. Most of our sanctions on Iran were bilateral sanctions, not international. While we forbid our companies from doing business in Iran and we forbid the sale of Iranian carpets (until Madeleine Albright decided she wanted one, we changed the law – that's not fair to Madeleine Albright but she really did want a Persian carpet, and they did change the law), the Europeans and the others were not as concerned about it. Certainly the Dubaites weren't, they considered it a legitimate business. They didn't trust or like the mullahs...

Q: Were the mullahs or fervent Iranian nationalism awash in your area?

KRAJESKI: No, no. I never saw any of that in Dubai. If it ever bubbled up, whoever was responsible for the bubbling would be put on a boat and pushed across the Gulf. There was zero tolerance for political opposition, for any kind of populist – whatever that population might be, whether it was the laborer population from Bangladesh, the business from Iran – if you didn't bring politics into business, you're OK.

Q: Were you concerned with monitoring Iranian business?

KRAJESKI: We were, but even more so today, we were the window on Iran. This is the third leg of the stool of our reason for being in Dubai, and that was Iran watchers. I had three fluent Farsi speakers on my staff. I was supposed to be a Farsi speaker too, but as I mentioned I had decided Arabic was more important to my career and to my work in the Emirates, so I focused on Arabic and pushed the Farsi away. As I mentioned before, if you do both of them, they're very closely connected. Farsi is frankly easier than Arabic. Anyway, I had Allen Eyre – and if you happened to watch the last year of negotiations with Iran over the nuclear non-proliferation issues, Allen Eyre is in the picture frequently. He is an amazing linguist. He grew up like in Poughkeepsie, New York. Didn't start his Farsi until much later in life, but is absolutely native fluent. May have been his second

assignment in Dubai, he was a visa officer. His main job was meeting and greeting the Iranian population. Most of them came to our visa window. It was easiest, as far as logistics, visa post for an Iranian who wanted to go to the United States, so we had a lot of Iranians every day.

Q: What would we do with those? Were we giving visas?

KRAJESKI: Oh yes, we would issue visas. I don't recall the percentage, I would be surprised if it was more than 50%. Iranians in my experience are very savvy people, very sophisticated particularly regarding government bureaucracy and regulation. They started it all with Darius, and they can out-bureaucrat the Brits. Somebody said that's the main problem in places like Iraq, you had the old Persian bureaucrats, then the Ottomans came in, then the Brits, so. In my experience they can quickly suss out what is necessary and then decide whether they can provide it, or fake it. And so [there were] a lot of the people who made that trek – and it was expensive. First you had to make an appointment well in advance; we had an appointment system in which an Iranian in Tehran or wherever had to, through email, it wasn't on-line, had to set up an appointment for a day often a couple of months in advance, to come to Dubai and apply for a visa. And [pay the] application fee and an approval fee. If you got the visa, you had to pay more money. If you didn't get the visa, you still had the application fee, you didn't get it back. That aggravated people. It's quite expensive now, think it's \$150, \$180 to apply for a U.S. visa. So the majority of our visa applicants were Iranian. I had Farsi speaking officers. It was a great opportunity to talk to people who lived in Iran. We had foolishly cut diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980, only because they captured 45 of our diplomats and held them for a year-and-a-half. Whenever you break diplomatic relations, it's always a bad decision.

Q: It struck me that of all the stupid things in diplomacy, if you're really out of sorts with a country and rip out your ambassador and diplomats, go into a huff, it's childish.

KRAJESKI: You stop talking to them. They do it to us sometimes, too. But it's easy to do, and really hard to recover from it. We still don't have relations with Iran, 36 years later.

Q: Were your visa officers sending out reports on conditions in Iran?

KRAJESKI: Oh yes, that's why we had them there. Two of them worked the visa line and worked with the political officer who also spoke – actually I had a second guy, spoke fluent Farsi; first guy didn't speak much at all. With the community that lived there, they generated contacts with the community with the visa interviews. Plus just sitting with somebody who's a merchant in Shiraz whose brother in law lives in Los Angeles or "Tehrangeles" as they called it, and he's a surgeon and his sister's pregnant and he's going to bring his sister for the delivery; a very common story. But you could sit for 10 minutes with him and ask him, in Farsi, about life in Shiraz. Very legitimate questions – "What is your business? How much money do you make? Can I see your bank accounts? Have you traveled before? Do many people in your community travel? Does your government allow you to travel to the United States? Do you get in trouble if you leave

Iran? If you come back to Iran?” Often you could just ask right out – Iranians can be quite outspoken, including in criticism of their government. I don’t know if it’s less so or more so now than in 1997, after their little Green Revolution a couple of years ago, I think it’s clamped down a bit. A lot of them – like a young woman going to graduate school in the United States, or going to see her sister, who’s pregnant. A very common theme, it was true in my family too, that first baby – moms came, aunts came, sisters came, everybody came to help my wife deliver her first baby. In the Arab world, the Persian world, the mother – you almost couldn’t turn her down for a visa, because she’s going to go help her daughter with the new baby.

So we would learn a lot. We were called the window on Iran. Now there’s a big office there, still part of the consulate but a separate physical building... I think, now with the new consulate maybe they’ve combined them. I’m not sure how many folks are there, I think it’s around eight, 10 people in our Iranian office in Dubai. That was a big part of it. I met a lot of Iranians there. Ate Iranian food, including Iranian pistachios – they’re terrific. I also bought the carpets, but only after it was allowed. We’d go down to the souk – great carpets at the souks in Dubai, and the most beautiful carpets in my view were Persian. We’d go and look at them, then say, “No, no, no.” We weren’t forbidden to buy them, just forbidden to bring them to the United States. Couldn’t import them into the U.S. So the dealer would say, “Don’t worry, we know you’re Americans, we’ll mark this as Afghan or Pakistani or Turkish, we’ll fix it up.” But I said, “The customs guys are smarter than that, they can tell a Shiraz from an Isfahani, a Persian from a Turkish, they can tell.” But it was while I was there that it became legal to import carpets, pistachios, and caviar. We in turn were allowed to sell agricultural goods to Iran. We had the regional agricultural office in Dubai. It opened things up. It didn’t go very far. In fact, the reason I took my next job is I thought we were going to open an embassy in Tehran. When I left Dubai in 2001, they persuaded me to be the deputy on the Iran/Iraq desk.

Q: Did you get involved in any of the shipping incidents, the Gulf of Hormuz and all that?

KRAJESKI: When I was there, the *Cole* was attacked in Aden harbor and nearly sunk. It was fascinating; you know the dredges to float the *Cole*? There are only like six of these ships in the world; they’re Norwegian built I believe, enormous ships that they sink next to the damaged ship. They pull the damaged ship on it, and then they refloat this ocean-going barge to bring it back to the United States to be repaired - which it was. Indeed, 10 years later I flew out from Aden port out to the *Cole* on its first run after it had been repaired; the attack was in 2000. One of these barges was always stationed in the Gulf because of the enormous number of ships in the Gulf. We had everything that came through Jebel Ali because of the shipping. The port was amazing. They couldn’t take the largest container ships in the world because they only had one channel into Jebel Ali which they had to dredge all the time. It was one way, it wasn’t big enough for the monster container ships. But the smaller ones – enormous ships, filled with containers. Have you ever watched a container ship being unloaded? And the containers put onto the port? The container ship stays there 10 hours maximum. It’s unloaded, then it’s gone. The merchantmen that I knew complained bitterly about it, they said “You don’t see anything but the inside of the ship for six months” as they sailed around the world. “You

don't have any ports of call, nothing. If the ship isn't moving, it's not making money." The captains make their money on how fast they get the containers off and back on again and how fast they get back to sea again. Jebel Ali was brilliant. It's all computerized. In advance they knew exactly which containers were on ship, which ones were coming off, which ones on the dock are going on. You've seen the sliding cranes, picking them up.

Another reason they value the U.S. Navy is because it keeps the Straits of Hormuz open. There was a scare while we were there – the Iranians are constantly threatening mining, and they did mine it in the 1980s. When they do that, the insurance companies tick up the insurance rate for the freighters one or two percent, so it goes up from one or two percent to four or five percent, which makes it much more expensive for that shipping company to bring stuff into Dubai, so they would stay out of the Straits of Hormuz and go to Salalah, to Aden although Aden was hopeless. I spent three years in Yemen trying to make Aden an acceptable port. Or they were going up to Jeddah, which was increasingly a more modern port, rather than go through the Straits of Hormuz. That happened once when I was there, the rates went up and believe me, everybody stops – all action stopped, while they worked with the insurance companies. Lloyds of London is at the forefront of this. Still. It's a Scottish guy who was their representative in Dubai. I forget the incident; it might have been the *Cole* bombing because suddenly everybody clamped down. This Scot, he was king of Dubai. Like all Scots, scrupulously honest, but he could have made a lot of money getting the rates back down again.

Q: Did you have any contact with Iranian diplomats, on the side?

KRAJESKI: There are very formal affairs, as there are around the world, some more formal than others. But the Arabs loved the formality of diplomacy. They were always "Your excellency," and diplomats were treated as some kind of special being. You have the national days. The national days, when I first started going, Fourth of July, every country has a national day. They have a huge party to celebrate it. Flags, anthems are played, gifts are given, the host government has a guest who cuts the cake with a sword. All the consuls or all the ambassadors come and stand behind the cake, get our picture taken. You eat and drink if you care to, though after a while you just want to get out. But it's very formal. In Dubai, our seating was formalized. They relished the fact that the Iranian consul-general had come the day before, had arrived and introduced himself to each of the sheikhs like a week or a day before me. So in the pecking order, he was right next to me, so they would always sit the Iranian guy next to me. And the newspaper guys would come and take pictures. We were allowed then – and remember, we tried to warm to Iran. When Khatami was elected president in 1997 there was a sense that maybe we can make progress with Iran. Albright and Clinton had a plan for opening, and pistachios and carpet were a part of it. We had a wrestling team go, wrestling matches. So I was allowed to say hello to him, "Saalam, how are you?" I could talk about football – and in '98 the United States and Iran played in the World Cup, and they beat us. He was very happy about that. I could ask him about their children, he could ask me about my children. That was the extent of it. Also they would love to put the Libyan on the other side of me, too, though that had nothing to do with the pecking order, it was just to annoy me. So I'd have the Libyan and the Iranian on each side of me. They thought it was the

most fun to do this. But otherwise I had no formal contact with Iranian diplomats. There were a lot of Iranian businessmen there and I knew quite a few of them, including many who lived in Iran and in Dubai. My staff knew even more of them. Inevitably, there were lots of Iranian intel guys as well, and we had (ahem) their equivalents with us, and there was a great game, almost the way the Russians and we played it...

Q: Spy vs. spy.

KRAJESKI: No. Occasionally we would all become very wrapped up in a particular operation that was going on. There was visa fraud among the Iranians. We had an Iranian visa clerk working in the consulate, a lovely woman, Farsi speaker obviously, probably 39 years old, three children, been there for eight years. And we uncovered a fraud in my second year there. The way the process worked, and it's different from when you were there and it's different now – they come in, present all their documents to the interview, then all of the approved visas would be run through clearances and approved for printing. At that point, there would be stacks of passports and applications, and it was the consul's job, the American's job, to look at every application, match it to the passport, make sure every visa was accurately printed, and that the application had been reviewed and approved. Some consuls were lax. Actually, it was a WAE (while actually employed) guy we had in for the summer, filling in while my regular consul was on home leave. I don't think he was involved in it, but at the end of the day he'd just say to the visa clerk, "All these have been checked, right?" And she'd say, "They've all been checked," and he'd say, "Approved." And all of them would be approved. He did this a number of times, and she noticed it. She started taking in applications and sort of approving her own visas for a price for Iranians in town. We don't think there was anything involved with intel or terrorism, it was just basically money-making. They were mostly men, probably 40 or 50 cases. I wanted to throw her in jail; I felt very badly about this. I wanted to go after the consul. I won't say his name, but he continued to get WAE jobs. DS did a big investigation, we had the whole works going on.

Q: WAE means "when actually employed," in other words a part-time worker.

KRAJESKI: Especially in consular – for a good retired consular officer, they can get all the work they want around the world. Not always in pleasant places. Especially in the summer time while people are on leave, I know a number of my colleagues in the consular cone who retired, go off for a month and take over a consular section or help out somewhere. They like it a lot, get to see different places. But this particular guy? I saw him only recently, here on the grounds of FSI, about two years ago.

Anyway, the Iranian angle was very big in Dubai, and still is. The American businessmen I knew there were just champing at the bit, they were so anxious to do business in Iran. They saw it as an enormous opportunity. Particularly the guys in the oil sector, of which there were many. All the big oilfield companies, Schlumberger, Halliburton, they were all in Dubai and saw this enormous opportunity. Boeing was going nuts, they wanted to sell planes to Iran so badly. "Why are we letting Airbus sell them planes when we can't sell planes?" It looked like in 1998, '99, it was going to break and we were going to let them

do it. The guys I used to play golf with every week, they would just harangue me. They would ask me things like, “How about if my number two, who’s an Indian, goes to Tehran and looks around?” I’d say, “Well what is he looking around for?” “Oh you know, the lay of the land”... In case his business – which was illegal, he worked for an American company, he couldn’t do it. I’d tell him...

There was a big American community and they saw Iran and Iraq as huge possibilities for future markets. Their biggest market had been Kuwait after the liberation of Kuwait, because the Kuwaitis spent billions rebuilding. Business, the Navy, and Iran were the three major parts of the job in Dubai.

Q: What was your social life like?

KRAJESKI: I wore a tuxedo once a week! You buy one for the Marines’ birthday, the formal. I had two of them made in Dubai, I was wearing them out. They’re awfully uncomfortable – my wife would say, “Yeah, you wear high heels and a bra and tell me how uncomfortable this thing is!” But tuxedos are not comfortable clothes. There were nights where I had two receptions and two dinners. Bonnie would not usually go with me to the receptions unless there was somebody she really liked. She was a teacher, she was teaching fifth grade in Dubai and teachers work harder than anybody I know. She didn’t want to go out at night; she had to do lesson plans and get up in the morning and go teach. I had my driver – fortunately the consul-general had a car and a driver. So Haji would take me, we would literally, like a military unit, plan the night. “OK, we’re going to go to the German pharmaceutical reception, I’ll stay there for 30 minutes, at this hotel – “we knew the hotels, Haj knew them all – “and I’m going to go through the front door, shake hands with everybody, have a soda water, sneak out through the kitchen, you pick me up in the back.” And I’d jump in the car and we’d go to the German national day at a different hotel, and I’d try to time it right for when the chief guest got there, so the chief guest saw you, shook hands. You shook hands with enough people so you got critical mass. You can do it very quickly, you always made sure you had a drink. If they gave you alcohol, I would pour it out because if you started drinking at the first one, by the time you got to the fourth one, you were done.

The dinners were harder, because you had to eat. If you had more than one dinner, well that’s probably where I got this [my belly] and kept it. It’s hard to refuse to eat when the Iranian host has made a special rice with a lovely golden crust on it “Just for you because we know how much you love Persia” – I don’t know where they got that. And the food is delicious. When Arabs eat, the table is laden. They do not believe in serving a plate at a time. You walk into the dining room and the table is filled with food. You sit down. If you’re at all an important guest, the host will start serving you and filling your plate with the best pieces of the lamb. And you eat and if you dare to eat it all, you get a lot more – eventually you learn you have to leave your plate half-full or even full so they won’t give you any more. And as Americans growing up, the clean-plate club, “children in China are starving, you must eat everything,” it was really hard for me to leave a plateful of food. We would go out – Bonnie would go out two times a week, I would go out five or six nights a week. Some of these were galas. And they were great fun!

The opening of the Burj Al Arab, which is that big hotel that looks like a sail in Dubai? It's one of the showpieces now of Dubai, when you see a postcard you see the big sail. It opened when I was there. The top suite, the royal suite, went for \$25,000 a night. It was twice the size of my house in Dubai – and I had a nice house in Dubai. It was bigger. The sultan of Brunei and his wife took it for a year. Sheikh Mohammed wouldn't let him do it. They said, "We'll pay full price, \$25,000 a night, one year, we want that suite for whenever the sultana wants to go to Dubai to shop. It'll be hers." He said, "No, other people are going to live there, too." So she had to take one of the lower suites – there was the presidential suite and the emir's suite, they were somewhat smaller, she had to take one of those. When Jimmy Carter came to visit, he agreed to stay at the Burj Al Arab – the sheikh was always trying to talk – Al Gore came, Cohen the secretary of defense came two or three times, Secretary of State Albright came – he always wanted them to stay in the Burj Al Arab, this was his pride and joy. I would take the advance team up to the presidential suite, which is what they would offer Secretary Cohen. Free of charge, by the way – a real problem. And we'd get a little tour, the advance team. I'll never forget, one tour, one of the first ones. You go in – incredibly ornate with real gold filigree, it's just beautiful if you like that sort of thing. This guy took us in, we're going on a tour of this wonderful place, we're going to have meetings here – and here's the private bedroom. An enormous room, with a circular bed in the room. This very large Emirati, kind of a chunky guy, sat on the bed and said, "This is a great bed, it's very strong." He had us all kind of sitting on the edge of the bed. And then he started vibrating the bed, and then the bed turns. Then he said, "Look up" and the curtains opened and there's a giant mirror on the ceiling. I looked over, I think this was Gore's advance lead, and I said, "What do you think? Washington Post test?" (Laughter) We were laughing so hard. And they were serious – they wanted the vice president of the United States to stay in a vibrating, rotating bed with a mirror in the ceiling!

We declined. We stayed at the Sheraton I believe, which is a really lovely hotel and everybody was happy about it. But I'll never forget that tour. In the lobby of the Burj they had these fountains designed by Disney animators, colored water fountains with music – this is inside the building. The fountain would go up 100 feet up in the air, unbelievable. They had a submarine ride in the bottom, to go to one of the restaurants. It was kind of like a marina, it was a fish restaurant. We went a couple of times. You would go into a room and then you would enter Jules Verne's submarine. You'd have a guide dressed as Jules Verne. They would strap you into your seats and the screens would come up and the You'd go underwater and see the squids and the octopuses. It was a Disney ride. Basically all the submarine did was turn 90 degrees and open into the restaurant in the hotel. It was unbelievable. But that was Dubai.

Q: Did they have the indoor ski place?

KRAJESKI: It was not there when I was there. That was nothing but desert. The golf course where I played golf was a little down the road. When I was in Bahrain I went back, the last time was about 2012 or 2013. Still have friends there. It's three times as big, three times as glitzy. We would always ask – every consul-general who worked

there, they still do, a week in and they'd bring the commercial officer in, the political officer in, bring the economic officer in, and say "OK, tell me when this bubble is going to burst and how bad is it going to be? Because this is unsustainable!" David Rundell was the commercial guy, Pat Heffernan was political and they would run off and talk to the businesses and bankers and they would say "It's not going to burst. This is based on good, solid investment and they've got the best companies in the world." And, as they discovered in 2008 when it almost did collapse because of the financial crisis, they've got Abu Dhabi to back them up. If Abu Dhabi will write them a \$4 billion check which is the estimates for what they wrote in 2008, they've got no problems.

Last story on Dubai. We had been going out almost every night. We had lovely friends, we used to camp in the desert a lot, which is kind of nice, to get out of the city. I played a lot of golf, that's really where I learned to play golf. We did a little sailing, but sailing in the Gulf is not that interesting.

Q: Did you find that Washington paid that much attention to you?

KRAJESKI: They paid attention because it's business. Because Bechtel had contract disputes. Not over the airport, they had some smaller ones over the terminal. What I discovered too out there is these guys will write the biggest contracts, the sheikhs. The airport was \$650 million, which in those days was real money, to build that first terminal. If you've been to Dubai now I think there are three of them that look somewhat like what the first one did. First one cost \$650 million and Bechtel designed and built it. At the end of the contract, they would not pay for things like escalators. Bechtel would put the escalators in, the bill would go in – it wouldn't get paid. They wouldn't pay for the brass railing in the underground walkway. The Bechtel guys would go nuts, "Why are you nickel and diming us at the end of a \$650 million contract?" And I was never really sure why, except they could.

They also had Magic World, Bechtel designed – they wanted to have an amusement park based on Disney World. They have one now, but in 1997, '98 all they had was the plan. The plan that Bechtel built for them for this amusement park called Magic World cost \$25 million for the model, about the size of this room. Then they had all of the specs for the plan. That design was \$25 million, and the sheikh decided not to build it. He had somebody come to him and say, "You know, it's 120 degrees in the summertime. When the kids don't have school, it's going to be really hard to persuade people to go to an outdoors amusement park in the summer in Dubai." They since got around that by having most of it indoors and by having these amazing water spritzers – you don't feel the water when you walk through them, but it's 20-30 degrees cooler as you walk through the area. But he decided not to do it, and decided not to pay Bechtel for the plans. So, yeah, when Steve Bechtel gets upset you have half the members of Congress and the administration saying, "You better make sure Bechtel gets what he wants." So I spent a lot of time with the sheikh and his guys saying, "You've got to pay Bechtel." There were probably a dozen companies in the same situation. Sometimes the company's fault, sometimes the government's. That's when I paid attention to.

When the *Cole* was attacked, we had the FBI investigation in Dubai. Where the *Cole* was bombed, they dredged the seabed under it for evidence; pieces of the bomb, of the ship, other things. They took all that dredge, which was mostly sand and rock and crap, put it onto barges, and took it up to Dubai where the FBI has special teams that sifted through it all to find pieces of the bomb (which they found) and to find pieces of the ship, pieces of bodies as well.

So yeah, a little bit. Mostly Abu Dhabi got Washington, which made Ted Kattouf very grumpy and he's a grumpy guy anyway. He thought I was having way too much fun up at Dubai. He would come up every chance he could because he wanted to have fun, too. That was the nature of it. I loved being consul-general. I've never been DCM. The consul-general is considered kind of the equivalent, but it's much better. The DCM gets all the work, as you know. The DCM's the hardest-working person in the embassy. Ambassador's off representing and being an ambassador, everybody else has their own little piece of it, and the DCM's responsible for it all. If you're an ambassador, you've got to have a good DCM. So I had the authority of running my own office, and we had about 35 Americans in Dubai – bigger than a lot of embassies. And it was mine. Except when Ted came up and said it's his.

Q: What was happening with the youth there, the native youth? Were they going to schools abroad or not?

KRAJESKI: I mentioned earlier on they had guaranteed incomes and guaranteed lives. As long as they married another Emirati. That was true for Dubai and Abu Dhabi. It was largely true for the other emirates, too, although Abu Dhabi did not subsidize them all as much as they thought they should be subsidized. So there were poor Emiratis in Ras al-Khaimah, in Fujairah, in little Umm-al-Quwain. Most of whom then got jobs in the military, in the police, or for another large government company and worked in Abu Dhabi or Dubai. Guaranteed jobs. Quite a few went to study in the United States. I met many bankers, businessmen, members of the government who studied there. The ruling family didn't send its kids there, they sent their kids to the UK. Sheikh Mohammad bin-Rashid went to Sandhurst then he went to another school. He hated school, he made it clear. When he was in his 20s and 30s, he had a red LeBaron convertible. He knew every Emirates' stewardess very well. That's what he wanted to do, he wanted to have fun. He was rich, he was young, had this red LeBaron. You could always tell where he'd been. Everybody liked him very much. I liked him when I met him later on. He drank a little bit, but not a lot, he gave it up when he got married and had kids and became the crown prince. Others did.

I remember going up to Ras al-Khaimah when I first got there, and Ras al-Khaimah was run by the old Qasimi sheikh, I can't remember his first name [Sheik Saqr bin Mohamed al Qasimi, 1948-2010]. He was probably 80 when I met him. He had a scar that came across his forehead; he was blind in one eye. As he claimed, and others backed it up, [it was from] a saber cut from a fight. He was indeed a pirate. I could never understand him, he spoke an Arabic dialect that I just could not penetrate. His oldest son, who's now the ruler, [Sheik Saud bin Saqr] who had been educated in England, would sit next to me in

our meetings. I would often turn to him and say, “I don’t understand what your father’s saying,” and he would say, “I don’t understand what he’s saying either! Just nod!” So we would both nod at him.

The son by the way was the businessman of the family and he kept trying to attract business up to Ras al-Khaimah. One [business] he had up there was a pharmaceutical company that counterfeited drugs. Quite openly. I’d go up there and talk to them about intellectual property rights and patents on drugs. His most popular drug was a knock-off of Viagra that he was really quite proud of. You know what he called it? He called it Monica.

Why did he call it Monica? Monica Lewinsky. The scandal was just breaking in Washington, and the Arabs were fascinated by it. The guys were just fascinated with the fact that the president of the United States was being criticized for whatever he was doing with this young woman in the White House. They couldn’t believe that we cared, and that they were trying to impeach him. They would sit me down and say, “This is nuts! He’s a man, she’s a woman! What’s wrong with you people?” I’d try to explain two things to them. One, he was a much older man. And two, she worked for him. If I had gotten involved with an intern in my office at the embassy, I wouldn’t be sitting here today. I would be working in a McDonald’s or a Wal-Mart, I would truly lose my job. They didn’t understand that at all. One of them looked at me and said, “Tom, you mean to tell me if she offered, you would say no?” I’d say, “Well yeah, I would have for many reasons, not the least of which is I love my wife.” They couldn’t get it. They also thought that she was very exotic. She was young and a little zaftig and Arabs and Indians, they don’t like the skinny ones, they want women that have a little... And so she was perfect for that. And the best thing, she was Jewish which made her dangerous and exotic as well. I would talk to Arab guys, educated in the U.S. and their hands would just be going nuts talking about Monica. So naming the Viagra knock-off Monica was brilliant! (laughter) They had a hard time with that one.

The sheikh’s son would be up there, I’d be seeing him about this knock-off business, which he didn’t see anything wrong with. Nothing wrong with stealing someone’s patent and making the drug. His next brother down, maybe third brother – interesting because he was like 6’6, tallest guy in the country I think. He had just been thrown out of Boston University because he wasn’t studying. His father had bought him an apartment on Beacon Street...

Q: I have a degree from Boston University.

KRAJESKI: It’s a respectable college! And he had just been told he couldn’t come back. So the kid comes into the majlis, [Sheik Saqr] introduces him to me (he’s a nice kid), and his father says as near I can understand it and Sheikh Saud helps me out and the kid does, “The school said he can’t come back.” I said, “Why?” The kid says “Because I didn’t maintain a [passing] grade point average.” The father is furious, and calls to his Indian aide de camp and said, “Bring me the checkbook. Mr. Consul-General, tell me the amount I have to write and I’ll write it, so my son can get back into BU?” I said, “It

doesn't work that way. There are schools in the United States where if you write the check, you get the degree. I'm not going to help you find one of those, but I'm not going to help you with Boston University, either." He was not happy with me. Took me out to the fort where he fought off the British, showed me the cannons they used when the British dared to come in. I didn't take the message.

I have found in my career that in the Arab world, their attitudes towards the United States are so conflicted and so complex. We tend to think that everybody loves us, that everybody looks to us as the model country, that everybody really wants to be like us because there's a whole lot of them out there that want to be like us. But 'us' means George Clooney, 'us' means Arnold Schwarzenegger, 'us' means Hollywood and the actors and the show. 'Us' means Boston University, the best hospitals, these more open or best aspects, they take that as American and they love it. Then on the opposite end of the scale is Israel and our policies in the Middle East, and they hate it and blame it all on the government. Many countries, Arabs particularly, see this huge divide between people and the government and one of our jobs always is explaining to them that government is the people. If a whole lot of people don't like the government, we change the government. There's a huge variety of opinion about whole aspects of government, but people and the government are all the same thing. So, if you're going to hate the government's policies, "here I am." "Oh no, we love America but we can't stand the policies of it."

They don't understand the violence. The Arabs, they probably couldn't understand our attitudes about sex. Boy, do they have conflicted attitudes to sex, they've got nothing to criticize. But on violence, mostly – this has really changed in the last 10 years – violence was often very controlled, particularly among the families and wealth, you never let violence get out of hand. And personal violence was very strictly prohibited and punished. If you and I got drunk and I killed you, I'm in real trouble. They may not kill me; they may kill my brother instead and then the sheikhs will move right in to stop the violence. They could not understand why everybody has a gun. The violence just knocks them out, they don't understand how we can live with it. I tried to explain to them that it's not as bad as you think it is, you can walk down the streets of Washington and not be shot. I'm not sure about other cities in the United States. Their views towards the U.S. are very complicated. If you walk into those relationships thinking you have a rapt audience and one that is willing to buy everything you have to sell, you fail.

Q: How did you view the treatment of women there?

KRAJESKI: The Emirates is a different place, first of all. I've never served in Saudi, because my wife won't go. Like all NEA hands, at various points of my career I've been offered jobs in Saudi Arabia; along with Egypt it was the biggest place to go. Bonnie said "No," she would not go. She wouldn't go to a place which wouldn't let her drive or that forced her to cover in public. Now a lot of my colleagues, both women colleagues and spouses of officers, said "It's not that bad. Frankly, you get very used to being driven around, it's kind of nice not to worry about parking, that's OK."

Q: I have to say, my wife actually had a Saudi driver's license.

KRAJESKI: Did she work at the consulate?

Q: No, it was just driving to pick up food and go to Aramco and all.

KRAJESKI: Dhahran was a little different.

Q: The sheikh, bin Jiluwi was first cousin of Saud. Our consul-general was able to get driver's licenses for the women so the men wouldn't have to be shamed into doing women's work, driving – because drivers weren't that available.

KRAJESKI: The Emirates were completely different. Women drove, women ran businesses, women were in government. I met a number of impressive women in technical areas, the minister of technology in Dubai was a woman. I met them frequently. Not socially usually. There were some Emirati women – and understand they were 10% of the population, so the great majority of people I met were Pakistani and Indian and British and American and Iranian. As consul, I had American friends who never met an Emirati, the only Emirati they knew was their sponsor. The company had to have an Emirati sponsor who got a certain percentage every year for doing nothing except signing the visa forms. Bad business. I think they've gotten rid of that now. Bahrain did not have it, this sponsorship system. As consul-general, I got to meet a lot of Emiratis, and my wife was invited all the time to Emirati women's affairs. They were separate, the weddings in particular I remember. Did you ever go to a wedding?

Q: No.

KRAJESKI: The man's wedding – all men – would start at about 7:00 at night, you would sit in this enormous majlis, the chairs around the outer rim. Someone would come and shake hands. Lots of tea, juice, more tea, Coca-Cola, tea, juice, shaking hands. They've got the incense, a very heavy incense. The guys would come around [with the incense].

Q: I used to come home smelling of night in Paris.

KRAJESKI: Oh yeah, they love perfumes. The men would be spritzing each other with perfume, drinking lots of tea and coffee and juice. This would go on for about an hour, hour and a half. Then they would open the doors to the banquet room, the tables – there would be 300, 400 people in the majlis, then another 300 or 400 people who weren't invited into the majlis. Everybody would pour into this big room, scramble for seats unless you had some kind of stature, so the family of the groom would seat you. They take the plastic wrap – they had plastic wrap covering all the food. It was all at room temperature; they do not like to eat hot food or cold food, more room temperature. You would eat, 25 minutes, get up and go home. That was the wedding. Then the groom's father would always call me the next day and ask if I had a good time. "Did you have a good time, I hope you enjoyed yourself, so glad you could come." I'd think, "You guys,

no alcohol, no dancing, c'mon!" They had dancing, that weird little sword and staff dance they do, and chant. It was neat to watch, but that was the dancing.

My wife would be invited to the women's weddings, at the big hotels, the fanciest ballrooms. The women would come – the western women would come dressed as they're dressed. The Emirati women would come dressed in full hijab, and then as soon as they got into the anteroom would take off the hijab and reveal the latest French fashions underneath. Bonnie said the first time she was there, she was shocked. "After everybody took off the hijab, I was the most conservatively dressed person in the room!" And then they would party down. It would start about 10:00 at night. There would be food – no alcohol – and dancing, they would bring in Lebanese singers, men, they would sing from behind a curtain. They'd have the best Lebanese band. I remember Bonnie coming home one night with a black eye! As the bride was coming in, they would have girls fling flowers, releasing doves, and in this case there was a famous chocolate out of Lebanon, about as big as your fist, wrapped in tin foil, it's delicious chocolate – really good, Bonnie loves chocolate. But she had a big basketful and was flinging it into the crowd, and one caught her [Bonnie] right in the eye (laughter), she had a big bruise. She said, "I kept the damned chocolate!" But they would go on till three, four in the morning.

So there was that separation. There was a sense when you went to a more traditional house in a place like Ras al-Khaimah or down in Abu Dhabi, you would be eating with the men. The women would be in another room, and there would be a moment where I would be introduced to the mother, to the wife, especially if there was a daughter who had gone to the United States who was studying, and there would be an interchange there. So socially, you didn't mix very much. In business and government, in education, some of the best schools were women's colleges and I got invited often to go and talk to the women's colleges. They also had some co-ed institutions; the American University of Sharjah was co-ed. I knew the head of it very well, he was provost at George Washington and then at American University before he retired, a guy named Rod French. Then he went out and started the American University at Sharjah, and his biggest fear was that someday the boys were going to climb over the wall between the boys' and girls' dormitories and then he'd have a big problem. He said, "They maintained a co-ed atmosphere in the two years I was there and didn't have a problem," but a lot of families would send their daughters there because it was in the region, in the peninsula. Rather than sending their daughters to the UK or the United States where god knows what would happen to them. And they always had to send a brother or male cousin with the girl if she was going to study, so it was more expensive for the family because they had to send two people. But at Sharjah they didn't have to do that and could still get an American education, and a pretty good one – it's maintained its standards, a pretty good university.

It was different in Yemen, much different as far as treatment of women. In the Emirates, my lasting impression was one of basic equality and lots of respects, and mother-reverence. Every Arab man worships his mother.

Q: In Saudi Arabia, word was mother was running the thing.

KRAJESKI: We didn't really understand how all that worked. If you pretend that you understand the family dynamics of one of these families, you're just pretending, particularly of the women. They also had women who sort of came out in the sense that they would suddenly start running the business. Arts, often had to do with arts or galleries. Or education, sometimes - the wife of the emir of Qatar has built this enormous educational complex. Occasionally, you would see one of them, I forget which Maktoum it was, a woman at a party dressed in "European" style as they always called it then. If she was wearing traditional, it would be very fashionable traditional dress, with her hair showing. It's hard to explain to Americans how a woman's hair affects a man. One woman explained to Bonnie, "It would be like you walking around topless in public, for a conservative Muslim woman of my mother's generation to go in public with her hair showing. Strip everything else away from that, for whatever reason it's been done, it's been done for so long. It would be like you going downtown without a shirt on." I think that was an exaggeration, maybe. It's hard to understand. You're seeing more of that, and certainly if you were a Western woman in Dubai you dressed as you chose to dress. I always told folks, "Unless you're at a beach resort, don't walk around town in a halter top and short shorts, please." If only because the men truly don't know how to behave, and you might have a problem. We did have attacks, we did have assaults and some rapes.

It's a really different world. Yemen was even more so. I had women working at the embassy, and they would often ask me, "If I go down to the old town, should I cover my hair, should I wear a hijab?" I said, "You're an American diplomat, I would rather you didn't. And for the most part, you won't have a problem." This is 2007, things were different in Yemen. "As long as you cover your arms, dress conservatively, no halter tops, you'll be fine. And they'll like it because they know you'll pay more for the goods, so you'll get special treatment, you're a tourist and you'll give them more." If a woman was blonde, I'd say "You might want to wear a shawl over your hair," because blond hair attracts - men would come up and pull on blond hair to see if it was real, or they would stroke it which was really creepy, just to feel it, it felt weird to them. If you were of Arab descent, or you looked Arab, then I would tell women to be a little more careful, a little more conservative, because if they think you're a Yemeni and you're not covered, then they go after you. So the attitudes were different in Yemen, more conservative, women were uneducated. Great majority were illiterate. In the Gulf countries, women have been educated now for three or four generations, and you saw them everywhere.

Q: Where did you go from there?

KRAJESKI: From there I came back to the United States, my least favorite assignment was when I came back to Washington, especially after Dubai, which was a lot of fun. I was going to tell one more Dubai story, about the entertainment. We were at the top of the Burj al-Arab, towards the end of our four years there - I stayed four years so my son could get into high school. We were sitting around these enormous banquet tables; I forget what the affair was, BMW introducing its new model, they hung it from the bottom of the helicopter and flew it up and put the car on the helicopter pad that's at the top of the Burj Al Arab, where Tiger Woods hit golf balls. So we're sitting in this dining room and eating, and literally they put a plate of caviar in the center. Bonnie looks at it

and she goes, “I’m so tired of caviar.” And I thought, we’re two kids from Massachusetts, it’s time for us to get the hell out of here, back to a normal life where peanut butter is good. Dubai could warp you, you get involved with this sort of rich life, driving fancy cars. I don’t know.

When I left, I knew I had to come back to Washington. It was time, I had been out for nine years. So I wanted the Egypt job; I was an O1, the top rank before senior service. I had opened my window, to be promoted into the Senior Foreign Service. So I expected a director’s job in NEA, that’s what I wanted. I wanted the Egypt job, which was an OC (counselor), senior job. But I pushed for it, and they said, “No, we want you to be the deputy in NGA.” This is Northern Gulf Affairs, the office of Iran and Iraq. Partly because I had just come out of Dubai and worked on Iranian things for four years. They said, “It’s our intention” – this is the new George Bush administration, 2001 – “the Bush administration’s intention to open to Iran. We’re going to show that Albright and Clinton didn’t know what the hell they were doing, and we’re going to figure out how to re-establish relations with Iran, and we want you to be part of that team.” It was a sales job. I didn’t really want the job. NGA was called the office of the pariahs, the pariah desk because we had no relationship with Iraq or Iran, had sanctions on both countries. We had no embassies, no visits, no business. It was nothing but sanctions. I didn’t want the job, but I took it being a good NEA soldier. David Pearce, who I’ve mentioned earlier is the ambassador in Athens, was the director. He also had been in Dubai, so again the Iranian connection. Iraq was considered in the back pages; we were going to build a little Iranian desk, that’s what we were supposed to do; this is August of 2001.

A month later, the world changed.

Q: Today is the 29th of April, 2016, with Tom Krajeski.

KRAJESKI: I know we were going to start on NGA today, going to NEA, but I wanted to tell two more stories about Dubai. I don’t think I fully captured – I know I spent a lot of time talking about the excess and development of Dubai, business and the real energy that was in Dubai. But one thing Dubai was that I was both fascinated in and had an opportunity to indulge, take advantage of, it really was – we used to call it the “city of the exes” because ex-presidents, ex-prime ministers, fading movie stars, folks not at the top of the game but up there, would come to visit. So I had the opportunity to meet George H. W. Bush, spent a day with him and Brent Scowcroft driving around to meetings with different people. James Baker III came through, Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter spent almost three full days there. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone all came together to open the Planet Hollywood. Rod Stewart.

My favorite one was Nelson Mandela. He had just stepped down from the presidency of South Africa, this is probably 1999. Clinton was president. So they invited Mandela to come to be the keynote speaker at a conference. They always had these enormous economic conferences, they all wanted to compete with Davos, they all wanted to be the Middle East Davos – a lot of Gulf countries had these conferences, and they’d invite as many big names as they possibly could. The Emirates, Dubai, got Nelson Mandela to

come and be their keynote speaker. The sheikh asked me six months before, “We’d really like it if President Clinton could come; do you think we could invite President Clinton?” I said, “It’s kind of tough, but I’ll inquire.” I went to the embassy, we went back, and there was no way they were going to schedule a Clinton visit to Dubai. Then they said, “Could he go on live satellite TV while Mandela is there?” Because Mandela was a hook, and I’m sure Clinton’s people were thinking about it – a chance to appear with Mandela. But they didn’t want to do the satellite, the president doesn’t like them or something. So finally what we got was a speech. They wrote a speech about Nelson Mandela and I was going to deliver the speech in Clinton’s name. So the night of the conference, the opening day, there’s 2000 people in the hall. And for reasons I don’t understand, Mandela spoke near the beginning. It was Mandela and then I was going to read the president’s address.

So Mandela got up – talk about personal charisma and performance, he’s a performer in public. He gave a 35-40 minute speech in which he excoriated the United States of America and the evils of capitalism and the racism of the United States and how we were responsible for all the economic and social problems of the world. It was pretty hard-hitting stuff, and I’m sitting in the front row next to the sheikh with my canned speech in my hand. The cameras are on me and I’m getting steamed up, I’m getting angrier and angrier. Finish the speech, standing ovation for Mandela, these are all folks who had businesses in the U.S., huge U.S. investment there, they were more capitalist than the most rapacious Carnegie or Rockefeller, but they love Mandela so they were cheering him. So I was introduced as the representative of the president of the United States to read a speech. I used this as an example with A-100 (orientation for new Foreign Service officers) classes, “what would you do, in front of that podium, in front of a thousand people who have just heard a famous man lambaste your country in fairly harsh terms? What would you do?” I said, “I thought about it. And I read the president’s speech, word for word.” It was all about what a hero he [Mandela] was, ending apartheid, a world partner. I sat down. Polite applause.

Right after the session, we had a dinner, downstairs in one of these incredibly beautiful places overlooking the bay. Mandela came up to me and said, “What did you think of my speech?” I said, “I hated it, it was terrible!” He said, “Yeah, it’s all politics, it’s just a game. Forget about it.” And he then proceeded to entertain the table for an hour-and-a-half. A remarkable man.

As I said earlier, Dubai was the first time I had a position of leadership and representation. So it was fun. It was great to be in Dubai and meet all of these people and attend these events. I told you about the golf and tennis tournaments, it was always something and always somebody coming through. People all wanted to come to Dubai.

Q: Did the ruling people in the Gulf take you out, put the rugs out on the sand dune and pitch the tent?

KRAJESKI: They loved to do it. Especially our generation, Stu, guys as old as you and guys of my generation. They remembered the traditions because they lived them. It wasn’t just a one-off for them. But now they lived in fancy houses and palaces, they had

majlis, they kept camels – they loved camels by the way in Dubai. Racing camels, they bred and raced.

Q: I understand they used to use underage boys.

KRAJESKI: That was the big human rights issue. Every year when we did the human rights reports, there were two. One was the treatment of itinerant workers, which frankly wasn't that bad. The one that caught everybody's attention was five-year-old Bangladeshi boys that were velcroed, they would sew Velcro strips to the inside of their thighs and the camel, they were literally velcroed to the saddle of the camel. And these were tiny people. I can remember going out to the camel farm, which was on the way to one of the places where I used to play golf. I knew the people who ran it, where the racing stables were near the race track. Camel racing by the way is kind of boring; you sit in the stands, the camels take off and run into the desert, you sit around and wait for 25 minutes until they return. I was talking to one of the Emirati guys who managed a string of camels and took care of the jockeys. There were two jockeys there. The law said that they had to be 14 years old in order to be legal. I know that Bangladeshis can be small, but these kids were clearly under 14; I would put them at six or eight years old. We started talking to them – the guy got fired by the way for talking to me about this. And these street kids, one of them who was very articulate – in English – said, “you know, I support my entire family back home. The money I make here in Dubai supports 40 people back home. We're building a new house, we're able to buy some more land. All because I'm here riding a camel. And you want to take that away from me.”

The point was, you couldn't go back to DRL (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in State) and say, “Come on, we need to push this aside. These kids are not being abused, not being hoodwinked or kidnapped, not being held under duress. They're being treated pretty well, and making a lot of money. Look at them like child movie actors.” The Emirati who let me talk to these kids was fired, and I was never allowed near them again. The sheikh was not happy. This was an embarrassment to them. They knew they couldn't justify it. That was interesting. Also a lot of fun.

Dubai was a unique experience, our only non-hardship post until Bahrain. A time where we stepped away from the usual crises and dangers and hardships of living and working in the Middle East, and lived and worked in this remarkable city.

Q: OK, then you're off to the State Department where you're the director for the pariahs?

KRAJESKI: The deputy director. I had been lobbying with NEA to get the director of the Egypt desk. It was time to come home. Nine years overseas. As much as I didn't like working in State, in the Washington policy process, it was time to come back and take a job on a desk, in NEA. So I was lobbying with them to get the director of the Egypt desk, or the deputy of ARP, which is the Arabian Peninsula desk, one of the biggest desks in the whole State Department – Saudi Arabia and the rest of the countries. I got a call out on the golf course one evening, and they said – I forget the name of the principal deputy

secretary. He was not an NEA guy. Ned Walker was the assistant secretary. This was the personnel director for NEA, and she said, "Tony doesn't want you for the Egypt desk. He wants you to be deputy director for NGA." Iran/Iraq desk. No diplomatic relationships, no visits, no embassies. It was called with very little joking, "the pariah desk." Being a good NEA hand and realizing that's what they were going to offer me, I took it. And I took it because the selling was, this administration – the George W. Bush administration, which had just begun; this is now June of 2001. "We're going to open to Iran." They were critical of Albright and her attempt to open to Iran, and the president had decided as one of his first policy decision, we're going to find a way to expand this relationship, and "you guys at State are going to lead it. Colin Powell's coming on as secretary of State, we need some ideas. We want you, you were just in Dubai for four years, did a lot of Iran stuff, we want you to take it."

David Pearce was the director. David had been consul-general in Dubai before me. He's ambassador in Athens, about to retire. David was the director, I was deputy. It was a very small office, couple of Iran desk officers, three Iraq desk officers, maybe four. Steve Beecroft who went on to be ambassador in Iraq and Egypt, was the political-military officer for Iraq. Young woman named Yael Lempert came on, she was Iraq desk officer. She was just deputy CG (consul-general) in Jerusalem; she's now got a job over at NSC (National Security Council). There was a guy who did the Kurds for us. For the first month – I started the job in August 2001. There was a lot of paper being churned out about the options for Iran.

I also was given the rather strange task of taking on the follow up to the Iraq Liberation Act. Jesse Helms, a bunch of the neocons, dissatisfied with what they thought was Clinton's feckless policy of enforcing the sanctions against Iraq, had pushed through Congress and Clinton had signed the Iraq Liberation Act, which among other things called for support funds which Congress had to apportion each year. Twenty-five million dollars was the amount, which would go to support the Iraqi opposition in exile. Frank Ricciardone, an ambassador now, was our first special representative to the Iraqi opposition or whatever he was called. I remember he came to Dubai to try to sell this to the Gulfies, who laughed at him. They didn't laugh at him, they just didn't want to see him. Frank went on to do something better, and I got what was left of his portfolio. He had put together a big conference in London, what was called the Iraqi National Congress, the INC, Ahmed Chalabi being the best known member of the INC, and the darling of the neocons. Pals with Wolfowitz and Pearle and a whole slew of others who would soon be central to George W. Bush's foreign policy. In 2001, however, NGA was in charge of running this \$25 million a year support fund. We supported some projects in Iraqi Kurdistan, which was pretty much autonomous because of the no-fly zones which were established after the Kuwait war. The Kurds were running their own show in the north, so we were investing in some humanitarian projects and infrastructure in northern Iraq. But the bulk of the money went to the INC to support television and radio programs, to support political strengthening programs. There were five or six different groups including the Kurds who were part of the INC. We had a whole range of programs that we were running, including one called the Information Gathering Program, which

became a real bone of contention in another year, because as we know, on September 11th of 2001, everything changed.

Q: When you were there, was there a group within your office, that was planning what do we do when we restore relations with Iraq and Iran? What are our policies?

KRAJESKI: For the first couple of months, the focus was Iran. Even after the shock of 9/11, [there was] still a lot of activity with Iran because of our immediate action in Afghanistan. Which as you recall, was fairly popular – a lot of support in the country and within the international community, that after this horrific attack on 9/11, we had the moral authority to go in and get Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. And if the Taliban insisted on supporting and defending Al Qaeda, well we're going to go after them as well. The Iranians, who hated the Taliban, considered the Taliban to be a real thorn in their side, were delighted that we were doing this. They were no fans of Al Qaeda, either. There was a lot of communication – I was not running this part of it, Ryan Crocker was doing most of it. Crocker was in touch with the Iranians; there are a couple of international structures that had been set up, mostly focusing on Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion, that were still in place. Others came in, that enabled Crocker to have indirect meetings with the Iranians (which I think he's written about) to talk about "Here's what we're doing in Afghanistan." Along the border, Herat, which is where the Afghan Shia are, the Iranians were putting a lot of support in. There were humanitarian flights going in to support the refugees. Lots of things going on with the Iranians, including fly-over permissions for humanitarian flights. So there was a sense that the Iranians were playing ball with us on this important issue, which was increasing the push for "how can we open to them?" Khatami came to the UN that year; he had been president for four years and had been re-elected. He gave a very positive speech. There was talk that we were going to have a meeting in New York with Khatami or someone else; turned out to be the guy who became foreign minister, Zarif, who was then their permrep (permanent representative to the UN) in New York. Again, I was not part of these meetings. I was focusing more on INC and Ahmed Chalabi, because as we were digging into Afghanistan, fighting the war in Afghanistan, it became increasingly apparent that the president was in the process of deciding that we were going to do something about Saddam Hussein in Iraq as well.

The fighting in Afghanistan was going pretty well in 2001. There was a real sense that it was time to go after Saddam as well. There was a lot of debate about this; meetings after meetings after meetings in the White House about whether or not this was a good idea, and how we might go about it. State, the secretary and deputy secretary, were cautious and even opposed to military action against Iraq. But [there was] more and more interest in it, and in alternatives to [using the] American military in the early days – we're looking now at December 2001, January/February 2002.

I flew to London frequently to meet the INC, their headquarters was in London. I used to fly in to the embassy, stay at the Grosvenor House – the embassy in London was in Grosvenor Square, at the center of London. Stay at the Grosvenor House and meet with the Kurdish representatives, Chalabi, with the man who would be king, Hussein Salam Ali, who was the last surviving male descendant of the assassinated Iraqi king, who was

killed in 1958. Hussein Ali was three years old when this happened. He survived and had lived in London and claimed to be the heir of the throne. There was a small party, the Iraqi Monarchist Party. He had some support, mostly from the exile community. He was a very articulate and distinguished man. Not particularly bright, but OK. He somehow believed that when Saddam went down, there would be a restoration of the monarchy in Iraq. So I would go visit them. Most of my conversations were nuts and bolts – “OK, where’s the money going?” I had long discussions about the TV station, which was completely mismanaged by Hussein Ali, who got into a bad contract deal with a TV supplier; they lost millions of dollars and never got the TV set up. Did get the radio set up, did go on-line for a while.

The most controversial program was called the Information Gathering Program. This was Chalabi’s favorite, because he was able to take this money and distribute it inside Iraq. Ostensibly for information, but more just to gather support [for himself].

In the early days, there was a sense that we’ll support the oppositionists. We particularly wanted to support the Kurds. The Agency and we in our analysis and when we were presenting policy alternatives to the president, we did not think that Ahmed Chalabi could bear the weight himself by any means of actually organizing an effective coup against Saddam that would bring him down internally. There was a lot of talk about how to do this. Would it be the opposition? Would the military eventually turn on Saddam? This had been the theory following the liberation of Kuwait. As you’ll recall we went into southern Iraq briefly [in 1991] and then pulled out. As I understand it, a lot of people then thought that the Iraqi military, humiliated by this defeat, would overthrow Saddam. It didn’t happen, and it was very unlikely that it would happen in 2001. So there was a lot of turmoil over what the United States could and should do.

The last piece of this was the United Nations, the sanctions, and it was Powell’s position that we needed to strengthen the sanctions and force Saddam to allow the inspectors back in to reveal every aspect of his WMD (weapons of mass destruction) program, or face the consequences. That’s really how we moved around.

The last point on Iran. Sometime in late December 2001 there was a shipment of Iranian weapons that we traced from an Iranian port in the Gulf, up through the Red Sea, for delivery to Palestinians bad guys (not sure if it was Hamas) in Gaza. We had traced the ship. The Israelis boarded and captured the ship, and it was determined that it was Iranian origin arms. The ship was called the *Katrina A*. This caused a minor firestorm in Washington. All of our contacts with the Iranians fell apart as we criticized them. We still maintained some contacts, mostly through the Swiss. There were still attempts to open to Iran, but the *Katrina A* really spoiled the effort that had gained a lot of traction during the early days of the Afghan war.

Increasingly - and there’s been more written about this than anyone cares to listen to - the president and the administration and the military under the president’s orders shifted their attention from Afghanistan and began to focus on the possibility of military action in Iraq. For much of 2002, we maintained – it was not a fiction, [it was] part of the policy,

that military [force] was only one option. If we could force Saddam to open his WMD program to our satisfaction, that's what we wanted. But as you look at the record, and as I recall many of my conversations, on how the policy process went in 2002, it was increasingly evident that the president had made the decision [to use military force]. I don't want to reveal classified papers that have not yet been made public, and I don't know if all of them have from that period, but it was very clear to us in State that the president had made a decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power by any means necessary, including military. He had not yet decided on military action, but most of the people who were around him argued that that was the only option that was going to work. We were going to have to build a military coalition strong enough to drive Saddam out of power. For the next eight months, starting in February, March 2002, it became increasingly apparent that that's what we were going to do.

The State Department, including at my level – which was really unusual, I was still the deputy director – we were basically being cut out of the interagency discussions. Secretary Powell, a man whom I admire greatly, had clearly seen the writing on the wall. State's role was basically to work with the United Nations and the new sanctions regime, and to give it our best effort, to put a good face on it. That was our instructions – “We're going to work with the UN, do this through sanctions and with the international community.” People in Cheney's office and Rumsfeld's office all looked at us and said, “Yeah, let State play with the UN while we do the real work of preparing for military action.” It was frustrating. There would be meetings at the NSC (National Security Council) and the Pentagon as we were getting deeper and deeper into the preparation. Sometimes we weren't invited. Often, you'd hear – Mark Grossman was under secretary for political affairs, he would go over to these meetings instead of Powell or Armitage. Sometimes it would even get bounced down to Bill Burns and Ryan Crocker.

One of the strengths of the interagency is you have all of these desk officers and deputies and directors – even when the bosses, the secretaries were fighting with each other over who's got the president's ear and in the Washington Post, at the working level people are talking to each other, exchanging papers. You're drafting your talking points for Secretary Powell for the meeting at the NSC that's coming up – god, it seemed there were two or three of these a week, constantly churning out talking points. What you would do is the day before the meeting, you'd call your buddy over at the Pentagon and say, “You're preparing Rumsfeld's or Wolfowitz' points; let's compare, let's see what we're going to say. So I can give my guy a heads-up, and you can give your guy a heads-up.” That stopped. All of it shut down. I had a few people at the Pentagon that I could go over and talk to. Most of them wore uniforms. They were being cut out of these civilian meetings. State was considered not only opposed to the policy, but we were wrongfully being considered obstructionist, that we would do everything we could to prevent military action in Iraq. Which was not true. We were not convinced that this was a good idea; we didn't think it was necessary. We thought there were other means of controlling Saddam Hussein. I think this ran through most of the State Department, with varying degrees. Including guys like Crocker, who played a huge role in Iraq in days to come. There was a sense at the Pentagon particularly and at the vice president's office that the State guys were just trying to obstruct.

I recall one meeting I went to; Crocker didn't even go, I think Crocker and Pearce were in northern Iraq with the Kurds. They went there from time to time, the deputy stayed and had to go to all these damn meetings. I went to a meeting chaired by Wolfowitz over at the Pentagon. We were talking about, "OK when we first go in, we're going to have political meetings. We're going to gather Iraqis together. For the first time in how many years, they're going to be able to gather together and vote and debate the issues and decide on their leadership, and we're going to have this whole series of political meetings as we liberate town after town." Wolfowitz [said this], they were talking about who would be invited and how it would work. I was sitting next to the agency guy, who gave I thought a very intelligent brief on family and tribal relationships in Iraq, how important the tribes would be.

Doug Feith looked at him – Doug Feith was the under secretary for policy under Wolfowitz, Mark Grossman's equivalent at OSD, the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He said, "You don't know what you're talking about. Iraq is an urban society with a well-educated secular population, and once we get rid of Saddam Hussein, these people" – doctors, lawyers, I don't know who he was talking about – "they would immediately gather and decide these issues. The tribes would have nothing to do with it." He was completely wrong, 100% wrong. Tommy Franks once called Doug Feith "the stupidest fucking man he'd ever met in his life." I'm not sure that's true, because I think Feith is an intelligent guy. But he believed what he was hearing from guys like Ahmed Chalabi, who was a well-educated, articulate, secular Iraqi. Chalabi had persuaded many of these guys, Wolfowitz included, that there was a whole group of these guys around the world and in Iraq – "Just empower us and we'll create that liberal democracy that you Americans want."

So as we were making these arguments, the guys in OVP – Office of the Vice President – and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, were slowly cutting us out. And the working level, the guys I would call and send emails to, saying "Send me your talking points, I'll send you mine"? They stopped doing it. We would get them at the very end. Usually it was the vice president's office, a guy named John Hannah. Smart guy, but really convinced that Ahmed Chalabi was the future president of Iraq and we should all support him. So the policy debate, on the policy side State's role was quite diminished.

Q: Did you feel the hand of Rumsfeld and Cheney?

KRAJESKI: More than the hand, it was the fist and the tongue. It was never directed to me; I didn't sit down with Rumsfeld and Cheney. I sat down in rooms with other people in which Rumsfeld and Cheney were talking to Armitage or sometimes Powell. He did a lot of the secure video transmissions from the Operations Center up at State. We would sit at that table, Powell or Armitage would be at the head, we'd be at the sides. Different screens would have other folks on them.

One of the things I had to do was organize visits from the INC. Again, this was two Kurdish parties, Ahmed Chalabi's party, Ayad Allawi (what the heck was his party

called? The Iraqi National Assembly I believe.), the Monarchists Party, and then two Shia parties who turned out to be extremely powerful parties. One of them had been headquartered in Iran. We're looking towards the middle and end of 2002; we're giving more support to them and trying to raise their public image as a possible alternative to Saddam. There were a couple of occasions where we would bring this group over to the Pentagon, the White House, the State Department, for meetings. Rumsfeld was a very curious guy. He's a very combative person in a room. He's not a particularly smooth diplomat. He would kind of lecture these leaders – they're all leaders in their own right, the Kurdish leadership, guys like Hoshiyar Zebari who's a tough old peshmerga warrior who went on to become the foreign minister of the new Iraq. He's now minister of something else, minister of finance maybe. Rumsfeld would lecture them all. Often the implied point of the lecture from Rumsfeld or Cheney or others, the hard-liners, was "You need to get behind Ahmed Chalabi."

They [the other Iraqi leaders] didn't like Ahmed Chalabi. They didn't trust Ahmed Chalabi. They felt he had out-manuevered them within the INC (which he had). Chalabi was getting all the press, the interviews with the Washington Post and *60 Minutes*. If you ever saw him, he's a very impressive, articulate man, who wears the very best suits. There were all kinds of suspicions about how he stole his money from the Petra Bank in Jordan. He has a doctorate in mathematics; he's a very smart man. And he had the ear of the neocons – Richard Pearle, Doug Feith, Wolfowitz, guys like John Hannah, which translated into he had the ear of the president and vice president and secretary of defense. These other Iraqi leaders did not. They – the Kurds in particular were grumpy about it. One, because they felt Chalabi betrayed them back in the '90s when there was going to be a coup backed by us against Saddam. The details of this are very fuzzy, but Chalabi's relationship with the Kurds was very bad after it. So they didn't trust Chalabi, and had no intentions of agreeing that Chalabi was going to be the next president of Iraq. And the Kurds had real power. They controlled territory and had a reasonably well-trained and armed military in the peshmerga. The Kurds were our most ardent supporters, and still are today, in Iraq. As an American, you can go to Erbil and be greeted with thanks for liberating Iraq and getting rid of Saddam Hussein; that's not true in many other places. In Kurdistan, my daughter was just there, she's a reporter who wrote out of Istanbul, she traveled to northern Iraq a couple of times to report on the Kurds. Still, the United States and George W. Bush and Dick Cheney are still heroes in Kurdistan because they got rid of Saddam Hussein.

The last point I'll make about the preparation for the war is something called the Future of Iraq. You asked how much planning was going on for the post-Saddam era? Iran is now being pushed aside. The Iran desk officer – we had two Iran desk officers. They had to wave their papers in the air for attention; everything was focused on Iraq in our desk and in NEA and in the building. One of my jobs was to increase staffing as we were looking at a much more complicated relationship with Iraq and in Iraq, and I was looking around all over the building hiring people. I was not yet at the point of dragooning people to go to Iraq because we were still saying, "Military option is the last option. We want to persuade Saddam to give up his weapons of mass destruction, don't make us go in there and take them from you."

By the way, on that point before I go back to the Future of Iraq. Intel on WMD, there has been much more written about it than I will say here. The intel was always shaky. While it was not a major driver of what we were doing, the president was making his decision to go in. The persuasive public point was weapons of mass destruction. As the public narrative about the need to prevent Saddam from getting these weapons and using these weapons was paramount, in the intel community, guys at my level over at the agency, at DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency), at the Pentagon, in INR at State – they were all looking at this stuff and saying, “This is pretty flimsy. It’s really difficult to put together a solid case based on reliable intel that Saddam is re-activating his weapons of mass destruction program.” His chem and bio in particular. Most folks thought the nuclear program was pretty much in suspension.

There were a couple of occasions, one I remember very well because Ahmed Chalabi generated this Information Gathering Program I’d mentioned. It cost about \$250,000 a month, one of the biggest programs. He was supposed to give me all the information he’d gathered, and he would never do this. He would show me his newspaper and say, “We’re doing it for propaganda and here are the articles we’ve reported on inside Iraq,” or would send me some other information that was mostly open source stuff. So one time I went to London and said, “First of all, we know that you are using this money to pay agents inside Iraq.” He didn’t deny it; he didn’t call them agents, but he called them reporters, supporters. I said, “This is a clandestine information program. We cannot use economic support funds” – ESF, which is what the Congress was giving for this program – “we can’t use this for an intelligence program. State Department can’t monitor it.” I used to have to go to the Hill every month to talk to Senator Leahy’s staff and tell them what we’re doing with our money, and I had to prove to them that we’re spending our money in a really reasonable and responsible way, and I can’t just say we’re giving \$250,000 a month to a program and I have absolutely no idea where the money was going.

So we had to shut this program down. As it turned out, a lot of the intel that the people were using back here as evidence that WMD existed was being generated by Ahmed Chalabi through this program.

Q: Did you meet Chalabi?

KRAJESKI: Many times. He did not, it’s not personal, but we got into a lot of arguments over the money. He and some of his supporters, Jesse Helms and Danny Pletka (one of his staffers) on the Hill, John Hannah in the Office of the Vice President, and many others believed we should just write Ahmed a check for \$25 million a year and say, “Spend it wisely and we’ll support you as you take down Saddam Hussein.” They understood that they couldn’t do that. But they thought we should do everything in our power to help Chalabi.

I have a \$25 million program, I had accountants working for me, people keeping track of the money. I had program officers – we treated it as an aid program and we had to account for the money. I was saying to him “We’re going to take this money away from

you; starting next month, we're closing the Information Gathering Program." Sitting in his office in London, a couple of his aides were with him. I was with a guy named Ethan Goldrich, who's now our DCM in UAE; he was a political officer in London, taking me around to all the opposition guys. Chalabi was furious, pounded the table and said, "You don't understand. I will do or say anything to persuade the United States of America to use its military to take down Saddam, and if you get in my way..." Then he kind of stopped, calmed down a bit. He saw us as being obstructionists as well. I did succeed in taking the money away. Wolfowitz was very unhappy, he said, "This is a valuable program, look at the information" – he showed me the intel – "they're generating." I said, "that's great but we can't pay for this. Defense should pay for it, or CIA or DIA should run it. State Department/NEA should not be running a clandestine intelligence gathering program. I can't go to Tim Rieser" (on Senator Leahy's staff) "and say, 'that's a clandestine program, I can't tell you anything about where the money's going' because Rieser would cut my head off." He was a good guy, but he didn't like this program, he thought it was all a waste of money anyway. He's a Vermonter, a tight-fisted Vermonter. I think he's still with Leahy. He would run me through the ringer – "Where's the money going?" Audits of all our programs.

We did succeed in doing this. I don't believe that Wolfowitz ever succeeded in persuading DIA that we should fund it. By then there was enough information that had come in – this is July, August, September 2002 – they were convinced, and the president I think was convinced, that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. The kicker on all that of course was when Powell in February 2003, went before the Security Council and made his pitch, including some photographs and use of intel, that Saddam's chem-bio program was very much active.

Q: Did you get a feel for Powell and how he developed over the time on this issue?

KRAJESKI: First, if you were in the State Department in 2001 when Colin Powell first came in as secretary of State, it was a very positive time. We were very enthusiastic about Powell's leadership of the State Department and the Foreign Service. Powell had a real sense of service, and he valued the Foreign Service. He made it very clear that he intended to get his expertise from the ranks of the State Department, from his ambassadors, from the embassies, from Foreign Service officers. He used to go down to the cafeteria, sit and drink coffee with folks. He eliminated a lot of these special ambassador and special envoy positions, of which there's two dozen right now – the Obama administration loves them. It was a natural tendency, when you have a problem you appoint a special envoy, and you give him a little office in the State Department and the problem is now solved. Powell emptied these out, he didn't replace envoys. He really did focus on the structure of the State Department. He was a very good leader, and we loved him. I think most Foreign Service officers in those couple of years really admired Colin Powell.

On this issue, however, he really let us down. I know he's addressed this in one of his books. It was clear at the beginning, and you got this through Armitage and Crocker, that we were very skeptical at the idea of using military force. The Powell Doctrine – only use

it when you have a clear victory, a clear endgame, you have an idea of what's going to happen afterwards. Then you mount overwhelming force, you do it. He was very skeptical of the use of military force. I don't think he saw the need for it. A lot of us said, "All right, there are a lot of bad guys around the world. There are a lot of threats to the security to the United States around the world." But on a scale of immediacy or intensity of the threat, Saddam's Iraq in 2001 I don't think made the cut as a place where we had to take military action. I think we could have controlled – we weren't allowed to use the 'C' word, containment.

Q: We had planes flying all over the place.

KRAJESKI: After Kuwait, Saddam had done very little. There was talk that he was supporting Al Qaeda; we never saw much intel that supported that. He was clearly a bad guy. For myself, during that period before the war, after I took the job on the desk and before the war, my particular job as I said was contacts with the Iraqi exile community, starting with the leadership. I also went out to Michigan, to Flint and to another place [Dearborn] where there's a huge Iraqi community, mostly Christian Iraqi but some Muslim Iraqi as well, and talked to them. Part of each of these meetings, whether it was in London with leadership, whether it was just kind of folks out in Michigan, you'd listen to tales of horror. You'd listen to what Saddam had done to them personally and to their families. Daughters being kidnapped and raped, people thrown in prison in these little, they called them coffin cells. One guy I know, I still stay in touch with him, Hatem Mukhlis, his father was a diplomat and a general who Saddam had mistrusted and arrested. He spent like six months in a coffin. They fed him once a day, but that's where he stayed. I guess they had air holes so he could breathe. Then they executed him. Hatem had fled to the States in the early '80s. He, like many [Iraqis] had supported Saddam in the late '70s as being a tough guy, the kind of guy who was needed to organize Iraq. He is now back again [in the US], he's an emergency room physician. And just tale after tale.

The Shia after '91, the atrocities committed against the Shia in the south, the mass executions – we discovered mass graves all over the place in the south when we went in in 2003. The Kurds, my friends the Kurds who are as tough as any human beings on Earth. I'd be sitting having a drink with Hoshiyar Zebari in London, he would just tell these tales of atrocities during the Anfal, at the end of the Iraq-Iran War of the 1980s, when Saddam decided he was going to punish the Kurds for supporting Iran. They went in and wiped out villages, and of course the gas attacks, Halabja being the one people remember. But there were more than a dozen of these attacks on Kurdish villages, using gas.

Saddam was a really bad guy. But all of that taken coldly – was he an immediate and serious threat to the United States of America? I would have to say then, no. And now looking back at it all, no. But the president disagreed. The president was convinced that Saddam's weapons program had to be stopped, if not now, later. If it was later it was going to be at much greater cost, and the risk of an attack on the United States, either in the United States or on one of our allies or our facilities overseas, the prospects of an attack were real. And after 9/11, he was going to stop it; he was going to prevent that

attack emanating from Saddam Hussein from occurring. He disagreed with Tom Krajeski and a lot of other people. Once he made that decision, which he made relatively early, we supported it.

Q: Were neocon believers brought in to talk to you all or not?

KRAJESKI: In the early days, say the first six months of 2002, as this process of slowly marginalizing State was taking place, Powell was still very much in the debate, attending the meetings. There was at the working level, my level, there was a lot of intense discussion over at the Old Executive Office Building, over at the Pentagon, in State, with people like John Hannah and others going, “You guys at State need to get on board. We need to convince you that it’s going to be necessary to remove Saddam from power, and that Ahmed Chalabi is his natural successor.” Yes, there was a lot of it.

And there was a lot of frustration and anger even among the working level neocons if you want to call them that; some of them were bureaucrats, some were political appointees. I remember in particular a guy named Harold Rhode, still around. Harold was a true believer in Ahmed Chalabi and Chalabi’s mission to become the next leader of Iraq. We had a meeting over at the Pentagon with the Kurds – I remember Hoshyar Zebari being in this meeting with Doug Feith, the under secretary. We’re in his office, and Chalabi was not in this meeting though he was around. There was a lot of discussion about Chalabi and Hoshyar was expressing his doubt about Chalabi’s credibility; Hoshyar didn’t like Chalabi very much. Feith was arguing back and forth about what would we do in a post-Saddam Iraq, how would we form a government, what place would the Kurds have? Reasonable points, but clearly trying to support forming a government-in-exile. There was a movement in the six months before the war to try to form a government-in-exile, which we opposed, led by Chalabi. Hoshyar would have none of it. He said, “We [the Kurds] live in Iraq, not in exile. We control one-third of the country, with your great assistance and help” (the Kurds didn’t want to muck anything up with us). He did not buy it.

After that meeting we were walking down one of the long corridors in the Pentagon, and Rhode got up to Hoshyar – Hoshyar’s a big man and really tough, he was a peshmerga assassin, he was a very tough guy. He grabbed Hoshyar by the arm and said, “If you don’t get with the program, we’re going to do this without you. We’ll just push you aside.” I thought if Hoshyar had had a knife, he would have stabbed him. Or garroted, strangled him, he got so angry. There was that level of almost fanaticism among the neocons. All of these labels are hard to apply. Among a certain cadre in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which is where Rhode was, there were true believers and they believed we had to get rid of Saddam Hussein, and Chalabi was the guy.

Q: How about Dick Cheney? Was he a figure or beyond your...?

KRAJESKI: John Hannah who was one of his foreign policy guys, Middle East guy, was the one I dealt with. There were others, including what’s her name, now the assistant secretary for European affairs (Torie Nuland). She was working at that time for the

Office of the Vice President. Cheney – what I knew about Cheney is what I read in the press. Occasional comments from guys like Armitage or Powell about Cheney. It was clear he had great influence, but he never injected himself in any of the meetings I was in. People would invoke his name only rarely, “the vice president wants this to happen.” By that time in the discussion, mid-2002, they had the president of the United States, and that was enough for all of us.

There was a certain point when we were pretty sure this was going to happen, we had a small in-house meeting, usually late in the evening (the hours were killing). We were sitting in Ryan Crocker’s office or Jim LaRocco’s office (he was the PDAS at the time). We had just come down from a meeting with Mark Grossman in his office. It was Crocker who said, “The decision’s been made, we’re going to invade this country, we’re going to drive Saddam out of power with our military. It’s not in any document I can show to you, but it’s clear.” And then he said, “This is going to be the biggest fucking mistake that any of us will ever be involved in. We’re all going to have to make a decision whether or not we support this, whether we can continue.” He said, “I’m going to do it. I’m a Foreign Service officer; I’m going to serve my president. You all have to decide.” Crocker obviously is one of the key figures throughout the early years and the surge years (I went back and worked with Crocker again in 2008). I don’t particularly like him but I admire him greatly. He made the point.

We’re going to go in and take Saddam down. There was a very naïve belief, fostered by Ahmed Chalabi, among the neocon supporters within the administration that this was going to be easy. Every single one of them will deny it, but you could tell they thought we State guys were just waving these alarm flags about tribal loyalties and breakdown of security and infrastructure problems, that we weren’t prepared to actually take over. They would say, “There’s no need to take over.” They really believed this was going to happen relatively quickly, and once they “cut off the head,” that within months – 90 days was the figure – “we’ll start withdrawing our troops and the Iraqis will take over. And the Iraqi security forces and the police, who were not under Saddam Hussein [will provide security]” – I don’t know where they get those ideas. “All this great middle class, secular Iraqis will come flooding back in, investing money. You guys at State, you’re waving the red flags because you don’t want to do this, you think it’s a bad decision and you’re doing everything you possibly can to obstruct.”

So we decided... a guy named Tom Warrick who is now a deputy assistant secretary over at Homeland Security, Tom was I think a schedule C – basically came in with the Clinton administration in the ‘90s as a lawyer to work on Balkan issues. When the Balkans was pretty much done, he stayed on through the early days of Bush. He had switched over to Iraq after 1998 and the Iraq Liberation Act and worked with Frank Ricciardone on Iraq liberation. He was in my office, working for me – a very smart guy, very dedicated, very anti-Ahmed Chalabi. He had the first idea that we need now – March or April 2002 – to at least begin the practical planning for post-Saddam. He called it the Future of Iraq project. It was divided into eight or nine different segments, all the way from the political piece of it – how would the constitution be written? How would the government be formed? What do we need to do in advance of military action to start that? Contacts

inside and outside? He looked at things like electricity, water, roads, education, healthcare. He had a Rolodex unlike anybody else's of Iraqis in the Detroit area, in London, in Europe, in Kurdistan, in Turkey. Iraqis who had some degree of experience or expertise in these areas.

For about six months, he worked his butt off. We all tried to help him; I gave him staff to do this, in trying to expand each of these programs within the Future of Iraq project. I remember we had a big political meeting in London in November or December 2002. We would frequently have smaller meetings of people focusing on things like infrastructure, health, security. We recognized it was going to be difficult to secure the streets once Saddam was gone, and we would need some kind of security force ready to go to prevent looting. It was Tom and his small group of people that focused on this. Tom was despised and distrusted by this group of neocon true believers. What they saw Tom doing was raising barriers against the decision to go in. "The electricity grid's in terrible shape, we're going to have to immediately provide electricity. You're going to see breakdowns and blackouts everywhere. It's going to cause morale problems; we need to focus on how we get the material and the experts into Iraq immediately in order to keep the electricity grid functioning." The oil – protecting the oil (that was the one thing the Pentagon agreed with him on) facilities. They saw all of this as just the State naysayers, "the State guys saying we shouldn't do this, it will be too hard. It's going to be easy."

We took some of the money from the \$25 million I was talking about to support the meetings and the planning for all of these different programs. We wanted the Middle East Institute to run it, not State – we'd support them. A guy named David Mack, a former ambassador to the UAE -

Q: I've interviewed him.

KRAJESKI: Now at MEI (Middle East Institute). He's the one who told me I should do this [an oral history], I still see David. He was at MEI in 2002; he's a fluent Arabic speaker. We went to him and said, "We'd like you to run this [future of Iraq project] for us." So MEI would organize these different conferences and meetings around the world. He agreed; we had the first session that Ahmed Chalabi – he really hated that we were doing this because he felt he had the planning under control – but he had to because it was the money and he was the head of the INC so he had to be there. I remember that first meeting, I think he came for an hour, late, and left early. He was on the cell phone the whole time. It was over at the Meridian House on 16th Street.

Literally, that next day, Ned Walker who had retired from the State Department, he was the head of MEI. David might have been the vice president of MEI. Ned gave an interview with CNN (Cable News Network) or somebody in which he just lambasted the administration's policy on Israel and Palestine. Really went after them, very critical. The next day, I was told, Jim LaRocco told me, "We can't give MEI the money." We were going to give them a \$5 million grant to run this program, in June 2002, and Jim said, "Just got the word from the seventh floor, the White House is furious at what Walker said

about their Israel policy, so no money for MEI.” So we had to take it back in and run it ourselves.

So I hired a lot of people to work with Tom, we gave Tom new offices even. Finding space in the State Department was really difficult so we found offices somewhere near the White House, H Street and 17th. We expanded it. At the end of the day, January of 2003 when the decision was made to do the military invasion, after the UN dance was over, that’s when the Pentagon appointed Jay Garner, General Garner, to be the head of the civilian organization that would come in right after the military and oversee the transition on the ground from military control to Iraqi civilian control. Again, with the clear notion that this was going to take three months. Garner’s instructions were to focus on humanitarian relief. Indeed, his organization was called ORHA, the Organization for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. Garner and the Pentagon at the same time set up their own little Future of Iraq project, taking a lot of the people that Tom had recruited. But they took Tom’s work – and I heard this said by somebody, that Wolfowitz said, “State has done a very nice academic exercise, but that’s all it is. It’s a nice graduate level academic exercise; now we’ll do the real work that’s needed to plan for the post-Saddam.” They appointed Garner, who was very well respected.

Q: He did a good job with the Kurds.

KRAJESKI: With Operation Provide Comfort in –

Q: Feeding the Kurds.

KRAJESKI: Basically saved their butts, and at the same time reestablished the no-fly zones in the north, very effectively. Garner still makes a lot of money as a consultant for the Kurds on business matters; they consider him a hero. I never met him; I sat in on meetings – because we sent Tom. He [Garner] was recruiting people from all over the government. He had a big budget. Focused mostly on “What if Saddam lights all his oil fields [on fire]? What if he blows up power plants, blows up bridges?” It was anticipated we’d have 500,000 instant refugees, displaced people; “How are we going to take care of them, feed them, clothe them?” That’s what he was focused on.

This has been written about in a number of books including George Packer’s The Assassin’s Gate, which I think is probably still the best book about the year before the war and the CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority) the first year after the war. He talks about this first meeting – they were called something like rock studies or rock groups. It’s a military term for getting people together in a big room and just throwing issues out there, trying to get ideas back. Garner invited folks from all over the government who were involved. We sent Tom Warrick – obviously – to this meeting.

It was at the Pentagon, I think there were maybe 50 or 60 people in the room. Garner would look at the military planners first and say, “OK, what about the electricity grid? Do we have maps of the electricity grid? Do we know where the crucial generating plants are, where are the oil pipelines feeding electricity generators?” The military guys are like,

“We don’t know.” And Tom Warrick would raise his hand and say, “I’ve been working with the former minister of electricity who now lives in Michigan, and we’ve got a small team together and he is putting together maps and grids of where the crucial areas are.” Garner said, “This is great.” This is the way the story runs anyway, and Packer’s a very good reporter so I think the story’s true, and Tom says it is, too. Then he would go onto another – “what about healthcare? How good is healthcare in Iraq now? What level can we expect? What if we get refugee populations?” And the military guys go “Mumble. We’re planning a war here, we don’t know anything about this.” Tom would raise his hand and say, “We just had a meeting of health experts in London last week looking at the level of healthcare, how do we recruit Iraqi doctors from London and New York who would be willing to come back as soon as Saddam was gone.”

According to reports, at the end of the session, Garner said “Who the hell was that guy?” They said, “It’s Tom Warrick of the State Department.” Garner said, “I want him on my team.” We said, “OK Tom, pack up your office and go to the Pentagon, go work with Garner.” We’re big guys; there was a lot of grumbling at State about how the Pentagon and OSD had taken over the whole policy, but we’re good soldiers. Tom was in the process of doing this when somebody at OSD heard about it and said, “There’s no way that we’ll have Tom Warrick working on this.” The story is they went right to the vice president and they said, “You’ve got to call Powell and say ‘no, we don’t want Warrick.’” Which happened. Warrick got pulled back. I went to a couple of meetings but I didn’t have anywhere near Warrick’s expertise and level of contacts. We sent over a few others, people like Steve Beecroft would go over. But Beecroft was focused mostly on the military stuff.

We watched them prepare for something that was plausible, but in the end didn’t happen. He [Saddam] didn’t blow up his oil fields. He didn’t burn his bridges. There wasn’t a huge refugee or displaced person problem. There wasn’t a humanitarian problem. What they had was a security problem, as you know. And that they were not prepared for.

The invasion’s in March. By the way, at this particular point I’m lobbying for my next job. I’ve been there coming up on two years as deputy, the lobbying for jobs always takes place in the November, December period before that. I went up to Jim LaRocco; I had just been promoted into the senior service so I was a newly-minted OC. I said, “My next job should be a DCM. I haven’t been a DCM; I was consul-general in Dubai. The DCM jobs in Tunis, Damascus, and Jordan were all opening in the summer. I really want one of those, and I really like Damascus.” I had written them down too, my wish list. He glanced at it, picked up the paper, and dropped it in the waste basket. Jim is like an old Mafioso; he runs the family. I like him enormously (some people don’t). I’ve worked with him since then over at National Defense University, too. He’s very direct. Very garrulous, loves to talk. He’s from Chicago so we talked baseball, he likes the White Sox, I like the Red Sox. Now he’s a devout Nationals fan. Jim just pushed it aside and said, “No, we know what we’re going to do with you. Just bear with us. What I want you to do now is become the director of the desk.” David Pearce [current director of NGA] was being pegged to be consul-general in Jerusalem, one of NEA’s big jobs and most risky positions as far as promotion goes. We consider it an embassy (can’t say that, obviously).

The CG in Jerusalem is easily as important if not more important than many of the ambassadorships in NEA.

Q: I did a very long set of interviews with Ed Abington.

KRAJESKI: Ed is one who didn't survive it well, although I think he always believed he did the right thing. Jim said [to me], "We have something in mind for you but right now I want you to be director." I really didn't want to be director of the desk. I had also made the decision, which I was working with Jim on, on how we would create an Iraq desk. We were going to split Iran out, it was going to go to ARP – which it did for a while, the Arabian Peninsula desk. And we were going to have an Iraq-only desk. We had started with about five officers, we were up to about 35 in December of 2002. I was finding new spaces, we were moving over to H Street. He said "I want you to be the director of that desk." You can't say no to Jim first of all, and you're a loyal NEA guy, so I agreed. About two weeks later he said, "Come on up. We're going to give you a chief of mission job." I was stunned. I thought DCM was where I should be, but I didn't say that. I said, "Where?" He said, "I can't tell you that yet." So I went back to my wife, and she was convinced it was going to be Abu Dhabi, which was opening up as well. A few weeks after that he said, "It's going to be Sanaa, Yemen." I was still a year away from going to Yemen, I had to be director of the desk and spend three months with the CPA and Jerry Bremer in Iraq.

Q: What I want to do, sort of skip this. Where were you, a personal account of 9/11, how did this hit you?

KRAJESKI: In the first case, it hit me like it hit everybody else, like a ton of bricks. It was unbelievable. We all remember where we were. I was in my office over at the State Department, on the fourth floor. We had inner offices that overlooked the heating vents, where NGA was. At least I had a window. David Pearce and Ryan Crocker were literally in the air on the way to the UN for meetings with this multilateral group on Afghanistan, but also were going to meet with the Iranians on 9/11. They were taking the shuttle up to LaGuardia. They were literally in the air as the tower was hit. David said as they were making their approach, one of the towers was on fire. Everybody was looking out the plane, wondering what was going on – there was a big fire in the World Trade Center. Then they came around and made their approach to LaGuardia.

I was head of the desk; I had gone off to some meetings up on the sixth floor, with Burns, staff meetings. Had just come down at 8:45 in the morning when the tower was hit. Like everybody, I saw CNN on the screen hanging off the wall in David's office. One of my colleagues, Beecroft or Warrick or Yael, somebody – a guy named Michael McGowan, a first tour officer, was doing the Kurds, said "Jesus, come take a look at this." Just staring at the scene at the screen, saying "What the hell's happening?" Then boom!, the other tower gets hit. Then the Pentagon gets hit, and suddenly it's "Holy shit."

We evacuated the building. I remember the alarms going off, the evacuation. I closed up my office, shut up the safes, filled my bag as if I was going home and walked out. We

walked over to Columbia Plaza which was our gathering point. It was pretty chaotic. Pentagon's been hit. This is 2001, so nobody has smart phones. But a lot of folks have cell phones, people are listening to the radio. It was really scary. At that point, about 10:30 or so, it was clear they weren't going to reopen our building. They were figuring, "other targets." We didn't have much information. "The White House is going to be hit. A plane just went down in Pennsylvania; they think it's part of this." They just shut down air traffic in the entire country. So I decided to get on the Metro and go home. I was fortunate to do that because they shut the Metro down about an hour after I'd gotten on it. So I'm back home, processing this with my family; my son and my wife were there, my daughters were in college. It's like Pearl Harbor. "What is this attack? Who did it?" You're just watching the news, not going back to the department (I did go back the next day) and realizing during the course of that day that this is going to change everything. We had been dramatically attacked and we were going to go after whoever attacked us. All of us, whatever we were doing, particularly those of us working on Middle East issues, we were going to be changing track. We went as I said from our focus on opening with Iran (though we kept part of that) to focusing on Saddam Hussein and Iraq.

Q: Was there in all the reaction, that "this must be Saddam Hussein?"

KRAJESKI: No. There was some of that I think, I wouldn't be surprised if some of the crazier folks among the neocon community didn't immediately make that connection. But in the immediate aftermath, as it became apparent that this was an Al Qaeda operation, there was never any intel or serious analysis that I saw within the department and elsewhere that Saddam had anything to do with it at all. I don't think there's ever been one iota of evidence presented since. He hated Al Qaeda, and they didn't like him.

Q: He was basically secular...

KRAJESKI: Anyone who threatened the established leadership. For better or worse, in 2001 Saddam was still the recognized leader of an independent country, Iraq. He would use Al Qaeda to the extent he might be able to. We saw very little information at any point of contacts. There were stories that would wander around on, "one of his guys met with some guy in Czechoslovakia"...

Q: This was Curveball.

KRAJESKI: Right. There were reports. But the Czechs themselves had discredited it. I remember somebody at the Pentagon showing me this report, it was highly classified then, showing that this meeting had taken place in Prague between one of Saddam's senior representatives and these guys in Prague who were Al Qaeda related. The Czechs afterwards said "We have single source on that one; we're not confident that this meeting ever took place." But we decided that it was true.

The whole atmosphere of this place. For the president, suddenly your decision-making paradigm has just shifted. The most serious attack against the United States since Pearl Harbor. Twenty-five hundred people killed? These two enormous towers taken down, the

Pentagon attacked. If I'm the president of the United States, I'm going to do exactly what George W. Bush did – I'm going to go after the people who did it. I'm going to use every bit of authority, power, every relationship I've got to make sure we go into Afghanistan and we drive these people into the ground. Which is what he should have done. We lost that impetus. I'm not an expert on Afghanistan. I used to have to sit in on the Afghanistan meetings that Richard Haass who's head of the Council on Foreign Relations; he was then S/P, the senior policy advisor to the secretary. He had a meeting every day at 5:00 in the afternoon in his office, about 25 people from around the government, on post-Taliban Afghanistan. A lot of money guys from AID, "How are we going to move into Kabul?" By this point Crocker had already raised his hand to say, "I'll go to Kabul." Crocker hated Washington even more than I did, than anybody did. He was very proud of his I think 38 years in the Foreign Service, of which two were spent working in Washington? Bill Burns used to laugh and say whenever you could recruit Ryan to come back he would find some crisis and volunteer for it just to get the hell out of Washington. He had been a year-and-a-half in Washington as a deputy assistant secretary. As soon it was clear we were going to reopen the embassy in Kabul, he volunteered to be the guy to go in and open it. He was perfect for it, exactly the person to have do it. January 2002. But he left us! He went off to Afghanistan.

I used to have to go to these meetings in Richard Haass' office once a day, at least an hour. My purpose in being there was to gather notes about how they were doing this, because we were going to have to do this for Iraq, too. This is January, February 2002. So what I know of Afghanistan was learned from that time.

You know, 9/11 still resonates. Around the government and around the country. It's been used for different purposes. I'm not a big fan of the PATRIOT Act ("Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001"), though I have two minds about it as far as making the balance between personal privacy and security.

Q: I don't get too upset about the personal privacy thing. It can get out of hand and some of the people I don't trust.

KRAJESKI: That's the problem. The government tends to say, "Trust us. You have nothing to worry about. You're a good upstanding citizen, you don't have to worry about us listening to your phone calls."

Q: Then you've got "We're just talking." We are talking about people who use events for their own ends. This is a good place to stop; we'll pick this up – they're going to make you director-

KRAJESKI: The director of the Iraq office but in the meantime, I'm going to go in and relieve the first group of people. David Pearce and Yael Lempert went in with Jay Garner in March of 2003, as part of ORHA, to do the political organizing there. They have some great stories to tell of living in the palace literally a week after the military had cleared Baghdad for them. They went in in March, by July they're leaving. The next tranche –

me and a bunch of others are going in to staff what was then called the Coalition Provisional Authority, headed by Jerry Bremer. I was assigned to be the deputy in the governance section, in the political office, for Bremer, for the CPA. Crocker had been the director, and a guy named Scott Carpenter, who now works for Google, a political appointee but a very smart, dedicated guy; did mostly development and humanitarian work, but he is the director. This is July. We were only going in for three months; Bremer called us the “90 day wonders,” because Armitage did not want to send me and others for a long period. We were being seconded to the Pentagon. State Department had no formal leadership role in Iraq until the embassy was opened in June 2004.

Q: As a matter of fact, Rumsfeld vetoed a lot of people with experience.

KRAJESKI: He sure did – including Tom Warrick. Before we do quit – as we were planning, part of the planning was we were going to open an embassy. In September of 2002, Crocker had a meeting with me and other folks and said, “We need to plan an embassy.” He put me in charge of the plans to staff the initial group of people who would go in. I worked with DS, with the information management people who have these packages, literally boxes of classified communications equipment that can be loaded on a plane and set in place immediately. We had meetings with the Poles; the Poles were our protecting power in Iraq. They were living in our old embassy. Our first embassy had been taken over by Saddam and made into the foreign ministry (we’re still fighting over that piece of property, I think). Second one was across the river near the university. The Poles were occupying it, and were prepared to turn it over to us when we came in. The assumption was we would go in. Crocker would become chargé d’affaires or whatever – we didn’t have diplomatic relations with Iraq, so how do you re-establish [them]? There’s a very formal set of procedures to go through as you set up an interests office and then you establish a chargé. You have to have a government to exchange credentials with. There was a lot of planning. Beth Payne, she’s here at FSI, runs one of the big offices here – she was going to be one of the consular officers. We had our DS officers chosen, I had an admin guy ready to go in. We were all going to go to Kuwait and get on one of these enormous Russian planes. We leased one of the largest freighters. We had armored vehicles marked out for us; we had a whole embassy in a plane ready to go into Baghdad, land, go to the Polish building, and become an embassy. It was not naïve, but perhaps not a practical plan, but we had it in place.

Sometime before Crocker went to Afghanistan – or maybe it was LaRocco, in January, February 2003, just before the invasion, [he] said “Forget about the embassy, there’s not going to be an embassy.” He kind of shook his head. “State will not send an embassy until Defense says [we can]; Defense is going to run it.” And they did run it.

Q: Today is the 6th of May, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, we’re off to Iraq. When and how did you get there?

KRAJESKI: It was 2003, shortly after the CPA was formed. If you remember when we first went into Iraq and I was the director of the Iraq desk (it was called the Iran/Iraq desk then, NGA) – we just created an independent Iraq desk as I was going. State was sending

out “consignees”, though Armitage hated that word. He hated the fact that we were going to work for the Department of Defense. Indeed, he forbid me from getting a CAC, a common access card, because he said “You’re not permanently assigned to DOD. You’re going on a 90 day TDY (temporary duty); I was to go out and take over as deputy of what we called the governance office within the Coalition Provisional Authority. I told you, when I was on the Iraq desk, we at State thought naively that we would establish an embassy in Baghdad once the military had deposed Saddam Hussein. Indeed, we had planned, gathered vehicles, personnel, we had everybody ready to go. We had even hired one of these giant Russian transports, I think an Antonov, the largest cargo plane in the world. We had armored vehicles, six of them. We had all our communications, this classified stuff in a box, communications in a box –about the size of this room, that they would just roll onto a plane. And we had a building picked out. Again, a little naïve here as we were planning, thinking we were going to be able to go and open the embassy.

Q: Very frankly, the whole process – the military. The problem was going to be to get through the waving flags.

KRAJESKI: The military did its job as they were told to do it. There were a lot of military [officers] who thought this was going to be a much bigger job than their bosses thought it was going to be. As we were planning for this, it was clear that DOD leadership and the vice president’s office believed this was going to be a very short war. They were right that it was not going to take too long to militarily defeat Saddam’s army and depose him. But they also believed there would be a very, very short stay. They would say, I heard in meetings – “within three months, the military will begin its withdrawal from Iraq and an Iraqi government will have been established.” So that’s what we were going on.

So we said, “OK, we’re going to have to have an embassy ready to go.” I had to do research on how you restore diplomatic relations. Breaking [diplomatic relations] is a breeze, you just say “the hell with you” and you leave. Bringing them back is hard. First, you need a government with whom to deal; diplomatic relations are not country to country, they’re state to state. We were planning to do that, but literally a month before the war began in March 2003, DOD informed us there would be no embassy in Iraq, that DOD would run whatever American presence was established, civilian or otherwise. They established the ORHA, Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, headed by a former general, Jay Garner. That would be the civilian component that would closely follow the military into Iraq and establish civilian offices that would handle reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. There was nobody out there talking about government – a little bit. There was a move to establish a government in exile, headed by Ahmed Chalabi. That was one of the few victories we had at State, we persuaded the president that establishing a government in exile to be parachuted in was a bad idea; it probably would not be well received by Iraqis. I’m not sure if we were right or not; I think it wouldn’t have been well received, but considering what’s happened since, maybe that would have been a better option.

ORHA was very short-lived. Within a month, Jay Garner said, “There’s no humanitarian catastrophe here.” Saddam didn’t light his oilfields aflame, which we thought he might do. He did not blow up bridges, he did not massacre people as he was leaving, he didn’t even fight a rearguard action. He just disappeared, his government melted away, we rolled into Baghdad largely unopposed and with relatively little damage. I don’t know when you first went to Baghdad, but in 2003 when I arrived in Baghdad in July, I was surprised at how little war damage there was in the country. How few bridges and buildings were damaged – in the Green Zone one famous one, it was the communications headquarters that we had taken out, but we only took out a piece of it where the satellite antennas were. It was recognized within a month that ORHA didn’t have a mission, so it was disbanded and replaced by the Coalition Provisional Authority, headed by Jerry Bremer. With the notion that he and a very large and well-funded team of military and civilians would take charge of the country. This was happening as the looting was reaching its peak, and it was recognized that we had no on-the-ground security. The military was not prepared and had not been ordered to prepare to establish security on the ground after Saddam left. I sat in a meeting in which a very senior official at DOD, Doug Feith, said “We won’t need it, the Iraqi police are well-trained and independent and not corrupt. They with good leadership will be able to provide security. And they’re trusted by the Iraqi people.”

I don’t know where the fuck he got this information. I was sitting next to a guy from the agency at this meeting. We looked at each other and shook our heads; “this is nuts. The police are corrupt, they’re badly trained, they’re in Saddam, Uday, and Qusay Hussein’s pockets and the Iraqi people hate them!” There was no preparation. So it was recognized about a month in, “Holy shit, we’re in a much bigger operation than we anticipated. We are going to have to take control, not just of reconstruction but we’re going to have to take control of the country.” In effect, be the country’s government. For a short time; it turned out to be one year.

So Jerry Bremer, Foreign Service officer, a very distinguished and accomplished guy, had been ambassador once or twice. Had been executive secretary of the department and had retired. He was a consultant or was running his own little security company.

Q: I interviewed Jerry.

KRAJESKI: A very decent guy and quite intelligent, obviously. He was considered to be a neutral choice. Somewhat surprising that he was the president’s choice, considering how dominant Rumsfeld and Cheney had been in the process up to that point. This is considered Powell’s victory as well, though Jerry was by no means leading towards State either; he was the president’s pick. He went in, we sent in the first group of 90 day folks including my boss David Pearce, who was director of the Iraq desk before me. Crocker went in as head of the governance section. Hundreds of people were assigned from all over the government to go in and work for CPA. Lots of contractors as well. Lots of retired guys – there were guys out teaching at the University of Arizona who got the phone call in the middle of the night from Rich Armitage, saying “Hey, it’s time to sign up again.” It was a fascinating group of folks.

I went out in the second tranche. I stayed [in Washington] and built the Iraq desk in May and June, and then in July I replaced Ryan Crocker – although Scott Carpenter was made head of governance. Scott was a political appointee sort of, but professional, a very accomplished development officer. He now has a senior position at Google, must be making kabillions. He was the director and I was deputy director of the governance section, arriving in Iraq in mid-July of 2003. About July 20. It was an out-of-body experience right from the beginning. Literally.

In those days you went in through Kuwait; they had a hotel, the Hilton in Kuwait that DOD had taken over. Money was no object in this operation; that's the one thing we did not lack, and we never had to really even ask for it, Congress just poured money at us. And we found a lot of money; the amount of \$100 bills that Uday and Qusay and Saddam and all the rest had hidden away in the country, something like \$6 billion dollars. That's the figure in my head. Some book somewhere gives a number, but there were billions. I remember going into one of Uday's palaces. Uday and Qusay, Saddam's two sons. They vied with each other for who was the most despicable and vile, and they really did some vile things. And they had these grotesquely large, lavish houses. It was a very big house and was very close to the palace. I remember being showed a room about this size.

Q: About 15 by 15.

KRAJESKI: And in it was a standard shipping pallet which was about six by six or eight by eight foot. On it was a six by six foot cube, shrink-wrapped packets of \$100 bills. Brand new, real, unused \$100 bills. Not counterfeit. It was eye-popping. It was a lot of money.

So I arrived at this very nice hotel. I'd done all the advance work, but my name was not on any lists. "We didn't know you were coming." At the airport I had to flag down this military guy – I was supposed to be met at the airport and taken in a van – I flagged down a guy in uniform and said, "How do you get to the Hilton?" He said, "I'm going to the Hilton," so I hitched a ride with him. I wasn't on the list when I arrived there but no big deal, they penciled me in. Spent that night at the hotel and the next morning they took us to the big airbase that we still have, near the international airport. And we waited. I went up to the guys who run the C-130 flights into Baghdad, and of course I'm not on that list either. "No problem, we'll get you on." I didn't have the common access card, the CAC; the second time I went I got one for damn sure, but the first time I went, I didn't have one. That's the magic card with Defense. Especially when you've got some spec-4 [specialist] who's got the list of who's getting on the C-130 and who's not getting on. If you're not on the list and don't have a CAC, forget it. I had a State ID (identity card), but that didn't matter. The State ID, I'd just been promoted to OC, officer-counselor, senior Foreign Service. I was the equivalent of a one-star [general]. But it said FEOC, Federal executive officer counselor I believe is what it stands for. They were like, "What's a FEOC? This guy's a FEOC."

Anyway, I got on a list. I went into the waiting room, waiting for the flight to come. You're also supposed to pick up all your equipment. You're supposed to have PPE – personal protective equipment, your vest, Kevlar helmet, fire-resistant gloves, there was a whole kit. Specific instructions – pick it up in Kuwait, bring it with you. I had my own personal gear with me, planning for a three month stay, and this [PPE] bag weighed a hundred pounds! Incredibly heavy. These vests that they wear, I think they're 40 pounds.

THIRD PERSON: Seventy pounds with the front plate.

KRAJESKI: It was heavy. I was a 53 year old guy. It's too heavy, I'm not going to haul this thing all the way out to the C-130, which is 200 yards away, in the July heat – it was about 3:00 in the morning, too, before we actually took off. They used to go back and forth, sometimes only doing night flights, other times only doing day flights. It was my first real experience with the military. I had worked with defense attachés and offices of military co-operation; I knew a lot of military guys from my previous assignments. When I was in Dubai I worked fairly closely with the Navy, because the Navy came into the port there all the time. But this was my first boots on the ground experience with the military. Boy, a lot of clichés came through, including hurry up and wait – “Let's go, let's go, we gotta go!” We all hustle across the airport, it's 95, 100 degrees. We walk through the jersey barriers, t-walls. We get there – there's no plane out there. We all sat.

Interesting point; when I was in the waiting room, filling in all the forms. Who walked into the waiting room? Ahmed Chalabi, trying to get on the same plane. They don't know who Ahmed Chalabi is either. He was with one other guy; he had just been down in Kuwait, and he was somebody. And if anybody's got pull with the Department of Defense in July 2003, it's Ahmed Chalabi. But the guys at the base just said, “I don't know who the hell you are.” I had to vouch for him. I had known him for a couple of years; we didn't like each other very much. But I got him on the flight. He's in a suit. He always wore the most beautiful Savile Row suits; he's a very wealthy man. But the only way to get into Baghdad in those days was U.S. military. You had no other options. There were no private – later on, there were private planes and guys like Chalabi could take a jet out of Amman, Jordan. Sometimes you could fly into Erbil even from Vienna, and then come down. But in July 2003 the only option was to drive yourself in – which was dangerous – or take the [military] flight.

This is a long story, but it took a long time. Finally got on the flight, arrived at BIAP (Baghdad International Airport), walked in. Of course no-one knows I'm coming. If you don't have transportation pre-arranged, you can't get from the airport to the palace. In a normal time it's maybe a 30 minute drive. But you had to go through a lot of barriers and checkpoints. You had to go in an armored vehicle, and you had to have all this pre-arranged. Or a helicopter pre-arranged. I learned in my next time out there to always have helicopters because they were a lot faster and more comfortable in their own way than an armored Humvee or these other monsters – they had this awful bus called the Rhino, an armored bus later on that they would make people ride. Fortunately, I had been ambassador the second time I went out so I had my own detail to take me out. But the first time 2003, you're just meat.

I was sitting there in the receiving room. I listened to a couple of guys talking; they were Canadian aid workers who were coming in to work with a Canadian team that was part of CPA. They had their transportation all set, so I hitched a ride with them – Canadians can never say no. They took me into the palace, where I walked into the big rotunda and then into Bremer's office – he had a large suite of offices, into the outer office where the staff were sitting. Guy named Pat Kennedy, who is now the under secretary of management for the department, was there as the first management officer of the CPA. Jerry had known him from previous work. Pat is without doubt the greatest management officer [in the history of State]. I just saw him a month or two ago – I can't believe the man is still doing this job and that he's not in jail. (Laughter) He is a fixer. From the day I knew him when he was an assistant GSO in Cairo, he is a remarkable administrator. He's almost right out of Catch-22; there was this guy in Catch-22 who could get anything, and get anything done? [Milo Minderbinder] That's the way Pat was. So Jerry choose wisely.

Q: I've interviewed Pat Kennedy's wife.

KRAJESKI: Oh, the consular officer. She was the consular officer in Cairo, Betty Swope? I don't know her well. Pat says, "We didn't expect you until next week. You're supposed to arrive next Tuesday." I said, "Well I'm here." He said, "Go find Crocker." Crocker had established the governance office, the political section of the CPA, in Saddam's kitchen. That was about as far away from the rotunda as you could get. This was an enormous palace; it was used mostly for ceremonial occasions; Saddam didn't actually live there. They used it for greeting visitors. It was very impressive and quite gaudy, ornate in some ways. It had a couple of huge meeting halls in it.

I've got my gear with me, my enormous pack, and I'm hopping down the long corridors. On the way to the kitchen you had to go through the north hall, and the north hall they had made into a barracks. There were hundreds of people sleeping in cots, the cots all lined up all over this big hall. Not a lot of room between them. There's a corridor, and I'm picking my way between them through the cots. This is 4:00 in the morning. It's interesting that Pat Kennedy was there, I don't think the man sleeps. Everybody's there. No, it's about 7:00; I arrived in Baghdad around 4:00 or 5:00. So a lot of people had come in, but still a lot of people asleep. It as a scene – not quite out of Dante, if it was it was a higher circle of hell to walk through this north hall. I walked down to the kitchen which is a large room, maybe 100 feet by 40 feet. Green tiled. In it were all of the political officers; Crocker and Scott Carpenter were there. Roman Martinez, Meghan O'Sullivan, she now teaches at Harvard. Danny Rubinstein, now our ambassador in Tunis, was there. A guy named Jon Carpenter. Lot of good people from State, lot of people from OSD. About 30 officers altogether working in the governance section. From there after meeting Crocker, who said "We didn't expect you until next week," I managed to wrangle through Pat Kennedy a room at the Rashid Hotel. This was early days yet. We had basically taken over the hotel even though it was still being managed by the same guys who managed it under Uday, it was his hotel. They kept the same staff and management, and we had a contractor in charge of it, and they doled out the rooms. I managed through Pat to get a room. Crocker was leaving the next week so they put me in

a temporary room, then I was going to get Crocker's room. So I wasn't going to have to sleep in the north hall. I didn't even have to share my room with anybody, which was a real coup. The shower worked in my room – only cold water. It was on the 11th floor and I frequently had to walk up and down 11 flights because the elevator wasn't working. But it was a hotel; I didn't have to stay in a barracks or the north hall or a trailer. The trailers weren't bad but you shared rooms, there were four people to a trailer and most trailers didn't have a toilet or shower; more and more did as we were there.

I lucked out, and I got to stay at the Rashid the entire three months I was there. The hotel was attacked once while I was there, by rocket fire. The room next to me was hit. My room faced the park; you could still hear the lions roaring [in the zoo in the park] until the lions were killed. That's where the bad guys pulled up a truck and would shoot Katyushas I guess, they would shoot rockets at the hotel. They did it once and didn't hurt anybody, though we all evacuated. It was the first of a few times that I've been shot at – not personally. It's not pleasant. For a civilian who's not trained, you don't know what's going on. You don't recognize the noises, the smell of the cordite – the shell hit the room next to me, which was fortunately empty. The second hit the wall of the hotel. The smell is really intense, like a lot of fireworks going off.

But you're not trained. So what's your first action? Your first action was to go to the window and see what's going on, which is possibly the stupidest fucking thing you can do. Then second, put your head out the door to see what's happening. Everybody's running around, they're evacuating the hotel. I remember Wolfowitz was there that same time and was staying at the hotel. The hotel was hit much harder about a month later. Just after I left, my replacement Maura Connelly was staying in my room. It was hit and people were killed. A woman named Beth Payne, who's now here at FSI, she saved a woman's life who had been badly cut. We abandoned the hotel after that. During my stay, I was in a hotel room. As dingy and unclean as it was, the shower worked. The television even worked, although I got like one Iraqi channel; it was good for my Arabic, that was about it. And the best part of the hotel – the bar opened while I was there. They served drinks. The hotel was mostly contractors and civilians, also some military. When you finished work at 9:00 or 10:00 at night, you could go to the bar and have a beer. So my experience in Iraq the first time as far as living was not bad.

My job was to recruit for and establish the first civilian teams that we were setting up all over Iraq. Bremer wanted to have civilians in every governorate, working first with the military civil affairs teams or whatever military unit was in charge of the area, but eventually establishing civilian leadership – CPA offices in every provincial capital.

Q: Was there a conflict between the military and the civilian side of things?

KRAJESKI: I was just writing about this. In my subsequent career, starting in 2003 until I retired last year I worked very closely with the military in places like Iraq and Yemen, most recently in Bahrain as well. The relationship has fundamentally and dramatically changed since those [early] days [of my career]. In the last 12 years, State and DOD, State and the military, have had a much closer and I think mutually beneficial

relationship than I think we had before then. Before then it was mostly traditional. I had a combatant commander and a military base – two actually – in Bahrain. And the relationship with the admiral and the general and the ambassador was very close. We communicated constantly with each other, we worked closely together. In 2003 I think we were feeling things out. The aftermath, the lingering effects of what had been a vicious policy war in Washington that State and the agency and one could argue the [professional uniformed] military lost to the civilians at OSD and the vice president's office. That fight over the policy over Iraq was brutal. When we all got to Iraq, it was somehow supposed to magically disappear. When I met Bremer, he said "Look, you don't work for the State Department anymore. You work for me. You work for the CPA." A guy named Roman Martinez – a good guy, really young, smart, he was an OSD political hire out there. He arrived at the approximately same time, we were sitting in Bremer's office. He said, "You don't work for OSD, you work for CPA." So among the civilians I think Bremer did a fairly good job of bringing us together. And frankly it was refreshing for anybody of us to work in the field, getting out of the Washington policy jungle out to an embassy or CPA in this case is a real change of scenery. Because people do establish better relations as a team.

Q: Did you talk about how to do things?

KRAJESKI: Always helps, you actually have a job to do and you have to get out and do it, so a lot of cooperation. There was still a lot of backbiting, mostly driven by Washington among the civilians, but the civilians did all right. The military suddenly found itself with a completely different mission than it had set out to do. Its mission had been "invade the country, defeat the military, drive Saddam from power, and then we civilians (at OSD) will do the rest. You guys go home." Literally. So suddenly, by July the military realizes, "We've got a whole different mission here. We're going to need a lot more people if you expect us to try to secure this country." The insurgency, which no-one was allowed to anticipate – we couldn't even use the word "insurgent" in July and August and September 2003, they were called "Saddam's dead-enders", considered the dying gasp of Saddam loyalists, not an insurgency. Al Qaeda had not yet – although it was in those months beginning to develop a presence in Iraq. We really had no idea of how bad it was going to get in those months. So the military is being told, "Change of mission. You have to provide street security. You have to train a new Iraqi army" – because we dissolved the old Iraqi army. Not Bremer's decision, by the way.

Q: There were two decisions that have often been laid on Bremer. One was dissolving the Iraqi military, and the other was kicking all the Baathists out...

KRAJESKI: De-Baathification.

Q: Could you talk about that?

KRAJESKI: I was the director of an office in Washington, which is fairly low level when you're talking about decisions being made by the president of the United States. Both of these decisions were made by the president of the United States after listening to his

senior advisors. Bremer was the president's envoy. I think in the case of de-Baathification, this had been discussed for some time before the war, a recognition that a lot of the senior officers in the military – all of the senior officers in the military – were senior Baath Party members. You could not be a general in the army unless you were a senior member of the Baath Party. It was generally agreed that any senior officers who are still around at the end of the war – they lose their jobs, they're gone. There was a great discussion of how far down we should go in dismissing the officer corps. There was never a discussion that I was aware of, of disbanding the army. I think we would have argued against it; I think our military colleagues would have argued against it. That happened rather quickly after...

Q: They disbanded themselves, didn't they?

KRAJESKI: That was kind of what Bremer's point was. I think there's some credibility.

Q: He mentioned that in his oral history.

KRAJESKI: I think there was some credibility to that. The army had a fairly well-trained, professional officer corps. A lot of caveats to that statement I'm sure, a lot of my military friends would probably disagree at what level and how well-trained they were, but they were a professional officer corps. The rest of the army were mostly conscripts. It was mixed Shia/Sunni. They were not very well trained or equipped; they were not very well paid. There were exceptions; the Republican Guards, Saddam's personal units, were well paid and well trained, they almost all came out of Tikrit, almost all Sunni. They did not fight by the way; they disbanded and remain today as one of the core elements in ISIS. They were instrumental in establishing Al Qaeda in Iraq as well. There was never any sense that they were going to stay.

It was kind of hoped that the military would confront them and defeat them, but Saddam did not use them. They backed up and when it became apparent that our military force was overwhelming, they took off their uniforms, recognizing that a lot of Iraqis particularly in the south where the Shia lived would not look favorably upon them, and melted into the civilian population, mostly in Anbar, in Nineveh, in the main Sunni areas around Baghdad. So what's left in the army after you've de-Baathified the officer corps, after the only fighting force with any credibility, the Republican Guard, had disbanded themselves, you're left with this group of ill-trained, ill-equipped, ill-paid, mostly conscripts. A lot of Shia who had no intention of fighting, who were happy as they could be to throw their arms down and go join a militia, which some of them did. So there wasn't much left.

So yeah, maybe it was a mistake to formally disband it. I think it was a mistake to cut as deep into the officer corps as we did with de-Baathification, because you had a lot of guys at the colonel level who were well-trained professional military officers, many with battle experience. They were told, "Sorry, no jobs and no paycheck." We resumed paying them shortly after, recognizing we had to pay these guys; otherwise they were going to join the underground, the insurgency. I think the disbanding of the army in retrospect was

a mistake, but not a huge one and not nearly as dramatic as it's made out to be, and not all Bremer's fault. That's my opinion, from a guy who was a director in an office in Washington, so you sit in the meetings, you prepare for the meetings, you don't actually participate. I don't go to the White House and sit in the Oval Office and listen to the president and Cheney and Rumsfeld and Powell, Armitage and these guys talking about it. You hear about it after the meetings are over, usually the State guys would brief us and growl about how they got rolled again by Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld and Cheney. Especially Armitage who's a great growler. If you've ever met Rich Armitage, he's a former Navy Seal, Vietnam vet. He's about 5'10", maybe a little shorter than that, but he's big – a big man. No neck, bald, piercing blue eyes, and a voice like this.

Armitage did a lot of the hard work at the State Department. He was Powell's guy, Powell's deputy, [he] loved Powell. He did a lot of the hard work in the department, including going to a lot of these meetings where State was rolled. I was the deputy and then the director of the desk. I would come into the office at six AM, go down to the gym and work out for an hour, start work at seven AM. Three days out of five, my phones would be blinking. These were the days we used phones that had voice mail on them, seems like ancient history now. The light would be blinking, I'd pick it up and it would be, (*growling voice*) "Krajeski! What the fuck is Chalabi up to now? Get up here!" in this big voice. I should have kept some of the recordings...

I need to get back to de-Baathification and then the military-civilian relationship as I saw it out there. De-Baathification had been very closely debated before the war. Tom Warrick, who was the head of the Future of Iraq project that my office put together almost a year before the war, he had done a lot of work with civilian agencies, civilian ministries. There was a very large Iraqi population in the States centered round Detroit, some in New York, some in Washington. Tom had great contacts among them. He knew about the electricity ministry first of all, [and] the basic condition of the electrical grid in Iraq, because he had a former minister of energy who was a businessman in Detroit, had been minister until Saddam killed some of his family, and he left in the '80s. A very common story among a lot of these well-educated, upper-middle-class, urbane, urban, almost all Sunni, who had worked for Saddam in the '70s. And then as the '80s rolled on, the war with Iran got nasty, Saddam got nastier and nastier, a lot of them fled. A lot came to London, the political types. A lot of the more practical folks – doctors, lawyers, engineers – came to the States. Tom knew them all. Tom also talked to them about how influential was the Baath Party. What does membership mean? We quickly learned that among all the ministries, all the universities, any government organization, the top level of management had to be members of the Baath Party. The example I use is, the head of the chemistry department at the University of Baghdad, a distinguished well-educated chemistry professor, when he was appointed head of the department – he told Tom, "One day there on my desk is, 'Congratulations, you are now a G12'" (I forget the number, the Baath Party did use a numbering system for its ranking); "You are now a G12 in the Baath Party." He went to his colleagues and said, "What is this? I don't want to join the Baath Party." They said, "You have no choice. You are now head of the chemistry department." It was a fairly senior ranking in the Baath Party. Congratulations. He didn't stay very long after that, he left for other reasons, too. We discovered this when we went

there as well – the Baath Party went a lot deeper than we thought it did, and a lot of it was precisely this. It was like being a member of the Communist Party, if you were a college professor in Poland for example –

Q: When I was in Yugoslavia, we learned that at a certain level just forget about membership because it didn't really mean anything.

KRAJESKI: Ahmed Chalabi, who hated the Baathis, he recognized that it was political, Ahmed was a very political animal. He would have made a great mayor of Chicago. He knew how to work the wards and how to manipulate people politically. He recognized that if we let this fairly well educated, middle tranche of the Baath Party remain in positions of authority, that they would challenge him as he attempted (as he did many times) to form a government, to get into parliament, to get a bloc, to be elected. Ahmed wanted to be prime minister of Iraq, he saw that as his natural role. And he saw the Baath Party as a natural opponent. He hated them; they had driven his family out in the '70s. He had left to Jordan and eventually to Britain and the United States, where he had made a lot of money. He also stole a lot in Jordan; that's under discussion. The Jordanians certainly believe he stole a lot out of a bank in Jordan. He ran the Petra Bank in Jordan and they say he absconded with quite a lot of cash. They actually convicted him in absentia; if he ever went back to Jordan they were going to throw him in jail. Though he was protected by the prince; it's a long story.

Anyway, Ahmed had a lot of influence in DOD, with Wolfowitz, Feith, Rumsfeld. He had a lot of influence in the vice president's office. He was adamant that anybody in the Baath Party in a position of any kind of authority or influence or power, whether it's just running power plants or running the power grid, or the head of the chemistry department at a university – they all had to go. That was the decision. I think that Bremer agreed at first with it. Jerry liked to make decisions, he did. Even though these two were not wholly his decisions. It was good to work for him – good to work for a guy who listened, thought, and made a decision. I think he agreed with this one in the beginning. He had thought like many that Chalabi was a potential leader. We had argued, and I had argued personally with him and others did, that Chalabi had to prove himself. He couldn't just prove himself to the Washington Post and to the vice president of the United States. He had to prove himself to the Iraqi people. After all, we're going to build a democracy in this country – aren't we? – so we can't choose their leaders for them. They're going to choose their own leaders. And if Chalabi has the credibility and leadership qualities that he says he has and that Douglas Feith thinks he has, great. But let's see if he can get support inside Iraq. He by the way was flown in by the Department of Defense, maybe a week after the liberation of Baghdad – we called it liberation in those days – end of March, early April was the day when Baghdad was cleared. Ahmed and his gang, his troops, his bodyguards, all were flown in from Erbil into Baghdad.

Very smart guy. First, he had some old property in Baghdad; the Chalabis were a fairly wealthy family in Baghdad before they were pushed out by Saddam. So he took over some of his old residences and then he took over the headquarters of the Mukhabarat, the Iraqi security and internal intelligence organization. He and his armed men occupied that

building. He was the first guy to get the files. In one of the houses he stayed in – there was a rumor, I think it's true – there was a tunnel. The house had been for a senior security guy, and there was a tunnel from there to the headquarters building, and Ahmed had literally rolled hundreds of file cabinets out of the headquarters and hidden them elsewhere in Baghdad, recognizing that information in those files could be extraordinarily valuable to his political career, to his drive to become leader of Iraq.

I don't know. It was true that he had files, because he gave some to us while we were there. He was very selective about what he gave to us; they usually incriminated people he saw as political opponents, people he wanted to besmirch. But Chalabi had a lot of influence. Bremer recognized him as having influence if not popular support. He was one of the early members of the interim Iraqi Governing Council, the IGC, that Crocker and Bremer had selected that was just taking office in July 2003.

Those two decisions – the one on the army I think is a little overstated. The one on de-Baathification was a mistake. Bremer recognized it. Bremer didn't do a lot of regrets, he wasn't that kind of guy. That's a quality of a leader; he didn't dwell a lot, you took a look at where you were and when he recognized that we really needed the head of the chemistry department because we wanted to reopen the university in September – one of his main goals was to reopen all the schools in September; we didn't get there because most of the school and university building like everything else had been looted. They didn't just come in and take books and furniture – they stripped wiring out of walls. They took tiles off the walls. You'd walk into these building and there's nothing. They took the door frames off.

Q: What'd they do with them?

KRAJESKI: I don't know! Sold them, used them in their own houses? For example, we protected oil and electricity infrastructure. We tried to protect a few other things. Once the museum had been looted, we protected the museum. Finally. Going back to an anecdote I think is in George Packer's book, The Assassin's Gate, which remains one of the best books on what I'm talking about. Anybody listening to me now should go read The Assassin's Gate, because George got a lot right. Bremer's book has a lot of interesting background in it too. While it's a self-justification memoir, which all the big guys write (Bremer's not alone in it), there's a lot of good information in that too. In Packer's The Assassin's Gate, he talks about the looting of the museum. There was a squad of American military who were on the street as the museum is being broken into. One of the curators of the museum ran out and said, "You have to stop this!" And the soldier said, "It's not our assignment. I'm not here to protect the museum; I'm here to see the people don't kill each other on the streets. If they're walking out with art, I can't arrest them." We changed quickly, we started protecting some of these key places, including the museum – a little late. I remember getting a tour of the museum as we were bringing stuff back in. People actually brought a lot of things back; Iraqis recognized that stealing their artifacts was not a good thing to do. A lot of looting incidents I think from what I've read – a lot of looters regret. They get caught up in the moment. Somebody breaks the window, so they grab a TV and go home and say, "Oh shit, I just stole a TV."

They bring it back. This has happened in some cases. Now stripping copper wire out of the ministry of transportation or ministry of education is a whole different type of looting, and that's what they had.

Bremer recognized that we were going to have to restore some of these civilian jobs, get people back into them. With the officers and the army, he recognized that if we don't pay these guys, they're going to join the insurgency. They're going to go out and try to make money however they can. They're going to become our enemies – and this is a large percentage of the population who were dependent on this officer corps. We started paying them. It was not quite their full salaries. So Bremer would look and say, "How do we redress this? We need to train a new army, we need to bring back these people." They wanted to establish a South African style truth and reconciliation council. This had been discussed before the war, Tom Warrick had led some discussions on it. Recognizing that afterwards, there were going to be a lot of people seeking revenge and retribution –

Q: It worked quite well in South Africa.

KRAJESKI: It did work in South Africa. I'm not quite sure why or how well. Different circumstance. It was not going to work in Iraq. What Saddam had done to the Shia in the south, especially after the first Iraq war in '91 was not going to be easily forgiven. Saddam like a lot of these guys, the people who had positions of authority were beholden to Saddam. He made sure their hands were bloody, too. He made sure if he went down, they were going to go down. The Shia communities in the south were not into truth and reconciliation; they were into revenge and retribution. We saw that develop into full-scale sectarian civil war in 2005, 2006, the peak of it.

How do you deal with the former Baathis? They did establish his un-Baathification process where a Baath Party member could be interviewed, then this committee of Iraqis would decide whether or not this guy could have his job back. It was a pretty humiliating process. All Iraqis do not take humiliation well. I've worked in the Arab world for 25 years; they are the toughest people, the hardest. Yemenis are really tough too, but until recently they weren't nearly as prone to violence as Iraqis are. And Iraqis don't forget and don't forgive. Shia or Sunni or Kurd. This is my – I spent a lot of time, especially with the Kurds and the Shia; I didn't spend as much time with the Sunni, interestingly. The Kurds? For what Saddam did during the Anfal campaign [1988-90] in which he wiped out whole Kurdish villages. Drove them out; forced people to Arabize their names if they wanted to stay; become Arabs. He actually launched a series of aerial gas attacks on Kurdish villages; killed hundreds of people. Kurds were not going to forgive that. When they came back into Kirkuk, they made a lot of those Sunnis who had taken Kurdish residences (because the Kurds had fled under Anfal), they took the houses back and often took revenge. I remember meeting with one Kurdish leader in 2003 at his house in Kirkuk, who said, "I went back to the village that my mother and I fled in 1978. That was my village. I rebuilt my house." And I said, "What happened to the people who lived there." He said, "They left." I said, "Did they all just leave?" He said, "Well, we killed most of them." I said, "Women and children?" He said, "We tried not to."

That wasn't going to work. As I said, Chalabi had a number of reasons, mostly political, that he didn't want the Baath Party back in positions of authority. But he also had great support from the Kurds and Shia. Chalabi is a Shia, as secular as I am about my Christianity, I think he changed in later years, to become more religious because he thought that would get him more political support. Or maybe he actually had a change of heart; I shouldn't judge the man.

So Chalabi's the head of this [de-Baathification] council. Bremer has no choice. This is going to be an Iraqi process, we're not going to have any part in it. Chalabi began to grate on Bremer; Bremer soured on Chalabi relatively quickly. Chalabi is a real bureaucratic, political maneuverer. And Bremer is a pretty savvy bureaucratic maneuverer. He recognized right away. Within that Iraqi Governing Council of 15 I think, Chalabi was one of the dominant members. An example of Chalabi's cleverness – the council is formed. They're all equals; there are so many Sunni, so many Shia, so many Kurds. There's secular, religious – there's a mix of people in it. Carefully selected by Bremer with Ryan Crocker and the governance people in the lead to select these people. From different parts of the country. Mostly inexperienced in governing. Some had had some government experience, guys like Ayad Allawi, who was the head of the Iraqi National Accord, a Sunni/Shia secular party that he had headed in London. He actually got elected to parliament and at one point had a majority in parliament, but we supported Malaki in the election, Allawi did not become prime minister, something I'm sure he's not forgotten. This governing council – the first discussion, is who's going to head it. There will be three – a Sunni, a Kurd and a Shia. How to determine who that's going to be? The discussions went on. I had just arrived. A colleague of mine, Danny Rubinstein actually had the lead for the governance team, going over there every day. Bremer is meeting with these guys individually, as a group, almost every day. He was very frustrated with it, the lack of decision making. So Chalabi proposed they would rotate the chair, the head position, monthly. So they all agreed they would do that, rotate it monthly. So then, who will be the first one? Ahmed said, "We'll do it alphabetically."

The first one was a guy named Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who became prime minister briefly later on and even recently had a cabinet position. He was the first one. Interesting guy, Shia who had been exiled and returned. Not sure of the details, I did not know him before the war. This is August. Who's next on the list? Chalabi. Chalabi had very cleverly outmaneuvered everyone, because he's the head during September. The first UN General Assembly meeting since the liberation of Iraq, and Chalabi is the head of the Iraqi government, the interim Iraqi Governing Council. So he goes to New York as a guest of the UN and the president of the United States. He's the one who is the face of the new Iraq to much of the world. Didn't get him where he wanted to go, but it was a fairly deft political move I thought. He also got invited to the state of the union address in January as a representative of the Iraqi government, sat in that row of the president's guests that they always show during the address.

Life was not bad. I got to travel a lot those first months. I had to go to each of the provincial capitals, scope out where we would put our offices, talk to the military there who were doing the civil affairs work – conducting elections, trying to form local

councils, trying to get the roads repaired, trying to get schools reopened, hospitals up and running. Often on the trips I would carry a gym bag stuffed with packets of \$100 bills that we would use on the ground. I remember a trip with Mike Gfoeller who was the head of the south, the senior civilian in the south. He was there when I arrived; we'd already established these provincial teams in a couple of major cities, Hillah being the major one in the south. He had Najaf and Karbala, the two main Shia cities, under his authority. He worked very closely with a very large military-civilian affairs team. You'd take the money, drive to a hospital where they were refurbishing an emergency room, training doctors – and he would give the project managers so many thousand dollars for work that had been done, so many thousand dollars for work that was being planned. So I got to travel, I didn't have to stay in the palace, I didn't have to live in the Green Zone.

We were a little stupid about it; civilians are stupid about war when we get involved in it. First, we figured "What war?" Some folks really believed there was no insurgency, even though IEDs (improvised explosive devices) by September of 2003 were popping off fairly regularly. It was then the military realized they didn't have enough armored Humvees; they were letting guys ride around in unarmored vehicles that were getting popped.

The CPA had purchased hundreds of white GMC Envoys; this is a small SUV (sport utility vehicle), about the size of a Honda CRV or a [Toyota] 4-runner, a small SUV. All white, all brand new, and we had dozens of them. The governance section had eight assigned to it. We'd hang the keys on the door, and when you had to go out around Baghdad, you picked the key up, walked out into a big old dirt parking lot across from the palace where dozens of these vehicles were parked. You hit the horn button on the key and listened for the horn, see where the lights were flashing so you could see which car was yours. Get in it, drive out of the Green Zone through the Assassin's Gate or one of the gates – the Rashid Gate was a pedestrian gate, I used to walk out of that one – and just take off and see Chalabi or visit somebody in town. We did this at night, although by September we were more cautious about going out at night. When we had a couple of these cars attacked, a restaurant where we used to go – We used to go out to restaurants, to have dinner at these restaurants. We thought the country was [secure] – that the military did its job. It was really dumb. One of the restaurants was firebombed with a couple of [our] guys in it. Slowly we were being restricted about how and when we could go out. And we did – stupidly, naively, with good intentions. We said, "OK, so the white vehicles are now noticeable, I don't want to be driving around in one of these Envoys, everybody in town knows this is a CPA vehicle." Plus I'm a blue-eyed white guy whose Arabic is – I can pass for a Lebanese sometimes, if we've all been drinking a little bit. But mostly people know I'm not an Iraqi.

So we hired two Iraqi drivers and their cars. Ahmed, the guy I used all the time, had a Nissan. It was a right-hand drive Nissan because they had bought it out of India and Pakistan. He'd been a taxi driver before the war. So we hired him, and got him clearance to come into the Green Zone. So when I wanted to go somewhere, I cleverly would go with Ahmed in his old black Nissan – there were thousands of them on the streets, all driven by Iraqis. I'd sit in the front seat in my dark coat and go to meetings. I did that for

a while, too. I felt safer on the street and really did attract less attention. When we came back into the Green Zone – there had been a couple of car bombs, one near the Assassin's Gate that killed a lot of people. Then [Mohamed Baqr al-Hakim] had been killed, a senior Shia leader, he was killed in a car bomb down in Najaf coming out of a mosque – we thought that was really shocking. And the UN building had been attacked, [Sergio] de Mello, the Brazilian diplomat – a really brilliant and good guy, he had been killed, and a number of his political team who we knew. One thing that Bremer wanted to do was bring the UN into the political discussion, because people trusted the UN more than they trusted us. Washington hated that idea. One of my jobs was liaising between the governance team and the political team at the UN. Until de Mello died – that lasted about two weeks, then the UN was attacked and the UN withdrew from Iraq, came back in only slowly.

So it was more dangerous to get out, but we were able to do it. The hard part with my Iraqi driver and the Nissan was getting back in to the Green Zone, because you had to wait in line. With the Envoy you could skip the line, go off to the side –they recognized it as one of their cars, the guard would check your ID and boom, you were back in. With an Iraqi car, you had to wait. The car would be searched, hood up. There were a couple of incidents in the early days, as we were increasing security for cars getting into the Green Zone, of cars being fired on. The guards, usually Americans but not always, sometimes different coalition members – something would happen, they would feel threatened, and would fire on a car. They killed an Italian aid worker who stupidly turned off his headlights and drove a little too fast towards the checkpoint coming in. We learned – turn on the lights in the car, turn off your headlights, stand off a hundred yards. I would take my CPA ID that said FEOC on it, and I would wave it out the window. They would motion you to come forward slowly. They didn't like letting Ahmed in, even though he had CPA ID. They didn't like the car. Sometimes they made me get out of it and walk in while they kept the car outside the gate and searched it more thoroughly. It became more of a hassle.

Then the last story on that. I mentioned I was at the Rashid Hotel. I would walk out through the pedestrian entrance. The governing council met at a building right next to the Rashid. It became the parliament's building once parliament was formed. A lot of Iraqis who worked for the government and were cleared came in that pedestrian gate at the Rashid. It was very convenient for me when I was at the hotel because I could walk out it, and an Iraqi friend could meet me in his car, a guy named Hatem Mukhlis who I'm going to get in touch with soon, he's back in New York – he's given up the fight. He's a Sunni I had known before the war. He lived in Baghdad; his father had been a high ranking diplomat and a senior general under Saddam whose family had been involved in a failed attempt to remove Saddam from power. He was arrested and tortured for a year, kept in a pine box, a coffin basically with air holes in it for six months. Hatem and the whole family fled when this happened.

He moved back [to Iraq in 2003], he was one of the guys who really wanted to move back when Saddam was gone. He was trying to form a political party of moderate Sunnis. He was from Tikrit, which was Saddam's home town. The Mukhlis name had great

weight. He used to take me to political meetings with him; I'd meet these party members. I'd always get great meals, too.

At least we didn't have to eat MREs (meals ready-to-eat) in the Palace, they opened the first DFAC, dining facility – for a long time I had no idea what DFAC stood for, I figured it was another stupid acronym. It's just “dining facility” – DFAC. They opened it in the palace, the enormous south hall I think it was, the one that had enormous murals of missiles on the walls, Scuds. It had Saddam's sayings, which Bremer had painted over. They looked like they were Koranic verses etched into the walls, but they were Saddam's saying, “Chairman Saddam” sort of things. Bremer had them all covered up. But they opened the DFAC. I really did have an easy stay. Not only did I not have to live in the north hall with 200 other guys; I didn't have to eat MREs. We had a huge supply of them in the governance section which I would take with me when I was going out. You'd work for 10 hours straight, you'd get back, the DFAC was closed, so there's an MRE that we would loot – I would loot it for the pound cake, or the M&Ms. You ate the main meal only (laughter)... They had self-heating pouches – add water, it was supposed to heat the inner pouch which had chicken a la king or something. I tried those a couple of times, it never really worked.

Q: During the Korean War, they would have clean garbage cans, boiling. You'd reach in and get these cans which were left over from World War II.

KRAJESKI: Right. The hard thing is they wouldn't kill you... My first meal [in the DFAC] was all the guys from the governance section, some military guys – big communal tables in there. And everybody was so happy. They had white bread, cold cuts, cornbread, milk. To me it was like bland cafeteria food, and I was picking at it. They were chowing down, so happy.

I used to go out with Hatem. One of the reasons I went out often was we got a real Iraqi meal, and I love Arabic food. Iraqis cooked this fish called mazgouf, this grilled river carp. Probably not the healthiest fish given the condition of the water. But they slit it open, put it on a wood plank, cooked it outside banked against a fire, slowly. It's so good.

Q: One of the things I've heard is that many of the civilians who were sent out were ardent young American Republicans with no particular skills.

KRAJESKI: But they were loyal to the president.

Q: They were loyal supporters. Did you run across them?

KRAJESKI: Oh, yes. The best book for this by the way is Rajiv Chandrasekaran's Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone. He takes that year and talks about precisely this. Two things were happening. One is we had money out the kazoo, so you had contractors from every corner of the United States trying to get a piece of the action. Some of them had no idea how to do the job we were going to pay them to do. So you had a lot of people out there literally winging it. Then you had a lot of them – This

was the Liberation of Iraq, this was going to be the establishment of a genuine Arab free market democracy in the heart of the Middle East. I have heard this from a number of people – this was going to be the breakthrough that would lead to peace in the Middle East, including a resolution of the Israel-Palestine dispute. One of the first things a new Iraqi government would do, I heard at a meeting in Washington, was to recognize the State of Israel. I choked on my coffee. I said, “There’s no effing way that any government is going to be able to do this, because they won’t be the government much longer.”

But there were a lot of believers. I sat in a meeting toward the end of September 2003, in one of the ante-rooms to Bremer’s office – Bremer was not at this meeting – and we were discussing working with the Kurds. I spent a lot of time working with the Kurds up in Kirkuk, and we very much wanted the Kurds in this new federal government that was slowly being formed. Bremer was trying to get a constitutional convention together to write a constitution, something that the senior Shia cleric in the south, Ali al-Sistani, opposed and issued a fatwa against. Bremer still thought he could do it, get it done with other Shia leaders. Sistani wanted it to be elected. We were having a discussion about some aspect of this constitutional convention. I was there because I was going to talk to Emma Sky, a British woman, our civilian in Kirkuk in 2003. She just wrote an excellent book in Iraq called The Unraveling. We’re in this meeting, probably 15 people; couple of military guys, mostly civilian, a couple from governance. This is an internal meeting; we’re discussing how we’re going to set up this constitutional convention. There were three or four young folks in the room who had just arrived. They didn’t have jobs.

A lot of people arrived and didn’t have a job – that surprised me. They would just show up in the governance section and say, “Hey, I’m looking for a job. Do you need somebody? I volunteered to come.” There was an office at DOD that would process people through, and they were just under instructions to send a lot of people. “CPA needs people, send them!” So they’d come and they wouldn’t have jobs. At a certain point, I said “Thank you, we’re full up. I don’t have desk space, I don’t have a mission for you.” And they’d smile and go on and find a job in another one of these gargantuan offices that were being formed in Baghdad. I think at our peak we had 3000 people there, with CPA. Counting military, who are assigned to CPA.

So I’m in this meeting, talking about trying to get this [constitutional convention] done and Sistani’s opposition to it. I was arguing that if Sistani doesn’t want to do it, it’s not going to happen and we need to find an alternative, because he’s the senior Shia cleric and has more than half the population behind him. We cannot do an appointed convention; it was our idea to select from all over Iraq the participants for this convention, who would then write a new constitution which would enable us to supervise the first national election, the first parliament, and then turn it over to this newly elected government. This kid said, “The president wants it to happen. If it doesn’t happen, it’s going to embarrass the president.” It’s 2003, and the election season is starting to gin up. Bush towards the end of 2003 – it was later that there was a chance he was going to lose the election. He said, “We’ve got to make sure the president of the United States is re-elected. That’s why we’re here.”

I just stood up and said, “This meeting is going nowhere. I’m not going to participate. I don’t give a damn if George Bush is re-elected president of the United States. That’s not why I’m here; I’m here because we are trying to build a new government in a country that we invaded, and we occupy. We’ve got to make it work, because we did it. But I’m not here to re-elect the president of the United States.” He [this young man] said, “I’m going to have you thrown out; you’re not going to be working for the CPA much longer.” I was due to leave in like two weeks; I left in mid-October to go back to my job at State.

I did learn later that one of the guys in our office, his job there was to spy on the State guys for DOD. You know this [Clinton] email controversy? We all had private email addresses. We all used private email to send communication back to the State Department in my case, because the State Department system wasn’t out there. We could only use the DOD system and there were some things that Armitage and others didn’t want on the DOD system. I also learned that there were things that CPA or the vice president’s office or OSD didn’t want on DOD system, either. So they used private.

I learned this because this one guy, I won’t mention his name [Michael Rubin], he’s still active I think at the American Enterprise Institute. I almost always was the first one into the office; I didn’t like to work really late so I would leave at eight or nine o’clock at night. Some folks stayed till midnight or one AM. But I would get in at seven [in the morning], or 6:30, whenever the first shuttle left from the Rashid, I’d get on it. So I would open up the office. Unlock it, start up the printers and turn the lights on, get coffee – I usually got coffee before, it was a long walk to the coffee shop. Then sit down and start work. As I was firing up one of the printers, it started spitting out paper; somebody had sent something to print, and had forgotten about it or the printer was out of paper. I’m sure you’ve seen this happen. It starts printing the last print job. It was printouts of emails from this guy [Rubin] to his boss at OSD, talking about me and what I was doing, who I was meeting with. “He’s up in Kirkuk, he’s down in...” There was no reason. There was nothing particularly bad. He didn’t like me very much, I didn’t like him. He knew a lot about the Kurds, and he didn’t like them, he didn’t like the Barzanis or Talibanis, he was one of the few in the CPA who would argue we shouldn’t be so close to them. He made good arguments. He was valuable to the political section. He would go to the north on his own, wander around Iraqi Kurdistan. Meet fascinating people, really had a sense of what was going on up there. Then he wouldn’t let me see the reports. I’d say, “Michael, just show me what you’ve written, that’s all I want. We can put it into some of our reporting.” He would send them directly back to his bosses. Occasionally he would show them to me. I tried to establish a professional relationship with him. So much for civility.

The last security incident. I walked out to meet with Hatem Mukhlis to go to one of these wonderful dinners and political meetings. They all spoke Tikriti Arabic with each other. The Iraqi dialects are impenetrable, unless you live there and listen to them. They would sit around the table and I would say in my book Arabic, “Come on, can you guys speak in standard?” B’fus-ha, meaning TV Arabic, so I could understand them. He always had wine, sometimes scotch. A very nice evening. He’d always have interesting people from

Tikrit, from elsewhere, all very dedicated people. Good reports. He wanted our money; we weren't supporting political parties with money; that was a no-no. Some other U.S. government organizations were, but State and CPA did not. This is when we liked them, hoped it would succeed.

One of the roundabout roads led to the Rashid and the pedestrian gate. He dropped me off at the checkpoint about midnight. I had had a couple of scotches, a little wine. I was tired, a little drunk. Got out of the car, and they had just changed as they often did the procedures for getting into the CPA. They had literally, in the time I was gone from six o'clock in the evening until midnight, they had rolled out razor wire and created this long corridor, almost from the roundabout to the pedestrian gate. It was fairly narrow, maybe six feet wide. You had to walk down this path bounded by razor wire. Razor wire is ugly, nasty stuff, it really cuts you. It was dark, the lights were off, so I'm having a really hard time seeing.

I'm a little drunk. I had forgotten to do the main thing, which is take your ID out of your pocket before you approach, and put it around your neck so it's visible around your neck. Because, at least the night before, there had been lights, so they could see – "OK, tall, blue-eyed white guy with a CPA ID," they're not going to shoot him right away, they're going to let you come in and maybe shoot you later. I had my ID in my pocket; I was tired and drunk and it was dark. So the first thing I did, the gate is 75 yards away. I'm walking, and I'm wary of this wire. I reached into my pocket and took out my flashlight – I carried a Maglite with me almost everywhere I went because you lost power in the hotel all the time. I switched it on, and this booming voice over a bullhorn came out from the checkpoint, and said "Drop the flashlight, keep your hands in sight, do not move."

I looked down and on my chest are these little red dots [laser points from a rifle sighting device]. Then I realized, I have to go into my pocket to get my ID. They said, "Identify yourself. Show identification." I shouted back (I have a big, loud voice fortunately), "It's in my pocket." He said, "You reach in very..." The thing is, what the suicide bombers had done, their hands would be in their pocket where they had their clicker; they'd release it and boom, it would go off. So they wanted to see your hands. So I reached in and took it out. They had night vision goggles on, and I held it out. As I moved closer they switched on a bank of lights. I walked in, got into the checkpoint. These were kids, 20, 21 years old.

Q: This is a scary thing, the military thing. The people with guns are pretty damned young.

KRAJESKI: They're extremely well-trained, and thank god they were well-trained. Because they didn't shoot me. He [the soldier] said, "We were this close to taking you down." I needed a change of underwear. (Laughter) I staggered back to the bar at the Rashid and had another drink.

Q: I always think about the story, an officer going on the rounds of guards. "Give the password," and he gave the password. The guard said, "Give the password." And he

says, "I already gave you the password, why are you asking." And he said, "My orders are sir, to ask for the password three times and shoot!" (Laughter)

KRAJESKI: I still have a lot to talk about.

Q: The next time, I would like to ask how you felt about the situation at the time and when you left. Was anything happening on the ground, and what would you say were your main dealings there? What were you doing?

KRAJESKI: Since that time and after I became ambassador in Yemen, then went on as vice president at the National Defense University, which is a great job. Did you ever go to NDU? For visits, you didn't go to school there? It's a fabulous place. I spent a lot of time over here because we were trying to sell a closer relationship with FSI. Ruth Whiteside was the head.

I used to participate in the ethics and dissent portions of the A-100 class. They do a couple of days where they bring in officers who had both policy and moral and ethical challenges during their career, and how did they deal with them. I talk about my opposition to – first, I was a conscientious objector during Vietnam. I worked in hospitals, I refused to join the military. I thought I was going to go to jail, in 1970. As a diplomat, you're working for peace, always. So this was the first time I had been involved closely both in the policy deliberations leading to the war, and then to the aftermath of the war – living in a place closely with the military and watching this country that I didn't know all that well because we hadn't had anybody in that country for years. All of my reports were tinged, that outside look in. But watching as the country was beginning to disintegrate.

Again, I was working mostly with the Kurds who were a different part of that disintegration. Talking to people like Hatem Mukhlis who knew the Sunni community very well as the Sunni community more and more opposed the American presence in Iraq, as Al Qaeda in Iraq gained strength, and watching the fabric of the country really start to tear apart, and recognizing that had we not invaded, that would not have happened. It would have been Saddam Hussein, he would have remained in power. We talked about why the president of the United States decided to remove him from power, and my decision once the president had made his decision, to continue to serve him and my country in what for me was the defining issue of my career. Certainly the most dramatic thing I've done in my life.

You talk to the kids; there were I think two officers before the war who resigned in protest. I have issues with both of them. There were many Foreign Service officers whom I think behaved badly in that they deliberately, actively shirked service in Iraq. They refused to go. They maneuvered so they would not have to go, because they opposed the policy. I could see because it was damned risky and dangerous, "I don't want to go." In my next iteration in Iraq five years later, I was the head of career development, recruiting people to go to Iraq – but there were some who through assignments, maneuvering, using influence with senior officers, they escaped service in Iraq. Then there were those like me

who said, “I think this is a bad decision, but it’s a decision we made and now we the Foreign Service, the State Department, have a responsibility to do everything we can to make this work.” That we failed... we failed. I’m one who said that Iraq is permanently broken and is not going to recover. Others will argue against that, I have a lot of good friends who say, “It still has parliament and an elected government.” We talked a lot about that. We’ll talk a little more about that next time, about the hardness of the decision and the disintegration of the country, the military-civilian relationship which was not great in the CPA at the leadership level.

Q: Today is the 13th of May, 2016 – Friday the 13th, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, do you remember where we left off?

KRAJESKI: I had been describing my adventures in Iraq, hadn’t quite finished with that. You had left me with the question, “Next week I want to talk a bit more about how you felt about the whole adventure, how you felt about these policy decisions which were clearly” – certainly from my perspective, the most dramatic and controversial issue that I was involved in. I thought I would talk a little bit about that.

The recorders may have been off; I’ve actually put together a presentation for the ethics exercise, one of the policy exercises that the A-100 classes have.

Q: The incoming Foreign Service officer class.

KRAJESKI: Right. And they have a day when they invite a number of people from State to talk about decisions they were involved in or that they were affected by in which they had a moral choice to make. They talked about some of the previous Foreign Service officers who resigned in protest to policy decisions made by the administration. Often these were senior officers. Tony Lake is the one mentioned the most frequently as one of the more senior officers who resigned during Vietnam. It has always been recognized in talking about dissent – and this is part of the dissent day. When you’re talking about dissent, there may come a time when you are so opposed to a policy that you feel it necessary to resign. This is considered to be an honorable decision to make. We are not the military; we are not sworn to serve regardless. There’s no punishment for resignation, but it’s a fairly serious move to make. I have respect for those officers.

Getting back to Iraq, in 2003 when the decision was made that we were going to change the government, remove Saddam Hussein from power. Over the course of the year in 2002 various options were explored how to do that, and in the end we used the U.S. military as the head of a huge international coalition, with the U.S. military being 90% of that, to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam’s government by force. A couple of Foreign Service officers did resign over this decision. They were so opposed to using military force in this fashion that they resigned. There was one officer, a political officer; I’m not sure what rank he was, maybe O1, who resigned out of Athens. He had editorials, op-eds in the Times and the Post explaining why he resigned in his protest to it. There were one or two others who were less in the public, but very few.

Q: I interviewed one, a woman who was in I think Mongolia, political officer, DCM there.

KRAJESKI: Some people also resigned during the course of the war. Of course, it was a very long one. Particularly when it was going badly – lots of people were dying in Iraq; a lot of Americans, but a LOT of Iraqis as the place was collapsing into a sectarian civil war, in 2005 and 2006 in particular. A number of officers, rather than go to Iraq, resigned and refused to participate in it. Again, I think an honorable course of action for a Foreign Service officer. I did not choose to resign, and it was a very difficult decision.

I had just been promoted to senior service. I had just been told I was going to be the nominee for the ambassadorship, chief of mission to Sanaa. And we invaded. I had known for some months that we were going to use military force. Some of this is probably still classified. Most of it is not; I'm not too worried about it. It was clear probably as early as September and October of 2002 that nobody had any confidence that the United Nations process of increasing sanctions and forcing Saddam to accept inspections, that the inspection teams that went in – they did go, in October, November, December of 2002 – that they were going to have much success. Particularly after the first tranche of information that Saddam, that the government gave to them; most of it was just crap, and it was recognized very quickly by professional inspectors who had a lot of experience in this, that this was just crap that he was giving us. So there was increasing suspicion that he was covering up, which only buttressed the general acceptance among most everybody, including those of us at State, that it was going to be necessary to use the military to remove Saddam Hussein. All of the arguments over the wisdom of that were long passed; we were going to do it.

I had a number of things. First, I was not morally opposed to this war. I did not think it was immoral for the United States to use its military power to protect, as they were being defined then, its security interests and those of its allies and friends in the region. I also did not have a moral opposition to using the military to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein in particular.

For me, it was a political decision. I thought, at my lowly station in the State Department, that it was not a wise decision. But it had been made, and I was not morally opposed to it, as I had been morally opposed to the war in Vietnam. As I mentioned, I was a conscientious objector. I did two years of alternative service, rather than serve in the military in 1970. For me, it was a decision I thought very carefully about. I also, I mentioned earlier, I had a team at the State Department whom I was very dedicated to. Led by Ryan Crocker, Jim LaRocco, Bill Burns, the NEA, my colleagues David Pearce, Yael Lempert, Steve Beecroft, Jonathan Carpenter, were people I had a lot of respect for. The people in the military whom I knew and worked with. There was a sense that – two things were going on. One, the president of the United States, for whom we had signed an oath of office, we had taken an oath, we had signed a contract, we had agreed to serve at the pleasure of the secretary of State, the president of the United States. That was a serious commitment. We also had looked very closely – closer than most people – into this decision and what we thought would be the likely outcome of it, recognized that this

was going to be an extraordinarily difficult enterprise that the United States was embarking on, and the United States of America would need us, would need experienced Foreign Service officers, Arabic speaking, who had been in the region. They would need us in Iraq, if we had any chance of succeeding.

Whatever the claims being made – and some of them were outlandish, that we were going to create a Jeffersonian democracy in Iraq and bring peace to the region finally, recognition of Israel. People were singing huzzahs and hosannas long before they realized just how difficult this was going to be. But if we were going to have any chance of succeeding – a much lower degree of success, we defined success much differently – then we had to be there.

The second part of it was through-out the last part of the process, we were denigrated. The people at State were thought to be opposed to the decision (which we were), and that we were somehow actively trying to undermine the president's decision, that we were being disloyal to the president, that we weren't on board with the policy.

Q: This is coming from Cheney, Defense – there was a very strong political neocon group that thought this was the greatest thing that ever happened, change the whole game.

KRAJESKI: They wanted to do it from the beginning, and I talked a bit about the circumstances that enabled them to persuade the president. I don't think George W. Bush came into office in 2001 determined to overthrow Saddam Hussein. It was an option out there, but I believe he had other issues in the Middle East that he was more focused on. Of course, 9/11 – nine months into his presidency, he had this horrific attack on the United States. I don't think his focus was, "I'm going to bring down Saddam." There are ridiculous stories about how they were going to do it because Saddam tried to assassinate his father. Some truth to this, in Kuwait – "They tried to kill my daddy so..."

Q: You don't crank up the entire military to do this...

KRAJESKI: That was kind of ridiculous, but there were things like that in his motivation. But there clearly were people in his administration and a group of so-called neocons, people like Richard Pearle, who's named as the most prominent of them, who I think very much wanted to persuade the president that this was the right thing to do. For many reasons, including those we've been talking about – building this democracy. I talked about Ahmed Chalabi's influence on these people. But the point is, the decision had been made. The military was poised to go in. I remember sitting in a meeting with Ryan Crocker; Yael may have been there, I forget, a few of us in the room. And he said, "We're going to have to make this decision. We all think this is a mistake, but the president has made the decision. We need to support him, we need to support whatever enterprise goes on." I talked a little bit about the early days with Jay Garner and the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). And we needed to support them.

I'm not morally opposed to this. I'm a professional Foreign Service officer. I have a commitment to my president. I have a sense of duty to my team and to the people at State with whom I'd been working for almost a year and a half on this issue. I'm not prepared to walk away from it.

The second part – I may have mentioned this already – in the course of those two years or year and a half that I'd been working on the desk, one of my jobs had been to work with Iraqis in exile. I mentioned the Future of Iraq project that Tom Warrick was doing, the funding for Iraqi National Congress, my many trips to London. I went to Detroit a number of times to meet with the Iraqi community. I met a lot of people who had pretty horrific tales to tell about the government in Baghdad, about Saddam Hussein, about his sons. These are pretty rough. People being raped, kidnapped, arrested, tortured, imprisoned for years. Lot of people who fled the country; most of the people I met fled because a threat had been made or relative had been killed. They saw this regime becoming increasingly brutal, and they got the hell out of there. I knew a lot of these people. They would show me pictures of this sister who had been raped. This meant a lot to me. It was part of my own rationale – and rationale is maybe too rational a word to use, but it was part of that whole body of reasoning that I used and I developed to decide, “OK, I'm going to do this. I'm going to go in, and we'll see what happens.”

So, that's what I did. I described what we did in Iraq for that first year. I was only there for three months; I talked about the 90 day wonders. It was our intention to rotate people out of NEA. In the early days, it was felt that only NEA people really could do this; you really needed Arabists. I can remember sitting at my desk in the palace. One of my jobs was to recruit people to come to Iraq to serve in the provincial teams that we were building in all the provincial capitals. I was a little shocked; I would go back to NEA and to HR and say, “Tell me everybody in the State Department who has 2/2 [measurement of speaking and reading ability on a 1-5 scale] or above Arabic. And everybody who has some service in the Middle East.” I was looking for people who had military background, because there were a lot of Foreign Service officers who did a military stint – three, four, five, six years, sometimes longer, then they joined the State Department. Because I knew we were going to work cheek-to-jowl, literally sleeping with the military out there in these provincial teams. So people that had a military background, I wanted to look at them.

I was kind of surprised how little information we had on our people. They sent me an email with this attachment of a database of Foreign Service officers who had reached a 2/2 in Arabic. They dated it back to like 1990 (this is 2003), and there were hundreds, hundreds of names on this list. I was so surprised to see how many people had done the one or two year course of Arabic, and then had done one tour in the Arab world, and not another one. So when I reached out to them in 2003, they were like “I don't have Arabic, it's gone.” Fundamentally, that's kind of stupid. So now I'm looking at people who are actually capable in Arabic. I want to offer the military the best Arabic speakers we can get, and it was amazing how few of them there were in 2003; how few competent Arabic speakers we had. I forget the number, but it was in the low hundreds of people we had who had 3/3s and could actually get out in the field. I wasn't looking for native fluency, I

was looking for competency. Very few people – and almost all of them I knew personally. Almost all of them were serving in NEA posts or had just left NEA posts, and in many cases really tough posts. NEA's got a lot of places that are kind of hard on people and on their families. They were in places like Rome or Washington [after Mideast service]. Or maybe they were in Cairo after having served in Sanaa or in Khartoum. So they're in Cairo with their family and I'm going to yank them out and send them to Iraq. Guys like Robert Ford, our DCM in Bahrain.

It was a difficult recruitment process, and there was no way I was going to be able to find people – because we were only going to send them out three months at a time. “We'll take you out of Bahrain for three months, throw you into Najaf” – which is where Robert Ford ended up – “and then back again.” It was a ridiculous system. It was very hard. I remember punching the phone to talk to FSOs (Foreign Service officers). Also the word was out there that we're looking. There were a lot of guys, men and women, who raised their hand and said, “If you want me, I'll go. Here's my qualifications.” Which is kind of gratifying. The toughest job in the Foreign Service arguably in 2003 is to go to Najaf and live with the military and try to work with the local governments in a dangerous, hard place, without a lot of support. I remember talking to this vice-consul, first or second tour officer, down in Medellin, Colombia. He had some Arabic, some military experience, and just wanted to get the hell out of the visa line in Medellin. We sent him to Baqubah. Tom Rosenthal, or Rosen, what a good guy. Baqubah was one of the toughest and most dangerous places, just east of Baghdad.

Always when you were talking to people – I mentioned this I think when the recorders went off last week. My last point on this – how did I feel about it? Point of honor, if you resign in protest, honorable thing to do. Most people, raising their hand, saying “OK, I'll do it. Tough job, hard place. I'm a Foreign Service officer, I'll do it.” It made me proud. Part of this was to prove to these folks who thought that somehow we were the weak link in the U.S. government's effort to build a democracy in Iraq. Prove to them that, “No, we're going to be part of this effort.” The one thing I couldn't tolerate were the people I contacted – some of whom were colleagues, whom I knew, who had the Arabic, had the experience – who said to me, “No, I'm not going to go. I'm opposed to this policy. This is a disaster in the making; I'm not going to go.” I was just stunned by this, that they would do this. To a couple of them, we said, “No, you are going to go.” This happened more in 2008 when I was recruiting for the surge and went back and did this again. It was a shock to me that people would maneuver their assignments in such a way that, “No, I'm not going to be available for Iraq.”

I did that for three months. At the end of the day in October, I left my hotel room at the Rashid. The hotel was attacked five days later; people were killed, they closed the hotel. I went back [home], and literally within three days of returning I was at Myrtle Beach playing golf with my buddies, my brother and friends. We've all had experiences in the Foreign Service, the shock of being in one place and then suddenly being in another. Coming out of Iraq, that whole experience, and then finding myself at the first tee at the Love course at the Barefoot Landing resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina was one of the greater shocks. As you move around – I'm sure you had them, too. One day you're

pulling your hair out working [in some hell-hole]. Next day you're sitting on a beach on the Riviera. And you don't have to go back!

Although at that point, I was really trying to go back. I had told Bremer I would try to go back. Armitage and LaRocco said "No." LaRocco said, "No, you're going to stay here and build an Iraq desk. We're going to break up Northern Gulf Affairs." Which we did. We put Iran into the Arabian Peninsula desk (didn't stay there very long), and we created a separate desk specifically for Iraq. I spent the next three months recruiting for that desk, building it, working with the Washington policy folks as we continued to try to – what we were aiming at was transitioning to an embassy no later than June of 2004. Which we succeeded in doing. Intense effort on how we would do that. A lot of the decisions I've talked about – de-Baathification, dissolution of the army, creation of the interim governing council, holding a constitutional convention and eventually an election for a parliament – all of this was very much in play. I found that in Baghdad, it was hard enough to do all this, but at least you were working with the Iraqis who were going to be affected by all this and I suppose nominally make the decisions. Back in Washington, it was just hellish. It was the same incredible churn of meeting after meeting, argument [after argument]. It's true with so many of the issues, when you're back here. There were thousands of people involved in this. Fortunately for me, through a coincidence, the guy who was going to replace me and be the first director of the Iraq desk, Rick Olson, who went on to be ambassador in Pakistan (I think he just left the ambassadorship in Pakistan). Rick had gone to Najaf to replace Robert Ford who had gone back to Bahrain I believe (or maybe to Baghdad to take another job). Rick had gone into Najaf to do three months of that, then he was going to take my job on the Iraq desk and I was going to segue to my consultations for Yemen.

Rick was under tremendous pressure in Najaf, and they tried to kill him. I think twice they came close, and there was a threat – basically the intel said, "We're going to kill this guy." Some of the Shia militias. So they yanked him out in February of 2004, and brought him back to Washington for his own safety. They put him on the desk and said, "The two of you will run the desk." I said, "No, Rick is going to run the desk. I'll do this for a week, we'll transition it, and Rick will take over the Iraq desk and I'll go on to prepare for Yemen."

So I had a very nice transition. I walked out of Iraq, left it all behind me (most of it anyway), and moved into a period in a career that is one of the more unique aspects of a Foreign Service career. And one of the most pleasant I think; at least it was for me. Which is, that period of consultations and preparation for an ambassadorship. I got to come over here and do Arabic with one of my favorite Arabic instructors. I spent time meeting everybody in Washington, going through this process, being interviewed. Finally getting a hearing scheduled in June. I was sworn in toward the end of July and went out to Sanaa in late July, think I arrived around the 25th or so of July 2004. My first chief of mission job. It was a very nice period. I will say for the record that during this time I managed to spend a lot of time with my family. I worked on my golf game. I worked on my Arabic very hard, because I knew I was going to need it in Yemen. So I had a chance

to polish it, it was probably the best it's ever been, before I arrived in Yemen. I got to meet some fascinating people, and I got to go out to Yemen.

The hardest thing about going out to Yemen was my wife and my son, who was a senior in high school at Thomas Jefferson High School over in Annandale. We wanted him to finish. So Bonnie and Aaron stayed in Falls Church while I spent the first year in Yemen alone.

So, we are almost finished with Iraq. I can't think of anything else I want to talk about, that early period in Iraq. I do go back to Iraq later on. Iraq of course figures very prominently in our policies through-out the Middle East in those years. In Yemen, lots of issues; Iraq was –

Q: Did we kick over the anthill in the Middle East there?

KRAJESKI: Yeah. There were lots of anthills in the Middle East, and you don't always see them. We did something not stupid – I won't say stupid – but we didn't think it through. Now, George Bush for all his attributes was not a person to spend a lot of time mulling things over. Didn't he call himself the decider? "I'm the decider." He believed in that. I had a lot of respect for that; that is what the president is supposed to do. He's supposed to make decisions, and at a certain point he listens to his advisors and he makes a decision. That's one of the quibbles, one of the beefs I have with the current administration, is they talk too much. They make too few decisions. They don't do stupid shit, as the president likes to say - I have great respect for this president, too.

We went into this country without a clear idea what we were doing, and what the results of it were going to be. We sold ourselves a bill of goods on Iraq. We persuaded ourselves (including most members of Congress, still an issue in the election) that it was necessary to invade Iraq and get rid of Saddam Hussein because of the threat that he posed to us and to the region and to his neighbors. I think that threat was exaggerated. It was not necessary to do this. Once we had done it, I think as we went in and realized that the complexity of the situation, we realized what we were in for... George Bush is not one to do hindsight either. I think he's been asked a couple of times, if he could make the decision again, would he change? And he just doesn't get involved. You make the best decision you can at the time, you're required to make the decisions and then move on. Always a good policy I think. Hillary Clinton will be asked again and again, why did she support the invasion? Bernie Sanders brings it up at most every speech; Donald Trump will certainly bring it up in the final election. There we are.

The Middle East is one of the most difficult, complicated, violent, conflicted parts of the world. After working there for 25 years, I really don't think I understand it any better than I did at the beginning. I don't see any clear path forward. I think Iraq is probably going to dissolve in the next few years. We will be faced – I can go do all this later on when I got into it even more, my second time into Iraq, as we looked at whether the country would hold together; then there were these last five years. There are those who have some keen analysis on your question. Some interesting analysis that without the

invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the subsequent instability in Iraq, the Arab Spring would not have been possible. Of course, without the Arab Spring, we would not have the Syrian civil war, or maybe the Yemeni civil war, the Libyan civil war. Al Qaeda in Iraq of course would never have formed, which means we wouldn't be facing ISIS today. There are lines of analysis that can be drawn and traced back to the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

As an academic exercise, I may indulge in that when I'm over at American University next year. But I also would maintain that if we had not invaded Iraq in 2003, if we had let Saddam remain in power, I think that within three or four or five years, a crisis would have developed – perhaps generated out of Baghdad, perhaps somewhere else (Lebanon, Yemen) that would have caused us to become involved militarily in the Middle East. I suspect – I read the Post this morning; we're going back in again. Of course, if Trump wins, we'll just bomb, bomb, bomb. Here we are.

Q: How did you see the Shia? Were they the majority in Iraq?

KRAJESKI: Absolutely. Censuses in that part of the world are extremely sensitive, controversial, and not always accurate. And they're rare. A place like Iraq was more reliable because of the nature of Saddam's government, which was very oppressive. If he said, "I'm going to count you," you were counted. By every count that had been done in the 1970s and '80s – I think those were probably the last reliable censuses of the population of Iraq – the Shia were in the majority. The Sunni were next and the Kurds were third. Then you have to throw in groups like Christians and Shebak and Yazidis. Iraq was really a multi-religious, multi-ethnic society, cobbled together by the British when the Ottomans were defeated in 1919. Iraq is 1924, I believe the starting point of so-called modern Iraq, so not even a hundred years old. I don't think it'll make it to 100 years, frankly. The Shia were the majority. When Saddam decided to invade Kuwait in 1990, and we led a coalition to liberate Kuwait, you might recall it was contemplated to go all the way to Baghdad and overthrow Saddam. We didn't do it, and as we withdrew from southern Iraq, Saddam really wreaked his revenge on the Shia. He massacred tens of thousands of them, displaced others. He drained the swamps. Don't know if you're aware of this, but these massive marshes around Basra and that area – he built reservoirs and canals and drained them. This started back in the 1980s. He did everything he could to impoverish and weaken the Shia community. So when Saddam was gone in 2003, the Shia had a lot of issues with Baghdad. They were the majority, and they were going to be sure they controlled much of the government. They wisely made a deal with the Kurds and some of the Sunnis – which has held until now, but it's clearly frayed and about to break.

Q: Should we move to Yemen now?

KRAJESKI: I guess we should. I'm trying to write about Iraq now. I'm not sure if I'm going to write a novel, or some kind of a memoir, or whether I'm just going to write and toss it away. As I look back at my career – and I had subsequent interesting assignments – that two and a half years, from 2001 to about March 2004, was really the most

interesting, most dramatic, most intense period of my career. And it was totally unexpected.

Q: What sort of reaction did you get from the new officers? They just sit and absorb, or were they asking questions.

KRAJESKI: Since 2001, I think – and the military has talked about this as well – we have a lot of people who come in with 9/11 on their shoulders. They’ve come in with the notion that this is a more dangerous world and we have to be ready to confront it. When I came in, in ’79, we had some idea of what an embassy was, and what diplomats do, and what Foreign Service life was going to be like. Patterned on hundreds of years of experience. We recognized there were some risks were involved, but for me the risks were more worry about disease and travel accidents. You worried a bit about violent coups, being caught up in them somehow. But these kids – kids, the groups I talked to – they come in understanding that there’s war. We’re going to be involved in war in which the United States has taken a side or is being pressured to take a side. That it’s increasingly a more dangerous place. So decisions like the one I talked about might well be part of their career. Some of the decisions that people have faced are really more difficult than the one I did, which I saw more as a policy – do I support the policy? Again, I did not think it was immoral to do this. We had very interesting discussions. And we were very clear with the new folks – you’re going to spend time separated from your families. You’re going to spend time in risky, dangerous places. You might be called upon to do something that you’re going to have to think long and hard about whether or not you want to do it. Do you want to support it, be part of it. I think it’s a much tougher job now than when you and I took it.

Q: Oh yeah. The danger in the job. I spent four years in the Air Force as a Russian language intercept operator. I served in Korea, and watched some action but I wasn’t particularly involved. I’d come out as a kid, World War II and all, expected to serve. I don’t think I had any particular illusions. Things happen, well OK, you get on with it.

KRAJESKI: When I was a kid, not long after you were a kid, the dangers, the threats were so large in the sense that – the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons, there’s going to be a nuclear war, we’re going to destroy each other. Now the threats are so diverse. You don’t know where an embassy might be attacked. You don’t know where a country might implode or explode. You don’t know where the next ISIS is going to rise and we’re going to have to be confronting it. You don’t know what the next president of the United States might decide to do. I think it’s a much less predictable world and a much less predictable career. The Foreign Service officer starting out today... I never expected to end up in Baghdad. When I joined the Foreign Service in 1979, I’d come out of graduate school in Russian literature. I had pretty good Russian, pretty good German. Some basis of knowledge of Soviet history and economics. It’s 1980, I’m going to go to the Soviet Union, that’s where I’m going to spend my career. I never thought – to me it’s one of the delights of the career. Part of it, when I’m talking to the kids today is, “Go with it!”

Q: It's fun because different windows open up. I remember when I came in, I think I told you, it was class one in the numbering system. They had just gone through the McCarthy period...

KRAJESKI: What year was this?

Q: It was '55. Bill Murphy was in my class.

KRAJESKI: Did you know, I was class 141 of that same cohort, and it was shortly after I arrived that they started counting again, with the Foreign Service Act of 1981. I think they only had 143 or 145, and you were number one and I was almost at the end of them.

Q: They asked, "How many of you want to be ambassadors?" Of course, we all raised our hands. But I can remember thinking distinctly, "I think it would be nice to be consul-general in Bermuda." (Laughter)

KRAJESKI: That's interesting as you look at career paths. At some point, I'll talk about my brief stint as head of assignments, when I was recruiting for Iraq. There's always an attempt in the service to try to develop or control career development. To go, "OK, you've got somebody coming in. How are we going to make maximum use of this person's talent and skills, their experience?" As you say, things happen. A door opens, and you're suddenly offered something out of the blue, and you think, "Maybe I'll take that."

Q: I was in Personnel back in the late '60s. We had something – the computer was just coming in. We were career assignment officers. We would say, "What would be a career path," considering languages and proclivities, interests. We would write out a career path leading up to senior Foreign Services. We fed into a computer, we figured out what do we get, where are we putting people? It made some sense.

KRAJESKI: It still does.

Q: In those terms.

KRAJESKI: We're still doing it. And it changes. I also was advised – maybe you were too, when you were starting out, asking experienced people, "What should I do next?" or "What would you recommend, where should I go?" I got my advice from a guy named Peter Burleigh early on, my first DCM. He said, "Keep an open mind. Take the jobs you want in places you think you'd like to live, and let the career take its own shape." At that time, we had cones, still had cones, they call them now tracks. In those days there were four cones – consular, admin, political and economic. Now we have public affairs as well, public diplomacy cone. I came in as administrative cone. I had absolutely no idea what this meant. When I found out, I said "I don't have any administrative or management experience. I've never balanced a budget or run anything." At the end of my first tour, a rotational tour, I asked Peter, "What do I do next?" I'm not really all that interested in admin work. That's when he gave me this advice. "Don't worry about it."

Build your own career the way you want to build it. Make your contacts, establish yourself in a bureau.” All of these things, which is what I did. I switched to consular cone early on in my career, because it was interesting and fun, especially in places like Katmandu and India – I thought it was much more interesting than political and economic stuff. And then I kind of veered away from that when I was the India political officer and got caught up in the Middle East. But it wasn’t a plot. I didn’t put it into a computer and say – “Eventually, Krajewski, you’re going to be ambassador in Bahrain, there you go!” I didn’t know where Bahrain was.

It’s important for us as an organization to continue to make efforts to have a career path or a variety of career paths, because we need experienced consular officers who can manage places like Manila and Mexico City and India. People who know passport law, citizenship law, visa law, who can manage these huge activities. You can’t just put somebody into that position who has maybe one consular tour 20 years ago when he did visa work in Manila, and say “OK, now you’re going to be consul-general in Manila.” Forget about it. You need managers, people who know how to write budgets and order stuff and maintain and run security. You need these people, you have to build that career. But you shouldn’t stovepipe people within it. You’ve got to allow flexibility of somebody who after two tours as an admin officer and one as a political officer, who says “I really want to take the political job in Manila.” You have to make that possible.

Q: I was with the Board of Examiners for a year. We were looking for flexible people. That makes a good Foreign Service office. Of course, most of us were looking for somebody like ourselves.

KRAJESKI: Well, if you’re a good Foreign Service officer, that’s not a bad model.

Q: But you were looking for people who could switch roles.

KRAJESKI: Did you do the oral exams at all?

Q: Yes.

KRAJESKI: I was fascinated by that process. I know we’re getting off track here a little bit. June of 1978, I did the oral. I had no idea what it was going to be. I appeared at the John F. Kennedy Federal Center in Boston on such and such a day, go to such and such a room, that’s what I was instructed to do. “Well, what is the process?” “You’ll be interviewed by Foreign Service officers.” I said, “Cool.” I bought a new suit – I’d been a grad student, I didn’t have many suits. I got a haircut, which in 1978 was a good thing to do. Did I have my beard in ’78? I did – I’ve had this since I was 20 years old. And I presented myself to three Foreign Service officers, who asked me questions for almost two and a half hours, a long time. Then I took an in-basket test at the end of it, where they gave me a box with phone slips and memos, and said “Prioritize them.”

In the end, what are we looking for? We have a much more detailed and I think effective process now. But ultimately, we’re looking for people like us. We need that person who

has the flexibility to be deputy in the consular section in Warsaw for a couple of years, then take over the political issues on the India desk, then move to the Operations Center, then study Arabic for a couple of years, go out to Cairo. You've got to have that flexibility. At the same time you have to build the expertise and the knowledge base, whether it's language or regional, functional. It's a tough thing to do. It's an interesting career.

Q: Tom, you think this might be a good place to stop? We can take this up when you're off to...

KRAJESKI: Off to Sanaa as chief of mission, ambassador. What a great honor to be chosen as ambassador. I was sworn in by Rich Armitage. All my family and friends were there, in the Ben Franklin Room. It was a very heady experience. I spent a lot of time consulting and meeting people, experts on Yemen, think tanks. Through the department, through the government. I was very excited about the prospect of going out to Sanaa, which as an Arabist is like the yolk of the egg, it's the center. If you're an Arabist, you want to go to Yemen. It's too bad you can't go these days. I was really excited. I will say that the doubts didn't kick in until I walked out the ambassador's residence that first day for the really short walk (it was in a compound) to the embassy, and I thought, "Oh Jesus, I don't know what I'm doing. Who made me ambassador? What were they thinking?"

Q: We'll pick this up then.

Q: Today is the 20th of May, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, you had just arrived in Sana'a, 2004, as your first ambassadorial assignment. Had you taken the FSI course on ambassadorships?

KRAJESKI: Yes – the so-called charm school.

Q: Could you explain what they were teaching and your impression of it?

KRAJESKI: First I think I mentioned last week, that period between when you're nominated by the president, when it becomes a public nomination, and your swearing in can be quite long. Sometimes you have a job and you stick with the job. But often they want to pull you out, and you start with your consultations. You start – in my case I did two months of Arabic. I was nominated in March, and I didn't get to post till August 11. During that period, you sign up for the famous ambassadorial seminar –

Q: Which by the way was suggested and introduced, the first one taught by one Shirley Temple Black.

KRAJESKI: Shirley Temple Black! Imagine that. Do you know who Shirley Temple Black is? Shirley Temple you know was the same person –

INTERN: Animal Crackers.

KRAJESKI: She was ambassador to Ghana.

Q: And to Czechoslovakia.

KRAJESKI: A Nixon appointee, I think.

Q: And went to the UN. All you have to do is see movies with a five-year-old child, realize here is a real intelligence.

KRAJESKI: By every report, she was a really excellent ambassador. So, I did take the course for the first time. Really interesting. This is 2004. In the second iteration of political appointees for George W. Bush. Presidents try to get three rounds of political appointees in so they can take care of all their friends. That first round is the first year; three years later (in this case, 2004), the second round is being nominated. So the class was a great mix of political and career diplomats. I was fascinated. What they did was focus – rightly – on the political appointees, to introduce to them “What is an embassy?” These are people who’ve never worked in an embassy. Many of them have had impressive careers – most of them had pretty impressive careers in the private sector or in other government agencies. For example, we had the former mayor of Knoxville, Tennessee in the class, appointed by Bush to be ambassador to Poland. Very interesting man – Victor something (Victor Henderson Ashe). A lot of it is, those of us who have worked in embassies – in my case, 24 years – we take time with the political appointees to say, “Here’s how an embassy works. Here are the most important pieces of it.” That’s a couple of days. You spend a lot of time talking about your style of leadership. That’s a great exchange (particularly with the private sector, businessmen, academics coming in) with the professionals, how do you lead a team as ambassador? You’re the chief of mission as well as being the ambassador; you’re expected to run the embassy.

Now, the second part of that is, who’s your DCM? There’s a lot of time spent in that class about the relationship between ambassador and DCM. Most of the career diplomats, most of whom had been DCMs, had a lot to add to that. Some of them had been DCMs to political appointees; that’s a different relationship than to career people. Bottom line that we always make – and I’ve done this course twice, and been the coordinator of it three or four times when I was over at NDU – the bottom line is, that relationship is absolutely critical to the success of the embassy. Make sure you’ve got a good DCM, and once you’ve got a good DCM, give her all the authority to manage the embassy.

Q: It’s also a tricky relationship. Many fine Foreign Service officers can’t stand being number two. They are up against an amateur. But as you say, these amateurs usually come from some impressive backgrounds and have a great deal to add. If it works, it’s really a great combination.

KRAJESKI: Absolutely. And as we try to impress upon the newcomers, the political appointees, it really will make or break you at an embassy, if you have a good DCM. That DCM is going to be a career person. He’s going to be trusted or at least respected by the country team. It’s really critical. Mostly in EUR (Bureau of European Affairs), you

hear lots of tales of political appointees who trash their DCMs, who try to do things that are perhaps out of the ordinary, even illegal. The DCM's the one who's supposed to walk into the ambassador's office and say, "No, you cannot use your official vehicle to go to Berlin to the concert, you have to use a private vehicle" – something like this. The politicals resent it. Often, they're very wealthy people; they're used to getting their way. Indeed, if you're not wealthy you cannot be ambassador in Paris or London or Rome. You're expected to use your personal funds for representation (huge representation budgets); not so with us.

So DCM relationship. Then we talk a lot about the country team. We talk about, what does the country team look like in Yemen? Who's there? Of course, 2004, Yemen – one of our major focuses is counter-terrorism. So we've got a fairly robust station. We've got a fairly robust military cooperation and defense attaché unit – both run by colonels. CIA guy's a very experienced guy with a big team. I've got teams of TDY Special Forces coming in to train Yemeni special forces. So a major part of the mission I know right up front is going to be military/security/intel. RSO is very big. So that's something I've got to focus on right off the bat. Those relationships, probably to me in the places I've worked, the second most important relationship for the ambassador is with that chief of station. Because so much of the mission is focused on intel, security, and counter-terrorism, the chief of station/ambassador relationship is absolutely critical. Another thing we will impress upon these political appointees, most of whom have never worked with the CIA. Only a few of whom have worked with the military before. It depends on where they're going, how important military security is; most of them are going to Europe. Very few go to NEA, the part of the world where I –

Q: That's where you get shot at.

KRAJESKI: Yeah. And I think there's a recognition among administrations that as good as some of these people are – and I do emphasize that. A lot of my foreign colleagues in the diplomatic service shake their heads at this practice we have in the United States of political appointees. And while there are times perhaps where we have too many of them, and we certainly have some duds who really embarrass us overseas, by and large I think it's a really good thing to add to the mix. Plus, we need people who are perceived, if not really, close to the president. In NEA, Near Eastern Affairs, the only two political appointees almost always are Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

Q: Egypt from time to time had somebody coming out of the American school...

KRAJESKI: In my time I can't recall a political appointee to Egypt. Doha had one. I don't think Abu Dhabi has had one yet. But Saudi Arabia insists; the Saudis want somebody who's "close to the president." In the Arab world it's particularly important, the notion that the ambassador has the president on speed-dial. Even though the career ambassadors will have met the president – you get your picture taken and put that picture on your desk, shaking hands, the president says "thanks for your service." You have that prominently in your office, so when people come in your office, they think you're friends with George W. Bush. Many times, Ali Abdullah Saleh, then the president of Yemen,

would call me and talk to me alone and say, “I want you to pass this message directly to the president.” I would say, “Yes sir, Mr. President, you bet,” and I would promptly call my desk officer or the assistant secretary for NEA and say, “Here’s what’s up.” I’m not going to call the president – unless of course, it’s war.

So these are things you focus on during those two weeks.

Q: Also the ambassador has some legal responsibilities, too. What you can and can’t do.

KRAJESKI: We spend quite a bit of time in that course on that presidential letter, the chief of mission authority letter that every ambassador gets from the president. It is tailored to your specific mission. Each letter contains basically the language, “You’re in charge.” Every U.S. government person assigned to that country is under your authority. The only exception is if there is a U.S. military base in country, then they have a combatant commander. I had this in Bahrain, my second ambassadorship, I had the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, NAVCENT (United States Naval Forces Central Command). They had a three-star admiral in charge of the base and all the operations of NAVCENT. He was not under my authority, and all those who on the base reported to him, not to me. But if we had anybody in the class who had a combatant commander in their country – that relationship is extraordinarily important. Prior to 9/11, it could be quite a contentious relationship, a difficult one.

Q: I was in South Korea, that was contentious.

KRAJESKI: The combatant commander, we called them CINCs in those days (commander in chief). He – I think the first woman combatant commander was just appointed – they are always four-stars, and they have enormous authority and assets that make every ambassador drool with envy. They’ve got planes and ships and staffs of hundreds. They have their own plane. They have unlimited money, it seems. Since 9/11, the relationships have gotten better in NEA. My combatant commanders were always CENTCOM (Central Command), which is headquartered in Tampa, which has its backup headquarters in Doha. The Navy’s in Bahrain, the Air Force is in Doha, the Army’s in Kuwait. Since 9/11, it’s been much more practical. The military/diplomatic relationship since 9/11 has become closer, more effective, and more practical, and less fraught with envy and jealousy and power games.

Q: One of the small exceptions to this power is, the ambassador cannot issue visas. In some places, this can be quite important – the consular officers can. Some places, an awful lot of people, the one thing an embassy can do for them is give their brother a visa to visit Disney Land (or to get a job). But this can get...

KRAJESKI: Since 9/11, the visa process has changed quite dramatically. The ambassador still has influence, but has less authority now and the military understands that as well as anybody does. You’re right, they frequently have their main liaison, a Yemeni general in the army wants his family to go to the United States, and they get turned down for visas. So the general calls the colonel – in my case I had colonels – and

asks, “How come they turned my brother down for a visa.” And the colonel comes to me, “What are we going to do here?” You’re an experienced consular officer – there’s the debate over whether we should exert influence. Always bring the consular officer into it immediately, to see “Why did he get turned down? What are the reasons? Where do we go?” If it’s an important enough person... Since 9/11 I’ve done that rarely. Rarely have I sat with a consular officer and said, “I really want you to reconsider. Here’s why it’s important to us that this guy get a visa.”

Q: These things get worked out usually.

KRAJESKI: Consular officers – I say as one myself – are smart and savvy, politically adept. I would always tell my ambassador in Warsaw, the last time I did consular work, “Ambassador, if it’s important to you and you look me in the eye and say, ‘I need this one,’ you’ll get it.” Unless I’m dealing with a thug or a crook or somebody, in which case I’m going to show you the criminal record, or the security reasons why we’re not going to do this, in which case the ambassador – I would have – would back off immediately. Although... In the old days we did it in writing, we had a paper application. I would write, “Ambassador strongly recommends.” So there’d be a record there. He knew I did that, a good ambassador would say, “Absolutely, this is on me.”

Q: Did you pick a DCM? How did that work?

KRAJESKI: NEA’s an interesting bureau. We call NEA “the mother bureau” because NEA takes care of all its little chicks (some get promoted), off and on, with varying degrees of sincerity and effectiveness. So one of the understandings when you’re appointed ambassador in NEA is, first you’re likely to get only one ambassadorship. And two, we’re going to be partners in picking DCMs. Because NEA wants to take the people it considers to be future ambassadors, people who are the most talented or effective or who deserve that DCM-ship. What the bureau does is present a short list, usually five names, to the DCM committee first (and then to the ambassador). Bill Burns was assistant secretary in 2004, and Jim LaRocco (somebody you’ve interviewed) was the PDAS, the principle deputy assistant secretary, the guy who does all the personnel.

So Jim said, “Here’s the list for DCM for Yemen, people who are bidding for it. Here are the people we think should get the job. Let’s talk about each one of them.” There were only three, because the fourth one had dropped out. We chose one, a woman I knew quite well. She was only an 02, and the DCM job was ranked at 01. This is sort of a colonel level, the top level of the Foreign Service until you jump into the Senior Foreign Service. I was an OC; the DCM was ranked as an 01. This woman had just been promoted to 02. She was a star, and she’d done some really hard jobs. She’d been one of the first people into Libya for example as Libya was opening up in 2004, or she was on the Libya desk when Qadhafi was making amends. She had done a lot of great work and NEA really wanted the next jump to be DCM for her. Sana’a was not a huge post, but it was a fairly important post and was in a place where we needed really good morale, where we were concerned about security. Of course, the *Cole* investigation.

Then the DCM committee approves the short list. Sometimes they'll cut somebody from the list, sometimes add to the list. That list is technically presented to the ambassador, and the ambassador chooses. If you don't know everybody yet, you do telephone or personal interviews. You look at 360s, which are very popular now; I don't like them that much. You know, 360s – having people who worked for you, your peers, and your superiors all send assessments of your performance and talents and shortcoming. The DCM committee looks very closely at 360s. I have to tell you, at that rank, when you're an O1 or in the Senior Foreign Service, the most important of those is people who worked for you - your subordinates. If you get trashed by too many of your subordinates, you don't have a chance of being a DCM. If you have a reputation of being a screamer, who loses their temper, or you're unreachable.

Q: I recall being on a committee to select people to go to war colleges and the equivalent. One very quiet guy on it. One name came up; this guy rarely spoke, but he said, "That son of a bitch" and went on to explain.

KRAJESKI: DCM, principle officer jobs, ambassadors. Though the ambassador selections are done much more quietly. The D committee, deputies committee. One black mark can finish you, and it can be completely unfair. I just had lunch with a good friend of mine, who was my DCM in Sana'a, who really deserved an embassy. He had a couple of folks who didn't like him, and every time his name got put into the hat for an ambassadorship, it would get taken out again. It's too bad, but there we go.

Going back to that two week class, we really do a lot. It's called the charm school. But we do spend a lot of time talking about how you're going to run an embassy. What are the components of an embassy. How are you going to manage Washington. We tell these political guys, some of whom do have the president on the speed-dial. We had a guy who went to Paris when I was going to Bahrain. Some of these guys literally are friends of the president, raised a lot of money for the president, ran parts of his campaign. The guy who went to South Africa, Don Gips (again, I'm going to Bahrain so the wrong time) – they really do. We have to impress upon them that you really can't go to the president all of the time, or to the White House. You need to develop your network at State. For the day to day business of your embassy, the desk, the country office, and the bureau are going to be far more effective working the bureaucracy in Washington than the White House is going to be.

Q: Did you deal with a problem – some ambassadors have come in and are highly suspicious of the Foreign Service. Most notorious one I can think of in recent times, our ambassador to Mexico under Ronald Reagan.

KRAJESKI: Some of that is a reflection of the politics, of the administration. It was a given (not always true) that every new secretary of State who comes in doesn't trust the Foreign Service, doesn't trust the State Department. There's something untrustworthy about people who speak foreign languages, who live overseas, who are expected to know the culture and politics and history of places like China. And they will tell you that you can't do certain things. We're all Foreign Service officers, so we're the smartest people in

the government. And it's true, we can be very condescending to people who aren't within that particular tribe. So these political folks come in, and some of them are very impressive people, very confident and successful. And some of them are just fundraisers and greengrocers and real estate guys who are getting their payback for helping the president get elected. They have no idea what the Foreign Service is. Suddenly, they're confronted with all these people telling them the details of the wheat trade in Saudi Arabia; then the next guy is talking about how oil prices are differentiated. He's surrounded by all these smart folks, and they get intimidated. Sometimes the relationship doesn't work. NEA is a little different because we don't have too many politicals, and because the issues out there are literally life and death at times, so you don't screw around. I don't want to exaggerate that. It's one of the reasons Morocco was always a safe bet, Morocco would have its political appointee. Saudi Arabia, because the Saudis insisted on it.

Q: Morocco was notorious. One ambassador used to write about "our king."

KRAJESKI: That's one of the reasons Morocco likes them, because it's a monarchy. We love monarchies. I can't figure it out. When I was in Bahrain, I was accused of being anti-monarchy. I said, "I'm an American! We don't have them! We threw them out, we're not interested!" The Bahrainis loved the Brits, the king loved the queen; he just wanted to be royal. I didn't think much of it. But the king was a good guy.

So those two weeks are fairly packed. You spend a lot of time thinking about your first day, week, and month at the embassy. The embassy meanwhile, you're in touch with the DCM who's hopefully already in place. Or with your predecessor, if she's still there. You're planning your arrival. Will there be press at your arrival? If so, got to prepare a press statement. You're preparing for your first day, when you'll meet your team. You're going to meet the country team, meet the embassy team. We always urge people to have an embassy town hall with every employee at the embassy. FSNs, now called LES (locally engaged staff); we keep changing the names, to protect the innocent. Foreign Service nationals, they were called for a long time, now called locally engaged staff. What are you going to say? Prepare it. Prepare a statement. Nowadays, we do YouTube videos. The ambassador will do a video which will be put up the day that he or she arrives at post. If you've got the language, you use the language, and introduce yourself to the country that way. I did not do that in either Yemen or Bahrain; in Yemen, because YouTube didn't exist in 2004. In Bahrain, because I was so highly suspect when I arrived. The Bahrainis didn't want me there. They thought I was there to overthrow the monarchy after the events of 2011 and the Arab Spring. We were very critical of their human rights performance, so we decided I wouldn't do one of these "I'm happy to be in Bahrain" YouTube videos. I probably should have, but there we are.

So we think about introductions. You think about who you're going to meet. When you first arrive at post, on your first or second working day you go to the foreign ministry to present a copy of your credentials to the foreign minister. What are you going to say? What issues are you going to raise? It's not a working meeting; it's more ceremonial, where you go to present this copy. But until that, you're not even supposed to leave your

house. Once you present to the foreign minister, you're allowed to conduct quiet meetings with the government. But you're not supposed to do anything public until you formally present your credentials to the head of state, in this case the president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh. We talk about that – what are you going to say? You're going to be expected to give a statement, in Arabic in this case. So I was over here working with Maggie Daher, one of the instructors here, and practicing my statement. In Arabic, when you speak formally you have to speak formally. You can't speak in dialect; you can't speak as if you are just speaking across a table having a cup of coffee. It's a formal language. I don't like it [formal Arabic]. I'm very uncomfortable in it. I tend not to do it too much. Even when I'm giving a speech, I will limit using some of the formal endings that mark a really educated Arab. Hosni Mubarak in Cairo used to be laughed at by the intelligentsia because his *fus-hah*, formal Arabic, was so bad. He would always try to start his speeches in it and then would immediately fall into Egyptian dialect. Which I think is just great; I couldn't understand him sometimes when he was talking classical Arabic.

So you practice all these things, and are very serious about it. Are you going to have press when you arrive at the airport? Is there going to be a camera spray? If so, you want your public affairs officer at post to be ready. Who's going to be there? What's your statement? Make sure you have a written statement you can hand out, because it's going to be in the newspapers. A lot of the countries we work in think the American ambassador is a big deal. Some, meh, it's just another guy arriving in Paris, I suppose. But in both Sana'a and Bahrain, they were waiting for me. I arrived in Sana'a at 2:00 in the morning, which is a great time to arrive anywhere because there's no-one out at the airport. The Yemeni press corps is not very good and they sure as hell weren't going to be out at the airport at 2:00 in the morning. Plus, I arrived on a Friday, which is the day off, a holiday. Actually, I arrived at eleven o'clock at night. I went right to my house, no photo spray. We had a little statement of my arrival which we sent to the press but nobody cares, nobody reads the papers on Friday. I did that deliberately. I wanted time to settle in before I went out public.

Q: Whom were you replacing?

KRAJESKI: Edmund Hull. Career officer – Yemen always gets career, no political. Edmund had been my DCM in Cairo [when I was in the political section]. He had been the deputy coordinator for counter-terrorism prior to the Yemen job. He arrived in 2001, just before 9/11 I believe. He was there for the famous Cheney/Ali Abdullah Saleh meeting. Edmund was a professional. The previous DCM [to my arrival in Yemen] had been Alan Misenheimer, another real professional. That embassy and then the one before it, Barbara Bodine's embassy, which was during the attack on the *USS Cole* in Aden, they had really gone through the fires, through the wars on counter-terrorism. A lot of Al Qaeda's roots are in Yemen. Even the Bin Ladens are originally Yemenis; they've been living in Saudi Arabia for a couple of generations. Osama was a Saudi, but they were from the Hadhramaut area of Yemen. A lot of Saudis have Yemeni background. The attacks on our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 – a lot of the planning had been done in Yemen. Some of the attackers had been trained in explosives in Yemen. Then of

course the attack on the *Cole*, which was an Al Qaeda attack on a U.S. warship in 2000, really focused attention on Al Qaeda in Yemen. It was our intention to drive them out of Yemen.

When 9/11 hit, there's a famous Dick Cheney meeting that occurred I think in late November. He flew out to Aden, the port on the Arabian Sea in Yemen, the old British port. He met with Ali Abdullah Saleh. According to the story, he said, "You see what we're doing in Afghanistan. We're going after these guys in Afghanistan and we're going to drive them out. We're going to do the same thing here, or you're going to do it here and we'll help. You decide. You're with us or against us."

And Ali Abdullah being a very clever man for all of his other baggage, said, "I'm going to be your senior partner in fighting terrorism in Yemen, it's time to get rid of these scum whom I've been helping in previous years, but now we're going to drive them out of the country."

Edmund and his team – a lot of FBI are there investigating the attack on the *Cole* still, because they were Yemeni Al Qaeda. FBI, the agency's there, Special Forces trainers – we didn't bring any active military in. We're bringing in a lot of equipment, tracking the guys in Yemen, with the Yemeni military. Very successfully. You might recall one attack in 2003 in which the senior Yemeni Al Qaeda leader was killed by a Hellfire missile fired by a drone – maybe the first drone attack. It was very controversial, because we used a drone and got this guy in his Toyota Land Cruiser as he was crossing the desert. But we made a deal with the Yemenis, who knew – they helped us do this, the intel I assume came out of the Yemenis, "Here he is, he's in that Land Cruiser, going from point A to point B." We had a deal with the Yemenis that the story would be he was carrying explosives for a bomb, and the explosives went off, blew up his car and killed him. We agreed before the attack that would be the story. Our senior leaders back here, Paul Wolfowitz prominent among them, could not keep this quiet. They were so pleased that we had gone out and killed an Al Qaeda leader. Our pledge had been, "We don't care where you are, we're going to find you and capture or kill you." So he could not resist going to the press and saying, "Look what we did."

So when I arrived nine months after this, Saleh was still pissed off that we had broken the deal. Once it had been determined that we did it and the Yemenis helped us, that didn't make him popular with some of his more radical constituents. By the time I got there in 2004, Al Qaeda was basically gone in Yemen. The training camps had all been disbanded, disrupted. Leadership had been killed or arrested – there were over 25 senior Al Qaeda in prison, awaiting trial or having just been convicted. Some of them got death sentences – the ones for the *Cole* got death sentences, later commuted to life, later commuted to five years and a cup of coffee. Fifteen of them escaped from prison while I was there, dug a tunnel and escaped. But in 2004 when I arrived, we hadn't declared victory – but we were confident that Al Qaeda no longer represented a daily threat in Yemen. When I arrived, as I looked at it, I was going to now focus on taking advantage of a relative period of peace in a country, as we see today, that does not have very many of them. We were going to focus on economic development, investment, education,

infrastructure, training military and police to continue the counter-terrorism effort. The Millennium Challenge – a Bush program in which countries competed for U.S. money. They had to make certain advances in democracy, open markets, human rights – a whole checklist. If they met that list, they would be given hundreds of millions of dollars to use as they wanted. It was not USAID, it was the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a quasi-government corporation. It still exists, they still fund countries. Our determination was to try to get Yemen on this.

Ali Abdullah Saleh had a parliament, sort of; weak and rather ineffective. He himself was elected president; the competition was not stiff, shall we say. He had been the head of North Yemen since 1978 I think; at that time [in 2004] he was the longest running (except for Qadhafi) leader. He held a presidential election. There was one due in 2006, so it was our goal to have an open presidential election, a freer election for parliament. And he established a ministry for human rights; when countries have problems, they always establish ministries. The minister was a wonderful woman, very talented and quite effective within the cabinet. Not very well liked. She would go after the minister of interior. We saw 2004 as an opportunity to try to effect regime change without really changing the regime. One of the courses I'm working on at American University is teaching the policy of regime change. What does regime change mean? I'm using Iraq, Yemen, and Bahrain as examples. In Yemen, we had a partner in Ali Abdullah Saleh in counter-terrorism. He was a slippery partner, but he was a partner.

Q: We had a significant number of Yemenis educated in the United States.

KRAJESKI: As we were looking at this opportunity in Yemen – and I mentioned education as one of the areas we wanted to work on. Yemen has the highest illiteracy rate in the Arab world. Less than 50% of men can read and write, and less than 25% of women. Most girls were lucky if they got one or two years of school. Very few of them went on to secondary schools. The schools were not very good, the teachers weren't well trained. The Yemeni elite would go to either the UK or the U.S. for education, or sometimes to India or Australia. A number of the members of cabinet had been educated in the United States.

Q: I've interviewed Bill Crawford, who was ambassador there back in 1970s. He talked about getting Yemenis to go...

KRAJESKI: In the 1960s and 1970s, USAID had a very large program basically funding people like Yemenis – four year scholarships to American universities. Mostly state universities, because we got more bang for the buck, we got in-state tuition for it. I met at least four members of the cabinet who had been beneficiaries of this program. One of my goals was to try to re-establish it. We had re-established USAID; USAID and the Peace Corps had pulled out in 1991 when Yemen was the only country on the Security Council that voted against the multinational effort to liberate Kuwait. A vote that James A. Baker told Saleh would be the most expensive vote his country had ever made; we pulled all USAID (it was dumb, excuse me Secretary Baker). We were extraordinarily mad at Saleh

Q: Jordan nearly suffered the same way.

KRAJESKI: Jordan in the end did the right thing – at least by us, I’m not sure by them. Yemen, when he did this [supported Iraq] in 1990/1991, when he did this, we pulled USAID and Peace Corps out. The country had just been re-united. There had been South Yemen, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, South Yemen no longer had a patron, and they had a fairly peaceful reunion of the country, with Ali Abdullah Saleh as president. In defense, in objective, cold, academic defense of why Saleh did this, Saddam had been one of the major funders of the Yemeni air force. Pilot training was all Iraqis training Yemenis. Yemenis who couldn’t afford to go to the States often went to the University of Baghdad, which prior to 1980 was the best university in the Arab world not counting the American University in Beirut or Cairo. Baghdad produced most of the Yemeni doctors, lawyers, engineers – all had been educated at the University of Baghdad. So there was a connection. Ali Abdullah also got money – he smuggled oil. As I discovered when I got there in 2004, they had this great report about who smuggled Iraqi oil. Ali Abdullah was near the top of the list, he funded quite a lot and made many millions of dollars smuggling Iraqi oil out of Basra in southern Iraq, through the Gulf to the ports of the United Arab Emirates.

There was a close relationship [between Yemen and Iraq]. More harmful to the Yemeni economy in 1991 (and this had severe repercussions), was the Saudis threw out tens of thousands of Yemeni workers as punishment for Yemen’s support of Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait. Kuwait threw out Yemeni workers. Tens of thousands of Yemenis living in Saudi Arabia, in some cases born in Saudi Arabia, suddenly lost their jobs and were forced back to Yemen. Unemployed, unhappy, and religiously much more conservative than most Yemenis because they had spent so much time in Saudi Arabia. They brought back a lot of the Wahhabi, one of the most extreme [sects] of Islam, teachings to Yemen. As late as 2004, when I was there, there was great concern about radicalization of Yemeni mosques. Partly because of this influence, and partly because the mujahidin had returned to Yemen after the Soviets were driven out of Afghanistan. A lot of the mujahidin we had supported and trained and armed were looking for their next [mission].

That’s really the incubator for Al Qaeda – that mix in Yemen of unhappy, unemployed, displaced Yemenis who didn’t feel like Yemen was really their home. Religiously more conservative, even radical or extreme, mixed together with a bunch of guys who had just had the greatest victory of Islam in the last thousand years – they had driven the infidel Russians out of Afghanistan, and they were looking for their next battle.

Dealing with Ali Abdullah was interesting. By 2004, we really thought we had an opportunity. Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East by far; per capita income was \$700, \$800. The majority of the population were subsistence farmers. They’re really tough, hard-core subsistence farmers – if you’ve ever seen pictures of Yemen, they build villages on the edges of cliffs. They are a very hardy, tough people. Women were dying in childbirth. They had big families, 12 children were not uncommon. Even with multiple wives – most Yemenis could not afford more than one wife. If you know Islam, it’s not

every guy gets four wives, you only do it if you can afford it. You have to treat each wife equally, you have to have the money to do it. So most Yemenis have only one wife. Bearing 10, 12 children, the body breaks down. Eventually you die in childbirth. Some women were dying fairly young in childbirth because of insufficient medical care, no obstetric knowledge.

One of the programs that Edmund [Ambassador Edmund Hull] started and that I really picked up on was, we built health clinics and focused on maternity and childbirth. We trained midwives; we found the traditional midwife in each village, and USAID had a big program to train them in modern techniques. We trained people in sonograms and set up sonogram equipment in a number of clinics; a very effective way of telling if you're going to have a breech birth, if there's a problem just before delivery so the midwife can be ready for it. We funded and helped build a hospital in Ma'rib, one of the centers of the Al Qaeda area. A modern hospital that we equipped, and trained people to work there. We really focused on health care. The sheikhs very much wanted this. One of my first visits outside of Sana'a, after I'd gone through my meetings in Sana'a, my first road trip was out towards Ma'rib, which was the center of Al Qaeda activity – it's northeast of Sana'a, as you're going out into the desert towards the Empty Quarter, the Rub' al Khali. It was also by the way where the great civilization of Sheba, the Queen of Sheba, flourished. During Roman times, it was a trading center.

Q: They flew over and took pictures.

KRAJESKI: There was an American archaeologist out there excavating the temples in some of the buildings from this time. It was a very fertile valley. There was the great Ma'rib dam, built BC (before Christ). It collapsed around 200, 250 AD because they didn't take care of it. When the Roman Empire started to fade, the market for the goods that were produced by this civilization, which was mostly frankincense and other kinds of incense. The Romans needed lots of incense. The trade routes ran right through Sheba and up the Red Sea or along the coast to Cairo and Alexandria. Alexandria was the big cross-shipment point to the Roman Empire. All that collapsed; the dam collapsed, the trade collapsed. The Al Nahyans, who now rule Abu Dhabi in the UAE, were originally from Ma'rib. Whenever the dam collapsed, the Nahyans migrated across the Rub' al Khali, the Empty Quarter, which is one of the most forbidding deserts on Earth. Migrated across it and settled in Abu Dhabi.

I went out to Ma'rib [August 2004]. One of my first visits was to a sheikh's compound. We had built a clinic and equipped it and trained the midwives at this clinic. I was going to go out with the sheikh and we were going to open the clinic formally and tour it. It was one of the most fascinating visits of my whole Foreign Service career.

Q: And this is Al Qaeda territory.

KRAJESKI: But by then, we had judged – the training camps were gone. There's still Al Qaeda influence, they're still providing recruits for Al Qaeda elsewhere, including Iraq. Al Qaeda in Iraq became the focus of Al Qaeda in 2004, 2005. A lot of Yemenis went up

through Syria to Iraq to fight for Al Qaeda there. This particular sheikh – tribal sheikhs are very independent cusses. One of the reasons it was possible to root out Al Qaeda in Yemen in 2002 and 2003 was because the tribal leaders were fed up with them – and we offered them more. We came in and said, “What do you want? What do you need in exchange for ceasing your support for terrorism?” This particular sheikh said, “My women are dying in childbirth. I want a clinic, I want trained people.” That’s what we did.

Q: Did you find sonograms led to the abortion of females? That was happening in Asia.

KRAJESKI: Never, no. Abortion in Islam is absolutely forbidden.

Q: It’s also more wives. Women are not as much a drag as...

KRAJESKI: Women were extraordinarily important. Women did all the farming. Women got all the water. Women worked, while the men chewed qat and fought – an exaggeration. The men were expected to learn how to shoot. Every Yemeni man had a gun and knew how to shoot, whether using the old single-shot rifles or AK-47s, the weapons of choice. I knew Yemeni men who had eight or 10 AKs, I would go into their house and they would show me their weapons before I met anybody else. They couldn’t believe I didn’t have a weapon. I was given probably six guns when I was in Yemen, as gifts – because that’s what men gave each other, weapons. You could buy any weapon on the street in Yemen. You can buy a used army howitzer. You could buy shoulder-fired missiles; this became a big deal for us in my next year there. But this particular visit, I just want to describe it because to me it was a fascinating example of how often we take a look at a country through the lens only of its central government. Our relationship is through that central government; we spend our time in the capital city, talking to diplomats, academics, business people in the capital. People say Washington’s different than the rest of the United States; I’m not convinced that’s entirely true, having lived all around. But boy, a place like Yemen, Sana’a is not the capital of Yemen. We consider it such, that’s where the central government is. But these tribal sheikhs are fiercely independent.

I arrived with my entourage of about 12 personal bodyguards and about 25 central police, who are fairly well trained (some of them). They’ve got the big pick-up trucks with .60 caliber Russian machine guns [dishka] in the back, all armed to the teeth. They’re with the central government. At the border of the sheikh’s territory, the head of the central police came to me and said, “We can’t go any further. The sheikh forbids it. He does not allow Yemeni military or police into his territory. Unless we want to be killed, we don’t go in. We’ll wait for you here.” I was allowed to take my personal bodyguards in, all who worked for the embassy – all Yemenis. I had an RSO [regional security officer] with me.

We drove along the road, and as we approached the sheikh’s compound, we stopped. My senior bodyguard, a guy named Mahmoud – he’s only about five foot five, tough as nails. He said, “Only you and me can go into the sheikh’s compound. The other guys have to wait out here.”

He got out of the car and stood in front of it and a single man came out of the sheikh's compound, maybe 75 yards away. He held up his rifle and fired a single shot. Mahmoud held up his Glock pistol, fired a shot, to let him know, "we are both armed." And then, he got back in the car (the driver came, too), and we drove up to the sheikh's compound. The sheikh came out the front door. Mahmoud walked with me into this room that was filled with guys that looked like they were all named Osama Bin Laden. All around the majlis are these Yemeni men sitting on cushions on the floor, chewing qat. All with rifles at their feet, almost entirely AK-47s. Different models, I learned there are different models of AKs, what the favorite ones are. I walk in with Mahmoud, who's a really good shot, he's got a Glock 9mm pistol. The sheikh met me out front, thanked me for coming, said it was going to be a glorious day and I was welcome. As I had learned previously, once the sheikh welcomes you, you are untouchable. No-one in that room would dare harm a visitor to the sheikh; otherwise he and his family would suffer. That's not to say somebody wouldn't...

So I sat and talked to the sheikh and drank tea. I always turned down qat; let me make that clear. I only put it in my mouth once, another time.

Q: I'm told the afternoons are usually devoted to chewing qat.

KRAJESKI: Every Yemeni man. And boy, too, which is too bad because now you see 12-year-old boys chewing it. And women. That was causing more concern; it was harmful. Physically, as a chemical, it's not really very potent. In the old days including my days there, we had a don't ask, don't tell policy with our political and economic and security officers, the military guys, all of whom – it was their job to get out and meet people, talk to people, pass messages, establish relationships. The best way to do it in Yemen was to go to the qat chews.

Every afternoon starting about 3:00. Everything would shut down about 1:00 because you had to go out and buy your qat, it had to be fresh. Qat grows year-round. It's a bush about as high as this room, about 12 feet average. [There were] intense arguments about where the best qat comes from and what to pick, which part of the tree you should pick it from. It has to be fresh; after two days it loses its potency. So that first day is critical. It comes from the qat fields to the wholesalers to the markets in the towns all in the space of a few hours. It's remarkable. If they could run the rest of their economy the way they run their qat economy, the place would be wealthy and secure.

At 1:00 every Yemeni stops and thinks about where they're going to get their qat. "I'll get it from Ahmed down at the corner. No, this time I'm going to drive out to this village because they've got better qat." By 2:30 or 3:00, people are gathering. Different houses, sometimes you move from one to another. They'll chew until about 6:00 in the evening. People who have chewed – and as I said, my officers, I had a don't ask, don't tell until my RSO, my security officer said, "You're not doing security clearances for these people. We consider qat to be a class one narcotic, on par with heroin and cocaine." I don't know

where that comes from. I guess it's a chemical analysis of the alkaloid that is the agent in qat.

People who have chewed it said after about an hour, it's like you've had six cups of really strong coffee. So you're flying, and talking. Everyone's talking. I've sat in many qat chews. I used to bring a cigar in with me – even though I don't smoke much, I'd bring in a little cigar. I'd smoke my cigar and say, "This is my bad habit, I don't need any more." They would accept that though sometimes they would fling the branches of qat across the room and say, "Try this one, mine's better!" Somebody new would come in the room and everybody would stand up and shake hands with the new guys. Arabs are very big on greetings, you have to do a lot of greetings, inquire about your health, about your crops. Do it repeatedly, not just once. We say, "Hey, how you doing? Just fine." and we're done, get down to business. Arabs, you take time, you really do. If you really know each other you can ask about families. You have to be really cautious about asking about the women. You can insult somebody by asking about his wife. But if you really know her and you've met, been out, and you know the kids are in school, you can talk about the kids in school and families. But you have to be careful.

Then my political officer said, "So that hour's great. Maybe you've got the minister of interior in the room, or senior military guys. People are talking. You can get work done, you can make deals, they'll make decisions during qat chews." It's not like heroin, at least my knowledge of it, that knocks you out. It makes you feel as if you're more acute. People compare it to chewing coca leaves. Energized. They also chew qat in Yemen for the same reason poor Bolivians chew coca – because you have no food. It's an appetite depressant. You don't eat. There's a lot of tea being drunk, so you've got caffeine and the qat. They would often smoke, too, usually counterfeit Marlboros.

The second hour, people would start to mellow out and get wistfully dreamy. The conversation would die. You would sit and talk. The chew – truthfully, if you want to know what it's like, go out and pick a bush (make sure it's not poisonous), pick off eight or 10 leaves and stuff them in your mouth. Keep it in your cheeks until it's like a green glob in your cheek. Sometimes the green spittle would dribble down. The breath, qat breath, will just kill you. Somebody would get up close to me and start talking after an hour or two of chewing... It really just knocks you out. This huge glob of green gunk that's bitter in your cheek. But it's a national addiction.

It's not really physically addictive. I knew many men who would go to the States where it's illegal to chew qat – there are Yemenis in jail in New York for trying to smuggle qat in; how they get it in within that two-day window I don't know. They [my contacts] would be at a conference [in the US] or going to a course for a month, and they wouldn't touch qat. They said, "I miss it the way I miss" (these were often educated, upper class guys) "the way I miss my scotch at 6:00 or the way I miss my first cigarette, or my cup of coffee." But physically, it's not like you withdraw from it, not a physical craving that you must have it. A lot of people blame qat for water shortages in Yemen.

Yemen has less water per capita than any place on Earth. There are 25 million people in Yemen and not enough water to sustain them. They have a real water issue. People would blame qat, because qat needs a lot of water. Most of the other crops they grow need a lot of water, too. The problem's not so much what they grow. For a [Yemeni] farmer, you grow qat, you make money. You grow maize or mullet or beets or grapes, you don't make nearly as much money. Qat is a great money crop and it's all year round. The demand for it is high, and it's not hard to grow, it's basically just a big weed. The problem is the way they irrigate it. They still use ditch irrigation. Most of the farms I visited (small plots), they use ditch irrigation which is very inefficient. Most of the water is absorbed into the ditch or evaporated by the hot sun. Yemen has 90% sun all year round. The climate in Sana'a was the most beautiful climate I've ever lived in, San Diego beautiful. Seventy-five degrees, sunny, dry every day. Not enough rain. Occasionally rain would come into the valleys. In the old days, before the big population burst of the past 25 years where they went from 10 million to 25 million people and the cities grew as a result, the aquifers in Yemen because of the rain and the way they preserved the water, either through a system of cisterns, or the actual natural aquifers, Yemen was quite an agriculturally rich country. It was once known as the breadbasket of the peninsula. There were still places where you drive into a valley and...

Q: Coffee came originally from there, didn't it?

KRAJESKI: They fight with the Ethiopians about the Queen of Sheba (the Ethiopians claim the Queen of Sheba as well) and about coffee. The coffee guys I knew – we tried to bring Starbucks in, because Yemeni coffee has a cachet. One time it was the most expensive coffee you could buy at Starbucks. It was called something – the Yemenis hated the name because it was not Yemeni; it was very expensive coffee. We tried to get Starbucks to come into the coffee plantations and buy. They really wanted to because Yemeni coffee, they wanted to buy more of it. But the Yemenis couldn't produce the consistent quality that Starbucks demanded. These big chains demand consistency. It doesn't necessarily have to be the highest quality but if you're producing as much coffee as Starbucks produces, you want consistency in your suppliers. The Yemenis just couldn't do it. We were working on it. There was another big coffee company, Seattle's Best which has since been purchased by Starbucks. Seattle's Best came in. There was a third one as I was leaving. Because folks couldn't make as much money with coffee as qat, they were cutting down these old coffee trees. Coffee bushes live for a long time. They were cutting them down and planting qat instead.

The minister of irrigation was a friend of mine, and he said, "All we have to do is change the way we irrigate. Just go to polyethylene pipe irrigation. Doesn't have to be drip irrigation, nothing too fancy. Replace the ditches with cheap pipe and we'll save." He estimated 60% of the water was wasted in ditch irrigation. "We save that water, we immediately have more water in the aquifers and more water for the cities." The only other option for water Yemen had was to build desal (desalinization) plants on the Arabian Sea and Red Sea coast, and that is extraordinarily expensive. First of all you end up burning gas or oil to fire the plant, and they didn't have a whole lot of gas or oil in Yemen. The second and really intractable issue was, you had to get the water to the cities,

and the cities were all in the highlands, and the desal plants had to be in the lowlands. Except for Aden, Mukalla, and Hudaydah on the Red Sea, there weren't major cities down there. So you had to pump it up to the cities. Just not practical. So they actually were talking before the wars broke out in 2011, 2012 when Yemen devolved into what it is now, they were talking about having to move populations down to coastal cities, that would be the only option as water was running out. Taiz, for example – if you lived in Taiz, which at one time was a very prosperous city. You got water once a month, the pipes that delivered water opened up once a month, so you had to fill everything up. They had water trucks that went around the rest of the time providing fresh water. They were drilling for fresh water while we were there. They were drilling deeper and deeper, and they were getting into water that was so highly sulfurous that you couldn't use it without treatment, and the treatment required modern treatment plants. They were starting to recycle water.

Yemen's a primitive country. Yemen's got terrorism, illiteracy, desperate poverty, one of the most severe water shortages in the world, and malnutrition as well. People were not starving, though there are more and more reports now of possible starvation. Because they were subsistence farmers, they usually had enough to eat – they just didn't always have the right mix of things to eat, so they had deficiencies. Undernourished.

All of us – the Japanese, UN, U.S. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had big programs. We were all looking at ways where we could improve health, education, agriculture, infrastructure. We [the U.S.] were putting our money into smaller projects. I'm a believer that local projects are more effective than the big projects. Ali Abdullah Saleh didn't like this at all. He wanted the United States of America to build roads. The first things these guys – “We want to build more roads; that's how we're going to improve our economy.” In some cases, that's true, because now farmers have access to markets in big cities. In most cases, no. Most cases, they want to build roads because the opportunities for graft and corruption in a big road construction project are ample. You can steal a lot of money when you build a road. I'm from Boston; where are you from?

INTERN: Erie, Pennsylvania.

KRAJESKI: Erie, Pennsylvania. Sure you've got projects in Erie, too. Boston's Big Dig, when they took out an elevated highway that went over the city. An awful eyesore, literally split the old city of Boston in half. They decided to dismantle it and put it underground. A 10-year project called the Big Dig. Was supposed to cost \$4 billion and ended up costing \$13 billion, most of it paid by the taxpayers of the United States, thank you very much. I don't know how many people have gone to jail, and how many more will go to jail.

Ali Abdullah Saleh wanted big projects because it was easier to steal. If I'm training midwives in Ma'rib, he's not going to get any money out of that. If I'm building small clinics, he's not going to get anything out of that, either. He would say to me, “You're the United States of America. You need to improve your image here in the Arab world. You

need to build a big dam or a big road and put ‘Made in the United States of America’ across it.”

We had one big project in Sana’a. An ancient drainage ditch that had been there in Sana’a for a thousand years, that went through the center of the city. When it rains – which it does in Sana’a, it rains this time of the year and in September. You can get some very heavy, huge storms come in and dump a lot of water quickly. In the city, it would run into the sailah, as it [the drainage ditch] was called, to the north end, the lower end of the valley, where it would feed the aquifer. The sailah had been allowed to get filled up with junk, it hadn’t been taken care of, and it wasn’t draining. So the water was staying in the city rather than going down to the aquifer. So we rebuilt the sailah. A 20-mile project. We paved it with old stones, which is how it originally was.

There was a road that ran down the center of it, like the aqueduct in LA (Los Angeles). When it rains, you want to get the hell off of it, quickly. We worried – they had bells in the city, and we put up gates on the entrances to it. As soon as it started raining in the south – the higher elevations – they would close the sailah and get everybody off of it. I saw this a number of times; you’d sit on the edge of the sailah, which is one of the [many] beautiful places in Yemen, in the old city of Sana’a. In my top five of most amazing, beautiful, fascinating places I’ve visited on Earth, the old city of Sana’a. I hope someday they can – hope not too much damage is being done to it in the war. The Italians and Germans had just spent a lot of money rebuilding it, as a tourist attraction. I’d sit there. The rain would start, and within 15 minutes the sailah would go from being bone-dry and having had traffic on it, to being a torrent, a 20-foot deep torrent of roaring water down the center of the city. I used to sit up there near this hotel where we’d get a cup of tea, and watch this happen. Then the kids would start going down to the edge, because water is a fascination for all kids everywhere. The Yemeni kids, this was amazing. I don’t know how many kids were swept away in it, I worried we had created this monster that was going to kill kids. They claimed to me it didn’t happen.

The one side effect that happened – these big projects always have unintended or unknown consequences. The wells in the old city started going dry. Instead of the water seeping into the city ground water and into the wells, it was going down to the main aquifer. So people who relied on wells in the old city had to hook up to the city [water] system, which was less reliable.

So when I arrived in ’04, that was our intention. We are really going to focus on development, security, counter-terrorism, and we’re going to see if we can’t build a stronger, more representative government in Yemen. It was a great opportunity, and I watched as we squandered it. “We” being the international community, but “we” being the United States of America. We are severely ADD (attention deficit disorder) in our policies. This is always talked about. We have four-year cycles. We also wanted to declare victory and go home. We see this quite often too; we need beginnings and we need ends.

So once Al Qaeda had been defeated in Yemen (remnants were there, but we had in fact made huge progress), Washington lost interest. Yemen was no longer on the top of the list of where we needed to expend our assets, our time. I watched as money [dried up] that was going to go for Yemen, whether for counter-terrorism training or development, education, health. AID's money got cut, the military started cutting its funds. I would go back to Washington and argue that we have a real opening here, we can make a difference. Everyone would agree with me, and I would get no money. The minister of social development, an American-educated, really terrific guy, one of the few honest people in government, as was the minister of irrigation. He would say to me, "We're funding this big project, we need you in it, and you're telling me there's no money? What's happening to the money?" I'm a baseball fan, as is this guy; he had gone to the University of San Francisco. I said, "It's like playing in the American League East, and right now we're competing against the Yankees and the Red Sox, and we don't have the players, we don't have the money. We're Toronto, we're Baltimore" (in those days Baltimore was not very good). "It's really hard – we're competing with Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon" (there had been the 2006 war in Lebanon in which we evacuated 14,000 Americans).

The [American] military was very supportive of trying to do more in Yemen. They recognized if we don't, Yemen is likely to come back and bite us again. They were right. I had a great military commander in the Horn of Africa; CENTCOM's Horn of Africa command was in Djibouti, which is right across the Straits of Bab al-Mandab. Question that I actually got right on the Foreign Service exam. I was asked in the oral exam, "What is the importance of the Straits of the Bab al-Mandab?" It's the strait between Djibouti and Yemen.

He [HOA commander] was putting his assets and money into it. I was getting military civil affairs teams to come up and do what we called MEDCAPs (medical civic action program) and VETCAPs (veterinary civic action program). These were [U.S. military] medical teams that would come up and we'd go from village to village, vaccinating, treating kids and people. The VETCAPS were veterinarians, they would bring military veterinarians – the military has everything. That was really popular; we would spend days. I would always go out and make an appearance, watch while they operated on goats. Goats were extremely important to the rural economy; goats and donkeys. Goats, as the reputation is, eat everything. But they can't digest everything. They can't digest stones. Literally, they would get stones stuck in their colons and intestines, and if they weren't treated, they'd die. We did operations. At the veterinary school, we were training Yemeni vets. Very important. They would always get pictures of me the ambassador rubbing donkeys with mange paste. This is what you do as ambassador.

The military was there. The military had 1204 and 1206 funds. These are funds that are specifically designated for civil affairs in the military, for funding these kinds of things. Like all things military, they had too much money. They had way too much money in these 1204 accounts. My [military] guy came to me and said, "I would like to work with USAID and get this money transferred to USAID." You can't do that in Washington, because Congress will say, "No we won't give more money to USAID, they'll just waste

it. We'll give it to the military instead." The military guys would go, "No, we don't know how to use it. The AID guys are the experts!" So we would do this on the ground. I had to apply for the 1204 money that would come in as a military fund that I as chief of mission could then use mission-wide. So I could use it to support the civil affairs teams – by that time I had one permanently at post; twelve military civil affairs guys. My AID mission was growing, we had a new AID director in. These two teams were working really well together. The influx of that money, upwards of \$100 million, would have made a big difference. The year I was supposed to get it, Lebanon blew up and suddenly that \$100 million went to Lebanon.

We said aid decrease, saw interest decrease. It's really hard for ambassadors in that part of the world to be effective if you're not bringing something to the table. If you come in empty-handed or even worse, you're taking something away, you're much less effective. We had a lot of things we were doing with the Yemenis where we really needed their cooperation. We continued to have a very close relationship on the intelligence side. Not as close as we would like; it was fraught with suspicion. We were still very much concerned about Al Qaeda passing through, or generating – as I said earlier, in those days we had Yemenis being recruited in Yemen to go fight in Iraq. The shoulder-fired missiles. Not RPGs, those are rocket-propelled grenades; that's surface-to-surface. These are shoulder-fired missiles, surface to air, that can take a plane down. Stingers were the best. We had given Stingers to the mujahidin in Afghanistan, and they're credited with having great effect as they started taking down Soviet aircraft, helicopters in particular. Before I arrived, there had been a missile fired at a plane I think coming out of Nairobi or Mombasa. The Shabaab, they think it was the Shabaab, had tried to take down an airliner coming out of a commercial airport. They had failed, but they had fired.

In Yemen as I mentioned, you could buy anything on the market. You could buy an SA-7, which was an old Soviet model shoulder-fired. They're run through a light and are heat-seeking; they're not as effective. Stingers are laser-guided. Once you nail a plane, it's fire and forget. You can shoot it and as long as you keep aimed at the aircraft while it's moving, that missile will not miss. We didn't think there were any Stingers in Yemen, but there were SA-7s and SA-9s, also the newer SA-16s, which were fairly effective. So I had to go to Ali Abdullah Saleh and say, "You've got to give them all up. You've got to help us find them all. We'll buy them."

We spent \$7 million buying missiles; that money went right to Ali Abdullah Saleh's pocket. I practically wrote a personal check for him. We needed his cooperation. We also wanted the ones his military had. A guy named Linc Bloomfield, who was the assistant secretary for political-military affairs came out, we made a deal with Ali Abdullah, and he agreed. As you make these kinds of deals, which are really important to you – the less you have to offer, the less effective you are in pushing this. I don't want to get into classified stuff here, but we frequently were working things in which we wanted them to do something – usually pick somebody up or talk to somebody. You can't walk into the room empty-handed. In previous days, 2001, 2004, we were working on it, we were literally paying cash for information as we were trying to find Al Qaeda in Yemen and elsewhere. That stopped. We stopped up front saying "You give us the guys, we'll give

you the money.” We had this whole deal. “We’re going to help you, we’re going to invest in infrastructure, education, health, democracy promotion” (which Saleh thought was ridiculous but he let us do it). We had less and less. The three years I was there, I watched the AID money shrink and the military money shrink. It was really rather dumb that we did that, but that’s what we do. We move onto the next crisis. Afghanistan wasn’t that important; it was all about Iraq.

Q: What about Yemen’s relations with its neighbors, Oman and Saudi Arabia, during your time there?

KRAJESKI: Fraught. The Omanis did not trust the Yemenis at all. They shared a common border, but it was a fairly remote border for both countries, so it was not a smuggling border. A little bit maybe. The Yemenis are smugglers, among other things. The drugs would come down from Pakistan and Afghanistan. The drugs, either raw or refined opium would come down to the Yemeni coast by dhow, by boat. It would be off-loaded on the Yemeni coast. One thing we were doing there was building a Yemeni coast guard; the Yemeni coast is huge and largely unguarded. They were more concerned about refugees – Somali boat people pouring in to Aden and the coast along there. They also had a lot of weapons coming in; they were smuggling weapons out. The Pakistani smugglers would come to the coast; the Yemeni tribal guys would be there to meet them. They’d off-load the drugs and trek them by camel or by Jeep, Land Cruiser, truck, to the Saudi border. Smuggle it across the Saudi border to the markets in Jeddah and Riyadh and the more lucrative markets up in the Gulf, the Emirates and Qatar, those wealthy countries in which these very wealthy people were starting to discover the joys of heroin and cocaine. When I was in Dubai, it was beginning to be a problem – these bored rich kids find ways to entertain themselves.

That was a concern for the Saudis. The Saudis were trying to strengthen their border. I mentioned, they had thrown a lot of Yemenis out; they were worried about blowback into Saudi Arabia. They had this plan of building – guess what? – a wall. This is some of the most forbidding desert in the world. The Rub’ al Khali – I’ve been on the edge of it. Go out to Ma’rib. We were driving up-armored Suburbans, which was a mistake. They’re not as good as unarmored Land Cruisers, which we found out – we’d sink into the sand and have to be towed by the Land Cruisers.

Q: I read that – was it Thesiger?

KRAJESKI: Yeah – Wilfred Thesiger. His Arabian Sands, about his trek across the Rub’ al Khali. It’s amazing. He did it by camel with a couple of guys. Freya Stark also has some [good stories], The Southern Gates of Arabia, amazing book about the 1930s in Yemen.

Q: Another one – Philby, not Kim Philby, but his father.

KRAJESKI: I didn’t read that. This is a wild place. So the Saudis are concerned. I would meet with the Saudis often. They would send like Muhammed bin Nayef, who’s now the

senior crown prince, he was then deputy minister of interior. He was in Sana'a all the time on intel and counter-terrorism stuff. They didn't trust Ali Abdullah Saleh, which is wise because he's a very slippery guy. But they didn't like him, either. That's huge in the Arab world; you don't trust somebody, you don't like them.

Part of it is what they saw as the betrayal in '90 when Kuwait was invaded and everybody thought the Saudi oil fields were going to go next – and had Saddam decided to move down into the Saudi oil fields, he could have taken them. He could have done a lot of damage. He couldn't have held them, just as he couldn't hold Kuwait. So the Saudi leadership, the king, really hated Ali Abdullah Saleh, and Saleh hated them because they had ceased funding him for one thing. The Saudis' belief was you could buy anybody off; that's changed.

So they put a lot of money in, they started shifting that money from Ali Abdullah to people who were nominally his allies but were in fact his competitors, including General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, who has just now been named vice president. He was the senior military commander along the Saudi border, with the Houthis – if you've been reading the news about Yemen, the Houthis are the Shia tribals who have spread through-out Yemen. They now control Sana'a, they still control Taiz. In 2004, when there was just a little [Houthi] insurrection up in the north, the army would go there every year and put it down. It got worse and worse, until it spread. Ali Mohsen was a very powerful military leader; the Saudis started sending money to him instead, and elsewhere.

There was a lot of Saudi private investment coming in, places like Mukalla in the south. They wanted to invest in Aden, and Ali Abdullah hated that. Ali Abdullah's a northerner; he distrusted the southerners who were socialists under the Russians. He distrusted people from Aden, which hurt him – a very stupid, short-sighted decision, because Aden, had it been allowed to develop privately, governmentally, or both ideally, could have become the most profitable port in the entire Middle East. The British chose Aden for very good reasons; it's one of the largest natural Deepwater ports on Earth. You see it, look at it – a perfect port. With very little dredging – most ports need a lot of dredging to bring the big ships in and out. Aden didn't need much dredging. But he distrusted the southerners. The Saudis were putting money into places like Mukalla, which is on the Arabian Sea coast; into Aden, into the Hadhramaut, which is where a lot of the Saudis came from, as I said. It's mostly just private development; building apartments that are empty, and villas that are empty.

Q: There's no skirmishing on the border?

KRAJESKI: No, except among tribal guys who are smuggling and Saudi border authorities. A little bit of that; that stuff's been going on for a thousand years. The Houthis were not yet threatening the Saudis. When the Saudis decided the Houthis were getting too powerful and they entered the war a couple of years ago with the bombardments, the first place they were attacking was Sa'dah, which is where the Houthis are from, right up on the Saudi border.

So relationships between Saudi Arabia and Yemen are strained. We kept telling the Saudis, “You’ve got to invest.” At this time, King Fahd established a program to send – always remembering that my numbers are not reliable – 50,000 Saudi students to the United States and Europe. Fahd was quite a reformer in his own limited way. One thing he saw as a game changer was, “I’m going to send as many of our kids as possible” – men and women – “to the United States and Europe for four years education.” Right now, I think the numbers are close to that – Saudi students in the United States. Now, a lot of those are men who have come with their sisters, because you don’t allow a daughter to go to a place like the United States alone; one of her brothers has to go with her. He figured, and I think he’s right, that as these folks come back, they’re going to change the way Saudi Arabia works. And I think we’re seeing some of that now, with the new crown prince. Well, we’re not happy about the war in Yemen, we think that’s a stupid mistake, a disaster waiting to happen. He’s made some changes internally that are really quite interesting.

So I went to the Saudis (and we did it through Washington, too, because they had a very powerful ambassador here, who was their foreign minister for a while under Fahd) and said, “You’re going to spend how many billions for this scholarship program for your students. Let’s take \$200 million and do the same thing for Yemen. Two hundred million dollars, how many Yemenis can I send to state schools in the United States, over the course of four years.” This in the long run was going to be a much more effective security measure for Saudi Arabia than having to send F-16s in five years later to start bombing Yemeni villages, which is not going to do much education or make you very popular. The Saudis wouldn’t do it. They didn’t like Saleh, they didn’t trust him; they figured he would just steal the money. I said, “Do it through the United Nations.” Who didn’t want to do it; the UN is very hard to work with, they have set pieces they do in different countries. I tried to talk USAID into it, but USAID can’t take foreign money to fund these kind of programs. So it never went anywhere.

With Oman, it’s the same thing. Sultan Qaboos distrusts and dislikes Ali Abdullah Saleh. The Omanis saw Yemen as a minor smuggling threat and perhaps as a generator of possible terrorist attacks. That really hasn’t played out in Oman very much. You could not fly from Sana’a to Muscat, which irritated me because after Sana’a, Muscat is the most interesting city in the Arabian Peninsula. If you ever have a chance to visit.

Q: At the time you were there, the gates would close and you couldn’t get in or out.

KRAJESKI: That’s a long time ago; 1950s, ‘60s. The old city of Sana’a – the gates are still there, the Bab al-Yemen, the Gate of Yemen. It is like walking into the 15th century. It is a genuine souk. It’s where the Yemenis go to buy pots and pans and shoes and shirts and jambiya, the curved knife that every Yemeni man wears at his belt buckle. Each jambiya is different in its kind of grip and scabbard you have for it, which will tell somebody which tribe you’re from, which family you are. Every Yemeni man has one and most of them wear it every day. The blades are fascinating; I’ve got a couple of them at home, under glass in a coffee table. The blades are kind of flimsy. They’re like a stainless steel tin blade almost. It’s not like a big sword. They’re used for stabbing;

they're very sharp and curved and you stab and twist it. And you're dead. They would occasionally fight with them. Rarely would blood be drawn with a jambiya; they generally took out a gun and shot each other. Once you bring that jambiya out, it means you're serious. You're now certifiably angry if you bring it out. There were some fascinating stories about jambiyas.

There would be shops with jambiyas, and like all souks, one street is nothing but jambiyas, and the next street is nothing but copper and tin ware, the next street is nothing but shoes, the next street nothing but clothes. There were a few tourist places – jewelry. My wife has a lot of Yemeni jewelry; it's beautiful stuff. The Yemeni Jews used to make the jewelry, they were known for their silver work. Prior to 1967 and 1970, when the Israelis funded the mass migration of Yemeni Jews, there were about 100,000, who had been in Yemen for generations. When I was there, they estimated there were maybe a couple of hundred. Because of Al Qaeda and the threat from extremism, they were under pressure as well. So they had the silver shops.

They have the food court [in the old souk]. We used to love to go to the food court, all the open air foods. Fascinating. And people lived there, there were houses. Yemeni houses were built out of mud, mud-straw brick that has stood for 700 years. Constructed with a wider base and narrower top. In Hadhramaut, they're eight, 10, 11 stories high. In the old city they were usually two, three, four. They're painted white and brown, very highly decorated. The windows, everybody bought the Yemeni fanned windows that they have. Truly a beautiful, fascinating place.

I would walk in, dressed as I am now, with three or four bodyguards walking with me. Sometimes the central police would insist on sending somebody with me, too. I was never harassed. Usually I was greeted with great friendliness, especially if I'd buy something. Because I had Yemeni bodyguards who were armed and were much more fluent in Arabic than I am, I always got really good prices. I went countless times. If you were at the embassy you could go in. Now, people at the embassy cannot – of course, our embassy's closed now, but for the last years, you weren't allowed to go to the old city. Which would be criminal, to be in a place like Sana'a and not be able to see the old city of Sana'a. I would go often. Embassy staff would go.

We would always brief people when they arrived on security in Sana'a, which we considered to be fairly secure. We really hadn't had an attack in Sana'a for a long time. We had a couple of plots which we busted up, thanks to a fairly good intel relationship. We have some really sharp people who do that for us. All of the phone-tapping aside and the controversies over listening in, my god if you're an ambassador in a place like Sana'a, you were just as happy they were there doing what they were doing. We uncovered a couple of plots directed against me. There were three assassination attempts, all of which failed obviously. The most serious one was the least planned. There were some guys hanging out in the street and they saw my car go by, and figured it must be somebody important. Because I had a follow car and machine gun guys and there's a siren ringing, and my armored Cadillac. I used to hate it, but that's the way we traveled through the city. They followed me to where I was going to dinner, a private house. It

was actually a Christmas Eve dinner at an American's house, with about 10 or 12 people going. They followed me there, recognized who I was when I got out of the car. "Oh, I can kill the American ambassador." They jumped over the wall of the house. They had hand grenades and pistols. My guys saw them and fought them off. They tried to escape, jumped over the wall. My guys chased them down the street, caught them. My guys didn't shoot, "There are too many people around, we're afraid we'll hit somebody else." They caught them. That's when they came closest [to getting to me]. I remember sitting at the dinner table watching everybody running around, wondering "What the hell are they doing out there?" I used to go [out] a lot. Toward the end of my stay, after three years of being in the newspaper and on the television, people would recognize me. As I walked down the very narrow streets, I would hear, "Hinak alssafir al'amriki; there's the American ambassador." Then I would be a little nervous.

Q: What about the role of other embassies. I think of obviously the British, the Saudi, Omani embassies. Was there joint action or concern or did you each go your own way?

KRAJESKI: I think in every place I've worked, to a greater or lesser extent – usually lesser – we've tried to do that. When I first arrived, it was recognized we were all prepared to invest a lot of money in Yemen. The British ambassador, Mike Gifford, was a counter-terrorism specialist. Wonderful guy. He and I organized a group of ambassadors – and the UN. The UN only reluctantly because they were afraid we were going to get political. UNDP was the senior agency, the United Nations Development Programme. They were doing good work on local government and education. There were about 10 of us; the Germans, the Japanese, the Dutch – the Dutch were very big in Yemen. The Italians also had a fairly robust aid mission. The Italians were big on cultural restoration. They were restoring mosques and madrasas, the schools, the old ones. Restoring them as potential tourist attractions.

Should Yemen ever calm down, should it ever be safe for travel again, it is an amazing place. Not just Sana'a. It's beautiful, its history is fascinating. The Germans and Italians were quite big on cultural restoration. The Japanese as I mentioned, the Dutch, us, the UN, the Brits. The Brits were big in Aden obviously, they had a connection there. We were often doing similar things, so we would get together just to discuss. We had a program with the coast guard where we were providing them with small coastal craft, training and funding. The Brits were building a coast guard headquarters in Aden. On government, the United Nations had a very effective program on strengthening local governments. You try to get it away from tribal sheiks into a structure that would be more inclusive, including women. These were in small cities like Mukalla, around the country. I persuaded USAID that instead of starting our own local government program, we should simply fund the United Nations' program, because it's so good. So they can expand it, we can work with it. We got AID to put \$2 million into a United Nations program. Washington hated the idea, but we sold it locally, because it was the most effective program; why duplicate it? So a lot of these meetings are, "Let's not duplicate our efforts. Let's talk about what we're doing."

Cooperation was harder. To actually say, “Let’s both go in on a project,” like local government. That was harder to do, because like USAID or our military, the money is controlled centrally. By Congress in our case. Congress is very reluctant, resistant to the notion that we would actually fund a British program. The same goes for the Brits. As I mentioned, we were probably most successful in health care. There was no way I was going to get the Brits to simply give money to our health care program. We could do things side by side, we could say to the Brits, “You build the clinic, and we’ll train the midwives, and the Germans will provide the funds for the sonogram machines.” Something like that. That could work, but it was hard to do. Everybody wants to take credit. We were big on branding. I still have the stickers and bookmarks, things we designed specifically. Anything we did, we put our brand on it, “Made by USAID.” If we added onto a school, we would put “USAID” on it. Brand it; that was big in Washington. I don’t know how effective it was. I will say, every time I went out to open a school or a clinic, to give out diplomas at the end of a nurses’ training program, we were always warmly welcomed. I never had protests against me. The only people who didn’t like me in Yemen were Ali Abdullah Saleh and those guys. They didn’t trust us; they thought we were trying to undermine their authority with these projects – especially the democracy projects.

Q: Well, you were!

KRAJESKI: Undermine is not the word I would use! We were trying to develop a more inclusive government, “Because in the long run, Mr. President, this is going to make your country more secure and make your legacy more complete.” He would say this, “I believe in democracy.” (They all believe in democracy...) “I believe in democracy, yes. And to prove it-“

I’ll jump ahead, to 2006. We have a presidential election. All of us, this group of countries, are putting pressure on Saleh. He’s got to fight corruption, and he’s got to expand the government. Be more inclusive, including giving more authority to local governments. Central governments hate to give more authority to local governments. We’re lucky in the States – we complain about this too. But mostly, our federal government got authority from local governments, granted through the constitutional process – rather slowly, and with a lot of argument still today over how powerful the federal government should be. In Yemen, the central government has all the money, and they’re doling it out to local governments as they see fit, as an instrument of power. They don’t want the local governments making any decisions. The ministry of Education guy in Mukalla is the one that’s going to decide where to build schools, not the town council. That’s sort of what we were working on.

We have a presidential election. We – “we” being me, the Brit, the UN, a bunch of guys who are Ali Abdullah Saleh’s advisors. Ali Abdullah was hard to deal with because he didn’t keep advisors close; certainly not the guys with me. He kept everybody boxed off. I never knew who would be in his office when I went to meet with him (and I met him frequently). Sometimes it would be the minister of Interior, sometimes his head of intelligence, sometimes the head of the newspaper. Sometimes only his interpreter.

Sometimes it would just be him. You learn very quickly – actually my predecessors, Barbara Bodine and Edmund Hull told me, “First thing you’ve got to do is make sure Ali Abdullah Saleh gets briefed, so he knows what you’re going to say when you walk into his office.” This is standard diplomacy; before you see the president, you tell the foreign minister, “I’m going to raise X, Y, and Z.” Or the foreign minister calls you to see what you’re going to talk about. That didn’t happen.

So I would go and see three guys. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, a former prime minister, foreign minister, now the head of the ruling party. He didn’t like that job. He was one of the guys who was educated at the University of Georgia, agricultural degree under this [USAID] program [in the 1960’s]. Then went on to Yale to get a doctorate in international studies. One of the smartest human beings I ever met; just died last year. He was maybe 5’1”, 5’2”. He was in his 70s when I was there; just the most energetic guy. Anyway, I would go to him. He was still close to Ali Abdullah Saleh even though he strayed during the oil smuggling days. He was one of the arrangers for the oil smuggling deals, and when the UN report on oil smuggling came out, it was revealed that the Yemeni government had arranged for 23 of these smuggling trips, and Ali Abdullah Saleh only knew about 15 of them. So eight of them, Abd al-Karim kept for himself. So he was a little bit in the doghouse. He told me that when I first arrived, “I’ve got to keep my head down because the president just found out... I’m giving him the money now! ‘Oh, I forgot about these!’” (Laughter) He was joyfully corrupt. They didn’t see smuggling as corrupt at all, it was just business.

I would go to see Mohammad al-Tayeb, former minister of labor who was close to Ali Abdullah. And I would go see the foreign minister, Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, who was a very impressive guy. The three of them would talk to Ali Abdullah, and tell him “The American ambassador is going to come in and talk about shoulder-fired missiles. This is what he’s going to want us to do, and here’s how I think we should respond.”

None of them would be in the meeting. He wouldn’t even have a note-taker. No American official worth his salt would go into a room without a note-taker and spear carriers. But it’s important. You’ve been briefed before you walk in. I would always talk to Washington, my DCM, my political people. “We’re going to see the president, we’re going to raise development issues.” I would bring my USAID director with me. I always brought my DCM with me, because he was an Arab-American. He was the best speaker of English and Arabic in the State Department. He just retired. Nabeel Khoury. I told Nabeel about you. Nabeel was a guy who didn’t get his ambassadorship, and he should have. Nabeel was Lebanese by birth, educated at the American University in Beirut. Then went to the University of Rochester, maybe Syracuse.

Q: How do you spell his name?

KRAJESKI: (spells Nabeel Khoury). He lives here in Washington, I just had lunch with him last week. I mentioned your program to him, he’s interested. He was a public affairs officer with the old USIS (U.S. Information Service, the overseas name for USIA, U.S. Information Agency), and when USIS was absorbed by the State Department he moved

in. He did a lot of political things when he came to NEA. He did a lot of PR, too. He was the Arabic language spokesman for Jerry Bremer during the Iraq War. He was just in Iraq a month ago, he still goes in and does contract work.

But anyway, I always brought Nabeel, for the Arabic – first because he’s really smart. You’d go in – no notetakers, maybe three or four other people in the room. Sometimes you don’t know who they are, sometimes I’ve seen them before. The interpreter Mohammad Sudam is there. My Arabic is good, but when Ali Abdullah Saleh gets going, he speaks a mile a minute and he slips into San’ani dialect, which is really hard to understand. We would start off in more formal Arabic, move slowly. And then he would get angry or upset or agitated. He was a nervous guy; he couldn’t sit still, he was always twitching, fiddling with things. He would start picking the heads off of flowers. He picked his nose! In meetings! So what would happen, when he got going fast – Nabeel would be sitting right next to me, and if I was losing him, I would look at Nabeel and Nabeel would whisper a couple of key phrases. Or I would say a word I didn’t understand, and Nabeel would whisper it in my ear. Ali Abdullah often stopped and said, “What’s Khoury saying to you?” Because Khoury is a very well-known name in Lebanon; it means priest. Most Khourys are Christians, so all the Arab world knows “the Khoury” as “the priest.” He [Saleh] would say, “What’s he saying to you?”

But often, especially if it was something I wanted to make sure he understood what I wanted to say, and I understood what he was saying, Mohammad Sudam the interpreter – excellent interpreter, very meticulous – he would translate. He didn’t do simultaneous, which I didn’t like anyway unless it’s perfect. So he would do intermittent. But Ali Abdullah doesn’t know intermittent; Ali Abdullah just talks, he goes and goes and goes “alalalal” (sound of fast speaking). He waves his hands and says, “Translate it!” And Mohammad, who’s been taking notes in his notebook for 10 minutes while Ali Abdullah’s been going on, then does a word for word ponderously slow exact translation of what Ali Abdullah’s said.

While this [the translation] is going on, Ali Abdullah’s bored. He doesn’t understand a word of English (all he could say is hello and goodbye). He would turn to the other people in the room, whoever they were, and start talking to them in Arabic while Mohammad was translating in English to me or if I had a guest – especially if I had Fran Townsend or someone in the room with me. He would just start talking to the other people in the room. Nabeel, because he had native, fluent Arabic, could pick it all up. He could pick up all the conversations going on across the room. So after the meeting, I’d ask him, “What did Ali Abdullah say to the intel guy?” Ali Abdullah figured this out after a while. Sometimes he would get out of his chair and start walking around the room. When I described this to my wife, who’s a fifth-grade teacher, she said, “ADD! [attention deficit disorder] It’s classic.” He’s just a man who can’t sit still.

One time we were talking among the embassies about corruption. Corruption was a huge problem in Yemen, it’s obvious. The presidential election is coming up. The opponent – there was a legitimate political opponent that the opposition parties [nominated] - and there were legal opposition parties, one of which was quite strong. Then there were

socialists and Nasserists, the strong one was the Islamists; ‘Islah’ they were called, the Reform Party, led by a very powerful sheikh. They had put up a credible candidate. Not the most powerful guy in the world, he wasn’t going to win anybody’s undying love. He certainly wasn’t going to win the election, with or without election fixing. But he was a credible candidate who was allowed to campaign, to hold big rallies, to criticize Ali Abdullah Saleh and the government in public. What he went after was corruption – “fasad.” When I raised this with Ali Abdullah early in my tour, I started talking about corruption, he said “There’s no corruption in Yemen. None.” I said, “Maybe a little?”

We actually had a program at the embassy in public diplomacy, funded by the military, a program – we were trying to promote counter-terrorism in villages, and we were doing this through children’s cartoons. We decided we could also do some anti-corruption. Even though it was outside the military’s purview, they said they’ll put some money in, we did some cartoons that attack corruption. It was a big issue. It was generating a lot of interest among Yemenis who knew damned well that there was corruption in Yemen, because “How was the minister of social affairs able to afford three big houses in the richest part of Sana’a when we know his family doesn’t have a dime?” On a minister’s salary, which was maybe \$10,000 a year. So yeah, there was corruption.

So Ali Abdullah seized on corruption and decided he would become the anti-corruption leader in Yemen. Those of us who at this point, in 2005, were putting a considerable amount of money into the country. The French, the Germans, the Dutch, and me. They were all concerned about corruption. “I can’t persuade The Hague to increase funds to Yemen until I can show them that we’re fighting corruption as well.” The four of us decided to go in to see Ali Abdullah together. I said, “I don’t want to do it [alone] because it’s just going to be the American going in and hammering at him and he’s going to want something from me. So I need you guys to come with me. And I need the Brit.” We sort of drew straws, I said, “I’m not going to take the lead. I’m not the one who’s going to pass this message to Ali Abdullah. He’s got to get corruption under control or we’re going to have a problem with our aid funding.” So we elected the Brit to do it. The German, the Dutch, and me and the Brit went in and he started. We had carefully prepared these notes. As I’d done with previous meetings, I’d gone to my contacts and said, “We’re coming in, the four of us, and we’re going to talk about corruption.” So he knew what we were going to talk about.

The Brit started his talking points, and Ali Abdullah just started shouting at him. “How dare you come in here, ganging up on me! The four of you, the Gang of Four, that’s what you are! You’re not going to cow me, you’re not going to intimidate me and this country! We don’t want your money, we don’t need your help. Don’t tell me how to run my country. You of all people” – pointing at the Brit – “you, the leader of colonialism in the world who kept my country under foot!” It was an incredible show. I was grinning, because I had seen Ali Abdullah in action many times, and Ali Abdullah loved to fulminate and shout. We’re in this majlis and – have I mentioned, the weather is always gorgeous in Sana’a? He had this tented meeting room, a majlis. Rather small, on the grounds of his palace. We would often meet out there, it’s a lovely place. He stood up and stormed out of the room and across the lawn towards the palace. The German was

absolutely petrified. He said, “We’re going to be PNGed. He’s going to throw us all out of the country, he’s so angry.”

I looked at Mohammad Sudam, the interpreter who was there, and I think Faris Salibani, the editor of the newspaper was there as well. I said, “Screw him. He doesn’t want our money, he doesn’t want to talk to us? Fine with me. Let’s go; I’m out of here.” Nabeel – this is where Nabeel is so valuable – grabbed my elbow and said, “Wait just a second.” The German is going, “This is a terrible idea! I blame you for this! I should never have allowed myself to be dragged in!” The Dutch guy was kind of cool; he was a very cool guy, I really liked the Dutch guy. I think he chewed a lot of qat. The Dutch diplomats often are among the most sophisticated and effective. I guess that’s their history, goes back a long ways. The Brit and I were, “If Ali Abdullah wants to make a scene, let him make a scene. Let’s make a scene, too. Call the cars; we’re leaving.”

And Nabeel said, “Just wait a second.” Nabeel followed Ali Abdullah into the palace and sat with him for about five minutes and said to him, “You’re out of your mind.” I don’t know how Nabeel got away with it; I couldn’t have gotten away with this. Nabeel said, “You’re crazy. You know who you’re throwing out, you know what you’re doing. This is nuts. You need to go back and talk to those guys. And you should be against corruption. You are against corruption; your picture’s on posters all over the country right now in front of the election, saying ‘We’re going to fight corruption together!’ So, what’s wrong with the message?” And Ali Abdullah turned around and came back [to the meeting], and we talked.

Nabeel is a very effective diplomat with Arabs. Part of it is he grew up [in the Middle East] – although he grew up in Lebanon, which is a very different Arab country from Yemen.

You try to work together. You try to do things so you don’t get in each other’s way. But often we would have programs that were duplicative or wasteful. But what I regret most is that we the United States didn’t put more effort into it, more money into it, in 2004-2007 when it may have made a difference come 2011 when the crisis hit Yemen. I think the crisis would have come anyway. It was a political crisis to start. But because of the weakness of Yemen’s structures, because of the many challenges – poverty, lack of water, malnutrition – it just didn’t survive the political crisis. And plus, Ali Abdullah Saleh like Qadhafi and Mubarak – he’s closer to Mubarak than Qadhafi – he didn’t give up power. Ali Abdullah Saleh finally – and it was the Saudis who finally turned the heat up - and he was nearly killed. If you recall, there was a rocket attack on a mosque where he and the minister of interior, who was severely injured, and a number of others, his top aides were injured, in what we think was a missile. Probably an Iranian Katyusha. It could have been a bomb smuggled in but guys who looked at the scene said, “It really looks as though a rocket struck the side of the building, penetrated the building, and blew up.” Ali Abdullah was burned over a significant part of his body, enough to seriously endanger him. More than that, according to a Saudi who I knew later on, we were talking about this (I was then at the National Defense University), he said, “Ali Abdullah took a splinter of wood right here, boom.”

Q: By the heart.

KRAJESKI: He said, “A fraction of an inch to the left it would have struck his heart and killed him.” Whereas a Yemeni who was sitting in the room with us said, “Aah, he doesn’t have a heart, it wouldn’t have hurt him.” Ali Abdullah Saleh went to Saudi Arabia for treatment. This is 2012 I think; we said, “You can come to the States for treatment. But once you come to the States, you’re staying in the States.” We were trying to transition power. It’s really been hard for Yemen these last few years.

Lots of other stories I could tell about Yemen. Our policies I think were the right ones as far as cooperation and counter-terrorism. We continued to make progress. I mentioned some of the levers that I had to encourage or maintain progress were weaker as my tour went on. Then the 15 Al Qaeda members escaped from supposedly the best prison in Sana’a; they dug a tunnel to a neighboring mosque and 15 of them escaped in February 2006.

That really started changing the whole dynamic of counter-terrorism in Yemen. Combine that with our lessening of resources, [and] we saw Ali Abdullah start to make deals. The kinds of deals he had made in the ‘90s. Suddenly the chief planner of the *Cole* attack, who had been captured, escaped again, was recaptured. The *USS Cole*, a U.S. Navy destroyer. We had used Aden harbor as a refueling point, come through the Suez Canal down the Red Sea, and Aden and then up to the Straits of Hormuz and into the Arabian or Persian Gulf. But the main planner of that attack had been convicted and condemned to death. It was then commuted to life, then reduced to 15 years. And he then escaped. No, no – he escaped but was almost immediately recaptured. But we never could figure out whether he was re-imprisoned or not. Whenever our guys would demand to talk to him, they would produce him. They would go down to the jail or to the intel headquarters, and they’d produce the man. But we were never sure whether he went back to jail or went to some house arrest. It was clear Ali Abdullah was making deals with his family who lived out in Ma’rib. Ali was making all kinds of tribal deals. Part of it was because he was worried about losing the election – which was ridiculous, he wasn’t going to lose the election.

The election was relatively free, fair. We had observers – we observed it. Some international observers, not too many. I visited a lot of polling places myself. Some evidence of multiple voting; they do the purple ink on the finger after you voted. If you were voting for Ali Abdullah Saleh, you could vote multiple times. At the end of the count, which we also thought was fairly done and the UN had observers, Ali Abdullah only got 75% of the vote. He had gotten 95% in the last election. He called me after the results were in and yelled at me, he was furious. “You’ve humiliated me; I only got 75% of the vote. Twenty-five percent of my people don’t support me, and now all the public knows this. So do the newspapers. I should never have let you talk me into this, never!”

I said, “I’m going to come talk to you tomorrow. I’ll bring Nabeel.” Because he was yelling at me; I often called Nabeel and said, “Get on the line and we’ll shout at each

other and then you tell me what he said!” So the next day, Nabeel and I went in. Before we went in – this is 2006, so you could go on-line in 2006, and find the Washington Post from 1984, the Reagan-Mondale election, which is still considered the biggest landslide [victory in recent history]. Even the Nixon-McGovern one, Nixon-McGovern was pretty big, Reagan-Mondale, the Clinton-Dole in ’96 wasn’t as much. Mondale only won like two states, and Reagan won 61% of the vote, and it was considered a colossal landslide. We were worried that this was the end of the Democratic Party, it’s not good to have one party dominating such as the Republicans were dominating in ’84. I brought in the stories to Ali Abdullah and showed them to him. Everybody knows Ronald Reagan; he’s very popular in the Arab world, and they knew him to be a very powerful, popular president. And the fact that he only got 60% of the vote, and we considered this a landslide? So, 75’s not so bad, is it?

The whole thing went to hell after that. We were focused on the parliament; the presidency we knew was going to stay with Ali Abdullah. The election by the way got Yemen into the Millennium Challenge; they met the threshold for a “threshold project” they called it. Not the full challenge, they were not going to get \$500 million; they were only going to get about \$35-40 million, and it was specifically in judicial reform and anti-corruption projects. But we actually got them accepted. It took a lot of smoke and mirrors and some squinted eyes, and maybe we were all a little drunk, but we got them into the program. We were desperate to get Arab countries into the program. Morocco and Jordan I think had gotten in, but we were really desperate for other countries to get in, so the White House was very keen on getting them in. As reward for the election and for getting into the Millennium Challenge, the White House invited Ali Abdullah Saleh for his second visit to the White House. Meetings with the president and lunch with the president. Not a state visit, but an official visit – you get lunch, not the fancy dinner.

When I first arrived, they invited him because of counter-terrorism. So twice during my time there I got to go to the White House and meet the president of the United States, sit in the meetings, brief the president of the United States, and sit in there and watch George Bush and Ali Abdullah Saleh talk to each other. These two guys liked each other. They were similar in some ways. Both guys who saw themselves as kind of tough decision makers, no nonsense. Like a good pal, George Bush called me “Buddy” and slapped me on the back. He was actually a very interesting man and a very intelligent man, as was Ali Abdullah Saleh.

They had met once before, at Sea Island. If you remember the G8 meeting on Sea Island, Georgia, in 2004. The focus of that meeting was going to be the Middle East, so they invited all the leaders of the Arab world. Only King Abdullah of Jordan and Ali Abdullah Saleh showed up. Otherwise, they got foreign ministers and vice presidents.

So Ali Abdullah Saleh got a meeting with the president, one on one at Sea Island. I’m told that as Ali Abdullah Saleh was walking up to the room where they were going to have the meeting, the Secret Service stopped him and demanded he take out his jambiya. He was dressed in traditional dress for the photo op. Ali Abdullah Saleh usually wore a suit and tie. Occasionally on Fridays he wore traditional Yemeni dress of the wraparound

skirt, the blazer, a shirt, then your jambiya on, and your turban wrapped in a Yemeni way. He was going to meet the president, dressed in his Yemeni dress. He had his jambiya, and the Secret Service stopped him and said, "You can't bring a knife into a meeting with the president." Ali Abdullah and his entourage said, "No, it's a traditional ceremonial knife, it's part of the dress." Plus, you take a knife away from a Yemeni guy and he goes in with an empty scabbard, that's bad. This is an insult.

Ali Abdullah Saleh apparently was cool with it, but his other guys were grumbling. It's always the bodyguards who fight with each other, his bodyguards said, "Well the president won't go in if he can't [wear his jambiya]." Apparently Bush heard the hubbub, opened the door, and said, "What's going on here?" They said, "Well, Mr. President, the president of Yemen – we need him to take off his knife." And Bush said, "No, it's no problem, let him bring it in, what are you guys, crazy? Come on in! Welcome, Ali Abdullah Saleh." He welcomed him and they sat down. They're talking. The Secret Service guys are pissed because they just got rolled, but it was by the president of the United States. I wish I could remember the name of the skirt that Yemeni men wore, a fairly long wrap-around. As they're talking, Ali Abdullah crosses his leg; the skirt lifts up and he's got a 9mm pistol strapped to his ankle, which he always wears. Again, Yemeni men wear guns and knives. The Secret Service guys went nuts, "There's a gun in the office!" Anyway, they were furious. They finished the meeting quickly, they hustled him out and they said to Ali Abdullah's guys, "The next time you get a Washington visitor to Sana'a, we're going to get you back."

Anyway, first meeting in the White House is November 2004. It was for me my first time to do a president's meeting. It was really quite impressive. And this president and the other one I dealt with, Barack Obama, they listened to the ambassador. It was kind of cool. I was instructed to get there half an hour before the meeting, to be in one of the anterooms. I was sitting there with Elliott Abrams, who was then a deputy national security advisor who handled the Middle East. Ali Abdullah's in Blair House across the street, staying in the official guest house. I had just been over there to see him.

Then the president calls you in. In the room was Cheney (the vice president), Rice was not there so Nick Burns who was then under secretary for political affairs was in the room. Stephen Hadley the national security advisor was in the room. And the president.

The president basically says, "OK tell me what this guy's going to say, and what should I say? What are the issues that we need to raise with him, and what's he going to raise with us?" He's already got all the briefing papers; I always wonder whether these guys actually read these briefing papers. He had a piece of printer paper that he folded in half. He had a fairly fine-pointed Sharpie, and as I talked to him about the issues (and we focused on counter-terrorism in particular and the programs we were doing), he would write a word on the paper. Then at the end of my briefing, about 15 minutes, he folded the paper and put it on his desk. I noticed that one of his aids immediately took the piece of paper away, because when the president writes something, it's part of the record so they keep everything. Ali Abdullah meanwhile had arrived and was being led into the anteroom. Ali Abdullah comes in and the first thing that George Bush says to him is,

“Where’s your sword? Where’s your knife?” He [Saleh] was dressed in a tie and coat. “No, I wanted to see that, that was a cool sword.” They start talking about knives and swords and guns; he’s [the President] a Texas guy.

During this meeting, we’re sitting there. You’ve seen this scene on the news, where the two guys are sitting in front of the fireplace and then there are two couches coming out from them, one side the Yemenis and one side the Americans. First seat is Dick Cheney, then me, then Hadley. He’s here at Brookings now. He was a smart guy, but not particularly impressive. So they’re [Saleh and Bush] chatting away, talking mostly about counter-terrorism. Ali Abdullah’s doing his, “I’m your biggest supporter, I’m your strongest friend. We are making great strides in preventing terrorism in Yemen. Indeed, we have prevented two attacks against your ambassador.”

This was news to me. Bush looked and said, “Ambassador? You mean this guy?” and he pointed at me. And Bush said, “Who would want to hurt him? He’s much too good-looking!” (Laughter) Everybody in the room is laughing, I’m thinking “What the...”

It was very strange. They [Bush and Saleh] stay in the Oval Office [for almost an hour]. Again, the focus on counter-terrorism and cooperation. Some specifics about training programs and weapons. Ali Abdullah always wants a lot of things. Talked a little about the Saudis and regional issues.

Then (and it happened the second time I went there, too), the president and Ali Abdullah get up and walk in the Rose Garden. This apparently is a great honor for a visitor; the president takes him aside and it’s one on one. We’re [the other participants] going upstairs for lunch. Everybody else walks along the inner terrace near the Rose Garden and take an elevator up to the next floor where the dining room is.

So he and Ali Abdullah go off alone with our interpreter, who is a great guy Gamal Helal; he’s famous among the Arabists. An NEA guy, an Egyptian-American, and he is the most extraordinary interpreter I have ever listened to. The meeting is about an hour, then we’re going to do a lunch at which the presidents sit across from each other and the interpreters, Mohammad Sudam on Ali Abdullah’s side and Gamal Helal on the president’s side are sitting right next to them, and the rest of the guests are seated around the table. As ambassadors, myself and Abdulwahab al-Hajjri sit down at the end. We know each other well. Everybody’s listening to the presidents. It’s simultaneous interpretation, and Gamal gets every inflection. Of course his translation is 100%. He does it as the president is speaking English, Gamal is speaking Arabic. As Ali Abdullah is speaking Arabic, Gamal is speaking English. It’s as if the two presidents are talking to each other; there’s no gap in the conversation, unlike when I do a successive. Just to watch that, it’s really kind of neat.

Ali Abdullah also met Condoleezza Rice who was secretary of State. For this meeting, he went over to State; one time she came to Blair House to meet him there, and one time he went over to the State Department to meet her. That was the first time, and he agreed to do it – apparently the whole protocol thing, he’s the head of state, supposed to come to

him. And he went over. We brought him into the main office where Condoleezza Rice [was waiting]. Ali Abdullah Saleh had kind of a crush on Condoleezza Rice. He thought she was the most beautiful woman; he would say this to me. He could not understand why she was not married. I swear he was going to divorce one of his wives and propose at some point. He clearly was quite taken with her. He was taken with the idea that a black woman was secretary of State; it was really quite remarkable to him. He had listened to her before on television; he was quite taken with her. She is quite attractive, and she is very meticulous in her presence, her presentation. Her hair is always perfectly done, her clothes are beautiful. She's a very shapely woman. She's very dignified. Ali Abdullah Saleh's short and not as dignified.

During this meeting, Secretary Rice is hammering him in a very direct way that he needs to do more on counter-terrorism. There was a particular case, I'm not sure what the classifications on this are that we were talking about and we wanted access to this guy and we weren't getting it, and "bang bang bang, you've got to do this."

He was like a little boy, just sitting there saying "OK, we'll do that. Yes ma'am, yes ma'am." I had prepped the secretary that this would be a tough meeting, this guy does not want us meddling around in this case.

At the end of the meeting, we walk out into the anteroom where the secretaries are and Ali Abdullah's supposed to go down the secretary's elevator down to C Street and out. He has a gift, "I have a gift for you, Madame Secretary." She's very gracious, "Oh thank you." He says, "I would like to present it to you now." He opens a case and it is a big, beautiful Yemeni silver necklace. A lot of them are big and clunky; this was a really delicate one, quite beautiful. And a set of earrings. She said, "That's really very lovely, thank you very much Mr. President." He said, "No, I need to see it on you." And he took the necklace out of the box and he approached the secretary and put his arms around her neck. She's a tall woman, he's a short man; you can guess where his chin was as he's reaching around. And he can't get the clasp closed. I'm sitting there with the assistant secretary of state [David Welch] and a note-taker, and I'm backing away, I'm thinking "This is not going to end well. I don't know what to do." I really didn't. Everybody else in the room is just frozen. The secretary is frozen cold, her face is just blank. And he's fiddling. He takes it off like this, and she says, "That's fine." He goes, "No," and he took her by the shoulders and turned her around. He flipped the necklace over and he caught her hair, so her perfectly coiffed hair comes down. He put the necklace on the back. He reached for the earrings, and she just said, "We're done here. Goodbye Mr. President." We hustled him out to the elevator and down. I never heard anything else beyond that. I will never ever forget the look on Secretary Rice's face as he was trying to get this necklace around her neck.

I think we'll end there.

Q: Next time we'll finish when you left and maybe what's happening in Yemen right now. Also I'd like to ask, was the role of women changing there, and did we have any female operators, and how they operated?

KRAJESKI: There's an interesting story on the women at the embassy that relates to going to the souk – because we let people, everyone could go to the souk. I did have women – my chief of the political section was a woman, we had women at USAID, a woman who was my public affairs officer. Fairly senior people at the embassy. When women came to the embassy and we briefed them on security, that question would be asked. Should I cover, should I wear a hijab when I go down to the market? Because all Yemeni women always wore a hijab, and sometimes even a burka, the face covering as well. I would say, "you're an American. If it's my decision, I don't want you to wear it." We didn't have any reports of any undue harassment beyond a catcall here and there. Nothing else. The only exceptions I made. If you were an Arab-American, or you looked Arabic, you might have more trouble, because they might mistake you for a Yemeni woman and then you would have a problem with the men in the marketplace. Or if you had blond hair. I said, "If you have blond hair... no-one's going to attack you or shout at you. But the Yemeni men are going to follow you everywhere." They would just turn into little babies with a woman with blond hair. They would try to touch it. They were just... So I would say, "You might want to tie it up, put a hat on. Otherwise, you're just going to be followed around everywhere you go."

In general, women at the embassy – we had very few incidents. My daughter came, Jenna. Jenna is dark-haired and dark-eyed, very beautiful (she's my daughter). She speaks very good Arabic, grown up in Cairo and Dubai. She's a reporter now, a free-lance writer. She came to Yemen before she was going to take a job with The New Yorker, she came for two months. She didn't cover when she went down to the market (she went down frequently). Because she understood Arabic, she said, "The worst I ever got was some guys who would come up and say things like, 'You are so beautiful, I would like to take you home and introduce you to my mother,' or 'Your eyes are like lakes in the mountain.'" She had just spent two years living in Brooklyn and working in Manhattan and said, "It's a lot worse on the streets of Brooklyn than down there."

Q: Today is the 25th of May, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, we were talking a little about the role of American women officers, and I was wondering sometimes the fact that women officers can penetrate the women's circle, the wives' circle in Arab countries. Wives know a hell of a lot; they're on the phone all the time, they talk to each other. Wonderful source of information. Did you ever find this played out for you?

KRAJESKI: Oh, absolutely. You're exactly right that first, women know a lot. And second, they have enormous influence and power. Power, I'll use that word – both within their families, where women are often the decision makers on family matters. But they have great influence over their husbands or sons or brothers who are in government or in business or in the military. We as men out in the Arab world. While I could connect very well with the Arab man; I have a beard, I'm a grandfather, I speak Arabic. I could go into a room, sit down with a bunch of Arab guys, and we could connect. Rarely could I do that with women. Some of the societies, some of the countries where I've worked – I would say Egypt and Tunisia (Tunisia I just studied language). In Egypt you could often meet and mingle with women and men. You could go to a woman's office and talk to her.

Egypt in 1993, 1995 was perhaps a little different than it is today. In Dubai of course, it was such a mixed society. It was difficult to meet with Emirati women, the citizens.

But Yemen, where we are in our journey, was a particularly tough nut to crack when you were trying to learn about that side of society and politics and government and business. There were women involved. Yemen had a little difference because in the south of Yemen, it was under socialist/communist government, and they were a client state of the Soviet Union back in the '70s and '80s. Women were educated up through university level. The wearing of the abaya was discouraged. Women were very much part of government, of business, of universities. When I arrived in 2004, when I went down to Aden, you could see that difference. I often met with women who were the heads of university departments. They were fewer and fewer as the influence of the more extreme religious views coming out of Saudi Arabia – we talked about this a bit last time – began to put pressure on this relatively small group of women who dressed in Western dress, who engaged with men who were not their relatives, who shook my hand.

In Sana'a, certainly when I went out into the villages and small cities and towns of the countryside, it was rare that I would have a conversation one-on-one with a woman. Sometimes with a group, usually at a university with a lot of men present. Having women officers at the embassy was very valuable for many reasons. But one was that they could penetrate that society. They could go to the qat chews; women like the men chewed qat in the afternoon. Not all women did; most of them sat around and drank tea. But they had a similar gathering in many places, including some of the smaller villages and towns. My political officer, I mentioned that my political chief was a woman when I first arrived, the first year I was there – Shayna Steinger. My economic officer was a woman. My public affairs officer also a woman, in the consular section, too. So we had a group of women Foreign Service officers, all of whom could get out and connect.

They had a great time. Often the women's affairs, their parties and weddings and celebrations, even their afternoon teas, were much more lively than the men were. The men could be quite conservative and quite dull sometimes. The women were very outspoken. We tapped into this group for a couple of our key programs, both through women – the deputy in the USAID also a woman, and the head of one of our largest contractors, they were doing health programs, was a very accomplished fluent Arabic-speaking woman who had lived a long time in Tunisia. Cheri [Rassas], who has since passed away God rest her soul, she had tremendous contacts throughout the countryside through these health programs. She would often invite me out to meet people who she had cultivated and she had met. Often just to be the ambassador and give a speech, but then I'd have the opportunity to sit down in a room with Cheri and a couple of other people and talk to these women.

As I said, they were very outspoken. They were very critical of Ali Abdullah Saleh and the central government. They were critical about corruption. We talked about this last time, how this became a major issue in the politics of Yemen, but also as a factor in economic development, and how we as the international aid community were going to contribute and work with Yemen. We immediately started a couple of programs on

corruption, using money from the U.S. military in one case, a program called – it used to be called psy-ops, thank god they took that name and threw it into the wastebasket where it belongs. Instead they had programs in which they had competent officers come out and do public relations, civil affairs programs. They were much more open about it; I insisted that we weren't going to do anything sneaky. We were going to be very open in our cooperation and partnership with these local groups, as we developed programs on counter-terrorism (that's the military's main thrust) but also on fighting corruption. They found that women were very effective at both criticizing and revealing corruption and pressuring government to do more about it.

Q: What was your picture of the corruption there?

KRAJESKI: It was endemic. It was not as blatant and distasteful as some reports I hear out of places like Mobutu's Zaire, or Baby Doc's Haiti. It wasn't accompanied by the brutish violence for one thing, the outright theft. Ali Abdullah Saleh, we know he owned property in Dubai and we thought he probably owned property elsewhere, but he was very careful not to be overly ostentatious or demonstrative in his wealth. The same was true for most of the government. But you couldn't help but notice that the minister for social development (the previous one, not the guy I worked with) has an enormous house in the wealthiest section of Sana'a. He'd fly frequently to Europe, Geneva. He lived quite well. I did like going to dinners at his house, but... And the Yemenis knew this. They would watch who's driving the new fancy Mercedes around town. "Where'd they get the money?" There was evidence of that kind of grand corruption.

Then there was the petty corruption, and that pervaded the entire country. And that's what the women in the villages were more upset about. In some ways they expected their senior officials to steal and skim, but what they hated was when they had to get a driver's license, and you had to pay the guy at the desk just to apply for the license, to get through it all. Or if you needed a permit to build on your house and you had to bribe somebody. Or you had to register your kids at school and somebody would come by and shake you down, "If you want your kids to go to that school, you're going to have to pay a little bit." This really riles the Yemenis. According to some of our sources, it was relatively new to Yemen, this petty corruption.

Q: This had not been the norm, then?

KRAJESKI: No. I don't want to overplay this, I've mentioned it before. In Islam, this notion of stealing from your fellow citizen, from your fellow Muslim is taken very seriously. I've talked a little bit about how in Arab society, these things become personal very quickly. Families are large and they know each other. In a country like Yemen, the connections between Yemenis are fairly deep. So if your cousin is rousting my cousin over a housing permit, I'm going to talk to you about that; I'm not happy. As Yemen became more urban – this happens throughout the world. The population was growing at 4% a year since 1970, so the population is doubling every 22 years. When I was there it was about 25 million; they'd got the population growth rate down to like three-point-something percent, but still it was going to double. It's not unusual to see Yemenis with

14 children in the villages. The population pressure in the villages was too much; people were coming to the cities. Cities are growing. The infrastructure and the economy just can't handle it. So people turn to less legal means of making money. Officials become more corrupt when the pressure on them is greater.

We felt that among the many challenges that Yemen faced in 2004, 2005, 2006, near the top of the list was corruption. I would have put at the top of the list water, and the need to begin immediately serious programs to conserve water. They simply were going to run out, as they have in some places like Taiz now. In the top two or three, maybe after education, another long-term but absolutely desperate need, would be getting a handle on corruption. From our point of view, the international donors had certain standards that had to be met. As I would say to Ali Abdullah Saleh, who didn't fully understand this, "I, the ambassador, have to go back to Washington and meet with members of Congress and justify every penny that we are spending in Yemen." That's an exaggeration, but it is also true. You are expected to account for the taxpayer's money. You are also, in the inner circles in Washington these folks know that a certain amount of the money we invest in Yemen is going to be skimmed. It's going to be skimmed by corrupt officials at some point in the process. But we have an obligation to minimize that and to go after it. The Millennium Challenge Account which I mentioned and into which we got Yemen into the threshold in 2006, I believe? That was a \$30 million program, a lot of which was going to go to judicial reform, specifically anti-corruption. Training judges, establishing the independent judiciary that would be able to go after corrupt government officials.

We also put a considerable effort – we and others in the international community – into trying to promote and develop a free media. Both broadcast media – only government channels were allowed – and print media. The print media had greater flexibility, greater scope for opposition and criticism. Our point was, in the United States we've had corruption since the beginning. The strength we have, the advantage, is that corrupt officials get caught. When they get caught, they're tried, and if convicted, they're thrown in prison. That is the greatest hold on corruption I think that a society can have. A free press – often the first knowledge of corruption is somebody leaks to the press about their bosses who's given the contract to Boeing and taken a little bit on the side, and the Washington Post prints a great expose and, bam! suddenly somebody's hiding cash in a freezer. Was that the local one here? Or she was hiding it in her bra? Officials sometimes steal.

In Yemen, they weren't close. The minister of justice whom I liked very much; a tiny man, his legs didn't touch the floor when he sat in a chair like this. He looked very young; he was in his 50s but looked like he was in his 20s. Very intelligent, very capable guy. I was surprised that Ali Abdullah Saleh permitted it, but in fact he had a great deal of independence and we worked with him as he was trying to develop this corps of judges who were independent from the powerful leadership, especially Ali Abdullah. I mentioned the last time elections and parliament. That's another aspect of this, trying to develop a parliament that's more independent and had more authority as well. I think when we do this step by step, we're more effective in our attempts to change regime behavior, certainly more than if we decide to invade a country and throw the guy out.

Didn't work in Yemen; maybe there was too much stacked against the country. Twenty-eleven broke it. In 2005 and '06 we really thought we had a chance to make a difference in Yemen. It breaks my heart that we didn't.

Q: I wonder if you could explain a little bit – you understand the country and it's a little bit off the chronology. But right now and the past few years, there's been a very nasty civil war going on in Yemen. What is this all about? Were the seeds of it there before?

KRAJESKI: Oh, yeah. If you look at Yemen's history over the last thousand years... Yemen's been around a long time. Something called Yemen has been around 6000 years. I may have talked before about how many scholars believe the roots of Arabic language are in Yemen. We talked about the great civilization of Sheba, the Queen of Sheba and Ma'rib back in 200, 400 AD. But I also talked about how Yemen has always been a splintered country, with local tribal leaders being extremely important and in general, the most powerful factor in that region is that local leader. The tribes often butted up against each other. They would fight over water rights. There would be some scuffle over somebody's daughter. There would be a fight and someone was killed. Tribes allied with each other, formed different federations and conferences. But they generally managed local security and to avoid civil war. Yemenis will tell you, and I think it's true in this case; other times I'm skeptical when someone sits with me and says "It's all about the foreigners. It's the damned foreign interference; if only the foreigners would go away we, we Iraqis, we Kurds, we Yemenis, we could solve this." But in fact if you look at Yemen's history, some of its most violent periods have been when foreigners have been taken sides in an internal dispute. The Turks tried many times to take Yemen and move factions against each other; they were not successful.

Q: It was never really part of the Ottoman Empire.

KRAJESKI: They were able to establish a couple of outposts there. They did try, as they moved down through the peninsula, to establish more control. The Yemenis fought them every inch of the way. They still talk about it today (that's true of a lot of things in the Arab world), how they didn't let the Turks take Yemen. Turkish friends of mine said Yemen was known as "the graveyard of the Turkish army." According to one story – I've never checked on this other than the one guy, the Turkish consul-general in Mosul in 2003 I think – he said when a Turkish soldier was assigned to Yemen, his family would give him a funeral before he left, because they really didn't expect to see him come back alive. Good story.

One of the most dramatic recent examples was the civil war of the 1960s in which the royalists of the south fought against the old imam. There had been a fairly extreme, conservative religious leader who controlled a lot of Yemen in the '40s and '50s. The war went back and forth for some time. The Egyptians decided to side with the republicans and they fought against the Saudis. The Saudis put some in. I don't think the Iranians got involved. The Brits were down in Aden, but they stayed out of this; they were backing off anyway, I don't know when they actually left Aden, '66 or '67. The Egyptians sent a lot

of troops to Yemen, and they lost a lot of people. For Nasser, it was a disaster. The Egyptians would still refer to it as “their Vietnam” – sending Egyptian troops to interfere in a civil war. So today, when I look at Saudi support for the government that’s basically in exile, the government’s in Jeddah, and the Iranians supporting the Houthis. Then you have the wild cards, the free radicals of Al Qaeda. ISIS not as strong, Al Qaeda stronger in Yemen – you have a lot of outsiders poking into what is an internal battle. I had maintained up until recently, even as the fighting got harder, the Houthis moved in –

Q: Is there a root cause? What’s happening in Yemen right now?

KRAJESKI: Right now, Yemen is a disaster that’s getting worse. I was talking with some friends the other day; they’re very worried about starvation for the first time. We talked a bit about malnourishment; now they’re worried about starvation. Many thousands of Yemenis have perished. Many have fled. Yemenis are very loyal to their country. There are only a few places in the Middle East where people identify with a national identity, and Yemen is one of them; Egypt is another where people have a sense of being Egyptian. Yemenis don’t leave Yemen. They stay there. Even when life is hard – and life is often hard for Yemen – they don’t have big refugee flows. It’s not a huge one now, but a lot of people are leaving Yemen. A lot of Yemenis work for the Brits. A lot came to the United States.

Q: Lackawanna, New York is full of them. I know because issued them visas.

KRAJESKI: That’s right. But the interesting thing is, I was talking about this with Maura Harty, the assistant secretary. Before I went out to Yemen I paid a call on her and we talked about the various consular issues in Yemen. She said, “One thing we’ve discovered in immigration in Yemen is that Yemenis don’t stay permanently in the United States. The man gets a visa. He goes to Lackawanna or to Queens – that was huge” –

Q: And Youngstown I think.

KRAJESKI: Youngstown and I think there’s a place in Michigan, too, where a lot of Arabs have gone. And of all places, Yuba City, California. You know how these – a couple of people go, and then a whole bunch more come and join them. I know about Yuba City because we had a terror finance connection clicking through there at one point. They ran all the 7-11 [stores] in Yuba City. They would stay for 20 years. They would often marry another Yemeni and have a family in the States. They would keep their wife in Yemen, come back every two or three years, get the wife in Yemen pregnant – with a new American citizen by the way, as my consular officers would remind me when I got there. Then after 20 years, they would come back. She [Maura Harty] referred to them as sojourners, not immigrants. Right now, people who are leaving Yemen – as often happens, when things get truly desperate, are the people Yemen needs most. Educated, more moderate thinking, a lot of educated women have left. The Houthis of course are an extreme religious group.

Q: The Houthis are?

KRAJESKI: Houthis are Yemenis. A Yemeni family that was the dominant tribal group in the north, in Sa'dah which is a district on the Saudi border. They started their insurrection, their war, in 2004, the year I arrived, up in Sa'dah. They were unhappy with Ali Abdullah Saleh. According to our sources and reporting, the two members of parliament from Sa'dah criticized Saleh on the floor of parliament as being corrupt. They criticized him publicly. He was furious, and had them thrown out of parliament and threatened to arrest them, etc. So they went back to Sa'dah, one of the poorest places in a very poor country – and the only part of Yemen that I never visited.

Ali Abdullah did not want me up there, and my security guys were not pleased with the notion. Although we came close a couple of times. I got up to Al Jawf, which is right next to Sa'dah, but I never got to Sa'dah.

The Houthis are there. They declared an emirate, an independent imamate in 2004. Saleh sent an army up there to crush it. Killed the old man, who had been the member of parliament (forget his name), and basically [Saleh] told us, "We've put it down, we don't need any help, they're done." Then every year, the insurrection would come up again, usually around June. Suddenly the fighting would start again; Saleh would have to send up his army. His army suffered quite a lot of losses because they were conscripts mostly. They'd be climbing up the sides of these impossible hills, driving these unarmored trucks. And the Houthi marksmen (being Yemenis they are marksmen) would just pick them off. They lost a lot of soldiers. Morale apparently in the military was rock-bottom. Saleh had to use his special forces, including some we had trained – we were not entirely happy about this – to go after the leadership the first and second years. He kept asking for more training, recognizing this. He asked for armored vehicles, which we were going to sell him. And he wanted training in things like getting helicopters in there, what do they call it, fast-rope training to get guys off of helicopters quickly. He wanted a lot of intel. He wanted eyes in the sky kind of things. He wanted help with us on mapping.

We gave him some assistance, because we didn't particularly support the Houthis. Saleh would say the Houthis are funded and equipped and trained by the Iranians, and he knew that was a hot button for us. It was not true. They were supported by the Iranians, but most of that was editorial support in the newspapers. Probably some money – it's very hard to track. We knew that the leadership of the Houthis occasionally met with Iranians outside of Yemen. But beyond that, we didn't see a lot of Iranian involvement with the Houthis; there's a lot more now.

Every year, the fighting got a little more intense, harder. They started bombing. They wanted to use F-4s; they had old F-4s believe it or not. They had some MiGs. With dumb bombs, they'd go in and bomb the hell out of a village, which is the worst thing you can do when you're going after a bunch of guerrilla rebels in the mountains. Then when 2011 came along and the political challenges in Sana'a to Ali Abdullah Saleh got so strong, they basically let the Houthis be. The Houthis were part of this; they were also calling for Ali Abdullah Saleh's head. They gathered strength. And they gathered strength in a

traditional way. Other tribal leaders, who didn't particularly support the Houthis ideology – if they had one, I don't believe they do. They are Shia, but they are Shia of a different sect than the Iranians. The neighboring tribes began to side with the Houthis to put more pressure on Saleh and the central government.

It was really they who began the more violent and armed opposition to Saleh in 2011 and '12. I don't know when Saleh finally stepped down. Others – Ali Mohsen we mentioned before you turned on the recorder; these dictators keep their challengers closest to them? A guy named General Ali Mohsen was the senior military guy who was fighting the Houthis. He turned on Saleh. Some of the opposition groups and other tribals turned on Saleh. Eventually, we turned on Saleh, too. He was persuaded to step down and his vice president took over. The Houthis and their confederation by then were much stronger. They took Sana'a and other cities in Yemen, Taiz. Al Qaeda meanwhile has the opportunity to gain strength in the countryside again and become a real factor. The Saudis have now stepped in to support the so-called government, whom we support too, against the Houthis. Ali Mohsen is still a factor. There's some talk of him joining with Abdrabbuh (Mansur Hadi), the current president. There was even talk of him becoming vice president. Ali Abdullah Saleh has sided with the Houthis and is now in an alliance with the Houthis, as they fight it out. It's a genuine civil war.

We don't see evidence – I don't have access to anything classified – as I read reports and talk to people. The Iranians, if they have anybody, they've got advisors only. There's no Hezbollah there. It's a colossal mess. It's at the point now where the families, the tribal leaders, can't sort it out. I always believed that in the end, the families would say, "Screw the Iranians, screw the Saudis, screw the Americans. We're Yemenis, we're going to figure this out. We're going to divide it up and establish effective borders between us and we'll stop the fighting." That's the traditional way of doing it. "My son will marry your daughter. I'll give you access to this well." But it's reached the point where that may be impossible, certainly in the near term, and Yemen continues to slide. They just have no wiggle room in Yemen, no margin of safety there for the great majority of people.

Q: Last time you were there – was there anything else we should cover before leaving Yemen?

KRAJESKI: I think I mentioned already that it was one of my most interesting and, I hesitate to use the word, one of my favorite places I've been in the world.

First, because of the fascinating history and beautiful country. I like the Yemenis very much. But it was very hard to watch as the efforts of the United States simply weren't enough. We didn't do enough when we had an opportunity to make a difference. It's our fault, it's perhaps a national fault that we have. We do things, we look at the most acute threats around the world and we focus on those. When we've mitigated them, we move on to the next one. We like to declare victory and move on. In Yemen in 2004, there were a lot of people in Washington who said, "We've made tremendous progress, we've driven Al Qaeda out of Yemen. We've captured and killed their leadership. They're no longer a threat, so we're done."

That was a mistake. It's just hard to see that happen. I don't know if I could have done anything differently. One of the things I don't have – and a lot of career officers don't have this – is you don't have the network of supporters in an administration that a political appointee would have or an ambassador who spent a lot of time in Washington has. People back here throughout the bureaucracy, some quite high-ranking, who form this network and pressure on the decision-makers to increase assistance to Yemen. I didn't have that.

I remember working with Elliott Abrams, a name that's well-known for lots of other reasons; Elliott then was the deputy national security advisor. He was very keen on pushing these issues with the president, but he was the only guy I had. God bless Bill Burns, whom I love, he's a really great guy. But it's NEA, you've got 20 other things you're looking at. Lebanon is exploding in front of you, Iraq is falling apart. You always have Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Plus State's influence in the game of who gets the money and support, we don't always exert it as effectively as we should. USAID, I had Andrew Natsios at the time. There was another guy at USAID who was really quite keen on this. But USAID's problem then was the Millennium Challenge Corporation that had just been established by the Bush administration a few years before. It was seen as a competitor to USAID for distributing American funds abroad. So USAID was struggling.

One of my biggest supporters was the military, the military recognizing that putting more investment into Yemen in 2005 and '06 could make a difference to them. They didn't want to have to go back and fight Al Qaeda again in Yemen, which they've had to do. I had a great partner in the commander at the Horn of Africa command, which was part of Central Command in those days; it's now part of Africa Command, AFRICOM, which is a problem. The military divides the world differently than we do. At those borders where NEA butts up against AF, right there with Yemen and the straits of Bab el-Mandeb and Djibouti and Somalia and Ethiopia. That little Horn of Africa command, which was a naval command in Djibouti, reported to CENTCOM, General Abizaid in CENTCOM. So as a CENTCOM guy, I could work with them and get some of their assets to come to Yemen. They wanted to do more and the military wanted to give us more and give AID money. It just never came together in a way I think would have been most effective. I think about it a lot, about what I could have done differently. How I could have tried to influence and maybe prevent that erosion of U.S. interest and support.

I left Yemen with a lot of apprehension and a lot of sadness. Barbara Bodine told me I would do this, by the way. She was ambassador during the *Cole* attack in 1997-2001 I think; she spent four years there. Barbara told me before I went out, "You'll leave it thinking this is one of the most amazing places you've ever served. You'll love it, but you'll also leave it with a great deal of sadness of how hard it is, and how difficult it will be for Yemenis to succeed." And we've seen that very terribly these last few years.

Q: Were there many Yemenis of African descent? When I was in Saudi Arabia, there was a significant number of black Arabs.

KRAJESKI: Yes. It was really very interesting. In Sana'a, up in the mountains, you had a lot of different Arab faces – it was mostly Arab, that's what you saw. When you saw a quote "non-Arab" face, it was an African face. Somali, Ethiopian, the distinctive features of that area. But they were also Yemenis. They were quite a large group in Sana'a who had emigrated. A great number of them down in Mukalla and Aden, and along the coast, because it was so close to trade between that coast and Somalia before the Somali wars, during the time of the British when the British had Somaliland and Aden.

There was a lot of trade, a lot of interaction, and a lot of intermigration. In Somalia, they speak Arabic. It's an Arabic that can be difficult to understand, but Somalia's more Arabic. Sudan, similar. So there were a lot of Somali and Ethiopian, Eritrean types in Aden who were Yemenis. My DCM's secretary, Maryam Abdullah – one of my favorite people in the Foreign Service, I think she's now retired. She was the director-general's secretary for a while, but Maryam was the DCM's secretary when I was in Yemen. We specifically went after her because she spoke fluent Arabic, and I really loved having a native speaker. She was born in Aden. Her father was British, her mother was Yemeni of Somali background. Her father was also of Somali background. She immigrated to the States relatively early on as a girl, but she had already learned fluent Arabic. She came back with us. There were Somali-Yemenis all over the place. When I was there, it continued, migration of boat people coming across from the Somali coast, being smuggled into Yemen, and then trying to move their way up through Saudi Arabia into the Gulf to try to find work. The UN had a fairly large camp outside of Aden to handle these refugees. It was quite interesting. Aden like every old port city in the world, you see every face, every color – everything is there, the Star Wars image we have of these places.

Q: I'm sure the dialect there was very mixed.

KRAJESKI: Two things about Aden. One, there is a lot more English – a lot more. The British influence was still quite obvious in Aden and Mukalla, a couple of other places where the Brits had established outposts. They didn't have huge presence in Yemen; they mostly cared about the port in Aden. It was their re-coaling port when the steamers came down either around the Horn of Africa or through the Suez Canal, they would re-coal. There are a lot of great British novels where –

Q: You think about "port out, starboard home".

KRAJESKI: As you're going back to India. I've read some great books on the raj, and some great books about Aden. One fabulous one I just read, Cutting for Stone. It's an Indian writer, Abraham Verghese. It's fabulous. The whole first part of the novel takes place on a ship coming out of India into Aden. They end up in Addis Ababa I believe, and most of the novel takes place in a hospital in Addis Ababa. A lot of British novels have descriptions of Aden in it because that's the first port they would see out of India, or sometimes out of England they'd stop to be refueled and refurbished in Aden. So there's still a lot of English.

The port was not as big and as modern as it should have been. As I mentioned before, it should have been developed by the government much more effectively. Ali Abdullah didn't trust the southerners, didn't want them getting rich, didn't want an economic power in the south. He wanted to steal a lot of it too, he and his cronies, which he was doing. This really annoyed the southerners, who still didn't like the northerners and thought the northerners were illiterate tribal bumpkins who got lucky and won the civil war. When the Soviet Union pulled out they had their reunification, then they had a civil war in '94, which the north won. So Ali Abdullah wanted to keep his thumb on Aden. But it was still a lively port city. There was a Chinese restaurant – Chinese food is not hugely popular in the Arab world, Thai, Chinese, Asian cuisines – but there was an old-style Chinese restaurant run by a couple of Chinese, this old woman. It was right out of Humphrey Bogart and *Casablanca*. An amazing place with ceiling fans and really good food and ice-cold beer. Anytime we went to Aden, I'd go to this restaurant. Aden was a different place. Still – I don't think it is now, now it's really suffering. The Houthis made big inroads, Al Qaeda is close to there. Right now the Emiratis have provided –

Q: At one time we had a consular post in Aden.

KRAJESKI: We sure did.

Q: It was closed. Back in the 19th century, the man who had been the consul didn't close up and the inspectors came and found the consulate happily open.

KRAJESKI: The old-style consular officer; you went out and established your own mission and charged fees to pay for your expenses. The building by the way still existed, and whenever I went down to Aden they would point it out to me. They would say to me, the government guy – I would often be traveling with the governor of Aden – and he would say, “You want it back? It's yours.” I forget what they used it for. It was right on the harbor, big beautiful stone building. DS would never have allowed us to re-establish an office. We did think about it. The Brits thought about re-establishing a consulate, too. We had the Coast Guard down there, and a small, very discreetly-maintained house where we had American and British coast guard trainers and some of our Special Forces guys. We were really antsy about it, it was just a house in the city where these guys lived while they were doing their training, mostly of the Yemeni coast guard but also their special forces. We talked about Alexandria I think as another example. We closed a lot of these consulates for budget reasons I guess, and security. It's really too bad. Aden was hard to get to. It was a seven, eight hour drive through the mountains. You could fly but you had to take Yemenia [airlines]. I was not always keen on Yemenia; it did not have the greatest safety record. Sometimes I could persuade the defense attaché to get their regional plane from Nairobi to come in. They loved doing it; they wanted to because they didn't get much chance to fly in Yemen. They would fly me to Mukalla and Socotra, and that would be great. I preferred to drive (can't drive now). But it was a long and hair-raising drive. There was one part as you're coming up to Taiz where you're at about 9000 feet and looking straight down. The road is not very wide... it's quite a drive.

Q: When did you leave Yemen and what did you do?

KRAJESKI: I left Yemen in 2007. July of 2007, indeed I left on July 4th. We had the big Fourth of July reception which I had to cancel at the last minute on the day of it.

A little story here. When I first arrived for my first ambassadorship, I took a look at representational funds, which were meager in Yemen. Yemen's a fairly cheap place to entertain, but you still need money. I looked at how much we had spent on the previous year's national day, the Fourth of July celebration. It was about three-quarters of the representational fund. I said, "I don't like spending all that money on one night for people whom we all know. I'm not going to have a national day. We'll take some of the money" (I found out later this was not strictly kosher according to regulations) "and we're going to do a charitable event to celebrate our national day." We were going to paint an orphanage and provide it with new playground equipment, and we did something else. The whole embassy community was going out to do this, and we did. I was not able to use representational money for that. They turned me down. I tried to turn it into a big party where we invited a lot of people too.

But we did not have the national day. I got a call from the foreign minister, who asked "Why didn't you have it?" Because every embassy has a national day, usually at the hotel. You know what they're like. I've been to so many of them; they give me nightmares. He was very upset that we didn't have one.

My DCM, Nabeel Khoury, led a delegation of the defense attaché and the station chief and AID director. They all came in and said, "We need to have the national day. It's important for us and our contacts and the community." So I said, "Mea culpa. Probably not my best decision as ambassador and we will have a national day."

So we had a smaller one in September [2005], I forget what we celebrated. The next year we had a big one. But the third year, when we were going to have an even bigger one...

We did these on the embassy grounds. We had a huge beautiful lawn, the weather was always spectacular so you didn't worry about weather wrecking your outdoor party. My admin officer who was really great and the person who did commercial work for me (I didn't have a commercial officer, I had an econ guy who did some of it), they went out and beat the drums with the private community – the first time that had been done, and got like \$50,000 from people like Kentucky Fried Chicken and Hunt Oil Company. They all got their name up there and I mentioned them, thanked them during the reception. I let Pizza Hut set up a little stand. You've heard of these, and that's what Washington likes us to do.

The second one [2006] was a huge success. We flew in a jazz band from Dubai, an American jazz band that was doing a tour under public affairs. We were going to do the same thing on the last year [2007]. On the morning of the event [July 3], 12 Spanish tourists were attacked in a convoy going to Ma'rib. Attacked by this resuscitated Al Qaeda out there; a number of them were killed by an RPG attack on the convoy. There

was a planned attack the same day according to my intel guy against the Hadda compound where many of my staff lived. Many embassy folks live there, all the oil company guys live there. It was the western enclave in the wealthy part of Sana'a. Good intel; they broke it up literally as it was forming on the streets to attack the compound – they stopped it that morning. Then there was other intel of other things, including a threat against me personally. So at noon on July 3rd we called off the July 4th party. It was hard to do. My management officer wept, because he had put so much time and effort and had been so successful on this one. We had 500 people coming to the party, so security is all beefed up to get everybody through the gates. We had VIPs coming with their cars, so we had to get cars in the gates – and DS never likes to let cars in. You have to do it quickly because you don't want to insult the minister. Everyone's all set for the receiving lines. Not to mention the fact [I was] getting my best clothes out and practicing my speech – and we had to call it off. It was a sad way to leave. I had planned to do the reception that night and literally go to the airport at midnight after the reception and get on a plane to come back. So I came back on July 4th.

I thought I would retire. I didn't really want to come back and work in Washington. NEA had an unwritten policy which I kind of agreed with. "We have a lot of great people in NEA; some of you are going to get ambassadorships. The great majority of you will get one and then we say 'Thank you very much.' We have other people we think are deserving of taking these missions." That was LaRocco's position, Bill Burns', I think it was carried on by David Welch, and then Jeff Feltman as well. I didn't want to take a big desk job in Washington. I don't want to be a DAS; the last thing on Earth I wanted to be was a deputy assistant secretary in NEA. The most thankless jobs in the whole U.S. government. I've never met a DAS who was happy. They're important jobs but the bureaucracy, the struggle through the meetings and talking points is just insane. You don't get to have a lot of fun as a DAS, and I had just come out of one of the most fun jobs in the Foreign Service, being an ambassador. But a guy named George – George [Staples], director-general in 2007, I keep forgetting names. He was an African hand, African-American.

Q: George Moose?

KRAJESKI: Not George Moose. I don't think he was ever director-general? George Staples – George Staples was the director-general. And George asked me to consider taking the director job of career development and assignments, CDA, in HR. The reason he wanted me to consider it was that the new secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, had told the president "We will provide you with all the Foreign Service officers and staff the embassy in Baghdad needs as we surge civilians into Iraq." This is in 2007. The military surge, led by General David Petraeus, is well underway and they're surging more military into Iraq, building more bases, spreading the military around, getting into the villages. "We're going to get out there and we'll take more casualties, but we're going to work shoulder-to-shoulder."

Secretary Rice and the civilian side said, "We'll do this too. We'll increase the size of our PRTs, the provincial reconstruction teams, and our embassy" – Ryan Crocker the new

ambassador – “he’s going to get anything he wants. And he wants hundreds more” (for us, hundreds is a lot) “Foreign Service officers to come out and work in the provincial reconstruction teams. He’s building political, economic, political-military sections; he’s building the largest U.S. embassy in the world. I don’t know how it started, but they’re saying we’re not getting enough volunteers. We’re going to have to, for the first time since Vietnam” (which is not true), “direct assignments. We’re going to have to force Foreign Service officers to take jobs in Iraq. We’re going to pull them out of the job they’re in and say, ‘Go there or you have to resign.’ We’re going to directed assignments.”

This controversy is brewing in July 2007. State is under enormous pressure to find people to serve in Iraq. Staples, who was not getting along well with the secretary and left shortly after this, called and said, “I want you to consider it because you have the street cred to work with NEA” (because NEA was taking the lead in the assignments; they established a whole Iraq assignments office), “and we want you to work closely with NEA. And you’re a senior guy who’s been out in the field, out in Iraq. You have the credibility to take this. That’s going to be your main assignment – staffing Baghdad.”

So I agreed to take the job. I had met George two or three times before, he’s a really decent guy. I took the job, got assigned, and then George resigned in a spat with the secretary. I’m not sure what the details were, it may have been over this particular policy. Rice was very hard-line on it. She liked saying, “We’ll make people go.” She used to say, “They’ve taken an oath” which is not entirely true; the oath does not say “I will go anywhere you want me go to.” But we do sign a contract that says we serve at the pleasure of the secretary of State and says that we will if necessary take any assignment that the secretary deems important. Your only option is to resign.

People have found ways of getting out of assignments. As I started doing research on this – and I had a really terrific special assistant in the office. I started almost immediately; I took a little time off after leaving Yemen and then jumped into this in 2007. Harry Thomas became the new director-general almost the same day I started in CDA, that’s Career Development and Assignments. Every Foreign Service officer knows this, this is where all the career development officers... Weren’t you a career development officer at one point? I think it’s a great thing to do. I used to try to persuade them to make it a one-year assignment. A lot of us don’t want to take two years in that job, but they’ll do it for one year because it’s valuable learning. Often a CDO, that second year all he’s doing is looking for his next job. I had mixed feelings about CDOs going in, and had been given good advice by a number of senior people which is, “Be aware. Understand that the CDO is going to get promoted if he fills that job in Lubumbashi. He’s not going to get promoted by giving you the job that you want. By filling that hard-to-fill job. So he’s going to look at you and say, ‘Lubumbashi would fit you really well.’” I’m exaggerating a little. What I always did and advised officers to do is to go out and make connections. CDOs would often do this, too. Get out there, see the jobs you have a chance of getting, you think you might want it. Then go to your CDO and say, “Here’s what I’ve done. I’m looking at one in Delhi, one in Karachi, one here...” and the CDO will help you.

So I'm back in CDA. The first thing is, "Okay your assignment is, staff Baghdad." The undercurrent coming out of the seventh floor is, "We're going to have to direct assignments. We're going to have to perhaps direct dozens of people to go to Baghdad."

I disagreed with that from the get-go. I said, "I know Foreign Service officers. I know their commitment to this country and to their duty and we are going to find enough volunteers."

I also took a look at the package of incentives that we had developed. Just before I got there, Pat Kennedy in the lead as the under secretary of management, with NEA and with CDA, including the participation of my special assistant, a woman named Dana Smith who is now the ambassador in Qatar. They put together a package of incentives to persuade people to take an Iraq assignment. Of course, the differentials were through the roof. The hardship differential of 25%, danger pay of 25%. You had a one year assignment in which you would get three R&Rs during that one year. So basically, every three months you could go home for a week, or take mini-R&Rs, take like four days off and go to Amman, Jordan. We'd pick up the tab, "Go stay at the Four Seasons Hotel in Amman, Jordan. Decompress and go back to Basra or Mosul or wherever you happen to be." One of the big pushes by the way was you don't have to be an NEA Arabist to serve in Iraq. You have to be an experienced, competent Foreign Service officer, to go to a PRT. You don't need to speak Arabic or immediately understand the dynamics around you – although you're going to have to learn very quickly about who you're dealing with in your region. We looked for people who had experience working with the military, working with USAID. But you don't have to be NEA.

So we were looking worldwide for volunteers to take an assignment. We would say, "Look you're an 02 economic officer in Madrid. You've been there for two years and you're hearing the call. Maybe you've got some Arabic, maybe you've got some experience, maybe you're a former military guy, maybe your DCM has gathered everybody together and said, 'We need people to go to Iraq.' Here's what we'll do for you. You leave Madrid, go to Baghdad. Your family stays in Madrid – kids stay in school, your wife stays in the same house you were in. We keep your job open – if it's a four-year assignment to Madrid you come back after your year in Baghdad, you do another two years in Madrid."

We kind of liked doing this. One, we got a lot of people willing to do that.

Q: I must say though, when you're talking about those, I served for 18 months in Saigon in the middle of the war. It was completely different.

KRAJESKI: This was an all-out push to incentivize service in Iraq. Also Afghanistan, by the way, but Iraq is what I was focused on at the time; Afghanistan wasn't nearly as big. We would also say to people, "You spend that year in Iraq and you'll get a preferred assignment. You can take a look at that list for the following year and pick an assignment. If it's reasonable, if you have the skill sets and experience, you got that assignment." We put a lot of people into Brussels and Paris and London and Amsterdam

and Buenos Aires, Melbourne. Think of all the nicer places around the world – we put a slew of people coming out of Iraq into one of these assignments.

It came back and bit us a little bit. What happened is, a lot of these folks had PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and this is a whole issue I will talk more about as I'm going through this process, because it became a huge crisis at one point. Later on, we discovered that the people coming out of Iraq, a lot of them wanted to go to Paris, so they had to do a year of French. They had no French. They're going to go to Paris, so we send them back here to this lovely campus (FSI) in Arlington, Virginia, for a year of French. And they completely self-destructed. They couldn't focus on the language. Service in Iraq was intense, it was dangerous, it was hard. At the very least, it took you out of whatever set of living conditions and routine you had and [it's a] 180 degree difference, to live in a military base, to work on a PRT, to work 18 hours a day, six days a week (we always tried to get people to take at least one day off). People came back and they had a hard time concentrating on language. That was one issue.

A friend of mine who was DCM in London, Richard LeBaron, who had been ambassador in Kuwait when I was in Yemen. Richard and I have known each other for 30 years. He was DCM in London and called me at one point and said, "Stop sending people from Baghdad to London. It's not working out for them or for us. We are one of the busiest embassies in the world. We expect that people who come here are going to have to work pretty hard. These folks coming out of Baghdad are looking at this as a couple of years of taking it easy after working hard in Baghdad."

"Second issue is, their families who have been maybe in another post if we left them there, or maybe in the States while the officer was in Iraq – the families are coming to London and our housing frankly isn't all that good. It's expensive in London. We've got to push people outside the city so commutes are long. Traffic is a brute so people driving their kids to school, back and forth... Living expenses are high. Restaurants are expensive. People come here and they're really not very happy. Don't do it!"

So that was interesting as well. Then we had people who had expectations. They would say, "All right, I'll take the job in Basra at the PRT" (a PRT is provincial reconstruction team) "but I want the job in Brussels." We'd say, "You're not qualified for the job in Brussels. You're only an 03 and that's an 01 political position and you're an 03 management officer. We're not going to give you that one." If they had already taken the assignment in Basra on the promise of a preferred assignment, we had a fight with them over what exactly that meant, even though we thought we'd been clear.

So we had a big package of incentives. Lot of money and a lot of perks for families and onward assignments. People also thought they were going to get promoted if they served in Baghdad. We would tell them right up front, "Serving in a place like this is going to look good, it will look great on your record that you have served in Baghdad" (or in Vietnam). "This is something that's a plus. But you also have to do a good job. You have to have good reviews. And you're going to be competing against other people who have done jobs in hard places."

That was a big complaint to the DG from Africa bureau in particular, who were having a terrible time recruiting people to go to places like Bujumbura or to go to some of their tougher, dangerous, hard places to live, because those folks wanted to go to Iraq and get the money and get the incentives – and they were getting promoted. Africa was saying, “Our guys aren’t getting promoted.”

So we had this huge package that we were offering to people. We had a really good machine run by a guy named Tony Spekakis? Tony... great Greek name, out of NEA, sort of the godfather of the assignment process in NEA. Tony and I would meet every week, we’d have a big meeting with NEA and CDA about where were we? I had a whole checklist in my office of all the jobs we had to fill and where we were, who the candidates were, and whether we thought we were going to have to apply more pressure on somebody to take a job. Yes, I thought we’d get volunteers, but I was also going to tell people, “You are going to volunteer for this job. And if you’re not going to listen to me, the head of CDA, or you’re not going to listen to Tony, and if you’re not going to listen to David Welch, we’ll put John Negroponte on the phone with you” (the deputy secretary of State) “and he’ll give you a call and he’ll ask you to serve. And if you’re going to tell the deputy secretary ‘No,’ go right ahead!” (Laughter) Because Negroponte would, he said “I’ll pick up the phone tomorrow if you need me to do this.” He would call 03 officers – which he did, once. I’m getting ahead of the story, it is a very interesting story about assignments in the Foreign Service.

Rice is continuing to put pressure on Harry Thomas to get this job done, to get these assignments made. This is around September; she wants all the assignments made by October of 2007 for the next cycle, or we’re going to move to directed assignments. Harry instructs me to set up the [directed assignments] panel. We hadn’t done this in a long time; it had only been done with individuals, a specific one-off job, we absolutely have to have an economic officer or a DCM in post X, and “there are five of you guys who are qualified for the job; draw straws” (that’s the way we used to do it) “one of you is taking this job. Often what would happen is one guy would say, “OK, I’ll do it.” But if no one would do it, we’d say, “OK Stu, it’s you.”

But it happened rarely throughout our history. We’ve been back to try to look to see. In fact, it’s a panel that is formed in which the head of CDA is the head of the panel. We had what were called “fair share” candidates. I don’t know if you’ve heard this term? I forget when the regulations were put in place; some years ago, before this. Trying to require everybody to take a hardship tour at a certain point of their career. So you can only spend so many years in Washington and you had to go out. And you could only spend so many years in non-hardship tours before you were listed as a fair share candidate, which indicated your next assignment was going to have to be in a hardship post. We had this whole cohort of people who had run out their time in Washington or were fair share candidates. Then you had the people who were qualified and who I was trying to persuade to go. Then you had folks who were hiding in the woodwork in places, who weren’t necessarily fair share, but knew if they lifted their head above the trench, somebody was going to shoot them. They were a likely candidate for a particular job. I

was always looking for these people where ever they were, calling them in Bogota and saying, “Hey, this would be a great job for you and you are the person we need” (I can’t tell you how many times I said that) for Diyala.”

Often it would work. Whether it was the incentives, or the sense of duty. Or one time this guy in Bogota was just bored out of his mind on the visa line and as soon as I called, he said, “You bet! I’ll go tomorrow!” His boss called me and said, “You can’t take him. This is the busy season, we will refuse to let him go.” This was the DCM, and I said, “OK, how far are you going to push this? Because you push me one more inch and you’ll be talking to John Negroponte.” He said, “Aah, fuck.” The word got out very quickly, if you’ve got somebody going to Iraq, that’s where they’re going to go. We’ll help you out. We would say to the post, to the DCM, “CDA will send out a TDYer”...

Q: It must really hurt recruiting for lousy posts in Africa.

KRAJESKI: It did. It was always hard to recruit for the lousy posts in Africa, always the most difficult assignments according to my predecessors. NEA had a corps of crazy folks who would go out to those jobs.

Q: That’s where the action was.

KRAJESKI: EUR never had a problem. Though with the new EUR – that means all the ‘Stans that came in after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, EUR became more of a mixed bag. EAP had all its great assignments. China could sometimes be difficult but it was mostly the languages that stopped you in China. But Africa was always a hard place and it became harder. Indeed, the AF (Bureau of African Affairs) bureau wanted to somehow get part of this. We had what we called the Iraq season, and then we had the Afghanistan season right following it, filling the rest of the jobs. We never had a problem in Afghanistan, never, and I don’t know why. Then we had the AF season – we said, “OK we’ll push for AF.” It petered out at a certain point. Then Pakistan waved its hands, and Saudi Arabia was in separated assignments at the time. Everyone started raising their hands, saying they wanted to have a special season, too. Right now it is Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq – I think that’s it.

We’re pushing all of these processes. In the meantime, we in my office are putting together the structure and plan to set up a panel to direct assignments. Even though I don’t think it’s going to be needed, Harry said, “You’ve got to do it.” Dana Smith did an incredible job of working with the lawyers, because as soon as we started doing this, the lawyers all raised their hands and said, “Yeah but dadadadada...” We have all these regulations on fair share. The book when you become CDO, much smaller I’m sure when you were one, is THAT thick, and they expect you to learn it.

Q: Five inches.

KRAJESKI: Five inches? It’s eight! It’s a three-ring binder stuffed with standard operating procedures and regulations on everything under the sun relating to assignments

and career development. And it is unbelievably complex. Even a straight panel – and every week on Tuesdays I had to chair the regular panel. Every assignment went through the regular panel, and every week we would have a list from 20 to 200 assignments that the panel had to get through and approve. If not approve, to debate and discuss, and sometimes to defer. Around that table were 20 people, some of whom had just one – they were like the experts on home leave policy, because someone wants to defer home leave to get to the next assignment. “Oh, the law says we can’t”... So of course, the regulations on directed assignments are intense. A lot of them are no longer applicable to what we’re going to do. But the issue of fair share is very much part of it. The lawyer said, “The only people you can direct are the people who are fair share, who are supposed to go out to a hardship post the next time.” Or have been in Washington more than, I think it’s 10 years, I forget the number.

Q: It used to be eight.

KRAJESKI: It might be eight. Actually it was five, but you could get deferments, and after seven or eight, only the director-general can approve an extension in Washington. They’re often given for health reasons, for children who need special education or special care – although at a certain point, the DG is supposed to say to that officer, and I’ve known a couple of them, “You should convert to Civil Service and take a job here. You can’t take another foreign assignment because your child is severely disabled and needs extra care and it can only be in the States.” Sometimes they had to do that. I knew officers who did that. But often they just wanted to be Foreign Service officers for various reasons.

Anyway, Dana put together this list of all the fair share candidates, and they became known as our quote “prime candidates.” Bad choice of words. I should not have let Dana sell that one to me. Suddenly we sent out in October 2007, letters to each of the prime candidates, telling them that they are liable to be assigned to Iraq. It didn’t say they were going to be, it said “These are our preliminary steps, but you are due for a hardship tour, you are an economic officer at such a rank, there are positions in Iraq that need to be filled. You would fit those positions. You are a prime candidate.”

It hit the news. I had to do a number of interviews, including one I just saw on YouTube the other day; it’s still there, with NPR (National Public Radio), as the protests came in that we were going to force people for the first time.

A number of stories built. One was we were going to literally lock people up and send them off to Iraq to their deaths, “to the most dangerous job and we’re not protecting them.” The second story was, Foreign Service officers are basically avoiding service in Iraq because they don’t agree with the policy, so the State Department now is going to have to force Foreign Service officers to go.

It was an unnecessary disaster. We didn’t need to send the damn letter out that early; Harry made us, um the secretary. We didn’t need to move to directed assignments until the end of October. I told Harry, “By the end of October, we’ll have every job filled, I

guarantee it.” Every day I had to give him [reports] – “We’re down to 50, we’re down to 40, we’ve got 30, and we’ve got two candidates here, one candidate here. Here are jobs we don’t have candidates for.” We gave detailed reports every day of where we were on the assignment process. We’re literally down to under 50 by September out of 700-and-something. I was fairly confident we were going to fill these jobs. He [Harry Thomas] said, “The secretary is adamant. She’s promised the president that the State Department will stand up. The civilian side of the government will surge in Iraq. And she wants to direct [assignments].”

I never talked to her [Secretary Rice] about this, of course; Harry did. My sense is she thought this made her look tough. “I’m going to tell these elite Foreign Service folks that they have to go out there and do it, because they’re committed. They signed an oath. They’re like the military guys. Military guys can’t say ‘No.’ Military guys are ordered to go, and they go. So I’m going to order my troops to go.”

I don’t know. But there was unnecessary pressure, and we took this step [setting up directed assignment panels]. As the stories built, Harry decides to have a town hall meeting in the big auditorium at the State Department. I argued against it. I said, “Harry I know you want to be open and answer questions. But we’re better off doing this in small groups.” I was doing it in small groups. Every week I had a roundtable session with all the assignment officers and anybody else who wanted to come could sit on the side. We’d talk about the jobs we needed to fill and how we were doing it, what the process was. I would always make the point, “We don’t think it’s going to be necessary to direct, but if it is, here’s the process we’re going to use to direct assignments.”

I was not happy with that process. It was very difficult to pick the person who was best qualified if you had somebody in the “prime candidate” pool who was barely qualified. There were a couple of cases where if it came to it, I wanted to direct others. Some of the people in the prime candidate pool were really – it was very sad. One woman who was absolutely fit – she had not had a hardship post. She had just been assigned to Cairo, which was a hardship post. But she had just been assigned there, and we said, “No, she fits for Baghdad; we’re going to assign her to Baghdad.” She was a member of a tandem couple. They had two little babies, twins I believe, who were like a year old. We said, “Your husband can take care of the twins and you can go back and forth. We’ve got to be equal here. We are not going to say, ‘Oh you don’t have to go because you’re a woman.’” I talked with her, and she was really quite stricken that we were going to consider this. I said, “We haven’t decided yet but you’re on the list.” I was trying to persuade her to go, it was “Don’t make me have to [direct you] – don’t force me to do this, why don’t you give us your boots, we don’t want to have to take them.” That’s the old line from *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. “Why don’t you give us your boots?” I forget her name. She was saying, “If I have to do this, I have to do this. I might have to resign from the Foreign Service, I don’t want to do that.” She was thinking about it. Then her husband got cancer, and she called. I said, “All right, you’re off the list.”

We had a number of cases of people in Washington who were desperate to stay another year or two in Washington, who said, “I’ll go in two years. I’ve got to stay here, my son

needs special attention, and he's going to graduate from high school. We've got to finish him off here, got to stay with him. Sign me up for 2009 and I'll go, but I can't go now." So a lot of pressure.

Harry decides to have the town hall meeting in the auditorium. We plan all of this. Harry's going to take the lead. Do you know Harry Thomas? He's African American, a big man. He has been ambassador to Bangladesh and more recently the Philippines, he's going to be ambassador to Zimbabwe I believe. A wonderful guy! The people who worked for him at the missions say he's one of the greatest ambassadors they've ever worked with. But Harry got stuck in this job [DG] when it was at its hardest. He was determined he would do this town hall meeting. We all agreed to it, prepare for it. I sat up on the stage along with David Satterfield, who was then the Iraq special coordinator, a seventh floor senior person for Iraq. David and I were up there and someone else was sitting with us.

Harry led off talking about the process, about the need to serve, about all the incentives and packages we had put together, talking about the need to fill these jobs. Then he explained the prime candidate process. (I was prepared to answer questions about it as they came up.) And the meeting turned hostile very quickly. This guy, a EUR guy, a senior officer, stood up and basically lambasted Harry, saying "You're sending officers to their deaths and leaving their families without fathers and orphaning them... blah blah blah." It was this diatribe about the process to force people to go. I since learned that this guy had never had a hardship post – actually he had one, it was Bangkok. All the rest of his career had been like Brussels. He was well-known as sort of a jerk within the department and within EUR as well. Harry got mad; I would've gotten mad too but I would have tried to control myself. Harry had a temper. He started making references first of all to what a stupid exaggeration this was and we're taking care of people, keeping people safe. He said, "This is not the worst thing that's happened in this country. Some of us have lived through slavery." Or something – he made a reference to slavery that popped out. It didn't play well.

Then this guy sits down and a woman stood up. Harry's fuming at this point. You could almost feel the heat coming off of Harry on stage. This woman stood up whom I did not know. She had just left Iraq; she had served for quite a lengthy period, many months. She had witnessed an IED attack or a suicide bombing in which many people were killed. She had been there. She had not been injured herself, but she had seen the carnage. We see on television a lot – the aftermath of a suicide bomb or a car bomb on the street, and we see the destruction. What we don't see on the television are the bodies and the body parts and the blood. It is one of the most horrific sites imaginable. Heads, severed heads. The heads stay intact. Suicide bombers by the way with the vest? The body blows up, the head stays intact, pops. It's awful.

I don't know how close this woman was, but this really affected her as it would any normal person. She had had other incidents where she felt she was in danger, and she left. She left prematurely, but she had served quite a long time and by all accounts had done a credible job. She said, "I came back and the attitude at State was, 'Gee that's too bad, that

must have been terrible. Here's your next assignment." She said, "I couldn't concentrate. I haven't been able to eat." She was weeping. She went through quite a sympathetic story, a hard story. We were just starting to wrestle with PTSD. The military was, been doing it for a long time, they call it shell shock. At State, we were just wrestling with it. And they hadn't given her much help.

Harry was just in no mood to be sympathetic. Basically, his answer was "Life is tough. Jobs are hard. We're Foreign Service officers. We're tough. Get on with your life." Boy, that was a bad answer. I wanted to go up and grab Harry at that point, take him off the stage (I really love the guy), "Harry, it's time to go, this is not working out well." And it didn't. Even though this was a closed session, not classified but closed. There was a camera in there; they always film these things I found out. Somebody leaked the session. It was in the news; it was really awful.

The end of the day, we didn't have to direct a single assignment. By the end of October we had found volunteers. Some of them had been urged quite strenuously by people like John Negroponte to volunteer, but we filled every job. The last job that we filled was an 02 Arabic-speaking (we wanted an Arabic speaker in this job) political officer in Baghdad. I had one candidate that I was really looking at, a young guy in Rome. He had just served in Damascus or Amman, an Arabic speaking country. He'd just been promoted to 02, and he's just gotten this great job in Rome. He'd only been in Rome for less than a year, maybe one year. I called him up and I said, "I really need you to do this. You can go back to Rome when you're done." He's a single guy, maybe 35 years old. Quite an impressive young officer. I said, "You've really got to do this." And he said, "No. You don't understand, I just left Damascus, I'm here and I just met the woman of my dreams. I'm in love and I'm in Rome. I'll go later; I don't want to go now."

I said, "I'm looking at the pool..." I mentioned earlier, when you look at the pool of Arabic speaking officers in the Foreign Service, it's remarkably shallow. So I said, "I really need you to do this. We've got to have an Arabic speaker. You're the guy. I don't have many other people. I want you to do it." He said, "No." So I went to Harry [Thomas] and said, "We've got one more to fill and we're done. You're going to have to call this guy. Give him a call and you can persuade him, Harry." So Harry called him. He called him on a Friday night in Rome at like 7:00. I don't know where Harry was, he might have been traveling but I can distinctly remember it was in the evening. He called him and said, "We really need you to do this." This is the director-general of the Foreign Service calling. "I want you to take this assignment." Tom – I think his name was Tom – said, "No. Mr. Director-General, I'm here having dinner with the love of my life." (He was quite smitten with this Italian woman; who can blame him?) He said, "No." Harry said [to me], "He turned me down."

So I called the guy back again and said, "You just turned down the director-general of the Foreign Service! Do you understand what that means?" He said, "Yes I do but I've made my decision." The next day, or three days later, we had John Negroponte call him. And he said, "Yes." I think his remark was, "How high are you prepared to go?"

I said, “The deputy secretary wasn’t high enough?” “Yes, it was, it was!” [he said.]

It’s interesting because during this process, I volunteered to go to Iraq. I decided that sending all of these people, being known as the Grim Reaper of the State Department as I wandered around finding people – considering all of my experience and qualifications... Crocker was looking for what he called his Dream Team, his senior management. The job of political-military affairs officer hadn’t been filled, and I called Crocker and said, “If you want me to take it, I’ll take it.” He said, “Yup!” So I volunteered. Which made it on one hand easier to recruit. Harry used to say it all the time, “Ambassador Krajewski has also volunteered to go back as well.”

Part of the reason I did too was I was tired of this job [in CDA]. After four months of doing this I was exhausted and frustrated. Plus interestingly, as soon as we finished Iraq and the secretary said, “Congratulations.” We never had to direct a single assignment. The panel was never formed. The prime candidates went on to something else.

We went into the routine of CDA, and I got bored really quickly sitting in long meetings about home leave policy. It was almost as though I was decompressing so quickly and I didn’t want to do this much longer. So I was glad that I had volunteered and in April, after seven months on the job, in early April of 2005 I packed up and went back to Baghdad to work for Ryan Crocker as the senior advisor in northern Iraq – not the political-military job. He decided that he wanted to keep this new position he had established with David Pearce working with the Kurds. So I took that one.

[By the way] I worked with this young guy from Rome who was assigned to the political section. He was just a terrific officer. He was as happy as could be in Baghdad; it was a great adventure. And he told me, “That thing with the woman would not have lasted. She would have dumped me sooner or later.”

Q: Today is the 31st of May, 2016, with Tom Krajewski. Tom, we were in Iraq?

KRAJESKI: We were on our way, a second time. I had finished my tale of running CDA during the Iraq recruitment time, the panel to detail officers that thankfully never materialized. A real stress on the department – there was genuine stress on the department in those years.

Q: I wanted to ask. When you walked into a room, was there a sudden hush and people averting their heads?

KRAJESKI: I would walk down the corridors and folks would run away. I felt as though I was carrying a scythe (laughter). I had weekly meetings bringing people in to talk about the details of Iraq – what it was like to serve there, what we were willing to do for them if they agreed to go, what kind of people we needed. But there were a lot of people who avoided service. I’m not overly bent out of shape about it, but I do think that as a Foreign Service officer, if you’re called and you have the requirements and the skills and the

experience to do the job in a tough place like Iraq, you really have an obligation, a duty, to serve.

Q: We've discussed Iraq but did you also have Afghanistan?

KRAJESKI: We were also recruiting for Afghanistan, but we didn't have a problem recruiting for Afghanistan. Partly it's because the mission was fairly well established in 2007 and 2008, and quite frankly was getting short shrift – it wasn't getting as many people as it needed. It wasn't getting the attention that it needed from the Bush Administration – and I think that's been documented and analyzed back and forth. Folks going to Afghanistan had a fairly good sense of what they were getting into, and the mission wasn't nearly as big. I do not recall having any problem filling the positions in Afghanistan. Pakistan was very unhappy because they weren't added. Shortly after I left, they added Pakistan to this list of posts to concentrate on in the first part of the bidding season. Before we would panel anybody else to anywhere in the world, we paneled Iraq, Afghanistan, and then I know Pakistan also got pushed into that. It was very hard to recruit for Pakistan, as well. Then we talked a little bit about some of the other posts in places like Africa that were really hurting. They couldn't offer the kind of incentives that we were offering to go to Afghanistan and Iraq.

I decided about halfway through that process that I would volunteer as well. I talked to Ambassador Crocker and a guy named David Satterfield, also an ambassador who was running the whole Iraq program back here. I was assigned to be the political-military chief in the embassy. About a month before I was due to go, the DCM, Pat Butenis – wonderful, just retired as well, I think she had Sri Lanka where she retired from as ambassador. She was DCM in Iraq at the time. She emailed and said, “We've been talking about it here. We really want you to take David Pearce's job instead.”

Pearce was the ambassador's advisor on northern Iraq affairs; specifically with the Kurds and specifically the negotiation of the boundary of Iraqi Kurdistan, and the city and district of Kirkuk which was hotly contested among the Kurds, the Arabs, the Turcoman, the Christians and a few other groups as well, all of whom were fighting over this particular city. Mostly because it sat on one of the largest lakes of oil in Iraq, but also for various ethnic, religious, and political reasons. So I agreed to do that.

Pat Butenis by the way is part of this group of people who would go anywhere and do anything for Ryan Crocker. There's a core of Foreign Service officers (I'm kind of on the fringe of that, having only worked for him twice), there were many whom Crocker would seek out when he was taking one of his many difficult assignments, whether it was Afghanistan or Pakistan or Iraq, and ask them to come and work with him. She was one of them, and she really was – I think she was his DCM in Pakistan before he went to Iraq. She is absolutely superb. I believe she is a management officer who...

Q: I had a very sound set of interviews with her.

KRAJESKI: She understood how that embassy developed in those crucial early years I think better than anybody. I relied on her completely when I arrived. I arrived in Iraq in early April 2008. By this time the surges – both the military and the civilian – are well in place. The PRTs, the provincial reconstruction teams that I had been tasked with trying to staff during my stay in Washington along with this expanded embassy; they were up and going great guns. Some of the teams in places like Kirkuk and Basra and Mosul, key cities, had 30 or 40 people – not all State Department, a mix of military, USAID, contractors, State – working in the PRTs. Most of the PRTs were located within military-controlled areas if not actually in the base itself. Kirkuk and Mosul were both in our bases. The embassy itself was thoroughly staffed. The political section had maybe doubled in size as had the economic section. Political-military, my buddy Michael Corbin who then went on to be ambassador in the UAE, he took the political-military job. I had a fascinating position as the envoy to the north. The Kurds have a fascinating history. One of their – I've said this before, the Middle East is a region filled with people with grievances. People who believe they've been oppressed, not gotten what they deserved. They have not gotten justice; they have been colonized, brutalized. There's a lot of truth to this.

Q: Sometimes the people complaining have also had their time on the top of the pile to be nasty to somebody else.

KRAJESKI: Talk to the Armenians about the Kurds. You bet. My example of that from the first time I went to Iraq was the Sunnis, who were very closely aligned to Saddam Hussein and who had all the power prior to his ouster in 2003. I sat in many meetings with them in which they complained how they were being oppressed. They needed justice!

The Kurds, with a lot of good reasons, were very much in that mode. In '91 if you remember, when we established a no-fly zone, basically established almost total autonomy in the north. The Kurds for the first time, some would say in their history but there have been other periods where they've been semi-autonomous, they were able to run their own economy, to establish political parties and parliaments, to develop their military – the peshmerga, very tough fighting force – with our support and protection. Saddam really didn't have much to say about it from 1991 to 2003. They were instrumental, the peshmerga and the security forces of Kurdistan, in the military action to overthrow Saddam Hussein in 2003. During that time, because they had the only credible Iraqi fighting force on the ground, they moved from the traditional Green Line, the line established in 1991 when Saddam was stopped from invading Kurdistan. They moved their forces down and took Kirkuk city, which they claimed as theirs. They called it their Jerusalem, which made me very nervous. Nothing holy about Kirkuk by the way, no sacred sites in Kirkuk; there's oil. They took Kirkuk and moved as far as the outskirts of Baghdad. In some cases, there were peshmerga forces in Baghdad providing security for Kurdish leadership and for other Iraqis, including working with our guys when we took Baghdad to try to establish security in the city.

Very quickly, the peshmerga were asked to leave Baghdad as our military established itself there. They moved into Mosul in the north, but then moved out of the city itself as we took control of it. They very much expanded Kurdish control of northern Iraq, beyond areas where most people thought they had any kind of historical claim. A great story of this is, when we first arrived in 2003, the Kurds printed a tourist map of Iraqi Kurdistan, to try to encourage tourists to come. It's actually a very beautiful place, and they had some success over the years. They would give this map away at the airport in Erbil to people arriving. David Petraeus, who was then commander of northern forces in 2003, got a hold of this map and he blew a gasket, as did Bremer when he saw it. It showed the Kurds controlling most of northern Iraq including Mosul and a huge chunk of Baghdad, as "traditional Kurdish areas." The Kurds were doing what you said; as soon as they were out from under any pressure to hold back, they moved as far as they could as fast as they could. Then they carefully negotiated their withdrawal to a line that still included Kirkuk. It no longer included Mosul, but included a number of what were called "disputed internal boundaries," the DIBs. In 2005, they demanded that Article 140 be included in the new Iraqi constitution. It laid the roadmap for the resolution of what the boundaries would be. They called for censuses, for referenda, and an independently supervised negotiation of where the final border would be of Iraq Kurdistan.

The UNAMI, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, was given the responsibility to negotiate this boundary. The same guy who's in Syria now, Staffan de Mistura, was the head of the UN Iraq office. Brilliant Italian – half Italian, half something else. Fascinating guy, very dedicated. One of the calmest individuals I've ever met. And very effective with Iraqis, at least as I worked with him. I worked with his deputy, a man named David Gilmour, who was charged with the day to day negotiation of the DIBs, including and especially Kirkuk. Crocker assigned me to work with Gilmour as his representative to the north. I moved into Baghdad; we were still in the palace in those days. The embassy had not moved out to the new embassy compound. We were still living in trailers. My trailer was right next to the helicopter landing pad. Forget the name. The helicopter airport where both State Department helicopters – in the time since I left Iraq, the State Department had established its own air force, partly run by Blackwater until Blackwater went away. They changed their name is all they did. If you'll recall, there was a very nasty case of a Blackwater attack where they killed a number of civilians in an intersection in Iraq.

Going off course a little bit, when I was there for that year, we had various security teams that would take us out on meetings, depending on where we were. If it was Mosul or Kirkuk, it was U.S. military teams. In Baghdad, we almost always got civilian teams. They were Triple Canopy teams or Blackwater teams. Again, Blackwater changed its name to something else while they were under investigation [Xe Services]. Frankly, if I had a choice of U.S. military, Triple Canopy, or Blackwater, I took Blackwater. They were professional, well-trained, very disciplined. And frankly when you got into trouble (and thank God I never got into much trouble out there; a few odd shots here and there), Blackwater guys defended you and got you the hell out of there as fast as they could. Their object was to get civilians back to safety. If you were with the U.S. military, they often went after the bad guys. So you're in the Humvee while they're hunting down

whoever's shooting at you to go get 'em. That was their mission, but it didn't make me feel very comfortable!

By 2008, 2009, there were a lot of military units that were specially trained to do security for the PRTs. So when I went to a PRT, I'd get into the MRAPs, the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles. These are enormous trucks, fully armored. They protected you from the IEDs on the road and were resistant to things like rocket-propelled grenades. You felt reasonably safe in them, although they figured out ways to attack the MRAPs as well.

We were living in the trailers. Trailer life, and I'm sure you've had many of my colleagues talk about trailer life in Baghdad – was not particularly fun, particularly when you're 58 years old and quite particular about your ways. Suddenly I'm sharing a trailer – with a guy I knew, actually, a colleague from NEA I had known, a nice guy. We shared a bathroom. We each had our own bedroom; we didn't have to have four in a trailer, there were only two. But the trailers were there – I arrived in April. As the heat builds and the dust builds, the trailers just aren't enough protection. Plus, just as I arrived in Baghdad, it was one of the great pushes from the Sadrists, the Jaysh al-Mahdi, the Mahdi's Army out of Sadr City.

Q: These are Sunni?

KRAJESKI: This was a Shia militia. They controlled Sadr City mostly. They and others would occasionally lob Iranian rockets, mostly Katyushas, into the Green Zone. They're not very accurate. They didn't have any kinds of fire lines or folks observing, trying to adjust the missiles. The missiles, apparently, when you fire them had an accuracy of 100 yards one way or the other. The Green Zone's huge. They would lob these things into the Green Zone, sometimes a lot of them. Some people had been killed. I think in February 2008 they hit a trailer. The trailers had no protection on the top, they were just tin roofs. So the rocket would come right through it. It was like standing 50 yards from a cardboard box and throwing rocks and maybe you'll hit something. Occasionally they would.

Every time one of these rockets went off, the "Big Voice" would come on – we called it the "Big Voice," it would be "Duck and cover! Duck and cover! Seek cover immediately!" Enormous, it would just shake your trailer, the voice was so loud. Usually it came after the rocket had exploded. If it exploded close by, you could hear it and smell it. I mentioned this before; as a civilian I'd never smelled ordnance that had exploded. A particular odor, if the wind is blowing towards you. We were supposed to put on our helmets, our armored jackets, our PPE, and race to the shelter that was nearest to your trailer. You were never supposed to be more than 50 steps from a shelter. They were all painted bright yellow so you could see them. You were supposed to sit in there until you got the all clear. "All clear, all clear," the signal would come.

When I first arrived, I did this once. I found out two or three things. One, the rockets had already come in by the time you had got your helmet and vest and shoes on so you could run the 50 yards to the shelter. Second, it was usually at night – during sandstorms, they

would set some off in the day, too. So it was dark. It was hot – even April in Baghdad it's starting to get hot. The third thing I discovered, they made the entrance ways to these little shelters only about five-and-a-half feet high. Anybody over that would whack their heads the first time. It hurt! The next time it went off, Mark and I would have a deal. We knew that one side of the trailer was defended by sandbags; they sandbagged one side of it. So we would roll off of our cots and up against the wall where the sandbags were. I would just lie there, and figure, "If it comes in through the roof, it's just serious bad luck." That's what we would do. After a while, frankly, we hardly paid attention.

We also got better. Our military is really good at adjusting. Sometimes it takes them a while and they adjust to whatever the threat is, and wait for whatever the next threat will be. In this case, they got really good at pinpointing where the missiles were coming from very quickly, and they had helicopters in the air over Sadr City. As soon as a missile would go off, they could triangulate almost immediately and identify where it was from, and get that Apache or that Cobra to that spot to blow the hell out of the vehicle. They were almost all in pick-up trucks and they'd drive to a place. To shoot them, they had to set down these supports to steady the rocket-launchers. So they had to establish themselves. If they fired one and we were nearby, they were ours. The bad guys learned this too, so they rarely fired a missile during the day or a clear night. They would wait for sandstorms to come because they knew helicopters couldn't fly. I was right next to the helicopter pad. The first couple of night was this constant "(helicopter sounds)" as the helicopter would come overhead, either taking off or landing. When the big Marine helicopters like the Chinooks or the big ones that can carry things came over, the whole trailer would rattle and shake. But I got used to the sound, and it became kind of a comforting sound to me. I knew if the helicopters were flying, the missiles probably weren't coming in that night. When the helicopters weren't flying and it was dusty, that's when they started lobbing shit into the zone.

I only stayed in the trailer for two months; I was one of the first to volunteer to move to the New Embassy Compound, the NEC, and to the new housing there, which was by trailer standards – we called ourselves "trailer trash" of course – deluxe apartments. As a former ambassador, I got my own one-bedroom apartment. Most people had to share apartments but had their own bedroom. All of these apartments were one-bedroom apartments, so they made the living room into a second bedroom. You shared a kitchen and a bathroom. As a former ambassador and a member of the senior staff at the embassy, I got my own apartment. I loved it! Had my own kitchen, a refrigerator that worked, and air conditioning. It was sealed. The apartments were really beautifully sealed; the dust did not get into them. The elevators worked, everything worked. They had a beautiful gym and a 25 meter swimming pool. They brought out a DFAC, dining facilities as well. So suddenly living in Baghdad wasn't so bad except you really felt like you were in a prison in the compound. It was surrounded by 20 foot walls with razor wire on top. The guard force (I think they were Peruvians) on the perimeter was tough. Sometimes you felt as though they were keeping you in. It was hard to get out when I was in Baghdad. I didn't like being in Baghdad; I preferred to go up to Mosul and Erbil.

We were pushing very hard to resolve the boundary issue. We didn't think we were going to succeed quickly; indeed it's still not done. But we had made a commitment to the Kurds that the United States would make every effort to help the UN negotiate this agreement.

The Kurds didn't trust the UN; nobody trusts the UN. The Kurds trusted us. Frankly, our motives were mixed. Crocker's main effort in 2008 and 2009 was negotiating a deal that would allow the United States to withdraw its military from Iraq. He was negotiating a Status of Forces Agreement, a SOFA; a standard agreement that would cover U.S. military that remained in Iraq after our withdrawal. And he was negotiating a security agreement with the Iraqis which detailed what kind of military security assistance we would continue to offer after we had withdrawn the majority [of our forces].

The Bush Administration – this is April 2008, so Clinton and Obama are fighting it out for the Democratic nomination and Romney and I forget who else for the Republican one. It's going to be a negotiation. It's very much part of Bush's policy that "I'm going to end this war. By the end of 2008, we will have an agreement in place with the Iraqi government that begins the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Iraq, with an end date." They set 2011 as the date that the last military unit – there would no longer be U.S. military bases. There would be a lot of military still there, training Iraqi forces. But we would no longer control ground or do any fighting.

Crocker was under enormous pressure from Washington to get this done. John Negroponte the deputy secretary of State was out there frequently. The secretary of Defense was out there. It was the major issue for the embassy. David Satterfield was brought out to focus on these negotiations in the embassy.

My job, stated rather bluntly by Ambassador Crocker, was to make sure the Kurds stayed on the reservation. The Kurds were very nervous about our withdrawal. They did not want us to withdraw. Every time I saw Barzani or Talabani, the Kurdish leadership – anybody in Kurdish senior leadership – they would discuss the possibility of a U.S. military base in Kurdistan. We did not have any bases [in their territory] – some military up there, very small, some security, but not many at all. It was a very sensitive issue with the central government in Baghdad; it was a very sensitive issue with the Turks and Iranians as well. We had no intention of establishing a permanent military base in Iraqi Kurdistan, but that's what the Kurds wanted. They were worried that we were going to walk out on them yet again. They were worried that we were not going to defend their interests in these negotiations with the central government over the boundaries of Kirkuk and the other disputed territories. There was a great deal of distrust, suspicion, and apprehension. We worked with the Kurds constantly, both in Baghdad where they had some representatives, and in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah which are the two major cities in northern Iraq [Iraqi Kurdistan], one controlled by Talabani and one controlled by Barzani.

Q: What did you think of Barzani and Talabani? Their names resonate with our entire dealings with Iraq going way back.

KRAJESKI: It was interesting. Part of my job was also working with the political officers in Erbil. We didn't have anyone in Sulaymaniyah, but also in Mosul and Kirkuk where there were issues over how the [political] dynamic within Kurdistan was developing.

Kurdistan had its own parliament. It was freely elected. The majority in parliament were Barzani's KDP – Kurdish Democratic Party. They were by far the more powerful party in northern Iraq. Talabani's PUK, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, a quasi-Communist or socialist party by the way, was run by a politburo. My meetings with them were always difficult because I had 20 people I had to talk to; wouldn't have just one or two persons. With the KDP, I just talked to Barzani. I talked to other people in the KDP, but for decisions, you were going to Barzani.

The same was true with Talabani but he had this whole act he had to put on that he was just one of many. Talabani had also agreed, with our considerable pressure [on him], to be the vice-president of Iraq. He was the senior Kurd in Baghdad. Talabani was also very old. Mam Jalal as he was called – there was Kakh Masood, Brother Masood [Barzani], and Mam Jalal, Uncle Jalal Talabani who were really the two patriarchs. They speak by the way different dialects [of Kurdish]. They're mutually intelligible but quite different. The Barzanis, I forget the names of the dialects, the Kurdish dialects the Barzanis speak is closer to Turkish [Kermanji], although quite independent and with quite a lot of Arabic in it. The Talabani side, they had more Persian [Sorani]. Closer to the Iranians, more Persian and still some Arabic as well.

These two groups by the way have fought each other a number of times in recent history, as recently as 1994 during the no-fly era. There was a very nasty battle that went on for some months that was finally resolved by us forcing them to make a resolution. They were getting along reasonably well in 2003 and 2008 when I was working with them. But Barzani's group, the KDP, were clearly dominant. And they remained dominant.

Mam Jalal was old and was not in good health. While we were there he had a heart operation; everybody thought he was going to die. There was great turmoil within the PUK over who would take his place. His wife Hero, a very strong powerful figure within Kurdish society and the party itself although she had no official position, very much wanted her son Qubad, who is now the deputy prime minister of Kurdistan. He was actually here; he lived in Washington for like 15 years and married an American woman. But Qubad was too young and was not peshmerga. There was great discussion about who would take over the PUK when Mam Jalal passed. There was a splinter faction. One of Mam Jalal's key aides during the '90s broke with him and formed his own party, which also has a number of seats in parliament. Lots of intrigue, lots of – I hate to compare them to the Mafia, because they're not the Mafia. But the same kind of pressures being put on; "You want a job? You better toe the Talabani line." A lot of it had to do with jobs and economics and who gets into the universities, who lives in what house. They controlled a lot of that. They controlled a lot of money. The Talabanis controlled the Iranian border; there was considerable smuggling going across. The Barzanis, one of the reasons they

were more powerful, they controlled the Turkish border. A lot of things including oil went back and forth, and the Barzanis took a cut.

Q: Where did the Turkish Kurd outfit -

KRAJESKI: PKK. (Kurdistan Workers Party)

Q: Where did they fit?

KRAJESKI: They were very much part of the discussion in 2008. As we were negotiating these boundaries, especially Kirkuk – for a number of reasons, it was the centerpiece and attracted the most attention. When I first arrived in April 2008, David Pearce who is now the ambassador in Athens, briefed me on where we were on negotiations. He said the Turks being Turks still had a very hard line on this. They said, “If the Kurds get Kirkuk, we will stop it. The negotiation will not end with Kurdish control of Kirkuk.” They were adamant about this, coming out of Ankara. This had been their position since 2003. We knew in any negotiation we were going to have to accommodate the Turks somehow.

Shortly after I arrived, the Turks sent an envoy to the Kurds, who came to Baghdad to talk to Crocker and me. I remember the meeting well. He came in, a very sophisticated, accomplished Turkish diplomat. He went on to be ambassador to Iraq later. He sat with us and said, “We are going to reestablish a strong relationship with Iraqi Kurds.” Erdogan has been prime minister I don’t know how many years at this point, think he came in 2003 or ’04. He was trying to negotiate with his own Kurds. He had a lot of support from the Kurdish parties that were allowed to participate in Turkish elections. They made a decision that they were going to negotiate with the Iraqi Kurds, too.

It was difficult for them for a number of reasons. One, they had a small Turkoman population in Iraq. These were folks who going back to the Ottoman Empire, had had positions of influence and some wealth during the empire. Since 1924, when modern Iraq was established, the Turkoman were gradually losing position. By 2003 or 2008, there weren’t many of them left. But they still maintained they were a viable ethnic group within Kirkuk and that Kirkuk was theirs. “Kirkuk is historically Turkoman.” The first time I went to Kirkuk, I sat with Arabs, Turkomans, and Kurds, and each one of them, almost the first sentence out of their mouth was, “Kirkuk is historically Arab...Kurdish...Turkoman.” The Christians even kind of waved their hands but they knew they didn’t have any real claim to it.

The Turks very much entered into a genuine negotiation with Kurdish leadership in Erbil. They didn’t like Barzani at all, and Barzani didn’t trust the Turks. No love lost between Turks and Kurds. Going back to the PKK, Barzani had been for a number of years tacitly or passively allowing the PKK to operate within Iraqi Kurdistan territory, right over the border. There had been frequent attacks, incursions by Turkish forces into Iraqi Kurdistan; usually following up on a terrorist attack or another attack against Turkish forces in the north. The Turks would roll the tanks in. Barzani would hit the roof and

shout, there would be a negotiation and the Turks would roll out. There was no love here. They tried to establish a genuine relationship. What they told Barzani is, “We want the PKK stopped. You need to cut off their supply trails and stop offering them any kind of support. We understand that they’re Kurds, so you cannot condemn them.” Although Barzani went pretty far in his criticism of PKK tactics. He put a lot of pressure on the PKK; enough to convince the Turks that he was serious about negotiating. Barzani is a very sly, clever, hard-nosed old peshmerga. He knew that without the Turks, there was no way...

I may have mentioned this before. You sit 100 Kurds in the room and you ask them, do you want an independent Kurdistan? Ninety-nine of them will jump to their feet and sing the Kurdish national anthem. That was true in 2003 and probably today. In my opinion, the eventual goal of Massoud Barzani and probably of Mam Jalal Talabani is an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq – the first in history. The Kurds have said, “We are the largest ethnic group in the world that has never had its own state.” Apparently that’s not true, there’s a larger group in India that has never. Anyway.

Without the Turks, there’s no way they’ll get there. They also did it for economic reasons. The Turks were willing to invest millions in construction, development and the economy of Iraqi Kurdistan, in exchange for this agreement but also in exchange for oil. There’s a lot of oil in Iraqi Kurdistan. Most had been undeveloped. They weren’t talking about the Kirkuk oil, but there were other oilfields that were being developed by small oil companies. Larger ones were concerned about coming in because our position, and the federal government’s position in Baghdad was, all of Iraq’s oil belongs to all of Iraq. The Kurds don’t have their own oil. So if that oil’s developed, the money from the sale gets put into the central budget and then is re-distributed to the Kurds. The Turks said, “Hey, we’ll buy your oil directly from you.” I’m not sure where that stands today, but in 2008 that was really controversial. We were not pleased with the notion that there would be a formal deal between Turkey and Kurdistan.

So the Turks were very much engaged in the north. They were a big player. My daughter who’s a journalist, she lived in Istanbul for four years and went into northern Iraq many times to report on the Kurds. She said everywhere you went, there were Turkish companies, goods in stores were Turkish-made. A lot of money coming in. I think that’s slowed down a bit now. Tensions have increased with what’s going on in Syria and Iraq. But in those days, it was a very positive development. It gave the Kurds a little more economic independence and autonomy from the central government. They were a little more confident as we were negotiating the status of forces agreement and security agreement with the central government.

There were a number of occasions where I had to go north, sit with somebody in Erbil, often with Barzani himself, and explain what was going on in Baghdad. We would tell him, “Go to Baghdad and talk to al-Maliki directly.” He hated Maliki. He believed Maliki had turned on them. Maliki had lived in northern Iraq in the ‘90s, on the run from Saddam. He had fought with the Kurds. So the Kurds considered him a brother. When he became prime minister, Barzani thought he’d turned on them and was going to renege

particularly on Article 140 of the constitution. Without 140, the constitution was null and void according to Barzani and the Kurds. So it was a constant struggle to try to keep the Kurds inside Iraq. That was my primary job.

By the end of 2008, we were starting to give up bases, planning on it. The first place the Iraqi army wanted to come in was Kirkuk. The Iraqi army began to move north and establish a presence in Kirkuk. In Sunni areas, but really close to Kurdish areas. In some places they would claim Kurdish areas, and the peshmerga would go down there to defend. There were a number of occasions in Diyala province and Kirkuk province where Kurdish peshmerga forces went nose-to-nose with Iraqi central government forces and nearly started shooting at each other. That got really dicey. The U.S. military would be in between them as fast as they could get there. Crocker would often go up to Erbil. We'd fly up together and we'd sit and basically hold Massoud's hand and say, "We're not going to go to war here."

Q: Did you find that the Kurds were able to get friendlier with our troops than the Iraqi?

KRAJESKI: The Kurds loved us. They wanted American soldiers. One of their repeated statements was, "You have not lost a single American soldier in Iraqi Kurdistan." There were some terrorist attacks, but "this is the safest place." They referred to it by the way as "the other Iraq." They actually, on CNN on one of those tourism blurbs were calling it "the other Iraq."

I loved going to Erbil. I tried to talk Crocker into letting me establish my office in Erbil rather than having to go back to Baghdad to the embassy then going for four or five days to Mosul or Erbil or Kirkuk – it would be easier to do it out of Erbil. Plus in Erbil there were restaurants. Rebuilding the old city of Erbil, which they claim was the oldest continuously inhabited place in the Middle East. (Damascus I think has the stronger claim to that.) It was a fascinating town. I liked it, and the Kurds liked us. We were popular. I would frequently walk into restaurants, and as an American they would refuse to give me a bill. "We're not going to allow you to pay." I would leave money on the table and say, "This is for your children then." Americans were welcomed. We were popular – we still are. I told the story, in 2003 going up to Halabja where the gas attack had been, and the streets were lined with people cheering, waving flags and pictures of Bush. It was still true in 2008, I think it's still true today. The Kurds were genuinely grateful to the United States for getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Liberation was real to them.

Q: Was this doing anything to our Turkish relations?

KRAJESKI: Until my last job when I was in counter-terrorism working on foreign fighters, I never really worked closely with the Turks. Only peripherally in 2003, in Mosul as they were establishing their consulate; they were the first diplomatic mission in Mosul. Indeed, if you recall when ISIS went into Mosul in 2014, they kidnapped everybody at the Turkish consulate; held them for months. I'm sure the Turks had to pay a lot of money to get those folks out. I had never served in Turkey. A lot of my colleagues had; there were always NEA-Turkish revolving assignments. I think that in

2008, Erdogan was still considered to be a progressive leader, the Islamist we can live with. He was an example in 2011 and '12 as the Muslim Brotherhood were taking over Egypt, "they're going to go the Turkish route, the reasonable route." So I think the relationship was strengthened by this Turkish-Kurdish rapprochement, and the Turks dealing directly with Baghdad with a more practical approach to their relationship with Iraq. Erdogan wanted peace with all of Turkey's neighbors; he had a phrase for it. The Turks were getting much more involved in the Middle East. They had a strong relationship with Israel, until the ship incident of 2011 or '12 – the aid ship going into Palestine that the Israelis boarded and killed a couple of people. It was a nasty incident.

Q: What about Iran?

KRAJESKI: Now you're dealing with the gorilla in the room that everybody ignores as it's huffing and puffing in the corner. I talked a little about this in 2002 and 2003 when we were going into Afghanistan. When we went into Iraq, Iranian influence immediately ramped up among the Shia communities. Many of the Shia leadership coming back into Iraq were coming from Iran after many years there. Many got military training in Iran. The Badr Brigades, which were the al-Hakim militia who came in were all trained in Iran. They had Iranian and Russian weapons. Across the border starting in 2003, you had thousands of Iranian pilgrims coming to Najaf and Karbala which is where Hussein Ali is buried, the great martyr of Shia Islam. During the Ashura commemorations which go on for many days. I just experienced it in Bahrain which is the only country in the Gulf that allows them.

This is the holiest time of the year for Shia. They commemorate and mourn the martyrdom of Ali. His gravesite at the great Battle of Karbala where he was killed is in Iraq. Immediately, they opened the religious sites to Shia pilgrims, the great majority of whom came from Iran. You could come overland, so there were busloads of Iranians coming in. Najaf by the way became one of the most prosperous cities in Iraq because of this pilgrimage site. They built one of the first airports in Iraq after the war, a very modern airport. They built a lot of hotels and really made a lot of money on the tourists, the pilgrims' trade. Economically, too, a lot of Iranian manufactured consumer items pouring in mostly to southern Iraq but also throughout Iraq.

Baghdad has a huge Shia population as well. With that [influx of Iranian pilgrims] came a lot of other things. Iranian intel, security, military-advisor types, all under the radar. Very much a closer relationship with Iran across the board. This is something we just did not deal with. We didn't until recently have any direct contact with Iranians. Most of the military and security training was done by people we consider to be trainers of terrorists, and terrorists themselves. You're looking at Suleimani and the Iranian Guard, all of these groups, Hezbollah. Not folks that we are naturally attuned to. And this great suspicion that Iran wanted to increase its influence in Iraq and eventually be the dominant force. It was hard for us to moderate this, to understand that the Shia population of Iraq would naturally turn to Iran for many things, including some degree of security. We see that playing out now as they're fighting ISIS, and you've got Iranian Revolutionary Guards and others fighting in Iraq, not alongside Americans but close to them, in cooperation

with them to some degree. It was a difficult issue. It's always hard to parse what the Iranians want. For one thing, the Iranians think very long term, so they were not involved in any kind of detailed negotiation. It was obvious to most of us (I did not deal with the Iranians very much) that they had a very big role to play in Iraq, and we were going to have to live with it. And maybe accommodate it.

Q: Was there any way when you were working on this, see if you had mutual objectives?

KRAJESKI: I think probably a lot went on. I talked earlier about our contacts with Iran in the pre-9/11 days, and post-9/11, as we were going into Afghanistan where we had more direct contact. I'm sure that there were channels of communication via senior Americans to senior Iranians. But I was not aware of them and had no particular need to know as I was working with the Kurds. The Kurds had their own connections with the Iranians; both Barzani and Talabani went to Tehran periodically. Crocker or I would go up and they would de-brief us, give us 100%, everything that they talked about with the Iranians in Tehran. "We're your best friends, we're going to tell you everything they're up to and what they want, with us and in the south." I'm not sure we ever got everything.

I understood and certainly a guy like Crocker understood that this was simply practical regional politics. Talabani had been in league with various Iranians for a long time and made a lot of money off the border. They had to live with these guys. Iran – we're finally beginning maybe to reckon with Iran, to try to work with Iran. But it's a fault in our policy, and a fault in Iranian policy, that we have not been able as two countries to somehow meet in a neutral area and establish a more normal relationship. If we could do it with the Soviet Union in 1960, surely we can do it with Iran in 1990 or 2000 or 2010. Maybe we're waiting for 2020, now.

I told you that the embassy was attacked and hostages taken and over-run while I was in language training for my first assignment in 1979. My colleagues were studying Farsi and getting ready to go out to Iran. So my entire career, we had no relationship with Iran – one of the largest and most powerful countries in the Middle East. Even at its weakest, it still is a force to be reckoned with. I don't know how that's going to play out. But certainly in 2008, 2009, we're focused on strengthening the central government in Baghdad, keeping the Kurds part of Iraq, negotiating a thousand things including the border of Iraqi Kurdistan. Turks are playing a positive role. The Iranians are not playing a negative role, but there's a lot of suspicion, a lot of concern about what they might be capable of.

We kept that up. Crocker got his agreement at the end. We signed a Status of Forces Agreement, we signed a security agreement that scheduled and began the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Crocker left in January of 2009; he retired, "Finally," he said from the Foreign Service, completely. We had a retirement party for him. Crocker hates parties, especially if he's the honoree. He allowed it because Pat Butenis [the DCM] insisted.

Crocker, if you work hard for him, he stands by you. He was good to staff. I didn't particularly like him personally. He's not a particularly likeable guy, he didn't give a shit

whether you liked him or not. I mentioned, he's not a small talker. I am. I like to talk. I like to learn about people, social, families, sports. Take a walk, talk it out. Crocker, he's not all business but he keeps his personal life very close to him and he doesn't have many friends. He has friends of course, but when he's out there at the embassy you spend hours with him in the back seat riding from Erbil up to the Barzani compound in the hills, or in Baghdad riding to meetings. Once the business was done, that's it. We could be an hour in the back of a Suburban riding up to al-Sulaymaniyah, to al-Salahidin, the Barzani compound. Beautiful place, just outside of Erbil. He'd be on his BlackBerry half the time. If he wasn't, he'd be half-asleep, or he'd just sit. He would respond, but he did not like to talk.

Q: In my interview with Pat Butenis, she was work-oriented and organized.

KRAJESKI: Pat was terrific. They embassy could not have functioned without Pat Butenis in charge of the day-to-day operation of that embassy. She did not like to do policy. She said, "I can't do both. This embassy is so huge." She would stand in for Crocker when she had to as a DCM, but she didn't like it. Indeed there was a period when, between when Crocker left and Chris Hill, the new ambassador coming in. Then Pat was charged. She really didn't step up. Partly because she just didn't want to.

I was there for most of that month, I left before Hill came. I did it deliberately. They [Washington] wanted me to stay on and I didn't want to. Partly because I knew Chris Hill and I knew he would not want me there. Chris doesn't believe anybody knows more than Chris Hill knows. Even though he had no Middle East experience, no Iraq experience, was coming in completely [blank] out of the North Korea negotiation, which god bless him was probably the hardest place on Earth to work and negotiate with those guys. I had a couple of occasions where I tried to brief Hill in Washington on what the Kurds were doing, and he wasn't interested. He made it quite clear, "I'm not listening." His attitude was, "I'm going to come in and finish the deal." A good friend of mine was his DCM, he'd worked for Hill three or four times; different character.

Anyway, Crocker was his own self. He's a legend in the Foreign Service. He's one of the most impressive diplomats I've ever worked for. But he's not a particularly likeable guy. In the end, so what? But at that retirement [party], Pat Butenis insisted she did it at her house – there were two houses on the compound, the ambassador's residence and the DCM's residence right next to it. Pat insisted that she would hold a party at the ambassador's residence, she would host it. Senior staff were invited only. It was an in-house retirement, and we were tasked with going out – I was in particular – with going out and finding all the people that had known Crocker through his career, and trying to get vignettes from them, little stories about their experiences with Ryan. Pictures – we'd ask people if they had pictures from his junior officer days, other parts of his career; send them, we're going to put them all together in a book and give it to him. We were collecting famous Crocker quotes as well. I had worked for him two years in Washington and this one year in Iraq. Others like David Pearce had worked for him numerous times; Pearce was his DCM in Syria. He's quite a character, so we put together an interesting book for him. He said that was it and he was going to retire; of course only a short time

later he was back in Afghanistan, they sent him back into Afghanistan when they were doing the surge. Crocker's a great American and a fantastic diplomat.

At the end of the day, I was glad I went. I think we made progress. Didn't resolve the internal disputed boundaries. The UN put in a terrific effort.

Q: I find this incredible. After all, boundaries in the Middle East have never been a problem.

KRAJESKI: Yeah...

Q: Alexander really settled things there.

KRAJESKI: That's right. And the Brits just kind of refined it, and the French. When the Ottoman Empire dissolved in 1919, 1920, there were a whole lot of folks clamoring for statehood. God bless the French and Brits, they didn't get it right.

Q: One can't help – it's a bit of false nostalgia – looking back, the Ottomans sort of kept their thumb on that whole area. Maybe would have blown apart.

Did you get involved in any of the negotiations – or were there any – with the Badr movement and the Shia movement in Baghdad?

KRAJESKI: Not in 2008. My focus was entirely on the Kurds and working with the UN on the negotiation on the internal disputed boundaries. My colleague Robert Ford – I don't know if you've talked to Robert, he is retired now, was ambassador to Syria a couple of years ago. He actually left in protest of the administration's lack of action, lack of decision in Syria. Robert was the political minister-counselor, and worked very closely with the Shia in Baghdad in particular. Gordon Gray who went on to be ambassador to Tunisia (also retired)...

Q: I'm interviewing him now.

KRAJESKI: He was my counterpart in the south, the senior advisor for southern Iraq. He did quite a bit of work with the Shia, particularly in Basra and Najaf and the border areas with Iran. I think by 2008, the Badr Brigade, the Jaysh al Mahdi – Maliki's government had gotten a great deal of control over them. He won the Battle of Basra just before I arrived. It was called something like 'Operation Charge of the Knights' in Arabic. The Iraqi army had with considerable logistic and air support from us had gone into Basra and driven the Jaysh al Mahdi – this is Muqtada al-Sadr's militia – and others out of Basra. They'd done this in other places in the south, so the militias were standing down and being integrated into an Iraqi security/military construct. They didn't give up their weapons, they didn't dissolve, and they've been reconstituted since ISIS moved into northern Iraq and were threatening Baghdad. This is the most extreme Sunni group, so the militias have reformed. The Badr Brigades were controlled by Sayyed Badr and the Hakims. I'm not an expert in this; I think there are five senior Shia families from whom

the grand ayatollah of the Iraqi Shia is selected. I'm not sure of the process, but it has to do with seniority of the person – it's considerable study mostly in Qom in Iran, or in Najaf, studying as a cleric. The five families – Hakims, Sistani, al-Khoi, and Sadr – Robert [Ford] would know these – they were very influential in Shia communities. The current grand ayatollah is Sistani. The Shia are very responsive to the fatwa, to the dictates, instructions of the ayatollah. This is different from the Sunni, who maintain that they don't have one senior figure; they don't have a pope. There's no hierarchy. Every Muslim prays directly to god, there's nobody between. The Shia are very much responsive to the grand ayatollah. So [there is] this competition amongst those families for who is the senior family.

The Badr Brigade as I mentioned were mostly trained in Iran. When they came in they were by far the strongest of the Shia militia. But they also negotiated. By 2008, 2009 I had the sense they had receded of their own choice so the militias were not as dangerous to us as they had been – although it was very much the position of Sadr and other Shia that the United States was an occupier that had to be resisted and had to withdraw. The threats against the U.S. in Iraq in 2008-10 I think were more from Al Qaeda and Sunni groups than Shia militia, but it was still there.

Q: Al Qaeda have any foothold in Kurdistan?

KRAJESKI: No. They carried out attacks there but only rarely. A hotel in Erbil where we were going to put the consulate in at one point; we had it [the consulate] in the Christian section of town when I was there in 2008, houses that we had converted to office space. But we were going to build. Of course, the Kurds wanted an embassy. By the way, one of the reasons Crocker wouldn't let me live in Erbil was because I had an ambassador title and he said the Kurds are not going to have an ambassador. "You are not the ambassador to the Kurds, you are my envoy to the Kurds." He was very direct. Kurds loved having me up there. I would go to all these meetings and they'd introduce me as the American ambassador to Kurdistan!

There had been some Al Qaeda attacks, but relatively rare. Erbil was the only place where with some precautions I could walk the streets without body armor. I could walk around the Christian zone anywhere I wanted to when I wanted to, because that was walled in and protected. I could walk around the city with body guards; the armored vehicles weren't far away. So the threat was not great. There was absolutely no support for Al Qaeda. Kurds support Kurds. The Kurds are very much their own selves. A Kurd can tell immediately that you are not a Kurd, whether you're an Arab or Persian or Turk. The look, talking...

Q: Much intermarriage?

KRAJESKI: Among Kurds, yes. Kurds and Turks – it's not forbidden by any means like it is with the Yazidi. I don't know if you've had anybody talk to you about the Yazidi before, but they've been very much in the news this last year. Terribly abused by ISIS who consider them apostates and non-believers.

Q: Were they a factor in what you were doing there?

KRAJESKI: The Yazidis were, very much. Before I leave Iraq, I should talk about that, too. But the Kurds are Kurds, they have their own culture, history, language, music, dance. They are very much a distinct ethnic group. There is a lot of interplay between Persians and Turks and Arabs and Kurds, including marriage.

Q: There was an awful lot of talk about the peshmerga. Were these as effective as they are portrayed?

KRAJESKI: Interesting question. Relative to other military, including Shia militia and the Iraqi army, the peshmerga were the toughest fighters. Disciplined, experienced, just really tough. Peshmerga means “facing death;” supposedly every Kurdish man is a peshmerga and expects to die for Kurdistan. So there’s a sense that this is serious stuff; you’re not a peshmerga for the money. On the other hand it is an organized military unit. They have real trouble with training. They have trouble with arms, with transportation – they always wanted more stuff from us directly and we wouldn’t give it to them because we did everything through the central government. We were trying to negotiate a peshmerga division as part of the Iraqi army. It had been agreed to by both sides that there would be a division stationed in the north that would be formally part of the Iraqi national army, but it would be largely Kurdish. There were mixed units already of former peshmerga who had been recruited into the Iraqi army. There were mixed units in Kirkuk. Still very much a work in progress. The peshmerga stood down Saddam Hussein in the mountains in 1991, with very little help from us at the beginning. Then we used airpower to drive Saddam back, but they did the fighting. They’re tough-ass folks.

I’ll never forget having a colleague of mine come back from a meeting with Barzani just before the war in 2003. You might remember we were trying to persuade the Turks to let us use Incirlik as a base of operations for the invasion of Iraq. The 101st Airborne, Petraeus’ group, had been moved into Incirlik. The Turks – it was very controversial within the Turkish parliament. They said, “We’re going to put it up for a parliamentary vote.” Prior to that, part of the deal as I understood it (I wasn’t part of the negotiation, I was hearing this in bits and pieces) was the Turks were going to deploy two divisions of Turkish forces into Iraq as part of the coalition. There were many in Washington who thought this was a great idea. The Turkish army is very well trained, well equipped, part of NATO, this made great sense [to some people]. A friend of mine went to northern Iraq with Crocker before the war to lay out this plan with Barzani. According to him, when they laid out this plan of Incirlik and U.S. forces and two Turkish divisions coming in, Massoud put his hands on the table and said, “Stop! The first Turk that comes across that border, all of our agreements are off. I kill Turks.”

They’re tough guys; sometimes to their detriment. The Kurds, whether it was Persians, Arabs, or Turks, they would go off into the mountains to fight. “The Kurds have no friends but the mountains.” I like the Kurds. Like all of the groups out there, they compete for “most oppressed,” and sometimes that gets on your nerves. As an American

negotiator, you're looking for a practical solution – where's the compromise? What can you live with? How can we move this to the next step? Sometimes all of that history and oppression gets in the way.

You mentioned the Yazidis. Iraq prior to 2003 and for much of its history was really a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society. Very large Christian communities in Baghdad and especially in northern Iraq. Large enclaves of Christians, generally part of society, depending on the king. Even Saddam valued his Christian citizens as long as they toed that very tough line with him – most of them did. There were churches. There were neighborhoods with Sunni, Shia, and Christians living together. Following the invasion and the sectarian fighting of 2004, '05, '06, the Christian community in Baghdad fled. Everybody went after the Christians, Al Qaeda in particular. They fled to the north, and by 2008 that's where most of the Christians were – around Mosul and in Erbil, for protection. Still large communities in northern Iraq.

The Yazidis, a very particular religion, were mostly settled along the Syrian border in a place called Sinjar. Mountainous area, some fertile valleys along the Syrian border up to the Turkish border. Their holy place is in the north, called Lalish. Al Qaeda went after the Yazidis as well, and I think it was in 2007, there were a couple of really nasty attacks in the Sinjar area against Yazidis. A couple of their temples were blown up, lot of Yazidis killed. At the request of the Yazidi community, the Kurdish peshmerga moved into Sinjar to provide security. The Kurds claim Yazidis are Kurds; the Yazidis speak Kurdish, the Barzani [Kurmanji] dialect. But they don't claim themselves to be Kurdish. When I was there in 2008 there was considerable tension between the Yazidi community and the Kurds. The Kurds were very much in charge and very much wanted to claim Sinjar as part of the Kurdistan region. The Yazidis were conflicted about this. They didn't want to be part of the Kurdish region at all, but they also knew that Baghdad could not provide the same security that the Kurds could.

The Yazidis believe they are the first people on Earth. Adam and Eve – mostly Adam – is the first Yazidi. According to their lore, God was wandering around his great universe looking at all he had done, and he saw a giant funnel of water, swirling in the universe. And he thought this would make a good planet, so he created Earth from this funnel of water. I spent a day with the Baba Sheikh. Wonderful guy, looked a little like Santa Claus. He and his crew would stop at that point and say, "You know, the Earth is 90% water." A lot of these stories ring bells with other religions, Christians and Jews and Muslims. God then created the first man – Adam. "Remember," they said, "human beings are 80% water." They're big on water. Then he created the first woman as well. Then the man and the woman said, "God, we need a child." So God instructed them to take a pot of earth, a clay pot. Fill it with earth and put it outside their dwelling place for the night. So each of them, the first man and the first woman (the first woman by the way doesn't have a name) put out their pots. The next morning, the first man's pot has a perfectly formed male child, sitting on top of the pot. The woman's pot, there's nothing but rotting vegetables and stones. That perfectly formed child is the first Yazidi, and from that child all other Yazidis have sprung. I asked, "If it's a male child..." They said, "The book is lost."

They claimed they had a book, because if you don't have a book you are not one of God's religions according to the Muslims and Christians and Jews.

Q: The Bible...

KRAJESKI: And the Torah. It's all the same book in many ways. If you've read the Koran, it draws enormously from both the New and Old Testaments. Anyway, the Yazidis claim they had a book but it was captured during one of their wars when they were oppressed, and it was burned. They decided they couldn't re-create it. So there are gaps in their story. And Lalish where I was having this lunch with the Baba Sheikh and his crew – we were standing around the table eating because the Yazidis believe standing and eating is better for your digestion than sitting or lying and eating. The main temple is right there, and before lunch they took me to the catacombs or basement of the church where the fountain of Lalish, the spring still flows. The original water from the funnel from the universe. And that's where they baptize their babies. When a Yazidi baby is born, you're supposed to go to Lalish (or nearby if you can't get all the way) and baptize their babies with water and say a prayer. They have a baptismal shawl and a vase from where the water is poured on the baby, then the vase is broken and stored in the catacomb. We were allowed – had to be barefoot – to walk in and drink the water. It was great; pure mountain spring. I drank it and didn't die!

You have to be born a Yazidi. If a Yazidi marries a non-Yazidi, they are cast out. Their children do not become Yazidis. They're very insulated. As you read about them, there are so many similarities with Christianity and Islam and Judaism. You can see how they developed. Beyond that, I don't know why they established themselves in northern Iraq. There's a small Yazidi community in Lebanon. The Yazidi community in Iraq right now is under enormous stress. ISIS enslaved the women, killed the men, drove them out of Sinjar. They're mostly in Kurdistan right now, there are some areas in the north of Mosul that the Kurds control including Lalish, where Yazidis can survive. But they're out of Mosul and out of Sinjar and really under stress. You're not supposed to emigrate, to live somewhere else; you're supposed to live with Yazidis.

Q: Where shall we pick up?

KRAJESKI: I'm going to leave Baghdad. I may have another story or two if I think of something or if we want to talk a bit more about how the policy develops at the end of 2009. I had hoped to get another mission. I was up for Tunisia but my friend Gordon Gray got it. As a consolation prize, Harry Thomas asked if I wanted to go to the National Defense University, where we put a lot of senior folks – usually for retirement, or just to hold them over there. He said I could either take one of the faculty jobs, or he would nominate me to be the senior vice president, which is the senior State Department position at National Defense University. With some regret in hindsight, I took the vice president job. It was more prestigious, and it was fun – I had a lovely time. But looking back I think I would have enjoyed the classroom more. It's an amazing institution, so

we'll talk about that a little bit next time. Then I'll move onto Bahrain, which is almost my last story.

Q: Today is the 6th of June, D-Day, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, you're just leaving Iraq?

KRAJESKI: Leaving Iraq, which I guess because of Afghanistan, is not yet America's longest war. We should be reminded of wars today, on D-Day, June 6th. Of course, we never declared war in either Iraq or Afghanistan-

Q: Or Korea.

KRAJESKI: Not since World War II have we had a formal declaration of war, despite having been involved in more than one, including Iraq. We had a quasi-declaration of war in Iraq. The president putting the proposition of using American military force to oust Saddam Hussein before the Senate in 2002, October I believe it was. Getting an overwhelmingly positive, supporting vote of Democrats and Republicans in the Senate. I don't recall the exact number, but only a handful of people voted against the use of military force – something that continues to hang over the head of candidates. On the other hand, in 2003 I think certainly the majority of Americans did support the notion of using military power to overthrow Saddam Hussein and to rid his country of weapons of mass destruction. It's an interesting issue, one that we've all read and thought about – the popularity of the war, of the action, in 2003. I think a lot of it was the national determination to support our military. Not necessarily the American people supporting the politics, the policy decision to go into Iraq – it was, "Our military is going to do it and we're going to support the men and women in the American military." That was the general feeling – you still have it today.

As I speak from time to time around the community about the Iraq war and how we got into it and out of it and what the effects of it were and what the prospects are for Iraq in the future. It used to be for me just an underlying theme; now it's a major theme, which is, this was an enormous expenditure of American blood and treasure, as the dramatists put it, and for very, very little in return. It's hard to say, having a brother who fought in Vietnam and did not come back from Vietnam, whose name is on the wall, the notion that your brother, your sister, your mother or father died for very little is incredibly hard to both say, and to actually accept. I believe there is a growing feeling and understanding in America that this did not get us much at all. Indeed, the effects of it may have been far more damaging to the security of the United States than if we had not gone into Iraq. I'm not a believer in going back and saying, "We should have done this; we should not have done that." I think that there is a point, particularly when you're actively engaged whether military or Foreign Service of saying, "If we made mistakes (and we did), let's see if we can't recover from those mistakes. Let's see what we do next."

But all in all, in 2016, 13 years after the invasion of Iraq, you have to look at the Middle East and wonder, was it worth it? Have its effects been predominantly negative?

So I left Iraq in 2009. As Crocker left in February 2009, I left in April 2009 with a sense then that we had turned a corner, that the two-and-a-half years of the civilian and military surge had made a difference on the ground in Iraq. Iraq was a safer place. It was politically more stable. There were economic and commercial opportunities. The oilfield infrastructure was fairly well maintained and established. The price of oil I think in 2009 was probably about \$75, \$80 a barrel, it was going up, up, up. There was a sense that if Iraq's central government and regional governments – especially the Kurds – could begin to focus on economic development, given the relatively strong security situation, the country had a chance of surviving and maybe, six years after the war, this country could turn out to be a success in the Middle East. That was what I felt when I left in 2009. It was a position I maintained during my two years at my next job, as a senior vice president at the National Defense University over at Fort McNair.

Q: So let's talk about that. What was your job? What were your experiences there?

KRAJESKI: It is one of the best jobs you can get as a senior officer. We talked last time about how the system reserves certain jobs for ambassadors who are leaving their posts. Under our law, when you are appointed ambassador, you are technically separated from the Foreign Service. You can continue taking your Foreign Service benefits and leave. You have a choice of going onto full presidential or this sort of hybrid where you are a political appointee, attached to the Foreign Service on detail. When you leave as an ambassador, the law says you have to re-enter the Foreign Service and have an assignment within 90 days, or you are retired from the Foreign Service. The director-general controls these positions – there are quite a few of them, probably 40 or 50.

Q: What was the rationale for this?

KRAJESKI: Often ambassadors coming out have limited opportunities within the system. Sometimes they're coming out at different times; sometimes they're coming out and you're looking at the number of jobs in Washington that an ambassador might take. Maybe deputy assistant secretary – although very few; that's usually considered on the way up to being an ambassador. Assistant secretary jobs – few of those. A few other senior jobs around the department that would suit a former ambassador. Former ambassadors also have a very high opinion of themselves. Usually not entirely accurate, so they're not willing to take jobs that they consider somehow beneath that rank, even though only a few people get personal rank of ambassador; you're given that title temporarily. Under the new laws, we can write "Ambassador (retired)" on our card. In the old days, you weren't even supposed to do that.

So the rationale was that these are people, many in their 50s or 60s, even 40s if you're a high-flyer, people we don't immediately want to discard. We want to keep them in that pool of senior officers – often because they're going to be put on the list for another ambassadorial assignment, and it takes time to get that processed, to get the White House to approve nominations. If you're doing that during a transition year, like this year – this year there are very few ambassadors being appointed because there'll be a new president in January.

By the way, when the new president is elected, you're expected to submit your resignation by January 1st. All political appointees – 99% are accepted. Almost all Foreign Service officers, 99% are politely declined. You're supposed to submit the letter of resignation, and the resignation is declined. Actually, they send a cable now saying, "You don't have to submit a letter if you're a Foreign Service officer unless we ask, unless the president asks you to." That's usually country-specific, not personal. You have a Foreign Service ambassador to London for example (and there have only been a couple of those in our history). That ambassador probably has to resign because the next president will probably want to put a political appointee into London.

There were also necessary jobs. Having been the vice president of the National Defense University, my job there – I was the senior State Department guy at National Defense University, which is a consortium of the war colleges. The oldest being the Army War College which is now called the National War College, that's George Kennan's college. I don't know if he was the first Foreign Service officer to formally teach at the National War College, but he was certainly the most well-known. It was still called the Army War College when he was there.

It was Eisenhower – one of his main intentions after the war was bringing the services closer together, forcing them to consult and cooperate with each other. As supreme commander in World War II, he was often frustrated by the stove-piping and different systems that the Army had, the Navy, Marines – they were all competing for equipment, duplicating each other's efforts. They didn't always talk to each other. Eisenhower, when he left that then became president, that was one of his pushes. It was in the '50s I believe – each service got its own war college, so you had the Air Force in Montgomery, Alabama; the Army in Carlisle; the Navy in Newport, Rhode Island. The Navy's existed before that. The Army War College moved from Fort McNair in Washington to Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the one in Fort McNair became the National War College. He created ICAF, the second college at National Defense University, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. It was specifically to address the concerns of one of Eisenhower's other main themes, the so-called military-industrial complex. We remember that phrase as being negative; when Eisenhower left office I believe in his final speech-

Q: He said "Beware."

KRAJESKI: "Beware of it." But the creation of ICAF was to bring business and the military closer together. First, ICAF would have all the services. Mostly lieutenant colonels and colonels marked for promotion – same as the war colleges. He wanted to have Foreign Service and other U.S. government departments send people. The difference from the war colleges, which also had Foreign Service and other U.S. government, was ICAF had private sector. He went to those companies who had the most dealings with the military, and said "I want you to send one or two of your bright young executives to ICAF for one year." The companies jumped at it – certainly when I was there they were very eager. His idea was to be a national effort, and what ICAF really did was the planning for war. They did all of the strategy brilliantly; at my time there I was

really impressed with ICAF. It's now called by the way the Eisenhower College – changed the name because it was hard sometimes to persuade snooty Foreign Service officers that they should go to the “industrial college” of the armed forces; they thought it was just for management officers, not political officers, which was nonsense.

The notion was, the guys over at National War College are doing Clausewitz and Sun Tzu and the great strategies from the general level, and the guys at ICAF were the ones trying to figure out how many horseshoes are we going to need to march from Richmond to Gettysburg? We actually did this; it was a fascinating exercise. I loved ICAF. There still was that difference. Later on, after 9/11, they added a third college, the counterterrorism college, CISA – College of International Security Affairs. Here's where my job came in. Each of these three main colleges – also at National Defense University (NDU), which was created only in 1972, to bring all of these together. There was a big think-tank, the International Institute of Strategic Studies. Each region had its own think-tank and study group. NESAs, Near East and South Asian Affairs was there. Africa had its own grouping as did South America and Europe. Europe's was the Marshall Center, and was in Europe not at NDU even though there was a formal connection between NDU and the Marshall Center.

My job was senior vice president for international affairs. I had a wonderful opportunity to lecture throughout the colleges on my own area of expertise, the Middle East, Iraq predominantly, and Yemen which was very much a subject in 2010 and '11. Then I also spent a lot of time with the military, which brings many of its officers through the colleges and then through various programs called CAPSTONE. CAPSTONE is a program similar to SETS, our Senior Executive Training. Once you're promoted to flag rank, you get your first star, you're expected to go through a 14-week course called CAPSTONE, centered at NDU. I would also spend time with groups like this, talking about the State Department, what does a diplomat do, what does an embassy do, what is a country team? These are officers who are going to be more engaged in the interagency process, either in Washington or overseas where they were going off to combatant commands or in some cases to be defense attachés or the heads of military offices of cooperation.

That was great fun. But the best part of my job there was to help manage the international programs. At each of the colleges – ICAF, Army War College, Navy War College – there were quite a number of international officers. Foreign military officers from all over the world, Afghanistan to Zambia as we would say. At NDU, counting the College of International Security Affairs, we had over 100 foreign officers, 50 of whom participated in what was called the American Studies Program, so that every month for four or five days, we would travel to some place in the United States and spend four days in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Rochester. Four days in San Francisco. We'd spend four days in Texas; we went from Houston to Galveston to Dallas to Fort Worth. It was one of my favorite trips. I would often go with these guys. They brought their families over, so their families – usually wives and children, the great majority were still men although some women. We had women from Denmark, we had a woman from Jordan – the king's sister participated.

This was a fabulous program. I want to make a pitch to continue this. It's paid out of the State Department IMET funds. If you recall, I don't know if they had IMET - International Military Education and Training. Every year, the Department of State has a certain amount of money specified for bringing foreign military officers to the United States, to study and train with our officers. This takes place at different levels among officer ranks. Some go to the staff and command colleges, the Joint Forces Staff College down in Norfolk, or out to Leavenworth where the Army staff and command college is. Indeed, the king of Bahrain, when he was the young crown prince of Bahrain went to Kansas for one year, with his wife and the now-crown prince, to study with American officers – a year he will never forget.

That is my point – this is a year they never forget. They have a chance to live in the United States and to meet Americans. Particularly this program is valuable because we take them out of the Beltway, out of the State Department/Pentagon/White House/NDU vortex and we take them to Memphis, Tennessee. We take them to Graceland. We take them to the motel where Martin Luther King was assassinated, which is now the National Civil Rights Museum – a fascinating place that they have built in the actual motel. They have preserved the room where he was assassinated. We go down to a small town south of Memphis along the Mississippi River, where we stay in people's houses, and we go fishing for catfish on the Mississippi. It's called jug fishing, where they tie lines to jugs. It was 104 degrees I remember when we went down there. We had chitlins and hush puppies and a catfish roast. It's fantastic.

Not only is it fantastic for these men and women, but also for Americans who meet them. Wherever we go, they put on a great show. There's always a group of people interested in foreign affairs – it may be through a university, it may be through government, it may be through the community. They are incredibly welcoming, as Americans always are. They're incredibly interested in what these men and women have to say. The number of events set up for them... I remember, I think it was in Minneapolis. We were at an event and this woman, very well-dressed, I think wealthy, came up to me and said, "I look forward to this event every year. There's no other time in my life where I have the opportunity to talk to an army colonel from Bulgaria."

We do have a requirement that all the participants speak English; some better than others. What happens is these men and women go back to their respective countries and militaries where they frequently rise in rank quite quickly and become the chiefs of army staff, defense chiefs, ministers of defense. We've had prime ministers come out of this program. And they maintain their contacts – not only the Americans they met and befriended this one year here, but also with their classmates. This is Serbs and Croats and Slovenians and Macedonians. This is Jordanians, Lebanese, Israelis, Egyptians, Tunisians. This is Vietnamese and Thai and Malaysians. We never got a Chinese; we get Taiwanese, which is one of the reasons the Chinese would not participate in the program yet. One of my main goals was to get China to send students. They kept claiming they wanted to. I don't know if they have yet. Pakistanis and Indians. It was always interesting to see how these linguistic groups hung together.

We took long bus rides; we'd fly on military air to Honolulu or Las Vegas, and then drive down to the Hoover Dam. We'd always see military bases, and we'd visit government. We'd go to the courts, see governors and mayors. We'd talk about local government with them. Then we'd take long bus rides. We rode from Las Vegas to Santa Fe. As happens in these trips, there's a lot of talk. I would see all the Arabs talking together. Frequently the Israelis spoke very good Arabic, and they'd be talking with the Lebanese guys and the Jordanians. The Pakistanis and Indians would sometimes become the best of friends. They do really have a common culture there that I think they both deny sometimes. The final point of value – You go in and you have a meeting with the deputy minister of defense, and you walk into his office and there on the wall is his picture of his ICAF graduating class. All he wants to talk about is the year he spent at Fort McNair and how much he loved it. How he still stays in touch with this guy, "That's Jim Halford. That's Ned Smith. We still send cards and emails, he came to visit me."

Q: This is done at different levels. I interviewed one person who was consul-general in Alexandria during Nasser's time. The police were not very nice; it was not a time of good relations. The man went into see the police chief in Alexandria, and there was a big picture showing he went to a police thing, foreign police going to the States. That's all he talked about. It was smoothing.

KRAJESKI: These are some of the most effective and valuable programs we have across government. I was always sometimes amazed, really pleased that we invested the millions of dollars into these programs, because they were priceless. Priceless.

Q: Speaking of my vast military experience of four years in the barracks... What about sergeants? Were we able to do anything about that?

KRAJESKI: Mainly we sent guys out to train. A couple of reasons for that as I understand it from my military colleagues as we looked at this at NDU – and there were a couple of programs at the staff and command colleges where they took NCOs (non-commissioned officers), the professional military guys, of which we have a very strong corps – NCOs and warrant officers, who really are the guts (and sometimes the brains) of our military. Any officer will recognize it. That master sergeant...

Q: From my point of view, I knew who ran the Air Force where I was. Incidentally I interviewed Admiral Crowe on time for this program because he was ambassador to Britain. We served together at his European command; I was in Naples when he was there. He said he was taking the Soviet minister of defense around, and at one point the minister of defense said, "You know, Admiral, the way your military is superior to any other military is in your non-commissioned officers. We don't have them."

KRAJESKI: That is probably the main reason we weren't successful in recruiting this level of military professionals to our schools in the United States. Most countries don't have that. Especially the countries we're really working closely and hard with like Egypt, Pakistan, India, Iraq, Saudi Arabia. In places where I've worked in the Arab world, it's

not considered to be a career. You have these militaries that are well supplied with excellent officers, great pilots, the people who drive the ships – they’re really first-rate and equal to ours in their ability, training, intelligence. But then they have these big gaps down to the enlisted man, who is often a conscript, there only for two years to do their national service. In some cases, it’s a poor country so it’s an opportunity for a paycheck. They’re not very well committed, not well trained, not well equipped. In between that huge cohort of conscripts and the elite officer corps is a big gap.

We tried to fill it in Iraq; it was a major focus of our military training, to build this corps of professional non-coms. The people who do supplying, who do maintenance. In Saudi Arabia when I would talk to our military guys, they’d say, “They have pilots who are equal to our pilots. Navigational people equal to ours. But they’ve got nobody who can fix an engine. Nobody who can do diagnostics on a plane before it takes off.” So they were hiring Pakistanis or other nationals or our guys. Twenty years we’ve been selling F-16s to the Saudis, and our specialists are still going in to train and make sure all is going well. There were tales when I was there of Saudi pilots running out of fuel, having technical difficulties.

So that was a problem. Many countries have recognized how important it is and are trying to build it. Certainly in Europe and some more of the advanced militaries. But in many of the newer militaries, you don’t have that.

Q: Did you find much thought given from bright young students coming in on terrorism and counter-terrorism, asymmetrical warfare? These are real challenges to the military. Did you find much bubbling up?

KRAJESKI: Certainly. In 2010, that was all the rage. Petraeus had come out with his manual on asymmetric warfare in which the focus was on small units, special ops, going into towns and cities, living with the Iraqis. COIN – counterinsurgency. This was it. These were the kinds of wars we were going to be fighting. Inserting special ops in places like Yemen and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya. Whether it was going to be smaller units branching out from larger bases as in Afghanistan and Iraq, but great focus on how do you fight a war when you walk into a village or town and you don’t know who’s a friend or who’s a foe. It’s very hard to do. We took a lot more casualties in 2006, ‘7, ‘8 as Petraeus changed the tactics of the U.S. military in Iraq. Prior to that, they stayed on bases, went out on specific missions to find bad guys, to visit a village – you roared in, established your perimeter, did your work, closed up and went back to the big base.

He said, “Nah-ah. We’re going to establish bases out there.” Casualty rates went up, but it was effective. So at NDU this was very big. On one hand, there’s this criticism that we’re always fighting the last war. We’re always figuring out, here’s the last thing that happened to us; here’s the last attack that we suffered whether it was 9/11, the insurgency in Iraq, IEDs. And we train people to confront that, rather than looking at what the next war might be and how we train for that. That was the constant churn at NDU – and there are a lot of really smart people coming through NDU. The military sends its very best officers both to study and to teach at NDU.

Q: Did you get much of a feel – they say “There’s the right way, the wrong way, and the Navy way.” Did you get much of a feel for the Navy?

KRAJESKI: To say something like that was anathema at NDU. We were all purple – there were no reds and blues and whites, whatever the different colors were for the military. The war college’s color was red and ICAF’s were blue, but we at NDU were purple. Whether you were a Navy or Air Force officer, when you sit down in the seminar, you have got to think strategically.

Q: The Navy, the problems facing naval commanders are often quite different.

KRAJESKI: That’s true I think with Air Force and Army as well. But there’s no war out there in the last 30 years that has been a land war that was fought by only the Marines and Army supported by the Navy and Air Force. There is a real sense at NDU and at the war colleges too, that each of the services has a role to play and the only way we succeed is if we coordinate. Even some Army guys would recognize that the Navy is the force of the future, the necessary force of the future as we look at the South China Sea. How are we going to project force in the Philippines and the South China Sea as we look at possible increasing confrontations with the Chinese? It’s going to be the Navy. If we have a sudden melt-down in Venezuela next year and suddenly we’ve got civil war there, who’s going to be the first? It’s going to be the Navy and Marines who, if the president decides to project force, that’s how we’re going to do it.

The Navy and Air Force are extraordinarily expensive; the Army not as much. For the Army to work, you have to have somebody to fight on the ground. What you’re seeing now, and this is true at NDU, is you’re seeing the ascension of the Special Forces. Special Operations Command is now equal to all of the other commands. They draw from all of the services, but they are their own command. So there’s no longer a sense that the CENTOM commander calls on the Special Forces to do something; that special forces commander has equal say in U.S. military projection. Certainly in places like Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, the Special Forces are the pointy tip of the spear.

So things are changing, and at NDU there was a constant mix. Our job as diplomats at NDU – you also had FBI, CIA, Commerce, Agriculture, USAID – how do you work interagency? Because any war we fight now is not likely to be a “let’s declare war on Japan.” It’s going to be, we need to work with the government in Pakistan to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and you need the diplomats and other assets of the U.S. government – the CIA, USAID. So as you’re plotting your strategies in the seminar you need to think whole of government, you need to think outside your own very small box of the U.S. Army or U.S. State Department. That’s the value NDU brings to the U.S. government.

It frustrated me that at State, we did not always send our best officers to the war college, to ICAF, to CISA. It used to be that the director-general would tap you on your shoulder as you reach O1 level, our equivalent of colonel. You were supposed to hold back on your

bids, and the director-general would among the first assignments say, “Stu, I want you to go to the war college.” It was considered a great boon – you were being marked as one of the best by the director-general. “Spend a year at the war college and then we’ll give you an onward assignment.”

That changed in the ‘90s with the establishment of all of our new embassies, in particular the ‘Stans, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Q: Basically the break-up of the Soviet Union.

KRAJESKI: Right, and we had something like 15 new embassies. Then the Iraq War of 2003 really broke it as well, because we needed everybody in the field. We’re a very small service; you couldn’t take the best O1s and give them a year of study – which I think is hugely valuable, and a mistake that we don’t still do it.

Q: I go back to the old days; I was in the 17th Senior Seminar.

KRAJESKI: Yes – we stopped the Senior Seminar. When Colin Powell came in, one of his priorities was to establish a training and continuing education requirement in the Foreign Service. As it is in the military; you do not get promoted to major unless you’ve gone to a staff and command college, or you’ve done the equivalent. You do not make it to colonel until you’ve done it. You don’t get into the flag ranks if you haven’t been to one of the war colleges. You’ve got to take that year and do it.

We drifted away from that. Powell tried to re-establish it with some success. But when I was the head of CDA in 2008, the State Department had 50 slots at the war colleges. We provided professors, senior – usually ambassadors – and they give us 50 student slots; we don’t pay for them. It’s expensive by the way to go to these places. Usually the top 50 O1s would go. Now, people bid on it and the director-general sends out notes saying we want you to consider it. But frequently that O1 officer is looking at being DCM in Kigali or Yemen and doesn’t want to give that opportunity up; if he takes the year at the war college he’ll miss it. He wants to be DCM; he wants to be political counselor. Then we have the pull factor; we need people in Kigali and Iraq and Afghanistan. We frequently send people to the war colleges and then halfway through we yank them out because we needed them somewhere, which I think is even worse a mistake.

We just didn’t have what some people call “the float.” Congress hated it – for some reason, the military could call it the float, but we couldn’t at the State Department. That was basically the cohort of officers who didn’t have an assignment and who were expected to be in training, so there were enough officers so that we could staff all of our missions and still have the 150 or so available for training, whether at the university level... The military sends officers off to get doctorates. David Petraeus got his doctorate while he was in the military. Ann Rondeau, an officer I know well, a Navy admiral, got her doctorate while in the military. They sent Petraeus for a year to Yale. We have a small program, we send a handful of people for one year to Princeton or Stanford, another place, Tufts maybe, to Fletcher. But it’s a handful of officers. And as you know,

it's not considered career-enhancing to take a year off and go study. Whether it's a war college, or one of these others. It's considered a blank space in that volume of EERs (employee evaluation report) when your personnel file is put before the promotion boards every year. I think it's wrong; I tell young officers now, "When you make O1, put at the top of the list the war colleges. You will thank me. You will never regret it, and in the long run it will help you in your career." I believe that.

Q: I'm with you.

KRAJESKI: But there we are. It was a wonderful year. I enjoyed it. Like many Foreign Service officers, we visit 50 countries during our career; we live in six or seven or eight of them. We travel around the world. We don't always travel around the United States. As a college kid I had gone across on a motorcycle, and once again in a car. But I'd never been to Minneapolis; we spent four days in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Rochester. We took these 50 students to the International Center for the Victims of Torture which is in Rochester, Minnesota. They take people who have been severely abused by their governments and in other circumstances from around the world, and they spend a year at the center undergoing therapy. And they learn from them as well. I took them [the NDU foreign officers] there; Abu Ghraib had already broken. The Obama administration had just come in and they're taking a look at enhanced interrogation and what it means – water-boarding, other methods of interrogation that we used in Iraq and Afghanistan, and at Guantanamo. I had this group of officers, some from places like Uganda or Central African Republic or Lebanon, places where what we would call torture was quite common. Different attitudes. We sat them down in a room – not with torture victims, the center said "We're not going to put the victims with these guys" – but with the teachers, the counselors, and the head of it, and had an amazing discussion.

In Texas, we started off at the Johnson Space Center and got to watch a simulated shuttle takeoff, then worked with the International Space Station; they were doing a spacewalk that day, and we could see it live. Then we took a tour of their exhibits, all the mock-ups of the rockets they were building. So we got to be astronauts for the day. The next day we went to Galveston, and went to an off-shore oil platform and learned all about the oil business, and got to be oilmen for the day.

The next day we went to Dallas and Lockheed-Martin where they'd been building the infamous F-35s. Lockheed rolled out the red carpet for this group; here you've got 40-50 foreign officers, many of whom are going to have senior positions in their militaries in the coming years... Lockheed didn't get where they are by being stupid; they really took care of these guys. We got to fly in the F-35 simulators, watched landings and take-offs, interviewed the pilots – because they're trying to sell the damned F-35s. I don't know how much they cost now, somewhere in the stratosphere, the most expensive plane ever built I believe. So we got to be pilots for the day.

Then the fourth day, the most fun of all, we skipped over to Fort Worth. We timed this to coincide with the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, which is one of the oldest stock shows in the United States. We went to the first day of the rodeo, the "real" rodeo, when

the ranches competed. It's hard to call it "amateur" because these guys are the real cowboys, doing the roping and tying and bronco-riding. The third and fourth days the professional rodeo came in. God, they loved it. These officers were just like kids in heaven, to be at the stock show and rodeo. They'd all buy the ten-gallon hats. They all came out with Stetsons and big belt buckles. Some of the guys would buy the boots which were like \$1500 for some of these. They were just stricken.

So you can imagine how many friends we made with the program. It was fun for me. I got to see parts of America I had never been to.

Q: Did you see or have any problems with racial tensions?

KRAJESKI: Yes. What we tried to do, and we really worked hard at this, is when we brought these guys to Memphis, Minneapolis, Seattle, Boston, New York, Miami, Mobile, Alabama, Houston in Texas, Honolulu. When we brought them to each of these places, we said, "We're not going to give you any kind of briefings. We're not here to try to sell anything to you at all. You will have an opportunity to talk to a wide range of people, in government, at universities, schools, courts."

We went to simulated trials in Memphis, it was really cool. Hilarious; very informative, too. In Memphis at the Martin Luther King museum, we had a debate between two senior judges in the Tennessee Superior Court. One was an 80-year-old white man who had grown up just south of Memphis through the '50s and '60s and the *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act and integration, and a black judge who had grown up around Memphis. He was in his 60s or 70s and he remembered very vividly the '50s, '60s, '70s. The two storylines as they talked about their lives, growing up, were so divergent. They were not friends; they knew each other quite well and they had done this before, so some of it was a bit of a performance. But the divergence in their attitudes and their core observations of integration were so dramatically different.

You heard so many things, growing up outside of that – I grew up in New England, and of course these guys came from all over the world – but they were fairly intelligent men and women. They knew about racial inequality in the United States and some of these struggles. They knew who Martin Luther King was. For them, it was fascinating. For example, we went on this jug fishing and then went to the barbecue. Memphis barbecue, which is different – it's always pork. They learned all this, all with the white community. Then we went into Memphis where we had the black community. The questions that they asked about, "Where are we today?" and the difference in the answers they got for me was eye-opening. For them I think it was really educational.

We visited a maximum security prison and had judges, jailors, and police talk to them. We would go to companies. We went to FedEx, which is also in Memphis, and showed them how American businesses work. I don't know if you know the history of FedEx, started by a former Marine who loved to fly and he had been trying to get a package to a colleague or somebody, and couldn't believe that they couldn't get that package there overnight. It would take five days. So he started the business in Memphis with a couple

of planes. He chose Memphis because it was centrally located and because it was a good airport. They basically take it over at midnight every night. At midnight, we went out to watch the FedEx planes coming in from all over the United States to Memphis. See the lights stacked up, the planes landing every five minutes, “boom boom boom.” This incredible army of people, mostly part-timers, going out, unloading the planes, putting it on trucks, bringing them into these enormous warehouses where the conveyer belts were zipping around every which way, sorting packages. It’s called the “Great Sort.” By two A.M. it’s all sorted, packed into the same planes, go off in different directions, boom! By three A.M., everybody’s going home. We wanted to show them a lot about the U.S. and I think they got a better sense.

We had no real problems within the group racially. There was a natural tendency that the Africans hung out with one another, the Arabs hung out with one another. The Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Poles would all hang out together – the Slavs. It was interesting. We didn’t push back against that, though there was a lot of cross-pollination.

Q: You mentioned pork barbecue. How’d you deal with that?

KRAJESKI: We would just tell the Muslims, “Hey, it’s pork.” They were cool. I don’t know how long we’d been going to Memphis for the pork barbecue, but the people there were very sensitive to it, understood, made sure there was beef and other things to eat as well, marked very clearly, “This is pork.” I found that among even the Saudis who are probably the strictest, a shrug of the shoulders; that’s fine.

We did have problems with women. Some of these guys came from places where attitudes towards women were quite different. The worst incident we had was the Afghan, who I didn’t want in the program; he was forced in because we had to have an Afghan in the program. His English wasn’t very good. He was an older man; we tried to get younger people, in their late 30s or early 40s who are going to make that jump. He was in his 50s at least. He was a general, a one-star. We had to take him. He struggled in his studies.

But worse is he just didn’t know how to drink. Some of these guys are out of their country, yeah they’re Muslims at home, but they ain’t when they travel. For us, it’s personal, that’s fine. He really didn’t know how to behave in public. We went to Honolulu – and I didn’t go on this trip, my colleague who was the vice-chair of ICAF went, a former ambassador, a black woman. She called me during the trip and said, “We’ve got a problem.” On the elevator in the hotel, this woman dressed in almost nothing, coming from the beach, walked into the elevator with the general, and he decided that was a proposition; clearly, she was half-naked in front of him! And he grabbed her and wrestled with her. She screamed, and you can only imagine. He was arrested. My attitude was, “Screw him. He’s arrested, he’s in jail; that’s it.” The woman did not want to press charges. The police were looking at the program. The answer was, “We’ll send him home.” He was furious. “You’ve humiliated me, shown me no respect!” Because we threw him out of the program, sent him home.

That was the most egregious. We had other cases where we would tell guys, “You have to behave.” Three days in Las Vegas. (sigh) We had no troubles. We got everybody onto the bus, but it was touch and go for a while!

Q: What were their families doing?

KRAJESKI: The families could come with them on some trips. We had housing for them, apartments, nice places mostly in Alexandria and Southeast (Washington, DC), nearby. Their kids would go to public schools. The apartments were paid for out of the IMET program, but also there was the National Defense University Foundation. This was made up of former generals and admirals and their families, and a lot of business people around the country who loved this program. I’ve told you already how popular it was, wherever we went. They donated very generously to the foundation, which enabled us to bring families on trips, to do special scholarships, to help the families in particular. Some of them came from countries that were really quite poor; they were getting stipends from their countries which were not enough to support the family.

We had one strict rule; if your wife got pregnant or was pregnant, she was not going to deliver the child in the United States. She was going to go back home. Every year, we had one or two students who didn’t want to go back, who wanted to stay. It was always one of the most difficult things to deal with. You couldn’t force people to leave the United States. But it was bad for the program. Bad for the country; often the governments were very unhappy that Jagdish decided to stay in the U.S. instead of going back to Indonesia. Then his wife was pregnant delivering babies. We had a couple of cases I was dealing with from years previous.

The families were usually happy. Our military is magnificent with military families. A huge part of what the military does is take care of the family while the soldier or sailor or airman is out there fighting in a war. General Austin lived on the NDU compound. Have you ever been to Fort McNair? They have the row-houses. One of them used to go to the State Department vice president for international affairs, but two officers before me didn’t want it, so we gave it up. We wanted to get it back. I didn’t want to live in it frankly because we had to pay for it. The military got subsidized; we had to pay \$2500 a month rent. I had a house in Falls Church; I didn’t want to live there.

But General Austin lived on the compound. He was the commander of ground forces in Iraq, then he went to Central Command. His wife took on the families, along with a lot of other military spouses (mostly wives). So the families got a lot. There were three or four trips – New York, Honolulu, Las Vegas – where spouses were allowed to come. They had to pay their own way and fly commercially (we flew military). But they could stay in the hotel room with their spouse. My wife came on one, to Honolulu. We had a wonderful time. We went to Pearl Harbor. Pacific Command, PACOM. We traveled around Honolulu. Las Vegas, we went to where they fly the drones, from the airbase near Las Vegas. That’s also where the Air Force Thunderbirds, the ceremonial flyers, went to see them. Always a big military component of the trips.

We talked longer than I thought on NDU.

Q: This is a point of our program. People should understand in later years what we were doing at the time. I think it's also one of our most effective instruments, as is the visitor's program at the State Department. The United States sells itself.

KRAJESKI: How many students have come here from around the world, spent four years at school? How many people have participated in some of these official programs? Tens of thousands. It is rare – I can count on one hand the number of people who did that who had a negative opinion of the United States. They may not agree with our policies. They may not think the United States is “the greatest country on Earth” – which I think is a sensible position to take. But they had a great respect for the American people. They had a much deeper knowledge of who we are as a country and why we did the things we did. They were good interlocutors. When you walked into that office, whether it was business or government, you knew you had somebody you could talk to; hugely invaluable. The ambassadorial conferences that Secretary Clinton began, bringing every ambassador from around the world to Washington for three days, then a two-day regional conference – there are arguments pro and con for the usefulness, and the bang for your buck because it's expensive to bring everybody in. I found it very valuable, both in Yemen and Bahrain (Kerry continued this). When we would sit down with the secretary or in small groups, and the question would be, “If you could get more money today, how would you spend it?” I can't tell you how many of us said, “We'd spend it on these exchanges.”

I'd spend it on getting Yemeni students to study in the United States, to get Yemeni business and representatives, to expand the visitor exchange program. We had imams out of Yemen who were radical, conservative, anti-American, and we would put them into one of these programs. They would come back, still pretty conservative and a bit radical – but they were no longer anti-American. They were more specific in their opposition to our policies than before they went. I sat with one of these imams with the minister of justice in Yemen, after his trip. I always tried to meet them; sometimes I'd invite them to the house. Anybody who'd been to the U.S. – students, people on business. I wanted to talk to them about their experience in the United States. Almost always positive.

This imam said, “I'm still 100% opposed to the invasion of Iraq. I still think what you're doing in the Muslim world is wrong. But I have a much deeper appreciation of the United States, and I no longer ‘hate’ you. When we arrived, we went to a mosque. I didn't know you had mosques! I didn't believe your propaganda that you had mosques. I sat down with the leaders of the Muslim communities in the United States and had long discussions with them about being a Muslim in the U.S.” This is in the days before Donald Trump. But the message that we as the State Department or U.S. government had been trying to deliver to the Muslim world, which is “We have a Muslim community who are Americans and who participate in American life at the same level as do other religious communities. We are a very religious country. We have great respect for the religions of the world.” They don't believe us when we tell them that. They don't. You go out to a small town in Yemen and make that pitch and they'll chuckle. They'll be polite, but they won't believe you. But this guy, who spent two weeks in the United States in our IVP,

International Visitor Program – they’ll believe him when he comes back. He says, “Yeah, there are lots of Muslims in the United States. They go to the grocery stores and can wear their veils if they want.” The community would talk about how hard it is, how they’re worried about their children, etc. It’s a hugely advantageous program for us, Stu.

Q: One can’t help but wonder what the long-term impact is going to be on China of the thousands of Chinese who’ve gone to the United States for education and then gone back.

KRAJESKI: I’ve talked about this before. King Abdullah, Saudi Arabia, a few years ago, 2006, somewhere around there, doubled down on the program of support for Saudis studying in the U.S. and Europe. The numbers as I am told today are reaching 50,000 Saudi students in the United States, men and women. Indeed, the majority now are women in the United States, studying. Imagine the impact of those people on the economy and society [of Saudi Arabia]. I think it’ll be positive. I do know there are skeptics who say, “No, Saudi society will not be dramatically changed.” I don’t think it’ll be dramatically changed, but it will be incrementally and gradually changed, particularly as these women come back and frankly expect a greater say in how their country is run, a greater degree of participation, whether that’s driving a car or running a business or being in government. Women can now vote in local elections, can be candidates. Local elections don’t mean very much in Saudi Arabia yet, but they’re going to.

Q: We mentioned this before. Women are actually behind the scenes already major power.

KRAJESKI: They’ve always been potent behind the scenes. They’re coming out from behind that veil if you will. There’s an interesting interview over the weekend on NPR (National Public Radio), a program in which they give people these recording devices and say, “We want you to periodically talk about your day,” and then they edit it into a piece for this NPR program. The one over the weekend was a Saudi woman with excellent, American-accented English, talking – it took place over two or three years then was edited it into this series. It’s interesting because while she very much – studied biology, got her degree, got to work in a lab, was talking about the difficulties of being the only woman in the lab. Talked a lot about the veil. Then there was the focus on who she was going to marry; she ended up marrying the guy her parents chose for her. Interesting aspect to this and something we don’t fully understand.

Q: We don’t understand this. Probably a failure/success rate better than random.

KRAJESKI: It’s hard sometimes to measure failure in a Saudi marriage, because divorce is much more difficult, even though Muslims will claim, “No, divorce is very easy.” If you’re a woman, divorce is difficult. Particularly knowing that after you’re divorced, your position in society is very precarious. Maybe your family will take you back. If you’re reasonably well off and well-educated you’re better off always, but if you’re middle class or lower-middle, your family’s not going to take you back. So it’s hard. When I was in India I was always surprised as a consular officer in south India, doing these immigrant visas for fiancés, for new brides, and it would be this guy from Santa

Barbara, studying surgery. As American as I am; he's been in the States for most of his life. And he's back and his parents have arranged this marriage, and he says, "I trust them to choose the right woman for me."

Getting off on a tangent here. Your point is right. We are constantly trying in our overseas programs to convince people of our motives, which we believe to be basically pure and generous and right. Persuade them of the rightness of our policies. We're not doing a particularly good job of it, partly because it's hard to do. Much easier when you put a whole bunch of Americans in the same room as a whole bunch of Yemenis or Saudis or Russians and let them study and work together – much more effective.

Q: Did you get any Russians at NDU?

KRAJESKI: Yeah. There was a break. They'd gotten some in the early days of the break-up of the Soviet Union in the '90s, early 2000s. We had Ukrainians – they were a problem. We had the Poles and Czechs, all the Slavs. Rumanians. We did not have Russians the two years I was there. We kept trying to get them; we wanted them. But Putin is coming in and there was the beginning of ... I'm sure we don't have Russians today. Would like to have them for many reasons, but one of them is we really love their big hats. Ukrainian, Russian military – enormous hats! Love their hats, their 'covers' as they said. There would be a couple of occasions during the year when everybody was dressed in their finest military duds. Great occasion. The women would come dressed to the hilt as well. It was always a great scene.

Q: Did you come away with any impression about differences between Army, Navy, and Air Force?

KRAJESKI: I did not. I'll ratchet back to the beginning. When I was coming out of Iraq and talking to Harry Thomas, the director-general; I had just worked for Harry before I went to Iraq. I was talking about my next job; NDU is often considered a retirement post. I said, "I'm not ready to retire. I'd like to do something else. I'd like a chief of mission job." I didn't get the chief of mission job I was put up for, Tunisia. So he offered me NDU. He said "You have a choice at NDU. You can either be one of the professors at the war college or ICAF, or you can be the vice president." I still go back and forth over whether I made the right decision. The guys on the faculty had a great time. That was actually teaching the course with the faculty. They have a mix of faculty. Some of the best academics in the world, and some of the most experienced military, Foreign Service officers teaching the seminars. The seminars are 14 people; usually two foreign officers, and then a mix of Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force, Navy, and Army.

I've already talked about the purple stuff and how we're all in this together. I would often talk to my colleagues about this question. What is the difference in attitude [among the services], and did you have trouble trying to reach a consensus of opinion particularly when looking at actual planning? We talked a lot about strategies, a lot about policy. Then you talked a lot also about the implementation of operations, about logistics, about tactics. You start off these studies with Sun Tzu and The Art of War. I'd never read it

before. Then you move to Clausewitz and his On War. Read all of Clausewitz, which if you're a non-English speaker, it's tough. For an English speaker, it's a thick volume.

You start with that. Trying to get these guys to think beyond how you run an Air Force squadron, or how you command a tank platoon or how you drive a ship. Right now, we're going to get you thinking. Then you go immediately into contemporary issues, whether it's policies on Iraq or Afghanistan. Each of the students is supposed to focus on a region – Latin America, Russia, China, Middle East, Africa. At the end of the year you take a three week trip to that region as a group. You're supposed to look at a region outside of what you're familiar with. If you've spent your Foreign Service or military career in the Middle East, take this year and do Latin America.

I regret that I didn't go into one of those seminars. I think I'd have a better answer for you about the different points of view from the different services. You heard a lot – I visited a lot of seminars, but it was usually a one-off. I'd go in and give a lecture on Yemen, then we'd talk about Yemen. What was the U.S. role in Yemen, what are we going to do about Yemen? This is 2010-11, including after the Arab Spring as Yemen and Syria and Libya are starting to roil. I met a lot of the students and we had a lot of discussions among the faculty about this issue; NDU's job was to bring all this together. You'd hear the Army guys say, "You're not going to bomb your way to victory here." We're hearing this today about ISIS. "Eventually, you've got to put people on the ground and take territory, and it's only the Marines and the Army that really does that. Marines may go in first, but we go in right after and we hold ground."

Still very much part of the Army's military philosophy. The Air Force continues to believe that sophisticated air weapons are game-changers, whether they are jets or missiles or now drones. Smart bombs that can hit precisely right between Stu's eyes, and "Bam," Tom's not hurt and Stu's disappeared. Or the Marines who believe, "Without us riding aboard those MEUs" (Marine Expeditionary Unit) – these amazing ships, the *Tarawa* and *Peleliu*, all named after Marine battles, with Marine battalions on board and all of their equipment. Everything they need to be a first wave and be the first ones. They're the guys by the way who evacuate embassies like Mogadishu in the '90s.

Q: Also Liberia.

KRAJESKI: In Yemen, they would often ask me, "We've got the MEU up in the Gulf. If you think things are getting rough down here, we'll slide it down." They always need exercise; "We'll conduct an exercise off of Yemen and review how the hell we get you out of this embassy." When they did evacuate the embassy a couple of years ago, part of the reason they did it is because if the embassy is under threat, "We can't get you out." Because the embassy is at 6000 feet, and helicopters burn a lot of fuel at 6000 feet. So if you're bringing a helicopter from sea level from the MEU up to the embassy, you're going to have to refuel before bringing it back to the ship. Not enough fuel, so you have to hold the airport. The airport was being held by the Houthis...

Every embassy does this, we all have our Emergency Action Plans, EAPs, that you review every month and constantly update. So the Marines have their role, and the Air Force and the Navy. I think it's part of that dynamic. There's a healthy competition. One thing we do at NDU by the way is try to break the competition, not between Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, but we break it between ICAF and the National War College and the Army War College. They have Jim Thorpe Days, they do sports. These guys – first of all, most of them are 35 to 45 years old; they still think they can do what they did when they were 25. So the injury rate goes way up. They finally banned the flag football, guys were killing each other. Softball, there'd be a lot of injuries. Soccer is where the foreign guys always came in. The College of International Security Affairs was 75% foreign. These were often by the way police officers and counter-terrorism guys; CISA would win the soccer competition hands down. No way you're going to beat Argentines and Italians at soccer. The Americans were hopeless. They were joking after these events; as vice president I was often presenting trophies to the winners. This one guy – they got beat something like 6-0. He looked at the foreign guys and looked at the soccer ball and said, "You can just pick it up with your hands and throw it, you know!"

Fun school, fun time. I've got Bahrain and the counter-terrorism job to do.

Q: Today is the 29th of June, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, still at NDU. You talked about life there. Did you find that the people coming through had a more conservative attitude towards foreign policy, or not? Did you notice a military cast to thinking?

KRAJESKI: It's an interesting question. It's a little under the radar, background noise as you're meeting interagency on a particular policy issue, the notion that State and the Foreign Service tend to lean to the left and be more liberal and more multilateral and more free-trade oriented, all of those "socialist" values – which I would say, now that I'm out of the Foreign Service, in general is so. And then the military tend to be more conservative, more defensive in their political views. But the military even more so than the Foreign Service – I'm talking about the officers here, the group of people I was working with at NDU at the three colleges; predominantly newly-minted colonels, lieutenant-colonels. On the international group, my program, a few one-stars.

Q: So people on the rise?

KRAJESKI: On their leadership tours. They really make an effort to depoliticize their policy considerations. When you're sitting in that room with 14 people, 10 of whom are American military officers from the various branches – usually in their mid-30s. They all have undergraduate degrees, often from the academies – Air Force Academy, Naval Academy. They're getting a graduate degree in international strategic studies at NDU. Then you have two American civilians, often a Foreign Service officer and then maybe somebody from FBI or CIA or Agriculture is there, at the equivalent civilian rank. Then two international, foreign officers, who can be from anywhere in the world. So you have a really interesting mix.

One of the first things you do when you sit with them all is say, “We can talk politics in this room. You can have a political point of view. When you’re trying to formulate both American policy – looking at strategy and policy around the world, and we’re looking at multilateral” – and we have our foreign students in the room to provide that multilateral or international perspective. “But you don’t have to be too careful.”

In general, the military are more conservative; they lean more to the Republican side of the American political landscape. They are wary of international involvement. The military are often the last people to agree that we should go to war. They’re very cautious about the use of the military, and this goes back in American history. If you remember Lincoln’s famous line about McClellan, his first commander of the Army of the Potomac? He was training and training and training, and they looked magnificent. Lincoln said, “If General McClellan’s not going to use this army, maybe he’ll lend it to me.” You find that the military are very conservative in the use of American military power overseas.

An exception on the international entanglement or engagements would be the Navy. The Navy has as part of its education, its culture, going out into the world and engaging. Indeed, as we old Foreign Service officers know, the two oldest American administrative institutions are the U.S. Navy and the U.S. State Department. We have been working together from the beginning of our country. Naval officers are often brilliant diplomats, and they’re able to engage wherever they are. Often they take their ship into Naples or Singapore or Buenos Aires and they’re out there representing the United States.

I thought we had great discussions in that [seminar] room. You really tried to strip it back. You’re a lieutenant commander; you command an F-16 squadron. You’re an FSO 01 – forget about all of that. Let’s get together and look at a particular set of issues and see if we can’t develop a strategy for the United States to confront or deal with that.

Q: How did you find the foreign representatives?

KRAJESKI: A mixed bag as students. First, I spent 25 years in the Middle East, so I immediately glommed onto the Arab speakers so I could continue to work on my Arabic. And because I just understood them and I know from my dealings with Arab culture that it really pleased them to know that the senior vice president of the university spoke Arabic and was “one of them.” We have them from Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Emirates, Yemen. As I said previously, the whole contingent, about 120 international students, came from Afghanistan to Zambia, A to Z. There were a few countries where we did not have students, China being the largest one; we were working very hard to get Chinese students. One of the reasons was we had Taiwanese officers, from the Republic of China. The Chinese would not participate so long as we did that. We didn’t have any Russians; we used to have Russians in Yeltsin’s days, but not since Putin. No North Koreans of course. We had Vietnamese. They’re a real mixed bag. Of the Asians, the Singaporeans, the Malaysians, the Vietnamese were just incredibly impressive officers.

Almost all men. We were seeing a few more women coming in, mostly from the Scandinavian countries, Europe, but also Jordan sent a very impressive woman who happened to be the sister of the king which made us all a little leery.

That's the other part of this. Sometimes these positions, which are a one year scholarship to study in Washington, DC, at what I discovered was one of the best universities I've ever worked with... You can take your family, so your family lives with you. It's a real plum for an international officer. Plus, it's a [signal] that we're putting a particular flag on you. Many of the graduates do go on to become chief of defense, chief of the army, minister of defense in their countries. It's over at Fort McNair, if you know where it is. They have a great Marine band performance there every Friday night throughout the summer. Really spectacular. It's free. Sometimes it's hard to get in. The campus is almost right next to the baseball stadium. On the Green Line. Anyway, it's well worth it. The main building has what we call the "International Hall of Fame" in it; it's pictures of those graduates who have gone on to be ministers of defense, prime ministers, [etc.].

A small percentage of the students are favorites or cronies, sons of important wealthy people. We have often resisted taking them. For example, we had an Afghan that was clearly not qualified when I was there. A much older man – we didn't want old guys, we wanted folks who had another 10 or 15 years of government service ahead of them. A huge value of this program are the friends that we make, the network built during that year between and among American military officers and their international colleagues. There are a number of examples where those relationships, five and 10 years on, prevented conflict. I'm not exaggerating. The Pakistanis and Indians – first, it was interesting how they would all get together, Indians would go to the Pakistanis because they share a culture, language – Hindi and Urdu are very close. Bosnians and Serbs and Croats would all sit and have lunch together; again, common language, common culture. But also an opportunity to take senior officers from those countries and sit them down together to talk about hard issues. So rather than take out the knife and cut your throat, let's just have an argument. It was fascinating to watch.

The Afghan by the way was a disaster; they made us take him. Came all the way from the secretary of Defense. Admiral Mullin called Ann Rondeau to say, "You will take this guy." Ann was adamant; she's a three-star, Mullin's a four-star. At a certain point, it's hard for three-stars to say "No" to four-stars, and Mullin said "The president of the United States wants an Afghan in this program. You'll take him." It was a disaster. We had to throw him out. I think I mentioned this the last time, had to throw him out for groping a woman in an elevator in Hawaii. He wasn't an awful person, but he was so out of his depth both intellectually and in the United States of America. Cultures do clash. The military spouses (General Austin's wife led the program while I was there), they do a lot of work with families, trying to acclimate them to the United States.

Q: As we all know, the United States is extremely seductive to people who come here. Not everyone, but...

KRAJESKI: We had some students who didn't leave. At the end of their day, they didn't want to go back to country X. Iraq was a big problem; we lost a couple of Iraqi officers, which really made the [U.S.] ambassador [to Iraq] angry. They refused to go; they applied for asylum. Wouldn't go.

Q: Did any of the courses or sessions discuss Islam and the motivations...?

KRAJESKI: There are no safe zones from dissenting or outrageous opinions at NDU. Everything was discussed. Islam was a discussion that I participated in many times. Again, a lot of the American military officers had led relatively – this is odd to say for a military guy who may have led a fighting unit in Iraq – sheltered lives. That is, their home life, their education, and their military career were very much within boxes. They didn't get outside of that very much. They were focused on their own career, on the military, on their family. What NDU needed to do with these guys who were supposedly the best of the military officers was break them out of that box. To do that, you had to say to him or her (mostly 'hims', though there were a lot of women officers as well on the American side), "We're going to force you out." The way to force them out is, "Say anything you want to say. Don't worry. You're not going to offend anybody in this room." We didn't have transcripts of the discussions.

So the conversations could get very tense. I was called in by a professor; "My Israeli student is about to strangle this guy from Texas who keeps claiming that Jesus was not a Jew." This is actually a discussion they had. The Israeli being Jewish – and most Israelis, at least not in the military, aren't particularly religious people. He laughed at the captain from Texas who said, "You're not going to call our savior a Jew."

Oh, man, I'm not going to get into this conversation! I sat down with the Israeli first and said, "Don't bait him." I know Israelis; they're really good at provoking. If you've ever argued with an Israeli, you've lost. They love to argue. I'm generalizing of course, mostly talking about diplomats and military officers, Israelis I met working overseas. The Texan was deeply religious. I'm not sure which of the Christian sects; probably Baptist or evangelical.

(To the Israeli): "You have mocked one of his core beliefs. He's wrong, but let's let other Christians talk to him. Let's study the history." One of the books we read – I didn't teach, I came in and lectured around – is Karen Armstrong's A History of God, and her excellent book on Jerusalem, Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths. Karen Armstrong is a Catholic nun who left the church and became an atheist, and is the preeminent (in my view) historian of religion in the world. She'll offend you if you're religious. She'll offend you if you're not religious, but she is really excellent... So we've gone through the history of Jerusalem. This is an issue that can really get people excited, especially the Arabs. We talk about Jerusalem and about Israel, and we often have an Israeli officer in the room when we're in these discussions. So you really try to open people up. Discussions can be pretty wild.

We try. At the end of each session, sometimes every week, we have what are really intense happy hours. We do a lot of sports. Kind of like a camp. So much sports; the health unit is huge because they're constantly treating broken legs and arms. Again these are 35 year old people who think they're 20 so they're out there playing baseball and soccer. The international team used to kill us in soccer. So you're doing a lot of that, just trying to break it [the barriers] down.

Q: On other issues – did you bring up women in the military?

KRAJESKI: Always. It's interesting how when you talk to a Saudi officer, the last officer you would expect to have anything resembling a liberal or moderate view regarding women in the military. I remember one discussion with a Saudi, and he said "It's coming to Saudi Arabia. We move slowly. We do not like to be criticized, scrutinized, to be told how we will do this. But it is coming." This is [during] King Abdullah's days; Abdullah was actively working within the family to expand the roles of women in Saudi Arabia. I think I mentioned, one way he did it was by sending about 20,000 Saudi women to study in Europe and the United States on full undergraduate scholarships. A lot of them had to take their brothers with them because the families wouldn't let the girls go alone. So sometimes we counted double; the brother was not usually the best student. Another way was having both police and military units that were women. They were segregated, separate units; usually did things like civil affairs and administration. They weren't anything resembling or close to combat or involvement with weapons. Although they were [trained in weapons] on their civil affairs [teams], and [they] had some military police women. There were always women military police. They were bringing them in.

We would have women officers from places like Denmark and Norway. I mentioned Jordan. Abdullah's sister, the name escapes me [Princess Aisha bint Hussein]; she became defense attaché at the Jordanian embassy after her studies. The king came for the graduation by the way. Refused to sit in a special place; he wanted to sit with all the other proud family members. So there was a lot of discussion.

The issue of women in combat roles was often a point of contention within these seminars. We tried to say we're not just going to talk about military. Get away from who does or doesn't carry a gun and see the larger picture. What are we going to do in the Middle East? What should our relationship with China and the South China Sea be in the next 10 years. How do we confront China? Not, does a woman carry a rifle in a trench. Although these guys will be in a position of leadership... It was very much a discussion.

We had women Marines. On this particular issue, the Marines are the vanguard, as they are lots of times. They're out there first, in front. They were very opinionated on it. Almost every man in the room said "No." The woman Marine would say, just like my Saudi friend, "It's coming. There will be women who qualify physically, mentally, emotionally, tactically they will qualify to lead troops in battle, to be in battle. You guys are going to have to accommodate it." It's the same argument that the Navy had 15 years before about women on ships, then women in submarines. You could sit down with a naval officer in the 1990s and he'd say, "No way can you have women on ships."

Discipline will break down.” Now I’ve been on ships where some [women] don’t even have their own quarters. Sailors are professional. Women do every job on board a naval carrier. Except command one; have not yet had a woman commander of a carrier. I think that’s coming really soon. You have to work your way up through the ranks and usually have to be a fighter pilot, an F-18 pilot to get to the top of the carrier ranks. Women have driven ships and been captains of other vessels. It’s coming. Now we see, a couple of women just qualified for the Rangers.

Q: What about the other major issue, of gays?

KRAJESKI: It was “don’t ask, don’t tell” when I was there. “Don’t ask, don’t tell” was breaking down. I’m not sure when they formally changed military policy concerning homosexuality in the ranks. It was very much “don’t ask, don’t tell” at NDU. That was one subject you didn’t talk about very much, because the command was “don’t ask, don’t tell” so don’t talk about it. It was a policy bound to break sooner or later. I think one thing that did it were the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where gay and lesbian soldiers performed heroically. And their buddies saw it. That’s what matters to a military guy. Is the guy next to you, the guy in the village with you knocking down doors, whatever you’re doing – that’s what matters. Not what generals say, not what the policy is on “don’t ask, don’t tell.” If that guy saves my life, or gives his life to save the unit – they don’t care a whit about his or her sexual orientation. Doesn’t matter.

Q: Did you see much divergence between American foreign or domestic policy at NDU, the military, and the public?

KRAJESKI: On the international side – almost all the seminars focused on American policy, American military history, American political history. Looking at the issues of the day, whether global like global warming, or specific regional issues like the South China Sea or Venezuela or the Middle East, it was from an American perspective. The professors are almost all Americans. The non-academic faculty are all former ambassadors, former military officers. Of course, most students are American too.

But we tried to – “Let’s us in the seminar now shift our perception and look at it the way an Israeli would look at it. Let’s look at Saudi Arabian foreign policy, from a Saudi perspective,” and the Saudi would give a presentation on Saudi policy towards Israel.

I was not there during an American presidential election; I’m sure this year on campus... Any presidential year... I’ve been overseas mostly for American presidential elections. It was fascinating to be in Yemen in 2004. I was in the United Arab Emirates when George W. Bush was elected in 2000. Embassies have these enormous receptions. You time them for when the polls are closing in the United States; if you have the technology (and we did in 2000), you have the big screens with Wolf Blitzer on one, and Fox on another. The results come in and you fill the hotel ballroom with people who are fascinated by American elections and you follow it real time. We have straw ballots – you talk about political proclivities among people.

I was in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan on election night 2008. Obama against McCain. We had a straw poll among the Kurds, probably 500 people in the room. Before the results started coming in, we had everybody mark a ballot; McCain or Obama. It came well in for McCain; 90%. If Kurds could have chosen, McCain would have won the election. It was because he was a military guy; Kurds love the American military and McCain was a military hero. They didn't care about Palin; what they knew of her didn't matter to them, it was all about McCain.

I was doing this in 2000 and we were watching: Florida goes for Gore, Florida goes for Bush, Florida goes for Gore, Florida's undecided. It all starts hanging up. There'll be a recount for Florida... We've been there eight, nine hours, still a lot of people there. I'm going through my Arabic dictionary, trying to figure out how to say "electoral college." I had one of my young officers and told him, "Go find the damned constitution and tell me what the electoral college is and how this works." Then I had my translator working with me how I was going to explain in Arabic to the crowd what exactly was happening. Then we all just went home. At one point, about a week later – they were doing recounts. The election was unique in U.S. history, finally decided by the Supreme Court of the United States. There was something called "hanging chads;" because of the way Florida ballots were read, they were hole-punched and read by a reader. Some people didn't punch their holes all the way through. Try to say "hanging chad" in Arabic. They thought I was hanging a guy named Chad. The senior advisor of the crown prince of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, came to see me and said, "So when does the military step in to stop this?" That was a serious question. He said, "How long can you let this go on?" An indecisive election. He said, "It's going to lead to chaos. When will the military step in and decide?" I said, "Never," and he did not believe me. We had a long discussion about the usefulness of the American military! I was absolutely certain the military would not step in.

That's a digression, I'm sorry. But these are the sorts of things you discuss at NDU all the time. I loved my two years there. I could step away from embassies and the State Department and meetings and all the crap that goes with it and have fun. It was great fun to do that. The military are a great group of people. I also got to travel; I think I already mentioned this, I got to travel all over the United States with the international crowd. Go to places like Minneapolis and Rochester, Minnesota. To Honolulu and Las Vegas; Las Vegas, what a disaster that was. Take 50 foreign military officers, all but one [of them] men, and go to Las Vegas...

Q: What happens there, stays there?

KRAJESKI: I think that's all I'll say. We all escaped relatively sober. No-one was arrested. We did discover – I gave them a task to do; to find the best Elvis impersonator. Have you been to Vegas? Right on the Strip, there are usually six or seven people impersonating Elvis Presley. It's very popular. The best one was a very small guy, and he was unbelievably good. Just like him! He was a little guy. Had a wig on; he was doing Fat Elvis.

Q: I went once when I was in Dhahran on a picnic. Had a Persian rug, we were sitting under a palm tree, and the emir or whoever he was had his favorite Elvis records. This is before he was the King...

KRAJESKI: An interesting part of the world. I would love to go back there – in the narrative, not for real; I'm staying in Falls Church.

Q: Did you find the State Department intruded at all or were you let alone?

KRAJESKI: I was let alone too much. I constantly tried to engage State. The military is engaged with NDU every day. Every four-star, chief of army staff, Joint Staff – Mullin was over there a lot. The military are constantly sending their most [senior] people to NDU to lecture, to attend functions. It was really hard to get State people over to do that. The director-general of the Foreign Service at the time was Nancy Powell, who's a good friend of mine, is a de facto member of the board at NDU. We have a formal agreement with NDU which gives us 50 student slots in exchange for providing 12 professors, former ambassadors mostly, to teach courses. So she – I tried to get her over a couple of times. I tried to [establish] a [better] relationship with this institution, the Foreign Service Institute, because a lot of what we did at NDU we also do here at FSI with State Department mostly, sometimes interagency. Both schools wanted more interagency mix, they wanted more military here at FSI, they wanted more civilians at NDU. I must have gone back and forth a dozen times, trying to increase that cross-fertilization, because I think it's really valuable. It was hard, mostly because State is too small. State is busy, constantly. There's not a person over there who doesn't work 10 hours a day and think they should work 12, who doesn't believe they're not the most important person in the United States government. I love the Foreign Service and think the State Department is a credible and important institution – but man, those people work! They don't have time.

We did a lot of games at NDU, tabletop exercises. We'd try to bring in the most senior people we could from the U.S. government and then set a crisis in front of them. An invasion of Lebanon; a collapse of Iraq; assassination of King Abdullah in Saudi Arabia. The people who write these games are brilliant. They try to be as accurate as they can. They do fake newscasts, so you see the guy on 'GNN' announcing the assassination of King Abdullah and the collapse of Saudi Arabia into chaos. Then you have around the table an assistant secretary of Defense, senior guys from the CIA, senior military officers, and then the audience of students. I would often participate in these. But from State, it was hard to get an office director to come over. Then he would cancel the day of the exercise because a meeting came up or his country was genuinely going into crisis and he was going to be called. There just aren't enough of us.

I went over to Bill Burns. We were writing at the time the first QDDR, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. The military does the QDR (Quadrennial Defense Review) and have for many years. Every four years the senior – from the secretary of Defense and secretary of State – they write a four-year scenario on where they think the United States is going to have to deploy its military assets in the case of the QDR, and its diplomatic and development assets in the QDDR. Where do we think the crises will be?

What do they think we'll have to do? Then the bottom line, what do we need to do it? How many Foreign Service officers? How many military officers? How many guns, planes, tanks, aid programs in disease prevention? It's the primary planning document that is supposed to be used as the main resource for the annual mission review plans that every embassy or military unit does.

Contrary to belief, we do plan things. We try to predict what we'll need, and then the secretary would take the QDDR to Congress. So the first one was being written, and Burns had asked me to focus on the role of embassies and ambassadors and diplomats overseas; to get their point of view on what's going to happen, where are we going to be needed, and how many of us are going to be needed? So I managed to get Bill Burns to NDU and I used this to talk to military guys. What do you think? Especially the last 10 years since the Iraq war, we've been working closely together on a lot of these issues. QDDR – they just put out the second one; first was 2012 and I think the second one just came out. It's an interesting document. I'm not convinced; I'm generally a guy out in the field running my embassy, that it's hugely useful to the day to day, month by month, even year by year operations of the embassy. They're often politically loaded, because of course the first one is written by Secretary Clinton and her team; the second one is written by Secretary Kerry and his team. Their points of view, perspective, analysis – it's obviously politically weighted. It might be interesting should a Republican win the presidency, what a Republican QDDR might look like in four years. I'm not sure I want to see that.

So we did a lot of work with that [interagency cooperation at NDU]. I used to fight with the department over who comes [to NDU]. I'm trying to get the best Foreign Service officers. We have those 50 slots at the war colleges, and it was hard to fill them. Again because 01 – 01 is the equivalent of a newly-minted colonel, an FS-01. I was trying to get the 50 best 01s to come spend a year getting a degree and working with these military guys who are going to be really important to our success. So you need to establish that network and we need you here to put the diplomatic perspective into play. It was tough; 01s want to go be DCMs, to run the political section in Cairo. They want to take the next big job because now they're at that point of their career where, "If I do really well the next couple of years, I'll get promoted to Senior Foreign Service and become an ambassador... if the luck of the draw takes me there." So they look at a year off at college as being not good for promotion. That's too bad, because it's really good for promotion and for that officer and for our country. Should you ever join the Foreign Service and get to 01, go to one of the war colleges; you will not regret it.

Q: Interesting for the interns here. One of the things that's often forgotten by people who hate the military is how well educated our military is. Almost all of them by the time they reach colonel have a master's degree. A good number go on to get a Ph.D. When you're not fighting a war, you have to do something with senior officers. It's very good.

KRAJESKI: It's true. That's one of the reasons we have a hard time with this. The military plans a float; they have a certain percentage of officers who do not have assignments. When not at war, there are more of those – they start retiring people; it's

harder to get promoted and majors and colonels get retired instead of promoted. But they also plan to have enough officers so they can skim that group and send them off to get advanced degrees. Not just at the war colleges. David Petraeus had his doctorate from Princeton paid for. It's inconceivable they would have given me three years to get a doctorate. He did a lot of it while he was working another job. It wasn't running combat operations in Iraq; that's obviously a full-time job, not much time to go to school. I met a number of officers like him who had doctorates.

We don't do that. Every time the Foreign Service has planned a float, has planned to take in more officers specifically so we can have this cohort available for training, something has happened and we have lost that cohort. The first case was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of 20 new embassies around the world, and suddenly all those officers were being yanked out of FSI training, yanked out of the war colleges and told, "You're going to open the embassy in Turkmenistan." It's a really exciting thing for a Foreign Service officer; go to a new country and be the first diplomats in that country. I never got to do that. I went to Iraq, but I wasn't alone that's for sure. So the military plans for it. I think it's a really good thing. The only thing we plan for in the Foreign Service is language training. The only time that taking two years is considered good for your career is taking two years to study Arabic. Taking two years to get your Ph.D. in international relations from SAIS (School of Advanced International Affairs) or Fletcher – we just don't do that.

Q: Looking at various problems – was there a menace? For a long time the Cold War, the Soviet Union attacking Europe was the top of our list, was all we prepared for. But during your time – what about China? Was there a concentration?

KRAJESKI: Most of the officers, students, were 20 years younger than me. A lot of them had fuzzier recall of the Soviet Union than I did. I grew up in the '50s and '60s and even into the '70s. We had an opponent in the world, an enemy. It was a bipolar world, the United States against the Soviet Union. So much of our policy was determined by that relationship whether they were proxy wars or trade. So when the Soviet Union collapsed, it was as if there was a vacuum or hole in our policy. The immediate tendency, military and I think civilian, was to find another opponent. Find somebody! There are those who say, let's make this an ideological war. I did not myself, and I was a student of the Soviet Union, look at it as an ideological battle, democracy against communism. It was very much a battle of economics and military. A lot of cultural aspects to it, but it was mostly guns and butter. That's what it was about; it wasn't about communism or democracy. But there were many people who believed that and who used the ideology in order to promote their policies, both on the Soviet side and on the United States side. Ideologies are very useful in building power bases. So we looked around; Clash of Civilizations was written in the '90s, Samuel Huntington. It was the book; it was basically the United States against Islam. Our ideological foe was going to be this culture. Not necessarily the religion; he was very careful about avoiding it as a religion.

Then of course we had George H. W. Bush and the beginning of Clinton and this was suddenly the American world. It was a global affair. We didn't need to have an

ideological or any kind of opponent. We the United States were the most powerful country in the world – economically, militarily and we believed culturally and ideologically, too. And we are the United States of America, so our motives are pure. So we will rule the world! There were a lot of people who thought that was a great idea! Including George H. W. Bush. This is good because we're America! We'll do good! There was a lot of shock when people [foreigners] looked at that and said, "No bleeping way do we trust you to run this world." Especially Arabs, I think. The opposition to the notion that the United States would be the only power was immediate and fierce. It shook us a little bit. "You misunderstand; we're invading Iraq to establish democracy!" Not so much.

That wasn't a major component to the rise of what Donald Trump likes to call Islamic extremism, but it had more to do with mujahidin leaving Afghanistan and returning to Saudi Arabia and not really having a place in Saudi Arabia and deciding they would take one. It's all about power; it's never about religion. Religion is an instrument of power (this is me lecturing four students over here). I believe that. So there was a sense we need to build a counterweight. In the early '90s we weren't listening to this discussion or privy to it; this was a discussion in Beijing. "We're not going to stand by and let Bill Clinton rule the world. Who do these Americans think they are?" In the '90s you saw the rise of China.

Right now it's anything but a unipolar world. The United States is still the most powerful country economically and militarily. I would not argue culturally or ideologically. We have enormous wealth and power, but there are many other claimants now to influence, if not on par with the United States, certainly competitors. China; Russia we'll see.

I was a student of Russia for so long. You watch Russia as it goes through its periods of turmoil and you think something positive and good and different will come out of it and then it doesn't, and it goes back to an insular... I'm not sure what's happening with Russia right now. What I see is a Russia that is building a wall around itself again and will remain a power.

We used to think the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa – were the countries of the future. Brazil is going through a rough patch. My first tours were in Nepal and India, so I followed India throughout my career and find India to be one of the most fascinating places on Earth. The potential is enormous, but they also have huge negatives. Most especially, they've got 800 million of the poorest human beings on Earth scratching by. They've got 400 million middle class, entrepreneurs, wealthy people – that's bigger than the population of the United States. The markets are enormous. I would watch India. I think what Obama and this administration have done with India is exactly right; very forward-looking.

China obviously is a problem for everybody; we'll see where they go. If you are looking at international relations, look hard at China. It's going to be critically important to the future of the United States – economically, militarily. The better and stronger relationship we can establish with the Chinese – notice I'm not going to say "friendly" relationship,

but a strong and rational relationship with China will make a huge difference to you and your futures as Americans. Sorry, not going to be able to wall them off. (Sorry, I'm starting to talk like (Trump).) If I were a diplomat overseas now, you can bet every reception, cocktail party, dinner, discussion over tea – there would be questions about Donald Trump. Who is he? Where does he come from? Is he really going to be president of the United States? Some people would be appalled, some fascinated, some bewildered, some very supportive. The level of ignorance about Donald Trump would equal his own ignorance of them. As a diplomat you spend a lot of time explaining American politics to an audience. It's great fun.

Q: I remember in Italy when I was consul-general in Naples and Ronald Reagan was running for president, saying "Don't sell this guy short. He ran the state that has a greater GNP than Italy!"

KRAJESKI: I went to a reception in Nepal and they showed *Bedtime for Bonzo*, the movie with Ronald Reagan and a monkey. "That guy's going to be your president?!?" Reagan was an actor and not a very good one; the monkey was better than him. It's very interesting. We did a lot of this at NDU, these kinds of discussions. People would get personally insulting and then you had to put a stop to it.

Q: What were you thinking about after this NDU stint?

KRAJESKI: First I was wishing I had gone as an O1 officer. I'm hypocritical here; I'm telling O1s to go... It was not a time for me to go. I had literally just finished the first year of Arabic language training here at FSI and had arrived for my second year in Tunisia. I had a job – an O2 political job in Cairo that I really wanted, and I was training for it. There was no way I was going to walk away from a year of Arabic to go to the university. In those days they had a fairly strict policy; they'll ask you once. It's different now, but in '92 the personnel policy was you're on the list for the war college, yea or nay? If you said nay, you weren't going to get another phone call asking you to go.

When I left [NDU], my overriding thought was one of enormous pride in what the United States can do as a government. The National Defense University is an institution unlike any university on Earth. I talked about the student body, which is unique. The fact that we fund – and the State Department funds a lot of it; we fund the international program, through IMET funds. The fact that we do this, that Congress continues to fund it without question really (mostly because the military wants it, and the military gets anything it wants and then it gets more). Which is why it's [State's] been really smart since Colin Powell was secretary of State, State's jumped on the military's back and it's helped us a lot – and the military has willingly carried us; they want us there. Particularly after the fighting is done and you're sitting in a village full of Iraqis and what's next? The military really doesn't want to be the one in charge of that conversation. I was – in my little village, we didn't know what we were doing, either.

Anyway, I was really proud of the fact that NDU exists. A lot of people don't know about it, or that the U.S. military invests this amount of time and money and its people into

educating its officers. Second is I never had so much fun. Considering some of the jobs I've had, while I've liked most of them, a lot of them have been heavy lifting and long hours and dangerous. This was fun! I traveled all over the United States. I got to sit down in seminars and talk – and as you can tell, I really like to talk. I got to talk to people who were very interested in what I have to say. With the military of course, it's where have you been, and the fact I'd been in Yemen and in Iraq twice, I was a Middle East guy. So you felt useful and engaged and as though what you were doing at the university was truly beneficial to the military, the government, and the country.

I don't say that lightly. There are things I have done in my career where I have questioned what the value is to the people I'm working with or to my government or my country. NDU is a remarkable institution; all the war colleges are. Huge respect for the American military; I always have had, but it's always been relatively limited in scope because at an embassy you deal with the defense attachés or the head of the office of military cooperation. They basically were diplomats in uniform, most of them, people who are specifically assigned by the military for that role of liaising and working at an embassy. After Iraq and Yemen and Iraq again and NDU, I have a much larger picture of the U.S. military and what it does beyond training somebody to shoot and kill. I was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War by the way; refused to go into the military to fight the war. Not anti-military, necessarily.

Q: How did things work out? Were you up for another assignment?

KRAJESKI: NDU is generally a retirement post. The senior vice president (that's what I had) is the number two person at the university, always a State Department former ambassador; it's considered a retirement post. I was pretty much ready to retire. It was nice to be home. If you do join the Foreign Service or the military and you go off and do something that takes you overseas for a lot of your work life, it's a career and you're nearing the end, it's nice to be back home and have a couple of years painting the walls of your house, to transition out of the Foreign Service.

So I said to Nancy Powell, who was the director-general – she was the consular officer in Katmandu in my first assignment in 1980 – and to Pat Kennedy whom I know really well; he's the under secretary for management at the State Department, who was a GSO in Cairo just before I got to Cairo, that the only thing I would do was I'd take another chief of mission job. NEA has a policy, unwritten, that you get one ambassadorship. So I got Yemen, 2004 to 2007. The accepted policy is you got your one, we've got a lot of other guys in NEA who deserve an ambassadorship, they're going to get their turn. Jeff Feltman was [NEA] assistant secretary; Ron Schlicher was deputy assistant secretary, and I told them the same thing: "I'm looking to retire. If there's a chief of mission job out there that you want me for, I'll consider it."

I was up at the lake – Sebago Lake. (Side conversation with interns re New England.) We go there every year, an enormous freshwater lake outside of Portland, Maine. There's an island in the middle of it with a little golf course. My brothers and I meet there for a week. So I'm sitting there at the lake, literally with my feet dangling in the water, playing

with my granddaughter, and I got a phone call from Nancy Powell, saying “OK, we want you to go to Khartoum.” Khartoum in 2010.

I said, “There’s no way I’m going to Khartoum. I can’t go to Khartoum. My bottom line is my wife Bonnie has to go with me. I’m not going to be separated from her. We were separated in Yemen and in Iraq. I’m done with that.” Nancy, who knows Bonnie really well, said “I’ll call you back tomorrow.” So she called back the next day and said, “Bahrain.” This is 2010. If you know your recent Middle East history, this is before the apocalypse of spring 2011, the so-called Arab Spring, when countries around the Middle East collapsed (and some remain collapsed). Bahrain has one thing going for it, the U.S. military base. It’s tiny. I’ve been to the Gulf. I said, “Nancy if you really want me. But surely you’ve got 20 other people who can go to Bahrain. You don’t really need me in Bahrain.” She said, “Well, I needed you in Khartoum!” So I said “No” to Bahrain, and I figured that’s it, I’ll retire.

Then she called the next night and said, “Libya. Tripoli.” I’m not sure who was pushing these. Bonnie was sitting next to me; we were discussing this up at the lake. Tripoli intrigued us. Again, 2010, before the collapse. This is the time when Qadhafi’s coming out, he’s re-engaging with the world, paid reparations for the Pan Am flight 103, the Lockerbie crash. His son, Saif al-Islam, is the Brooks Brother star as he’s making business deals. The oil companies are roaring back into Libya, American companies included. We’re building a new embassy. I’d never visited before, it’s known for its ancient Roman ruins. I said, “Sure.” Bonnie said, “Great, let’s do it.”

So I accepted Libya. My name was at the White House, all set and ready to go in January of 2011 to be nominated for Libya. And then all kinds of shit happened. Jeff Feltman called in February – more back-story here. You remember WikiLeaks? You probably all used WikiLeaks for research if you’re doing international stuff. Because you can read our cables. For a while we weren’t allowed to read WikiLeaks. We weren’t even supposed to call it up on our screens, because it was classified documents. After all, they’re still classified even if they’ve been leaked to the front page of the New York Times. They changed that policy after a while. The first headline that I recall when WikiLeaks broke in December 2010 was a story about Qadhafi’s Ukrainian nurse. This gorgeous blond woman who was his private nurse. Gene Cretz, who was then ambassador to Libya, had written this cable in which in rather stark terms he described what Libyans thought of this relationship their leader was having with this six-foot – he liked tall women. So here it is on the front page of the New York Times. Qadhafi said, according to Gene who I know well, Gene said he was told by his chief of station that “The word is out. Your ambassador will be killed. We’re going to kill this guy, close the embassy, and send everybody home.”

Qadhafi’s senior advisors talked him out of sending everybody home, but there was still a death threat. At one point, he and his wife were out somewhere, fairly heavily guarded, and these guys in black leather jackets came up to them – that’s always the street security guys – and one of them looked Gene in the eye and said, “We didn’t know you were still

here. You're not going to be here much longer." Gene and his wife got on a plane the next day and left.

I was supposed to go out as soon as I could to replace Gene. [But in February] Feltman called and said, "The secretary wants Gene to go back once Qadhafi goes down;" Qadhafi was on the run by February, March, April. He said, "Bahrain has gotten very interesting." We had no ambassador in Bahrain at the time, as Bahrain was nearly going down. So we changed to Bahrain. This is March 2011. Jeff said, "You have to be prepared to go out tomorrow. We're going to try to rush you through and get you out there. We need somebody out there on the ground in Bahrain." I didn't get out there until October; that's how long the process took. It's a ridiculously long process in which the Senate holds up nominations forever. It's also true that this White House vets people down to their toenails. I'd been in the Foreign Service for 33 years and how many security investigations had I had? Every five years you have to have another security update in which they go and interview high school friends who haven't heard from me in 30 years, and suddenly I get an email saying, "The FBI has come to the door asking whether you were a Communist or not." I hope you didn't tell them! (Laughter)

Still, the White House starts as if you were an infant and they check everything. It's mostly focused on money and the possibility of scandal for nominees. But it takes a long time for the White House. I had two – the Bush White House for Yemen, and Obama's for Bahrain. Then you're nominated and the Senate takes its sweet time. There's the committee and then you have to get to a floor vote. Because the Republicans and Democrats work so closely together (laughter), particularly on bipartisan issues like foreign policy, it takes a long time. Sometimes they'll hold you up not because it's you, but because they don't like the policy. There were a couple of folks in the Senate who did not like our policy in Bahrain, did not think we were being hard enough on the Bahrainis.

A little history: during the Arab Spring, the demonstrations in Bahrain became fairly violent. They were starting to disrupt the financial life of the city, and the Sunni-Shia aspect was most frightening. Most of the opposition in Bahrain was Shia; most of the government and the ruling wealthy class are Sunni. Shia are a small majority. Al Khalifa, the ruling family, of course is Sunni. As the demonstrations became more intense, there were more sectarian threats going on. There are villages in the country where crowds of Sunni kids with weapons would go through Shia neighborhoods and break windshields and slash tires and maybe somebody would get beat up. They were very much afraid this was going to devolve into Shia-Sunni sectarian battles.

As demonstrations were continuing, the government said, "Let's make a deal." The crown prince tried to make a deal with the head of the opposition to stand down. The deal was, the opposition was going to have considerably more political power within the parliament. They were going to have say over some of the major cabinet posts. Not the so-called sovereign posts of treasury, defense, foreign affairs, but other posts would be designated for the Shia opposition. It was a pretty good deal, frankly, but they [the opposition] turned it down. They said, "Look what's happened to Mubarak in Egypt. Look what's happened to Ben Ali in Tunisia, what was happening to Assad in Syria"

(and is still happening to him. We thought Assad was going to go down quickly, too.); “We don’t need to make a deal.” Sheikh Ali Salman, who’s currently in jail, in 2011 told the crown prince “I’m going to be the next prime minister. You’re lucky if you stay as crown prince.” The crown prince went to this very powerful Shia businessman, former minister of labor, who was acting as a go-between, and said, “You’ve got to tell Ali Salman to take the deal, or the Saudis come in. I can’t hold off my military” – another Khalifa was a very hardliner and was growing very impatient with the king and crown prince as he negotiated with the opposition, and was very close to the Saudis, as was the prime minister. The family was divided between hardliners and moderates. The crown prince said [to the opposition], “That’s it, this is your deal. If you don’t take the deal, the Saudis come across the causeway tomorrow.”

The opposition didn’t believe him. And the Saudis came across the causeway, they [the Bahraini police] cleared the roundabout where the demonstrations were; lot of heads busted. A dozen people killed, a few thousand arrested, a few hundred tortured.

Q: This is before you came?

KRAJESKI: Yep. This is when I’m waiting for the Senate to confirm. This happened in March and April 2011. Our reaction in the United States was, this is bad and we want you to release the prisoners and address these human rights abuses; otherwise we’re going to withdraw all our military support and equipment. Like most countries who are our allies, we have a military cooperation agreement with them where we provide weapons, training, ammunition, logistical support; in the case of Bahrain it’s fairly large, because we have the largest U.S. Navy base in the Middle East in Bahrain. We didn’t want to lose the base, but we did suspend all military aid to Bahrain as a friendly gesture of our unhappiness with their decision to crush the demonstrations, and the clear abuses of human rights – torture of prisoners – that was occurring. All this while I was waiting to go out there.

Over the summer the king agreed to allow the establishment of an independent international committee of inquiry called BICI – the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry. Everybody just called it BICI. This truly was an independent, international commission.

I admire the king; I rather like him personally, which is always a danger as a diplomat. We played golf together. He’s a good guy; not real smart. He wants to do the right thing. When President Obama gave a speech in I think April 2011 in which he directly criticized the government of Bahrain for its inhumane actions – he called it “brutal actions” – the king was really taken aback. The king believed he’d done the only thing he could do; it was either that or lose the country, in his view. He had no other option but to stop the demonstrations. The opposition wouldn’t take the political deal; they wouldn’t clear the square. He had no other option. Surely his friends in the United States [would understand] – and we’d been friends with Bahrain for a long time.

One of the reasons I didn't take the job the year before was it was a very solid relationship; there were no problems. They loved us, we loved them. They were the moderates of the Gulf. Their women were well educated, in law and in business. They didn't all wear hijab. They were the center of banking (until Dubai came along and took a lot of that away). The relationship was smooth-running until March 2011, then they had the president of the United States publicly condemn a decision of the king, and according to stories I heard there (I never verified them; certainly not with the king), the king wept. He did not understand why the United States did not understand that he had to do it. So, he ordered that this commission be formed to investigate everything that happened in March and subsequently in the prisons. They had full access to all the prisons, all the records. They could interview prisoners and families. It was headed by a very distinguished international human rights lawyer, and Egyptian-American who taught at a university in Illinois. There were four, five members – a Brit, a Lebanese woman – all very qualified human rights experts, who came in and were given free access to all records. I arrived just as this report was being completed in October 2011. It was highly anticipated. We told the government, one of my first talks with the prime minister who was a very old man and you were never sure if he was listening to you -

I should back up a little bit. They [the Bahraini hardliners] did not want me as ambassador. There was a whole group of Bahrainis who decided the United States was going to promote regime change in Bahrain. We were going to topple Al Khalifa; that was our goal. We had done this elsewhere in the Middle East. They looked at the Arab Spring as an Arab disaster. They saw Mubarak go down, an old friend of the United States that we quote "threw under the bus." They didn't like Assad very much, but the instability in Syria that they saw (rightly, as it turned out) as something that was not going to go away quickly. They were really concerned about terrorism and the strengthening of terrorism that chaos in places like Libya and Syria would bring. Many of them saw this, as often happens in the Middle East, as an American plot. That we were deliberately agitating in these countries in order to bring down these governments, in order to create chaos, in order to increase our own influence and power in the region.

I had had a lot of experience in Iraq, including in 2001-03 when we used our military to go in and take over the government. They were convinced that's why I was selected as ambassador; to do the same thing in Bahrain. I still have a collection of newspaper articles in which they wanted the parliament or the king to "refuse him. This is not the man we want. He is responsible for the establishment of the Maliki government." They hated the Maliki government, the Shia government in Iraq. As if I was personally responsible... And they didn't like our policy. We had publicly criticized them on human rights, and we had suspended military assistance to Bahrain. The head of the military and the hardline Sunnis – most of the Sunnis – did not like our policies, did not trust us, and did not trust me specifically.

So I arrived in Bahrain under suspicion, and just as this report was coming out. Our first point with the king was, "We've been very impressed with the process you have established, Your Majesty, with this independent commission. By all reports they have been given free access to files, and have conducted hundreds of interviews including with

the victims of torture, people who had been arrested. We have been very impressed with your openness and willingness to accept this investigation which will deliver its report shortly” (it was in draft form when I arrived), “and in that report there will be a series of recommendations on how you might redress the wrongs committed in March, and how you might establish institutions of law and order in a way that’s more responsive to human rights.” There were human rights organizations that had come in to issue reports – all of them very negative of the government. The government was incredibly sensitive about this when Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International would come in with a team of people, the government would say “Come in, talk to everybody, and right your report,” and the report would be understandably really critical. The government would go nuts, “All you do is talk to the people who’ve been tortured!” “Well, we’d be happy to talk to the torturers...”

It was a very uncertain time in Bahrain. They were uncertain about their own future, about their relationship with the United States. They were worried about their security and were becoming increasingly more divided. Prior to this, Shia and Sunni communities had often lived very closely together, often intertwined in certain villages.

Q: You haven’t mentioned Iran so far.

KRAJESKI: Iran was under every rock, behind every bush. When I first arrived, they were convinced Iran had been responsible, that this was no Arab Spring, this was not a political demonstration of a legitimate political opposition in Bahrain, this was an Iranian infused and inspired attempt to overthrow the government of Bahrain that the United States either stupidly and naively ignored or actively and maliciously participated in. This was a small segment of the Sunni population that believed this, but there were members of the royal family who believed it. My own analysis was, Iran was certainly quite interested and quite enthusiastic; they liked to see it. They look at their major opponent in the region as Saudi Arabia, the head of the Sunni Islam world, while they consider themselves the head of the Shia Islam world. Almost like a cold war in some ways, everything is seen through that lens of the Saudi-Iranian relationship. And Bahrain... it’s a tiny country. It’s literally in the center of the Gulf, between Iran and Saudi Arabia. There is a road that takes you across (to Saudi), which I never crossed by the way. It’s why we had a naval base there. It’s perfectly situated strategically for a naval base.

Q: It’s been there since the ‘40s.

KRAJESKI: The first American ship paid a call there in 1946. So the relationship with the Navy is a long one. So there we are. I’ve got human rights activists all over the country who are from the Bahraini perspective nothing but trouble. Or on the American Hill – I’ve got a lot of Hill staffers interested in this – aren’t being allowed to cause enough trouble. “They’re being restricted” – and they were being restricted. The government kept throwing them out.

Tom Malinowski who is now the assistant secretary for democracy, human rights, and labor over at State, our highest-ranking American human rights official; he was arrested

in 2011. He came over with Human Rights Watch. He was part of a demonstration, sitting with some of his contacts in the human rights community of Bahrain. He was tear-gassed. They didn't hit him but they did detain him, put him in a room while they tried to figure out what the hell to do with the American they'd picked up. I had a government that was very uncertain about the relationship, about me, about the future.

Then I had the U.S. Navy. The highest ranking officers in the American military – the chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I had the CENTCOM commander, the chief of the Navy all in my first month came to Bahrain. Their point to me was, "Look Mr. Ambassador, I know you have a tough time here. We're all on the same team. We all work for the president of the United States. We understand the policy." A Marine four-star with CENTCOM, Jim Mattis, a brilliant little guy; really small for a Marine but tough as nails – Jim said, "We understand the policy and we know how hard it is for you. But our bottom line is, don't screw up the relationship we have here. We need these guys militarily. We need this base. Look at what's happening in Syria. We're focused on Iran. Iraq is a constant problem. This is a big deal for us. We don't want to lose it."

There was all this discussion of how the United States should move its naval base in protest of the human rights abuses. I went in with those two competing if not conflicting policy imperatives. One, to continue to encourage, cajole, criticize the government on human rights, open society, rule of law; to help wherever we could, though our help was not really trusted. "We'll bring in judicial experts and train your judges; you need to establish an independent judiciary." The minister of justice would say, "Yes we do," but they really weren't looking at American programs to do that for them.

Then on the other hand, to go to the king and the crown prince and the field marshal, the head of the military (who really disliked me) and say, "We don't want to do anything to change the military relationship we have now. We need you; you need us. Rest assured, that is solid." He would look at me – he was probably 6'3, weighed 240 pounds, biggest Bahraini I'd ever seen – so he could look down at me a bit. He likes to use his physical bulk – some big guys like to do that when they're arguing. It's an implied physical threat. Not that he would ever punch me, but I think he probably wanted to.

It was hilarious to watch him with Jim Mattis. Jim was not a big man, but he was a Marine general. The two of them would go after each other, arguing. We would all back away from them in case it turned into a fight. But Khalifa, the general, said, "What do you mean it's the same? You won't even sell us bullets any more. I've got my men out there doing field exercises –" They're all using American equipment, we've been selling them equipment for 25 years, so they're using M4s – and we won't sell them ammunition for the M4s, and they're running out of ammunition. Troops have to fire their guns to stay proficient with their rifles. So he had to cancel exercises. He couldn't train new officers. They were running out of parts for their tanks. Not that they needed tanks on this little island. They were supposed to buy TOW (tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided) missiles from us. These are not very sophisticated anti-tank weapons. They really wanted them because they were convinced the Iranians were somehow going to get tanks onto the island and they were going to have to fight these tanks. It was dumb, but that's OK.

We wouldn't sell them TOW missiles, we wouldn't sell armored Humvees because there was a picture in one of the newspapers during the demonstrations and the crackdown that followed of an American Humvee being used by the security forces as they moved into the square, so we suspended sales of military vehicles. [Bahraini] military guys were saying, "What do you mean the relationship hasn't changed? You've changed it."

He (the defense chief) meant this personally too; "You're responsible for what's happening." I have to go to him and ask for things like another berth for a carrier, and we wanted to build a bridge to connect the two parts of the base. For some reason, there was a highway that ran down the middle of the base – just the way that it happened. It used to be, we had no security around bases. In Bahrain, there are 8000 Americans on the base in Bahrain, which we did not call a base, ever. Because we had no "bases" in the Middle East. No independent Arab country would ever tolerate an American military base on its soil. We referred to it as the NSA, Naval Support Activity, a euphemism. Another reason we didn't call it a base is because the word for base in Arabic is al Qaeda... that's why the terrorist group got its name, it was called "The Base" because all the terror groups came to Osama Bin Laden, to his base, and Al Qaeda became the name of the group. First time I got into my limousine, my wonderful big Cadillac, to be taken to meet the admiral at the base, I could hear my security guys talking. Where are they going? Setting up the movement of the ambassador. I kept hearing "Al Qaeda, al Qaeda." I said to the RSO, "Is there a threat out there?" Then I clicked into Arabic and asked my guard, and he said, "No, we're going to the base, al Qaeda."

On one hand, it was really hard to sit down with guys like Tom Malinowski or with the head of Amnesty International and talk human rights and try to persuade them the United States was genuinely on their side and the United States was doing everything it could to push the government in this direction. And then literally an hour later have a four-star or the chief of naval operations sitting in my office and assuring him that the base is there to stay. My number one priority is making sure that this base remains – and it was my number one priority.

That's something as a diplomat you run into a lot. The secretary of State when confronted with what some people saw as a contradiction of policy in Bahrain (and elsewhere in the world and the Middle East) of those two primary American foreign policy interests – the promotion of open societies, the protection of human rights, the establishment of responsive government alongside the very necessary need to secure alliances, to secure military relationships to fight the bad guys and to secure our borders. You've got both going on in this tiny little country that ordinarily wouldn't get a glimpse, where I had refused to be ambassador because it was too boring. It was not boring. The secretary of State [Clinton] was confronted on this by a journalist and [she] said, "Look, we're the United States of America. We can do two things at once. We can walk and chew gum. We can promote human rights and democracy while maintaining strong security relations."

I saw her about a month later – I'm going to really reveal my political preferences here. This is a brilliant woman, whatever else one thinks of her. She has a long record, good

and bad. This is a brilliant person with a remarkable ability to retain information. She's really smart. So she really knew a lot about Bahrain. Often when you go into meet the secretary as an ambassador, you get 15 minutes, maybe. And you don't want to waste those 15 minutes. But a lot you know is going to be spent on basics, the basics of the relationship. With George W. Bush whom I met four times when I was in Yemen – also a smart guy, by the way. Or as his advisors used to say to us, “You Foreign Service guys. He's not as dumb as you think he is.” Which is not high praise. But he wasn't, he was a smart guy. With him, you went in and said, “Yemen, Mr. President, these are the four things we think are important about our relationship with Yemen, what we want from them. And here are the two things they want from us.” These are likely to be the main points discussed when the president comes in the office in a half an hour. Literally, this briefing was done a half hour before Ali Abdulla Saleh was going to walk into the Oval Office.

With Clinton, I walked in for my first meeting with her before I went to Bahrain, and man, she knew more than I did. I'd been studying – you do this when you get ready to go. One of the advantages of the Senate taking a long time is you get lots of consultations, you can work on your Arabic, you can learn a lot about your country [of assignment]. You're not allowed to go to the Bahraini embassy and meet with the ambassador. But she knew a lot about Bahrain. She knew what she wanted. We talked a lot about these policies, what we had to do. We talked a lot about the BICI. The next time I went in... She's also a politician, and actually a pretty good one; she gets rapped on that, too. Not as good as her husband, though – the remembrance of names and faces and the eye contact, handshake that Bill Clinton could do. But she remembers her ambassadors – or she was just all briefed before I walked in. She said, “OK, Tom, tell me how it's going.” I said, “Madame Secretary, I read your comment with great interest on the necessity sometimes to maintain two competing policies at the same time. I agree with you; you have to do it. I can walk and chew gum. Every once in a while you bite the inside of your cheek – it really hurts. So sometimes you just have to sit down and chew your gum, it's all you can do. And sometimes you can just walk. There are times we have to figure out whether walking is more important than chewing gum.”

At this point, she said “Can the metaphor. Our number one priority in Bahrain is maintaining our military relationship and maintaining that base. Can we do it?” I said, “Yes, but we need to restore the military assistance. We need to look at a way we can get back on military assistance.”

By this time, the report had come out. The report was fascinating. We had just issued our latest assessment of the progress Bahrain had made since the issuance of this report. If you follow Bahrain in the news, progress [in 2016] has been negative pretty much. They closed down the opposition party, threw the head of the party into jail, extended his sentence to 10 years, and stripped the citizenship of the senior Shia religious cleric who was the conscience of the opposition party. But in those days [2011-12] we were still hopeful, pushing for this to happen. We were basing progress on whether we would restore military assistance, we were doing step by step with the progress they were making on human rights. A lot of members of Congress were watching very carefully.

One more story. The countries of the Gulf are family ruled. There's no other place on Earth like this anymore, where absolute monarchies still rein. "Absolute" is a fungible term here. Even those who'd be considered the most absolute, like the Saudis, the king by no means has absolute power. He answers to a lot of people. Just sometimes we don't see how that web is formed, what that network is. The Khalifa in Bahrain – there was a parliament that was freely elected. The elections were actually open. The opposition party when it chose to participate in the elections would be the largest party. Wouldn't be a majority; they always made sure they couldn't get a majority; they'd rig the vote through imaginative gerrymandering of the districts. They actually had Americans advising them how to draw the districts at one point, so that Shia majorities would not be able to elect representatives in certain parts of the country. If you look at a map, it's like Massachusetts or Texas. So as an American, I had a really hard time saying, "These are unfair districts" when in fact they're doing just what we do, with Republicans and Democrats.

But nonetheless, the family is by far the most important institution of government, of politics, of rule, of the economy as well. The prime minister was the richest man in Bahrain. If you were on his side, you got government contracts. He promoted both Sunni and Shia families, but you had to toe the line. The king is no genius, but he's a relatively good guy. He's in the middle of the family. He's got his hardliners on one side saying, "You've got to crush the Shia. That's what we've always done in the past." Twenty-eleven is not the first time the Shia have hit the streets and decided that they wanted a little more. Indeed, every ten years is a general rule of thumb. Last time was in the mid-'90s when they had serious riots and violence on the streets. That time they just rounded everybody up, threw the leaders into prison or out of the country, and nobody paid any attention. CNN for some reason didn't pay attention.

So the king recognizes he's got to do this. He makes a very difficult decision – because the hardliners opposed it – of establishing this commission and giving it access. He's supported by us and by the crown prince. The crown prince is the next king most likely, assuming some disaster doesn't befall the country or the family. He is a graduate of American University here in Washington, DC. He speaks better English than I do. He also speaks wonderful Arabic, which is a must. A very intelligent guy. He was the one who was trying to negotiate with the opposition during the demonstrations, but the opposition trusted him. They trusted him. Everybody trusts the king; the opposition not so much anymore. The Shia hate the prime minister, the king's uncle. He's the wazir (vizier). Jeff Feltman, the assistant secretary for NEA, used to call him "Scar," a *Lion King* reference.

The king is really in the middle and he considers it the place he has to be. He's made a daring and fairly brave decision to allow this commission to come in [May 2011]. I arrive the 25th of October. They scheduled the release of this report for November 20.

In order to attend, I have to present credentials. If you are familiar with the protocols for ambassadors, once the president nominates you, the senate confirms. Then you're sworn

in. At that moment, you're actually the ambassador-designate to Bahrain. You're not actually ambassador until you present your credentials, you letters of credence which is basically a personal letter from the president of the United States to the king of Bahrain saying, "Here's my ambassador, please accept him." It goes back to Genghis Khan. They recognized he'd have to protect ambassadors, because ambassadors would go off to the enemy's camp and say, "You've got to do this and this," and they'd cut their heads off and send their bodies back in burlap bags so it's hard to recruit ambassadors. So they developed these protocols for the protection of ambassadors. So once you're presented to the head of state and he or she accepts you as ambassador, now you are under his protection. That's what diplomatic immunity is. You can't really go out and commit whatever crime you like and nobody will prosecute you. You are under the protection of the local host government and under the protocols, the Geneva or Vienna Convention of 18-something.... It's been updated a couple of times. It focuses on prosecution. In order to protect you from capricious prosecution under the laws of your host country, you have immunities.

What most countries view those as, we are going to invoke immunity regardless of what this diplomat has done. This happened in Dubai when I was consul-general. Maybe he got roaring drunk, got into an automobile accident in which two Emirati children are killed, and he's arrested and he's in jail. The first thing you do is say, "We will invoke immunity. You will hand that person over to us. Then we will decide whether or not he can be prosecuted under your laws, but we make that decision not you." It's to protect you from capricious prosecution. So if you're the ambassador to a country that's hostile to the United States and the head of the country decides to trump up some charges – "We found bags of drugs in the ambassador's house! We're putting him under arrest!" To protect you from that kind of prosecution is why we have these conventions. The drunken sailor by the way, it was a Navy guy who was assigned to the consulate, got 20 years in an American jail. We did not allow him to be tried by the Emirati courts; the military tried him and gave him a far rougher sentence than he would have gotten in Dubai.

[Back to Bahrain] So the report is coming out. I present my credentials – it's a great ceremony. You wear your best suit, they send their fanciest car to pick you up, there are military guys all dressed in their ropes and flags, anthems are played. It's kind of neat; I liked it.

I was able to attend the initial presentation of this report. It happened in one of these large majlises; a majlis is basically a huge meeting room in the Middle East. There were probably 500 people in the room, including international press. The entire diplomatic corps, which is why I needed to be credentialed so I could attend. All the members of the parliament, all the cabinet members are there. Military representation, businessmen – a wide representation of Bahraini society. It's being broadcast live on BBC, on CNN. The head of the commission who was a human rights lawyer and prosecutor stood up at the podium and in his wonderful, perfect Egyptian Arabic, indicted the king of Bahrain and the prime minister and the crown prince. That's what it sounded like; a prosecutor opening a trial, listing in detail the crimes that had been committed by security forces. The instances of torture, of death by torture. In fairly vivid detail. Not as much as he

would have liked to have done; he held back a little bit. The king, the prime minister, and the crown prince were sitting behind him as he was doing this. He's facing the audience and behind him is the king, the prime minister, and the crown prince. I've never seen anything like this. Certainly not in the Arab world, certainly not in a place of absolute monarchies. At the end of the presentations, there were 72 recommendations. He did not list them all, but there was a series of recommendations; a demand that people be held accountable for this; and a promise to continue the investigation, to remain. The king actually wanted them to remain. They present these documents in these enormous red boxes; it's a British tradition, I think it's even called the red box. Have you ever seen the great series, called *Yes, Minister*? Very funny.

(*Crosstalk*)

KRAJESKI: The diplomatic ones are very ornate. The bows; I'm not joking here. So Bassiouni – his name was Cherif Bassiouni, the Egyptian-American who headed the commission, turns and takes the box. The king stands up, accepts it, goes to the podium, and thanks Bassiouni for all of his work and pledges that every instrument of government will be put to work to meet every one of the recommendations. I wanted to stand up and applaud. I was sitting next to the British ambassador who had arrived only a couple of weeks before me. His predecessor by the way had been rode out on the rails by the British community because his predecessor had criticized the government and the king, and the British community in Bahrain love the king and the government and think the Shia should just be beaten and thrown into the sea. They're all folks who have a really great deal living in the Gulf. I just said, "I don't think we'll ever see anything like this again."

It was a very positive step. I suddenly had something to work with. As we're working the human rights portfolio, I've got an actual document with a list of recommendations accepted by the king. Now I can go to my meetings with the minister of justice or with the head of the military and say, "This is not my program, this is the king of Bahrain's. Your king." Because none of them could deny the king. Even though they would do everything, in the case of Scar, the prime minister, and the head of the military, do everything they could to undermine the king. They had wazirs – this is right out of Tales of the Arabian Nights, they had appointments within the king's privy council of different ministers who were actually called wazirs, like the grand vizier in Aladdin. Always the evil guy. And the crown prince is trying to do the right thing. There was one who was the minister of the royal court for implementation. He was a crony or protégé of the very hard-line head of defense. We used to joke and say, "This is the minister who's in charge of making sure that the king's orders are NOT carried out." As we were working on this whole set of human rights issues, we were also trying to expand our naval presence and our air wing. We had an air wing. We had carriers that were there (they're great air wings, you can move them around), but we also had a Marine squadron of F-18s on the ground in Bahrain, at an airbase on the southern part of the island. We were trying to get permission to expand that airbase, to bring more people in and have a more permanent place for these squadrons, who rotated out periodically. The head of defense was being very obstructionist. He wasn't going to make this agreement. He said, "It's not really up

to me. The parliament's on my back because you're refusing to sell us weapons and TOW missiles, and we're going to give you this permission? The parliament won't stand for it." It was bullshit, because the parliament had no power whatsoever in these decisions. It was the hard-line head of defense saying, "We're not going to give you everything you want; we won't roll over for you."

Q: Did you make any progress at this point?

KRAJESKI: So General Mattis is the head of CENTCOM. Mattis, we'd talk on the phone a lot about where we were because they [the Navy] really wanted us there. Carriers are expensive and there are only so many of them. If you keep a carrier in the Gulf all the time, it's really hard on the carrier. The Gulf is a difficult place to maneuver. It's very shallow. Oil tankers frequently bottom out in the Persian Gulf, particularly when the waves are high. Their sterns will scrape the ground. There's not a lot of room for carriers. Submariners hate it even more; there's no place to put a sub in there. So we really wanted this air wing, which would basically be another carrier group positioned right there in that perfect little spot (Iran is the main worry), so that we could have more flexibility in using the carriers. So we really wanted it. We were going to pay a lot for it, too; we don't get these things for free. The field marshal – he was a field marshal, five stars, so he outranked Mattis, who only had four stars – was being incredibly obstructionist. I had gone to the king two or three times, and the king would say, "Yes, you can have it. You have permission." Then everybody gets to work doing the contract – exactly how many people, what kind of munitions you can bring in, what kind of work you'll do on the runways. This is all done contractually, often with private contractors. There's a lot of money involved in this. So our Navy guys want a deal, they want an agreement and we can't get one. The [Bahraini] guys that are negotiating the agreement keep saying, "You have to ask the field marshal. The field marshal doesn't want us to do this." So the field marshal says, "Yes, of course, whatever the king says we'll do, absolutely." And then they wouldn't sign the contract, or allow a shipment of plane parts to come in, and they'd stop something else.

Finally, Mattis came and this is when we had the near dust-up between Mattis and the field marshal. They weren't going to get physical, but boy, they were nose to nose. The field marshal was this much taller than Mattis and this much bigger. He wasn't fat; he was just big. Like a linebacker, big. Mattis is cornerback small. They're bumping up against each other. We backed away. Often the best thing is let these two guys talk. Mattis is saying, "It's fish or cut bait. I'll take these planes and put them in Kuwait. I'll tell my bosses you don't want us here." The field marshal said, "No, we want you here but you know my parliament..." Mattis is a Marine; he says, "That's bullshit." They were staring at each other. I was with a Bahraini general, only a two-star, on the field marshal's staff. I said to him, "If this comes to a fight, I'm putting my money on the little guy." He laughed, and said, "Me, too!"

And then as often happens, suddenly everybody's smiling and food is brought out. This is true around the world, but in Arab societies, food and tea is always – you could have knives at each other's throats, but now you put your knives on the table and "Now, we're

going to have some tea and eat.” So we ate. After the meal, we resumed the discussion. The field marshal is getting exasperated, with Mattis and always with me. He looked at us and said, “This has to come from the king, directly.” Completely ignoring the fact we’d had the king’s permission for a month. I looked at him and said, “Great. We have a meeting with his majesty in an hour. We’ll ask him then.”

An hour later we walked into the big majilis with the king. He hates the politics and the diplomacy but he loves the American military. He loves Marines, he loves the Navy. He doesn’t love diplomats so much, but he liked me on the golf course; I’m a golfer. Sitting in the room – whenever you went into the king, and this is true I think with every meeting; when you walk in to see the big guy, you’re making eye contact and saying “Hi” to the king, but I’m also looking at who else is in the meeting. Who’s sitting there? Because that can really switch the tenor of the meeting. It can even change a little bit of the talking points, what I’m going to say and how I’m going to present it. The king – there was the foreign minister in the room. Normally when the American ambassador visits a head of state, the foreign minister’s present – but this foreign minister was very moderate, very liberal, and had very little power. He’s also very fat, if you’ve ever see Sheikh Khalid. Wonderful guy, but he’s an enormous mountain of a man; can’t be healthy. He graduated from a college in Austin, Texas; St. Edwards [University]. A Jesuit-run school; there were four or five Bahrainis from the royal family who’d graduated from there. Most of them had gone to UT (University of Texas) and hadn’t been able to cut it at UT, which is a tough school and apparently also a party school in Austin, Texas. They had partied down a little too much so they had withdrawn from UT and went to the Jesuits.

But who’s in the room? The wazir [vizier] is in the room, the senior counselor to the king. A hardliner and deliberately assigned by the king’s father when the king was still crown prince to be his vizier, his wazir, to look after the young crown prince and teach him the ways of politics and the family and the world. He was [in that role] when I was there and still today is the king’s principle advisor. He’s the older brother of the field marshal, the head of the military. The two of them are the hardest of the hardliners. [deleted by ambassador] They thought this whole political deal, human rights, this was all somehow unnecessary and obstructionist.

So he’s sitting next to the king, as he usually did, to the king’s left. One side is the visitor and one side is the home team as you come in. Hands are shaken all around, introductions are made; the king often introduced people. And next to [the vizier] is his brother, the field marshal. Then next to them is the man I was talking about [Sheikh Mohamed bin Atiyatallah, the Royal Court Minister for Implementation], who is responsible for making sure the king’s orders are not carried out. I’ve got three of the toughest hardliners right next to the king. There’s me and Mattis and maybe my DCM. We had a lot of military guys down the row, and they had lot of guys running down the row. It’s important to have equal amounts, but we always outnumbered them. American generals travel with a ton of people. So we started the meeting as we often do, which is the king talks. The king makes me sound shy and backward. The king can really talk. I learned early on you simply have to interrupt him, at some point you have to say, “Your Majesty, very

interesting. Now we need to talk about ____.” And he would smile and say, “OK, let’s do that.” In English, by the way. These guys all spoke excellent English. The king is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College in Leavenworth – which he loved. He never failed to talk with the military guys about how much he loved his year at Leavenworth, Kansas. Living like an officer does. When you’re a young crown prince, 22 years old, they only had a four-room apartment and only one servant... but he loved it. He loves America. We talked about how valuable these programs are.

So the king starts off. Mattis knows the king well; they’ve met a couple of times. The king likes Mattis; Mattis is a Marine which is Navy. And Mattis is, if you’ve ever met him, is an engaging smart guy with a good sense of humor and a feel for the diplomatic necessities. We had a long talk about how we were going to handle this meeting. Then the king interrupts himself – he was telling one of his many stories. We had something called talking point bingo with the king. My political officer, she had a list of things the king always said and at every meeting. She showed it to me once; she actually had it on a bingo board. She would be taking notes. Fortunately, she was sitting down the [row] so she wasn’t in my peripheral view. On occasions when I could see her, the king would talk about Leavenworth and she’d go [mouth], “Bingo!”

The king interrupted himself and said, “I know we need to talk about some important issues regarding your presence here on the island. You have to understand, I’m under this pressure from my constituency, from the people” – he would never say ‘parliament’ – “from the people, who are concerned about our relationship and this embargo that you have imposed on our military assistance.” He had never used this word before, embargo. And it’s not an embargo or boycott – he said boycott, too.

I said, “If I can, this is not an embargo or boycott. We have restricted certain items, but we have permitted many other items. And our military relationship has never been stronger. We are providing you with X, Y, and Z, and training, la di da di da. We’re still working on a small basket of items that the Congress of the United States has ordered us to restrict, but we’re narrowing that down.”

He looked at me and said, “So there’s no boycott? No embargo?” I said, “No. Absolutely not, Your Majesty.”

He said, “That’s a relief. Let’s bring the planes in then. I really want them.” And the field marshal was on fire. I watched him self-immolate. He just glared at me across the room. If he didn’t like me before, he liked me even less then. And the king then to top it off, the king turned to the field marshal and said, “I want this to happen. Sign the deal.”

So I got the king to say, “Sign the deal;” I got the field marshal really pissed off, but the king just ordered him to sign the deal in front of me, in front of General Mattis, in front of a bunch of other folks all taking notes. Mattis and I went back; we had a beer at the hotel. We got it done; “Thanks Jim for coming, good work. Let’s get moving.” The planes were already there, but we needed the agreement to build the infrastructure to keep the planes supplied. I told my defense attaché who was the primary negotiator of the

contract with the military. I wrote back to Washington in a cable. I got compliments and congratulations.

And it didn't happen. A month later, no contract. Two months later, no contract. Mattis is boiling, and says, "We're going to move the damned planes to Kuwait." [And they] flew the planes off to Kuwait.

Kuwait's perfectly happy. It's not the best place because Kuwait's way up in the northern part of the Gulf, it's not good for anything going on down in the south. But better than nothing.

We went to the field marshal and said, "That's it. Deal's off. I'll have to go tell the king that we weren't able to make the deal." I'm alone with him, too, out on his verandah. They like to do this, the big guys. They like to say, "Just you and me, we'll go out and talk." Intimidating; he could push me off the verandah. I said, "I'm going to go to his majesty tomorrow and say, 'We couldn't make the deal, so the planes are leaving.'"

He's got this great stone face, and said, "Well we tried everything we could, but your refusal to sell us these [weapons and equipment], it's such a barrier to get through. Morale in the military is rock-bottom, they think the Americans have abandoned us. I've got to buy this stuff somewhere else. How can I let more Americans and equipment into the country when they're going to work side-by-side with my guys who don't have bullets, because you won't sell them bullets?"

That's a pretty effective point. I went back and talked to Mattis and then with the assistant secretary Jeff Feltman, or with Barbara Leaf who was the deputy assistant secretary (now ambassador in Abu Dhabi). I said, "The deal's fallen through. Mattis is as angry as a nest of hornets, and they're moving the planes." They're pissed off, they're growling. They said, "What can we do?"

It happened that our ambassador to Saudi Arabia was in Washington. He said, "I'll just go to the Saudis." General Austin was taking over [CENTCOM] about this point. We thought this was a [good] idea. So we went to the Saudis in Washington; the guy who's foreign minister now, Adel Al-Jubeir, was the Saudi ambassador. And we went to the Saudis in Riyadh through our ambassador. We said, "The Bahrainis don't want us to keep the planes there. And frankly, they're all about defense of your oil fields; that's why we want the planes there." Because the Iranians are literally two or three minutes away; we need a fast reaction force right there near the oil fields. "We had an agreement with them; we can't seem to make it stick because the field marshal won't do it." The Saudis in their way said, "Mmm, that's very interesting." Five days later, the field marshal signed the agreement, and we brought the planes back from Kuwait.

The Saudis said [to the Bahrainis], "What are you doing? Why aren't the planes in Bahrain?" I don't know what they said to them, but whatever it was – five days.

Q (intern): When you were at National Defense University and the war college, you talked about the differences between the international students and the American students. What about between the military and Foreign Service officers? What was that like, civilian vs. military?

KRAJESKI: This is post-Iraq. I don't know what it was like before Iraq, but once we went into Iraq and used our military to overthrow the government and we occupied the country, we the diplomats, the Foreign Service officers, went to Iraq in force. We worked side-by-side with these military guys. What I had often in the seminars in 2009 when I started [at NDU] were Foreign Service officers who had served at PRTs, provincial reconstruction teams, out in Iraq alongside military officers who had often served on the same teams, or who had been members of whatever military unit it was that was in charge of Mosul and worked closely with the PRTs. There was a much wider sense of what we did in the field. Prior to that, our joint experience had often been restricted to defense attachés and offices of military cooperation at embassies.

Otherwise, except for places like NDU, we didn't get together. Even though it's a great environment, it's an unreal environment; it's not a work environment. So I found there was a far greater understanding in the military of what the Foreign Service does, and more important, what we bring to the table, what we can do. It's not just look good in suits and speak politely at cocktail parties. We have regional knowledge, cultural knowledge, in-depth political knowledge of these places. We have the languages of these places and we're able to go places and do things the military cannot do in uniform, and they recognized it's far more effective that the United States be represented in Mosul by a civilian than by 10,000 military guys.

Right from the get-go at these seminars, there was a mutual respect and understanding. I understand more what the military guys do because of that joint experience, and they understand more about what we do. I found that Foreign Service officers in the seminars – and there were not as many as I would like. There usually was one in each seminar; there were like 15 seminars at each college. We also had people at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island; the Army War College in Carlisle; the Air Force [College] down in Montgomery, Alabama. They often were, when the discussion would turn to, “What's happening? Why is the government of Thailand making these decisions?” the Foreign Service officer would often lead those discussions. Talk about what governments do, how they're formed, how they relate to their militaries, how they relate to us. This is experience that military guys didn't have, and they valued that. Just as the Foreign Service officers valued having the military perspective as we're formulating policy. This notion somehow that as Lincoln said, this [is] lovely military, let us use it – that doesn't really tell you about working with the military. They want to be considered as an integral part of American foreign policy, both as an instrument of the policy but also as a partner in the formulation. This [NDU] gives them an opportunity to do it.

Q: Today is August the 5th, 2016, with Tom Krajeski. Tom, we just finished talking about getting these Marine planes based on Bahrain, your problems with your good friend, the field marshal. What should we talk about now?

KRAJESKI: That particular set of meetings and events really exemplified the military relationship we had with Bahrain. Our relationship with Bahrain was primarily military and security. A small piece of commercial and economic; there were some cultural cross-currents as well. Bahrainis had sent many of their top students to the United States to study. That included people in their royal family. We had a very strong relationship, but let's not fool ourselves – the backbone of that relationship was our military cooperation, specifically the largest U.S. naval base in the Middle East in Bahrain. Prior to the Arab Spring in 2011, prior to the Obama Administration's policy to withhold certain military and security items from the Bahraini government until they "improved" their human rights situation – that policy was a fairly large burr under our saddle for the three years I was there.

Q: You left when?

KRAJESKI: I left in December 2014.

Q: When did the Arab Spring hit?

KRAJESKI: February of 2011. I arrived in October 2011. Before February 2011, there wasn't a whole lot going on in the American-Bahraini relationship. It was a fairly quiet embassy, one that was known as a "first-tour embassy." Ambassadors, DCMs, political officers, first-tour officers going to the Middle East. Bahrain was a good place to send people; families were happy there. It was considered a good family post, and there aren't many of them in the Middle East; fewer now than when I began my career in NEA. After 2011, it changed. It became a less secure place, though Americans were never really caught up in the violence on the island. We weren't the targets for any of the violent opposition groups, but it became a riskier place.

Q: Going back to the '50s when I was in Dhahran and we covered Bahrain, there was a lot of worry (even though the shah was on our side at that time in Iran) about Iranian illegal migration to Bahrain. I would have thought by this time when you'd have an Islamic state and hatred for the United States in Iran; that this would play heavily in a significant part of the population of Bahrain.

KRAJESKI: Prior to 2011, except for a brief period following the Iranian Revolution in 1979-80 when there was a major policy of the new Iranian regime was to spread Shi'ism around the Muslim world. During that time there was an attempted coup in Bahrain that failed very quickly. Other than that particular period, just the early '80s, Iranian influence – military, political, economic, cultural, social, linguistic, and religious – in Bahrain has always been grossly exaggerated, usually by the hardliners in Bahrain who see that big presence to the north as a convenient source to whip up public support or fear. It was always our opinion, including during 2011, the so-called Arab Spring in Bahrain, that direct Iranian interference and influence was greatly exaggerated.

There's approximately 1.2 million people in Bahrain. About 600,000 of them are Bahraini citizens; the other half are expatriates. Of the Bahraini citizens, roughly 60% are Shia, 40% Sunni. The ruling family is Sunni. Of the Shia, there's a division between those Shia who are called Baharna or Bahraini – those are Arab Shia. They've been on the island the longest. They would claim longer than the Sunni, that they are the original inhabitants who converted to Shia. The other percentage, a smaller percentage... They don't do censuses; places like this are loath to do censuses that would actually give you a number of how many Christians there are and others. But of the Shia, the other group whose name I can't recall, they are Iranian, Persian Shia [Ajaam Shia]. Some of the families have been there for generations. Some have been there only since 1950s for economic reasons; as Bahrain was building its commercial and trading economy, Iranians did come to work there. It was an entrepot for Iran; at least they billed themselves as a commercial hub Iran could take advantage of (again, this is during the shah's days). Post-revolution, some Iranians came. Not many, because they were viewed with great suspicion. So the majority of these – I'm embarrassed I can't remember their name, one of my friends I used to play golf with was a member of this ethnic group [Ajaam]. He spoke Farsi at home with his mother and father. This particular group, this so-called Persian Shia, were among the most loyal to the Khalifa. They did not support the political opposition, which was almost entirely Baharna Shia. They were a fairly well-off group; banking, business. A lot of their business had been associated with Iran, so that was basically dying now, particularly as we imposed more banking and financial sanctions on Iran. As Hezbollah gained in strength, these Shia really gathered together...

While we saw Iran as the major threat in the region, as did the Bahrainis and the Saudis, we really didn't see the Iranians doing anything dramatic in Bahrain. To do that, they'd come in direct confrontation with us. We made it very clear – any aggression against any of the Gulf countries, including and maybe especially Bahrain because they're right out there on the tip, would be considered aggression against us and our navy. You weren't going to be able to keep us out of that fight. So the Iranians were very careful. During my stay there post-Arab Spring, we saw increasing evidence – I have a good body of stuff I've read in the New York Times. We saw increasing evidence the Iranians were becoming more active for their support for Shia opposition groups in Bahrain, including training the more extreme and violent groups. People going to Iran and mostly to Iraq, where these training camps were, among the so-called Iraqi Hezbollah group who were sponsored by the Iranians. They did training. During my stay, there were at least two interdictions of weapons and bomb-making material shipments by sea; a larger dhow would come out of Iraq, off-load to the small speedboats then they'd come into Bahrain. There were at least two interdictions, which the U.S. Navy played a significant role in, though it was the Bahraini coast guard who we trained and equipped who took them down. So there was increasing evidence that the Iranians were becoming more involved. Again, I think it was exaggerated. It was especially exaggerated when they made accusations against the political leadership of the Bahraini opposition, who were not violent, that they had ties to Iran, were accepting Iranian money, were somehow Iran's agents. The exaggeration there was politically convenient. The head of the opposition is now in jail for [allegedly] calling for the violent overthrow of the king – which he did

not do. He's there for [allegedly] fomenting violence, those fuzzy laws governments like to use against political opposition.

Q: Was there any indication of interference with the Emirates or Qatar?

KRAJESKI: The Emirates are an interesting case. Of the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia dominates. Since your time there, Saudi Arabia's the big kahuna, the big bear in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). The only competition it really has on a military, security, and economic standpoint is the UAE. Especially over the last 10 years, the UAE has built a very credible military, focusing on special forces. Economically, they're very secure, very powerful. It's a very stable country; they don't have the huge population pressures that the Saudis and Bahrainis and Kuwaitis have. The UAE has really emerged as a quasi-independent player in the GCC.

Among the relationships – I've already talked about Saudi influence in Bahrain; it is quite large. The second would be the UAE. The relationship between the king [of Bahrain] and the ruler of the UAE, between the [Bahraini] crown prince and the UAE's crown prince, are very strong. I would suspect there is a lot of support coming from the UAE for the royal family, including monetary support. I know that when we were discussing the basing of the F-18s in Bahrain, we went to the Emiratis to see two things: one, "Can you exert some influence on these guys?" And two, "If we can't put them in Bahrain, can we put them in the UAE?" Not optimal; if you know the map, Bahrain is right in the center, closest to the airfields. The Saudis didn't want us to put them in there [the UAE] and frankly it's easier to operate out of Bahrain. We ended up by the way putting them in Kuwait for about six months when Mattis finally told the field marshal to kiss off. The UAE already has a fairly sizable American air presence, and a sizeable force of their own. So they really didn't want – I don't know, I don't recall getting what the answer was from the UAE. Often – this is not exclusive to Arab and Gulf countries – you never get a "no." They tell you it's under consideration, we think it's possible... Then you just wait. After a certain point, I would go back to Washington and say, "They're telling us 'no.' We need to accept 'no' and move on to our next alternative." They [the Arabs] don't like to say no.

Q: What was the Iranian official presence on Bahrain?

KRAJESKI: They had an embassy and an ambassador prior to 2011. In 2011 – I had not arrived yet, I was still at National Defense University, but I was following this. There was an incident that occurred around the height of the demonstrations in Bahrain, and Bahrain withdrew its ambassador in Iran and Iran withdrew their ambassador in Bahrain. The embassy was drawn down considerably. So they did not have much of an official diplomatic presence when I arrived in October 2011. It never got much bigger.

There was an Iranian diplomat on the island. They did not send back their ambassador even though the Bahrainis sent back their ambassador to Tehran and let it be known that they would accept an Iranian ambassador (that's in 2012). The Iranians never did. They really weren't much of a presence. Commercially, they had a significant banking

presence prior to the financial sanctions levied against them in 2010 and 2011, when we really went after the movement of all the Iranian money in the world and we forbade banks that wanted to use the international financial system from dealing with Iran. Since all of those financial systems go through New York, if they wanted to deal with us they couldn't deal with Iran. That really stopped banking. That's probably, as we look at this deal that was made on the nukes, that was a major factor in the Iranian decision I think; they couldn't move money any more. They couldn't pay for anything. They had to pay using cash. This story the past couple of days of us paying them in cash for the F-4 deal that we squelched back in 1981? That's the reason we paid them in cash, because we couldn't move the money. We couldn't write a check or do a cash transfer out of a New York bank; we paid them in \$100 bills, palettes of \$100 bills. Whether or not it was ransom for the folks being held there, I'll leave that for others. The point is, the banks in Bahrain, and there were a couple with sizable holdings, were allowed to keep their Iranian holdings, but weren't allowed to let the Iranians draw on them. They could continue to invest the funds and make money. I forget the amount; it wasn't a whole lot of money, \$20 million or so. They could invest it and make money off of it, but none of it could go to the Iranians and the Iranians couldn't access the account to pay for anything. It just sat there.

Prior to 2011 they [the Iranians] had some trading companies there, and banking, financial interests. By the time I got there in October 2011 and over the next two years, those dried up. Iranian presence, influence, actual on-the-ground was pretty small in my view. But still, Iran loomed large in the political-security space.

Q: Was there small boat traffic between them?

KRAJESKI: Not that much. It is a goodly distance to go. It's one of the wider parts of the Gulf. If you're smuggling out of Iran, the best place to go is to Ras al-Khaima, up near the Straits of Hormuz. That's the closest. Ras al-Khaima is one of the emirates, the northernmost one right near Oman. There's a great spot up there. When I was in the UAE, a group of us from the consulate rented a small house. The plan was to take a dhow (which we did) that took us all through the Musandam which are like the fjords except without the trees. It's an amazingly beautiful place. Dolphins swim up alongside, the water is crystal clear. We'd park the dhow and go swimming. But that particular town is the major smuggling point with Iran. We walked out on the beach in the evening – I'm the consul-general from America and trying to stop smuggling was one of our policy points. I walked out to the point about 6:00 in the evening.

There were 30 or 40 feet long aluminum open boats with a very powerful 70, 80, 100 horsepower engines. They were loading these boats. I'm just standing around. They look like south Asian, Pakistani laborers. They're loading them up with Johnny Walker Black Label, cases of Marlboro cigarettes, big boxes of Pampers diapers – apparently you could get a good price for disposable diapers in Iran. I was laughing and talking to these guys, or trying to – the language issue was hard, trying to find somebody who speaks a dialect of Arabic that I could follow; or find a Pakistani who spoke English. They said, "Every night these boats are fully loaded and just at dusk, they take off and go." The American

Navy patrols this area, but it's very hard for a destroyer or a frigate to stop one of these small boats. Are you really going to stop a load of Pampers?

They did have a collision while we were there; one of these boats collided with one of our frigates and a couple of smugglers were killed. They would head out to the point on the other side. Not that far away, he said about three hours on the water. Then they come back at dawn, coming across just as the first light is breaking. I said, "What do they bring back?" He said, "Goats and sheep." Apparently you can buy them cheap in Iran and sell them dear in the Emirates. Some agricultural stuff as well. Some of the guys smuggled oil out of Kuwait but that was a whole different operation, not here.

So back to your question on Bahrain; it's a little farther away. It's probably 10 hours. With the smuggling we were watching closely – bomb-making stuff or weapons – a larger boat would probably come out of Basra and that area, stay in Iranian waters, and at a certain point come out into the middle. Then a small boat from Bahrain would head out to the dhow and they'd off-load at sea and come back.

Q: I was consul-general in Naples and freighters would come out, stay more than three miles out, and they had these blue boats – no markings. They would load up with cigarettes and liquor and dope. The coast guard would try to stop them. Sometimes there'd be fake boats with nothing which would get in the way. The consulate-general was right on the gulf, and used to watch this. The shipyards were full of these empty hulls.

KRAJESKI: I'm sure I told the story; smuggling's been going on since there were borders and taxes. The [Dubai] customs guy told me, "You Americans need to understand. For us in Dubai, you have smuggling, and that's business. Then you have illegal smuggling – guns, drugs, people and money. We'll work with you on those. The rest of this stuff is business. Are you really going to stop a dhow full of Pampers?"

Q: I remember in Naples talking about this. Everybody said, "Well, it's bad." I remember asking, "How many of you buy cigarettes with tax stamps on them?" There was dead silence.

KRAJESKI: For Italians, it's a national sport to evade taxes! The last point on smuggling – not much was smuggled into Bahrain because everything could be brought in legally. The prices were actually pretty low. The major smuggling went into Saudi Arabia from places like Bahrain, so things would be brought in legally into Bahrain and then brought across the causeway – legally. But there was also some smuggling as well.

Q: Particularly something like liquor which was illegal in Saudi.

KRAJESKI: Right – and it was not [illegal] in Bahrain. Anybody could buy. Bahrainis could buy booze in Bahrain.

Q: We used to come from the consulate-general to Bahrain. We would load our suitcases full of liquor. I remember being frightened; I thought if my suitcase burst I will be persona non grata and it will look like I had a liquor problem!

KRAJESKI: That kind of smuggling still goes on. With the causeway now – after the terrorist attacks, they really tightened up security on the causeway to the point where it was starting to affect business. A number of companies in Bahrain like Kraft Foods and a big paper goods company did all of their manufacturing in Bahrain, because they could import all of the raw materials easily. The ports were efficient. You could hire Pakistani workers at a good price. You could build a modern factory. The infrastructure was good – electricity, water, sewage. The Bahrainis encouraged it. They had industrial zones on the island, and they were producing for the Saudi market. These companies relied on the easy flow of goods across that causeway to the Saudi markets.

As security tightened up and traffic increased, the island – it's a tiny island. The causeway began at the northwestern tip of the island over to Dhahran in Saudi; the highway would have 250 of these big trucks waiting to get across. A lot of the importers would use Bahraini ports to import into Saudi, because Saudi ports were so inefficient. They brought a lot of stuff into the Bahraini airport because it was more efficient and better run. The Saudis are not the most efficient folks in the world. They stop to pray five times a day. They would only open the causeway at 6:00 AM and close it at 6:00 PM. They finally expanded to 24 hours.

The guy running this big paper company, Kimberly Clark, he was a member of the chamber of commerce and we'd talk to him. A lot of these British, American, German companies were really unhappy; it was cutting into their profits. We ambassadors were often talking to the business community and trying to influence the Bahraini government, which was easy; the Bahrainis were frustrated, too. Problem was influencing the Saudis to make the crossing more efficient and clear this backlog of trucks. This paper goods guy said "I could have a truck do three trips a day, load here in Bahrain and empty in Saudi three times. Now, I can't get one a day done. It's killing us." He stopped plans to double the size of their production facility; they made feminine items as they called them, tampons, pads. They made some other things, too, and sold them all in the Saudi market.

Kraft Food had to cut down a lot of its cheese production. Saudis are crazy for that jarred cheese spread. The other thing that Kraft made was Tang, and during Ramadan especially they said they could not make enough Tang for the Saudi demand. They would stock up. Tang – it's an orange drink with many flavors now, just mix with water. Apparently that's how they got their kids to drink more water during Ramadan, when everybody was trying to rehydrate. They love Tang. I hadn't had Tang since I was camping as a Boy Scout. Remember the astronauts – all of us were drinking Tang when I was 16 years old. It was the breakfast drink you hiked with because the astronauts drank it. It's still manufactured in Bahrain for the Saudi market.

Q: We touched on this before – what was the human rights problem by the time you left?

KRAJESKI: I'll approach this in two ways, with two voices in my head, one in each ear. The first voice is the human rights community; Amnesty International, Doctors without Borders, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, all of whom had during the Arab Spring and in some cases before it, got involved in Bahrain. At one point, Amnesty International had its Middle East office in Bahrain.

After 2001, when the new king came in and opened the political process and allowed the opposition party to establish; there was an opposition newspaper. There was a big effort, led by the new crown prince, to educate and employ Shia, to bring them in [to the mainstream]. Bahrain was considered a human rights oasis in the Gulf, what with Saudi Arabia chopping off people's hands and throwing out Christians.

But after the Arab Spring, that changed. The Bahraini government bristled at the criticism, whether from these groups or from governments like our own. The Bahrain leadership – and I'll put the crown prince here as the principle spokesperson because he is one of the more objective, rationale, intelligent and well-educated of the royal family, he understood the issues they had. He balked; he disagreed with what he called our lack of context. Why didn't we place what Bahrain did in 2011 in the larger context of what Bahrain had been trying to do in the previous decade and what went on in other countries in the region? He would mostly look north to Iraq and Iran.

I said that was a sympathetic argument, but not one that plays when you've got these human rights groups who've got contacts in Bahrain, mostly in jail not because they fomented violent revolution but because they complained about the human rights situation or opposed the government politically. The government had stopped allowing human rights organizations to come to Bahrain. When I first arrived, they wouldn't let them in. They finally grudgingly let Amnesty in for five days when they came to do their annual report. They became very prickly about it. It was quite real.

In 2011 – there's a report called the Bahrain Independent Commission of Investigation (BICI) led by an Egyptian-American human rights/civil rights lawyer, out of a college in Illinois. He conducted a very thorough study of what happened in 2011. It's not something human rights organizations made up and exaggerated; it's not something that the government successfully hid. There is no question that when the government made the decision to shut down the demonstrations and clear the square, a quote from the crown prince: "We sent in a bunch of thugs." Mostly Pakistani, mostly Baluch members of the interior ministry's riot police. They were ill-trained and ill-equipped. They were Baluch Sunnis; they didn't give a shit about the Shia. This was the old British way. Bring in somebody from the outside who doesn't have a dog in the fight. Whack anybody in their way. There's ample evidence of hundreds if not thousands of people being badly beaten and abused. Thousands arrested. Hundreds of those were tortured. In some cases, the torture was being whacked about the ears with a rubber hose or truncheons; not really torture, it's abuse. That's one thing I learned out there; be careful when you use the word "torture" because – this is maybe irrelevant to what I'm talking about, but I had an opposition leader I knew well who was arrested while I was there; he was held for about six weeks because he waved the flag of a violent opposition party during the legitimate

opposition party's rally. I said, "Khalil, were you abused?" And he said, "Once they made me run up the stairs very fast. It was like torture." I said, "No, Khalil, that's not torture."

The definition of torture is really fungible. But there certainly was a lot of abuse, and some of the abuse was meticulously documented, in this report and elsewhere. There is a number – I think about 40-something. My numbers are always bad, I'll try to correct some of these in the transcripts if I can. It was fewer than 100 people killed, either died in custody or tortured to death. Fewer than 50. Not a huge number of people.

There were a number of internationally-renowned cases, the doctors being one that was the headlines. These were a group of doctors and nurses at the largest public hospital in Bahrain, Salmaniya. Salmaniya, the poor people's hospital. It was quite a good hospital by the way; we used it. Embassy staffers used it because the quality of care and equipment and expertise of the doctors were quite good. The government during that 10-year period where they were trying to win over the Shia community had invested a lot of money in this hospital. It was staffed by a number of Shia whose training had been paid for by the government - medical and administrative personnel.

During the demonstrations which lasted a couple of weeks, people were being whacked about the ears every day in confrontations with the riot police; they were being brought to this hospital. CNN and Al Jazeera in particular [reported on this] – there is an Al Jazeera special they did on this hospital and what it did during the demonstrations. Basically, they [the doctors and nurses] treated people. But there were stories (in the Sunni and government press) that they actually arms caches, that Salmaniya was a place where people could get weapons. Completely untrue. I never saw any evidence to support this. Or that the medical staff were refusing to treat Sunnis, and many [Sunni] police were being injured. It's true that many police were injured, as often happens. This hospital was walking distance from Pearl Roundabout where the demonstration was. There was even one story how an ambulance came in with a badly injured riot policeman in the back, and the staffers pushed his stretcher and spilled the guy onto the driveway and refused to treat him. I don't think that's true either, but a lot of people believed it.

When the crackdown came on March 15, 2011, the hospital was one of the first places to be cleared. The riot police cleared it brutally and arrested 30 or 40 of the staff and charged them with supporting the violent opposition and providing weapons to demonstrators. I knew a number of the doctors were tortured. Some were held for months. Some were convicted by military tribunals that very quickly ran through cases; hundreds of people were convicted and imprisoned.

When I got there in October 2011 – we felt the situation was turning in the right direction with the establishment of the independent commission and the king's acceptance of it. (I know I've talked about all of this before.) But in fact, the situation was still quite harsh. During my time there, there was a slow, grudging release of the doctors. I believe all of them were eventually released.

One of my more interesting conversations with the king was during a dinner [in late December 2011] at his house with my daughter and wife and a few other people, the Navy Admiral Mark Fox was there with his wife and daughter. We were talking about the BICI report that had just been released. I talked about this before, this great scene where the king accepted the report and committed himself to carrying out all of its recommendations. [At dinner] I said to the king, "There are some things you can do easily and quickly that will gain you great credibility regarding your intentions to carry out these recommendations. One of them is to pardon the doctors." (There were like 12 left in jail). He looked at me and said, "There are no doctors in jail. They've all been released." I said, "No, Your Majesty, there are still 12 in jail. I think you should look at their cases. This would be a great gesture to do this, with the human rights community, the opposition, your many supporters and friends in the international community." He insisted and was getting a little agitated with me. I'm a hard-nosed New Englander, an American, so I said [again], "You need to work with this." His wife was sitting on the other side of him, Princess Sabika, a wonderful woman, [she] saw the king was getting agitated. She grabbed him by the arm and said, "You need to talk to the American ambassador about the golf course." He said, "Oh yes, let me tell you about my golf course!" They knew that I loved golf. So Princess Sabika probably helped me out, this new American ambassador.

I sympathized with both sides. With the folks saying it's not so bad; we did some things, we made mistakes, and we're going to recover from them. We allow opposition, we don't brutalize our population. Then I had the human rights people saying you've got the doctors, you've got this case and the Khawaja sisters. These two girls, Maryam Al Khawaja and her sister, one lived in England, one in Bahrain. They did sit-down strikes. I used to talk to the opposition, I'd tell them you need to look at some previous opposition movements in history and look at Gandhi and Martin Luther King and what they did. I really shouldn't have given this kind of advice to an opposition group. There's a whole body of instruction that's out there and available to opposition groups on how to conduct a non-violent opposition that's effective. They could get 20,000 people on the street to demonstrate; that's a sizable number in a small country like Bahrain. You get those 20,000 people to sit down in the middle of the square – they weren't allowed in the roundabout anymore, which had been completely destroyed. They razed the big pearl monument, they built a standard intersection there and it was still closed. But they could go on the streets. "Go and sit in front of the ministry of interior. Six hundred people, 1000 people, 1500 people, just sit; they haul you away and arrest you, charge you and then release you. Then go do it again." But they never did that. But these two girls did, Maryam and Zainab, whose father got a life sentence as a leader of the uprising as the government called it in 2011. He was on a hunger strike.

There were genuine human rights issues. There were genuine people on the government side who recognized the problems and were trying to deal with it. There were diplomats trying to make this work, because Bahrain was important to us. We didn't want to lose Bahrain because we had the biggest damn Navy base in the Middle East there and we had invested hundreds of millions of dollars in this place and were expanding and building it.

We liked it; we liked dealing with the Bahrainis. The Saudis liked having us there a lot. The Iranians didn't like us there, so another plus.

When all this shit came down in 2011 and Bahrain was being criticized for the suppression of its opposition, there was a lot in the press and also within the government about whether we should move the base. "The moral imperative is for the United States to move the base." Remember, this is 2011 when we thought the Arab Spring was the great blossoming of democracy in the Arab world. Not so many blooms have succeeded. Within the Obama Administration, led by people like our current ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, there were a lot of people who said we needed to pressure this government to do the right thing regarding the opposition and its human rights abuses. The lever of influence is the Navy base. The Pentagon, from four-stars to deputy secretaries said, "You have to keep the base there. Your number one priority is to make it so we can keep the Navy base there." People would say, what's Plan B if the base has to move? They would say, "Plan B is to make sure Plan A doesn't fail. Plan A is Bahrain."

In fact, there were Plan B's, but they were lousy. Nowhere else really would have let us in. The Emiratis talked a little about doing a base at Abu Dhabi, but it was not as good a port and the Emiratis were much harder to deal with than the Bahrainis.

It made no sense in Kuwait; Kuwait's ports are all artificial and are all jammed with the Iraqi and Iranian ports. So there are really narrow strips of international water. There are actually places coming out of Basra that the Kuwaitis, Iraqis, and Iranians all claim as part of their limit. There is an international channel cut through that, but in fact you are in Iraqi and Iranian water. About six months ago, one of our smaller ships wandered into Iranian waters right at that spot. So the Navy doesn't like to operate up there. Certainly not big ships; they would never put a carrier anywhere near there. Just too close to potential trouble. Keep the base. We kept the base.

Now the Bahraini opposition is disbanded and illegal. The head of the opposition has a 15 year sentence. I think the newspaper is still being printed. There is certainly within the Shia community a sense that it's over. All the efforts of the king and crown prince from 2000 to 2010? That's all gone now. Building goodwill, training programs – they had a university, the Bahraini Polytechnic Institute that while both Sunni and Shia, was designed to get the smartest of the Shia and get them into hi-tech professions. That's pretty much gone now. There is a [recent] article by Ron Newman who was ambassador to Bahrain in 2004, about how the Bahrainis have really lost ground. They're trying to maintain a status quo that in the long run is likely unsustainable; that's his point. When I see Ron next, I'll argue with him a bit about that because these monarchies have a remarkable ability to survive. Even in Bahrain, which is not a rich country, they have huge resources to do that. Given the situation in the region right now, is it really wise for us to try to push them over the edge or forget to keep them on board with us; it's more useful for us to have Bahrain as an ally and a supporter than to have a Bahrain in turmoil that would then be completely managed by the Saudis?

Q: While you were there, what about this news outlet Al Jazeera? It became quite a factor all over.

KRAJESKI: I remember when Al Jazeera first started, out of Doha in the '90s. CNN's big time was the first Iraq War. Al Jazeera started in the '90s. It was Qatari-funded. It was mostly looked at as a thumb in the eye to the Saudis, something the Qataris love to do. If you look at a map, Qatar's like a thumb sticking up there. The Al Thanis, the family that runs Qatar – this is also concurrent with their discovery of the great North Dome, this enormous gas field that they share with Iran in the Gulf. A huge part of it is in Qatari waters; they were just beginning to exploit it, to establish the LNG (liquefied natural gas) trains to sell this stuff. Pipelines to places like the Emirates. There's enormous wealth pouring into Qatar at this point, with a tiny population.

So they started this cable news channel, in Arabic. The first channel that was international in the sense that it wasn't the Egyptian or Syrian or Saudi or Dubai news. It was controlled by the Al Thanis and their money, so there were certain redlines. Couldn't criticize the Al Thanis. But everybody else was fair game.

It really very quickly established itself as the only broadcast news, cable, satellite news – and satellite systems are growing now too, the big Orbit systems. Arabsat is up there. So Arabs throughout the region are beginning to tune into cable and satellite news. Jazeera is something new. It's not just the Saudis. If you're an Egyptian, all you could get before this through your antenna was the Egyptian news; maybe you could get CNN now, but that's in English so [it has] limited influence. BBC I think is establishing their channels now. Jazeera comes in, it's the only Arabic one out there.

It has immediate impact. Egyptians don't like the Saudis very much; they like seeing programs in which the Saudi government is being criticized. They didn't like their own government all that much. Suddenly, Mubarak is being criticized on these talk shows. Jazeera quickly established itself as a real, nose-to-nose confrontational - There was one I used to watch, the *McLaughlin Group*? They were pretty mild. The main thing was entertainment and shouting at each other. There are famous incidents on Al Jazeera of people shouting at each other and getting into fights; fist fights, wrestling matches, throwing pieces of the set at each other. It was wonderfully entertaining, and it was critical of governments that had been above or outside of public criticism before. It was immediately popular.

Over the course of the 10-20 years I was in the Middle East, it became standard that when you walked into a big majilis, it would have cushions and chairs, everybody's sitting there drinking tea and smoking (all men, usually), there would be a big-screen TV in the corner, and that TV would have Jazeera on it. If something was happening in the world, the sound would be up as well. Al Arabiya in Dubai tried to compete; they didn't criticize the Saudis or Emiratis. Al Arabiya's a pretty good station, but Jazeera quickly established itself as the real premiere Arab news station in the Middle East.

When we invaded Iraq in 2003, Jazeera was there on the ground. While at first they were like embeds, and if not welcomed, they were permitted in that big press pool that was following the American military and the international coalition. But they're unique among most of those organizations in that everybody speaks Arabic – the cameramen, the reporters, technicians – all Arabs. So they immediately can get much deeper into a story in a place like Fallujah or Tikrit than CBS can do. Even if CBS has the best interpreter in the world – my daughter is a freelance journalist who uses what they call 'fixers,' people who interpret, set up interviews, do translations for them. But there's a wall you run into if you don't have the language. There was no wall for Jazeera.

So suddenly they were reporting stories that we (Bremer was particularly [hot] about this) looked on as harmful. Not only to our political interests – OK, we can live with that – but harmful to our security and military objectives. There were stories of how Jazeera would get a tip from somebody in Fallujah or Sadr City or somewhere in Baghdad that there was going to be an IED attack on American patrols, and they would set up their cameras, wait for the American patrol to come through, and get all the shots. Shots of the explosion, of the firefight. I don't know how much that's true, but they certainly were on the scene more than anybody else.

Bremer wanted to arrest them all, close down the office, throw them out of Iraq. A number of us; myself, Robert Ford, we argued that no, we really need Jazeera. What we need to do is make sure Al Jazeera gets our story. We need them with us, not out there on their own, because they're the ones the Arabs are watching and we need to use them. We don't have that platform. We decided we would set up Al Iraqiya, the Iraqi version of Jazeera. It had some success, but it was always known as the American-funded Arab news channel, so its credibility was immediately suspected by the Arab watchers. It still exists, no longer funded by us; it's considered a credible news program in Iraq. There were other competitors. Nilesat, the Egyptians tried to set up theirs. The Saudis even tried. The Emiratis did Al Arabiya. But Jazeera was the first and remains the most influential. They tried to branch into an English version here, Al Jazeera America. In the beginning, they attracted some excellent talent. People like Riz Khan out of CNN, who I was interviewed by. A number of other really good reporters. They did some of the best reporting on the 2008 American election. I was in Iraq at the time, and Jazeera America was doing a terrific job. They just closed; they couldn't make any money. They were a very good, objective view of what was going on in American politics. I've always been a supporter of Jazeera. The Bahrainis hated it.

Q: You mean the Bahraini government?

KRAJESKI: The Bahraini government. They [Jazeera] did this big series on the demonstrations, were on the ground. Like all news organizations – CNN, BBC, Fox included – they get things wrong. The good ones, and Al Jazeera is a good one, try to correct the record and come back. There was a story during the height of the Pearl Roundabout demonstrations that a Bahraini-crewed American helicopter, a Blackhawk, had strafed the crowds below. Absolutely false. There were no eye-witnesses to this, but the story got out there. Once somebody says "There's a helicopter that fired on the

crowd!” Boom, it’s all over the internet and cable news. Jazeera reported it as did CNN; CNN later corrected it. Jazeera got thrown out very shortly after that. They were banned. The special they did on the hospital they did undercover, which really infuriated the Bahrainis. They left people in Bahrain unbeknownst to the Bahrainis, who were Al Jazeera reporters. They did a lot of the camera work on cell-phones. I watched it; it’s a very professional documentary, not entirely inaccurate, of what happened at the hospital in the days immediately preceding the crushing of the demonstrations. Jazeera’s still out there. If you walked into a Shia house, they would often have on the Lebanese Hezbollah cable – Al Manar, it’s called, funded by the Iranians. That would be on often in the majilis, while every Sunni would have Arabiyah on; some folks would have Jazeera.

Q: How did women dress in Bahrain? Was there much of the full-blown hijab?

KRAJESKI: No. If you saw a woman in full hijab with a face-veil, gloves – 100% Saudi. You could see them in the malls – there were huge malls in Bahrain built to attract Saudis over the causeway on a Thursday night. Used to be Wednesday; they changed their weekend to Friday-Saturday in Saudi. On Thursday night, the folks would come across the causeway to shop and go to the movies. You couldn’t get into a movie theater on a Thursday or Friday night in Bahrain; we tried once. So you would see in the big shopping malls women in full hijab, and they were 100% Saudi.

Of the Sunni Bahraini women, some would wear abaya. Some would dress in a conservative Western style. Some would dress in very fashionable Western style. The Bahrainis were very cool about it. They regarded themselves as very cosmopolitan. Sunni Bahraini women were cosmopolitan, international. Well-educated; women had been educated for generations, not just newly-educated. They were in law, business, government across the board. Generally, in an office; I went to see the minister of Justice, and one of his key advisors, a lawyer, was a woman, key in this BICI process. She would be dressed the way you might see a woman at the State Department dressed. Business suit, hair nicely done, make up, nothing excessive.

At the restaurants in the evening, you’d see a mix. Shia women were more conservatively dressed. To go to the demonstrations, which I only did once (my political officers or FSNs would go to the demonstrations). The demonstration would start in one Shia town and gather people as they walked down Al Budaiya, the big highway in the northern part of the country. Normally there’d be [about] 4000 people, sometimes as many as 20,000 out there. It’s a boulevard with a strip of trees and grass in the middle. On one side there’d be all the men, dressed in white. The other side the women, all dressed in black. Many of them had their faces uncovered. But separated. I used to laugh at my opposition friends, “Sooner or later you have to get over that. You’re not going to win a lot of votes among Sunni women. If that’s your goal as an opposition you have to win Sunni votes. You’re not going to win many with that kind of an optic out there.”

When you went to the malls on a non-weekend when it was mostly Bahrainis or expats, you could tell Shia women from Sunni women; the Shia women would be at least in abaya. The head could be uncovered, just wearing a flowing abaya. Sometimes they’d

wear the head covering, sometimes the hijab as well. It was a more relaxed society. There weren't men out there criticizing women for the way they were dressing. You could see expat women in various states of undress; it used to knock me out that somebody would go into a mall in short shorts and a tank top and flip flops and wonder why the men were falling all over themselves and following them down [the mall]. We would always advise folks to dress conservatively, but don't be concerned. If you're on the beach, you can wear a bikini. In the mall, dress nicely but you don't have to cover. It was true. The Bahrainis prided themselves on this. One of their great laments – so much of my career has been filled with the lamenting of the oppressed and of the folks who had somehow lost their place through no fault of their own. But one of their great laments among mostly Sunni men and women was this loss of liberality, this loss of the social fabric of Bahrain. [The Sunnis would claim that] Shia and Sunni got along so well and you couldn't tell a Shia from a Sunni in a public place. It was an exaggeration of a past that didn't fully exist...

Q: We see it being played out in our politics of today.

KRAJESKI: I don't want to go back to the 1950s thank you very much and get polio.

Q: I remember in Bahrain going there with somebody. The women were in the full-blown things; this is back in the 1950s. He said, "She's a prostitute, she's not." It was in the way they walked. And pretty soon, I could pick them out, too!

KRAJESKI: In Yemen, the hookers all wore full hijab. Bahrain was a fascinating place. It was tiny, so there were many days when I was bored out of my skull. Particularly on a Friday, if my wife wasn't in town and I didn't have anything planned. I hated making my security detail work on a Friday. My detail were mostly Yemenis hired by the ministry of Interior. Bahraini citizens of Yemeni descent; they thought Yemenis made the best bodyguards; having worked in Yemen for three years, I agreed with them. But I hated to take their day off and make them work to take me to play golf or go somewhere. So I would often sit at home. There wasn't any place you could go – there was no real town center. There was one part of town with nice restaurants and some carpet shops. There was an old souk, but mostly reminded us of shopping in Madras or Delhi somewhere, just lots of shops, none of which attracted us. A gold market. There weren't many places to go and just hang out.

Q: What about beaches?

KRAJESKI: Interestingly, most of the coastal land was owned by the government and the Khalifas. So the Khalifas had great beaches, huge beaches on their palaces. The best beachside was the Saudi, west side, starting at the causeway, along that tip which was mostly Shia, then down the west side where all the Khalifa had their palaces. The crown prince's, the king's were down there. There was one public beach – there was a big hotel, the Sofitel had a really nice beach. But you had to be rich. I could go because I was the ambassador, and my wife and I would go and have a little lunch, and might swim in the beach. It's also brutally hot, and the water is like bathwater. The Gulf is not very deep

and it's warm. I remember swimming in Dubai the first time I went out there, it was tepid. Nothing refreshing about swimming in the Gulf. I used to swim in swimming pools that were chilled.

Q: I remember the Bapco (Bahrain Petroleum Company) hotel had a guesthouse.

KRAJESKI: Yep, they had the golf course.

Q: That's where I would stay when I was doing my consular duties.

KRAJESKI: Bapco is still run – Occidental, British Petroleum was quite big with Bapco. They still had a large complex. It's very close to the new golf course that I belonged to, the Royal Golf Club which is the one Colin Montgomery designed. It actually had oil pipes running through it. It was an environmental hazard, so you got a free drop if you hit your ball into the oil pipes which ran right through the course. There were a number of holes where if you sliced or pulled a little too much, you'd end up in the pipes.

Q: Was golf important in the social business life of well-to-do Bahrainis?

KRAJESKI: Some. More [Bahrainis played golf] than [Emiratis] played golf in the Emirates; there were a few Emiratis who played.

Q: Very important in southeast Asia.

KRAJESKI: The companies often had big golf days. I have golf shirts with HSBC Bank on them, Citi – the banks would have their golf day. Because the American business presence was not that large – the largest were the Brits by far. Most of our guys were in Dubai. I didn't have [in Bahrain], like I would have in Dubai, the CEO of General Motors coming through and the local General Motors guy would set up a golf game and would want the consul-general to come and play, so I would play. That was an important part of business in Dubai for the expat community. Not so much in Bahrain. In Bahrain, it was very social. There were a lot of Bahrainis who played. The king loved to play golf. He didn't play on the big course; he didn't like it. He had a nine-hole course at his palace, designed by Jack Nicklaus. It was a short, executive-style course. He would have one tournament a year on it. The American Mission Hospital, which he loved – they were the first hospital in the Gulf, came in 1918 or 1920. Every American visitor who came, the king would tell about the American Mission Hospital and how much he loved it. It was still open and the king supported it. They had their tournament on the king's course every year. I would always participate and bring a team from the embassy over, sponsor a team. Hard to do; now as an ambassador, you're not allowed to raise money particularly among your staff. My DCM loved to play golf, my RSO. We could get a four-person team together but it cost \$250 to get a team. I didn't want to spend the whole amount, had to split it out. Had to be careful with the ethics people. But I thought supporting the American Mission Hospital was a good thing to do. One year, when I said it was hard to raise the money, they said "Don't worry, you can do it for free." I said, "I'm not going to do it for free."

Then I played with the king twice during my stay. The course wasn't used that much. It was beautiful, right at his palace. But it wasn't used that much and unless you're using and maintaining a golf course, weird things can happen. Root rot in the greens. You really need it to be professionally taken care of. The guys that ran the Royal Golf Course would come over all the time to try to help His Majesty maintain the course. The king sponsored a Bahraini youth program. There were a couple of 12-year-olds who were really great. They're starting to play on the Asian circuit for young people. I think it's a matter of time before the Bahrainis have somebody on the Asian tour and maybe the European tour. There was a fairly large contingent of Bahraini, almost all wealthy, almost entirely Sunni, who liked to play golf. I'd see them quite often.

Q: Do you think there's anything else we should cover on Bahrain?

KRAJESKI: I think we've pretty much done it. As the ambassador from 2011 to 2014, I considered my tenure there to be a success. Not because we greatly improved the human rights performance or expanded democracy and open society. We didn't do much of that.

Q: I have to ask – what about the 12 doctors?

KRAJESKI: They were all released having served most of their sentence. There may still be one in jail. There was one when I left; he was considered to have other issues. Even the human rights community – they never gave any leeway at all to the government, but there were some who would talk to me about the fact this guy probably got involved in some dirty stuff. So the doctors were released. The best-known human rights activist in Bahrain, Nabeel Rajab, a Shia who was very prominent in the demonstrations who was arrested and imprisoned for three or four years – no, two years, was released while I was there. He's back in jail again. The head of the opposition party, Sheikh Ali Salman, is in jail. He's a Shia cleric. They have stripped citizenship from Sheikh Isa Qassim, who's a senior Shia cleric. You can make an argument that they've gone backwards on civil rights and open society. On security and military, intel – I don't think our relationship has ever been stronger. Coldly put, that was our main reason to be there. We were there because we needed a place to operate from, and the Bahrainis provided that for us.

Q: Was Bahrain at all an intelligence post for Iran, that you can talk about?

KRAJESKI: The short, unclassified answer is "Yes." The longer, classified answer is classified. Iran loomed very large in what we were doing. But we also were very focused on Al Qaeda, particularly the movement of money and people through the Gulf. Financing, both out of Bahrain and out of other areas in the Gulf. We had one of our strongest relationships that I've ever experienced between the ministry of Interior and our intelligence services. Our chief of station had excellent relations with their head. I relied on that contact many times. They spoke together directly. I saw them often. We did a lot of cross-training, even when things were going sour with the military side we maintained a very strong relationship on that aspect, and never got any blowback from Washington or anywhere else on it. It was valuable. They had a small but well-trained and efficient

service who could do things in the region – we weren't so interested in internal Bahrain, except for the Iranian aspect. But elsewhere in the region, all I can say is they were very good partners.

Q: Did you retire from this post?

KRAJESKI: I did not. I had planned to. I submitted all of my papers for retirement in October 2014. I told them since I was retiring, I would stay in Bahrain until my successor had been confirmed by the Senate. That process as you know can be very long and uncertain. Bill Roebuck had been nominated back in March 2014 to replace me. My three years were up in October but I said I'd stay until Bill could get out there, which turned out to be the middle of December. That's when he was confirmed; I was given the OK to leave. Pat Kennedy – Pat, with career guys who were looking for onward assignments after their ambassadorial posts, Kennedy was very strict with them and saying, "You're not going anywhere until your successor is confirmed." At one point, we had 40 chargé d'affaires and vacancies among ambassadorships around the world, because it took so long to confirm successors. Even in places like Bahrain where you're getting a professional in a country with no political interest. And the Senators used – when I was waiting for my confirmation; I was nominated in February of 2011, didn't get out there till October. I would always get calls from staffers (Republicans and Democrats) saying, "It's not about you. Nobody has any objection to your qualifications, but this and this is going on..." It was very political.

I was going to leave on December 15, retire on December 31st, and I got a call from Justin Siberell who is the deputy coordinator for counterterrorism in the bureau of counterterrorism, asking me if I would take a job that was just established and expanded, the special senior representative on foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, as ISIS moved into Iraq in 2014. A guy named Bob Bradtke – Bob was ambassador in Croatia – had come in and begun the position. They thought it would be short-term as they established these new international laws around the world to try to prevent people from being recruited by terrorist groups, traveling to Iraq and Syria, and fighting with ISIS. In fact, the situation expanded dramatically as ISIS very successfully recruited Europeans, Moroccans, Saudis, Americans, to go and fight. I agreed and withdrew my retirement – even though I was going to turn 65 in April and I told Pat Kennedy, "I'm going to be 65, I've got to retire." He said, "We'll find a workaround." They're very imaginative on workarounds now. They gave me a stay of mandatory retirement – I made Pat put in front of it "involuntary." So I took a couple of weeks off and in January started in the front office of CT (Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism), working with Tina Kaidanow and Justin Siberell and a really good team of people, but mostly traveling to Europe and North Africa and Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Q: I think this requires another session.

Q: Today is 9th of August 2016 with Tom Krajeski. Tom, where are we?

KRAJESKI: We're at the end! I left Bahrain in December of 2014, after three-plus years. I was intending to retire; had put all the papers in to retire. That's quite a process. I had even received all the approvals to the point where my name appeared in State Magazine as having retired, when I got a call from Justin Siberell, the deputy coordinator for counterterrorism back at State, and Tina Kaidanow, who I believe still is the coordinator for counterterrorism. They wanted me to take a newly established position that had previously been part-time, that they called the senior advisor on foreign fighters in Syria. This had been established in early 2014, filled by a former ambassador named Bob Bradtke, who had been ambassador to Croatia. The focus of it – and it was truly meant to be part-time in those days – was to be the point person for United States policy on establishing stronger restrictions and controls and a stronger legal environment to prevent people being recruited by terrorist groups in Syria, including ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front, and traveling from their home countries to Syria to fight.

In early 2014, it was recognized that the foreign terrorist fighters were a growing contingent and a very effective fighting force within these terrorist groups. We were discovering that not only were the fighters coming from more obvious source countries such as Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and places like Iraq; we were also seeing increasing signs of people going from the Balkan states – one of the reasons Bob Bradtke was brought on, because he had been a deputy assistant secretary for the Balkans plus ambassador to Croatia. We were seeing foreign fighters being recruited out of France, out of the mostly Muslim Northern-African immigrant communities. We were seeing them coming out of Germany, out of Belgium. There had been an incident in Belgium already where an attack had taken place; I believe it was a French citizen who had gone to Syria, come back, and then organized an attack in Belgium in early 2014. It was one of the first terrorist attacks in Europe traced back to ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front.

So State decided we needed to put more effort into trying to develop policies around the world to prevent the recruitment – so we were going to do a lot of community work and look at the means of how they recruited fighters, primarily through the internet and social media – and identify vulnerable communities. We were going to look at national laws that actually criminalized this action.

Much to our surprise, only the United States and a few other countries had a fairly strict legal regime that criminalized the action of going and fighting for a foreign terrorist group. Our criminal laws had to do with aiding and abetting terrorism, and had been on the books since 9/11 and in some cases before that, so that if you physically presenting yourself to them, you were assisting a terrorist group, and that's how we were going and prosecuting Americans. Many European countries did not have these laws – France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium.

So in early 2014 there was an international effort that eventually focused on the United Nations in September 2014. They passed United Nations Security Council resolution 2178. Under chapter seven of the charter, it could be enforced. The enforcement mechanisms are often vaguely described within the resolution, but the resolution itself was quite clear. It demanded that all member states take actions to prevent the

recruitment and travel, to increase border security, to create a more robust judicial structure that would criminalize and prosecute and imprison people, and would increase information-sharing among countries. When ISIS went into Iraq in June 2014, suddenly the crisis expanded, and we realized that beyond the violent terrorist groups in Syria that were fighting, there was a much larger threat that we saw develop quickly and dramatically across Iraq in 2014, as ISIS came close to the walls of Baghdad.

Q: The situation in Syria, you might explain where did the fall? The Assad regime was under threat – who was threatening it? We didn't like anybody there.

KRAJESKI: After 25 years in the Middle East, you get tired of hearing Middle Eastern hands telling you this is a very complicated situation. “There’s a lot going on here. Sometimes it’s difficult to sort through the conflicting loyalties, the brief alliances, the generational animosities, religious, ethnic, economic...” The problem of ISIS is deeper and far more threatening than we had first realized. It was at this point we formed the coalition led by General John Allen, four-star Marine general – he was the American lead in the international coalition to go after ISIS, focusing on the military aspect of it. A large part of his effort was going after the recruitment of foreign fighters. We had a number of other efforts we began. Again, we focused on the UN. They did pass a strongly-worded (for the United Nations; I’m not a fan of the UN but in this case the resolution was quite clearly worded) resolution that required countries to enact laws, increase border security, increase information flow and work with their communities.

So when I came in in January 2015, there were a lot of things going on. What I focused on was working with those countries we decided were most at risk, who were the largest producers of foreign fighters, who were the transit countries used to get into Syria and Iraq. So we’re looking at the routes people took out of Europe and northern Africa into Syria, and then working with countries on border security. We offered a lot of training through DHS (Department of Homeland Security), through ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), our border security forces. There’s a lot of different electronics sensing that can be used.

There are some basic things that surprised me - that countries were relatively casual about who entered and left their country. For example, if you are a member of the European Union, if you have an EU passport, when you enter any entry point into the EU – London, Athens, Paris, Rome – in many cases your passport was not even scanned. You simply showed the French passport and the Greek guy waved you in. Didn’t look at the picture, didn’t open it up. If you’ve traveled in Europe in the last five years, you’ve seen this. They have EU and those folks just walk through. Sometimes the guy would open the passport and look. But no scanning; done. It was relatively easy for people to enter the EU and the Schengen Area. This is a treaty among mostly EU where if you got a visa to one country, you were admitted to all of the countries. Intra-Europe border points were eliminated, so going from Italy to France, you were no longer stopped at the border point. You were already admitted no matter what citizenship – American, Argentinean, or Iraqi, you did not have to show any documentation at the French-Italian border because of the

Schengen Agreement. Countries recognized they had to do a lot more to strengthen their internal and border controls.

A week after I took the job was the attack on the French magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, in Paris in which five or six people were killed and some others were killed in a nearby Jewish bakery. Then there was an attack in Spain, another in Belgium. So countries began to focus more on who were conducting the attacks, how were they being trained and equipped, and how were they being inspired. As we looked at these three attacks, these were all citizens of the country in which the attack occurred. In only one case had we any evidence that one of the attackers had traveled to Syria, maybe undergone some training and had direct contacts with ISIS. What we did discover is that most of these people had been influenced by and were often associated with ISIS or Nusra recruiters in that community in Paris or Belgium. There was a connective tissue there. The great concern among many of these countries as they looked at the number of people who they believed had traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight for one of these groups was that some of those people were returning to conduct attacks in their countries of citizenship. We estimated at one point approximately 25,000 foreigners had gone to either fight or participate; a lot of these were women. I'm sure you remember the stories of the young women who were recruited by ISIS to marry foreign fighters or ISIS fighters, to raise families in some cases. There was a lot of support. People didn't just go to be fighters; they ran the ISIS computer systems or ISIS garbage pick-up in Mosul. This is when ISIS was claiming to be a government and were administering and ruling fairly large tracts of property in Iraq and Syria.

Like everything, it was very complex. You asked about Syria and the difficulty in sorting through these groups in Syria. It is extraordinarily complicated, and we're not good in my opinion in differentiating among bad guys or even differentiating among good guys. We like to support the good guys and beat the bad guys. It's really nice if there's a nice clear line, hopefully maybe even a line of trenches with guns on both sides, pointing at each other. That makes it kind of easy. Or there's a particular ideology. Fighting Communism, or fighting the Russians or the Soviet Union. We like it when we can identify our enemies. That really changed in the 1990s.

Q: The difficulty being that ISIS was going after Assad, and Assad was not in our terms a good guy. Normally we'd be all for deposing him.

KRAJESKI: Now that I'm retired, my political leanings become more obvious. I've been a huge fan of President Obama and this administration and what they've tried to do. I think domestically, economically they've had a number of successes. I think in the foreign policy sphere, not so many. In the Middle East, what they've failed to do is understand that at a certain point, for better or worse, you've got to throw your money on the table and make your bet. Decide who you're going to back, who you want to influence, who you want to beat, who you want to stop, how you want to do it – and you've got to just do it. This particular foreign policy crowd simply has a difficult time making that decision in complex situations. They are very careful analysts; the president is a very careful analyst. The president wants and he's capable of absorbing large

amounts of detailed, nuanced information. He looks at precedent. He talks to a lot of people. He asks a lot of questions. But this is not a legal case that grinds on for six years before a judge makes a decision about whether you do or don't get the property. This is a rapidly deteriorating and very dangerous situation.

That's part of the reason we didn't move in Syria. The second part is, we saw Syria as yet another pillar or tree blooming in the Arab Spring (how's that for a metaphor?). Another garden. This is 2011. We've watched as Ben Ali went down. Mubarak is driven out in a peaceful revolution. Qadhafi is collapsing. And there are demonstrations on the streets in Syria demanding more democracy, more accountability. We saw Syria as part of that. So early on, as Assad continued doing what Assads have always done in the face of political opposition, which is crushing it brutally without exception. As we saw him do that, we turned on Assad. The president said fairly early on, "Assad must go." U.S. policy is Assad will no longer be the president of Syria, this is going to happen inevitably, blah blah. We don't have to do a whole lot because the army's going to turn on him, the people are against him, the others in the region are going to support the opposition. We'll support the opposition too, but not in direct ways.

It hasn't really worked out that way. The major opposition we saw in Syria and Iraq in the north, we saw groups like Nusra Front, which was an affiliate or offshoot of Al Qaeda which has since distanced itself a little bit from Al Qaeda. A very harshly ruled Islamic extremist organization going back to the sharia laws, to the harsher aspects of Islam and imposing order. A lot of Nusra are Syrian Sunnis. They saw Assad as a Shia government being propped up by other Shia governments, specifically Iran. Or indirectly by Hezbollah out of Lebanon and Iraq. They see elements of sectarian war in this. They became the strongest force against Assad. The moderate opposition, which my good friend Robert Ford and others were trying to organize around the world, to create an alternative governing structure to Assad that Syrians could rally around, including rally around militarily.

Like so many exile groups – direct experience, I've already talked about it prior to our invasion of Iraq – these guys are usually a hodgepodge of various oppositionists who don't get along very well, have a difficult time agreeing on who's in charge. They often portray themselves to outsiders as being far more influential and powerful than they really are, in order to gain power and influence. If they can get the United States to back them, they'll be a more credible opposition. It's hard to sort through these. At a certain point – not sure what year that was – Robert Ford (and if you haven't talked to Robert, you should; he lives up in Vermont I think)... He was our last ambassador to Syria. I think technically – no, he resigned somewhat in protest. He was unhappy that this administration had failed to make the hard decision and failed to say at a certain point, "This is the opposition we've got." Assad is not going to step down voluntarily; he's not going to be forced out. The Iranians are increasing their support for Assad, along with Hezbollah. The Russians hadn't stepped in yet. At a certain point, the United States has got to put real money on the table. Weapons, training, special forces, increased air. No-fly zones to protect refugees. You'll remember, the refugee crisis was desperate and

getting worse. This is maybe 2013. Robert resigned before I left Bahrain and retired from the Foreign Service.

On one hand it's really hard to sort these guys out. On the other hand, if we want to make a difference we've got to bite the bullet and do it. That's hard for this group to do because it could easily go the wrong way.

Q: This counterterrorism group – did you sit and debate whom we should support? Or were they pretty much on one side and had more or less figured out what to do? Or were they adrift?

KRAJESKI: We're a country of laws and a country of a thousand voices and we see ourselves (rightly so) built on a moral political structure. So we tend to have things that we're against. We're against terrorism; we've been against terrorism since Yasser Arafat's boys hijacked planes back in the 1970s. I don't know when we began – CT as an organization I think was created in the 1980s. It was then not even a full bureau, just an office – it was called S/CT, one of those offices under the secretary. We began to designate groups (and individuals) as terrorists. Once you are designated as a terrorist, that's it. You can't easily appeal and not become a terrorist any more. Yasser Arafat succeeded and the PLO succeeded, but that was an extraordinary circumstance. There have been a few others we've taken a look at removing from the terrorist list.

But we're quick to put groups on and it's very difficult to take them off. So Nusra and ISIS and Al-Qaeda, these are terrorist groups. There's no discussion of whether we can support them. I won't go into classified areas here, but it's pretty clear – the president, Congress, the laws of the United States say, "Thou shall not support terrorist groups." We've designated Nusra as a terrorist group; end of debate. Some of us could argue that we're restricting ourselves a little too much here. There may be cases where we have to be a little less determined to defeat terrorism and maybe take advantage of what you've got when you've got it. We're not good at that; nobody is actually. The Brits claim they were back in the day, but the empire didn't last that long either so...

Q: There have been cases in the Middle East with Ollie North and others, we sold missiles to Iran.

KRAJESKI: In order to defeat the Sandinistas in Nicaragua! But particularly under Democratic administrations, that's wrong! Ollie North should have gone to jail. Did he go to jail? His secretary was Fawn Hall. But that was wrong, that was criminal.

Look at things more recently. This little kerfuffle last week when it was learned that we sent \$400 million in cash to the Iranians that happened to arrive the day that four imprisoned Americans were released. What did we do? We paid ransom. But we don't pay ransoms, we don't. Between you and me, we have managed to make arrangements in which payment is made for the release of American citizens.

Q: Do you remember as a kid, you learned the phrase, “Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute”? That was during the time of the Barbary pirates. We gave the equivalent of millions of dollars for ransom. We even built and gave a frigate to the bey of Algiers.

INTERN: The money to Iran was specifically not ransom money.

KRAJESKI: No, it was not. I listened to the White House spokesman explaining it and I can fully understand the rolling of eyes that must occur, but in fact the money was a result of a long-standing negotiation with the Iranian government over the refund on an arms sale. I think it was F-4s, wasn't it? In 1980, right after their revolution we stopped the sale and never gave them back the money. Under international law...

Q: We had a bunch of C-130s for Qadhafi.

KRAJESKI: We did that with the Pakistanis, too. But we do refund the money. Most countries when they make these arms sales, the money is put into escrow, into government accounts. Escrow accounts controlled by the Bank of New York or CitiBank or some large financial institution that will hold the money until the deal is completed; interest is collected and payments are made. What happens in this case is the United States controls most of those escrow organizations as well. It's interesting that we gave it in cash. In pallets of shrink-wrapped \$100 bills.

INTERN: It was euros, European money.

KRAJESKI: So the question of supporting these groups – no-one in Washington was willing to put that on the table. Occasionally it would be discussed in think tanks or academic settings or on the op-ed pages. When I took this job, one of my conditions on taking it was I would not have to go to interagency meetings in Washington. So I would not go to the White House for two hour gab sessions with everybody else on what we should do about foreign fighters. I have a very clear mandate; I know what I want to do. I'll work with foreign governments; I don't do Washington. Of course, many of my colleagues including Tina, the leadership of CT were very much involved in these policy discussions.

Q: When you got there, did we have through our intelligence sources a fairly good feel about who are potential foreign fighters in the United States, and could we control them?

KRAJESKI: The answer to the first question is a qualified “yes.” The estimates out of the United States are about 150. Most of those were Somali men from Minnesota and Maine who went to fight for Al Shabaab in Somalia. We had a few cases of people going to Nusra or ISIS, but just a handful. It wasn't as big a concern in the U.S. We had a huge conference in Washington in February 2015. This was focused on community activities; how to recognize vulnerable communities and how to work with them to identify individuals who might be tempted, or who may be recruiters or financiers. How do you go at the root problem? It was called the White House Summit on Countering Violent

Extremism. I recognized this as part of the long-term solution, but it wasn't something I was looking at short-term. I was looking at closing borders; I'll get to sharing information, which is huge as well. We have an advantage in the U.S. and it's one we have to be careful about spouting off about in these international meetings; the United States is a country of immigrants. It's always been a political issue in presidential elections – perhaps more so in this one than previous ones – but every one of us comes from somewhere else.

Q: And we all boast about where the family came from.

KRAJESKI: Right; we do. We are better than most of the European countries at if not integrating – somebody said it's not a melting pot, it's a giant stew with all sorts of things. We're much better at absorbing immigrant communities than these countries are, and at actually bringing that community into the mainstream or whatever you want to call it.

One of the reasons is because American is not an ethnicity. We're not a cultural entity. We are a political and ideological country. All you have to do is buy into the American idea and you can become an American, whether you're Muslim or black or white, wherever you're from you buy into that constitution and you can become an American.

It's a lot harder to become French. I've worked a lot with the French, and the French of course have been hit hard by this phenomenon. They have enacted some of the tougher laws in trying to prevent their citizens from going, and prosecuting people who've been, and working with these communities. If you've been to Paris, you've probably never seen one of these communities. They're quite isolated. The Moroccan – it's mostly Moroccans, Tunisians, and Algerians, the French-speaking Arabs and Muslims who populate them. In some cases they've been there for four generations. Under French law, once you become a French citizen, you are French. There's no discussion about whether you are a French Muslim or a French Catholic or whether you speak French or Arabic. Whatever it is, you're just French. No qualification. End of discussion. So there was no recognition – and I had French members of their parliament and French government officials tell me that not only did they as responsible officials have to recognize that they had problems in the French Muslim community, but they had to then persuade the larger French political world that this is a problem, and it's specific (this is a word they didn't want to use) to this immigrant Muslim community. The options are go the Le Pen (or Donald Trump route) and throw them all out and not allow any in. Or try to work with these communities to recognize the roots of the problem and help integrate these communities into France. There are still French people who say, "What do you mean? They're French! End of story."

In the United States, we're frankly quite willing (with exceptions and outbursts of stupidity like we're getting now). Our history is a history of saying, "If you come here from eastern Europe fleeing the pogroms in Russia and Ukraine and you come and want to live as an Orthodox Jew in New York City in your community, speaking your

language – OK.” There are qualifications and some people get unhappy about it, but whether you’re living in Chinatown in San Francisco...

My family is from a small Polish community in Salem, Massachusetts. The larger ones were in places like Chicago where you could walk down the streets and speak nothing but Polish. There was a story on the news last night about Iraqi immigrants who have been brought into Buffalo, New York. Buffalo and the older cities have actively tried to recruit refugees, because they’ve seen their cities rejuvenate and their populations come back. They were talking about how the first Iraqis that came were miserable, depressed, unhappy. People are trying to help them, but they had no connection to the city. Once more Iraqis came and they established a Little Iraq neighborhood and had stores and shawarma in the shops they were much happier.

In America, we’re willing to recognize that, the present situation being somewhat different; this is not the first time we’ve gone after immigrant communities. We threw the Chinese out. After they built the railroads we said, “Thank you very much for building our railroads, now leave! You are no longer welcome.” Jewish immigration was restricted. Eastern Europeans and southern Europeans as well, Italians and Greeks. Now we’re seeing Muslims and Asians. The strength of our country is the strength of this fabric, and other countries don’t have it. The Germans have a fairly large Turkish and Kurdish population who came as workers in the 1960s and ‘70s. They’ve never really been fully integrated into German life. I have a couple of friends, one of whom is a journalist. She was born in Berlin, went to German universities, she’s a brilliant journalist. She worked for Stern, she worked for Der Spiegel, the big German magazines. She was told at one point, “You realize this is as far as you can get? Because you are not German.” She was from Iran originally.

European countries have a harder time. The Swedes have prided themselves on taking refugees, a country of first and last refuge – and rightly so. I visited Stockholm and a couple of cities near where immigrant communities live. These are not happy communities; these were generators of foreign fighters. We saw Swedes, Danes, French, Belgians, British being recruited. Not always members of Muslim immigrant communities; in some cases they were ethnic Swedes and Danes and Germans. Vienna was having a hard time, mostly because of the Balkan population and because of the Chechen population. After Russia had crushed the Chechen revolts, a lot of Chechens fled to Vienna. They’re being recruited as foreign fighters. So this was a complex and large problem.

When I left the job in September 2015, we had made enormous progress in identifying these communities, improving those judicial structures that would enable governments to prosecute financiers, recruiters, and fighters who actually went. There was a lot more cooperation in international travel. I spent a lot of time in Turkey, which was the major transit route for foreign fighters. Indeed in the early days because Erdogan’s policy was to defeat Assad, Turkey welcomed the foreign fighters. They changed their mind after a while and they’re suffering blowback from that. We made a lot of progress.

We also made some progress in sharing information. Our intel agencies and other countries' intel agencies work very closely together on issues like this. It was quickly determined that the most common way to get to Syria or Iraq – mostly via Syria; the fighters came into Syria where they were screened and sent to various battlefields – was to fly to Istanbul. Fly to Istanbul, meet a recruiter there. Or they were given instructions to get on a bus down to Gaziantep near the border with Syria, where they'd be met by a recruiter and smuggled across the border.

It wasn't very hard to get across in the early days. The Turks began to make it much tougher. The Turks were being criticized; "Why aren't you stopping these people?" Their response to the French and Belgians and Europeans and us to some degree was, "Tell us who they are. Give us names of people who are traveling to Istanbul, and if you have suspicions or evidence, tell us and we'll stop them in Istanbul, or at least question them. But if we don't know who they are..."

Istanbul has 19 million visitors a year. It is one of the top five airports in the world for number of visitors. In 2012, 2013, 2014 – tourism is important to the "New Turkey." I spent three weeks traveling around Turkey, and it's a wonderful place for a tourist. Less so now than three years ago. For the Turks, this is a big deal. The Turks would turn to us – I was sitting in Ankara with John Bass our ambassador and a couple of high-ranking Turks in the Interior department. They said the Germans and French said, "We can't give you that information. We have privacy laws that prevent it. We can't tell you who's on that plane or how they're flying or give you any of their identifying data."

This was called the Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS). This is when you go onto the United Airlines website and say, "I want to go to Istanbul." You pick a route and you put in your name, passport, credit card, address, telephone number. The computer that you're using has an identifier code called an IP address. For many countries (Turkey was one), you indicate where you're going to stay. If you're staying with someone, you have a contact; that telephone number goes in. All before United will issue a ticket. That information is protected under European law. The Germans are the strictest on this because they're very sensitive about government agencies getting access to your personal identifying information. So they didn't want to share it. They didn't want to share it with each other – Germans didn't want to share with the French who didn't want to share with the Belgians who didn't want to share with the Swedes; nobody wanted to share with the Turks.

Under the UN resolution, they're required to increase information sharing. The United States after 9/11, for better or worse – take the PATRIOT Act for what it is and isn't – we opened all of this up. If you want to fly to the United States of America from anywhere in the world, if that plane you're on is going to land in the United States, we know who you are. We have all of that information before you get on the plane in Stockholm or Istanbul. Anywhere where there's a direct flight, where the next point is landing in the U.S., we've got you.

We have the National Counterterrorism Center down in a non-descript building in Reston. It's not classified. I don't know if private citizens can take a tour, but they've given government officials tours of this place. It's quite remarkable. There's a room that's literally one of the few times where I've been in a government facility and thought, "This is like the movies!" Huge screens on the wall, lots of people on keyboards. Information pouring in all being spread out on the screens. Literally every flight – millions of people land in the United States every day. Every one of them is screened in this center. They showed me. "This is Lufthansa 242, took off from Frankfurt an hour ago. Here are the 222 people on board that flight. Names, addresses, travel histories, visa histories, everything is there." They don't call it "profiling" anymore because "profiling" is a bad word; they call them "algorithms". They run the algorithms on each person. Of those 222, there are five people of interest. Those five people will be stopped at immigration and sent to secondary. Everybody else whooshes through. It's much faster to get into American airports now than it was in the three or four years after 9/11. But it depends. I was ambassador to Yemen 2004-07; if you were a Yemeni traveling to the United States in 2004 – I almost wanted to say, "Don't try." The deputy foreign minister and his family going to Hawaii on vacation were stopped – humiliated, searched, it was miserable. It's much easier now. The no-fly list which used to be, "Your name's Mohammed? You're on the no-fly list." Now it's more sophisticated, and we're much better able to determine that THAT person is the Mohammed we're looking for.

These systems are something that Americans have accepted. Frankly, I have accepted it. They didn't exist in Europe, but more and more they are. Countries like Belgium and France that have been attacked are requiring that this information be provided if you want to enter. Some countries are threatening to reestablish bilateral borders, to begin to have checks on borders that don't exist now. Nobody really wants to do that. The U.S. Congress has put pressure on the Schengen zone countries because most of those are also visa waiver countries. Another thing that the CT office got involved in was determining what countries are visa waiver countries and what the requirements are. In fact, visa waiver does not mean you don't need a visa; you have a visa, you can just get it electronically. Go on line, put your information; if you're from the UK or another visa waiver country you get a pre-clearance before you get on the plane. That enables you to walk in at Dulles and you're in. You don't need to go to a consulate and be interviewed.

You've done visa work. Now we have a system from every embassy connected to the central system. Everyone applying, the moment they go on-line and begin their application, the checks begin. By the time they get to the consulate or embassy, they've already been vetted through all the security systems before they've even been interviewed. So you don't have to do these lengthy security checks anymore where you've approved the visa but have to go back and get the security check that takes six months and there's a huge backlog. It was an enormous pain in the butt. Most is now done through these systems much more efficiently.

I found that the job was interesting. I think it was useful. I was happy that I did it. It also gave me a smoother glide path to retirement.

It's much easier to retire from a position in the United States than coming from overseas. As an ambassador, you have a peculiar status bureaucratically, because technically you are not a federal government employee, you are a presidential appointee, even if you're a career Foreign Service officer. Even if you choose not to take that presidential classification for pay and leave purposes, and most Foreign Service officers keep their FS pay and leave when they become ambassadors. But under law, when you resign your position as ambassador, you have 90 days to re-enter the Foreign Service. So you have to be given an assignment. In some cases, if you've been ambassador three or four times, there's really nothing in Washington. Unless you're really high up there, someone like Bill Burns, there are only a few jobs at State that are going to be available, and they're very senior. We have a number of jobs like professors at NDU that we reserve frankly for returning ambassadors – partly because we like having ambassadors over at NDU, but also because we can slot them into it quickly. In my case, because I was turning 65 only four months later, I was not eligible for another assignment, so I was going to retire out of Bahrain. I learned that when I landed in the United States, I would have five days on paid status to conduct all of my interviews, to take care of bureaucratic business, and bam I'd be retired. That was it.

The State Department's retirement office according to my colleagues in the government and at State who run it, is one of the most efficient and effective retirement offices in the whole government. We do a good job of making sure people get their benefits and are informed about their 401(k)s and understand Social Security – all of these things you confront in retirement – unless you're in a situation like I was, in which case they say, "Good luck."

This was not my primary motivation for taking the CT job – I thought it would be a useful and interesting job, and I had a friend ask me to do it. I also in the back of my mind thought this would make it easier to schedule and organize my retirement, and indeed it did.

So in September, Jake Wallace our former ambassador in Tunisia took my job, and I started the retirement process. It takes eight weeks; it's quite nice. So I retired on December 1, 2015.

Q: Let's talk a bit since we're at the end. An easy question: what is your solution for the Middle East?

KRAJESKI: I talked a lot about this during these weeks of interviews. As I say to the A-100 entering officers when I meet them, I'm not a big player. I'm an NEA hand; a good, loyal worker in the Near Eastern affairs bureau. I put in my time in hard jobs. NEA was and is a good bureau that tries to recruit and keep good people. If you perform well, they try to reward you with good jobs and ambassadorships.

I'd also tell this to the new folks. "Make a decision early on. Do you want to spend most of your career in Washington, working the policy process? Being an aide, being a deputy director? Being part of that process, only going overseas when you have to. Or are you

going to be a Foreign Service officer and spending your career abroad working in embassies, coming back to Washington only when you have to?”

There are models of both of these; the two that I use are two people I know fairly well. One was a really good friend who chose the first route, Nick Burns. Nick was a junior officer in the ‘80s in Tel Aviv when I was in India. He was supposed to replace me on the India desk at one point. Turns out we’re both Red Sox fans. Nick, after an early tour in Tel Aviv and one other, came back and basically spent his entire career in Washington. At one point he was the press spokesman under Christopher. He was in Washington for something like 12 years and then went out as ambassador to Greece. He chose the first one. I tell the kids, if you’re smart and like it and can engage in the policy process, I’d do what Nick Burns did. Maybe you can be under secretary for political affairs. Nick remains a friend because he’s a Red Sox fan, primarily!

The other person, I won’t say he’s a friend but he’s a colleague and someone I have enormous respect for and I’ve worked for a couple of times. That’s Ryan Crocker, who was our ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Pakistan. There’s not an easy job in there. He spent his entire career overseas. Bill Burns – there’s another one. Bill did some overseas tours as well, but flourished mostly in Washington. Bill laughs that whenever Ryan came back (because they’d make him come back), Ryan would look around for wherever the worst crisis is, the hardest place to go, and he’d wave his hand and volunteer and say, “I’ll go there.” So he would last six months as an office director in NEA and bam he was in Syria or Lebanon or somewhere. One could argue that Ryan has had a pretty good career, and has certainly distinguished himself as a Foreign Service officer.

I don’t put myself at either of those levels, but I especially am inept at the policy process to the point where I have a hard time engaging on issues. Let alone, “how do we resolve the Middle East?”, but some of the more specific policy questions. I’d much rather have a set of policies presented. “The president has decided to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam’s government. Whatever some folks at the Pentagon think, this is going to be really hard. The military’s going to get it in three months, then it’s going to get really hard. So what do we then do? How do we as Foreign Service officers...”

I talked about how we were going to form the first embassy. That never really happened. Crocker was going to be the chargé; I was going to be his deputy at the embassy in 2003. I’m much happier and I think effective and useful in that process than in the decision-making process of “Do we use the military to overthrow Saddam Hussein?” I participated in it, but I don’t pretend to have the answers.

So the long answer to your question is, I don’t know!

Q: On the career thing – I liked doing consular work overseas. I don’t pride myself, but I never had my name on the door at the State Department.

KRAJESKI: It's funny. I mentioned earlier, when I took the job in CT it was with the condition that I did not have to go to the NSC for interagency meetings. I would go and brief – tell them about the foreign fighter issue as we see it. Explain what the French, Germans, EU, Saudis are doing. Then walk out of the room and let the others decide what would be most effective thing to do.

There have been times in my career, probably in the last 10 years more than the first 25, where I've really despaired. It's really been hard to say to a young, new officer who's been working on his Arabic at Brandeis, who has gotten into the Foreign Service. This is where she's wanted to go; she wants to serve in NEA. It's been hard to say to her, "You can be part of the solution. You can be effective in promoting U.S. interests and defending U.S. security, and you can make a difference in the region. You can help Muslims and Jews and Christians and Arabs and Turks and Kurds and Klingons" (I'd swear there were Klingons up there somewhere). "You can help them. Only the United State can play what Albright called us, the 'essential nation.'"

That's such bullshit. But from an admirable quality. We think if we work hard enough, dedicate ourselves, if we're pure in thought and deed, we can make a difference. In the Middle East quite frankly, there have been times where I've despaired and said we should just back away from it all. Back away. For 10 years, hands off. A no-go zone for the U.S. military. Then we'll see what the lay of the land is then. But that's not going to work for one really big reason – Israel. And it's not going to work for another really big reason, which is oil and energy. And it's not going to work for another big reason, which is terrorism, sectarian war. There is no answer to your question.

Q: I think this is all. Thank you very much, Tom. I've enjoyed this. You will get the whole transcript of our sessions.

KRAJESKI: Who does the transcripts?

Q: We have a set of people we hire. We pay bottom dollar. We don't have much money and the people who do it enjoy listening to these things, and do a very good job.

KRAJESKI: We do it in segments?

Q: We've sent some already. Then you will get a copy on the computer and can edit it any way you want. Do the normal fact checking, get the spelling right and all that. But beyond that, if you realize you forgot to mention this, or nobody asked about that – put it in. More is better than less in this type of thing because people will use word searches.

KRAJESKI: I've read some of the finished transcripts you have on-line. There seem to be two ways of going at it, in addition to the points you mentioned about correcting names and dates and adding more. That's the smoothness or the flow of the conversation. Most of us do not speak in complete sentences or paragraphs. Most of us jump back and forth; I'm not quite as bad as George W. Bush was, or his father who was famous for breaking sentences in the middle and just going off. You hear people talking about that all the

time; I'm doing it right now. But I'm not David Satterfield. You'll meet David soon, he's going to retire. He was ambassador in Jordan, has a wonderful job in Rome taking care of the multinational force of observers in the Sinai. David was an NEA guy. Beautiful speaker of Arabic. David always speaks in complete sentences, and paragraphs. You can hear where his paragraphs end and another begins. Chas Freeman is one I've heard about, too. I've heard Chas speak before; I don't know him well.

Q: I've interviewed him.

KRAJESKI: I admire it, but it isn't the way most people talk and it's not the way I was raised to talk as a New England, Massachusetts fast-talker.

Q: My answer to that is, clean it up if you can.

KRAJESKI: I don't want it to sound silly, and I don't want it to be too disjointed. If there's a problem with flow, I might try to connect things.

Q: Absolutely. And you can take from one place and move to another. It's your nickel.

KRAJESKI: Are the transcribers doing it word for word for word? I'm sure they cut out, I'm sure there are people who say "uh, uh, uh".

Q: Mostly that's not a problem, they do their own cleaning up.

KRAJESKI: Most Foreign Service officers learn to speak without "you knows"...

Q: We did early on have one transcriber. She couldn't hear things; she'd put in "incoherent."

KRAJESKI: Incoherent? All right, incoherent. I think there have been times where I've been incoherent!

(INTERN: The one that irked me – I was trying to do a piece on a massacre at the Lod Airport. There was a guy who said the phrase, "I was very involved in that massacre at the airport where 13 American citizens were mowed down." The exact quote was "mowed down." And no-one thought that deserved a follow-up question or an explanation. They just moved on. What happened at this massacre at the airport?)

KRAJESKI: I'm sure you'll find a lot of that.

Q: Also if you see things – acronyms. I try to catch these.

KRAJESKI: We're better than many at avoiding acronyms. All right.

End of interview