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

PHILLIP W. PILLSBURY, JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 28, 1994. This is an interview with Phillip W. Pillsbury, Jr. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Phil and I met briefly in Italy. I think I even met you also at a dinner in Minneapolis one time when I was with the Senior Seminar, but I ...

PILLSBURY: That's right. I think that's right. You did a tour of the Pillsbury plant.

Q: But anyway, today, so we'll start this interview. Phil, give me a bit about your background, when and where you were born, a bit about your family, and all ...

PILLSBURY: I was born in Chicago, and then we moved to Minneapolis when I was three years old. My father was president of the Pillsbury company during the war. I had my initial education in Minneapolis before going away to school to Hotchkiss in 1951 and then went on to Yale where I graduated in the class of 1957.

Q: What were you studying at Yale?

PILLSBURY: I studied political science at a time when the department was at its strongest. There were some great professors. So it was a good major and it occurred during a time when there was a lot going on: Khrushchev's speech and the Hungarian revolution ...

Q: Oh yes. You know, those were in '56. What was the attitude at Yale, would you say, did the student body or the faculty ... were they ... how did they feel about the United States' role in the world? Did you get any feeling at that time?

PILLSBURY: Well, the '50s were of course the time when we, from our view point, saw the United States, somewhat realistically, as omnipotent. It was a period of course when the sword of Damocles of mutual assured destruction hung over everybody's heads, but the Eisenhower administration was a time of relative peace. The United States, with the Soviet Union on the other side, the United States and a few other countries really ran the world basically. It was before the wave of independence of 1960, so the attitude at Yale was the number one enemy and threat to the United States was world communism, and that was what sort of fashioned our world thinking at the time I think.

Q: It is interesting, because you are sort of a half generation after me. I graduated from Williams in 1950 and for us the United Nations was somehow ... I mean it was going to be a new world ...

PILLSBURY: That's a good point.

Q: It was a disillusion, but it sort of comes back now in the 1990s, it's a little more back in fashion. But it is an interesting counterpoint to the ...

PILLSBURY: We looked basically at the United Nations as an important part, but it was at a time during my years when Dulles was fashioning his series of treaties around the world to contain communism and they looked like treaty arrangements that were fairly solid, but of course they weren't. But nevertheless that was what kind we saw and there was no Vietnam problem so to speak till well after I got out.

Q: Had the idea of going into the Foreign Service hit you at all at that time?

PILLSBURY: Well, I knew that I wanted to do something in international affairs. I think when I graduated I put down in my yearbook "International commerce" thinking of the Pillsbury company overseas. But I think it was study abroad ... I studied in France for a year after I graduated from Yale, and that was the end of the Fourth Republic.

Q: So you were at the university of Paris?

PILLSBURY: Yes, '57-'58.

Q: This is when De Gaulle returned?

PILLSBURY: I was there when De Gaulle's people marched down the Champs-Elysées. It was one of those defining moments in one's life. At the time there was a great deal of anti-Americanism. There was stuff on the streets, signs, and demonstrations. It irritated me.

Q: Where was it coming from? Why was it ..?

PILLSBURY: I think it was largely fomented by French communism.

Q: Was it striking a chord within the French soul, do you think, or at least with the students?

PILLSBURY: Yes, with the younger generation, sure, and the fact that the United States was the number one power, plus the attitude towards the French, you know, the empty chair if they didn't join the European defense force, they could you know, they'd be out of it. So there was a lot of resentment against the United States. I felt that it was a question, perhaps naively so, but I said if they only understood us better then at least they would look at us more objectively. At that time, the only agency that was really involved in that was the fledgling United States Information Agency.

Q: At the university of Paris, did you find that there was much understanding of the United States within the educational apparatus of the French. I'm talking about the American history, American government, how we work, and that sort of thing?

PILLSBURY: No. I felt that with the exception of a group of very dedicated and committed and objective scholars and their students ... There were a couple of courses that dealt with the United States, but on the whole it was pretty much centered on France and Europe, French and European studies and the role of Europe in fashioning the contemporary world. Obviously recognizing that the United States had saved that world, they gave obeisance to that, but there wasn't a great deal of understanding of where the United States wanted to go or what the US and free world's role was in the perceived threat from the east, omnipotent one-force communism, you know. So, I felt that lacked. It lacked in conversation I had with people. I found myself talking to young French people and there were ideas that were skewed I thought. So, that's when I began to look seriously at the Foreign Service as a career. I think that probably if the Peace Corps had existed when I came back from France in 1958, I would have gone to that first.

Q: Yes, that really didn't get going till .... It was Kennedy's ... '61ish. How did you get into the Foreign Service then?

PILLSBURY: Then, the process at USIA was a little different from that at State. The written exam was different, so was the oral. We came in if I remember, our first title was Foreign Service Career Reserve, because there was no career service in the USIA. We understood when we came in that eventually there would be.

Q: Yes. Wasn't it Fulbright who didn't want ... he had something against it?

PILLSBURY: It wasn't so much that it was Fulbright. It was certainly in the Department too. There was and still is a certain reticence about mixing the information side of things with the cultural. If Fulbright at the time had a thing against a career service it was the idea about information people dealing in cultural exchange. That might have been a factor. I think there was a feeling in the Department too that the USIA people were a bunch of failed newspaper hacks who didn't belong, you know, which was certainly far, far from the truth, specially after they started... The career officer which program began bringing in very good officers in '56, I think.

Q: So you took an exam to get in, you came in when, in ...?

PILLSBURY: I came in in 1959, class of '59, March of '59.

Q: How were you trained? You were a brand new person, walk in ...?

PILLSBURY: Well, they had there again ... The Agency, the USIA was really beginning its the career officer program. The junior officer status had just begun in 1956, so they were feeling their way in their training program. The Department training program was pretty well established. I regret that ...one of the regrets that I had in coming in early was that they didn't, we didn't have as they do now the basic Foreign Service Officer course that is given to all career people coming in no matter what cone they have chosen or what area of operation. We had a day or two in the State Department and that was it. As my career went on, that was a lack. For example, in Turin I spent a whole summer being a consular officer and I had to learn by doing. If I had had some inkling of consular work as a younger officer, I wouldn't have had to go through the agonies. But there was a very strong emphasis in the training on cultural affairs. One of the best things that USIA did was a program called: "Meet the Critic" in which two USIA officers would take on the role of foreign officials and would grill a JOT on issues which were sticking in the craws of the country to which that officer had been assigned. That was very, very effective. I found that training very, very useful everywhere I went. So, it was a good training program, but it lacked the input and access to the Department, which they then subsequently recognized of course. There was also at the time something which they thank goodness dispensed with, and that was psychological training. We had two four-hour sessions with a psychologist, to make sure I guess that we wouldn't break under pressure. That aspect of the training period was eliminated. Those, in themselves, would make great reading. There was one officer in particular, I remember, a black American ... I was waiting for my first interview, because there were two four-hour interviews with a psychologist, then an hour with a psychiatrist. Anyway I saw him storm out of the office

and say: "If they think I am going to have to talk about this kind of thing, they can take this job and put it, you know, elsewhere. And it was that kind of reaction that led to eventually dispensing with that testing.

Q: But tell me, because this is the first time I've ever heard about this. When they got you, what were they asking?

PILLSBURY: Well, they had the Rorschach test among others. Then they had another, I don't remember the name of it, but it's a standard test that they use ... particular scenes, pictures of scenes of ... one in particular I remember was a woman standing behind a door. It looked as if she had a gun, and then you had to say what was going to happen. Then there was very extensive questioning about your background, your sexual life, if you were married, your relations with your wife. I mean it was very personal and prying.

Q: What was the word before you came in? Was it the standard one of that era? Make sure you like your father more than your mother, and ...

PILLSBURY: I don't think ...There might have been some subliminal stuff on that ...As I say, it didn't last very long. It was very expensive for one thing to do that. Second of all, it was clearly not productive. I guess the idea was that in a cold war mentality if somebody were caught in a compromising or difficult situation with the opposite side that he wouldn't break under pressure.

Q: It is interesting because I don't think that the State Department did ....

PILLSBURY: They did not. It went out with Murrow. Murrow said this was ridiculous.

Q: Edward R. Murrow.

PILLSBURY: Yes. Kennedy's director of USIA.

Q: Well you had a free psychoanalysis. Did you ever get a hold of ...

PILLSBURY: No, I'd like to see what it's like, to see if I'd borne out under the pressure.

Q: Anyway, where did you go on your first post?

PILLSBURY: I went to Madrid as a junior officer trainee.

Q: This was in '59?

PILLSBURY: In '59. It was a fascinating time to be in Spain because Franco was still very much in power and had just succeeded in getting what he wanted, recognition in the United Nations and becoming a member of the family of nations in return for the bases that we needed, that the US needed in Spain for the communist threat, you know ... And

Eisenhower was the first president to visit. Eisenhower came there in the winter of that year, so that it was a fascinating time to be there, and they had a good training program for the junior officers.

Q: What sort of things were you doing?

PILLSBURY: Well again, it was a good training program within the context of USIA. There was very little or nothing like what a USIA officer gets today in terms of working ...when in an Embassy, working around an Embassy and working in the various sections. We had a little bit of contact with the political/economic/consular/etc. sections, but not much. The training was really based on USIA activities. Which in those days were kind of old-fashioned, I mean, they used a lot of going out with mobile units, showing movies in the countryside, things that they don't do anymore.

Q: How did you find ... going out with the mobile units ... Of course this was before television. The Spanish had been isolated for a long time, so in many ways that made sense to do that kind of thing.

PILLSBURY: Yes, it did. I think that the film program of USIA which obviously was going to be eliminated with the advent of the much more accessible television and VCR. Was at the time a way of personally reaching large groups of people, because there would be showings and then afterwards inevitably there were crowds of people asking questions about the United States. It was an opportunity to meet people and yes, distribute literature and yes, it could be called propaganda, indeed it was. I never felt anything wrong with that. But it was a very personally based operation and I just loved it, you know.

Q: Did you have a problem? Here you are in a village square whatever it is, wherever you set up your film showing it in a provincial town. You are in a place where you're talking about America. When you say America, you think of democracy and all that, and you're at the height of a dictatorship there. How did you handle this? How did the local authorities react?

PILLSBURY: Well, Franco at the time .... I mean Eisenhower's visit was, I remember, somehow criticized for giving the Franco government more or less stamp of approval by coming. But within the context of the cold war we needed the bases that Franco made available to us very much. Still do for that matter. Zaragoza, Cadiz, Torrejon, and others. And so that's on one side, then, as you said, the Spanish had been ... Franco had isolated them quite effectively from the currents that had taken place ever since the end of the Spanish civil war. So that I found it was kind of an intellectual time warp for many people. They were fascinated and desirous of knowing more about the United States. There was very little anti-Americanism, I found. There had not been an opportunity for the sometimes negative impression created by of large groups of Americans, either tourists or military who don't know the sensitivities and sensibilities of another country. So that we were something new and kind of rare, and they were very interested.

Q: What about the local authorities, because in any organization, particularly a dictatorship, you get your real apparatchiks who aren't very flexible or anything else down the line at the village level you might say. Would they get nervous when you'd come, was it a problem?

PILLSBURY: No, not in Spain then. Franco's control was absolute, there was no doubt about that. They would have got very nervous if we'd started to talk about democratic reform as applied to other countries. Then they would have started to be nervous, and there again as you said, before we talked I, as a junior officer, was not privy to decisions being made by Ambassador Lodge at the time or the political office. USIS was part of the mission of course, but our senior officers watched what we did, and as a junior officer trainee, I did what they told me to do.

Q: Sure, just wondering. I don't want to belabor this, but it's interesting. You are down there and somebody says: "Well how does your government work?" in other words all these questions. I think every one would be loaded. You know, every person has a vote, there's competing parties, all this stuff.

PILLSBURY: Well, we did get that. Franco even then was beginning ... He knew that Spain was going to enter the modern world, economically and politically, and even then I think that Franco had ideas about whom he wanted as a monarch. He had some ideas about when and where eventually democracy would take place, but he wanted to do it on his terms. So I think that at the village level like that there wasn't a whole lot of concern about questions being put to an American film team coming through, or British for that matter. Then, the Voice of America and the BBC were being listened to a lot, so that it wasn't as if Franco felt that he could put up a big SDI system, you know Space Defense system against information coming in. It was much more apparent that ... Your question is much more relevant and valid for the time I spent in Iran twelve years later because then we had to be very careful. The Shah was very, very tight on that.

Q: As a junior officer, you know, junior officers always have bigger ears than later on. It's a new world, you're looking around. What were you getting from the Embassy and the more senior people, what was their view of Franco? This is '59 and '60.

PILLSBURY: Yes. The whole policy was geared toward that base system and nobody wanted to upset that, and I think it was right at the time too. So that Franco, first of all, was recognized as a person who really did control things, there was no doubt about that, and looking back, he had successfully kept Spain out of World War II. So that in that period, I think one of the frustrations of my junior officer experience (which, again has changed in recent years in that the JOT does the training, and then gets an onward assignment in the country so that you get at least two years) was that I left after nine months and it was really frustrating.

Q: I would think. It was sort of a foolish idea, because you had both the culture and the language ...

PILLSBURY: And the people. I never felt that I had ... As a JOT I had access to university students, to the younger elements of the population and they liked my wife and me. We were very popular. I felt that another year and a half I could have made real contributions to the Embassy's understanding of where the generation which is in control today was going.

Q: It sounds, from what I gather, with the psychological thing, this training and all, at that point sort of the management of USIA was in the hands of academics, or somebody who really didn't understand what the thing was.

PILLSBURY: Well, I think there was ... I wouldn't want to completely agree with that, but I think that certainly in the management of that initial assignment for JOTs, that that nine month thing was a mistake, because I didn't really have the opportunity to dig in the way I knew I could dig in in Spain at the time. That was shared by other members of my class.

Q: I'm sure it was. Well, after that nine months you were untimely ripped from Spain, where did you go?

PILLSBURY: It was hardly something to complain about, it was a relatively short drive from Madrid to Florence. We drove ... Put our stuff in our little station wagon and drove from Madrid to Florence and it was a very pleasant drive along the Riviera. There was nothing we could complain about, and the two years I spent in Florence were ... it was a paradise assignment. It really was.

Q: Before we leave Spain, what were you doing, and what was your impression of the Eisenhower visit. Presidential visits always get big ... Were you dragged in to carry suitcases or something like that?

PILLSBURY: I do remember ... I didn't have an idea how important it was because I went to the PAO, Public Affairs Officer, at the time, Frank Oram, and said: "Mr. Oram, my parents are in Paris and I'd like to go and visit them over this period." And he said: "Do you have any idea who's coming?" And I said: "Yes, the President is coming." "So, let me explain to you. When a president comes there's no leave. Everybody works for a presidential visit." So that was a good lesson early on.

Q: Yes. One presidential visit is the equivalent of two earthquakes.

PILLSBURY: Yes, exactly. And I saw what it does to an Embassy. Eisenhower was at the end of his second term. The United States was absolutely number one in the free world. I remember Eisenhower going down, I think it was the Paseo Castellona, in an old-fashioned carriage with Franco in his funny old hat. It was very impressive. It was the old world and the new. I was very proud. That was the impression I had that it was great to be an American. Very, very impressive.

Q: Well then, you went to Florence from '60 to '62. What was the situation ... What were you doing in Florence?

PILLSBURY: In Italy, the USIA had a lot of money as did the Department of State. We had posts that have long since been closed. Florence was a four-man USIA post. It would just be unthinkable today. And I was the fourth person on the totem pole. It think I was Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, that was my title. USIA had the full complement of the then USIA activity. There was a very large library that was well established, well recognized. Sort of after the British library which had been there a long time, but still a very credible with credible information. We had a very good Consular district, Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. We had just closed our library in Bologna but maintained a small branch there. Johns Hopkins was just setting up its center. All the American universities were just coming in to set up their operations which are still going strong today in a big way. Stanford had just opened when I got there. Syracuse came in. So there was a flowering of cultural relationships with the United States. It was a wave that we rode there. In the face of what was then ... It was my first encounter with the power of a major communist party. The communist party in Italy was the largest in the western free world and as a young officer I was astonished to see how well they were organized, how they could bring out the Faithful. I had a special interest in the organization of the young communists, the "Federazione Goivanile Communista Italiana" in seeing how they organized at a very local level. It was there that certainly, that I realized your point about being able to do things as a young officer that you couldn't do as the Consul. The Consul certainly couldn't have gone to some of the meetings I went to. The Socialists were much more militant then too. But to go to some of the meetings and see and hear some of the diatribes against the United States was a real learning experience.

Q: How did we view the communist party then? Because the Italian communist party has gone through all sorts of things, still around, probably more influential now than it has been for a long time, but with its own particular slant now, no longer dealing with the Soviets. But how did we view the communist party then, particularly in relation to the Soviet Union lines of ...?

PILLSBURY: We knew that they were somewhat ... Again I was looking at it from the ground up a bit, but Togliatti was still in control and ... We knew that the Italian Communist Party, it being Italian, had a personality of its own, that they would not march in lockstep with edicts from Moscow all the time. But still it was regarded as a major threat to the west and the effective operation of NATO. They were getting, I believe if I remember, up to 30% of the popular vote and it was monolithic in that, unlike later on in my second tour in Italy when the left was splintered, they were pretty much it, they and the socialists. It was the red belt, that was the red belt, and it looked at Tuscany and Emilia Romagna as kind of political divisive force. It was of course the time when Aldo Moro led the movement for the "Appertura a la sinistra" the opening to the left that was I remember, not that there weren't elements in the American foreign policy apparatus that weren't very keen about that. They felt that was a mistake to open it up, but it turns out

that it was the thing to do then. So that there were openings in that two year period to the left that all the while supporting strongly the Christian Democrats that made it very interesting for a junior officer to work, especially in Florence.

Q: You said you went to all these meetings. We've gone through time, you know, when you'd catch leprosy easier than go to a communist meeting, but what about them.

PILLSBURY: Yes. I always asked permission from my superiors. It's not that I became a fixture at these village meetings, but I was especially interested in going prior to the WFDY, World Federation of Democratic Youth meeting. It was an acronym that they had, the big world communist youth festivals in Helsinki and Moscow at that time. It was useful for me to go to some of these things and then come back and say what I'd heard and seen. So that on a controlled basis I was allowed to go... I found out about it and I asked if I could go. And there was one, I don't remember what the particular diatribe was, but it was so off-base and so repulsive about some attack on the United States that I walked out, and then I didn't go anymore.

Q: Did you have, or did the Consulate General have ... Who was Consul General, by the way?

PILLSBURY: Merritt Cootes was Consul General, and he'd been there for, I don't know ... He spent seven years there I think.

Q: We had an interview with Merritt Cootes?).

PILLSBURY: He was very effective at the time and I don't say that because now you said that you'd had an interview with him. I really liked working with him. And he was a very good political officer at the time, Joe Cunningham. He was the best political officer I met, and Cunningham was preceded in that post by Sam Lewis who was also a very fine political officer.

Q: What about as the Consulate as a whole, could you have real contact with the communist party?

PILLSBURY: I didn't really, except with the Federazione Giovanile, I didn't have contacts with communist party officials, but I think that was more a function of my relative low grade. Certainly Cunningham and the Consul ... They defined their function. Those in turn were defined by the Embassy. And that changed of course, you're right. Over a period of time that changed. John Baker's book on the Italian communist party is interesting in that regard to see those changes that occurred. I spent more time learning about the younger leaders in the Christian Democratic party. That was to me fascinating and it's something I've kept up to this day with the son of Nicola Pisteili for example, Nicola was being groomed to be the prime minister and Giorgio La Pietra was the famous mayor of Florence. There was a lot of idealism in the Christian Democratic Party.

Q: Did you have the feeling ...One of the problems that's coming home to haunt us, and the Christian Democrats, is the fact that particularly from the '48 election, but it continued on, an awful lot of American CIA money in one form or another was poured into the Christian Democrats. Did you have any feeling for that at the time?

PILLSBURY: No, I didn't. It's a good question, and it was always in the background of my work I'm trying to do with the young political leaders and the establishment of relations between the United States and young political leader movements in Europe. They are much more structured and organized than they are here in the United States. As far as intelligence gathering and the agency's relationship with the political parties at that time, very little, which was correct. I think it was then and still is important that USIA be as far removed from intelligence gathering as possible. You know, I've been called a spy lots of time anyway, so ...

Q: What about those Christian Democrats? How did you get together with them, what were your views and your dealings with them?

PILLSBURY: Well, as I said, I was very inspired by Mayor La Pira who was a character in Italian politics. He was kind of a mystic and he truly believed in Christian principals being applied to a political sphere, and ran the city accordingly. One of his disciples more or less, or one of the individuals he was grooming, was this man Nicola Pisteili who would have definitely been elected to the parliament and would have definitely, I think, gone right to the top. He was killed in a car crash. We were still there. And it was that contact, where I saw the beginnings of the young political leadership going to the Christian Democrats who, with Aldo Moro were going to be willy-nilly in control irrespectively of what the communists did. The communists were sort of a loyal or disloyal opposition. It was that contact that enabled me to get to know his son today, Lapo Pisteili, a young twenty-six year old who shares his father's idealism and is a member of the Christian Democratic Party even though the Christian Democrats are going through the tortures of the damned, which they inflicted on themselves. I really believe that the Christian Democrats had a vision and a role to play in the future of Italy.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Italian intelligentsia, intellectual group. I always think that the French intellectual group is sort of a defined group. They know who they are, and they have a disproportionate influence in how people think. How did you find ... Florence is a hotbed of culture and all this. Did you find that type of thing there?

PILLSBURY: For the Italians, at least in Florence, the British presence was much more appreciated or looked at with favor. The eminence grise at the time was Sir (Harold) Acton. An historian and an expert on Chinese affairs and really a salon leader of the old school.

Q: He just died, it was in the paper today I think.

PILLSBURY: Oh, he did? I know that he'd been sick. Anyway at the time his influence and the British influence in terms of culture, as well as the French who were next door, to us, kind of shut us out a little in terms of perception. It was a little harder to get across the idea of American culture. The thing that I'd say that one of the very important breakthroughs was the arrival of the New York Pro-Musica Antica. The director was a man by the name of Noah Green. At any rate, he came and he presented as part of the Spoleto Festival of that year, (presented first in Florence) was The Play of David. He'd also done scholarship and had found the Lament written on the death of Lorenzo Medici, which the Italians thought had been lost years ago and didn't even know still existed. Anyway, they did that, and it woke the Italians up to the fact that there was significant scholarship on the other side of the Atlantic. From that time on I think more and more post-World War II recognition was accorded to American excellence in the arts and letters.

Q: We raised the subject when you were in Paris. How about the knowledge of the Italians on American history, not just culture, but government and all that. How did you find ...?

PILLSBURY: I'd say that they were more open to ideas and to exchanges of information than the French when I was studying there in the late '50s. I attribute that to a very active, extensive and well-run Fulbright program. They had a professor whose name I have momentarily forgotten who did a three year Fulbright program at the University of Wisconsin in American studies and then came back and set up the first chair of American studies at the University of Florence. It was very popular and well-attended and well-recognized. At any rate I think the Fulbright program, and in France too, became a significant force in the early '60s as well. It was a very important part of Italian understanding, in recognizing that there is such a thing as American culture.

Q: What about the Italian media, the newspapers? The USIA is always trying to get our story into these papers. Yet the Italian papers seem ... each one has its own little segment of the political spectrum. Did you have any dealings with that sort of thing?

PILLSBURY: Well, there again in Florence I was pretty low on the totem pole, but I worked with Luigi Pilo. It was my first real long term, in other words two year, recognition of the brilliance and the importance of the Foreign Service national. All Foreign Service Officers soon recognize that their jobs are made or broken by the Foreign Service nationals. I benefitted from the fact that the press guy for example had been the head of the newspaper in Leghorn. So I spent a good deal of that two year just watching and following him and watching the way he worked with that wide spectrum of Italian newspapers. We had very little to do with La Unita, the communist paper. We did a great deal of work with La Nazione, which was the Florence daily, the prime one. Then we placed articles with other publications from, the right to left of center and they were pretty objective. I can't remember if magazines ... I'm sure "l'Europeo" was still in existence. There were a couple that occasionally published rather scurrilous stuff on the United States, but that national stuff was handled by Rome rather than Florence. Our work was

basically in Florence and Bologna. Il Resto del Carlino that's the paper in Bologna too, so we worked with them.

Q: You were there from '60 to '62, when Kennedy came in. The Kennedy administration was really a new look on the scene. How was that administration particularly President Kennedy received from your perspective?

PILLSBURY: It was a blast of fresh air for the Italians. The USIA had an all-night vigil, that was a long election, and we had an all-night vigil at the library, with an election board and results from The Voice of America. There was a passionate interest in that election. The election center was crammed with people all night long. The next day, when Kennedy was elected there was the beginning of an almost euphoric attitude towards the United States and its new leadership role in the world with the younger generation, a president born in the twentieth century.

Q: It was really a generational thing, do you think?

PILLSBURY: No question, yes. But his victory brought along the older generation too. The whole sense of the American capacity, and it was my realization too, the American ability to renew itself. We see it just today, the Japanese using the term the "Rising Sam", you know. They recognize the United States has gone through another period of renewal. Well, in Italy in 1960 the good leadership, excellent leadership now recognized by some as great while regarding Eisenhower administration as somewhat old and stodgy, old-fashioned, unable to change with the times. Kennedy comes in with this whole bunch of new ideas, new thinking and it just swept our era and I'm pretty sure that would go for anyone ...

Q: Well, did you find your being a junior officer, that you were being given more instructions to get out and mix and mingle with youth?

PILLSBURY: Not really. I did it, but I wasn't told to do it. I had a natural affinity for it. We were young, a nice looking couple, I spoke Italian, and I just had a natural affinity for the younger generation. And I might say that it was not all work in Florence. We had a wonderful time. I mean, I was not the "youth officer." There was not a youth officer at the time.

Q: That came a little later. I remember we had it in Yugoslavia, Robert Kennedy was pushing it.

PILLSBURY: I am not sure today whether that was effective or not. I know that I was effective there and in the subsequent two posts without being told to deal with younger generation I just liked it and was able to reach the younger elements of the population like nobody else really because I just liked doing it.

Q: I think sometimes ... It was an interesting period, particularly with Robert Kennedy pushing his brother to concentrate on youth. In many ways, in many places, it was naive, the idea that this was going to be a force that would just take over which it didn't. But we were getting to the people at an early age. There was an emphasis by our government to look at youth as being ... to replenish ...

PILLSBURY: One of the criticisms I have, actually, I mean looking in terms of continuity over a decade time frame, is that I believe that looking at youth, young political leaders, over time, if it's done in a continuum, not having one person like Robert Kennedy come along and say: "God, we don't have any contact with these kids that are demonstrating in the streets, we don't know who they are, we don't know who's leading them, why is this happening. Got to set up a youth office." That kind of thing doesn't work because the next administration comes in and says: "They're not important." And I do think that the French certainly do it, the British do it. They've got programs that are aimed at reaching the next generation over time, so that would be a change I'd like to see if I had anything to say about it, that there would be a recognition, not so much high school type, but, in Europe, once a young person gets out of school, university, they join the youth wings of the political party. In some cases that's an absolute button they have to push in order to advance to a senior post in the party, so that by the age of twenty-five you can begin to spot people who twenty years later are going to be running the country. And that's what I mean, when I talk about youth I mean twenty-five to forty.

Q: Sure. You left Florence then in '62, and after Madrid and Florence there was a slight change of scene?

PILLSBURY: Sure was, and actually my ongoing assignment from Florence was Naples, and I said: "Hey, that's great. I can get my knowledge of this fascinating complex country built up even more" and also have a good time in southern Italy where I hadn't been able to travel much. I went home on home-leave and I got a call from personnel which said: "There's a slight change in assignment. You're going to Bamako." Certainly, in the early days after independence in Africa, even the personnel officer didn't know exactly where any of these places were. I complained, then I flew to Washington from Minneapolis and said: "This isn't fair, all my household effects have gone to Naples. I'll be a much more effective officer now that I've got this initial Italian experience under my belt." And they said: "This is all very true, but, we've got an emergency. The information officer in Bamako has come down with black water fever" which didn't generate a great deal of enthusiasm either on my part. And "Yes, you can complain, and we can probably get your assignment changed around, but frankly that will just stay on your record you know, and besides, it's a challenge" the guy said. And then he turned to a map of Africa and he said: "And it's right ..." and his finger began to wander around and I knew that he didn't know where Bamako was either. So that there was a sense of adventure going to Africa at that time.

Q: That was high Africa.

PILLSBURY: It was high Africa. There were huge amounts of resources being poured into Africa, opening post and taking people out of Europe, kind of like what's happened in the newly independent states today. There was the same kind of rush to a new world. Certainly the other side was establishing its base there too as confrontation points for the cold war in the third world.

Q: The other side being the Soviet Union and the Chinese.

PILLSBURY: And the Chinese, especially the Chinese in black Africa.

Q: What were you told about Mali when you went out there?

PILLSBURY: I was fortunate. I knew nothing about the country. I think that it's safe to say that that pertained generally, aside from a handful of people who had had access. The French kept access to French West and French Equatorial Africa pretty much to themselves. We had posts in Dakar and Brazzaville, but that was it, and the French didn't allow us to have anything else, so that knowledge of all these new countries after 1960 was limited. I was fortunate in that the Ambassador at the time ... I think he was the second ambassador we had there ...

Q: Who was that?

PILLSBURY: Bill Handley assigned me to accompany a group of ten Malians. It was the first delegation of IVs, International Visitor Program, people to come from Mali in the fall of 1962. So Handley said: "I want Pillsbury to accompany these people around the United States ..."

Q: This was before you went?

PILLSBURY: Before I went ... The Ambassador said, "because there can be no better training for him, for his work, than to get to know these people outside of their country." So I did that. I spoke French. I went around, there was an interpreter assigned, and lived with these people for thirty days. That just changed me so... It was again one of these life changing experiences. I found in them, in those ten, what I subsequently found in Bamako, a sense of civilization, of civilized behavior in treating each other from a totally different culture which has fascinated me ever since.

Q: Could you describe that a bit?

PILLSBURY: One looks at still today and with some degree of justification ... you see the primitive African, you see pictures of villages with few material comforts defined in western terms. That's true, and from that point of view it's primitive but I found that just the way they treated each other on that trip around the United States and then the way I was treated, political attitudes notwithstanding in Bamako, I found that they treated each other many times in a much more civilized manner with a sensitivity towards each other,

the golden rule being lived, than I'd seen in my own culture... than I often saw in western society and especially the impact of, the quest for material benefits, for material well-being, sometimes getting in the way of brotherhood and all that. So that they gave me some understanding immediately on that, those attitudes, a way of treating each other. Then there was also the first ever introduction that I had to a culture and to a people that were completely different from anything I had experienced in the Foreign Service or traveling before. And they were black. I was many times traveling around with that group in the United States, the interpreter and I were white and then the ten Malians, and then many, many times afterwards being the only white person in an all black society was a revelation to me.

Q: Well now, here was a group which had been pretty well kept probably relatively isolated. Mali was not on a main stage of the French either. Here was a group of people coming out of that, brand new practically after independence, coming and touring around in the United States which they might not even have heard of before.

PILLSBURY: Well they knew about the United States.

Q: Yes, but I mean, all of a sudden in thirty days, what was their reaction to how we were, including the race problem and all that?

PILLSBURY: One of the ... it's improved now, but at that time, the Department and the IV program, the International Visitor program, was not really set up to have access to and penetrate ... have meaningful discussions and dialogues with black Americans. It wasn't anybody's fault. The ones who were running the program themselves didn't have any contact with it, so it was hard to set up. We did have some. The Malians I was with were, I learned subsequently, were definitely hand-picked by the president himself.

Q: The president was who?

PILLSBURY: Modibo Keita. They all had leadership roles, not just in the youth movement, but they were leaders across the board. They came, many of them, with fixed ideas, based on very leftist precepts. Modibo was certainly a Marxist-Leninist, African socialist, of the early days of African socialism and was very open to and taken by the philosophy of Marx and Lenin, and especially of Mao. Mao had a very big influence in post-independent French Africa. They also had a very strong love-hate relationship with the French. So they came to the United States, some of them, looking at the United States as their enemy in effect, because they had been trained ... some of them had gone to school in Moscow or about to and subsequently did go later on to Lumumba University in Moscow, etc. So that their attitudes toward the United States were ... what knowledge they had was negative I'd say. It showed to me the extreme effectiveness of the International Visitor Program because they did have a relative amount of access to black America. We did go to a couple of black communities. They had access to whatever they wanted to see. On our visit to an Indian reservation in New Mexico for example, they were astonished to realize that... some of their stereotypes were confirmed ... the Indians

were oppressed. It was a minority that was in a bad way. On the other hand they saw the opportunity that was there for advancement ... people were free in the United States to exercise their God given abilities to do what they wanted. So they came back from that with a completely different view of the United States. Also it was at the time of the Cuban missile crisis and we were in a restaurant on October 22nd, 1962 when Kennedy gave on television his speech about the establishment of the blockade. They realized that the fate of the world was in the hands of two people basically. That was a very sobering thing for them. It wiped away the relative importance of De Gaulle, of European leaders, of Mao and they saw Kennedy and Khrushchev at loggerheads, I mean face to face with each other. That was a very sobering experience for them. I think they took that back and recognized that Africa was on a stage of its own, and important in its own right, but still in terms of life and death of a civilization, what they'd seen on that television screen was fundamental.

Q: How did they react to the materialism of the United States would you say?

PILLSBURY: I think that they ... Well, they were astonished first of all. Seeing just the variety of stuff on the shelves and when I'd subsequently went to Bamako and saw what was available on the shelves there, I could see why they were astonished. They were not taken over and they certainly didn't say: "This is the way I want to live." In effect they were quite objective about it and said: "Well, these are the fruits of a free society, we're going to get there in some way or another and we'll have some of these things ourselves." They were very objective. I remember, shortly after arriving there was a reception for Kennedy's Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Mennen Williams. Mennen Williams said to the leader of my delegation: "Now you've been to the United States, and you've seen how we are, you know something more about us. Isn't it true, why don't you just follow our lead and do what we've done, and then you'll avoid all of our mistakes." And the leader of our delegation said: "Mr. Secretary, we've got to dip our own hands into the water." So they recognized that American leadership was important but they had to develop on their own. So I think that within that framework, the material benefits of western civilization ... what was good for them would come, or they'd get it to a certain extent. Other aspects of it, the search for material benefits at the expense of a civilized way of treating each other that I mentioned at the beginning, they didn't want that. I came back from a trip just last month from Bamako, and I still find that's true today, thirty years later. It was pleasant to see that.

Q: So, you went out there in late '62.

PILLSBURY: Yes, October, November, actually, the end of '62.

Q: What was the political-economic situation of Mali in those days?

PILLSBURY: Well, there was a euphoria for the possibility of an independent Africa. Being able to strike out on their own. All the trappings of independence. I mean the most obvious ones, a flag, and a national anthem, and a national airline, and a national

currency, all of that had been established. They knew that they were ... I think it was René Dubois who coined "le tiers-monde..." of the third world. They had a very high illiteracy of probably 75 or 80%. All the problems of a third-world society they had. But there seemed to be, there was no pessimism at all in the belief that they would be able to conquer these problems. There was also, when I was there, an almost God-like attitude towards Modibo Kieta as was the case with the other leaders of African independence in francophone Africa, from the French. Houphouet, and Senghor and Touré, among others, which again in subsequent years dissipated itself. But at the time, Modibo was regarded as a real leader. That was exemplified by a conference they had to resolve a dispute between Morocco and Algeria. Modibo served as a mediator for it and it worked. That was one of the first effective applications of the Organization of African States mediation strategy to resolve disputes locally. So that from that point of view, there was this euphoria and it was a pleasure to be there and to see that, a sense of optimism. It was not a pleasure to be there as an American because they were virulently anti-American and could make life unpleasant. We knew their feelings and their sympathies and their directions were with the Chinese and the Russians and all the other eastern European countries.

Q: Where was this coming from?

PILLSBURY: I think it came out of one of the things that I'd like to explore now more is the colonial experience and the influence it had on the leaders of post-colonial Africa. I think that a lot of it came from their experiences in France, studying in France in the thirties, forties and fifties. The fact that they were subject to very effective proselytizing by the Comintern and just the ideology of Marxism-Leninism as opposed to capitalism which was regarded as the handmaiden of the colonial experiences. So I think they were these post-colonial era leaders ... You know, their minds had been worked on. They'd studied a great deal about the relationship and they didn't look at what the Russians had done in eastern Europe so much as they looked at what had happened to them as French colonies. Plus the fact that African village life is socialist anyway. It's all for one and one for all, so ... It fit. That fit nicely into the application of economic socialism on the African level.

One thing in Bamako: We talked about Kennedy. So going from the cradle of western civilization in Florence to a place like Bamako, and being there when Kennedy was killed was really an extraordinary experience. Because I remember that I was in the interior, or the bush as they call it there in January of '64, and I spoke Bambara at the time. I'd learned the local language, and I was talking with a man in a village and he started to talk about Kennedy, and I was astonished. He actually started to cry because he had associated himself with Kennedy, not from hearing the news directly on the Voice, but rather from what he heard from the village wise man, the Marabou, who interpreted the news. The Marabou had the radio and then he'd say what had happened. This villager was to me an extraordinary indication of the reach of the appeal of John F. Kennedy.

Q: Well, did you find ...? You had these two things. One the geriatrics of the geritocracy of China and the Soviet Union, and all of a sudden somebody who is really brand new on the scene, Kennedy. How did that play on the anti-colonialism scene?

PILLSBURY: It didn't play very well. I was kicked out of Bamako, out of Mali. I was *persona-non-grata*. It was completely unjustified, but it happened and it was only thirty years later that I found out why. It came full circle, because I got some documents. I was given some information and documents from the man who was Secretary General at the time in the Foreign Ministry. One, I was suspected of spying because I was very close to the youth movement, and it bugged them. The government was not pleased to have a younger officer in the Embassy who spoke Bambara being that close, largely because of the initial access that I had because of these ten people I took around. Those ten people I found out had gone after they got back ... they went to the President Modibo Kieta for a debriefing. They said: "Don't get upset if you see us with an American officer and his wife because we like him and we think that he's fine and OK." So I was the only one ... well there was an AID officer who also had access to Malian families. But everybody else in the Embassy never saw Malian families on a social basis, especially in the *Quartier Africain*, you know, the African sections of the city. And Bamako was a truly African city with a European quarter rather than the other way around. So that I had initial access, and then I ran with it. We did a lot of things with sports exchange programs that were extremely effective in terms of reaching the younger population. I was close to the youth, and at the time, going back to your question, at the time, the rebellion in the Congo was taking place. Tshombe was taking the Katanga out of the Congo. Hammarskjold was killed, or they say he died in the air crash. Lumumba was definitely assassinated and the Malian government at any rate laid the blame squarely on the United States, mixing around in African affairs. L'Essor's editorial on the subject that resulted in a formal complaint from the American Ambassador at the time. And it was just at that time that I was at the height really of my working with young people, in a kind of a naive way, I'll admit, because I didn't connect at all that I, as a young officer, would be suspected of turning young people's minds to American thinking. But that was exactly what the attitude was, so I was thrown out.

Q: Did you have the feeling that there was either Chinese or Soviet influence behind this, or was this homegrown?

PILLSBURY: Well, that's a good question. I think it was a homegrown attitude. I don't think that a Soviet element, or a Chinese element in one of their embassies said: "This guy is dangerous. Get him out of here." Or you know, make an example of American involvement in African affairs the way you interpret it by throwing someone out. No, it was definitely a Marxist who worked closely with the President who did it.

Q: Were the Chinese and the Soviets able to get out the same way you were?

PILLSBURY: They had more access. They did. But their control for access was limited more by their people. The Russian Ambassador and the Chinese Ambassador had named

certain people in their embassies that were allowed to have full access and could go where they wanted. They did not want their people running freely either, so ... But it was their own control rather than something that came from the Malian government.

Q: How did our Embassy ... William Handlet was the Ambassador? How did he operate? How did the Embassy operate under very difficult ...?

PILLSBURY: It was under very difficult circumstances. Again I had the opportunity of working with one of the best political officers I've ever encountered, known, Bob Keeley. I don't know if you ever met ...

Q: Oh, yes.

PILLSBURY: Keeley was absolutely extraordinary.

Q: I had a major interview with him. I didn't do it, but somebody did it.

PILLSBURY: Keeley, and also the Deputy Chief, Bayard King were very effective in dealing on a human basis with some of the more ideological elements, some of the more ideologically oriented elements in the Malian government. And then we had a very effective AID program. So that we recognized the African socialist orientation of Modibo and others like him. I mean Julius Nyerere was doing the same thing in Tanzania. The AID program and especially the military aid program were two counterweights that kept a framework for American operation there which were extremely effective.

Q: When you say effective, what were we trying to do?

PILLSBURY: It turned out ... One, the AID program was aimed at village development. The idea was great the way they attempted to carry it out. Sometimes they did not recognize traditional village life enough so that some of the ways that houses were built according to urban designers in the west that did not take into account African traditions or culture at all. Some of those constructions were torn down two or three years later.

Q: What were the problems? Doors facing the wrong way?

PILLSBURY: Square houses and square streets. That was the biggest one. And outhouses, toilets fixed at a certain point. It just didn't take into account the fact of the randomness of an African village. The intention was there, and I saw again thirty years later that the idea was correct, that to a certain extent the idea of trying to keep people away from the main cities ... It hasn't worked. Everyone of the third world cities has been crushed by population. But nevertheless, they did establish regional economic centers that are valid today. And then in the military, it was a silly project, but it was what Modibo wanted. Training paratroopers to, in theory, fight the Tuaregs in the north. Our MAAG mission clearly just carried on the project to maintain contact with the government, but it was effective in its time.

One last thing on Bamako that has a connection with at least my thinking and my relationship with Africa. At the time, we had a young woman working as the librarian. She was getting married, and she asked me to go to ...

Q: This would be a ...?

PILLSBURY: A Malian. She asked me to come to her wedding, and I did. I took pictures of the wedding. I went back to Mali in 1968, 10 days after the coup that overthrew Modibo. When I arrived, I asked the Ambassador who had done it. He said: "It's some young Lieutenant by the name of Moussa Traore." Well, that was the guy I'd known. So that I kept in touch with him over the years too. That was a fascinating ongoing thing that's alive today.

Q: How about the Peace Corps? Was the Peace Corps there?

PILLSBURY: The Peace Corps was not established. The Peace Corps ... I think the first contingent went to Tanzania in '62 or '63. But the first Peace Corps ... Modibo did not want to have anything to do with the Peace Corps. There was a fairly large contingent of the French equivalent. *Cooperants,* young development specialists who were effective. So the Peace Corps did not come until later. It is now I think the largest Peace Corps in Africa, in Mali so ...

Q: Before we leave Mali, I'd like to ask you on our next interview, what USIA was doing, how you operated at that time and the thrust any relationship to the news media there, and also how you felt about being persona non grata as far as how your Embassy treated you, how USIA did. Was there a stigma, was there a problem on that. We'll talk about that the next time. So we'll just leave it at that.

PILLSBURY: Right.

Q: Let's see. Today is March 15, the ides of March 1994. This is an interview with Phillip W. Pillsbury Jr. I am continuing. This is tape 2.

Q: Phil, last time when you were in Mali. First I wanted to ask you. What were the main activities of USIA?

PILLSBURY: The activities of USIA, not only in Mali but in several other countries of Marxist-Leninist or African socialist orientation were pretty much proscribed. Especially in the information side of things it was very, very difficult to do any serious work. In our case, in Mali in particular, the Ministry of Information at the time was run by a very strongly anti-American type. At that time the Chinese, the People's Republic, and the Russian Soviets were very active and had unhindered access to the information media such as it was in the country at the time. So that the only unhindered access we had to countries like that was really the Voice of America.

Q: What was the relationship of the Voice of America? Were you saying: "Here is something that was going on here that maybe you'll want to address." In other words were you working to tune the Voice of America to Mali and to penetrate.

PILLSBURY: Well, to a certain extent, we did. We had to be careful because the atmosphere was such that the government could just have shut us down altogether. We had to be careful. We had a lot of taped program, from the Voice of America which we played on the radio, cultural programming, music, and things like that. The main access that we had really was personal contact largely through sports programs that the State Department sent. People like Wilma Rudolph, people like that.

Q: She was a well-known black track star.

PILLSBURY: And VISA sent a three man delegation from the NBA. led by John Havlicek and K.C. Jones of the Boston Celtics sent a group out that was enormously successful. They would be the key to further programming, especially entertainment in the home, etc. which was virtually unimpeded. The Malian government and other governments in Africa at the time were also interested in military training. So, our military training team had also a fairly unimpeded access too.

Q: I'm surprised, because I would have thought that in any particularly new country, the army is the key. This is where you are going to have the coup as history has shown throughout many countries. For a Marxist country to let Americans in, why did they do that?

PILLSBURY: It was a very specific program. The President, Modibo Keita wanted to have a trained paratroop group to work with the problem in the north. The French had tried to deal with it and failed. It's still there as a matter of fact. The Tuaregs in the desert. The goal was perhaps misguided, but that was not for us to decide. So the President of the country really wanted it and recognized that the Americans had the best paratroop training in the world, the 101st Airborne. They trained a battalion I think and also pilots. It was a very specific program. AID also had an important mission there in village development. And then the competition for minds and hearts which came out later in Vietnam. That was played out most blatantly you might say in three trade fairs that were held one after another. I think that this has general application for United States diplomatic relations in Sub-Saharan Africa at the time. The Chinese built a pavilion. First they brought in many tools and implements and ways of doing business agriculturally that would fit right in with the traditional forms of agriculture already extant in the country. The Russians followed with a hopelessly unsuccessful exhibit in which they brought in heavy machinery which had no application to the developing world at all. They included a model of an icebreaker that had no relevance whatsoever. It was a cultural mistake of the first order. The United States had by far the most fun pavilion. We had one of Fuller's geodesic domes. It was a combination of small agricultural implements, a little go-go cart track for go-go carts, popcorn, things that were .... It was the only time while I was there, in the two years, that we had absolutely unimpeded access to distribute information,

pamphlets about the United States without anyone asking any questions and wide showing of films that were always sold out. So that it showed us that there was a huge interest in the United States and an appreciation for the United States.

Q: Alright. We already talked about why you were made persona non grata. Could you tell me how the system treated you? This and being made a hostage sometimes when it's not your fault, how did it treat you?

PILLSBURY: Right. There's no doubt that it was a traumatic experience for me because it came so completely unexpectedly and it came at a time when I was very, very closely involved with the Malians. I had associated myself almost in a spiritual way, I might say. So to have that cut off before its time, I left about six months before I was due to leave, that was very difficult for me. The Embassy was fabulous with me, especially the Deputy Chief of Mission who was a close friend.

Q: This was ...?

PILLSBURY: Mr. Bayard King. Bayard was very sympathetic. When he first told me I had twenty-four hours to leave, I said: "That is just impossible." So he went to the Foreign Ministry and got me a week, which was OK. I left my daughter and the nanny to clean up, move out, pack up. So that I have nothing but praise for the way the Embassy, and the Bureau and the United States, and USIA handled it. It certainly didn't affect me because I got a Meritorious Service Award out of that and the work that I did during the fair, and the work that I did with the youth and the sports trip that I did. In a way, one could say that being expelled was somewhat of a recognition of work well done.

Q: Yes, in that context. Well now, where did you go then?

PILLSBURY: Well that kind of thing throws everything into a cocked hat of course. I went home on early home leave and then started looking around for assignments. There was nothing really open because I hadn't really begun the process of asking, bidding for assignments. There were several offers, and then one finally opened up in Madagascar, in Tananarive, and we went in the end of '64.

Q: So, what was the political situation in Madagascar, in Tananarive. How do you spell it?

PILLSBURY: TANANARIVE. That is the French version of the name which is now the Malagasy name Antananarivo. It is considered one of the most exotic and fascinating places in the world and still is. Many people, when I mention Tananarive, say: "Oh that's been one of the lifelong dreams of my life." At the time Madagascar was just coming out, as were many other countries in former French Africa, coming out from under the wing of the French. The French were much more involved with and much more strongly entrenched. The French presence was much more evident in Madagascar than it was in Mali. The President at the time, Philbert Tsiranana, was the father of the country and very

active in independence, but he was taking it a whole lot slower than the Malian president. There were French advisors in every ministry. The French regarded Tananarive and Saigon as the two best places to go in terms of their overseas empire prior to independence for just creature comfort, and cultural life. It was a wonderful assignment to go to at the time. The country was still ... they had their ecological problems but nothing compared to the way it is today. The population was six million then, it's now eighteen million. The infrastructure was still relatively intact. That has severely deteriorated since certainly.

Q: What type of government was it?

PILLSBURY: It was certainly more open to the west. It was definitely a one party state and Tsiranana was certainly the ruler. I wouldn't call it a dictatorship, but a one party state with a father figure as a leader who was reelected, I remember at the time, with 99% of the vote. He would have won easily 85% anyway. There wasn't any serious opposition to him when I was there. That came later.

Q: Did it have either a Marxist or a French socialist tinge to it.

PILLSBURY: Not really. Well yes. I think some of the tenets of the French socialist party, the SFIO, were there, but it was certainly more open to us. Our main competition at the time, and the main barriers to access were the French really, because the French regarded that as a real bastion of theirs at the time in post-colonial Africa which I certainly didn't gainsay. That was their choice. They were there first, had been there a long time. Their cultural operation was a model of the French attitude of their *mission civilisatrice* towards people of another country, and especially in a former colony. They had a policy of educating to the very top of the French system the best and the brightest of the Malagasy people, and they did it always recognizing the extraordinarily deep and interesting, and powerful tradition of the culture of the people and the history of Madagascar. And so recognizing it, they created a love/hate relationship that I think still exists there between the Malagasy and the French. There was a dichotomy among the people of Madagascar, certainly at the intellectual level, individuals who sometimes were faced with the choice of trying to decide if their spiritual heritage was stronger in the Malagasy way or in the French way. So it was fascinating to watch that process.

Q: What were the American interests in Madagascar?

PILLSBURY: They were limited at the time in Africa. Of course I mentioned that our biggest concern was communist penetration of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and of course that focused ... Our biggest worries were in the most important ones, in the Congo, of Zaire as it is now known. On Nigeria to a certain extent. And then other countries that were strong. Tanzania, and it's president, Julius Nyerere. In terms of strategy it was the beginning of our very strong involvement in the Indian Ocean. I believe that the first signings of treaties with the British with regard to Diego Garcia took place then. So there was a certain strategic interest there. There was not any particular interest from a resource

point of view because Madagascar does not have that much, in terms of some exotic plants and fruits that they use, spices and such but that was about all. In a larger sense our interests were political because Madagascar was the leader in the western oriented grouping of African states - the OCAM it was called, *Organisation Commune Africaine et Malagasy* - which grouped States like Madagascar, Senegal and the Ivory Coast, in an alliance that was under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity, but was more attuned to the west than were the states like Ghana, Mali, and Guinea which were definitely Marxist.

Q: How African did the Malagasy feel?

PILLSBURY: The fact that they are an island is a direct answer to that question. They recognize their geographical affinity and their proximity to Africa and they certainly recognize that they were a part of African Unity. But their cultural, racial, ethnic heritage, especially the people on the plateau is toward Southeast Asia. So the people on the plateau, the Merina have traditionally ruled the country much to the distaste of the people on the coast who are definitely more African. The people around the coast of the country are more Africa oriented. It was only after independence that the people on the coast began to take positions in ministries and have a much stronger voice in running the country.

Q: What is the proportion about, highlanders versus lowlanders?

PILLSBURY: I'd say 30 to 40% highlanders, and then if you take all of the groups around it's about 60 to 70% non-highlanders. That includes a large community of overseas Chinese as well.

Q: So it's a fragmented group?

PILLSBURY: Yes. Eighteen ethnic groups.

Q: What was our Embassy like there. Who was the Ambassador.

PILLSBURY: The Ambassador was a man by the name of Vaughan Ferguson who was one of the few men in the State Department at the time who had wide African experience. He had served in Consulates General, I know, in Dakar, and I think in Brazzaville before independence. He had a good understanding of Africa, pre-independence Africa. We were all hobbled by a lack of access under barriers imposed by the British, the French, the Portuguese, the Belgians, all of the colonial parts of Africa. We just didn't have presence there that the colonial powers had. It was a good Embassy. They had a very fine AID team. And AID had an extensive program in rural development as well. So that going back to the interest question, there was a lot of altruism there. We didn't have strong economic interest, there wasn't a political worry about turning Marxist although they later did, in the '70s under Ratsiraka. So it was really an assistance program to help them solidify their independence.

Q: OK. You were with USIA on this island where the French are extremely strong as far as the cultural side. We're trying to spread American culture. The French are our allies. Did you feel that one, were the French trying to cut you, two, were you trying to cut the French. How did you see it? What were you after?

PILLSBURY: We had a modest four man operation. A little cultural center. The most important thing that I felt as Cultural Officer. I believed, and my boss agreed, that in terms of cultural affairs that we had a strong card to play in regards to English teaching because there was a huge interest in that and still is. The French had no quarrel with that at all. They knew that their French teaching operation was very solid and had been in place for a hundred years. Exchange programs on a very modest level also were effective. We did everything we were allowed to do and had the resources to do given what was being allocated out in those days from Washington. Working with the French I felt the most important thing was ... We certainly couldn't beat them, and so to join them in a way. So we had a lot of cooperative programs ... And this I did in Zaire as well with the Belgians and with the French later on. We had cooperative programs. We had a joint venture, joint programming with the French Cultural Center in which we would bring an American who was an expert in French literature, who would talk at the French Cultural Center, and then we would have a Frenchman who would do American literature. This is one example. He spoke at the American Cultural Center. I had a very good and close relationship with the Director of the French Cultural Center who was one of their best in the whole system, admired greatly by none other than Malraux himself at the time, Bernard Mounier. So we had a very good relationship with the French and I don't think there was any feeling of wanting to undercut them, or they undercutting us because we recognized that this was largely their turf and we had a certain part of the pie within which we wanted to work and they said: "Fine, go ahead. At least when I was there, there was no conflict whatsoever.

Q: You had the people on the plateau, and then those down below. Were we working both of these groups deliberately. It's so easy to sometimes stick around the capital?

PILLSBURY: Yes. The answer to that is yes we were. We had a countrywide approach. All of our IV program, the International Visitor Program, the AID programs for exchanges, bringing specialists in, definitely concentrated on the country as a whole. We recognized that the traditions remained strong and still are today. We didn't want to step on toes, but also made it understood that we wanted to work with and find leadership elements in the population as a whole. I traveled extensively in the country at the time in those two years and learned the Malagasy language. I had an access that was very extensive and broad-based, let's say, and can say with pride that I had a very good understanding of the culture of the country. We dealt with them countrywide really.

Q: You say that the country turned Marxist some years later. Did you see any of the seeds of that, were they apparent at the time?

PILLSBURY: You know, you'd always like to say that you had the prescience, but "nobody listened to me." I don't think so, because the man who took over... He was a sailor and in the French Navy. He had been trained ... he went to St Cyr, I know that. Then he went to the Naval Academy at Brest. Anyway, when we were there, Tsiranana really ran things. It was only subsequently from '66 on that things began to unravel and there was some serious demonstration against the government. They reflected discontent with one man running things for so long, and with the French presence. That created some of the conditions that led to the coup by Ratsiraka. The Russians and the Chinese never regarded Madagascar with the same interest in terms of influence that they did in Africa itself. Their presence was never what it was in Mali, or Guinea or places like that. No we didn't forsee the change. I think it came even somewhat as a surprise. Ratsiraka expelled our Ambassador and the Public Affairs Officer, and a couple of other people all in one swoop. So our relations with the country went to ground zero and were there for several years. They're very good now.

Q: It sounds like a rather quiet, tranquil period while you were there.

PILLSBURY: It was a tranquil period. The Malagasy are a very tranquil people until they get riled. The worst rebellion against the French colonial rule took place in Madagascar in the late '40s, in 1948, except obviously for Vietnam. I found that, again as I said I, had the Malagasy, so I imagine I spent especially the last year, I was with the Malagasy people almost exclusively and I found that they overwhelmed me with their hospitality, with their kindness, again I used in my last talk with you, the civilization that I found, the civil attitude of people from another culture. It really struck me. But they showed also later on that they can be extremely violent. I will say, that I saw some elements in the Merinn, the plateau people. There was a pastor, the church was strong in terms of ideological influence. There was a pastor who had this dichotomy of the love/hate relationship with the French. He really began to be very angry toward the French and their influence and he was one of the leaders in the opposition, not Marxist-Leninist but certainly socialist and very anti-French, that led to the take over in the '70s.

Q: You left there when?

PILLSBURY: I left in 1966.

Q: And then where did you go?

PILLSBURY: That was an important time in my life because my assignment in Madagascar of course coincided with the time when the United States started to unravel. It was the time when our involvement in Vietnam became very large. The Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred just before I went to Madagascar. The free speech movement began and then we had burning of the cities. The whole question of civil rights, black power, all of that was from the vantage point of Madagascar absolutely incomprehensible to me. I didn't understand what was going on. It made it very, very difficult not only for me but for any Americans to answer questions about what was going on in the United States. You

say that you want to talk about America and all the good things there but in fact it looks as if things are falling apart. So that it was, especially as a USIA officer, and especially talking to students and professors, our main focus, it was untenable. So I came back and I wanted to take a leave of absence from USIA and try and figure out what was happening so that once on overseas assignment again, I would be a better officer for the USIA. The agency said fine. It was before the Pearson amendment came into being which provided Foreign Service people the opportunity to do a tour of duty in the United States outside of Washington. I didn't want to work in Washington. I didn't want to have a desk job because I knew that would not give me access to the understanding that I really needed. So I took a leave of absence and in January of 1967 I began working with the Minneapolis Urban League in Minneapolis as a volunteer in their manpower development and training program, the on-the-job training program, which was designed to bring disadvantaged people into the work force. It gave me an incredible access to just exactly what I hoped to have. The USIA after four months rightfully said: "You make a decision whether you want to stay with us and come back or resign." I wasn't ready to come back. I was just beginning to get an understanding for the dynamics of what was happening, especially in black/white relations in the United States. So I resigned from the agency and took a full time job now with the Urban League as the Director of On-the-Job Training Program. For the next three years I did that. I had gained an extraordinary access to the black community because of that and also because I was interested. They regarded me as a credible and committed person. There were also great an extremely community wide interest not only in Minneapolis/St Paul but in every city in the United States. There were urban coalitions and meetings of business leaders (what was then called the power structure) in the inner city communities to try and come to some kind of a solution to stop the burning basically. So that I learned a great deal then. I was regarded at the time as the resident expert on Africa. I was really one of the few people in Minneapolis who had had an experience in black Africa at a time when the black community in the United States was passionately interested and involved in the black-is-beautiful, black-power movement. The underpinnings of that whole effort were a recognition of their African heritage. I had the pictures, the experience, the personal experience, the clothes, the music of black Africa. So I was called upon to speak a lot in the inner city communities. That experience meant an enormous amount to me. And then I was asked ... It also led to a political involvement in the United States through the human relations committee that I chaired for our little community. Out of that I was asked to run for Congress in 1970 as a Democrat against Bill Frenzel. I was all set to do it, and my parents thought I was crazy to do it, but they said they'd support me. I had an important discussion with my cousin who was running as a Republican for the State Senate and had declared his candidacy long before I did. Recognizing that blood is thicker than water and the importance of family relationships, I pulled out and I'm glad I did. I would have created a rift which would have been difficult to heal in the family. Therefore, I then turned to the USIA again and said that I would like to come back in. This was extremely difficult.

Q: Oh yes.

PILLSBURY: They said: "Well, we'll think about it." Then they thought and said: "What we can offer you is a limited reserve appointment for two years," which I took. I had then got remarried, and my wife and I said: "Fine, we will go." It was to Lubumbashi, Zaire. So that was the next assignment, and that was in 1970.

Q: You were there for what? For two years?

PILLSBURY: Two years.

Q: What was the situation at that time in Zaire. Lubumbashi, that was what? That was Elisabethville?

PILLSBURY: All the cities had been renamed.

Q: Lubumbashi, Stanleyville. But anyway, this was the heart of Katanga? At that time what was the situation?

PILLSBURY: Well, my wife and I were lucky to be sent there in 1970. The horrible period really extended from independence in 1960 to 1965, and saw the ascension of Mobutu, Jean Joseph Desiré Mobutu, who was a sergeant in the army at the time in 1960 and then moved his way up with our help I think, it saw the death of Patrice Lumumba under curious circumstances, and saw the ascension of Moise Tshombe in the Katanga, and his effort to engineer the secession of the Katanga from the Congo. Dag Hammarskjold died in a very mysterious circumstances. There was general chaos for five years. Mobutu consolidated his power and in 1965 nationalized the great copper company Union Miniere du Haut Katanga, it became (GECAMINES), a Congolese company. He recognized that he didn't have the technical expertise to run it. So the Belgians stayed pretty much, technical people and the administrative heads stayed in Lubumbashi to run the mines. The copper prices were high at the time, worldwide, and so the Congo was on a roll. Shortly after we arrived, Mobutu as did many other African leaders went towards Africanization. They changed the country's name to Zaire, they changed the Congo River's name to Zaire, not recognized by its neighbor across the river. In Brazzaville they still call the Congo the Congo River. Lubumbashi had changed its name, but many of the cities were renamed at the time. The currency was changed and Mobutu pushed for africanization of names including his own. He became Mobutu Sese Seko. Our interest there in Zaire was again the concern of penetration by the communists, the Russians and the Chinese. There's no comparison between Zaire and my other African posts in terms of national security. Zaire is exceptionally rich in terms of strategic minerals. It's been said many times that who controls the Congo controls the heart of black Africa. So that we had a huge mission in Zaire at the time. Everything that goes into a US mission was in Kinshasa. We had consulates all over the country. There was a large consulate in Lubumbashi. I was the only USIA officer, but there had been two officers at the time. We had a big center there and a good budget ...

Q: Who was Consul General at the time?

PILLSBURY: It was Leonardo "Nard" Neher. A fine man. An African hand. He knew Africa very well.

Q: What was your job there?

PILLSBURY: That was my second assignment in a consular district. So, we, in the Consulate and the USIA carried out the policies that were established by the Embassy. My boss was in the capital. That said, the distance of two thousand kilometers and sketchy internal transportation kept us pretty much isolated from Kinshasa. We were much closer physically to English Africa, to Zambia, which was only a hundred kilometers away. We would go there to buy food, as a matter of fact. It was that close. As I said the concerns were in one line. To keep Mobutu happy, we recognized that he was the man for better or worse who controlled things. We had very large economic interests there, centering on the strategic minerals especially. There was a vacuum there as differentiated from the situation in Madagascar where the French had remained very strong. The Belgians had pulled out, absolutely pulled out in 1960 with the exception of running things like GECAMINES, the copper mines. They started to come back in terms of their aid mission which was quite strong, but as far as infrastructure and political assistance, they'd left very little in terms of educated or trained Congolese or Zairois to run things. So there was a vacuum. The Mobutu government was very open to United States assistance efforts to help them. He recognized that himself, and we knew he was important to us. He played that card pretty well.

Q: Now Mobutu is considered a pariah of the first water. But at that time in 1970 .... You were there from 1970 to 1972. How was Mobutu considered?

PILLSBURY: Well, it was kind of two levels. We knew and the people knew that he was a master politician in the African sense. He was a master at shifting people around in different jobs so that the cabals could not build up against him in particular areas. He had a fantastic ability to sniff things out before they started to get serious. One of his sources of power is of course the fact that in African society the chief is important and he is regarded as the maximum chief. Often in a country the people like the chief to act like one and Mobutu played that to the hilt. We at the time as I said looked at him as the person who would keep order and control and not let things get out of hand and certainly not let our opposition penetrate too much. Given what had happened during the civil war in Stanleyville and places like that where the cold war struggle was being played out on a daily basis, we didn't want that to happen. So I think that our policy was one of swallowing our distaste for the man and the way he ran things, the human rights violations, etc. putting that in the background and just saying: "Well, we have got to work with him and support him." I'm sure that for the people who dealt personally with him in Kinshasa, it was a somewhat and sometimes distasteful experience to have to swallow that knowledge that he was a person who one wouldn't want to have necessarily as a good friend. The one thing that we found in the Consulate that was hard to deal with is that we saw things, (and it was true in other consulates too) we saw things in the interior that our

Embassy didn't see on a personal basis. I traveled a good deal in the interior of the Katanga at a time when it was allowed and there was no danger of being ambushed or anything like that. One trip in particular was three weeks into the interior. I know that I was the first official of any western embassy to be on some of those roads in ten years. The infrastructure that had been built up by the Belgians prior to independence was totally gone. There was a level of the things we said we were doing, distributing medicine, food, and clothing, and things like that very often didn't get to the people intended. There was a lot of graft. A lot of medicines that were coming in rather than being given were being sold. This kind of thing we would report and because of larger interests, especially wanting to bring in American business investments, the Embassy didn't want to have too much negative stuff going back to the United States on the actual condition in the interior of Zaire. That was a frustration for us, because there was one reality that we saw in the interior and then the reality that was being told to the American private sector to bring them in to invest in the country that was different. That of course came out later. After I left, there were the rebellions in the copper belt. The Angolan war broke out and disaster and chaos returned.

Q: What about the Katangan government, the Zairean government in your area? Did you have much dealings with them?

PILLSBURY: I didn't really, because my area of unimpeded access was the university. We did a lot of work with the university and had a lot of programs at the center with students and professors. The Consulate did have quite a bit of work with the government. There was a fellow, the governor, a not particularly impressive fellow who had been named by Mobutu and things were run ... They didn't do anything without asking Mobutu or the central government first. There was not a whole lot of independent action. With the exception of the Tshombe family. I mentioned Moise Tshombe who was the leader of the Katanga opposition and for a time Prime Minister. His brother David Tshombe succeeded him as the appointed director of operations for the government in the northwest in the Katanga. But he was also the emperor of the Lunda, a tribe which reflects the problems of the colonial division of Africa in the nineteen century. Then they didn't take into account the tribal or ethnic lines. Rather they just drew lines on a map and said this is yours and this is mine. The Lunda are a very strong tribe. They are present in Zaire, and in Angola and in Zambia. So the Tshombe family ... David Tshombe was the emperor of the Lunda and the prefect of the northwest and he was the only one with both governmental and tribal authority... maybe. There was one other case in Zaire in which Mobutu permitted that to happen. He recognized that in the Tshombe family it was better to let Tshombe stay and have both jobs. So that again it was a centralized government. Mobutu's party the MPR, Mouvement Populaire Revolutionnaire definitely was the one that was in control.

Q: What about the university? What was your impression of the university, the professors and students, and what were we doing there?

PILLSBURY: The university again was the creation of the Belgians prior to independence. Very good facilities that they created by 1960. But in the five years' civil

war, a lot of them had been shot up and destroyed. There was a very good director at the university, very talented and capable. He brought in good professors. We had an effective, small, but effective exchange program in which we brought in Americans to teach on short term basis, much appreciated. The student population was avid to learn. To learn about the US. They recognized the technological and administrative and business superiority and the way of doing things in the United States, and wanted very much to have access to that, which we provided. In those two years I'd say that our relationship with the university was as good as any I've had anywhere in my career. The problem of course was that it was short lived. Everything started to fall apart again. The brief shining light of those two years again started to fall apart due to the chaos in the country and the fact that the central government couldn't or didn't want to leave the university or those students alone. It's now back I guess to an anarchic state. While we were there it was a very gratifying experience to work with them.

Q: You were there then two years?

PILLSBURY: Two years.

Q: Then was your status moved back to regular FSIO?

PILLSBURY: Yes. I'd gone there on the understanding that it was a limited reserve appointment and that I had to ....

Q: We were talking off a microphone about the things you did with Mobutu. Could you describe it again?

PILLSBURY: Sure. I'd indicated that basically we wanted to work with Mobutu because of the strategic importance with which we regarded Zaire. Mobutu made a trip to the United States on an official visit and among the places he stopped at was in New Orleans where he visited the Swiftboat Company. The Swiftboat being descendants of the PT boats of World War II, he decided he wanted to have six of them.

Q: They're about 90 feet long?

PILLSBURY: About 90 feet long and armed. They were widely used in river warfare in Vietnam. This was not by the way military assistance on our part. Mobutu bought them with the money that he made. The Congo was then a rich country. These weren't given to him. There was no facilitation at all. He bought them. But there was very strong opposition in the Consulate, in our Consulate. The Consul General and everyone felt that this was a dumb thing to do, because what Mobutu wanted to do was put the six boats on Lake Tanganyika allegedly to stop the communist infiltration from the socialist states across the lake. But I always felt that it was more for status and to establish what we regarded certainly as a dangerous maneuver, displacing any kind of military balance of power in that that part of Africa. I used to think of the African Queen ...

Q: I was thinking of C.S. Forester's book and then the movie the African Queen.

PILLSBURY: Exactly. It was that same kind of thing. That German ship controlled that lake. So that we were very opposed to that, but Mobutu wanted it very much and our policy on the whole was to go along with what he wanted. The fact that he was buying them with hard currency also had a certain impact that didn't hurt the Swiftboat company in any way. At any rate, the decision was made that it would come and the next problem was getting them there from Louisiana to the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The procedure was extraordinary. Just the procedure, they used a ship. They shipped the boats by sea to Accra and then used the plane that was affectionately known as the Guppy. It had been developed to ship the Apollo spacecraft from California to Cape Kennedy. They used that plane to fly the hulls across Africa. I think all of the parts, some might have gone by sea around the Cape of Good Hope, and then all of it flew, was flown across Africa. Then a retired Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, working with the Swift company, constructed a little narrow gauge railroad of about 200 yards from the airstrip to the lake and reconstructed the Swiftboats on the lake and launched all six of them on time. I went and saw him before he launched the sixth and asked him what his prognostications were for how long they'd last and what they'd be used for. He said: "That's not my affair. My job is to launch them, get them into the water. Given what I've seen with the four that are there now, I don't think they're going to last very long, because ..." He gave an example. He found that a big wind had come up and he had just happened to go down to the dock where these things were moored and found that they weren't moored properly to deal with any kind of a wind. If he hadn't been there they would all have come out of their moorings anyway. So in effect what happened was that over a period of one or two years, maybe three years, the boats were cannibalized. One part would go down, then another one that they would take from another boat. A problem that was not faced at the time was the fact that all the instructions were in English, and that none of the Zairois assigned to the boats spoke English or read it. So there was an accelerated English training program to try and get that done. It was a misguided, we always felt, a very misguided venture.

Q: Were there any protests from Tanzania?

PILLSBURY: Yes, very strong ones as a matter of fact, but really not listened to, at least not from my perception. I don't know what was going on relationshipwise between Nyerere, our Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam, and the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. I was not involved in that at all.

Q: Then you left Lubumbashi and you went back ... You were reinstated in USIA as an FSIO. Then you went off where?

PILLSBURY: It came as a bolt out of the blue, really. I can't remember the places that I put on my bid list, but Tehran was not one of them. I had no experience in that part of the world at all. I had no language experience, no cultural experience, no knowledge of the history, no training. Nothing in my college career would have indicated an assignment to Tehran, but the man who was PAO in Tehran at the time had been my boss, had been

Director of African Affairs in USIA and liked what I did apparently in the center. He needed a director to run the American Binational Center, known as the Iran American Society. So he had me come and I was extremely honored and please to be so named. Then when we got there, again, it was one of these wonderful openings that occur for Foreign Service Officers when you encounter for the first time a culture and a tradition and a people that you know nothing about. It was a tabula rasa from day one. I just learned an enormous amount.

Q: What did you do? What was the political situation? You were there from '72 to '74?

PILLSBURY: Right. From '72 to '74. It was a fascinating political situation because during the time the Yom Kippur war occurred in October of '73 I think and the world woke up to the fact that oil was no longer a cheap commodity. The price went up from 2 or $3 a barrel to around $11 overnight. The world realized for the first time that OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, was a formidable adversary that would require a whole new way of dealing, politically, economically... And little had been prepared in the way of police. Also it was at a time when the Nixon administration looked at the Shah of Iran as the bastion of security in south west Asia, in that part of the world. Here we had a man who was absolutely in control, an absolute monarch. There was no doubt about that. His interview with Oriana Fallaci is a classic of a person who had assumed in his own mind and certainly was regarded as such by the people around him as something even above an ordinary king. The Shah knew a great deal about the oil industry and was the leader at the time in, and I give him credit today for making us in the west wake up to the fact that energy is ... I mean that there are down sides to profligacy. Profligacy and the use of energy, petroleum products at any rate. He also was the first to really make the world at large recognize the importance of oil to world economies. So I give him credit for that. He was also bent on acquiring a very modern military force. The figure of twenty billion dollars in purchase sticks in my mind. Something like that. It was a huge military operation and we had a very large advisory and training military presence in Iran at the time. There was also the fact that they bordered with the Soviet Union. Right across the Caspian Sea were some of the Soviet Union's most important missile facilities. It was a place of enormous security interest to the United States. So that going from Zaire which was the most important security interest of ours in Africa perhaps, to going to Iran when at the time Iran was one of our most important security interest worldwide was a fascinating experience. I certainly wasn't involved with the political end very much. I was the Cultural Officer in charge of the Iran-American society at the time, but you couldn't help but recognize the importance of being in Iran at that time.

Q: A great many Iranians go to the United States universities. How did you find being in the cultural center ...? Were you dealing with the American trained Iranians? What did you do?

PILLSBURY: At the time the Iran-American Society (IAS) was the largest institution of its kind in the world. It had been vastly expanded by my predecessor. They received a grant for operation from USIA, especially for the salaries of the Director, the Deputy

Director and the two Americans who ran the English teaching program. The English teaching program was one of the largest in the world, twenty thousand students a year. The cultural facilities were like none other. It had the best theater in the Middle-East. So that as a presence, the American cultural presence was by far the most important I would say of any western country. The Shah was not interested in having any Soviet or Chinese presence at all. He did not permit access to the opposition. He said that that was being taken care of by his own intelligence people, the SAVAK as you know at the time. This was an accepted quid pro quo. We had invested in the Shah the position of the bastion of security in the Middle-East and also a very important access to watching and listening to what the Soviets were doing across the Caspian Sea. That was important for us too. So that there was a quid pro quo operation there that was recognized by both sides. The Cultural Center itself, given the fact that we had that unrestricted access and that extraordinary facility, we regarded that as a very strong responsibility not just as presenting aspects of American life to the Iranians, but also in a truly binational sense putting on and presenting works that were Iranian to Iranian and American audiences. So that our programming there was really half and half. That, coupled with the English teaching program, we had a credibility there that was very wide and we also willy-nilly had people coming in whom we now know were members of the opposition. One of the hostages during the hostage crisis in 1980 was the PAO at the time whose guards spoke perfect English and who told him that they'd learned their English at the American Cultural Center. So that we know that we had, tacit perhaps, but access to elements of the opposition. The poetry readings that we would do, we had Iranian poets come in and read their poetry to audiences of two thousand people. It was just an extraordinary experience to see that. We know also that the Ministry of Information was watching us. just before I arrived the society did a play by Bertold Brecht that had been translated into Farsi. The Ministry of Information had to approve each page of the translation before the play could be presented. The play went on, and the first night, it had not been going on more than an hour when somebody in the audience who turned out to be a member of the Ministry of Information got up and said: "We're going to close it down." The reason was that the actors were using intonations and inserting words into the translation that were messages from the opposition that were recognized by the members from the Ministry of Information right away which of course the American director didn't read at all. But it was an indication that our activities were very closely followed by the Shah's people and that we had very unlimited access within a very narrow framework.

Q: What was your impression of the Iranians who were trained in the United States and came back? I assume they would be one of your major clientele.

PILLSBURY: Not just the ones trained in the United States, the European trained ones also were just very easy to get along, wonderful people. I mean they were our best friends. Years after of course, after the revolution they went to the four corners of the earth, the European trained ones and it took a long time for us to reestablish contact with some of our friends who got out. But they were the ones we dealt with. We were with them all the time partly because it was easier, partly because they understood America and Europe, partly because we weren't allowed to have access to the people in the bazaar and (a part of

where the opposition) around the countryside. So that the Iranians on the board of the IAS were European-trained or American-trained Iranians. Generally that was our life. I always felt of course that it was proved that they too had, in their training, lost contact with some of their own heritage and roots and above all, they'd certainly lost any kind of credibility with the Khomeini people who came in. They were among the first that the Khomeini people wanted to get rid of, either truly eliminating or just getting out of the country.

Q: Was it a matter of concern to you or to our operation there, whether attempts to reach into the countryside, to the more fundamentalists, or to the more mercantile bazaar?

PILLSBURY: Again as I said when you question in terms of our recognizing winds of opposition coming into Iran, I'd say that the beginnings of the indication that something was rotten in the State really began to occur just as we were leaving in 1974. I believe the first killing of an American military guy took place at that time. So that there were hints of things to come. The Shah's illness, his cancer was not known, although he had it then. He did have it but it was kept very quiet. Certainly when we left in '74, he remained in our minds, my wife's and mine anyway, omnipotent. There were scholars, one is James Bill who is now teaching at William and Mary who did have access to elements of the opposition. It was permitted by the Shah, and especially by his wife, the Shahbanou, for scholarly reasons to talk to people who were *verboten* to us anyway, were not permitted. I'm assuming that some of the intelligence people had access to the opposition perhaps on an agreed basis with the SAVAK. That I don't know, but I'm assuming. There were a couple of officers who wrote very fine pieces on the need to have access to the opposition and recognize especially the religious people, and in this case, one in particular wrote this thing for ... What was that channel called? The Dissent Channel. He wrote some pieces that I think are required reading or ought to be in terms of his views, in terms of what was happening in the religious community. So that there were some voices, but it was never really ... I don't think that anyone foresaw the explosion that occurred in '79. That period from February to November '79.

Q: Was there concern on the part of you and others in USIA about the effect of this large American, particularly military and AID community, because you know, we bring our own baggage with us, and to suddenly plunk it down in the middle of an Islamic society (...) cultural clashes?

PILLSBURY: It was huge. It was not so much of a concern, because, at my level at any rate, what I read about the situation too, it looked, as I said, to me as if the Shah would squelch any kind of opposition. But where it was evident ... I give one example, the Shah bought a thousand helicopters -- he never did anything in a small way -- from the Bell Helicopter Corporation in Texas. The Shah decided that he wanted to decentralize this type of operation in the countryside. He wanted to decentralize, and rightfully so. And part of what he called his White Revolution, he wanted to decentralize the economy and move it away from Tehran. So he established the helicopter base of operation in Isfahan, one of the most beautiful cities in the world and certainly a tremendously important religious center for the Shiites. So, all of a sudden, you get the support structure flying in

from Texas into the middle of a culture that is totally alien, and they ran amok. They created a horrible public relations problem. So much so that the Bell Helicopter people called a lot of them back to Texas for sensitivity training and cultural training, and we began working on a crash basis with the military to provide a basic understanding of what Islam was all about. This was done by one person in particular who is the daughter of Margaret Mead, Mrs. Bateson who was brilliant in cross-cultural communication. But it was something that should have been done ... Let's say the Shah orders a thousand helicopters, and one or two years later they begin to send their people after they've been trained. It was much too fast and created all sorts of problems. I think that, there's no doubt in my mind, that, if we in '74 didn't have much inkling of the cataclysm that occurred in '79, that period of massive military build up with the absolute necessary military assistance of Americans who were very good in their field but perhaps more culturally sensitive, that created a fertile field for the preachings of the Iranians, of Khomeini and his people. So that really is I hope a lesson learned in terms of our dealings with traditional societies outside of the small circle we talked about, the European/American trained Iranians. But moving that out into areas where there was no understanding, to see foreigners, in this case Americans, trampling on traditions and cultures that are held sacred, that was a fertile field for Khomeini to preach to, I tell you.

Q: You left Tehran in '74?

PILLSBURY: Yes, in '74. I came back to USIA. I was thinking I was going to be in the United States for four years. I had two good assignments: the first one was a year working in management. It was an assignment I should have had before I went to Tehran rather than after, because the management of a two million dollar budget center was beyond me, frankly. I'd had no training in that area at all and it showed. If there was one weakness, I'm sure there were many, but certainly that one weakness in managing a huge diverse business, is what it was, was something that I had ... I could have used the training that I had at the agency before rather than after. It was still a good assignment. And then I went from there to a wonderfully free, spirited operation in cultural affairs. I had a job of establishing an American architectural program which was fascinating and that gave me an access to people like I. M. Pei, for instance. That's where I got to know him, because I went to interview him. I really enjoyed that, that year. It should have lasted longer, but I got a call ... Again another bolt from the blue, this time from the European director of USIA whom I had known only by name and who said: "Phil, we want you to return to Italy." It absolutely astonished me. I hadn't made any applications for jobs or anything. I was planning on four years in the United States. I found out that, again, a friend of mine who had seen my work before said: "This is the man we want to reopen the USIS operation in Turin which had been closed." Again, the reason was I'd say largely political, the influence of Euro-communism in the iron triangle cities of Genoa, Milan and Turin. Euro-communism was very important at the time and it was extremely strong in Italy and so that was one of the reasons certainly that they wanted to reestablish contact there. So after much soul searching and much persuading with my wife who did not want to leave--that happens in Foreign Service families--we went. Now I must leave.

Q: Very good then. We'll stop here and we'll pick up your time in Turin from '76 to '80 and then Buenos Aires. Very good. Thank you.

Q: We start with you going to Turin. How did that assignment come about, and can you give me the date?

PILLSBURY: Yes. I was working in Washington in the USIA on a home assignment and planning to spend four years having been overseas for some time. The home assignment was supposed to be four years. So I'd made none of the usual preparations or bidding for assignment or anything. I wasn't planning to do that for another two years. I got a call from the European bureau of USIA, a friend of mine, who said she wanted to see me about an assignment. So I went up and she said: "We want you to go to Turin to open, re-open the USIA post which had been closed ten years before, something like that, to prepare for the huge amount of resources going into Vietnam. That's why it had been closed, one of the reasons. This was again a bolt of the blue which surprised me to say the least, and I said: 'When?" And they said: "Within ...," I can't remember, but it was some very short time frame. Six months, or something like that. I knew that this would have a pretty strong effect on my wife and kids. On the other hand, Italy was a country that I knew and loved and knew the language, and was looking forward to at some point going back there. So it was a terrific proposal under adverse circumstances that came along. I went home and talked about it with my wife. It was a bombshell because we'd just bought a house and were moving in. You know, every Foreign Service Officer goes through that. But we talked about it for a while and finally decided we'd do it. So this was ... decided to go, then arrived in Turin in late August or early September of 1976.

Q: And you stayed there till when?

PILLSBURY: The summer of 1980.

Q: Alright. Talk about Turin. When you got there in 1976, and so what we were up to there?

PILLSBURY: Turin in 1976 was, well is part of what is known as the iron triangle in northern Italy along with Genoa and Milan. It's the main focus certainly of heavy industry and commerce. Turin is the home of giants like Fiat of course and Olivetti. One of the problems at the time and the reason that the United States government wanted to expand a little bit in that area, or reopen a presence, let's say, especially a USIA presence was the importance at the time of Euro-communism. Especially in Italy, the communist party was in one of its many resurgences. There was also the birth at the time of some really rather alarming developments on the far left which were of great concern to the west and to the United States. It was also a time when we were beginning to want to insert missiles in Italy and in Germany and in the Netherlands to counter the perceived threat of the Soviet Union and their missile capability on the other side.

Q: You're talking about the intermediate range missiles? The Soviets had started putting their SS-20s I think or something like that.

PILLSBURY: That's right. The idea was that we had to mount a pretty strong campaign to sell the idea to our allies in western Europe.

Q: Our idea was to put in the Pershing missile.

PILLSBURY: Right. To the Italians' credit, they did accept it.

Q: The Italians were really the key players.

PILLSBURY: They were the key players. There was also a growing terrorist threat. The Red Brigades were getting more and more important. So it was a time of tension. Certainly the bloom was off the rose in the Italian miracle era. So that going to Turin at the time politically and just in the terms of safety was not like it was in the '60s, certainly.

Q: In the first place, the post had been closed. What was it now? Who was running it?

PILLSBURY: The USIA had closed down. It was a Consulate. In Genoa, it was a Consulate General, in Turin it was a Consulate, then Milan of course was a Consulate General. We also had a post I believe if I remember correctly in Trieste. So there was a very strong American presence in the northern part of Italy. Turin was a three-man post. Two consular officers. The Principal Officer, the Vice Consul, and then the USIA person, me. So it was a small operation. I think there were eleven or twelve foreign service nationals there. Basically their job was commercial.

Q: A little later we overlapped a little bit when I was in Naples. Sort of the word was that our Consulate in Turin remained open mainly because of Agnelli, the head of Fiat. Agnelli would come and turn his charm on in Congress or something every time we thought of closing it down, he would call in some chips and it would always remain open. Did you have that feeling?

PILLSBURY: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: What was his first name?

PILLSBURY: Gianni. Gianni Agnelli. I know he did it once during the Kennedy administration. One more time I know of for sure. At one point he finally said: "That's it. I've had it. I'm not going to do it anymore." Certainly in the Carter administration, they wanted to close it, and did in fact. I believe it closed down altogether in 1980 and then was reopened again during the '80s in a much smaller configuration. But the building we were in, of course, closed. The Vice Consul who was there with me closed it in the late summer or early fall of 1980.

Q: Can you describe the political situation in your consular district at that time during '76 to '80.

PILLSBURY: One of the most important single institutions was the metal workers union whose relationship with Fiat was essential. They were controlled by the communist trade union the CGT. Fiat was on an upturn, and therefore the whole area and the whole country. I mean, where goes Fiat, a good part goes Italy. So that was one factor that was very important. Another factor, as I said, was the rise of terrorism, the Red Brigades which were founded by members of middle to upper middle class families in the north, in Milan and Turin. At the time when we arrived they were using methods that were brutal but not fatal. I remember the word almost when I first got there, I heard the word: "Aginocchiare which means to kneecap somebody.

Q: Shoot them in the knees.

PILLSBURY: At some point shortly thereafter, they raised their sights and killed a journalist of La Stampa, but they said: "We've raised our guns to eye level, and we're now going to ..." So the threat was definitely increased and the atmosphere was one of fear and uncertainty. The Italian government more and more was being held hostage to the threats of these urban terrorists, a very small group but very effectively organized. They were aided and abetted by groups of the extreme left. Even the communist party itself disavowed themselves from them. So it was not the atmosphere that one would hope of the stereotype of the fun loving Italians, and good food and all that. There was that, but it was a very dangerous and unpleasant situation. Our cars were armed. Even my little Fiat office car was taken to Rome and had stuff put in. Not in the windows unfortunately. I had asked ... This car came back about a thousand pound heavier. This little Fiat 128. And I said: "How about the windows?" And they said: "Well, the window casings are too small and we can't put bullet-proof glass in the windows." And I said: "What if someone shoots at me?" "Well, hope they're aiming at the doors and you'd just better just duck." So it was not the most effective ... But it was a somewhat difficult situation to work in. And then another important thing at the time was that Turin, Genoa, and Milan were the focus of the huge immigration of labor from the south in the '50s to fuel the economic miracle. Certainly in Piedmont, I'd say especially in Piedmont, the Piedmontese did not accept this influx from the south very well. So there were strong, almost racial overtones in the way the northerners looked at the southerners. It was social explosion really that I think they're just now beginning to absorb. It's taken a long time, several decades, and we were right in the middle of that too.

Q: How did you operate? What were you trying to get across? You had this communist party being important to the unions. Were we making any attempt to get a hold ..?

PILLSBURY: Certainly USIA was not doing anything with the unions. That was largely the work of the Consulate. I would say that even there the most important work with the unions in the north was being done out of Milan and Genoa largely. The Consul's main client was certainly Gianni Agnelli and the Fiat people, and to a certain extent of course

Olivetti Iurea too. But their job was to work closely with Agnelli himself when he so deigned, although Agnelli's contact was really with the Ambassador and higher. I mean, he had contacts in the administration at home. Our main focus was the major newspaper, really one of the great newspapers in the world, La Stampa. So we did work very closely with them in terms of the standard USIA operation of getting material placed in La Stampa and other regional newspapers. And then I personally worked closely with the University of Turin and in small discussions we brought speakers in, very effective I think, to the university I also had lecture programs of my own... We had university level and government people from the United States giving lectures on various aspects of American economic and political life. We didn't have a center. It was not a library, so we did most of our work outside.

Q: How did you find the university as far as imparting knowledge about the United States and its political system?

PILLSBURY: Very much to the left. One of my friends actually who I just saw at the Democratic Convention in 1992, for the first time in twenty years ... Gimgincomo Migone who is from a very old and almost aristocratic family who was the leader, and still is, of an extreme left party. He teaches American history and American political science at the university. We understood from his students and from others that he left his political attitudes at the door and taught a quite objective course. He knew the United States very well and had been there a lot. So that the field within the university in the area of American Studies was wide open. By the way, while I was there, my area of operation was increased to include Genoa as well for USIA. I was the Public Affairs Officer for both Liguria and Piemonte, the Val d'Aosta, and at one point for a little while I was assigned to Monaco as well for the big television station, because it was at the time that private television exploded. So we worked with a growing plethora of private TV station that were coming in at the time as well. But I felt that there was a real need for USIA operation at just about that level. I mean I had two people working for me in Turin and three in Genoa, and it was just about right in terms of resources. It required a great deal of personal activity and just going around meeting people and talking to them and having meetings of key individuals in your house. It was a very personal operation. Perhaps the most personal oriented operation of any of the USIA assignments I had. And language fluency was key, certainly.

Q: How receptive did you find the students or those who were newly out of school who had been through almost the standard rather leftist orientation. It seems that almost any university of anybody who is interested in what you call the political side seems to come out that way.

PILLSBURY: I found that they were extremely interested in the United States as interpreted by and seen through me. I mean it was definitely a personal relationship. I only had a couple of adverse occasions. I remember one in particular, a student from the far left, who was making some absolutely outrageous comments about the United States at a public gathering. I was with the editor of La Stampa. I was going to get up and try

and counter this fellow in public and the Stampa editor said: "Don't bother. He is completely," you know, "he is ideologically in a tunnel and there is no point trying to get him out of it, and you'll just embarrass yourself. There is no point in trying to change." So at that point I learned that there was a certain element in the Italian younger population there was just no point in reaching, because they were unreachable.

Q: Did you also find that the same phenomenon that goes on almost, certainly in the western world, where students have a wonderful time being very leftist when they're in school, and very quickly turn around and turn, I won't say to the right, but certainly move away from that to settling down, getting into business, raising families, and essentially going more middle line.

PILLSBURY: Yes, I did. Particularly this individual if I could find his name, I'd love to see where he is today. My guess is that he has assumed the position you just said, you know, finding a job, etc. The interesting thing to me was talking to Migone at the Democratic Convention sixteen years later, and finding out that he was just as convinced about the importance of basically a Marxist ideology as he was when I was in Turin. In his flawless English and knowledge of the United States, it was equal to none. I gave him credit for sticking to his ideological guns.

Q: Well, the academic world is still .... You weren't there during the collapse of the communist system which I think dealt a tremendous blow to the Marxists. Were you observing the corrosive effects of corruption but also of state support of non-viable industries?

PILLSBURY: Not really. I wouldn't say that. It was going on and perhaps I should have been more aware of it. I talked with the Consul about it a little bit. But I think it really began to come to a head after I'd left in the '80s. Certainly the P2 scandal and that was the opening even in... the indication of the corruption at the core. I think that the thing that impressed me the most was actually a very positive thing about Italy, was the kidnaping and eventual assassination of Aldo Moro which was an effort on the part of the Red Brigades to bring the Italian government to its knees and to turn to fascist state control methods. Do away with civil liberties in order to get at this problem of terrorism and to the great credit of the Italian government, they didn't do it. They went about it without destroying, taking away the civil liberties and in effect finally got judges and juries not to kowtow to the threats of local Red Brigades and to carry out the judging the members of the Red Brigade, to put them away. A very courageous aspect. That was in 1978 I think.

Q: What about the dealing with television stations. You had this growth of independent television stations, some were almost pirate stations, weren't they. What were we trying to do with them? How were you trying to operate with them? How successful were you?

PILLSBURY: The television movement began in northern Italy, in a little town, Biela. A man felt that he'd read the Italian constitution that said freedom of speech and all, so he felt that he had the right to start a television station of his own. The first one was ... I

think it had a reach of maybe two hundred yards around his house, but it upset the Italian monopoly, the RAI. They brought it to a head by bringing it to the Corte Costituzionale who ruled in favor of this fellow. And this just opened Pandora's box. There was no regulatory agency like the FCC to control this and a pent up desire to get on the air that had been building for years exploded within a year and suddenly, and you'll remember too, that there were ... anybody and his brother could get a signal on the air. They would just get a signal on the air even if it was the circle with a number on it to occupy a frequency. So much so, that in turn they were interfering with signals in the airport. It was hard for planes to land and to take off. For a while, it was anarchy. I remember getting a telephone call from a big news station in Los Angeles and they were calling and they said: "We've heard this fantastic news, unbelievable news." It was just at the time when the Red Brigades had upped their ante and they were starting to shoot people for real, to kill them. And I said: "Yes, this is a terrible situation facing us." "No, no, no, we're not talking about that. We're talking about this growth of private television." They had heard of housewives' striptease programs to lure viewers. That was the big news.

Q: Yes, I remember reading about that.

PILLSBURY: These stations were using any way that they could to get viewership, and one of the means was one station giving opportunity for housewives to take their clothes off in public. So that there was a period of anarchy. We went and visited these stations as did our colleagues all over Italy really. There were more in northern Italy than southern. But we went and visited the ones that appeared to have some long term viability and indeed did. We picked them well. And then we provided them with programming that came out of USIA. They of course were also buying heavily into American ... buying American movies and American commercial products. Again, it was a fascinating period to watch this competition explode and watching RAI first trying to resist and then going along with it, and everybody cutting out their own niche. Today I think they're in that situation where they are somewhat ... they have channels somewhat like we have here. There are some major private television stations. But it was a fun time to be there.

Q: Our Ambassador then was Richard Gardner for most of the time there and he was sort of unique in that he was not Italo-American or a professional diplomat but he came with an academic background in labor law. Wasn't that it? And he spoke Italian and had an Italian wife. From your point of view, how effective was he?

PILLSBURY: I'd say that first of all his Italian connection, his Italian wife was of big assistance. She I believe was related to the family that ... the film *Il giardino di Finzi Contini* was her family.

Q: Right. She was of a Jewish Venetian family I think.

PILLSBURY: And so, she gave the couple, the Gardners as a couple and then Ambassador Gardner immediate credibility in terms of the Italians. And the language was very important, and the Gardners spoke good Italian. It's a little hard for me to say. He

was effective when he came on his visits to the consular district, and dealt with again Gianni Agnelli and so on and his people. They were usually lightning visits, very quick, coupled with sometimes he would take, combine a trip to Turin with a trip to Courmnyeur to do a little skiing too, which was fine you know. We would join him there. My contacts with him were limited. The only time that I remember, it was a meeting in La Spezia which was also in my district from the USIA point of view, and Gardner made a speech there on American policy. It was a labor speech. There was a question I remember that was asked, I can't remember exactly what it was but it was anti-American, but I know that, anti-US policy. Gardner answered it beautifully. Usually Gardner in a formal speech would like to have the questions translated into English, but it was basically a ploy for him to think about his answer. He knew what they were saying. At this event I happened to have a tape recorder. The reply was misreported in the paper and I had the recording. So I sent it down to Gardner and the paper had to retract. So that Ambassador Gardner thought that was great, you know. I think he was very effective in his relationships with the government. He was a good Ambassador at the time. He was good for the time that he was there I think.

Q: This is my feeling too.

PILLSBURY: But I do say, as you know, the seven hundred kilometers that separated Turin and Rome were much more than that in terms other than geographical. We were a long ways away from what was going on in the Roman Embassy.

Q: Well, I was only about three hundred kilometers away but we're not even talking ...we're talking about a continental change. I could have been in Africa instead of being in Naples. The major thing was the Pershing missile business, getting ready to put the missiles in, which obviously was vehemently being opposed by the communist party. How did that play where you were?

PILLSBURY: Well, I think that occurred in the late ... It started to really take place in '79, '80.

Q: Yes. They really didn't get put in until ... during the Reagan administration, but the ground ...

PILLSBURY: The ground was being set during the Carter administration. I think that just Europewide or even worldwide, USIA can take a great deal of credit for the public diplomacy aspect of that effort, because it wasn't heavy-handed. We got materials from various sources, from academics, from scientists, from political scientists, hard core recognition of what the Soviet threat was, and I believe very definitely that it was a threat. Our mission really was to get that idea across that what the Soviets had on the other side was indeed a threat to western Europe and had to be countered. So that it was part of our programming over a period of four years, but it wasn't the only thing we were dealing with. That would have made us look as if we had a one-track mind and we would have lost our credibility for other things. Within the context of the protection and the common

recognition of what was important in western civilization vis-a-vis the threat that was perceived from the other side. So that it was part of our programming over that period.

Q: Did you see in dealing with the communists or getting across to them in Italy that in a way it was almost two-fold. One: that internally, they were good solid communists and all that, but externally they basically they did not buy all the ... they weren't solidly, or at least many were solidly on the side of the Soviets and what they were doing. I know for example that in Naples the mayor was a communist and he wanted more fleet visits, you know. The Sixth Fleet, he did not want us ... It was jobs, but also one had the feeling ... I mean the Italians were sophisticated enough to know they really did not want the Soviet stuff. Did you get that feeling or not?

PILLSBURY: Definitely. Ernesto Berlinguer I remember was head of the PCI at the time, the communist party and his relationship with Moscow was ... He was always a thorn in their side. In my case the mayor of Turin Diego Novelli was a communist. I admired Diego Novelli. I got to know him relatively well, and I talked to him ... His major concern was trying to create a sense of community in Turin between the southerners who lived in the periphery and also who had taken over some of the central part of the city causing a flight to the suburbs, something like what we had here. So his social policies were right on target in his effort to enable Turin to be a valid urban agglomeration in the face of this tremendous dislocation, spiritual and psychological caused by the influx of southerners. I think Novelli was a southerner, a second generation southerner himself. So that the answer to that question is yes. The Italian communist party is certainly sui generis and the fact that before we started you noted that in this last election they again won one third of the vote.

Q: We're talking about 1994.

PILLSBURY: 1994. They were getting a third of the vote when I was there. They represent a certain part of the Italian population that as you said wants to stick it in the face of whoever is in power. I think the Italian communists certainly were far removed from the monolithic approach of the Soviet Union's and Chinese as well.

Q: Well before we leave here, is there anything else we should cover on Turin?

PILLSBURY: Turin meant a great deal to me. I greatly regret its closing. It's the epitome really of, I think, the unfortunate tendency or actual policy of various administrations to open and close consulates and especially in a city that is of such importance to Italy and to the United States. I think we lose by closing a small window, we lose an enormous amount of access let alone the impact of the public relations of closing a place that has existed for a hundred and forty-four years. I greatly regret that we've done this not only in Italy but in the world. We should just ... I know we're going to do it again. Milan is now the only office in northern Italy and at some point something is going to happen and we're going to say: "We'd better reopen in Genoa, or reopen in Turin." So I think that that hiccup attitude towards facilities is really unfortunate.

Q: So then, your last post was Buenos Aires? You got there just at either the right or the wrong time, didn't you? Could you tell how you got the assignment and you were there from when to when?

PILLSBURY: The Buenos Aires assignment for a change came as a result of the bidding process. It was my second or third choice and it turned out to be that rare combination where everything seemed to fall into place right. In effect I arrived there in the early fall of 1980 when the military dictatorship was still in power, the Videla government. They had been running an anti-terrorist campaign that was known as the dirty war, *la guerra sucia*. They had been under constant fire from the Carter administration for human rights violation and rightly so. Exactly how many people died in that period of 'disaparecidos', the disappeared campaign, nobody knew. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo marched against it every Thursday. The Embassy had a political officer whose sole job was making sure that the policy of the Carter administration was always front and center. Patt Derian was the head of that in the State Department. Argentina was certainly one of the main focal points. They were nasty people, the Videla government, and they were dealing with a nasty situation. It will be one of those subjects that will be talked about and debated for years. They used draconian methods to get rid of the terrorist threat. It was both urban and rural terrorism that had overtaken Argentina. So that when we arrived, it was the end of the Videla government, certainly not the end of the military control. Videla turned over the reins of power to another military guy, military rule continued until 1983. From 1980 to 1982, the military were still very much in control. We arrived therefore at a time when the terrorist threat to the foreign diplomats was over. Therefore we had, as I said, it was a combination of the best. We had a situation that you could see would move towards democracy eventually. We had one of the two best Ambassadors I ever worked for. Harry Shlaudeman was the Ambassador who came in late fall of 1980 and it was just a pleasure to be associated with a man of that caliber who knew Latin America so well. The level of the Embassy staff was, officers and foreign service nationals, was uniformly excellent. We had a good school that was no longer under the terrorist gun. We could move around the country as much as we wanted. I was Cultural Affairs Officer. And so my job gave me the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the country which I did do. It was a good situation for both my wife and our kids, they all had interesting things to do and had the opportunity to widely appreciate Argentine life and culture. So it was a tremendous time to be there, with the exception of the Falklands war.

Q: Before we get to the Falklands war, how was the election of Ronald Reagan received? Because to most people in other countries, Ronald Reagan was a movie actor considered both a light weight and a hard right conservative. And you arrived there just at the time this happened.

PILLSBURY: He was elected two months after we arrived. That was the election of 1980. I think that, certainly in Argentina, his election was applauded by the military government. They were tired of constantly having the human rights issue stuck in their face. Carter's Ambassador Castro had been the former governor of New Mexico and was

extremely effective in doing so. At the very minimum they looked at Reagan's election as a welcome respite from that. Human rights was in a very low key in Reagan's administration. Reagan's emphasis on military build-up, his emphasis on looking at the Soviet Union as the evil empire, all were applauded by the military government because that's what they had been fighting more or less. I mean the urban terrorists were Marxist. So that the urban terrorists, the Montoneros were definitely Marxist-oriented and were speaking the Soviet line. So that I think that Reagan's background, was not so much an issue with the Argentine government as the fact that he was a conservative and they liked that. I think that in terms of the public I don't think that there was a particular reaction one way or another in terms of Reagan being a movie actor. It was not an issue.

Q: Well now, as Cultural Affairs Officer, who were your target groups?

PILLSBURY: It was an interesting period because when I went there, my superior, the PAO, had gotten into kind of a frame, a mindset, in which he defined only certain groups to which he wanted to devote all USIS resources. Mainly government leaders. I mean the people who really pulled the levers of power. He wasn't interested much in education, the traditional focus of Cultural Affairs Officers. He wasn't interested in dealings with the university or with the performing arts theater groups, the library. He wanted to give away of all the general collection of the library, all of American literature. He was not interested in Americans. He was interested in political/economic/social issues and that's what he wanted to concentrate on, so it was initially a difficult period for a Cultural Affairs Officer. I went there with the feeling that we should be dealing in long term with future leaders in all areas including the performing arts. It was a major policy difference for me and it was very hard at first for me and for my office because it was a big cultural affairs office. We had three Americans and about eight or nine foreign nationals, all seniors, senior level. So that first period was difficult. One example: The foreign service national librarian at the time had been told to get rid of all of American literature, theater, books on music, etc. Just stick to library books on the issues that "carried the freight", so to speak. And instead of getting rid of them, she hid them. The director for Latin America for the agency came down, he found that this was happening and eventually the man who had instituted this policy (which I felt was a mistake) was replaced. I mean he was not removed summarily, but the new PAO came in just before the war in 1982 and changed things around a way back to the traditional USIA operation and the Foreign Service national who'd hidden the books got an award for doing it. From that time on we got into a much more traditional operation with my new PAO and from that time on I could travel. My main focus was the twenty-six universities in the country. We had extensive speaking programs with them, a fast growing Fulbright program, extensive use of our library and establishment of contacts with university libraries throughout the country. So I would say that the main focus was certainly with the universities and students.

Q: Well in the first place on this focus, I would have thought that the focus on the people pulling the levers would have, just by itself I mean, here you had a dictatorship, and dictatorships come and dictatorships go and we all know they go, that this is almost self-defeating because you really have to prepare for the next generation. Was this sort of ...?

PILLSBURY: Exactly. All of the PAO's colleagues felt that yes it was important to have contacts with the people who were in power at the time in the various ministries, but I believed that especially given the fact that there was no particular edict from the military government that we could not deal with people outside of government, it was a mistake not to devote some resources and time to the future leaders. I think that if he'd stayed there for two more years we would have been caught when the military government fell, it just had no more credibility. We would have had a rebuilding program that would have been difficult to do. So yes. It was not something I agreed with.

Q: What about dealings with the universities? Could you do a little compared contrast with the Italian ones? Where the students were coming from? Their outlook, knowledge of the United States, etc.?

PILLSBURY: I think the Argentine government ... They wanted to establish a university in each of the twenty-six provinces. So there was a building program that went too far too fast. I visited some universities that really didn't have the facilities other than a name really to be called a university. The university of Buenos Aires was very similar to European universities in terms of hotbeds of activism, and students there of course had been one of the main focal points for the disappearance campaign. The so-called radicals in the university, the young radicals. It was dangerous to be a radical in the university during the 70s, from '76 to '80 certainly. So that the military government very much controlled what was being taught, who had the professorships, who was allowed to stay as professor. They saw any deviation from that as a real threat to their existence. That began to change of course after we got there from '81 on. We had to be a little bit careful in terms of spreading the word of democracy through the university system. You know, we looked behind our shoulders a good deal when I first got there, in terms of not doing something that the military government would find inimical to their interests. There was a private university system that had begun. One in Buenos Aires, and a couple in a another part of the country with whom we dealt. They had a little bit more freedom and were more reachable. One in particular had a pretty close exchange relationship with American University here. So the beginnings of good student exchanges really started to get going just after I got there. There were some similarities with Italy. I mean, the common denominator among students is that they want change fast and see ways of doing it, especially in a repressive government. You can't compare Italy and Argentina in terms of government. Italy was a functioning democracy and Argentina was a military dictatorship. So there was a pressure on academic and student life in Argentina that just didn't exist in Italy or in any free society.

Q: How about knowledge of the United States?

PILLSBURY: Surprisingly little. We found that the alternation of strong military dictatorship governments and weak democratic governments since 1930 in Argentina had resulted in alternating periods of strong Censorship on things during military rule and periods of cultural free expression during the years of democracy. During the 'Dirty War'

cultural creativity withered, and resulted in a situation in 1980 in which a serious lack of knowledge and understanding existed between Argentina and the United States. There was a lot to do. And a huge interest in America. I mean all throughout the dictatorship periods, the library served as a tremendously important access for information about the United States and about democratic forms of government. The library was very, very active in their reference service and outreach. The most effective of any library I've been associated with in my career. Certainly the strongest continuing interest.
Q: Did you find that you were the heir to the Carter concentration on human rights. Did you find that that created a reservoir of good-will, made the United States a place where the educated people knew that at least our heart was in the right place, at least to some extent?

PILLSBURY: Yes, I'd say that's true. Certainly the base line was that people recognized that human rights policy saved lives. There were a lot of people that would either have been exiled or killed and weren't because of the pressure that was exercised by the Carter administration. There's always a problem in that situation. We're dealing with the question of human rights today in China you know. Certain elements of the society say: "Keep your nose out of our business, our internal affairs." Others would say: "You've got problems of yours at home. Why don't you take care of that before messing around with ours." That was a common denominator that we dealt with. Then there were other families, some of whose members had been kidnapped or killed by the terrorists. So their attitude towards human rights was a whole lot different. They felt that the government had to exercise draconian methods. But even they began to see that the need for a strong central hand was beginning to disappear and in a world that was more and more interdependent a military dictatorship could not operate independently of other neighboring countries in the Southern Cone of South America or the world at large. Everyone ... It was very interesting to live and walk in a South American country central to U.S. interests because it makes you realize that the presence of the United States, understood or not, the presence of the United States, how well they understood the United States, just the very presence of the Goliath is a fact of life. More so than in the places I've worked in Europe or in Africa. They recognize that super power status is particularly relevant in the relationship of their countries with the United States.

Q: Could you talk about how the Malvinas or the Falkland war--it was in '82 wasn't it? How that impacted on ... how you observed it and our dealings with it and how it developed? In the first place, you might explain what it is?

PILLSBURY: Yes. The Malvinas, or as we called them the Falklands. The Argentines call them the Malvinas, are islands off the coast in the South Atlantic that are now owned by the British but have been claimed by the Argentines for a hundred and thirty-three years as theirs. In terms of value, as real estate there is probably very little. Many more sheep on the islands than human beings. There is indication of oil resources off the coast that have not yet been explored, probably true. But it was more a spiritual and historical and traditional thing for the Argentines and their claim is valid. It is shrouded in counter-claims that go back, even the United States was involved at some time.

Q: Yes, we grabbed it for a couple of weeks or so.

PILLSBURY: Our action, the U.S. Navy action in 1828 or 1830, enabled the British to establish their hegemony over the islands. But since then, there is a song that school kids sing in Argentina referring to "our sisters the Malvinas", so that it is part of the national psyche and was a constant thorn that existed in the love/hate relationship that has existed between the British and the Argentines, given the fact that there is a very large British community down there. It came to a head in 1982. There were three major misconceptions that led to the outbreak of that. One was that the British didn't really realize how seriously the Argentines felt about this. It was always on the back burner for them and when the Argentines said: "We want to talk about the Falklands," the British said: "Yes, sometime, but not now." The Argentine government, the military guy at the time was a man by the name of Galtieri. Galtieri had a mistaken notion about the relationship of civilian and military power in the United States. He had been to the United States just after Reagan's election, when he was head of the army, and had been feted and made to realize how important the United States felt the army was. He came away with the mistaken impression that the United States would support him in their effort to get the discussions going on the Malvinas. The third misconception was the failure of the Argentine military to take seriously the British threat to send an armada. I think that everybody was surprised by that. So there were these three misconceptions working when in the first part of 1982, some Argentines occupied the weather station on South Georgia in the South Atlantic. Galtieri at home was facing increasing unrest and it is a standard ploy as we know for military people, if they've got troubles at home, to embark on a foreign adventure to get the people's minds off what's wrong at home. So he very secretly laid the plans for the invasion of the Falklands and I think it was on April 1 as a matter of fact, April fool's day. To the surprise of everyone Margaret Thatcher said: "We're going to come and take them back." And the United States for the first part of that period of seventy or eighty day tried to serve as a mediator. Haig came down a couple of times. He went to England. Then it became evident that nothing was going to happen. The British had launched their armada and we obviously sided with the British. We said: "It is still British property." It was at that point that things got kind of unpleasant in Argentina on an official basis for Americans being there and certainly for the British. They broke relations of course and the British interests section was set up in the Swiss Embassy. There were elements, certainly official, that felt that the United States had betrayed Argentina. Shlaudeman, our Ambassador was given the cold shoulder not just by the government but by friends who surprised him, doing that to him. We in a work capacity had to hunker down certainly. We stopped a lot of our activity. I still traveled some but our public programs were really basically stopped for that period. On a personal basis, friends ... there was no change at all in our relationship with the Argentines. We continued to have a very good personal relationship but we were in cold storage for that period during the war. Feelings in the country were ambivalent towards the United States. The Argentines realistically I think that the war reflected the last dying gasps of the repressive military government they wanted to get rid of. But on the other hand it dealt with something that

was very close to their hearts and part of their national patriotic sense. So it was a very hard period for us as Americans and for the Argentines in our official dealings.

Q: You left there when?

PILLSBURY: In 1984.

Q: Now, we're talking about '82. You had two years when you were there. Was there a recovery period or not?

PILLSBURY: Interestingly enough, the thing that reopened relations between the United States and Argentina was a cultural event. It was the coming of the New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta. This was in September just a few months after the war was over. As one or two further comments on the war. Of course the effective Argentine use of the Exocet missile had changed the whole concept of wars that would be fought, the maritime strategy. So it had some strategic aspects that were very important. Also it had a long range influence in the fact that it made the then two superpowers realize that conflicts could break out in completely unexpected places in the world that would bring them face to face on opposite sides of the table in a situation that they could not control and they did not want to be in. I mean the Soviets had a very large grain trading relationship with the Argentines and in all probability helped them with some intelligence and logistics. We certainly helped the British. So it was an unpleasant confrontation that was kind of a harbinger of what we face today - situations that are out of the control of the now one superpower. So from that point it was very interesting. As I was saying, the New York Philharmonic was scheduled to come in September and there was a big question whether they should come at all. Anti-American feeling was riding high. The impresario in Argentina very courageously said she wanted to have them come and we went along with that, the American government and its sponsorship. Mehta came ...

Q: Within the Embassy, was there any dispute?

PILLSBURY: Big division, yes. Ambassador Shlaudeman felt that they should come. But there was a lot of debate. Mehta proved to be ... It was one of those times when the only thing that was going to unthaw that relationship was a cultural event. It had complete credibility. Culture, music, with the great Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires had always been a center for music and opera. So Mehta came and the first thing he did, he had a press conference that we put on. He didn't talk about the freeze in the bilateral relationship, but said that he was going to give a free concert at the big Luna Park which was a tremendous thing. He also made reference to the universal language of music and the importance of freedom of borders to the passage of information, of cultural performance. He was a master and those concerts in Buenos Aires and Cordoba really were the thing ... After that, things really began to change. Galtieri had been disgraced really because of the loss of the war and a caretaker military government had come in to prepare the country for democracy. Campaigns of the two major parties had begun after that concert in September and once again we began to be regarded with favor. So that the New York

Philharmonic's appearance in September really opened the way for the return of more normal relations.

Q: Were you able to go then to the universities?

PILLSBURY: Yes. Right away after that. It was very clear that democracy was going to be coming back and so we had much greater access to various groups. The universities, the press, television, radio, etc. to place material on the how-tos of helping a democracy to work. We worked very closely with the the UCR, Union Civica Radical party of the eventual Raul Alfonsin. Also to a certain extent with the opposition party, the former Peronistas - now known as the Justicalista Party. We had really greater access to these various elements.

Q: You left there when, in 1984?

PILLSBURY: Yes, Alfonsin was elected in October of '83 and we left in the summer of '84.

Q: Is there anything else that we should cover on that period? It sounds like you left on an upbeat.

PILLSBURY: We certainly did. We left on an upbeat and Alfonsin ... The basis for what appears to be now, ten years later a valid and vibrant democracy was laid in that period. So we definitely, it was my last overseas assignment, we left on a very high note.

Q: What did you do after that?

PILLSBURY: I came back and worked ... I was assigned to the National War College for one year. A very great experience for me. It was my first contact with military people, something that I treasure. I learned a great deal. Then I had two tremendous assignment with USIA. I worked first as director for the youth exchange program which had been started again. I mentioned consulates opening and closing. Same deal with youth activities and the US government. Big during the Kennedy years and then sort of disappearing. Well, Charlie Wick of the USIA felt that this was very important, and so did Reagan. So they got a youth exchange program going and I ran that. That was a great, great experience to be involved in that. Especially with the reestablishment of a major exchange program with the Germans. Then, after that I went to run the books translation, libraries, and English teaching program of USIA, worldwide. That was the home equivalent of what I had been doing all my life overseas. So I had two wonderful assignments with USIA.

Q: What was your impression of Charles Wick? A very controversial person.

PILLSBURY: He was a controversial person. You asked me the attitude towards Reagan, when Reagan was elected, and I said that Reagan was greeted largely with open arms in

Argentina. Wick on the other hand for those who knew USIA activities, and certainly within USIA we regarded his appointment with incredulity, you can believe it, and somewhat with ridicule. His first three or four years as viewed by a career officer's point of view overseas, we looked at his movements and the way he was running the agency as bordering on disbelief. Interestingly enough, I think Wick will be regarded as one of the best directors USIA ever had. It took him a while to learn the ways of Washington. Certainly the second term of Reagan he was very effective. He was very effective because of all the directors of USIA I can think of only one or two others, Edward R. Murrow with Kennedy and maybe Leonard Marks with Johnson who had that direct line to the president, so that Wick's voice was listened to as the director of a relatively minor agency in the big picture of foreign affairs. He doubled the USIA budget and kept it there, a monumental achievement. In the second term he concentrated on the things he was interested in, worldwide television, the Worldnet and in the computerization of the agency bringing it in into the twenty-first century, latter twentieth century. Those are real achievements. So I started wondering how it could have happened that someone like that would be named director and ended admiring him greatly. He was very effective.

Q: You say the youth program which is obviously a major excursion in trying to reach a group that will pay off was his initiative and also Reagan's.

PILLSBURY: I don't know. I think it was really Reagan's idea. I think that it came to a certain extent out of the virulent reaction in Europe among young people to the United States' effort to put the missiles in. I think that was one of the things the US administration in general said: "My God, here's a whole generation of Europeans who really don't understand what we're all about. I think that was really one of the motivating factors for Reagan, but I think that he really believed deep down that exchange programs of young people between the United States and other countries laid the groundwork for future understanding that you couldn't quantify in terms of dollars and cents or short term results. It was rather very much long term. They put a tremendous amount of resources, allocated a large amount of resources at the time and provided very good officers to run it. The next director was not so keen on the idea and the program was cut. Pretty vast changes, but now it's back in the fore largely due to the breakup of the Soviet Union and Senator Bradley.

Q: Senator Bradley of New Jersey.

PILLSBURY: Yes. He's succeeded in getting a great deal of money for exchanges with the former republics of the Soviet Union, in the Freedom Support Act.

Q: Well, then you left USIA in 1990.

PILLSBURY: In 1990.

Q: Why don't we stop at that?

PILLSBURY: Okay. A fine career it was.

Q: Good. So, I've enjoyed this very much. Thank you.

End of interview