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

RUSSELL O. PRICKETT

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy & Lewis Hoffacker
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 24th of March, 1999. This is an interview with Russell O. Prickett. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Russ and I are old colleagues and friends. Russ, could you tell me when and where you were born and then something about your family?

PRICKETT: Yes. I was born in the town of Willmar, Minnesota, in 1932, and lived as a child in Morris, Minnesota, in the western part of that state. My dad was a teacher at the West Central School of Agriculture, one of many schools that were financed half from federal agricultural funds and half from University of Minnesota funds.

Q: Your mother?

PRICKETT: She was also a teacher. Both Dad and Mom were farm people, the first in their families to get a college education. Mom's folks came from Norway, and Dad's had been in the country since the 1600s.

Q: What about Morris? Was it a farming community, or what was it?

PRICKETT: A farming community of about 3,000 souls. It was a stop on the Great Northern Railroad from the Twin Cities out to the Pacific Northwest. It was one of those places that J. J. Hill looked at and said, "I can get rich hauling wheat to market if we can get farmers out here to raise wheat."

Q: So they sponsored trips and got farmers to drop off the train and raise wheat all along there.

PRICKETT: My Grandfather Erikson, Mom's dad, was one of those young Norwegians who came over and worked on the railroad for a time and then bought bargain-priced farmland from the railroad.

Q: What years were you living in Morris, approximately?

PRICKETT: From '32 to '43.

Q: So you were going to school there.

PRICKETT: In grade school, yes.

Q: What was grade school like?

PRICKETT: We had many things that some people question now, whether music and art, for example, are essential. We didn't have any foreign language instruction in grade school, but we had good schooling. We walked to school, of course, in a small town. If you lived on one side of the town and the school was on the other, then there were school buses that would take you across the town, maybe two or three miles.

Q: Was there much of a Scandinavian aura to the town?

PRICKETT: Very much so. There were more Lutheran churches than, as my mother would say, you could shake a stick at. And one Catholic Church and a Federated church between the Congregationalists and the Methodists, which we attended. We had a small share of my mother's family's homestead farm, and the Norwegian folks who lived across the road were farming it and paying us rent. On a visit one time in later years one of their little girls asked my sister, who was a young woman at the time, "Are you Lutheran?" Joyce said, "No, we're Methodist." The kid said, "You believe in God, don't you?" "Yes, of course." "Then why aren't you Lutheran?" So yes, there was a Scandinavian influence. My mother spoke Norwegian in her childhood home. My Grandmother Erikson never spoke English; Grandfather Erikson did.

Q: Were there sort of Norwegian festivals and things like that, or was it just —

PRICKETT: No, they were just festivals, because you hardly had to identify their ethnicity. The Kongsvinger Church west of Morris in the little town of Donnelly was totally Norwegian Lutheran. That's where my mother's parents are buried

Q: Well, Russ, I know what you're doing now and what you did when I knew you back in the '60's, how about singing, music? Was there much music in your family and in the school and all, or not?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. My dad was a tenor. He had started singing as a kid in Iowa walking behind the plow, so he had a deep chest, big shoulders, and a tenor voice that just wouldn't quit. A colleague of his at the agricultural school was a good pianist, and Dad was sort of the shining star in that community as far as singing was concerned. He sang duets with my first-grade teacher, Sally Criser, and an alto, a Mrs. Clark who was our Cub Scout Den Mother. There was a lot of community and family music. I remember one time when I was no more than six or seven, we were singing around the piano. My aunt was playing, and suddenly she stopped. We were all singing, and I was sort of improvising — I had an unchanged soprano voice — and she turned around suddenly and said, "Russ just sang a high C." that was a long time ago!

Q: Of course, this is the height of the Depression.

PRICKETT: That's right.

Q: You were pretty young, but do you recall the Depression and its effects?

PRICKETT: Yes, we lived in town, and Dad had a very modest salary as a teacher. All of my cousins lived on farms. They didn't wear shoes in the summer time. My uncles were happy to sell us a quarter or a side of beef which we'd put in a frozen food locker. We had some cash money, and they had plenty of farm produce, but almost no cash money at all, so we helped each other out. Also in the 30's there was not only the Depression, but also a severe drought. Dad did his master's thesis in rural sociology on the impact of the drought in western Minnesota. I remember going to a lake in western Minnesota called Pelican Lake that was totally dried up, just caked mud on the bottom. In earlier and later years it was quite an extensive lake.

Q: What was the big city for you all?

PRICKETT: It was Minneapolis, or St. Paul. We didn't say "the big city"; we said "the cities."

Q: The cities.

PRICKETT: The cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul. That's where I got my first pair of glasses. Mom or Dad would go there for a serious medical checkup. The drive was about 160 miles and took four hours before the Eisenhower Freeways were built.

Q: What about reading, I mean as a kid? Did you get into reading?

PRICKETT: Sure. There was a Carnegie library in town —

Q: Bless him.

PRICKETT: — and I went regularly to that library to take out a stack of books. The librarian would say, "You can't read all those before the due date time." But I did and brought them back and got another stack. Soon I had read everything in the library that I was at all interested in. I beat a smooth path to that library.

Q: Was there any particular field of interest that you had? I'm talking about, still, sort of up to '42 or so.

PRICKETT: I was in a couple of plays as a kid that they put on at the agricultural school, which was high-school level. In church and Sunday school they had the holidays, especially the Christmas programs, and everybody would say a "piece," — "Why do bells at Christmas ring? Why do little children sing?" *et cetera, et cetera.* I always seemed to

get the longest one of those things to recite. For some years we lived in an apartment in one of the men's dormitories. The English teacher and drama coach was paying court to, the home economics teacher, Toni Halvorsen, he would teach me poems to recite to her, so I was one of the instruments of his courtship.

Q: I hope he married her eventually.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes, they were Ted and Toni Long.

Q: You were still pretty young, but you were around seven by the time World War II started. Was the war much of a topic of conversation there early on, round the dinner table?

PRICKETT: Yes, indeed. My older cousins went off in the army. I remember when my cousin Darrell Dyer came back one time on furlough. I looked at his sleeve and his corporal's stripes were gone. I said, "What happened?" He had gotten into some trouble and he said, "I lost my stripes." I learned later what that meant.

Q: You didn't go looking around the barracks for your stripes.

PRICKETT: No! Later his two younger brothers were in Korea in the Marines.

Q: Well, you moved out of Morris in '43. Where did you go to high school?

PRICKETT: I went to a school called Murray High School, which is in the northwest corner of St. Paul, cheek by jowl with Minneapolis. It was a junior high school before, and it's a junior high school now, but when it was our high school we had the best academic record in the city because we had a whole lot of professors' kids from the university. That was Dad's status when we moved to St. Paul. He went as assistant state 4-H Club leader, and that was, again, one of these programs that was jointly financed between the University of Minnesota and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He had associate professor rank when we went there.

Q: So you were in high school from about when to when?

PRICKETT: Well, I graduated in the class of '50.

Q: So that would have been from about '46 to '50.

PRICKETT: Exactly.

Q: How about high school. This was in the big city and all that. Was it a difference?

PRICKETT: Well, I didn't really know the high school at all well back in Morris, although our first grade and kindergarten were in the high school building. But I do have

some recollections that it probably wasn't that big a difference. They had a great high school band back in Morris, and I played in the band at Murray when I went there, but I still remember that it was the Morris High School band that inspired me to want to play the cornet.

Q: What was it you were playing in the high school band? Was it the cornet?

PRICKETT: Actually, in junior high I was still trying to play the trumpet or the cornet. I had braces on my teeth, and it made hamburger out of my upper lip. I was going to give up the band, and the director said, "No, you don't have to sing every day." It would have been choir all the time. She got me onto the drums, and I became a bandsman, eventually student conductor and president of the band.

Q: What were your topics of greatest interest '46 to '50, which is immediate postwar years, of course.

PRICKETT: Well, I was very interested in the social studies and English; we had a very good English teacher. I remember doing a project that used works of literature to illustrate various themes of life, along the lines of Michael Toms' program "New Dimensions." I wasn't on the staff, but I wrote some articles for the student paper including an interview of Antal Doráti, when he became conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. I was president of the band and was captain of the cross-country team. My parents would say, "Russell, you can't spread yourself too thin," I would say to myself, why not? I was pretty active. I never made the basketball team, but we were city champions in cross-country and track.

Q: Did international affairs intrude at all in this Middle-Western life?

PRICKETT: Sure. Let me back up a bit. During the war we followed the battle maps of the fighting in the Pacific — MacArthur's retreat from the Philippines, and then his island-hopping victorious campaign — and the North African and finally European fighting. We were very much aware of the world outside the United States. Our very good newspapers and the broadcast stations were stronger on public affairs and international affairs than the networks are either on radio or TV today. If you listened to the radio you were aware. We heard Roosevelt's speech just after Pearl Harbor. Dad, who always claimed to be an independent but never admitted to having voted for a Democrat, made very much of the fact that Roosevelt said something like "I declare" — and then paused, because he couldn't declare war, according to Dad — "that a state of war has existed ever since this date that will live in infamy." We listened to the University of Minnesota football games on the radio, too. Dad was assistant football coach at the school where he taught in Morris, and when we moved to St. Paul he was able to get university faculty tickets. We attended the football games, the basketball games, the hockey games at the university. Bernie Bierman was the much-revered football coach at Minnesota in those days, and he had been, I think, the model for Dad as a coach.

Q: What about literature and all? What grabbed you there? History or anything?

PRICKETT: We had very good literary anthologies in our English program, and we had a very active library club at the school. For some reason I didn't join the library club, but I had been reading classics like King Arthur and Treasure Island, and some works of Mark Twain since I was small, and I liked reading some poetry. Our seventh and eighth grade classes were in the high school building, and we had many of the same teachers. I had the same English teacher, Miss Surratt, for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, and she was very good. And, I learned the nine rules for the use of the comma. I learned when you use the objective and the subjective case, and I would never say, "this was a very good deal for you and I." Those things were really drilled in. In my later English classes, we had some very strong people on literature. Once there was an assignment to recite a poem from memory, that should be at least 20 lines long. My English class was in the second hour of the day. Band was in the first hour. I was the head of the percussion section by then, and we learned in band from some of our friends who had the English teacher for homeroom that if you memorized your 20 lines you'd get a C. I thought, Oh, God. So I turned over the drum section to the other kids, and I went back into a side room with James Weldon Johnson's poem The Creation, and in that first hour I learned it from stem to stern — the one that said, you know:

"And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Darker than a hundred midnights down in a cypress swamp.
And God looked around and said,
'I'm lonely. I'll make me a man.'"

Way down to the final

"And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen."

Well, the *amen*s were placed one atop the other, so the poem totaled out 101 lines.

Q: You got and A.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. I wasn't going to get anything less than an A in English class. I got less than an A in a lot of math classes, but not in English or in social studies.

Q: Did any book of any kind or any books leave a particular impression on you? We've had people who are inspired by Kenneth Roberts' books sometimes or Richard Halliburton's. I was wondering whether any particular books that may have stuck in your mind to sort of get you out of Minnesota and think about the world?

PRICKETT: Oh, let's see. I imagine that getting out of Minnesota probably didn't occur to me until I was in college, but I remember being very much affected by A Tale of Two

Cities in high school. I may well have over-idealized Sidney Carton.

Q: Well, then, you graduated in 1950. 1950 was an interesting time to graduate because a gentleman named Kim Il Sung was doing nasty things in Korea just at that time. Did that affect you?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. I've always had a great respect for those — including a lot of my classmates, of course, who went into the army. I went into college and filled out form 109 every year, which certified that you were doing decent college work, and on that basis you got deferred. Both of my cousins, whom I've mentioned, went into the marines. They were at the "great bug-out" when the Chinese came across the Yalu River. They were practically going out one end of the tent when the Chinese were coming in the other. I've always felt I owed a lot to the guys who went to Korea when I went to college. Some of my high school classmates did not come back. They did the job that had to be done. I don't recall any of us, by the way, ever questioning that this job had to be done. Certainly, going back to World War II, we were firm on that matter too. Even though there was a fairly substantial German population up in Minnesota and the Dakotas, I don't recall any serious dissent about the war. A few folks were saying, well, we might as well be fighting the Russians, because we're going to have to fight them sooner or later, but it was understated, really.

Q: Well, in 1950 you then went to university for four years, is it? '50 to '54.

PRICKETT: Yes, I went to school called Hamline University, a liberal arts college whose claim to being a university back then was that it also had a nursing school. Since then they have added a law school and other graduate schools. It was a school of about 1,200, including the school of nursing, affiliated with the Methodist Church, located in St. Paul. Mom and Dad figured that they were making a considerable sacrifice when they moved to the big city, so that we kids could afford to go to college. They were essentially small town folks; Dad had gone to Hamline, too, by the way, and he was from a fundamentalist family that was afraid that by going to this school (that was producing most of the Methodist ministers in the state) he might lose his faith because he was going to college in a big town. There was some of this country-mouse mentality in our family when we moved to St. Paul, but we kids loved it. We had a ball.

Q: I would have thought that you would have aimed for the University of Minnesota.

PRICKETT: Well, everybody went to the University of Minnesota, especially from our high school, which was in the shadow of both the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses. My younger brother and sister both went there. Dad worked at the St. Paul campus, which is where the Agricultural College was. The talk among us kids was, "Where are you going to go to college?" "I don't know, I suppose I'll go to the factory." Something in me didn't really want to do that. It was the spring of my senior high school year before I had really made up my mind where I was going to go. A recruiter had come up from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and said it would only cost *X* thousand dollars for my

parents to send me there. My parents didn't have *X* thousand dollars. They figured that they were making the big sacrifice, as I said, by moving to the city, where there were many colleges, in Minneapolis and St. Paul. There was Hamline; there was Macalester, where Hubert Humphrey taught for a time. There was the University. There were a couple of Lutheran colleges and two Catholic colleges. The folks figured there was plenty of good education to be had right there; we could live at home and go to school, and that was their contribution. It worked well for me. I hitchhiked to a lot of classes and missed a lot of eight-o'clocks on that account. Hitchhiking, by the way, below zero in the wintertime in Minnesota is an experience.

Q: It's challenging.

PRICKETT: Yes, as Garrison Keillor says, it instilled virtue in all of us.

Q: At Hamline, what was happening? What was life on the campus like?

PRICKETT: Socially, I guess, compared to today's campuses, it was quite conservative. Some friends of mine considered it quite scandalous that when the snow thawed in the spring a lot of beer cans emerged from under the windows of the men's dorm. That was heavy stuff. (We never had beer, by the way, at a high school dance. If anybody was caught with it he was out.) Of course, the Methodists have, since John Wesley's time, been opposed to alcohol, at least in theory. When I go back to reunions now I see they do have wine-and-cheese parties at the various departmental gatherings. Hamline was strong academically and had a very good fine arts program in both the visual arts and music. An excellent orchestra was led by a man who became for a time the assistant conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony. Our *a cappella* choir of 55 voices toured all around the country and later abroad under State Department auspices. Oh, yes, and a world-class basketball team, which had won the national small-college tournament, the NAIA, three or four times. They had played all over the country, from Hawaii to Madison Square Garden. The first intercollegiate basketball game in the U.S. was actually played between Hamline and a University of Minnesota team, but in my day the "U" wouldn't play us. Vern Mikkelsen, who had a career in the NBA, was one of the stars. He also sang in the *a cappella* choir. I was lucky enough to get into that my freshman year, so besides doing some theater I sang in the touring choir for four years.

Q: When you graduated in '54, you're degree was in what?

PRICKETT: Political science.

Q: Political science. What moved you towards political science?

PRICKETT: I guess I'd had a strong and increasing interest in civic affairs, which had dated basically through high school, and while I loved music, I had two thoughts about it. My dad, who was a fine singer, as I said, always said he loved music too much to have to depend on it for a living, and I was affected by that. But I also thought, having taken some

piano lessons and some lessons on the trumpet, that music was hard work. I sort of shied away from something that would be that hard to do. I am convinced that God has a sense of humor, because I wound up at the Harvard Law School.

Q: Well, during the time you were at Hamline, this was also the height of McCarthyism. Did that intrude at all on the political science?

PRICKETT: Yes. And it also furthered the idea of a legal career. I had a couple of very good friends who lived on campus and we watched the Army-McCarthy Hearings on TV in their room. While I already had the idea that I was going to be a lawyer, watching Joseph Welch in those hearings was really inspiring. Back in the spring of 1946, when I went over to Hamline to discuss where I was going to go to college, the dean of admissions, a man named Arthur Williamson, pulled out a file — it was my file. He said, "Now, Russ, were you valedictorian in high school?" I said, "Oh, no." "Some girl beat you out?" he said. "Well," I said, "it was more than that." I was, I think, ninth in a class of about 200. He said, "Well, what did you have in mind?" I had seen in the catalogues a program where you did two years at Hamline and then transferred over to the university for four years and took a bachelor of arts or science and a law degree. So I was interested in the two-year pre-law program. He said, "I don't think that's for you. What you really need to do is first get your liberal arts degree, and then get your professional training after that. Where you really ought to go is Harvard." I took that seriously. I thought that wasn't a bad idea, and that's the way it turned out for me.

Q: How was Hamline political-wise during that time? Conservative? Was McCarthy striking positive notes there?

PRICKETT: No. I don't recall any pro-McCarthy sentiment at Hamline. In the presidential campaign of 1952 we had a mock political convention, and my debate coach twisted my arm and got me into the Harriman campaign — Averell Harriman. We sang his campaign song on our campus, which was the old Irish song Harrigan, and "the divil take the man who votes agin' he." I had started out as a Warren fancier, Earl Warren actually won the contest. Of course, Harold Stassen was big in Minnesota. He had the record of having been the youngest governor in the history of the country, at age 29, and had been a presidential candidate in 1948, so there was a Stassen contingent. There were some Bob Taft supporters too. But it came to a showdown between Harriman and Warren, which means that we were in those days pretty much in the middle of the road. These days, of course, especially here in Texas, we'd all be called flaming liberals.

Looking ahead a bit, my first association with Yugoslavia was while I was still at Hamline. There was, and is still a college study-abroad program in Minnesota called SPAN — Student Project for Amity among Nations. This also says something about the awareness of international affairs in Minnesota at that time. There were some 10 colleges taking part in it, and it was most common to take a summer abroad between the junior and senior year. I had set my sights either on that or a Washington semester at American University, which is also Methodist-affiliated, and people from colleges around the

country were spending a semester there. I considered both and decided on the SPAN Program. Each year they picked a handful of countries to study in. You would apply and be selected or not to take part in this program a full year in advance of the spring before you traveled, so that you had a year to prepare yourself for that project. I applied and was accepted, and the year that I was to travel, 1953, the countries that people were going to were India, the UK (Great Britain), Spain, and Yugoslavia. I guess I was so snobbish that I thought going to England would be like going to the library. India didn't hold a lot of interest for me and was the most expensive, because of the traveling costs. There were scholarships that paid from a fourth to a third of the total cost of a trip, but it was still pretty costly. As for going to Spain, most of the people who were interested in that had taken a lot of high school and college Spanish. I had taken Latin in high school but not Spanish. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, appealed to me; it was between East and West and all of that. We had the intervening year to study Serbo-Croatian, for which we went over to the University of Minnesota. There were 10 of us in the program from various colleges. I was the only one from Hamline. Macalester and the University of Minnesota were the other schools that I remember in the Yugoslavia program. I was going to spend my summer working on the Bratstvo-Jedinstvo Autoput (Brotherhood and Unity Highway), the highway between Belgrade and Zagreb. They had international student brigades doing labor on that. I think they found, however, that it wasn't all that productive labor. They canceled the international student participation in that project before I got there, so I did a study of local government throughout Yugoslavia. I was in Skopje, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik — I didn't leave that out, certainly — and Ljubljana, asking questions about how the local government worked. I found that they were pretty much cookie-cutter duplicates, but it was, nevertheless, interesting to see how they worked out their governmental theory. That was my first taste of the country where we both served.

Q: Well, what was your impression of Yugoslavia. This is the first time way out in the big world, wasn't it? And this would have been what, about '53 or so?

PRICKETT: This was the summer of '53.

Q: What was your impression of Yugoslavia at that time?

PRICKETT: Walking through Belgrade from the Studentski Dom down around Boulevar Revolucija up to the American embassy to pick up our mail we went by what passed for their Pentagon in those days, a very low old building with a stonewalled yard; and I was much impressed with the very businesslike automatic weapons that the guards carried. I met a number of young people, of course. It was very interesting. They were poor. Stu, you saw the film <u>When Father Was Away on Business</u>." It was from that era, and those naked light bulbs hanging on their cords, and the other very rudimentary facilities that people had in the film, took me right back to '53. It was just after the war. The bullet scars were still on the buildings. There were still ruins around and about that hadn't been rebuilt. Yugoslavia was only five years after Tito's break with Stalin.

Q: '48, yes.

PRICKETT: The Trieste issue was very much alive, and the U.S. decided that issue while I was there. Neither the Italians nor the Yugoslavs could agree on that question for their domestic political reasons. The solution had to be imposed from outside, that made it acceptable to both of them — dividing Trieste into Zone A and Zone B. Protestors actually threw stones at the embassy, one member of our student group started holding informal seminars with Yugoslav students explaining it. She got sent home. Still, we traveled the full extent of the country, from Lake Ohrid in the south to Lake Bled in the north and all along the coast. Since we were going by public transportation, we never ran into any of those forbidden military districts that we sometimes encountered later on when we were driving around in our own cars. But the freedom of movement was just as great, really, as when we were there in the '60's. There was a lot of idealism among the young people. I met one young woman, about the age of my kid brother, who had just graduated from high school. She took me on a walking tour of Belgrade, and when we passed the drama academy, she said, "That's where I'm going next year, and I'm going to be a movie star." When I returned in '64, Mira Nikolić was a film star whose performances had won awards in Cannes. She was the star of a famous film, *Pet Minuta Raja,* Five Minutes of Paradise.

While walking (in '53) we went to Kalemegdan, the fortress at the confluence of the Sava and Danube Rivers, and looked across to the plains where New Belgrade was to sprout, but it hadn't yet. The Federal Executive Council Building was nothing but a skeleton of girders that had been standing like that for years. There were jokes and theories about why that was. The official line (probably the truth) was that they had started this very ambitious building and the break with Stalin had had such negative impact on their economy that they weren't able to continue this huge public project. Another story was that they had started it on that low ground over across the river, had discovered that their footings and foundations were sinking, and had to call it off. And the one I liked the best was that they claimed they had gone immediately from capitalism to Communism — they didn't have to mess with the intervening stages — and so it was allowed to stand as a monument to the withering away of the state.

I met Mira because I had been doing black-market currency transactions with her brother, George. In those days the official rate of exchange for the old dinar was 250 or 300 to the dollar, and we could get 450 or 500 trading with these students. He was a manager for the Yugoslav fencing team which was allowed to travel abroad to compete. They would take the hard currency that they made on the black market with them overseas, and they'd buy things like cigarette lighters and silk stockings and bring them back into the country, sell them for dinars, and buy another supply of dollars. These idealistic socialist students were engaged in capitalist currency exchange.

Q: What was your feeling when you left Yugoslavia? I mean, was one filled with the horrors of Communism, or were you just saying, "Yugoslavia is different," from what you were hearing?

PRICKETT: George Nikolić said to me one day, speaking intensely, "My father is a doctor of medicine. My mother has a master's in pharmacy. And we don't always have enough to eat." There was a sense that people who had been established before the war, or under the old regime, were taking it on the chin. But I have to day, I found food in Yugoslavia in the '50s to be plentiful, inexpensive and delicious. At numerous small private restaurants with outdoor tables, you could get a small steak with fries and a tomato salad for 200 dinars — about forty or fifty cents at the black market exchange rate. Maybe George was trying to make a political statement. Of course Yugoslavia was and is a gorgeous country, and the people were very attractive. I wasn't spending time elsewhere in war-ravaged Europe, so it was easy for me to believe that the basic if not primitive conditions were due to Communism rather than the fact that this was basically a not-rich country that had just come through a devastating war. I did acquire a strong and continuing interest in what was going on there, and of course the heroism of the Yugoslavs, standing up to Stalin, was a big thing. The big question was how they could be open to us and still call themselves Communist, while the rest of the Communist world was so closed off. I did talk with some of the officers in the embassy. One political officer asked me, "What do American young people think about the Foreign Service?" I said, "Well, gee, I don't know." "Well, what do you think about the Foreign Service?" I said I'd never given it any thought, and I hadn't. That may or may not have been the seed that ultimately sprouted, but it was the first time I gave the Foreign Service any real thought. Of course, at that time, the Foreign Service was in the real doldrums because McCarthy and his cohorts were pressing down heavily on the State Department. (John Carter) Vincent and (John S.) Service and others had their careers ruined. I remember my humanities and history professor at Hamline when I told him, from law school, that I was going to take the Foreign Service exam and go in if I could, "Well, you're going in at a time of probably the lowest possible morale and esteem for the Foreign Service in our history."

Q: You were at Harvard Law School from when to when?

PRICKETT: '54 to '57.

Q: What was it like?

PRICKETT: There were two female students in our section, six or eight in the whole school. About 1,500 in the school, 500 in each class, and the first year class was divided into three sections. Nowadays the students are pretty evenly matched, men and women. We were just past the era where the dean would famously say to the class of incoming students, "Look well to the right of you, look well to the left of you, because one of you will not be here next year." Just about everybody was passing. Partly that was because of weeding out two-thirds of the applicants. Each entering class of 500 was selected from about 1,500 applicants.

It was heavy going. As a young guy who had always done well in my studies without much effort, it was a little bit like being a recreational swimmer jumping into real

competition. I was at best a mediocre law student, with the exception of a few subjects that I did well in. I recall that one fellow asked if he could look at another guy's notes for the previous day, which he had missed, and the fellow just drew himself up and said, "Of course not. We're competing." So there was a bit of that.

Q: Well, what led you to go to law school?

PRICKETT: Oh, I'd always been a bit of a talker, and one of my Sunday school teachers in my high school years was a lawyer. I was a successful debater at Hamline (we won the state championship) so the law seemed to be the most logical outlet for talents that I had. I wanted to be involved in the serious business of the world, and being a lawyer, especially after observing the advocacy during the Army-McCarthy Hearings, struck me right.

Q: In the first place, would you say that you were still part of what was termed later "the silent generation"? People came out of World War II and kind of got on with it. They didn't do an awful lot of introspection of "Why am I here?" and "What am I doing?" and a lot of ME. You got on with the job. You had to make a living, and you just sort of got on.

PRICKETT: I was always of a kind of philosophical bent, I guess, asking questions of that sort, but not in a public way. Also, there was always that Form 109. You did not take to the streets in those days, because if you did, you would find yourself in Korea very quickly. The draft continued, of course, for years thereafter. So if you were going to go to grad school, there were good reasons to keep your nose to the grindstone and go immediately from college to whatever grad school or professional school you were going to do. I was certainly glad that I served my army hitch after law school rather than before. Those were some of the objective circumstances, as the Stanislavski acting people would say.

Q: There may be more, but I can see three major reasons why someone would, say, go to Harvard Law School. I mean, it is the preeminent law school in the United States. One, those that go there because, by God, their parents went there or, I mean, this is where one goes, and really without much thought; two, this is the place — wow — to make a lot of money because this is the best law school; and the other one is to do good. But were any of these playing around at that time, or how was it?

PRICKETT: Oh, sure. The first and the third were strong in my mind. I think Dean Williamson's words stuck in my mind; the prestige factor was pretty strong. On my way back from Yugoslavia in that summer of '53, I stopped in New York and went up to New England. I had applied to both Harvard and Yale, so I went up and toured both of the campuses. Frankly, the atmosphere at Yale was more congenial to me as a liberal arts student, than was Harvard. I remember Dean Toepfer, the dean of admissions at Harvard Law, looked at me with kind of a fishy-eyed stare. "If you get in," he said. In my arrogance, I was thinking, that's not the question; the question is where I choose to go.

But it turned out that Harvard offered more scholarship money, and I figured that I could maybe afford it. They had these so-called national scholarships because they were looking for "diversity," as we call it now, to get away from the Eastern Seaboard. They hadn't gotten into ethnic diversity in those days.

Q: I remember. And of course, Minnesota was the back of beyond, wasn't it?

PRICKETT: No, no, not really. The University of Minnesota Law School was a respected school nationally, even though it wasn't in the league of Michigan or Virginia or Stanford or California at Berkeley.

Q: — Columbia —

PRICKETT: — Columbia, of course. Yes, there were a lot of people out there who looked it that way, but we knew that we were nearer the center of the country around which the rest revolved.

Q: I remember around that time — I'm a little older than you — but everybody felt that you had it made if you were from Nevada, because that would sort of fill out a chunk if they were checking off things.

PRICKETT: Yes. I experienced something like that too. I was nominated for a Rhodes Scholarship in 1954, and missed it by one. I was second to a guy from Minnesota who then went to the six-state regionals and on to Oxford. Yes, there was some regional stuff going on that I wasn't aware of at the time.

Q: Well, there was the famous movie, book, and television series called <u>The Paper Chase</u>, which somebody. . . . Was that pretty accurate as far as how things worked at that time?

PRICKETT: I'm sure it was, but I had already had enough law school, so I hardly ever watched it. I just didn't need to relive those years. There were legendary stories of verbal abuse of students by professors, and we all told them, the way people tell their war stories. You're sort of proud of having survived it.

Q: Well, was it a pretty workmanlike atmosphere, or was there much intellectual, other than sort of legal intellectual, discourse? Or was it pretty much nose-to-the-grindstone.

PRICKETT: Nose-to-the-grindstone was the rule. And I wasn't a nose-to-the-grindstone kind of guy, so that as I say, I only made a mediocre record. I did succeed in staying in, both partly by achievement and partly by inertia, because there were people who were perfectly intellectually capable but after a year of it decided it wasn't for them.

Q: What about international law? Was there anything going around in your mind about foreign affairs or anything?

PRICKETT: Yes. The first year we didn't have any elective courses. We took the basic stuff — contracts, torts, administrative law, property, agency, criminal law, and probably a couple of others. But by second year we were taking elective courses as well, and while the guys who were going to make money were taking advanced courses in wills, corporate law, taxation, and oil and gas, I was taking international law and a seminar on constitutional and international law, so I was pointing towards that. I was also able to take an advanced Serbo-Croatian course over at the College and get law school credit for it. And I took a seminar on the formation of foreign policy in the Littauer Center, now the JFK Center. I was definitely considering it. I first heard the Foreign Service recruiters when I was in the middle of my second year of law school, and I telephoned my then fiancée that I was going to take the Foreign Service exam and if I got in that's what I was going to do. I didn't ask her how she felt about it. I had that very day been to a property class in which the professor was talking about something called a short-term trust. "Now, suppose you had a client with an annual income of, say, $50,000." (That's about a half million dollars in today's money) "$50,000 sounds like a lot of money." And then he went on to explain, however, that if the guy lived in a decent neighborhood, belonged to the right clubs, got his kids a good education and so forth, well, the poor chap just couldn't save enough for you to help him, tax-wise, with a short-term trust. He wasn't in our league! About that time I thought, is this what I want to spend my life doing, saving these multimillionaires tax dollars? I heard the Foreign Service recruiting pitch that very same evening, and thought, both in terms of subject matter and client, I can do better than that.

Q: When did you take the Foreign Service exam?

PRICKETT: I took the Foreign Service written exam in June of '56 and was married just after I applied, but before taking the exam. In those days, when you applied to take the exam, you had to state whether you were married or not, and I was not. If you were married to a non-citizen of the United States, they wouldn't let you apply to take the exam. My first wife was the daughter of one Von Braun's rocket scientists and wasn't yet a U.S. citizen.

Q: This is Hilti.

PRICKETT: Hilti Hermann, yes, and Rudolf Hermann was her dad. He later founded the Space Flight Center at the University of Alabama at Huntsville. The Hermann family had entered the United States on the famous "Operation Paper Clip," and that meant that they didn't have any legal status.

Q: Explain what Operation Paper Clip was.

PRICKETT: At the end of World War II, the United States and Russia basically glommed onto as many of the best minds — especially defense-related minds — in Germany as they could. Basically, they loaded them on a plane and brought them over here — no formalities, no customs, no passport control, no passports, nothing. They wound up at

Wright Field, Ohio. It was funny, because Rudolf Hermann, my late ex-father-in-law, was the external aerodynamicist on the V-2 rocket, and in his work preparing that thing, he had invented the supersonic wind tunnel to test it. He had the neatest paperweight you ever saw. This was not just a replica of the V-2; this was *the* wind-tunnel model of the V-2. This was his paperweight on his office desk! Well, they had come over in '47, and what with one delay and another — Rudolf was sometimes pretty acerbic in describing the delays and bungling of our bureaucracy (of course, he came from a very efficient bureaucracy) — but I always figured that the situation was this: that there were a lot of war brides and others who needed documentation before they could get into the States, and for those people who were already in, a lower priority was assigned in processing their paperwork. In 1953, their family all bundled up and crossed over into Canada at Niagara Falls and made their "formal entry" into the United States. That meant that by '56, when I took the exam, Hilti had only been in the country formally for three years, although she had actually been living here six years. I had applied to take the exam before I was married. We got married, and on our honeymoon I had thought, should I take my French book along to study for the French part of the written Foreign Service Exam? I think I took it along and never opened it.

Q: Oddly enough.

PRICKETT: Then I passed the written, and I was in my third year of law school when I took the first oral exam. I read the New York Times every day for a year and really focused on all the international news. I remember that first oral exam very well.

Q: Tell me about it. Let us recapture this.

PRICKETT: It was a three-on-one exam. There were gentlemen named Dow, Farnes, and Daspit who sat opposite me behind their desk, and it was a very gentle exam compared to what we administer now. The first questioning had to do with what my background was. Then, on the second round, they probed to see what I might have gotten out of that background. On the second round I think it was Dow who said, "Well, Mr. Prickett, you're in law school, you were a state champion debater in college, you were this and this and this and this — it seems to me this points you more towards a career in law than to the Foreign Service. What have you got to say to that?" I said, "Well, Mr. Dow, would those things that you mentioned disqualify me for the Foreign Service?" The other guys got a good laugh out of it, and I felt gratified. I don't think I endeared myself to Mr. Dow. But that was the tenor of the exam, and it was a breeze. At the end of it they said, "Mr. Prickett, your wife is not an American citizen, and so we're going to give you what we call a 'deferred' rating. That means we'd like to see you again in not less than one and not more than two years' time. We usually do this when we think an officer may have the stuff we're after but lacks a little something in maturity or 'seasoning.' But we're going to note in the record that we would have passed you except for the circumstance of your wife's citizenship."

So I thought I was in good shape, and the second time around, I didn't prepare a whole

lot. But it seems the second oral exam panel wasn't all that impressed by what the first panel had said. One of the first questions out of the box was, "Mr. Prickett, would you define for us the difference between the international balance of trade and the international balance of payments?" Ernie Stanger was the economic specialist in that second exam. I remember Ernie because I worked with him later on in Vienna. I was not an economist, and I fumbled around most awfully. In those days you didn't have to wait for notice by mail whether you passed or not. You went out in the lobby and sweated it out while they decided your fate. I was doing investigative work for the law firm I was employed by, and I had a briefcase full of investigation files. I came out of that exam, and I just pulled out a file or two and figured I had better focus on my law career. Then they came out and said that they had accepted me but I should probably brush up on my economics. Ironically, I became an economic officer later on, went to the Foreign Service Economics Course and consider myself an economist now.

Q: Well, they must have been used to that, because when I took it — I took it in '54, I think — when I came out they said, "You'd better do something about your economics."

PRICKETT: Later, when I was on the Board of Examiners, I also became a pretty tough examiner in the economics field.

Q: Well, were you at all torn between a law career and a Foreign Service career when offered the real alternative?

PRICKETT: I could have been happy practicing law, but the Foreign Service was my first choice, and circumstances reinforced that. I was working for a large law firm in Minneapolis, a trial firm, looking to a possible career as a trial lawyer. Then the firm went through a RIF, a reduction in force. I was the last guy hired. They were going to expand into tax work, and they took on somebody who already had tax experience. They needed to give him work to do until they built up their tax practice, so I was out. At that time I knew of a small firm headed by a brilliant younger lawyer who was close friends with my then father-in-law. I think I could have gotten a place in their firm, but a junior lawyer is a real economic burden on a small firm. I was hoping for the call to the Foreign Service; I had decided by then that if it came I was going to go, so I didn't apply to the small firm. I went to work for West Publishing Company, which was the world premier legal publishing house, headquartered in St. Paul. After I'd been with them for several months, the telegram came from Washington, and we packed up and went out there and joined the Service in April of '59.

Q: Did you do military service? Did that happen before or after?

PRICKETT: I took the Dan Quayle route through the military. I was in an artillery company of the Minnesota National Guard and did six months active duty for training, from the fall of '57 to the spring of '58. /that summer I did a two-week training stint with my Minnesota guard unit. My oldest daughter , Chris, was born toward the end of that training gig. Because Hilti was near delivery, the Guard made an exception to their "no

cars at camp" rule for me. After a 3 am phone call, I got a pass and drove to St. Paul in time for Chris's birth.

Later, I transferred to an army reserve unit in military government. I don't know if you want to hear, but I had an almost comical army reserve "career" that extended into my years with the State Department.

Q: Sure, let's grab everything we can.

PRICKETT: Well, as I said, we went to Washington in April, 1959. A few weeks later, I got a letter from Indian Head Gap, Pennsylvania inviting me to pick a couple of weeks (or they would pick 'em for me) when I would do my Army reserve training. Ambassador Aaron S. Brown was then the deputy director of State personnel, and he was issuing letters for people in these circumstances pointing out that since we had commissions that were nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, we came under a provision of law (that was probably intended for people of more exalted rank than we) that made us eligible to serve in the "standby" reserve, rather than the active reserve. I pointed this out in my letter, and enclosed a copy of the letter from Ambassador Brown and sent it off and didn't hear anything. Months later I got my first overseas assignment to the U.S. mission to the Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. I had been there for a little while, and I got a letter from one Lieutenant Howard Himmelreich in Heidelberg, Germany. It said, basically: "In the past, we didn't have facilities for summer drills for our reservists who happened to be residing in Europe, but now we have these facilities, and so we invite you choose a time for your summer army training, or we'll chose a time for you." Obviously the issue hadn't been resolved. I got out another copy of Ambassador Brown's letter and composed my own. said, "As you can see from the enclosed, my reason for not serving in the reserve in Europe is not your lack of facilities but because I've got a Foreign Service commission, which. . . ." et cetera. And I never heard anything. In 1961 I had a direct transfer from Vienna, because my predecessor in Basel had been selected out. I was transferred from Vienna to Basel, Switzerland, where we had a two-man consulate. And darned if several months later I didn't get another letter from Lieutenant Howard Himmelreich in Heidelberg saying the same thing, which I answered to the same effect, and again didn't hear anything further. In the summer of '62 I was transferred back to the States to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I'd been back in Washington for a little while, and damned if there didn't come another letter from Indian Head Gap, Pennsylvania, saying the same darned thing: pick your two-week period or we'll pick it for you. I sent my standard answer back and didn't hear and didn't hear and didn't hear. Then one day, in 1963 I think, there arrived this big manila envelope with a Department of the Army return address, and I thought, here we go again. I opened it up, and it was my honorable discharge.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service when in '59?

PRICKETT: Late April.

Q: What was your Foreign Service class like? It's called the A-100 course for some reason, but I mean the basic officer course.

PRICKETT: Well, Brandon Grove was a member of the class, and Al Holmes was, and Jim Hackett, who later became the director of administration for ACDA, I believe. There were 26 of us.

Q: Any women, any minorities?

PRICKETT: Two women, one Hispanic — Rogelio Garcia, a very sharp fellow who was 5-5 in Spanish. Very impressive folks. It was a fun time to be in Washington. I don't believe I had a suit of clothes to my name. I had one sports jacket and a few compatible pairs of pants and one daughter and one wife, and we set up housekeeping in a small apartment in Falls Church near Seven Corners.

Al Holmes' dad, of course, had had a run-in with the McCarthyites, which kept him from becoming ambassador, and so he had for some time been consul general in Hong Kong. Elkin Taylor was a member of the class. Elkin turned out to be my best friend of longest standing in the Foreign Service. When we had our class presentation to make on some subject, I was impressed that most of the folks could have gone on one of the major networks as an anchor, being very articulate and with very well organized minds — certainly, in the dimensions that I respected and was familiar with, a match for any of my law school classmates. So I was very much impressed. A couple of us, Bill Miller and I, took to going down to Campbell's Music Store on Monday mornings to stand in line for tickets to hear the Budapest String Quartet, and we'd show up — this was after the A-100 course — a little late for our German class; it was a good trade-off.

By the way, I was first assigned to French training, and I lobbied rather hard to get into German training instead, mainly because it would affect my assignment, and my wife was German. I managed that successfully.

Q: Hilti had become an American citizen.

PRICKETT: She had become a citizen by then, of course. I thought it would be a whole lot better for both of us if we went to a German-speaking post, and a lot of the French speakers were going to Africa. That's where Brandon went, and Al Holmes went there on his first shot, too. The Spanish speakers were going to upcountry places in South American locations. I got the hardship assignment of all, to Vienna.

Q: Well, one has to take the bitter with the sweet. Could you give a feel for the spirit of the times when you came in? I mean, I don't know if you can characterize the other people. Is this a job? Are you off on a crusade? Was this an adventure? What did you think this was?

PRICKETT: I was thrilled to be joining the Foreign Service. I had said in my oral exam

that I was prompted by the service aspect and the idea that my skills might jibe with some serious national needs, and to be in a field that I was intrigued by. With all that's gone on since, I've never regretted it. The cross-cultural experiences that I couldn't have predicted have turned out to be some of the most rewarding. My history and humanities professor back at Hamline had said, "Well, Russ, you're joining the Service at about the nadir of its reputation and morale." He had some acquaintances in the Service who were not happy. But I wasn't deterred by that. I thought, well, we'll get in, we'll do some good.

Q: Well, as you got in there, this is about the time when Dulles was leaving because of his fatal illness and Herter was coming in. Was there a feeling, were you picking up any residue, echoes of the McCarthy times and the fact that Scott McLeod had been an unfortunate influence within the security apparatus, or was that kind of gone by?

PRICKETT: I think it had basically gone by, but it had really intensified the kind of security briefings that we got. The famous microphone behind the eagle in the ambassador's office in Moscow was part of the show-and-tell that they gave us when we came in. The story of the admin officer who got caught in the honey-pot entrapment in Warsaw was part of the story. I think we got some backwash from it, but not the direct impact. But we certainly received very serious security briefings.

Q: Was there the feeling at that time that you were entering a Cold War, that the Soviets and the Communists were the enemy and this was the major influence?

PRICKETT: Partly. That certainly was the theme of our security briefings during the A-100 course. In language class, of course, we focused on the language. In Vienna we were briefed on which Russians were KGB, but we were also trying to get some positive work done.

Q: You were in Vienna from when to when?

PRICKETT: '59 to '61 — a year and a half, roughly.

Q: What was your job there?

PRICKETT: I was the administrative officer to the seven-officer U.S. mission. There was the chief, Admiral Foster; there was a senior scientific advisor, Ed Bradley, who had worked on the Manhattan Project; there was a senior political advisor, Mose Harvey who was chosen for his Soviet expertise and definitely a hard-liner, one of George Kennan's ideological opponents in the State Department. He was hired out of academe, I think, directly into an FSO-1 slot (not the FS-1 slot today). Other advisers were Clyde McClelland, scientific, a physics PhD; Betty Gough, political, an international organizations expert who had been on our delegation at the UN founding in San Francisco; and John Trevithick, "technical," an AEC bureaucrat.

I was the low man on the officer totem pole, and there was a file clerk and three excellent

secretaries.

Q: Well, what was the mission of the mission at that time? The American — what was it called?

PRICKETT: It was called the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Our credentials were to the international agency, not the Government of Austria. The big project was to create the system that we've heard quite a lot about lately, international atomic safeguards. The Indians were much opposed. The Soviets hadn't yet seen it in their advantage to have atomic safeguards, so when the Indian representative would say, "This is paternalism, Mr. Chairman," the Soviets were happy to fish in those troubled waters.

The resident head of the Soviet mission was V. I. Molotov, and it impressed me to meet him at a reception. He was by then quite out of favor in the Soviet system, but he was still, by God, Molotov. One of my first jobs as administrative officer was to handle the social arrangements for a meeting of the Board of Governors of the IAEA. The U.S. governor, John McCone, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, came over from Washington; he wasn't resident in Vienna. He put on a dinner for the 52 IAEA governors, and I had to do the seating for that dinner. There were many different protocol categories; people wore a lot of different hats in Vienna. Some countries' representatives to the IAEA were also that country's ambassador to Austria. Others were, like our Admiral Paul Foster, resident in Vienna with credentials to the international organization. Some were deputy chief of mission in their country's embassy and also accredited as representative to the IAEA. Others were cabinet officers, the cabinet officer responsible for atomic energy in their related countries. McCone was in this category, as are Emelyanov from the USSR and Homi Bhabha from India. So this was a real rats' nest of protocol seating. Some were from big countries and some were from little countries. Then there was Molotov. How do you deal with him? I think I put him to somebody's left, pretty high ranking, but on the left side — not with political puns intended. But that was the kind of thing that was happening. That's when I developed Prickett's principle for protocol seating: the system should be clear enough so that each guest can see that his status is being recognized, but not so clear that he can tell exactly where he ranks among the other guests.

Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1, with Russ Prickett. Russ, you know, at a certain point we found ourselves on nuclear matters, that was one place where we were really with the Soviets at a certain point. We mainly wanted to keep other people from messing around in this field. It was too damned dangerous, so we had joint reason. But I take it we hadn't reached that point yet.

PRICKETT: No. We did make some progress, but we didn't complete the international atomic safeguards. But I think we saw that we could. We'd had serious talks. The head of Atomic Energy in India, a man named Bhabha, was making a bomb. We knew it. The Russians knew it. We knew it was just a matter of time, so it was awkward. Basically, the Russians were siding with the LDC's, mainly the Indians, who were opposed to

safeguards. Nobody was paying attention to what the Israelis were doing, but I think the experts knew. The Soviets didn't come around, so safeguards weren't adopted until after I left Vienna.

We did have one other very interesting adventure while I was there. They borrowed some of us from the international organization mission to work on what was sometimes called the *Zweiter Wienerkongress*, the Protocol on Diplomatic Immunity, and we did negotiate that. I was again a very low-ranking officer on our delegation to the "Second Congress of Vienna."

Q: Well, how did you find Austria? By the time you arrived it had been four years into its neutral role with the occupying powers gone. What was Austria like then?

PRICKETT: Our arrival was difficult for me because of family circumstances. My mother was in the hospital when we left the states, by ship. When we arrived in Vienna I learned that she had died several days earlier of brain cancer. This was before the days of compassionate leave, with government-paid transportation. It was hard.

But Austria itself was very comfortable for us. We had brand-new town house apartments in the nineteenth district (the "glass ghetto," I called it). It was lovely, although there was still some residual pro-Nazi sentiment in Austria. The Autobahn only existed in a few (too short) stretches. One of the jokes was "When is the Autobahn going to be completed?" The answer: "*Beim nächsten Anschluß*" [By the next Anschluss]. Hilti and I rented a piano in Vienna. We went to a big second-storey hall that was full of pianos, and the proprietor got to talking with us. Hilti's German was fluent, of course, and mine was coming along. (I finally got to the point where I could call the Bristol Hotel to make reservations for the VIP's coming to town and could persist in talking German until the reservations clerk abandoned English and talked German with me. That was a milestone in my take-off from the Foreign Service Institute German to a working level.) So our piano salesman was talking in German, and he said business just had never been the same since the war. In the old days, he rented out and sold lots and lots of pianos. You know, he said, it's a shame that the right countries didn't get together. Germany, of course, and the Scandinavian countries and England and America. *"Das wäre ein Reich,*" he said [That would be an empire!] It chilled my blood. It was one of those little clues to what might be lurking beneath the surface. But we had many friends and good times there. It was all very *gemütlich*, very friendly. We went on ski trips. My twins were born in Vienna, in the Rudolfinerhaus.

Q: That's Sylvie and —

PRICKETT: Sylvie and Suzanne.

Q: Suzanne, yes.

PRICKETT: All of our kids have names that work in both German and English, and all of

them, when they started to speak, spoke both languages. On Jim Bostain's advice (remember his "culture shock" lectures?), Hilti talked German to them all the time, and I spoke English with them all the time, and they would switch just like that. Once when Hilti and I were dressed up to go out, I came down the stairs, and Christine, our oldest, not yet three, said, "Daddy, where are you going tonight?" — with a little quiver of the lip — then when Hilti came down, "*Mami, wo gehst du heute hin?*" Just a quick switchover. Sylvia is the only one who has really kept up her German, and she's probably better at it now than I am.

Q: Did you ever get down to Yugoslavia while you were there?

PRICKETT: Yes. We had one vacation in Yugoslavia, in the Hotel Miramare in Crikvenica, just below Rijeka. It was a fun vacation; I still have a painting we bought on that trip.

Q: As you were working on what you were doing, were you figuring out what you wanted to do, because this was an assignment somewhat outside the normal Foreign Service career?

PRICKETT: I was hoping for a career as a political officer, but you may recall in those days we were expected to take a tour in each of the functions before settling into our career specialty. I guess I was thinking, if I have to punch the admin ticket, Vienna isn't a bad place to do it. But I was barely getting acclimated when our file clerk resigned, and I had to do all the filing for several months. I'm not good at filing. I wasn't happy during that period, and I felt stifled. About that time it was reported that graduate engineers were making $11,000 right out of college. I was making $5,500, and I thought, Good God, I could probably go back to school and take a degree in engineering and come out and do better than I will sticking with this stuff. But the replacement clerk finally arrived. The IAEA mission had been set up by my predecessor, a class two admin officer, so that it practically ran itself. So, once the new clerk was in place, I had almost nothing to do. But Betty Gough, the second-ranking political officer, was very conscious of giving a junior officer a chance to take responsibility, so I had my shot at drafting reporting cables from the meetings, dealing with the IAEA people on administrative matters and otherwise getting involved in the substance of the mission's work.

At the same time, the extracurricular activities were keeping us interested. Hilti and I sang in a production of Honegger's Joan of Arc at the Stake, where we had to memorize all the chorus work, and we sang at the Universitätsplatz in downtown Vienna. We skied during the ski season. We went to some of the balls; the one I could afford was the Jägerball, the Hunter's Ball. (I've still got the green jacket I bought for that.) The second winter we were there, I was president of the international ski club, and we ran 14 weekend ski trips, something I'm still proud of. And we were active in the English-speaking church and singing in the choir.

Q: Well back to the mission. . . .

PRICKETT: Okay, we'll keep our mission in mind.

Q: The admiral who was in charge, Admiral Foster, how was he? I mean, did he know what he was doing, or was this just sort of an assignment?

PRICKETT: He knew what he was doing. He was a retired admiral who had earned both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross. In World War I he pulled a wounded sailor out of a burning gun turret; in World War II he rammed the submarine that had torpedoed the destroyer he commanded. He and his wife were very prominent socially in Washington while they were there. The Admiral ran a tight ship. He was very, very good in the parliamentary debates. On safeguards, for instance, I once heard him say, "Mr. Chairman, there's a sign over the door of a saloon in Brooklyn that says 'Too much beer is just enough,' and Mr. Chairman, that's the way we feel about atomic safeguards." He was in his '70's and one of the sharpest men in town, no question about it. He could be a little stiff. On separate occasions, when my brother and my Dad visited us in Vienna, I applied for leave. The Admiral said, "Well, now how long have you been here," and I didn't get the leave either time. I never had a real vacation until I was back home after both Vienna and Switzerland. I had to make do with stretch weekends.

Q: The Kennedy Administration came in in January of '61. Did that impact on your mission at all?

PRICKETT: I don't believe it did. We listened to the Kennedy-Nixon debates on the radio. I remember one of our mission members, a mid-career officer, saying he wasn't sure how he felt about a President coming into office who was younger than he was. You'll recall that Kennedy won by a very narrow margin, and was very careful to maintain as much continuity as possible. He kept Hoover at the FBI, Allen Dulles at the CIA, and John McCone at the AEC. There were no personnel changes in our mission as a result of the election. The Eisenhower Atoms for Peace Initiative, which gave rise to the existence of the IAEA was pretty bi-partisan. John McCone was the first IAEA governor from the U.S. as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. He remained in that office, residing in the States and coming over for the meetings. I do not recall any changes in policy directives. The Kennedy Administration certainly subscribed to the basic mission of the mission, i.e., to push through those atomic energy safeguards. (You know, Eisenhower, by today's lights, would have been considered a left winger, a real internationalist.)

Q: Well, you were transferred to Switzerland, to Basel, in '61, and you were there for how long?

PRICKETT: I was there till the summer of '62.

Q: What were you doing in Basel?

PRICKETT: I started as the number-two man in a two-man consulate. My boss was a political appointee who had been appointed at the O-2 level as deputy information officer in Paris, partly to handle the flack that came when our U-2 was shot down over Russia. He was a very sharp guy who had won a Heywood Broun Prize in New Hampshire for exposing corruption in the Attorney General's Office — by the attorney general, as a matter of fact. He said it was the only time in his life he ever carried a gun. I complimented him on the good looks of the younger women on the consulate staff. "Prickett," he said, in his New Hampshire accent, "On my staff I will tolerate inefficiency. I will tolerate bad looks. But I'll be god-damned if I'll tolerate both." So we had a couple of older women — one was the commercial specialist, and the other was the consular specialist, the passport officer — who were both very efficient, and then we had a bunch of very nice-looking young women on the staff. We did visa work, passports and assistance to American citizens, notarials, and some commercial reporting. We did not issue immigration visas; we referred them to Bern. We did a land-office business in tourist visas, but we issued hardly any to non-Swiss. There were a lot of Italian workers who were in Switzerland as guest workers, *Gastarbeiter*. They would come in and apply for tourist visas. We would ask them where they lived in Italy and why they hadn't applied in their home consular district. Oh, it just wasn't as convenient. We couldn't consider that they were *bona fide* tourists; they were just looking for a way into the States. Then there was protection of U.S. citizens.

Q: Can you think of any problems?

PRICKETT: I remember one, with a student. There were two substantial categories of students in Basel. There were theology students studying under Karl Barth, and there were medical students, who had, I assumed, not been able to get into a U.S. medical school so they were studying abroad. One of the medical students got picked up by the police for exposing himself to a young girl on one of the bridges across the Rhine at Basel. It was my job to visit him in jail and to talk with the police. We worked out a deal where if he promised to leave the country immediately, they would let him go home. He did, and they did, and he left. We didn't have any problems with the theology students. A number of them were my contemporaries and we played basketball together. They invited me to come with them to the Monday evening theology colloquia with Dr. Barth, which was a very interesting, stimulating opportunity.

The consulate occupied the entire fourth floor of the Kantonalbank in Basel, which was directly next door to the police station and just down the hill from the university. There was one reserved parking place for the consulate. While Elias McQuaid, my boss, was still there, I parked up the hill by the university, and after he moved, it was a big prestige thing to get my own parking place — and my own consular car. I remember one time when McQuaid came back from Bern just after a new ambassador had arrived. He was a political appointee who cut quite a swath. At that same time, the consulate had been given a new car. Our first car was one of the old Plymouths with the big tail fins. It rode like a limo, and it had a lot of space. McQuaid had a lot of kids, and it was a handy car for him. The new one was a Rambler, a short, stubby thing. When McQuaid went to Bern for the

staff meetings on Wednesdays I would stop at his house after work for drinks and to get briefed on what had taken place in Bern. My first question on this occasion was, "Well, how do you like your new car — oh, excuse me, what do you think about the new ambassador?" "Prickett," he said, "let's say I like them equally well. I get the impression that the Ambassador's a guy who would 'let George do it' — and then blame the hell out of George."

Q: Were there any problems at that point with Swiss-American relations that you had to deal with?

PRICKETT: Hardly any. A member of the Schindler family, that makes elevators and railroad cars, invited me to tour their railroad car factory in Basel, and punctuated the visit with lunch in their private restaurant overlooking the Rhine River. Having plied me with food and drink, he then brought up the subject of the new American ambassador, who was, I believe, a pharmaceutical entrepreneur from Missouri. "Herr Prickett," he said, "I understand this is a political appointment. We seem to be getting your political appointees" — I don't know if he actually said "the residue of your political campaigns" or system, but that was the strong implication. Here I was, a young officer in my 20's, on the spot to respond to a major industrialist in Switzerland and in Europe. Somehow I had the presence of mind to come up with a good reply. I recalled some distinguished U.S. ambassadors from the past and then said, "Herr Schindler, as long as we have the political system which we have, and as long as your country is as beautiful as it is, and as long as our relations are as good as they are, you are probably going to be receiving political appointees as your ambassadors." He took that in good spirit. It's often been a sensitive issue, but I think I stated the case as well as it could have been made.

Q: Absolutely.

Was there any sense while you were in Basel, about the new Kennedy Administration, that this was considered by many, particularly in the United States, to be a fresh of breath air, a new era, and all that? Had this gotten to the Swiss?

PRICKETT: Yes, especially among the public. Several letters and cards from the Swiss to President Kennedy, wishing him well, were referred to Basel for reply. The Swiss in authority were generally older, yet they were full of good will and willing to see what happened here in the U.S. By the way, there was a joke back in Vienna when Kennedy was elected. The story is that their economic minister, a man named Figl, loved to take a drink. When he asked who had won the American election, he was in his cups and didn't quite get it. When he was told "Kennedy," he heard Kennei'die? Do I know this one?" in dialect, and replied, "N*ur beim Heurigen*" — only in the new wine season."

Q: Well, did you by any chance, in your connection to Vienna and all, pick up any talk about how, when Kennedy made his famous visit to Vienna early on, and his meeting with Khrushchev, which did not go well at all. Were you picking up any stories?

PRICKETT: I was in Switzerland at the time. It was scary, and establishment people were nodding wisely and saying: Now this is what happens when you send a boy to do a man's job.

The younger idealists were given pause, ourselves among them. We Americans were optimists, we didn't really think disaster was impending. The Europeans were more concerned. This came just after Eisenhower. With the man who won the war in the White House, they hadn't worried. A new, younger President made them wonder.

Q: Well, then, Russ, after Basel, you were assigned where?

PRICKETT: To the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in Washington. The Foreign Service inspectors who examined Basel had recommended that I be assigned to the policy planning staff in the State Department. I was assigned to the Policy Coordinating Office of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, that was much more an administrative coordinating job.

Q: Now you were doing this from when to when? And I thought we'd close at this point. I'm just putting it at the end where we were.

PRICKETT: I was in ACDA from the summer of 1962 through the summer of '63, just one year.

Q: All right, well, we'll pick it up the next time. I think Lou Hoffacker will be doing the interviewing at that point. Great. Thank you very much.

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Q: This is Lou Hoffacker on the 16th of April, '99, interviewing Russ Prickett on the continuation of his memoir, which we think broke off during his tour in Basel, so I give you Russ.

PRICKETT: Good morning, Lou. This was about the summer of 1962. Basel, Switzerland, was my second post. The first one had been in Vienna. When my wife, Hilti, and I came into the Foreign Service, we had no furnishings, hardly anything at all. We were just a poor young couple still living like students. Our quarters in Vienna were furnished, as was the house we tented in Basel. I had the good luck to earn substantial chargé pay in Basel, which basically enabled us to furnish our household. I was there for about a year and a half. A few months after my arrival, my boss, Elias McQuaid, was transferred from Basel to Geneva, Switzerland, and I was left alone in charge of the post. I was a newly minted FSO-7, promoted just after my arrival in Basel. McQuaid was an FSO-2 at the far right-hand side of the pay card, so there was about a $10,000 gap between our pay scales. As you know, once you had served three weeks' time in charge of a post, you got half the difference between the actual salaries of yourself and the person that you were replacing. I was in charge for eight months; my chargé pay amounted to

about $3,000. Here in 1999, $3,000 wouldn't cover a month's retirement pension, but in those days it has a lot of purchasing power. We didn't need the chargé pay for our regular living expenses; we invested it in our permanent household. I bought a VW bug, tax-free overseas, for $1,200. We looked very carefully through the Ostermann-Petersen furniture catalogues from Denmark and ordered a whole quantity of furniture to be shipped back to the States. This included a queen-size bed, a chest of drawers for the bedroom, a Danish-style couch and a couple of easy chairs, a set of bookshelves, a tea cart, and a china cabinet — all this with my chargé pay. So we arrived back from our first jaunt overseas, which included two posts, actually able to set up housekeeping with a modicum of self-respect — besides having the plum of running my own post before age 30.

Q: Was anything going on in Basel in those days?

PRICKETT: Well, mostly I was just doing consular services. I did have some good relations with something called the Swiss Tropical Institute, which had relations with Third World countries. There were four major chemical companies located in Basel. CIBA, Sandoz, Geigy and Hoffmann-Laroche were all separate companies then, and I got to know some of their top executives. Friday was notarials day, and a number of their chemists regularly came in to notarize their U.S. patent applications. I mentioned that the Swiss theologian Karl Barth taught theology at the University of Basel. I had the privilege of writing his visa to the United States. Several American theology students were taking their PhD in theology under Barth. We socialized with them, and we guys played a lot of basketball together.

Q: Basel was in the Protestant Lutheran part of Switzerland.

PRICKETT: Protestant, yes, but it was more Calvinist. Zwingli was the Swiss-German Calvinist, and we used to say that it was only a matter of numbers that Zwingli's German wasn't the standard German rather than Luther's. Swiss German was really quite something to hear. In one of the festivals, their so called *Fastnacht* (Mardi Gras) — which occurred, by the way one week into the traditional Lent, underscoring their difference from the Catholics — it was said the celebrations were so wild that men would disappear from their families for a week at a time "because it was *Fastnacht.*"

Q: Zwingli might have been part of that because, apparently, he had an extracurricular life that historians, at least, knew about.

PRICKETT: We didn't get so wild. We went to the dawn procession from all directions into the heart of town, and we went out to dinner in the evenings. As an example of Swiss German, I remember a flower vendor who went from one restaurant to another offering roses, and when nobody took him up he would thank the folks and move on. In the German that we know, what he said would be "*Guten Abend, meine Damen und Herren, schöne Rosen? Auf Wiedersehen und einen recht schönen Abend*." But in Swiss German, it sounded more like this: "*Gwette Abe mitte'nant. Schöne Rösli? Dank ihne' vielmals und eene racht schöne Abe.*"

Q: It's different.

PRICKETT: Very different.

Q: It's almost Scandinavian.

PRICKETT: Yes, actually one of our FSI linguists, Dr. Van Buskirk, came through Basel. He was of Dutch descent, had been in Holland, and had written out some words for some of my Swiss local people to pronounce. What he found was an almost identical correspondence between the sounds of Swiss German, as spoken in Basel, and of Dutch — the same guttural throat sounds in particular. Basel was a good tour. I had my own shop, and I streamlined the passport and visa operations. I think I mentioned that my predecessor had been selected out, so I had a lot of cleaning up that I was able to do. I actually got a commendation from the Department for streamlining the visa operation and for the hours I kept the consulate open to the public.

Q: Did the ambassador expect you to do a little political reporting on the side, or did he just allow you to play around with visas.

PRICKETT: He just sort of left me to my own devices.

Q: Maybe there wasn't any political reporting to do. I don't know.

PRICKETT: We did commercial reporting. We had a commercial officer, a woman named Caluori.

Q: Sure, on the chemical side.

PRICKETT: There were mainly chemicals, and watches and shoes, for internationally significant industries that had one foot in Basel. Bally shoes —

Q: Bally is Basel. So you pronounce it "Bally." I know a French Swiss lady who calls it "Bye-ee." I just can't get used to that.

PRICKETT: Well, they didn't call it Bye-ee in Basel.

Q: They didn't.

PRICKETT: That's always the thing: do you pronounce it "Bahzel" or "Bayzel" or Bâle — and of course with the *a* circumflex the French pronounce Basel "Bahl."

Q: Then you moved back to the States.

PRICKETT: We came back to the States, and I was assigned to the Arms Control and

Disarmament Agency. The Foreign Service inspectors had come to Basel while I was there.

Q: You came out all right on that?

PRICKETT: I came out like a rose. I was running the shop all by myself. I was still in my '20's. I was an FSO-7, and they said great things.

Q: You were a comer.

PRICKETT: Well, it looked that way. It had taken me a long time to get my first promotion, as I mentioned. It didn't come until I'd been in the Service three years, and. my entry had been delayed, as I mentioned, by the fact that my wife wasn't an American citizen when I took the first oral exam. Then came the Wriston program and everybody who was in the old six-grade service, got upped a grade when it switched to eight —

Q: They crowded you.

PRICKETT: Yes, they moved ahead of me. But I made up for some lost time there in Basel, running my own little shop and streamlining the visa operations. Now, of course, they do visas by mail in countries like Switzerland.

But the inspectors had recommended that I be given some kind of great posting stateside, like maybe the Secretariat in the Department. I found myself in the secretariat of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which was a two-person operation that mostly shuffled paper. After a short time I was transferred to The policy shop in ACDA headed by Ambassador Henry Byroade.

He had the distinction, I believe, of having been one of the youngest generals in the history of the army. He was a remarkable guy, but his health wasn't good. He had already completed his tour as ambassador to Afghanistan, and he didn't look well. He was impressive, soft-spoken and very sharp. I worked on his staff and actually did a paper suggesting an arms control initiative for some of the newly emerging countries in Africa. It was my thought that if they could just settle for necessary internal police forces and establish some kind of a regimen that would keep them from threatening each other and having to spend scarce resources on military for show, that this could be a significant development. So I put that paper into the mill. Of course, from our present perspective, we know that it did not come to pass.

Q: Not even as U.S. policy.

PRICKETT: No. But we weren't really taking an active role in Africa then. We were happy to leave it to the French, mostly, and people who had traditional ties there.

Q: This was approximately what year?

PRICKETT: I was in ACDA just one year, from mid-'62 to mid-'63. I had the feeling I wasn't really doing much of significance, and I was looking to get into something that looked more like the real Foreign Service. There was a bit of good luck; the Commerce Department had decided ultimately that they were going to eliminate the position of commercial attaché in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. It turned out they couldn't do that without getting the agreement of State, but they hadn't put anybody into the pipeline for the job. So there were some slots open to go into Serbo-Croatian language training, which I did, after a year in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency I had checked in with a 1+, I think, in Serbo-Croatian when I joined the Service, a 1+ or a 2 in German and a 2+ in French — something like that. And so I went into a 10-month Serbo-Croatian language training and came out with a 3+ or a 4 because I'd had a start at it, having spent time over there in the summer as a student and done some academic work in the language.

So I had a shot at that job. I had till then been interested in political work. I was a lawyer, I was a political science major and so on, but when I got out to Belgrade as commercial attaché, I found that I was having some of the most fun in the embassy because I was dealing with the Yugoslav so-called "socialized enterprises." The Yugoslavs had a unique system of socialism which gave their enterprises a fair amount of independence, and I was dealing with them as if they were Western companies. They were just as happy as hell to have somebody dealing with them that way.

Q: This is under Tito, of course.

PRICKETT: Yes, it was.

Q: Okay.

PRICKETT: Shortly after I got to Belgrade, there were already plans underway for a U.S. trade mission to come out there. Within a couple of weeks, the advance man for the trade mission came, and he and I were going all over Yugoslavia drumming up interest in the U.S. trade mission, and then a few weeks after that the mission itself arrived. These were mostly small business people. They weren't about to set the world on fire in commercial terms, but it was a lot of fun.

Q: Was Washington trying to find ways to get used to this quasi-Communist regime? Was this a major thrust of our policy? Did you do this for other Communist countries?

PRICKETT: We were way ahead of anything that had been happening with other Communist countries, but our people in Belgrade had really a good understanding of the unique Yugoslav system. Our political people saw clearly how independent Tito and his people were from Stalin and the Soviets, and there had been some pretty good economic analysis of the Yugoslav so-called socialist enterprises, and their workers' self-government. A lot of it was just on paper. The Party still controlled the personnel moves, for example, and yet these enterprises were supposed to be financially responsible. They

were supposed to be independent. They were supposed to be making profits (although they didn't call them profits), but the workers shared in this. They had some very arcane accounting practices to avoid the capitalist terminology of profits and the like. All of this was a lot of fun for me, and it also opened up to the Department of Commerce another country in which to do trade promotion mission. Again, in those days — we're talking the summer of 1964, when I actually went over there — the Yugoslavs were importing about $2 billion a year. In those days, that was a substantial market, greater than a lot of other countries. I remember going to a regional commercial officers' conference in Vienna, at which I was able to attract some attention when I said, "Now, the Yugoslav market isn't very big, it's only $2 billion, but that's bigger than. . . . " and then I recited a bunch of other countries, and I said, "The French and the British and the Germans and the Italians, etc., etc. think it's significant, and I think we ought to consider it significant too." I was an advocate for doing business everywhere.

Q: How were your dealings with the individual Yugoslavs? You had no problem talking with them, being with them, traveling without restrictions? What were the restrictions?

PRICKETT: None. There were areas that were blocked off from foreigners for military reasons; this had been the case from very early on. But otherwise we were free to drive our cars anywhere in the country, as we had been free to travel in the country back in '53 when I was there as a student. In '64, we rented cars for the trade mission. I rather think we went down to Skopje in Macedonia, and we were up in Ljubljana in Slovenia. We were in Sarajevo. Certainly we were in Dubrovnik and in Split and Rijeka.

Q: For the holidays.

PRICKETT: I meant trade promotion trips. But yes, we also vacationed all over the country.

Q: Relations between the two countries were generally good, then, if not friendly.

PRICKETT: Yes. We had an AID program to Yugoslavia, and we were sort of wrapping it up. We had Ex-Im Bank credits available to the Yugoslavs. We were selling airplanes to them, Caterpillar tractors for road-building and railroad building, railroad switching equipment. I had a whole litany of stuff that I knew we were supplying. Agricultural machinery was big. Coming from the upper Midwest myself, I looked around at Yugoslav agriculture, and it looked very much like what we were doing here in the States in Iowa and Minnesota. Minnesota's my home, of course. And so almost from the time of my arrival in Yugoslavia I started saying, "We need to do an agricultural trade fair," that is, an agricultural equipment trade fair. I pushed and pushed and pushed for it. The Yugoslavs had an annual agriculture fair in Novi Sad, the capital of Voivodina, where we just bombed a couple of bridges. And just to skip over, we did appear in the Novi Sad fair one time while I was there in 1966, but it was strictly a catalogue presentation. We didn't get any hardware over there. Some companies were showing stuff independently of the USG, but Tito came through our little booth and said, — in English — "Next year, come

back with machines."

Q: Now the Russians, how did they fit in there? Well, describe it. I just have no feel for how the Russians were behaving vis-à-vis the Yugoslavs in those days.

PRICKETT: Their relations had been pretty chilly after '48. Stalin had said, "I will lift my little finger and there will be no more Tito." Stalin figured he had the Yugoslav Communist Party infiltrated with his agents, but Tito was at home on the ground. He had really led the fight against the Germans and had won the civil war that took place at the same time during World War II, Tito had Stalin's infiltrators infiltrated. So in 1948, when this confrontation took place, a lot of these sympathizers with Stalin were simply taken to the border of Hungary and Rumania and told to run for it and were shot down. Others were taken to some of the island camps and run through a re-indoctrination or brainwashing session. There was a Yugoslav movie made about this theme that was called Otac na poslovnim putu [Dad's on a Business Trip]. In other words, the father of the family had disappeared and been taken away to one of these islands and run through the "purifying" process. The remnants of this were still very strong in memory. At the same time, the Russians had an embassy that was electronically well equipped, as we did, and they were there, and the Yugoslavs had never claimed to be anything but Communists. So they were sort of like cousins that hadn't been getting on very well lately. But the Russians and we were both supplying a good bit of military hardware to the Yugoslavs, and the Yugoslavs — as best our military intelligence people could tell — were really insulating the intelligence information one from the other. The Russians didn't find out a whole lot about our stuff, and we didn't find out a whole lot about theirs, and God knows, we were both trying real hard. One of our attachés got caught up a tree — literally — trying to use his binoculars and see what was going on on the other side of the barbed wire, as it were, in one of these military establishments — Sezinski was his name, I think. We called him Ski, and we kidded about "Ski up a tree." A big burly guy, too. The thought of him up in a tree still makes me smile.

Q: Did he have to leave?

PRICKETT: No, he didn't, actually. They must have figured that he hadn't got anything worthwhile, and maybe they'd rather have him hanging around than get somebody in there who was better at it.

Q: Tito obviously ran a very tight shop.

PRICKETT: He did, and in those days, he was still in charge. Later, during the years after my first tour in Belgrade, Tito they said, became, if not senile, at least less in charge. He was diabetic, and he lost a leg. I think he was at least 84 or more when he died in 1980, and some of the folks were saying he lived too long. But as long as he was alive, the Yugoslav Communist system was more flexible. Tito was quite a pragmatist, and if they were able to put economic incentives into their system, as long as Tito blessed it they could still call it socialism. After Tito was gone, they had a lot more rigidity, and if they

all had to agree on changes, then the most conservative of their brain trust effectively had a veto.

Q: How had he handled the ethnicity, which is so important now?

PRICKETT: Tito had been very much a leader of the Communist Party's opposition to the ethnic rivalries. Tito had set up this system of the six Constituent Republics — Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bosnia, which was then called Bosnia-Herzegovina. They had carved off from Serbia the two autonomous provinces, so-called, of the Vojvodina and Kosovo — as it was then called, Kosovo-Metohija — "Kos-Met" we sometimes called it. The whole idea was that the pre-World War II Yugoslav monarchy had been a very, very heavy-handed thing, and the only people who appreciated it were the Serbs, because the monarch was Serbian. The Croats, the Slovenes and the others felt oppressed by that monarchy. The Treaty of Versailles had created Yugoslavia as the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes," but it was dominated by the Serbs. The Croats and Slovenes, throughout the 19th century, had had quite a different idea, even though they had all shared in this movement towards Yugoslav unity. These former subjects of the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Empires saw maybe a unified country as their way out of those empires. Both of those empires, of course, imploded surprisingly quickly, from the point of view of people who had been observing them for centuries, with World War I. So maybe before they were ready, but in any case, in a hurry, here was this country ready to be born — people who were ethnically very similar, linguistically very similar, with different religious heritage, the Orthodox Serbs and the Catholic Croats and Slovenes. Well, the Slovenes and the Croats had looked to a kind of loose federation or confederation in which they'd have a voice in the central government and a fair degree of autonomy at home. The Serbs looked at a union as being part of a pan-Serbian movement in which they would share the benefits of their monarchy with their Slavic neighbors and cousins. The latter arrangement was really what emerged after World War I.

So part of Tito's appeal during this civil war that was taking place during World War II was that he was offering something different from the old Serbian monarchy. During World War II, you'll recall that the first resistance movement that we heard about were the Chetniks under Draža Mikhailović, a colonel who had been elevated to general rank when the monarchy fled from Yugoslavia during the war. Well, Mikhailović saw his mission as keeping some kind of an army in being ready to rise up when the allies invaded. Tito and his partisans, on the other hand — and this was, again, a broad movement of which the Communists were the point men — adopted the policy of fighting Germans whenever and wherever they could. This brought terrible reprisals from the Germans. They'd come into a village where a German soldier had been killed, and they'd trot out ten Yugoslav men and line them up against a wall and shoot them, ten to one. Those reprisals drove people out of the villages and into the hills, looking for somebody with whom they could fight Germans. And generally the first folks they found were Tito and his partisans. So this general strategy, or tactic, brought a lot of power to Tito and his people, and in addition, he was already forming his philosophy of a broad

umbrella under which the Slovenes could be the best possible Slovenes and the Macedonians the same and including the Serbs and so forth. The Serbs were about 40 percent of the population. The idea of this carving out of Serbia the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the autonomous region (later called province) of Kosovo and giving them some local autonomy and separate voice in this central government, served to lighten the disproportionate weight of the Serbs in the overall balance. That was one thing they did. And the other, parallel to it, was that regional nationalism was to be absolute anathema. They got to have their folkways and folksongs and dances and so on, but the idea that Croats hated Serbs and vice versa was utterly a complete no-no. The Communist Party was very, very tough on that. There were purges of folks who promoted anything that could smack of separatism or regional nationalism. Interestingly, in the first Yugoslav constitution of 1946 and some subsequent versions, the constituent republics — Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, etc. — had the right on paper to secede from the Yugoslav Federation. That was one reason that any suggestion that Kosovo might be given the status of a constituent republic was immediately brushed aside. The fear was that Kosovo, which even then had a majority of ethnic Albanian population, would want to secede and join with neighboring Albania. That couldn't be allowed because, after all, the traditional patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church was in the town of Peć in Kosovo. Dečani and other monasteries were there, and the famous field where the losing battle had been fought with the Turks back in 1389, Kosovo Polje, the Field of the Blackbirds — was down there, too. It was kind of a dog-in-the-manger sense on the part of the Serbs, because any Serbs who could get enough skills and enough education to get out of Kosovo were getting out. It was the poorest place in all Europe, about 100 miles across from east to west and north to south, with the possible exception of Albania itself.

Q: It was largely agricultural and mining, wasn't it?

PRICKETT: Well, rather little mining, too. The Trepča lead mines were there. It was mostly mountainous — very, very dramatically beautiful, but very inhospitable country. A small percentage of it is arable land, and mining is very difficult. During the Tito years, they did try to start some industries there, but these were mostly capital-intensive, which didn't really offer jobs to the poorly educated people there, the unskilled. Agriculture was subsistence; people were scratching out their living, and at the same time, the ethnic Albanians had the highest birth rate in all of Europe — nearly three percent per year. It was a situation that was a challenge all the time when I was ever acquainted with the country. And as with other poor countries around the world, what they had for export was people, *Šhiptari*, as we called them then, which was the Serbian pronunciation of the Albanian word for their own country and their own nationals. They called them *Šiptari.* They were working all over Yugoslavia doing the most menial tasks, cleaning the streets, shoveling the snow, things like that. We called them *Šiptari* in the '60's. Later, when I came back in the '80's, *Šiptar* was an epithet like the n-word in our country. You couldn't say *Šiptar* any more. They were "ethnic Albanians." I recall back in the '60's hearing one American kid paraphrasing one of our racist sayings in the States, saying, "Who was your *Šiptar* last week?" It was clear, they were on the bottom of the totem pole. They had been oppressed for a long time. We're sort of digressing into current politics a little bit, but it

was possible to see some of those things. Tito and the Communist Party were very strongly against these nationalist rivalries and old hatreds. These had flared up and were tremendously virulent during World War II, especially atrocities committed by "Croatian Quislings" who collaborated with the Nazis. More recent events, in the eyes of Serbs at least, echoed those atrocities, and precipitated the fighting that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

It's tragically ironic that the leaders who caused the break-up of Yugoslavia by triggering Serbs-hate-Muslims-or Croats and vice versa nationalism had come up through the Communist Party, which was dead set against all this animosity. But when the Communist Party was discredited throughout Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, then to strengthen their power with the people, they deliberately went for the hot buttons to reignite these old smoldering issues.

Q: Milosević.

PRICKETT: Slobodan Milosević in Serbia and Franjo Tudjman in Croatia were both flaming nationalists. There were moderate democratic parties, but too little and too late. The Prime Minster Ante Markovic — we're talking 1990 now — tried to form a national democratic party, the Reform Party, an economic reform party, but he just didn't have the political base to do this. It didn't happen.

Q: Now this was after you were there, these nationalists, Tudjman and Milosević?

PRICKETT: Yes. The country didn't start breaking apart until 1991, years after my second tour in Belgrade.

Q: You didn't know Milosević.

PRICKETT: I *did* know Milosević. We're jumping ahead now temporarily into my tour in the '80's, but yea. Milosević had run a business, a manufacturing business, and then he was the president of the Belgrade Union Bank when I was head of our economic section in my later tour, which was '82 to '85.

Q: Wasn't his wife following him into politics at that time, or was it later?

PRICKETT: That would have been later, after I knew him.

Q: Because he was in business, essentially.

PRICKETT: He was, but he was a Party man. As I said, the Party really ran the country. Like the old Russian *Nomenklatura,* the party decided who headed up what. Milosević was a Party man first, then a businessman, and then a banker. Then he became president of the Serbian Communist Party and later president of Serbia itself.

I did meet Milosević during my second tour in Belgrade; I never met Tudjman.

Q: And you referred to that meeting in your book?

PRICKETT: Yes. One of the chapters had to do with the commercial relations in the '60s, and another chapter had to do with the financial bailout when they had a hard-currency shortage in the '80's.

Q: Well, lets put in a note that the book is something that people ought to read if they want to know more about this.

PRICKETT: Yes, it certainly provides a lot of background. It's Yugoslav-American Economic Relations Since World War II, and it came out in January of 1991. My co-authors were John Lampe, professor of economic history at the University of Maryland and also was secretary for East-Europe at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington; and Ljubisa Adamovic, professor of economics specializing in international economics at the University of Belgrade and Florida State University in Tallahassee.

I wanted to mention some of the other folks at the embassy when I arrived in 1964. When I was in Serbo-Croatian language training, '63-64, I fully expected that I'd be serving under George Kennan, whom President Kennedy had appointed, brought him back out of retirement from Princeton; Kennan had agreed to serve under Kennedy as ambassador to Yugoslavia. Kennan had resigned in protest against some of the Congressional treatment of the Yugoslavs. He found American policy, as dictated by Congress, as insufficiently forthcoming to the Yugoslavs, insufficiently encouraging of their independence and their middle road between the Soviet Union and their position astride the Iron Curtain, if you will. But he had resigned, so I missed serving under Ambassador Kennan. Eric Kocher was DCM under Kennan and was chargé when I arrived and for several months thereafter. And then Burke Elbrick was our ambassador. Elbrick had the rank of Career Ambassador, which is our highest rank, and I think had held it longer than anybody else. So he was by one measure the highest-ranking career Foreign Service officer in the Service. He had served in Lisbon prior to that and served in Brazil after that. He was studying Serbo-Croatian. He wasn't proficient in the language. He was fluent in Portuguese. And you'll recall that later he was kidnapped and held hostage in Brazil. He and his wife were delightful people. He ran a good shop.

Q: He was very healthy, wasn't he?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: Did Tito see the ambassadors socially?

PRICKETT: No. He would see the ambassadors rarely and only on business. He projected himself as a man of the people, and at the same time he had wonderful dress uniforms that he could appear in to be photographed. He had a great presence. He was not a tall

man; if you saw pictures of him welcoming various heads of state or government to Belgrade, they all seemed to be paying respect to Tito. If you analyzed those pictures, it was because Tito was short, and he was standing upright, and he would not lean toward the visitor, he would simply extend his hand; and in order to shake hands with him, they had to lean forward. So you had many pictures of people seeming to pay respect, in their body language, to Tito, who by that time — as you indicated with your gesture a moment ago — had acquired a bit of "frontage" and was portly. He would stand there with his belly out and his hand out, and they would lean forward to shake his hand.

Q: In pictures of Milosević, isn't he also a short man?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: He's always standing like Tito —

PRICKETT: I think he patterns his body language after the Marshall, yes. Yes, I think so.

Q: Okay. I'm sorry, I'm getting away from your substance.

PRICKETT: But it is a trait, I think. These are people with immense pride, and you didn't see a whole many Yugoslavs slouching or slumping, ever. Mostly they're tall folks, so if somebody is short and achieves a position of leadership in the country, he's got to stand tall, and he's got to have something about his physical presence. You may recall the Yugoslavs had done very well in international basketball. They're a bunch of tall people. Walk down the street, and you see young kids in the distance, and by the time you're meeting them, you know, they're towering over you. High school kids 6' 1", 6' 2", are very, very common.

Q: Did you think that Elbrick had good relations with Tito, as good as possible?

PRICKETT: Yes. Elbrick himself had a lot of personal dignity. He was of our old school.

Q: Classic?

PRICKETT: Classic and classy. He chose his words very well.

Q: He knew his business.

PRICKETT: He knew his business extremely well. He had immense respect for the diplomatic process, and he was a pro. After all, they were picking a man to succeed George Kennan. They had to come up with somebody who had some class. I was thrilled.

Q: Well, of course, if not dazzled.

PRICKETT: I was thrilled to be out there, feeling hey, I'm on the first team! It was great.

One of the things that was a responsibility of the Economic Section was to handle residual AID matters. Well, who did that? It was a second secretary named Larry Eagleburger. The famous or notorious earthquake in Skopje in Macedonia had happened in 1963, just the fall before I arrived. Stu Kennedy went down to Skopje and set up, basically, a consular office. He and Larry Eagleburger went down. Larry was coordinating U.S. aid efforts, and they lived in tents. They were going down there to take care of our people and our aid mission. There were a lot of social security recipients, former immigrants to the United States who had come back. Maybe a lot of them were citizens, some were not, who had gone back home to retire. So we had very strong consular interests down there when this devastating earthquake struck. Stu and Larry went down to Macedonia at the same time practically that the French consulate was pulling out. Of course, their building was devastated, and they didn't have any place to stay. But our guys were going down there and living in a tent, while others were pulling out.

In very short order, we had brought a U.S. army hospital down into Skopje. Who do you suppose coordinated that move? Larry, with civil air matters in his portfolio, was the point man; he got the clearances through European air space. He worked all night, practically, to get that done, so that by the time dawn came and the Skopje airport opened, our army planes had been in the air and were ready to land. That was just a hell of an operation.

Q: That must have had a powerful impact.

PRICKETT: Yes. As you probably know, an army hospital travels with its own rations and so forth for the medical personnel, but not for the patients. Our army hospitals are designed to care for army people, and the army has its own logistics to feed its people and so forth. So if we send an army hospital unit to take care of somebody else, where is the food going to come from? A sergeant-major in the attaché's office in embassy Belgrade made a regular run. He would take a truck and go to the open-air markets in Belgrade and load up with food and get on that highway and go down there.

Q: Drove to Skopje.

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: That's a good long way.

PRICKETT: Yes, but there was a good highway. It was, maybe a couple hundred miles.

Q: That took him all day.

PRICKETT: Yes. He was in the markets when they opened at five o'clock in the morning, and he was loading up that truck. And by god, we fed the patients in that hospital. It was a tremendous operation, and of course, it made us great friends among the Yugoslavs, and the Macedonians, who had been very, very inward-turned — you know,

they're landlocked and down there in that mountainous country — and they did not have a tradition of welcoming foreigners.

Q: They felt people want to covet them. They felt their neighbors wanted to take part of their land.

PRICKETT: Sure. The Macedonian Question was not a happy one for the Macedonians. But this really opened them up to the outside world, and particularly to us, in a friendly and a happy way. And then we put up a lot of temporary Quonset huts and the like. They called it "Eagleburger Village." We provided housing for people who didn't have any housing. I mentioned early on that my summer work when I was going to school was in an ice factory. When I looked at some of the apartment buildings in '64 that had suffered the earthquake, I saw cracks that extended along the sides of those buildings that reminded me of a 400-pound block of ice that you'd better not grab with your tongs or it would just break all to bits and crush your feet. Some of those apartment buildings looked as if they were ready to tumble. The reconstruction took a long time, and we were very helpful in it. We later had an earthquake in Alaska, a minor one, and the Yugoslavs sent some prefabricated housing as a gesture of sympathy and thanks. So we were doing good stuff in our relations with the Yugoslavs, and they were responding in kind.

Larry and I spent a lot of hours on the road. I went with him on a number of trips down there to see how things were going, and he showed me around, showed me the Quonset huts and so forth. There was still work to be tied up from that effort. But he had the key to the city of Skopje. He was very well known.

Q: It's appropriate that he went back as ambassador.

PRICKETT: It was. He knew the language very well; he was good with languages. There's a language story. He was escorting Mrs. (Elfie) Elbrick through an art museum in Skopje, and she was learning Serbian. (Macedonian, by the way, is not far from Serbian at all; it's somewhere between Serbian and Bulgarian, and if you speak Serbian, you can converse with a Bulgarian) She was trying to compliment the appearance of one of these modern works of art. The word for 'beautiful' is *lepo* or *lepa*, and so she said, "*Kakosh lepo kurve*," meaning to describe — and she was thinking in partly Portuguese — the wonderful *curved lines*. Well, unfortunately, *kurva* means 'whore' in Serbian. So here's Larry coming along behind her, and she's talking to the curator of the museum, and she says: "what lovely prostitutes" they had on their wall!

Larry had a great sense of humor. He'd pick up the phone, if he was following up on something, and he'd say, "Hello, Birdledogger here." He was a great colleague to work with.

Q: So he was about second, first secretary?

PRICKETT: He was number three in the economic section. We were second secretaries

together.

Q: Both together. Oh, my goodness. Well, well.

PRICKETT: Another sign of my misspent youth, I guess.

Q: Well, so you had a good four years there.

PRICKETT: I had a good four years. I was proud to say that I had established the first complete American commercial program in any Communist country anywhere, with a commercial newsletter, with trade missions, with world trade directory reports, the so-called WTDR's that we did on foreign businesses —

Q: Good for you.

PRICKETT: — with commercial exhibits, and the whole *shmier*. We had to make some decisions how we were going to do our commercial newsletter, because this was a country with two alphabets and a number of ways of writing their language, and we determined that we would use the Serbian standard of syllabification. The Serbs say *"hvala lepo*" for 'thank you very much'; the Croats say "*hvala lijepa*". They call it *ije-kavski* or *i-kavski* when they describe the different dialects or styles of the language, and *e-kavski* was the Serbian thing. So we decided we were going to do *e-kavski*, but we would write it in the Latin alphabet. In those days the national economic daily was written in the Latin alphabet. One of the things that the Serbs were first to do when the country broke up was to stop printing anything in the Latin alphabet; it's all Cyrillic there now. Our newsletter was a unifying thing. We got permission to publish in their language, which was a big, big step.

Q: Good for you. Good for you.

PRICKETT: The public affairs officer, Walter Roberts, was reluctant to go in and ask. He was a very high-ranking guy in USIA, but I got the ambassador's approval to do the thing, and I finally said to him Walter was very knowledgeable about Yugoslavia and a fine person, but he didn't want to ask and get turned down and set a precedent that would lock us later. He thought it was a bit early to try for something like that — he was publishing his American magazine in Serbo-Croatian, but that was all to an officially approved list of subscribers, and it was our cultural stuff. The idea of business stuff to —

Q: — anybody —

PRICKETT: — to anybody of <u>our</u> choosing, and particularly to the business community — that was new. I finally said to Walter, "Will you do this, or shall I?" Then he went in, and he was surprised when he got the "Yes." We had permission to mail to a certain number of people — five thousand, I think. I got some good advice from people who said, don't fill up your mailing list quota right away, don't send to more than half. Be

very selective, because you will acquire new names that you will want to send to, and if you have used up your quota, then you maybe won't be able to get it out to your best prospects.

I was probably the youngest commercial attaché in the service back in those days. I was 32 years old when I went out as commercial attaché to Belgrade, and I was doing pioneering work. I had been trained, as I said before, in political science and law and had been looking to be a political officer in the Foreign Service, but I was having the most fun of anybody in the embassy, with the possible exception of the ambassador.

Q: Did you have a good local staff?

PRICKETT: I had an old fellow named Dan Dobrodolac, who was my commercial assistant. He was the engineer that I mentioned that had seen the Serbian bodies coming down the river. The second assistant was named Nada Vujić. She was the wife of a Serbian engineer. They lived in Pančevo across the river, and they were both very, very devoted. They had both lived through the toughest time under the Communists. A lot of anti-American stuff had gone down, and the local staff were either fiercely anti-Communist or they were on the pay of the Yugoslav secret police. So we had to assume that even if our help was very sympathetic to us, that there was no way that they couldn't be coopted to tell what they knew. Therefore, of course, our embassy was very much segregated as to who could go where without an escort. My commercial library was on the first floor right next to the entrance to the embassy, and my office was up on the fourth floor. So I got a lot of exercise going up and down the stairs. The elevator was small and old, so I kept in pretty good shape doing that. However, all of my traveling around meant that I ate an awful lot of what we would call barbecue down here in Texas. The Yugoslav food was heavy, but good and substantial. There was a lot of high cholesterol, a lot of meat and potatoes. The meat was very good — beef and pork and lamb and often on a spit, roasted outdoors.

Q: And Slivovitz and other things to drink, and beer and whatever.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. Beer, and Yugoslavs make good wines, their white wines especially, but they have good reds too. People always said their wine was better than their beer. I developed a taste for the beer first and later came around to the wine. After leaving the country, even in the '80's, you could buy Yugoslav wines in the supermarkets back here in the States. That's jumping way ahead, too, but Coca-Cola developed a barter program, and they were selling their Coca-Cola in Yugoslavia and taking Yugoslav wines in exchange.

Q: Not making Coca-Cola there, just selling —

PRICKETT: No, they did have bottling plants, but the syrup, of course, came from here. Well, let's see. Back to the '60's.

Q: Back to the embassy.

PRICKETT: We did, as I said, have a very strong commercial program where we had a trade show that came through in 1966. Tur-Ex '66 it was called. This show, sponsored by the Department of Commerce, had been in Madrid and Munich before Belgrade. It was a three-point thing. Belgrade was in some pretty good company. It featured equipment for the tourist industry and included all kinds of hotel equipment, which could also be used for hospitals and other public facilities — kitchen and laundry equipment, for example, and recreation equipment of all kinds. The inventor of the trampoline was there selling his stuff. People who provided these parquet dance floors that can be fit together, squares of them on top of a carpet — this outfit was there. We had a lot of space in the Belgrade fair facilities, and their trade fair facilities were quite good and spacious. In fact, our trade fair was in Yugoslavia, in Belgrade, at the same time that the Russians had a touring show of their space program. They had a space capsule, and one of their cosmonauts came to town. I talked to the director of the Belgrade fair grounds, with whom I had a good, friendly relationship, and his deputy director (who was very much an anglophile and an America-phile and had translated Helen Keller's book into Serbian). I said to them, "Maybe we could set up reciprocal visits," so that we, our guys from Commerce and some of our business people could go and get a walk-through of the Russian space exhibit, and their people could come and walk through our commercial exhibit. While we were doing this, without thinking about it very much, I got to talking with the Soviet cosmonaut, a man named Popov, a well-put-together fellow of about 5' 9" or so, not a tall guy. And midway talking to him, I suddenly realized, *I'm talking to this guy, and I don't know Russian and he doesn't know English.* I was talking Serbian. I raised this with him, and "Oh," he said, "I'm Ukrainian, and Ukrainian and Serbian are close enough together so that we can understand each other if you're speaking one language and I the other." That was great fun.

Q: Heavy competition, though, space show.

PRICKETT: Well, you know, they were talking to the general public, and it was fine, and ours was a business target.

Q: There was no static or anything about it. Belgrade was lucky to have both.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. And it was kind of typical of what was going on. We had cultural presentations. The Roger Wagner Chorale came to Belgrade in the '60's. Sviatoslav Richter, the Soviet pianist, came. We were in cultural competition. And of course we got to go to them all. We had a great time in this kind of thing.

Q: Belgrade was a major capital.

PRICKETT: Arthur Rubinstein, the pianist, came. They applauded and applauded and applauded, and he played encore after encore after encore, and finally he came out with his hands steepled together in a "please, please" gesture and opened his hands and looked

at them and shook his head and said, basically, he had done all he could do.

Q: That was pretty far along in his career, wasn't it.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes.

Q: He was never young in my lifetime.

PRICKETT: No, no, no. He was quoted famously as having said, "Oh, there are young people now who can do things that I could never do. They can do absolutely superhuman things; I wonder when they're going to start making music." Isaac Stern came to town. He was politically very astute, very much up on world affairs, and he had a question and answer session with the students at Belgrade University who were asking about the war in Vietnam, and he was handling himself very well. I had some of that experience myself on a field trip Sarajevo. Stu Kennedy's deputy, Howard Gross, and I made a field trip down to Sarajevo, and we had talked at length with young people from the University of Sarajevo about how the university was structured. Yugoslavs, at least on paper, were way ahead of us in terms of the students having considerable say in the running of the university. I'm sure that the students that had the say were very carefully picked and supervised by the party, but that was all backstage. And so we said, "Now you've been very generous with your responses to our questions. Do you have anything you want to ask us?" And *bingo*, we were right into Vietnam and what the hell were we doing over there, and so on. I said — and we were talking in their language — and I said, "Well, now, however you look at it, there was at least a certain pressure from the north to the south that — " "Well, what business do you have over there anyway, way over in the Pacific?" I said, "We were attacked from the Pacific." "Oh." They could understand that. So we had a mutually respectful conversation.

Q: It was a good presentation.

PRICKETT: It was fun to deal with Yugoslavs, very direct, very open — blunt, of course, to the point of rudeness oftentimes, but you knew where you stood with them.

Q: How was Sarajevo as a city in those days, sophisticated and cosmopolitan?

PRICKETT: No, not so much. It was very much inward-turned.

Q: Ethnically what was the composition, or did it matter?

PRICKETT: It hardly matters, almost equal parts of Bosnian Muslims, Serbs so-called (that is, people of the Eastern Orthodox heritage), and Catholic-heritage Croats. You're talking about Bosnian Serbs, you're talking about people who come from the Eastern Christian heritage. Bosnian Croats are of the Roman Catholic tradition. And the Muslims. First time I was ever in Sarajevo was in 1953 as a student. I was in the Hotel Europa — *Evropa*, as they call it — and I could count from my hotel window 13 minarets — lots of

Muslim mosques in Sarajevo.

Q: Weren't they intensely Muslim?

PRICKETT: Not in the '60's, or even in the '80's. They were mainly secular, but the mosques were there.

Q: Nobody was veiled, or were they, in the '60's?

PRICKETT: No, their faces were not veiled, but often the hair would be covered.

Q: Not the university students.

PRICKETT: No, the kids were very much of the 20th century.

Q: Blue jeans.

PRICKETT: Yes. Later on. Blue jeans came in in the '60's. In fact, these American firms were among my clients as commercial attaché. Levi's, I believe, worked out a licensing arrangement and did some manufacturing there.

Q: Oh, manufacturing.

PRICKETT: Yes. There were American textile interests that licensed manufacturing there. I still have some suits that I bought down south of Skopje at a textile plant that they were making to American specifications. This, again, was in the '80's. This activity was starting in the '60's, and I was proud and happy to have had a role in it.

The John Deere tractor company was working on a deal to sell some of their universal harvesters — these are harvesters that could do both corn and small grains — and it was a several-million-dollar deal. I learned about it one day when a man appeared in my office — a German named Dr. Hess. He was representing John Deere and had a problem. He said, "They have promised to give me a bank guarantee of payment for the John Deere equipment, and we signed an umbrella agreement last year. The people back in Illinois have run the machines off, and the guarantee that's been promised, week after week, month after month, has simply not come through. I've been given my marching orders from headquarters that if I don't get that guarantee by tomorrow, the company is going to have to cancel the deal, because they must then offer the machines on the domestic market. They cannot afford to just store them and have them around. And to offer them on the domestic market, they have to be modified somewhat from how they've been made, and then the whole marketing effort and distribution method has to proceed. So we're counting back from harvest time in the States, and they've given me this as a final deadline, and I don't know what to do about it. They won't talk to me."

Well, I got on the phone to a guy named Kapatanovic, who was the director for

international business at the Yugoslav agricultural bank, and I talked to him, and he said, "Well, yes, we can have it in a few days, but we can't do it today." It'll be just a few days, and so forth. And I said, "Mr. Kapatanovic, I don't want to be in the middle of this process. I'd like you please to tell Dr. Hess in person. Can we come over there?" "Well, no, I can't. . . ." "Look, I just want you to tell him this in person because I think this is too important business to just do it by telephone." The connection was broken. And I called back, and I asked to talk to Mr. Kapatanovic, and the operator said, "He is in the office with his general director," that he was in this meeting and can't be disturbed. So I said to our embassy operator, I said, "Call this number. Talk to the operator there, and tell them that the John Deere representative and I are on our way over to the Agricultural Bank. And he did it. When we got there, they were waiting for us, and we went in and they sat and negotiated and talked. It was the better part of the day. The Yugoslav business day was from seven to two, Monday through Saturday. We were there until noon, and they still couldn't reach agreement. Dr. Hess was absolutely crestfallen when we walked out of the agricultural bank. I said, "Dr. Hess, the business day doesn't end here until two; and you've still got time, of course, with the time difference back to Illinois. They may still get back to you." He had left them his number at the hotel. Well, the next day, it turns out that they had gotten back to him, and they said they would give him a personal letter relating to the guarantee. They would assure him personally, and if he would give his personal assurance back to Moline, Illinois, that would work. I was quite familiar with the Serbian mentality at that time and knew something about the businesses. I figured out — and later on I asked and was confirmed on what had actually been going on. The Agricultural Bank had been going around to the various Yugoslav *kombinats*, they called them, great big state or socialized farms, to try to get them to promise that they'd increase their exports in order to earn the hard currency necessary to pay for these harvest machines. When these *kombinat* directors heard, as they did find out, that about half of the resources were available but only half — this had come out of our negotiations — and they needed to scare up the other half with additional guarantees of exports, why, being good Yugoslavs, they all just naturally assumed, well, my machines are included in the good half, and so they don't need anything more from me! So the bank had their guys out in the countryside trying to get the Yugoslav agricultural enterprises to commit, and they were finally able to do it. But it was such a delay, that these machines, which were normally — they're self-powered machines — they were normally — yes, huge, huge things — they were normally knocked down, you know — the wheels were taken off, they were packed and crated, and so forth — they had to be shipped wholly mounted, wheels on and everything. But the time came when the ship arrived, and these machines under their own power rolled down the gangplank in the Port of Rijeka, and John Deere made their sale.

Rijeka is up by the Istrian Peninsula and is the biggest port in the former Yugoslavia. The Italian name for it is Fiume.

Q: Is that now Slovenia?

PRICKETT: It's now Croatia. Koper, the Slovenian port, is on the north side of the

Istrian Peninsula on the Dalmatian Coast. Rijeka is on the south. Shortly before I was leaving Yugoslavia at the end of my tour, John Deere signed a deal to license the manufacture of some of their equipment in Yugoslavia. The chairman of the company came to Belgrade to celebrate the arrangement. When we met, he said, "Oh, you're Mr. Prickett." He knew about the adventure we'd had that had given them their first foothold in the country.

Q: Well, that must have made you feel good.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. And then, at one of the celebratory meals the John Deere chairman gave a toast to their future successful and happy relations with Yugoslavia, and Anton Debrecin, the ranking Yugoslav agriculture official, responded in kind. Then at the end of his remarks he said, "But this is not an entirely happy occasion." I was seated at his left. He said, "Mr. Prickett, who has been so helpful to these relations, will soon be leaving our country, and we're very sorry to see him go."

Q: So that was near the end of your tour.

PRICKETT: It was just days away from my departure.

Q: Well, that's a good send-off. Good for you.

PRICKETT: Talk about ego strokes!

Q: Well, obviously you had a little more slivovitz. So where did you go in '68?

PRICKETT: That was the end of my tour in Belgrade, as far as business was concerned, but I might just go back and mention some of the extracurricular stuff that we did.

Not long after I arrived — I think it turned out to be about February of 1965 — our British friends put out the word that they were going to write and produce a piece of musical theater, and they did. They invited people to take part, and it was called *Mountain Air*, a story of folks from England who were on a skiing vacation in Austria. They found themselves in a village where there were a couple of inns in intense rivalry. One of the inns was run by a widow who had a beautiful daughter, and the other was run by a widower who had an eligible son. The parents were rivals and had some animosity between them which turned out to date from an old former romance — clichés of romantic comedy. The head of the British travel agency was very much adored by his assistant, and they were both on the trip along with a group of students from England. This was easy to produce because we all had ski clothing, German or Austrian type jackets, et cetera, so we were able to provide out of our own or borrowed wardrobe all the costuming that we needed. I mentioned earlier the Skopje earthquake. The play was to be a benefit performance with the proceeds to provide medical equipment for a hospital in Skopje. Belgrade television constructed and donated the scenery for our show, and the Children's Theater of Belgrade provided the space. Our show played for eight or nine

days, and netted between $800 and $1000, which went for medical equipment in Skopje. It was attended, not just by the foreign community but by Yugoslavs as well. We had a ball. I played the son of the widower who was also the local ski instructor; I sang a yodeling song in the show. We had 13 or 14 nationalities represented, including Yugoslavs, in the cast.

I had been among, other things, a church choir director, one of my part time jobs when I was in college. We had an active English-language Protestant Church community in Belgrade, but it didn't have a choir. I realized there were a lot of people singing very nicely in this show; maybe we could get them together. Since one thing you don't do in the diplomatic service is turn down an invitation to a cocktail party, Hilti and I gave a cocktail party to which we invited the 40 or 50 people who had been in the show to come and have a kind of reprise of Mountain Air. Our party morphed into a musical sing-along or song-fest, I made a pitch for the church choir. I think we got a good dozen folks who were willing to get together and sing on a weekly basis at the protestant services.

Q: What size congregation did you have?

PRICKETT: We had probably 30 to 50 people at most, the Brits, Canadians, Australians, and the U.S.

Q: Did you have a pastor?

PRICKETT: Eventually we did. In the meantime, a U.S. army chaplain came through periodically, and there was also a British Church of England priest who had a circuit in Eastern Europe. Eventually we did get a pastor who lived in Belgrade. He had been pastor of the community church in Vienna, where we had known him. His name was Ken Zebell, and his denomination was Congregationalist, I think. This was the '60's, mind you, days of a lot of talk about church unity and the Pope had extended some olive branches to the Protestants. There was a "Church Unity Sunday," in which our little Protestant group got together with others — Yugoslavs and foreigners — and we met in a Catholic church in Belgrade. Although we were the Protestants, my little choir sang an Orthodox piece by Bortnianski and Mozart's Catholic Ave verum corpus.

With respect to this Christian unity movement, Ken Zebell's denomination decided that if the next step was going to be some kind of union with the Orthodox churches, they needed to know more about the Orthodox Church. So they had established a partial stipend for some member of their faith to go to a location in the Orthodox tradition. Ken Zebell, who was already in Vienna, had applied in for it and had won it and was coming to Belgrade. He could come if we could provide housing, we found housing. While we had traditionally taken an offering, we hardly had anything to spend it on except Sunday school materials for the kids. We didn't know whether we would be able to support Ken's housing. I was on the church board, and here's another name for you: Spike Dubs was head of our Political Section. Spike and I had tours that almost exactly coincided. We had a little field organ from the Army Chaplain Corps. Spike was a pianist and he played.

Q: What did you use for a church?

PRICKETT: We used the American Club room where the movies were shown. Spike was chairman of the church board. I made the argument, and Spike agreed with it and people went along with it, that we hadn't had any use for our offerings, but if people had something that really needed to be paid for, people would dig a little deeper into their pockets, and we would manage it somehow. And we did. So Ken came to Belgrade, and we actually had our own resident pastor for a time. He did a lot of traveling, of course, to Serbian monasteries and to Greece and Bulgaria as well.

I found that one of the most rewarding things about the Foreign Service was that you came right face to face with your need for certain social institutions. Overseas, if we didn't serve on the school board or the church board, if we didn't create community events, they didn't happen. All of us had to take part, because we were spread thin. If we wanted a church group, then we had to form a church group. If we wanted American schooling for our kids, we had to create it in some way. And so Spike and I both served on the board of the church and on the board of the American school in Belgrade. In the second half of my tour I was chairman of the church board, and Spike was chairman of the school board. When we needed a new constitution for the school board, I wrote the first draft. Of course, our kids went to that school. It went up through the sixth, eventually the eighth grade before the kids had to go away to school.

Q: This was under the auspices of the Department's International School Program?

PRICKETT: Yes. And of course, it took a lot of Spike's work, as head of the Political Section, to get approval for this kind of thing to proceed, especially in a Communist country.

Q: And you called it the American School, or international school?

PRICKETT: ISB: International School of Belgrade. We had Americans and Brits, basically, I think, and maybe Canadians.

Q: Then you got on the ship and went home.

PRICKETT: Got on the ship and went home, on the same ship with Spike Dubs, as a matter of fact, and we played in the ping pong tournament on the ship and were the finalists. And in fact, we were on board ship twice together; the previous time was for home leave in 1966. I think he won one tournament and I won the other.

Q: Those were the days when we used to take the ships.

PRICKETT: When we could take the ships.

Q: Then they finally phased them out, and then we had to fly.

PRICKETT: I remember debating whether to take the ship or not for home leave in '66. It was Stu Kennedy who said, "Russ, can you really afford not to take a week's vacation in first-class accommodations — by the sea?"

We got back to Washington in '68, and I had decided during home leave in 1966, the middle of my tour in Belgrade, that I was going to cross over to economic work. I was not going to follow my original inclinations to be a political officer. I had had very little economic work in college — the basic economics course and a course in public finance. If there was anything else, I don't remember it. So I applied for the Foreign Service Institute's Economics Course. I had been accepted to that course by the time I went back, so I had to get back by the middle of 1968 in order to get into that six-month course. My wife and kids went down to Huntsville, Alabama, where her parents lived. I think I mentioned that my-ex-father-in-law was of the Von Braun rocket scientist team, and Von Braun had persuaded Rudolf to found the Space Flight Institute at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. So they went and spent the summer down there, and I had to stay with somebody. We didn't have a place to live yet, and I had to find us a place to live. So I stayed for several weeks with Stu Kennedy, north of DC, in Bethesda.

His family, I think, was in New England, so we were bachelors together for several weeks in the summer of 1968.

Q: Until you found a place for the family.

PRICKETT: That's right.

Q: They came back for the school year?

PRICKETT: Yes. We found a house in Green Acres, which was just north of the DC Line up Wisconsin Avenue.

Q: You were nine months at FSI.

PRICKETT: Six months. They were running two courses a year.

Q: Did you like it? Was it high quality?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes, I did and it was. We took the Graduate Record Exams in economics when we finished the course, and the general average of Foreign Service Officers who had completed the FSI course scored in the 90th percentile of the national Graduate Record Exams in economics. Of course, we were motivated, and we were more mature than college undergrads. These were Graduate Records, that is, of people completing the bachelor's. So FSI held itself out as offering the equivalent of an undergraduate major in economics, and I think it's fair to say that that's what we had. And the University of

Oklahoma gave graduate credit for some of the work we had done in the Foreign Service Institute. I later did all the coursework but did not complete a master's degree from Norman.

Q: Do you regret that?

PRICKETT: To a point, just because I hate to start anything and not finish it. I don't think it made any career difference, but there was subject matter that would have been worth writing up for a thesis, and yet I was always up to my ears in plenty to do without writing a thesis.

Q: Then you stayed in the Department after that?

PRICKETT: I was in the Office of Economic and Business Affairs — E Bureau and then EB, as they call it. I was in the Office of Trade Policy. My first assignment in EB was in a division called STA, which I called the "import desk" because we were the State Department's watchdog office on potentially protectionist measures that were being taken elsewhere in the government. We also had the job of answering congressional correspondence when somebody was complaining about their business being damaged by imports. We were the free traders or the liberal trade voice in the government.

Q: Cordell Hull would have been happy about that.

PRICKETT: Very, very — he of the "wecipwocal twade agweements (reciprocal trade agreements)." I was the anti-dumping expert of the State Department.

Q: But was it a good job? Did you feel fulfilled in any way?

PRICKETT: Yes and no. I think a lot of it depended on my own learning what it was that we were doing, and also on the supervision that I had. It was pretty mechanical at first, and my supervisor, the division chief, was kind of a martinet, and we seemed to be spending an awful lot of time nitpicking. I'm not very good at the formalistic stuff, anyway, and answering all these piddly letters, which I guess as the most junior guy in the office came to me in any case. Then there was a change at the head of the office, and suddenly we were into some really serious trade policy stuff. Imported shoes, of all things.

Q: Bally?

PRICKETT: Not quite so much. More Spain than Switzerland. But shoes and electronics.

Q: Is this in the dumping category?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: Who was dumping on us?

PRICKETT: There were accusations against Spain, Italy and some Far Eastern countries. Actually, there were two categories — dumping and so-called "countervailing duties." If the foreign government is subsidizing its products, and we can determine what the amount of that subsidy is, our law requires a so-called countervailing duty to be applied to those imports to offset the subsidy, so that our producers are playing on a level field.

Q: You were sort of investigative.

PRICKETT: I was actually watch-dogging the investigators. The direct government responsibility in these matters was in Treasury — at first. It later moved over to Commerce. But in the late '60's it was in Treasury, and the head was a deputy assistant secretary named Matt Marks, who was also of the liberal trade philosophy. He welcomed our presence and interest, so it was fun and easy to do. There came a time when shoe producers in the United States thought they were being harmed by the dumping of imports. Countervailing duties did not require a finding of injury to our domestic industry. If there were subsidies, you countervailed. Dumping, on the other hand, required sales at less than either production cost or at less than the price that the things were being sold at home. In other words, you're selling cheap overseas and selling at a high price in the domestic market. If there was injury to a U.S. industry, then dumping duties were applied. If we didn't have any such industry, or there was no injury, then, what the hell, let them ship us cheap products; we'll be more prosperous as a result.

Q: Did the Congress get involved in this?

PRICKETT: Congress had, of course, established the legislation in the first place, and every now and again they would have hearings, and their constituents would holler if they felt they were being hurt and weren't getting relief from the Administration. So it was fairly politically sensitive. Also, the domestic shoe industry was going through problems of its own. Shoes and textiles were having trouble, and one of the things that illustrates the kind of trouble they were having was the situation in New England. New England was going from low-tech to high-tech. The electronics industry was expanding in New England, and labor unions were gaining strength in New England, which meant that wages were going up in New England. This put textiles and shoes in a difficult position, because they were low-wage industries in what was becoming a high-wage area. All along Route 128 and elsewhere around Boston, the electronics business was attracting workers, the shoe companies and the textile mills were having a harder and harder time. It's also true that shoes and textiles were being imported in those days, and it's a whole lot easier to say that you're being injured by imports than by the fact that you have to keep paying minimum wage in order to make a go of it in your industry. The tendency was to blame the imports. The Department of Commerce was very receptive to these calls, but there was a lot of information in Commerce that Commerce was not bringing to the Trade Staff Committee. The Trade Staff Committee included representatives from several different government agencies at the staff level.

Q: Why didn't they?

PRICKETT: Turf and votes and the constituency.

Q: Oh, yes.

PRICKETT: Congress people, as you said.

Q: Okay.

PRICKETT: The places where the manufacturing took place were not the same places where the retailers were making money. We had retailers from New York and Washington, DC, who were very much in favor of more free trade and the general economic proposition that everybody's a little better off under free trade. That generalized prosperity doesn't cut it against a few people who are losing jobs. They're really hurting, and we're just feeling a little better off. So the political clout is with the protectionists on this kind of thing.

Well, I became the department's shoe expert, and the question was what's going to happen? My boss, Joe O'Mahoney, and I went to a lot of Trade Staff Committee meetings, and it was partly Joe's coming in as division head and partly the fact that this issue came up and he passed it on to me that made that job become a lot of fun.

Q: And that lasted how long?

PRICKETT: Oh, let's see. That was after my first year after FSI, my next two or three years back in the Department. I worked for Joe from early 1970, I think. It was January of '69. I took office (in trade policy) — the same time that Richard Nixon did. Some time during that time, Murray Chotiner, who was one of Nixon's hatchet men, was the Special Trade Representative, so we had some dealings with him.

Q: What was he trying to do, the trade representative? Was it compatible with what you were trying to do?

PRICKETT: No, I don't think so. I think he was trying to guess what Nixon wanted, and he and a number of people — career people, too — were trying to advise Nixon to do what they thought he was going to do. Al Garland was a man who came over to the trade representative's office from Commerce, and in this whole shoebox of stuff, people were coming up with findings of injury based on statistics of how many companies had gone out of business. Well, this was a quick-in and quick-out business. Commerce was reporting the companies that had gone out of business, but they were not reporting the companies that had gone into business. They were reporting the companies that had failed up in New England; they were not reporting the new companies that had been formed down in Virginia, Tennessee and Missouri. These were the small manufacturing outfits;

not Wolverine, the Hush Puppies, Genesco Shoes — I've forgotten the names of some of these, but boy, I sure knew them at the time. We were digging out Commerce data and dishing it up to the Trade Staff Committees. It was so galling to them that they took to not telling us when they were going to meet. Well, we had some friends in the private sector who were ratting on them and telling us when the next meeting was, and we would show up and their jaws would drop, but they couldn't say, "You're not supposed to be here."

Q: Did they chair that committee?

PRICKETT: STR chaired it, that is, the trade representative's office. Most of the meetings took place in STR. We were bringing in data that they didn't want. One time, I think Al Garland had prepared a paper, and the trick was they were going to find injury, but they were going to stop short of imposing duties. They were going to go for "adjustment assistance," which basically means that you're ponying up some money to try to help firms modernize and compete against the import competition or to buy them out of the industry. Worker adjustment assistance meant that the workers could go to be retrained in some other industry. Firm adjustment assistance could mean all kinds of things. People weren't really too sure what it would do, but it didn't sound as protectionist as tariffs. So they came up with the proposal that we go ahead and allow a finding of injury. Now the Tariff Commission, later the International Trade Commission, were the ones responsible for finding injury, and they hadn't found it. But the idea was that the Administration would take the case back to the Tariff Commission and recommend a finding of injury.

We had a meeting in Joe O'Mahoney's office. Walter Hollis, who was a State Department lawyer who knew the GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, quite possibly as well as any person living on the planet said, "Well, if they find injury, and if we hold them to adjustment assistance, maybe it won't be too bad." Joe said, "What do you think about that, Russ?" I said, "I think it's a slippery slope. I think if we once knuckle under on the issue of injury, they'll say, well, this injury is continuing, and adjustment assistance isn't alleviating it, and we'll be up to our ass in tariffs before we know it." We talked a while, and Walter and Joe agreed. So then we went to John Renner, who was the deputy assistant secretary for trade policy in the Economic Bureau. We persuaded him, and we got a meeting with Philip Trezise, who was the assistant secretary for economic and business affairs. I had done a paper with the options — as Option A, Option B, and so forth — and the first option was essentially to fight the finding of injury, and the other options tapered off to nothing. We sat down, and Joe was late to the meeting. Walter Hollis was there. I don't think Renner was there. Phil looked at it and said, "Well, Option A isn't an option, is it?" "Well, sir," I said, "we would like you to hear us on that." About that time, O'Mahoney came into the office and said, "Have I missed anything?" I said, "Well, you almost missed the whole ball game, Joe." Phil Trezise was willing to hear what we had to say, and he backed us up, at least as a first position; he said, "Yes, you can take this in as your initial bargaining position." We held them off for four years. It wasn't until Joe and I were both gone that any tariffs went on shoes. We showed up, as I said, for meetings when people didn't expect us to. One time,

Al Garland brought out a 20- or 30-page paper that was a summary of the industry situation that was totally one-sided. We got it on noon of one day — and he said, "If anybody has any questions or suggestions about this, we'd like it back in 24 hours," i.e., by noon of the following day. Joe brought this in to my desk and said, "Russ, I think we've got our work cut out for us." I went to work to write a rebuttal, and when quitting time came, we went up to Joe's house in Bethesda, and we worked until three o'clock in the morning, until we had taken that position paper apart root and branch. We set up secretaries in relays to type our paper, and we got it back over to STR by noon the following day. We were Horatius at the bridge, by God, and we did it.

Q: You prevailed.

PRICKETT: Joe was one tough Irishman.

Q: Well, that must have been very satisfying.

PRICKETT: People sometimes said, "Well, now, politically. . . . " Somebody, it may have been Chotiner, made some remark like, "Now we are talking about, politics here, and what I think the President wants . . ." and so forth. And Joe, God bless him, said, "You know, I look around this room, and I see quite a few pretty good economists here, but I don't see anybody who has ever run for political office, and I'm not being paid to play guessing games about what the President wants to do politically. I'm being paid to give him economic advice, and do you know what? I think the rest of us are too." some people who are used to polite bureaucratic meetings don't know how to handle stuff that comes straight from the shoulder.

Q: It made your job worthwhile.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. And fun. I didn't mind 3:30 in the morning if you go in the next day and you slay the dragon. We were having a ball.

Q: And all you were doing was enforcing the law.

PRICKETT: We were calling a spade a spade.

Q: You weren't ideological about it.

PRICKETT: That's right.

Q: You believed in free trade, but you also believed in the law.

PRICKETT: If we hadn't had the facts, they'd have blown us away. But we were embarrassing the people over in Commerce because we were coming forward with their data about the startup of shoe factories, data that they had not presented. It was a ball.

You asked if I was getting promoted all along during this time, and the fact was, I was not getting promoted in my time in the Economic Bureau, not until almost the end of it. I'd been promoted fairly quickly while I was over in Belgrade. I went from FSO-6 — and my predecessor in the commercial attaché's job was a Class 4 officer — so that was good. I was going in two grades under, and I went from 6 to 5 to 4 in the period while I was over there.

Q: Four years.

PRICKETT: So that was good. Then it wasn't until almost the end of my Stateside tour that I made 3. It took a long, long time, and I was in the States for a total of six years.

Q: So that's '68 to —

PRICKETT: '68 to '74.

Q: — to '74.

PRICKETT: Yes. I was going to say, my boss, Joe O'Mahoney, was transferred over to be the head of the division in Trade Policy that handled some international affairs, including the UNCTAD, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the conference that became an organization with its headquarters in Geneva. Basically, this was dealing with the developing countries on trade issues. Often it meant that we went to international conferences to let the developing countries beat up on us and our European colleagues. The European colleagues would make conciliatory noises and say they were willing to do things that they had no intention of doing. We were more moralistic about it; if we didn't intend to do it, we said no. That meant we took all the flack. We took the lightning, and our European friends sort of smiled and were happy that we were there to take the flack.

Q: So you got to travel?

PRICKETT: Yes, I went to Geneva on a number of delegations, and we were dealing with a number of issues. The developing countries had a thing about nationalizing enterprises in their countries, and of course we were dead set against that without proper compensation. On the other hand, the developing countries also thought that as a matter of right and justice we ought freely to share our developing technology with them. They were also talking about their "patrimony," minerals or forestry, et cetera, to which they have a natural right. It reminds me of a saying that my dad used to have: "What's yours is mine, what's mine's my own."

I did have a chance to go to Geneva on delegations on a number of topics. I remember one time the issue of textile quotas came up, and while we weren't talking about dumping there — we were just plain flat-out protectionist, in that we only allowed imports of so much of certain kinds of textiles from certain countries. This was a sore point in our dealings with a lot of countries. Countries sort of graduated up the line. We had a textile

agreement early on with Japan, for example. Japan soon got out of the textile business and had their own textile import quotas with their own textile suppliers. On one occasion I was presenting the U.S. position — I think it was to the textiles committee — in Geneva, and I called attention to the fact that a lot of the countries that were supplying us would never be able to compete with China if we had no textile quotas at all, that they could be damned glad that they had a piece of our market guaranteed by the quota system or they'd be blown away by still cheaper competition. Markets were volatile in those days. Things were changing. I had a few notes, and I was speaking from fact, of course, but this was not a prepared position paper. It was generally agreed on in our government, but we hadn't had every jot and title approved and cleared throughout the government. People were asking me for copies of my speech, but I didn't have one! I had managed to say in a fairly sympathetic way from the point of view of the LDC reps who were in my audience, that they stood to lose a lot more if we were to revoke our system of quotas.

Q: Wasn't this transcribed in the committee?

PRICKETT: I think it was paraphrased and summarized, but transcripts weren't available, and they were interested in that.

Q: Multilateral diplomacy you would call that.

PRICKETT: Yes, and of course, in Geneva. It was fun to go over there.

Q: Wonderful city in those days. You could afford it.

PRICKETT: Almost. And of course, on *per diem* and staying in a fairly modest hotel within walking distance of the U.S. mission, I'd get out every morning and I'd run alongside the lake, and I'd see the sun coming up over Mont Blanc — ah, it was gorgeous.

Q: Good life.

PRICKETT: And my boss was in Washington, and the guy that I was dealing with in the mission over there, Bill Culbert, the number two guy, I think, on the economic side, wanted me to come over and take Kochanik's place as the UNCTAD officer in Geneva. That's the one man in the entire U.S. government who had full-time responsibility for the organization UNCTAD. For the rest of us, it was just pieces of our responsibility. You can bet that I wanted to do that. As we came up to the end of my tour of duty, John Renner, the deputy assistant secretary, was pushing me for it. Bill Culbert had written something saying, yes, he'd sure welcome me as a member of his staff over there. Phil Trezise, I think, was in favor. Well, two things happened, and it was a shame. One was that Henry Kissinger went to Mexico and came away with the opinion that some of our Latin American guys had blinders on and didn't see much beyond their immediate purview, and therefore we needed to institute a program where Foreign Service officers would go someplace that was out of their traditional line. This became the Global

Assignments Program, or GLOP — you remember?

Q: Yes, I remember.

PRICKETT: So —

Q: So you were GLOPed.

PRICKETT: There were two things: one, I was going to go to Geneva, and the International Organizations Bureau slipped a guy of theirs in ahead of me; and the fallback was to go to Bonn as deputy chief of the Economic Section, I think. I had good German and would have been happy to head over there, but then, as I said, the learned doctor came up with this edict, and I think, as most of us knew at the time, this was going to last just about one or two assignment cycles and then everything would revert. People who don't come up for assignment are going to have a bit of an advantage here, because the rest of us are going to get GLOPed while they go down the smooth highway of their career paths.

Q: I can't wait to hear where you'd been assigned.

PRICKETT: I was sent kicking and screaming, if you can imagine, to Tokyo. Tokyo is a fine place to go if you have to go someplace kicking and screaming. My last gasp as an UNCTAD officer was to be a member of the 40-some-country drafting committee of the charter of rights and duties of states. This was the so-called Echeverria Charter, named after the president of Mexico, who called for this. The U.S. delegation was on the drafting committee. We had a series of meetings in Geneva to put this thing together, and the final one was in Mexico City. Steve Schwebel, who was deputy legal advisor at the time, and I were co-heads of that delegation on the so-called "Echeverria Charter," formally, the Charter of International Economic Rights and Duties of States.

Q: That must have been fun.

PRICKETT: Yes, but it happened that our delegation in New York had given the farm away. They had agreed to a whole bunch of stuff that was totally against U.S. policy, and again, I'm happy to put the blame on the International Organizations Bureau because they're always looking to keep things smooth and happy, whereas it was us over in EB who had to deal with the tough guys, in Treasury especially, and elsewhere in the U.S. Government, on issues like nationalization and so on. So we wound up saying no, no, no, no, no to a whole bunch of stuff in Mexico on the final day.

Let's see, there was one other delegation I was on before we get away from EB. We went to a meeting of the Inter-American ECOSOC meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, and this was one where they were looking for somebody from the Trade Representative's Office. Harold Malmgren was the deputy STR at that time and a great trade expert. The IO people asked Malmgren to be on our delegation to the IA-ECOSOC, and Malmgren said,

"Oh, you don't need me. You've got Prickett on that delegation." It turned out that this was another one of those Inter-American gatherings where we agreed to get together with the Latinos and let them beat up on us. They could gang up on us there, and we didn't have our European cohorts to agree with us. They were pushing a whole bunch of issues that were favorite LDC issues, including nationalization, commodity agreements, and many others, where our national position was much more free-market oriented than theirs was. Well, the doggoned delegates started saying that we, the United States, had agreed to all of this in one of the UNCTAD meetings in Geneva. I was the only member of our delegation who had been in that UNCTAD meeting in Geneva, and I knew they were lying in their teeth. So at every evening meeting, these speeches would be made long into the night. We would get translations of the speeches and for the next day's rebuttal, it was my job to write our rep's responses to them. So we'd get all that material, we'd go to a late dinner in Bogotá; you know the drill. We'd come back to the Hotel Tequendama, where we had both our offices and our rooms — way, way, way up in this hotel — and I'd put out my order for breakfast the next morning and leave a wake-up call for six o'clock or whatever. I'd get up and have my pot of Colombian coffee and my big dish of fresh pineapple, and I would eat my breakfast, and I'd sit there writing in my robe and slippers and pajamas. The sun is coming not up and not over but around one of the mountains and shining into my room in the Hotel Tequendama, and I was writing the responses. After the first day or two, we had to do so much of this that I didn't have to take my turn in writing the daily reporting cable; I was doing the rebuttals. As a college debater, my thing was rebuttal. Day after day, this drill went down, and again, I was having a ball.

Q: What was the outcome?

PRICKETT: Well, none of the issues were decided by majority vote; it had to be by consensus. But there was also a very strong sense that if something was said, and it wasn't challenged, then it must have been agreed to, so we had to get on the record. This was really my only experience with the Spanish language (until much later, when I sang some songs with guitar). The text of some of these speeches would be handed to us in Spanish, and then we would put the earphones on and hear it in English, and I would make marginal notes down the text. You'd see enough cognates, so I learned that *paices en desarrollo* does not mean 'countries in disarray'; it means 'countries in development.' This was my three-week Spanish course, and by golly, when I got on the plane to go home and read the newspaper account in Spanish of our meeting, I could read every word, because I had read them all before.

Q: It's immersed.

PRICKETT: Of course, with any other vocabulary, of poetry or anything else, I'd be totally helpless, but I did know the subject matter of that meeting pretty well. Some of us went to Cartagena for a little while and spent some time on the beach before coming back.

Q: That was at the end of your economic tour experience, I mean before you were GLOPped.

PRICKETT: That's right. That's before I was GLOPped.

Q: Then you went to Tokyo.

PRICKETT: Then I went to Tokyo. As I said, I didn't have a chance to learn Japanese before going, and Japanese language study was a long, long course. I had to make do with an hour a day while I was on the job, and couldn't always make time for that hour a day, either. So I learned to say *biru-mo i-puh kudasai,* which means 'another beer, please.' And some other things that sound very, very Japanese but basically mean "driver, please turn right at the next signal." But I did learn enough Japanese so that I was able to take my kids and a bunch of other teenagers to a ski resort up in the mountains. I was the only one that had any Japanese at all. In the land of the blind, the guy with one eye is king.

Q: Well, that was how many years, Tokyo?

PRICKETT: I was in Tokyo '74 to '76. It was to have been a three-year tour, but my second wife left and came home after a year and a half, so I curtailed my tour and came back to the States after two years in Japan. But it was the Far East. I got to travel a bit. I got to Taiwan and Hong Kong and to the Philippines.

Q: You were in the Economic Section, or were you running it?

PRICKETT: Yes, I was deputy economic counselor.

Q: Oh, well, you were moving right along.

PRICKETT: Yes, I had been promoted to O-3, just before leaving the Department. My predecessor was a Class 3 officer, and I think he had made 3 in that job. So it was not a bad job. On the other hand, I was writing the Economic Trends Reports on Japan, and I had been writing the Economic Trends Reports back in Belgrade from '64 on, so here I was ten years later doing essentially the same thing.

Q: For a bigger economy.

PRICKETT: Bigger economy, certainly a more significant economy in the world, of more impact on the United States. I had supervised four or five officers in Washington, and I had three or four officers to supervise in Tokyo. I had a very high batting average getting promotions for my people. One year in Washington I got three out of five, and one that I didn't get had just been promoted the previous year. It was essentially the same thing in Tokyo. I was always really happy when I could get people some recognition for what they had been doing.

Q: And who was ambassador and DCM?

PRICKETT: The DCM was Tom Shoesmith. Tom Shoesmith never got an ambassadorial appointment. I think he was cross-wise with some folks up on the Hill.

Q: Yes.

PRICKETT: I believe they eventually gave him the Consul General job in Hong Kong.

Q: Oh, that's not bad.

PRICKETT: Not bad at all. It's better than a lot of ambassadorial jobs, no question about it.

Q: Of course it is. He was a Far East expert.

PRICKETT: Yes. Ambassador Hodgson was from Minnesota, as a matter of fact, who'd been at the University along with Eric Sevareid and Bud Schulman and some other famous folks. He was a former Secretary of Labor and very genial. We got along great and talked about the "Minnesota Mafia." He did some very nice things at the embassy, he ran basically a happy shop, and it was fun serving under him. He would come back from consultations in Washington saying, "They see things as very quiet out here, and they just want us to keep it that way." We had an era of good feeling with the Japanese at the time.

Q: Trade was in balance, was it?

PRICKETT: No, but the deficit wasn't intolerable, either.

Q: Was this the time of the Japanese economic boom?

PRICKETT: No, I think they were in recession, which meant they had annual growth of about three percent. We were all wishing *we* could have a Japanese recession. The dollar was sometimes over 300 yen, which is a lot of yen for the dollar, and still, many Japanese restaurants were so expensive that you had to read the menu outside the door before you set foot inside because you could go broke in a Japanese restaurant.

Q: So that didn't make life very comfortable.

PRICKETT: Well, there were affordable places too. You could go to the Yakitori shops and you could go to the noodle shops, and there were nice restaurants, and we had very good Japanese staff who could give us advice on these things. And we could travel. We had to drive on the left side of the road, or we could take the bullet train — that was fun.

Q: And housing?

PRICKETT: We lived in embassy housing that had been built right after the war. Our embassy had very, very valuable property right in the heart of Tokyo, and I had a four-bedroom apartment. I was there with my second wife and her two little boys and my oldest daughter, who had been living with her Mom and her three sisters.

When my first wife, Hilti, and I were divorced I was, for all intents and purposes, my own lawyer, and I made some arrangements that turned out to be very helpful.

One of our "coconspirators" in the trade policy battles, a lawyer representing shoes from Spain, put me in touch with a divorce lawyer who became my "attorney of record," even though I did most of the work. His name was Joe Morgan. I basically did all the correspondence and wrote the documents, and gave them to Joe's secretary. She typed them up, and he reviewed them and signed off as the attorney of record. My lawyer's bill was $200, for a divorce that could have been nasty.

Her lawyer had written a provision in the separation agreement, which became the divorce decree, "The parties recognize that the wife is a fit parent for the children, and that it is in the best interests of the children to be in the custody of the wife." I rewrote that. I said, "The parties agree that they are both qualified to be fit parents for their children. They agree further that at the present time it is in the children's best interests to be in the custody of the wife; however, they foresee the possibility that in the future, possibly for educational advantages, it could be in the best interest of the children to be in the custody of the husband." She agreed to these words, and eventually all I had to do was refer to that paragraph in the divorce decree, and *bingo*, my daughters, one at a time, came over to live with me in Tokyo. The Department paid their fare.

As I said, we had a four-bedroom apartment in Grew House, the largest of the Embassy apartment buildings. All of compound has now been replaced with other buildings. When we entertained, the Japanese were amazed at how much space we had because they lived in such small digs themselves. After my wife went back to the States, I did some bachelor entertaining. We had a balcony where I could put my charcoal grill. Beef was terribly expensive, and we had access to commissary beef, so I would always do a London broil if I was entertaining, and that went over great with the Japanese counterparts.

There was an English language theater group over there, TIP, Tokyo International Players. I did some Shakespeare and some other plays with them. I also formed a little Christmas chorus that went caroling. The Embassy Recreation Club owned a bus, and when we got our group of carolers together, we were able to take that bus and didn't have to fight parking problems. We sang Christmas carols at various ambassadors' residences around town and wound up at our own ambassador's place. He was in the residence where MacArthur had lived, and had a big, big, almost like a medieval hall. MacArthur had had his desk at one end of it, and people who approached him had to come the whole intimidating distance of that long hall.

Q: What about MacArthur? How is he revered by the Japanese at that stage? Was he still

the great hero?

PRICKETT: Yes, very much. The U.S. had been very considerate of the Japanese. Our ambassador's predecessor was Edwin Reischauer, who was the great Harvard Japan scholar married to a Japanese woman. So the Japanese knew that we had been very thoughtful. Again, it was Jack Kennedy who appointed Reischauer to Tokyo. Kennedy was able to get some very fine people working for him in important positions.

In Tokyo I found out how my friends in the International Organizations Bureau had let me down in New York — from a Japanese counterpart who had been there at the time. He told me that the guy, an old AID hand sponsored by IO, had been actually absent from his chair in the Committee of the Whole in the Economic Committee up in New York — had been absent from his chair when a bundle of LDC sponsored measures went through the Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly. Treasury and STR and others were so unhappy that they sent me to New York to vote the measures down in the plenary session. It was a little late to find out what had happened in the Committee of the Whole.

Q: Well, but that's good to know.

PRICKETT: Yes. I guess because of my previous experience, I had the job of liaising with the Japanese on international multilateral economic matters. I was able to do that because of this one Japanese counterpart with whom I had shared some experiences before. I was able to find out from him what the Japanese were planning to do. There was a bit of embarrassment with this. We had a very able Agency station in Tokyo, and it seems that they had some folks in the Japanese Government that were telling them things. They were getting some second-hand information about what the Japanese delegation was going to advocate when they went into some of these multilateral meetings. Sometimes their "info" was wrong. Sometimes they were getting it second- and third-hand from inside the ministry. I complained about it, but nobody thought we ought to fuss with the Agency about it, so we didn't, but I said, "It's damned embarrassing when you go right up to the front door and ring the bell and present your credentials and you go in and you ask, in all honesty, what are your plans here, to find that somebody else has been skulking around to the back door trying to sneak information from the servants."

Q: Yes.

PRICKETT: I'd heard that kind of thing echoed from colleagues with experience elsewhere. A friend who had served in Panama said that he couldn't get people to talk to him because other embassy people were paying for information. This was when we were into the Canal negotiations. That can poison the wells of information.

Q: You were properly GLOPped.

PRICKETT: I was GLOPped well and proper.

Q: And that didn't help —

PRICKETT: Didn't help my career.

Q: Didn't help the career at all.

PRICKETT: I was pretty good at what I was doing, but I heard second-hand that Tom Shoesmith was advising a political officer who was asking should he go back and take the FSI Economics Course. "Naw," Tom said, "we've got people like Prickett to do economics. You ought to stay with your political specialty." The Tokyo tour was very interesting culturally, but it didn't help my career at all.

I had gone to Tokyo shortly after my second marriage, to a lady named Lee Moore, who had two little boys of her own, and my daughter Chris had come with us; so we had a household of five, and we had a four-bedroom apartment in Grew House in Tokyo. After a year in Tokyo, Lee and I separated. She went back to the States, and I put in for curtailment of my tour from three years to two. At the same time, I was also concerned to let as many of my daughters as possible share in the Tokyo experience. At that time, Christine, who was born in 1958, was 15. She was in high school, and so were my twins, Sylvia and Suzanne, who were born in 1960. In 1974, Sylvia and Suzanne were 14 and Chris was 16. Sylvia came over when Lee and Chris and Lee's boys and I had been there for six months. Then when I curtailed my tour, I thought, what about Suzanne? We got Suzanne over there for the last six months of the tour, and having curtailed because I was a bit at loose ends after the end of my second marriage and thought I needed to get back to home base, we wound up returning to the States, leaving Tokyo on the 1st of July, 1976.

Skipping back to 1975, an interesting thing had happened. The Metropolitan Opera came to Tokyo and did three operas: La Traviata, Carmen, and La Bohème. For Carmen and La Bohème they needed what we called in Japan "round-eyed" extras — Caucasians. So they talked to the cultural affairs officer at the American Embassy, and he put the word out, and several of us were willing to "sacrifice for the cause" and appear on stage with the Metropolitan Opera. We were on stage with the likes of James McCracken, Marilyn Horne, Luciano Pavarotti, José van Dam, and others. That was quite a thrill. I was literally a spear-carrier for José van Dam when he was Escamillo, the toreador in Carmen, and walked through the set as one of the soldiers in the outdoor scene in *La Bohème.* That was great fun. When the ambassador gave a party for the visiting stars from the Metropolitan Opera, he included those of us from the embassy who had been in the shows as well, so it was possible to mix and mingle and chat with these wonderful, wonderful musicians and great folk. It was a joy. Their stage director, Bodo Igesz, was with the show, and later on I had occasion to meet him here in Austin, because he came to be our stage director with the Austin Lyric Opera. (I'll get to the Austin Lyric Opera later on.)

Q: You were a 3 when you left Tokyo?

PRICKETT: I was a 3 when I got there, a 3 when I left, and a 3 when I finally retired. Although that became a 1 when they recast the Service.

I came back in '76. I had a wonderful trip across the country with one of my twin daughters. All of my kids had been having some trouble with their mother's second husband, and my three older daughters all spent some time in Tokyo with me. For a while I was over there as a single parent of teenage daughters. You can imagine what fun that was; my kids were on the wild side.

Q: They weren't damaged in the process?

PRICKETT: We were very, very lucky they were not. We all survived and we left. I don't know if that's one of the reasons that she hasn't opted for the Foreign Service as a career or not. She was doing a lot of work in social anthropology.

Q: Is that the one that accompanied you cross-country?

PRICKETT: Yes, this was Sylvia.

Q: You took your time?

PRICKETT: We did. We were in Hawaii on the 4th of July, 1976, for the big Bicentennial Day and couldn't find any fireworks as we walked up and down the port in Lahaina. Somebody in a boat with a big cockpit said, "Come on aboard. Greatest country in the world. We're celebrating. Come on aboard and have a beer." We said, "Maybe a little later. We're looking for fireworks." We didn't find any, so we did step aboard and drank some beer with them.

Q: Did spending time with you make a difference?

PRICKETT: Yes. She was the wild one, and the first one to settle down and raise a family. She's in business now, doing pretty well.

Sylvia and I flew to San Francisco and rented a car. We drove down the Pacific Coast Highway as far as San Diego, and then headed east to Tucson, Arizona, where my brother lived, and Sylvia's closest cousin, Karen, and then we went up to the Grand Canyon, and through Colorado to Denver, where I had a cousin, and then headed east again through Nebraska. We took a left at Des Moines, Iowa and drove up to Minnesota, where I was raised. I don't believe Sylvia had been to the source of the Mississippi River before that, so we went up there. We visited my dad and my stepmother in St. Paul — actually in the suburb of White Bear Lake. Then we crossed over from northern Minnesota via Duluth into Wisconsin to the Sault Ste. Marie, down through lower Michigan and up into Canada, passing by Niagara falls and down through the Finger Lakes region of New York. We finally wound up — it was about the first of August — in Washington, DC. That was our Bicentennial odyssey across the United States, the bearded hippie-looking

dad and his hippie-looking daughter, driving through the countryside, Sylvia playing her guitar some of the time. It was quite a trip.

As sometimes happens in the Foreign Service, I came back feeling that I had cut my travel time and home leave right to the bone because the folks back in Washington had been insisting that I had to arrive no later than August 1st, but the reaction when I arrived was almost, "Well, what are you doing here already?" That's not an uncommon experience, I understand. I was assigned to the NEA Bureau's Office of Regional Affairs. I had written ahead to Personnel about that assignment, because I didn't have any specialty in NEA or Middle Eastern affairs or Arabic or anything of the sort. I was to be the senior economic officer in the regional affairs office, which was where the economic function was located, so in a manner of speaking, I was the senior economic guy dealing with Middle Eastern Matters.

Q: You were in NEA?

PRICKETT: Right. This was NEA.

Q: But you were the senior economic officer in that office.

PRICKETT: I was the senior economic officer in the Office of Regional Affairs.

Q: Okay, I got that.

PRICKETT: Joe Twinam, who was the deputy assistant secretary, had considerable economic experience. A number of the political officers had been dealing with oil countries, and so they were by no means lacking in economic skills, but in terms of job description anyway, I was entitled to say I was the senior guy tagged with economic responsibilities in the bureau.

Q: You wrote the papers.

PRICKETT: I wrote the papers.

Q: Got the clearances.

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: Ah, that's NEA.

PRICKETT: But because I had written to Personnel requesting review of the assignment, somehow it got into my file that I was unwilling to do this, and darned if it didn't show up at efficiency report time. I got docked and then low-ranked. At the time I thought grieving wasn't what somebody did on this, so I didn't file a grievance, but it may well have been the factor that kept me from getting into the Senior Foreign Service. Now as I

look back at it, whether I would have been better off getting into the Senior Foreign Service or not, I don't know. We'll follow p my later life later on.

Q: We know you were GLOPed when you went to Tokyo, but you were GLOPed when you went to NEA. You were GLOPed twice in a row.

PRICKETT: Yes, that's so. It was my second off-the-track assignment, really. Of course, it was possible also to say I was in the economic specialty, and that sort of thing ought to be transferable. That's legitimate — I suppose. But I was also looking at the fact that I was a Class 3 officer, and my predecessor had been assigned to that slot when he was a Class 4 officer. I'm still talking the old designations.

Q: There was no room to move up.

PRICKETT: It didn't look like it. This memo that I got with my low-ranking order spoke as if I was guilty of sour grapes and unhappy with the assignment. Well, I was questioning it, certainly, because I hadn't been doing badly in my career. But that was that.

While I was in NEA, the possibility of taking a familiarization trip to the Middle East had come up, but I hadn't done it. I had been traveling. I had taken a ski trip to New England and had met the lady who is now my wife at a concert in New York that I attended to hear a friend whom I had sung with in college. I wasn't eager to get out of the country, either temporarily or permanently. In fact, as my NEA tour was coming toward its close, there was an interesting prospect opening up in the area. There was a developing country in the NEA purview that had a lot of natural resources — agriculture, minerals, and brilliant long-range plans and oil and gas income to fulfill or to pay for their development program. The economic counselor's job was coming open in our embassy there. I was in an economic job in the bureau with a good shot at the job, but as I said, I had met Rose Taylor. I was traveling to New York regularly, and she was coming down to Washington from time to time. We were courting, and I didn't want to interrupt that. So a chap named Moorhead Kennedy got the job of economic counselor in Tehran, and spent 444 days as a guest of the Ayatollah. Rose reminds me every now and again that I owe her a good one, which indeed I do.

I did some interesting work while I was in the NEA Bureau. I prepared a water study on the Rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra for India and Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra is the upper Ganges as it flows out of China. I learned some interesting facts, e.g., that if the waters of that River were not allowed to escape to the sea, that in any given season they would flood the entire area of Bangladesh to a depth of eight feet. That's an awful lot of water coming down those rivers.

We also worked on IRS proposals to tax both business and diplomatic people overseas on the value of the housing that they received. We had done this back in Tokyo and found that the private market value of our housing would probably be so high that we wouldn't

be able to afford the taxes on it out of our salaries, that our salaries themselves might not even equal the tax. This was in the '70s, you understand. The kind of housing that people were living in in Saudi Arabia, sometimes Quonset huts and the like, still would have such a private-sector price tag on it over there that our people and the oil companies' people and the other private business people who were living over there would be equally hard put. Those were some issues that we dealt with.

I didn't go out to Iran at the end of my two-year stint in NEA. I went to INR instead. I was chief of the division that was in charge of trade and financial affairs. There was another name for it, but I called it the Trade and Finance Division. And among the things that we did was to monitor the impact of our sanctions against Iran. How effective were the financial sanctions? Every now and again we would get something back from the White House saying the President wants to see everything you have on this, and the initials ZB for Zbigniew Brzezinski would be at the bottom of the memo. So we knew that we were doing something that was useful.

Q: You were working with quality guys.

PRICKETT: Yes, But I had a couple of problems there. I was shorthanded, and one of my guys was goofing off. I mean, he was literally goofing off. He would disappear for hours out of a day, and one time he disappeared for two weeks. I tried to get him transferred out; it was a hell of a battle. But meanwhile I had to do his work. So I was busting my ass, but it was good work; it was serious stuff. You show up in that inner office, and you read all that spooky traffic, and then you have to reduce it to something that busy people can absorb in a hurry. Then you do your longer-term analytical pieces, too.

Our deputy office director was an economist from the Agency, and we had good relations with the folks over there. At one point there was a young economist at the Federal Reserve who got a bunch of economists from around government to put together a delegation, and we presented papers at the Western Economic Association meeting in Las Vegas. I did a paper on floating exchange rates and addressed the issue of what the trade effect would be if you allowed exchange rates to float. That would have been a good subject to do a master's thesis on, but by then my economic work at the University of Oklahoma was rather dated, and I was too damned busy again to turn this stuff into a thesis.

Q: You had to have some time to focus.

PRICKETT: Yes indeed.

On the cultural side, I had been singing in the Paul Hill Chorale since 1968.

Q: The Paul Hill Chorale — I don't know them.

PRICKETT: This was one of the choral organizations in Washington that was formed

about 1967 or 68. We sang at the opening of the Concert Hall in the Kennedy Center and regularly sang concerts in the Concert Hall. That was our home.

Q: Was Paul Hill the conductor?

PRICKETT: Paul Hill was the conductor, yes. We were also the host chorus for the sing-along Messiahs in the Kennedy Center. Every winter we'd be up on the stage, and the Concert Hall would fill with people who brought their Messiah scores.

Q: And your wife was in the chorus? Or she was a professional, a soloist.

PRICKETT: She was a professional. One of her first gigs in Washington was as alto soloist in that sing-along Messiah.

Q: That's a wonderful part.

PRICKETT: She had sung it for 10 years with the Philadelphia Orchestra. She had a good time. We were married in 1978. In the fall of '77, when she still lived in New York, I had talked to Paul, and she had come down and done the solo gig. We were married on the 23rd of December of '78, and we did our wedding reception at our own home. My sister made a trifle, which was our wedding cake, and after we took the last guests from New York back to the airport, we went to the Kennedy Center and contrived to sit next to each other onstage in the chorus, singing that sing-along Messiah. Those events were fairly informal. Paul had invited several other conductors — Norman Scribner and Martin Feinstein, who chaired the Kennedy Center, and some others.

Q: Really?

PRICKETT: Feinstein had always wanted to conduct the "Hallelujah Chorus," and that became a tradition. Every year, Marty Feinstein would conduct the Hallelujah Chorus. Paul Hume conducted one year, and at one point he said to the orchestra, "In four." And the concertmaster said, "Don't you mean 'In two'?" "In four." And he started to wave, and the tempo was way off, and they had to start again. Paul Hume was a funny conductor. Looked like a pig trying to fly, I thought.

Q: But enthusiastic.

PRICKETT: Yes. This was informal, and the conductors were coming and going in 1978, and Paul was making occasional remarks. At one point in the proceedings, he said, "How many of you were here last year?" Maybe half the hands in the hall went up. "Then you will remember our alto soloist from last year, Rose Taylor." And there was a nice patter of applause. "Well, this morning at 11:00," he said. "Rose was married to a member of our chorale, and they're up here singing the Messiah this evening, and I call that dedication." So Rose and I, who had contrived to sit next to each other, stood up, and we got wedding day congratulations from 2,700 people in the Concert Hall of the Kennedy

Center.

Q: That's wonderful.

PRICKETT: Not only that, but the following year, when Rose was again the alto soloist, and Paul was introducing the soloists (it was always on December 23rd), and he said, "And our alto soloist, Rose Taylor. You may remember that on this date last year she was married to Russ Prickett in our chorale." Rose turned around — there she was in her lovely gown — and blew me a kiss. I stood up and blew her a kiss, and the crowd gave us anniversary congratulations. So whenever we could, we would go back, and Paul continued to hire Rose as the alto soloist in that gig, while we were in Washington.

Q: Anything else you want to add about your INR tour?

PRICKETT: Let's conclude the INR account with a positive personnel story. There was a blind chap in my division who had one of the GS, Civil Service, jobs in INR. His name was David Konkel, a very bright fellow, a graduate of the University of California system (I forget which campus) who had his doctorate in economics. While in California, he had had the benefit of readers provided by the State of California who would read for him and help him do his research and his studies in economics. The state of California provided for a couple of years of this service into their clients' first employment, after which they would have to handle it by themselves. David's time that he would have readers provided by the State of California was just running out and he did something that showed great ingenuity and initiative on his part. He went over to the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and advertised for readers, noting that he would not be able to pay them, but that they would have access and they would be reading highly classified stuff. They would of course have to qualify for security clearances, but he figured that he could find people over there who could afford to do the work without being paid for it and who would be sufficiently interested, who might be looking forward to Foreign Service work of their own, and who would have a chance to get inside the Department and see how things worked. So he had two or three or four readers — a stable of readers — who would come over and spend two to four hours a day reading for him. One of the things that I was very happy to do — we worked on it the whole time I was there, and it finally came through — was to get readers hired by the State Department for David — and not only hired by the State Department but hired in the overall Departmental complement. They were also not charged, either budget-wise or as a slot, to INR, the logic being that if the Department was serious about providing equal opportunities for people with a handicap, that there shouldn't be a handicap in disguise or an impairment in disguise by loading down the bureau or the office where they were working with an extra slot. And we got that through. The last I heard, David was the Office Director.

Q: Good for you.

PRICKETT: As I look back on my career, I find the fact that I was able to help other people who were working for me was one of the real gratifications of Foreign Service

work. I had a good batting average getting promotions for the people that I wrote efficiency reports on, and getting that assistance for David was gratifying. David was also working with some folks on the technical side in the Department to do the optical scanning and put it into an artificial voice, technology which has certainly advanced tremendously since that time. We're talking now, of course, about 1980 and '81. But that technology was advancing even then. I was acting office director for a time. Other times I was working for Mike Ely. We talked about that earlier. He was head of the office back in those days, and I think it was after his transfer that there was a gap in his position and I stood as Office Director for a time.

I would have happily stayed on in INR for another two-year tour, but that wasn't consistent with the scheme of things in Personnel in those days. Looking around the horizon, there were a couple of possibilities, both of them details out of the Department. There weren't jobs for me in EB at that time at an appropriate level. But one job that was available was out at Langley, working for the Agency in basically an analysis and drafting position, and the other was over at the Department of Commerce, working in the division that had been transferred from Treasury dealing with anti-dumping and countervailing duties, things that I had been responsible for in the State Department back in 1969 and '70. So I wound up going over to Commerce working for a fellow named Dick Self, who had been deputy chief of the office I had dealt with in Treasury before that office was transferred. If I had wound up working for Dick my whole time, I'm sure it would have been pretty productive, but Dick got a job in the trade representative's office and the head of the office in Commerce wasn't particularly interested in having a Foreign Service guy around, so I sort of cooled my heels in that office and tried to find useful things to write about. I went up to Canada and resolved a trade dispute over software, and kept my eyes open for what would come up next on the personnel horizon.

As it turned out, the thing that opened up after about a year over at Commerce was the economic counselor's job in Belgrade. I had checked out at a 4 level in the Serbo-Croatian language after my tour in Belgrade in the '60's, had gone through the economics course at FSI and had a series of economic tours, and there were still people in positions of power and authority in Yugoslavia whom I had been acquainted with back in the '60's. I had, as the personnel people said, "all the tickets" for that job. I did get the assignment, from '82 to '85; it was a three-year tour.

I was assigned as economic counselor to Belgrade in 1982. In preparation for that transfer, my wife Rose was able to get into a Serbo-Croatian language class at FSI. Being a singer, she's good with language, and was able, even though she had to interrupt her studies from time to time to go off and sing an opera or concert someplace, she could usually come back in and catch up with her classmates. She did not surpass the officers, but she did about as well as any of the dependents who were doing that language work. When we arrived in Belgrade, we had an apartment that was not in the embassy complex; we were out on the economy, so to speak. We were near the large marketplace. We did marketing and shopping on the economy. We weren't quite as dependent on the commissary that was down in the embassy apartment basement as some of the other folks

were, although we certainly took advantage of it. Rose was out in the town a good bit. We had a housekeeper who would come in a couple of times a week who didn't speak any English at all. She and Rose communicated okay. Rose said there was a lot of pantomiming, and she was sure that what she said wasn't grammatically correct much of the time, but they did understand each other.

Q: Now was this servant assigned to you by the government?

PRICKETT: No.

Q: So you weren't being penetrated.

PRICKETT: Oh, I don't doubt that we could well have been, but Dragica came on a recommendation from somebody else, I think from the Brits. I don't believe she had worked for Americans before. But she was in the community of folks who did work for foreigners, so she was surely known to the Interior Ministry people.

Q: Well, perhaps you'll talk about the security aspect of the assignment. Could you speak in bed? What about bugging?

PRICKETT: Oh, we assumed that we were bugged. We just assumed, which of course is what the SY people always told us to do, and there was no reason to assume otherwise. The telephone would ring, and there wouldn't be anybody there, and we just assumed that people were checking to see if folks were home — so that they could come in and change the tapes or whatever. I was aware of this, of course, from my former tour in Belgrade, and we just assumed it was being done. We also knew that the Russians, who had their embassy on some high ground not far away, had some pretty sophisticated equipment too, but they were not hand-in-glove with the Yugoslavs by any means.

Q: They weren't sharing intelligence — to that extent.

PRICKETT: No, not unless it was to their advantage. We probably shared some stuff with the Yugoslavs on the Russians, too, just as there were military missions from both sides to Yugoslavia, and the Yugoslavs were very happily playing the man in the middle. But they kept pretty good insulation. I think I may have mentioned in connection with my previous tour, we didn't learn much about the Russian equipment and their classified relations with the Russians, and they apparently didn't learn much about ours either. For instance, while their rhetoric was against the West, their defense plans were all against the East. They knew where the threat was coming from if there was to be a conflict. So yes, our domestic help may well have been interviewed from time to time, but there wasn't much to catch. There were probably microphones in our telephones and stuff like that. We just didn't think about it much because we knew to take it easy.

Q: You learned to take precautions.

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: And Foreign Service nationals, or locals, as I guess you called them in those days, in the embassy — did they fall in the same category as your servant?

PRICKETT: Yes, with a little modification. These folks had made their careers with us from early on, and most of them we had very good reason to believe held strong loyalty towards us as employers and strong yearning towards the United States as a future place to live. I always made a point of explaining it. I hired several locals in the course of the years, first in the Commercial Section and then an economic professional later on, and I told them at the outset that whatever their protestations about not being Communist, about being more favorable towards us — I said, "I'm not going to put you in a position where you need to feel a conflict of loyalties between your loyalty to your country or your loyalty to your employer. We keep that sort of stuff separate in our embassy, and so if anybody comes around and knocks on your door and says, "We need to know what you see, what you hear," or whatever in the embassy, you're free to talk. The response usually was "Well, I would never do that." Of course, we all know better. The kind of leverage that a government has over its citizens just makes it such that we have to assume they are vulnerable. It would be wrong for us to put people in a position where they had to endanger themselves, their kids, their education, their opportunities, or their relatives to put themselves in any kind of jeopardy on our behalf. That just wasn't on, and so I made this clear to my people all the time. This, as I understand it, is the way everybody in Belgrade and in the Communist countries has dealt with the locals and their domestic servants. You make certain assumptions. It makes our life a little more inconvenient, but it saves them from really terrible circumstances.

Q: It's important, yes.

PRICKETT: I was very gratified when I arrived in Belgrade, to be working for an old buddy from the '60's. David Anderson had been second secretary in the Political section when I was commercial attaché, and he was our ambassador in 1982. He had come from Berlin, where he had been civilian chief of our mission. He was good with Serbo-Croatian, he was well connected with the Belgrade leadership, and probably had as good — well, better — entrée with the top Yugoslavs than any other ambassador in town. On one occasion George Kennan visited Belgrade (Kennan had been ambassador to Yugoslavia. I mentioned that I just missed serving under him). David told us about his conversation with Mr. Kennan. He said George Kennan had asked him, "Whom do you see on a regular basis? Do you see the defense minister, for example?" "Well, not unless we have a serious issue to raise. I can see him if I have to." "And the foreign minister?" "Well, yes." "The trade and industry minister?" "Yes." Kennan just looked at David and said, "You're a much more effective ambassador here than I was ever able to be." David was good.

Q: Of course, times were different, too.

PRICKETT: Times were certainly different, no question about it, and there's certainly no question that Ambassador Kennan was doing his darnedest to make American policy encouraging to the Yugoslav position of independence. He resigned because he didn't feel he was being adequately supported in that effort by Congress.

As a young man, David was a soccer player, a very accomplished soccer player. He was born in Scotland, and had come to the States at about age 16 with his parents. He still had just a trace of an accent, but you couldn't quite identify it. He had played in some of the industrial soccer leagues as a kid when he first came to the States. I'm digressing and talking about David because David passed away some years ago, and I don't know whether we have archives like this for him or not. When he came to the States he played in these soccer leagues. He said, "We'd go out and play, and then everybody would go to a bar and drink beer and fight. That was the way it was, so that's what I did." David wasn't a tall guy, but he was very well put together and tough. In a staff meeting one time, somebody said he wasn't sure that Washington wanted us to make this, that or the other point, and David just cut the guy off and said, "I didn't come out here to tell Washington what it wants to hear. I came out here to call it like it is." It was a thrill, really, to be working for an ambassador like that; David always backed up his staff people. One deputy assistant secretary of Commerce came out and was fussing at our officer who was in charge of air transportation affairs because he hadn't gotten an invitation to a particular dinner. He was leaning on the officer, P. J. Nichols, my deputy. Of course, we always kept Ambassador Anderson informed as to what was going on, and when David found out that this fellow was leaning on P. J., he called him up at his hotel and really reamed him out. He said, "If it's so important to your ego to go to this affair, Helen and I don't need this" — Helen was his wife — "we don't need it; you can have our tickets if you want, but you *will not bully my people.*" David had already turned down, I think, whatever amounted to tenure in the Senior Foreign Service before he took the post. He wanted it understood that he wasn't beholden to anybody. He was a career officer, but he planned for this to be his final post in the Foreign Service. He was one independent SOB, and a real pleasure to work with.

We arrived in Belgrade in mid-1982 when the Yugoslavs were beginning to experience a hard currency shortage and a foreign exchange crisis that the world knew well in the cases of Mexico and Brazil, back in the first half of the 1980's. What had happened was that the Yugoslav economy had been expanding by leaps and bounds all through the '70's. They had lots and lots of private bank lending. They'd had a lot of World Bank loans and projects, and infrastructure and big heavy industrial projects were sprouting up all over the country. They were living high on imports and were managing to keep their inflation relatively under control, because they were importing so much stuff that they had plenty to spend their money for. But being a fairly inefficient socialist economy, they were not building up their own capacity to produce goods for the world market. So when it came time to start paying their hard-currency loans back, they had not earned the foreign exchange that they needed to do so. They did have substantial gold reserves, but these were not to be touched. This was their stash that was to preserve the independence of the republic, after all. Nobody knew where it was. We assumed it was in Switzerland, but the

location and the exact amount of their gold reserves were closely guarded secrets.

Q: Debt ratio — is that what we're talking about? In other words, how much should they. . . . Wasn't 20 percent the magic figure?

PRICKETT: Something in the 20s, yes. And they were well above that.

Q: They were well above that. Okay.

PRICKETT: And what was very much talked about back in the '70's was the that the international private banks were having such a time recycling their oil revenues that they were in a way more anxious to lend that money out than they were to examine how it would be repaid. Although we had thought back in the '70's that the problem was going to be recycling those oil revenues, that turned out not to be the case. The problem was what was going to happen after those revenues got readily recycled — i.e., to countries like Yugoslavia, Mexico, Brazil, etc. Yugoslavia was in such a crunch in the early 1980's, that they were going to have to reschedule their debts. But they had a very fundamentalist attitude about rescheduling. It was a bad, dirty word. Rescheduling, refinancing — re-anything — wasn't to be even considered. The Yugoslavs actually had a good credit rating, and they were afraid that any refinancing was going to endanger that. They were very proud that they had been making regular payments. In a sense though, what they had been doing was converting the hard-currency loan income to dinars, spending it on infrastructure projects, roads and railroads and bridges, and importing a lot of industrial equipment from the West and a lot of consumer goods. They weren't building their own export capacity nearly as much. They had very good agriculture, and they were getting some income from their exports to Western Europe. They had a very efficient and well-operated airline, and they also were making good income from goods transit through Yugoslavia from Western Europe down to Greece and the Middle East.

But they were in tough straits by 1981-82, and we at the Embassy were already in the business of intermediating, as it were, between the Yugoslavs and the world financial community. When the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank comes to most capitals, it steers a pretty wide path around the American embassy. Being located in Washington, DC, after all, they work against the apprehension that they are under the thumb of the U.S. Government in Washington. In Yugoslavia, however, the situation was different. We had expertise that they didn't have about the country, and particularly about the people running the country and whether the negotiating positions that those people took were based in fact or whether they were just bluffing. We found that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the private bankers, and most folks who came to town to do business with the Yugoslav firms or banks or to negotiate with the Yugoslav Government, regularly came to see us. We got inside knowledge about a lot of transactions and a lot of negotiations that embassies often don't hear about.

The American businesses and banks and the international financial institutions relied on the American Embassy to give them a perspective on their negotiations and dealings in

the Yugoslav business and financial communities in a way that didn't always happen elsewhere. In the course of some negotiations, when it finally became clear that there was going to have to be some kind of rescheduling or refinancing of Yugoslavia's foreign exchange debt — by whatever name, and they managed to keep from calling it that (I've forgotten now what the terminology was) — it would happen that the International Monetary Fund negotiators would be in town, and the representatives of the consortium of over 500 private western banks, which were led by Manufacturers Hanover Trust (because they had the biggest exposure) would come to town, there would be negotiations that would take place from about eight o'clock in the morning until the negotiators were worn out. The Yugoslav business day usually went from seven till two (it was a six-day business week). Then they would retire for a huge Yugoslav business lunch. The Yugoslav custom was that's when you went for your siesta, and then you would get up later on ready for your nightlife. Ambassador Anderson had the habit of taking a fair amount of work home with him at lunch time, and it could easily happen around two or three in the afternoon that I'd get a call: "Russell? David. Manny Hanny [meaning Manufacturers Hanover] people are coming out to the house about five o'clock this afternoon to talk about the rescheduling negotiations." And I'd say, "Would you like PJ and me to come out about 4:30?" "Would you mind?" David would say. And so Patrick Nichols, PJ, my deputy, and I would go out at 4:30. I should say that PJ was a very able, very intelligent, very knowledgeable guy who had been an analyst over at Langley for some years, had worked on Yugoslavia, Poland and some African countries.

Q: As an FSO?

PRICKETT: No, he was hired by the Agency first, and he actually had done some documentation that was published in Congressional hearings on Yugoslavia in the '70's. Then I think he did a tour in one African country and, I believe, in Poland before his assignment to Belgrade. He resigned from the Agency and became an FSO, not an FSR.

Q: He became an FSO.

PRICKETT: Yes, he was an FSO. He and David were good buddies and were there before I arrived. Parenthetically, PJ was a little concerned about this. My predecessor had apparently been nervous about the fact that here was a guy who played golf, as did David Anderson, the Scotsman, was a golfing buddy and a tennis buddy with Anderson, and maybe was closer to the ambassador than he was, the fellow who was in between as his nominal boss. PJ mentioned that to me about my predecessor's feelings, and I said, "PJ, it doesn't bother me to deal with somebody who may be brighter than I am or closer to the ambassador. I will just insist that you keep me completely informed."

Q: And it worked.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. We had very good teamwork. We had a lot of respect for each other and had a lot of fun together.

Q: His previous label must certainly have been known to the Yugoslavs.

PRICKETT: Sure, because his bio was available.

Q: Did this have any negative effects?

PRICKETT: No, it didn't seem to. He was also good with the language, a very good linguist.

Q: So you didn't have a spy on your staff, in the imagination of the Yugoslavs.

PRICKETT: If we did, it didn't seem to matter, because PJ was very well connected. He was able to talk economics with the people he needed to talk to. He had good entrée around town. If they had ideas like that, they were taking them into account and figured he was a guy they could deal with.

Q: Makes sense.

PRICKETT: Sure. And in fact, all PJ's work was above the line. He was a Foreign Service Officer. And in fact, too, I think the Agency recognized that we had language capabilities in the legit Foreign Service that they didn't necessarily have. We had history and connections.

At any rate, PJ and I would go over to the ambassador's place, and we'd sit out on the verandah, and presently the Manufacturers Hanover people would arrive, Pavro Dobrić and Maggie Mudd, the daughter of the former political counselor in Belgrade, both very, very sharp people. Dobrić was of Croatian parentage. They both knew the language, and they were both bankers, and they were representing a 500-member consortium of Western private banks. As talk would proceed, David at some point would say, "Now the people from the Fund [meaning the IMF] are coming by about 6:30 or so." So in what could have been a parlor comedy, the private bank folks would arrange to leave a few minutes before the people from the Fund were due to arrive, and then the International Monetary Fund folks would show up. Everybody was talking about what positions the Yugoslavs were taking; is there concern about possible public unrest if they institute severe fiscal restraints, or monetary restraints. Is this just talk, or is there some substance to it? We would give our best analysis of the actual economics of the situation and of what popular response to such measures might be, where the Yugoslavs might have some wiggle room in negotiations and where they really wouldn't — either from their bosses or from the popular opinion — be able to move. Their bosses, I may say, were not accessible to anybody. They were the members of the Presidency. These were the really old-time close confidants with Tito. They were one representative from each of the six constituent republics and the two autonomous provinces who shared the head-of-state hat that Tito had worn when he was alive (he died in 1980). We were dealing with the first post-Tito government in Yugoslavia. It was a committee, basically, and they shared as chief of state, as commander in chief, of such responsibilities.

Q: Their head of state was a committee?

PRICKETT: It was a committee, basically, and they shared as chief of state, as commander in chief, such responsibilities.

Q: Was there a rotating committee head?

PRICKETT: Yes. The presidency of the Presidency rotated periodically, but these guys were a club of old-timers, and no ambassadors saw them, with an interesting exception. David Anderson had been a soccer player, I mentioned. Back in the '60's when he was a second secretary in the political section Alex Johnpaul was his boss, and David had arranged with him that from time to time he could get off early in the afternoon, to actually go and work out with the Belgrade soccer team. This was a soccer team that had an international reputation, so David was one hell of an athlete to be able to do this. He would work out with them. He didn't play in their games, but he had their respect. And of course he had contacts. When David came back as ambassador, he knew some guys from those days, and they knew him. David had complimentary tickets up in the box seats — we would call them the sky boxes — of the Belgrade stadium for soccer matches any time he wanted to go. He would take his wife or he would take one of us from the embassy. The sky box in Belgrade was an open-air sky box. It was primitive. It was not like one of the luxury boxes that they're building at the University of Texas stadium for football. The wind blew through, but you had a cover over your head if it rained. When I was sitting up there with David, he'd point out members of the Presidency to me. He'd say that's so-and-so and that's so-and-so over there. As we came in there were no extended conversations, but they'd wave and nod and greet each other. David was known to these guys, whether he had formal entrée to their offices or not. That's the kind of representation we had in Belgrade when David Anderson was ambassador.

Back to the Residence, and the financial visitors: The Manufacturers Hanover people would leave, and the International Monetary Fund people would arrive, and then maybe the World Bank and we would talk out the subject. Then, maybe around 7:30 or eight o'clock David would say, "You know, the Yugoslav vice-premier for economic affairs has asked if he could drop by around eight or nine," So then the Monetary Fund or World Bank people would depart, and we'd have another round of visitors. Somewhere along the line, PJ and I would call home and say, "Look, we're sorry about dinner, but you knew we were going over to the ambassador's tonight." We'd move indoors off the patio, and the conversations would continue. David would ask his kitchen to bring some sandwiches, and we wouldn't be home for dinner. Sometimes it was a little easier for me because my wife Rose might be back in the States on an extended professional trip with musical engagements, or she sang elsewhere in Europe too. But in fact, she was gone — we figured it out — just about a third of the time that we were there, out of the country, doing musical things.

Q: It worked.

PRICKETT: She knew that I had my work to do, and I knew that she had her work to do. Then David, PJ and I would talk sometimes till well after midnight with the vice-premier, a Slovene names Zvone Dragan, and his assistant.

Q: It's a long day.

PRICKETT: It was a long day, and we knew that the vice-premier then had to brief the members of the Presidency, this august body that was Tito's heir, and they had to get the parameters of their negotiating position for the coming day before they started again with the Western bankers. This pattern repeated itself day after day during negotiation visits. That was very tough for the Yugoslavs; they were going through a hard time. But it was as exciting as could be for us.

Q: You were the hub of all this. . . .

PRICKETT: There were several rounds of negotiations, when the negotiators were coming to town, we cleared the decks and made sure that our normal business would get taken care of some way — the routine reports and the periodic reports that had to get written — and make sure that somebody was available to talk to the visiting business people.

Q: How big was your staff?

PRICKETT: I had a deputy and three other officers, one of them a junior trainee, I think. A deputy plus two. And we had a science attaché who was administratively located in the Econ Section, but his office was elsewhere and he was totally concentrating on the scientific work. My deputy, P.J. Nichols, was also directly involved in our work with the negotiators.

Q: Did Washington appreciate Anderson's good work?

PRICKETT: I'm sure they did; the IMF people said they couldn't have done it without us.

Q: I would think they would, because that's a commendable performance.

PRICKETT: David and Larry Eagleburger were very close buddies.

Q: Now Larry, was he political counselor at the time?

PRICKETT: Larry was political undersecretary at that time, I believe.

Q: Oh, you mean back in Washington.

PRICKETT: Back in the Department, yes. Larry had been number three man in the Econ

Section in the '60's. Then he had come to the Department when Kissinger came in the second Nixon Administration. Larry was deputy undersecretary, I believe, for administration and basically was Kissinger's right-hand guy. I believe he had been his assistant over in the National Security office too. Larry was out and then back in the government. At any rate, he had been assistant secretary for European affairs, he had been undersecretary for political, and then deputy secretary, and then for a brief time Secretary of State. He wasn't Secretary of State until after the end of my career and Ambassador Anderson's career.

Q: You had a DCM in Belgrade.

PRICKETT: Yes. This was Harry Gilmore, who had served in Budapest previously and had served in Turkey and was a musician by training. His wife was an accomplished singer also, a soprano, and Harry and Carol and Rose and I made a lot of music together in the English-language church group. Harry was the keyboard guy, a pianist, and he had undertaken to play the harmonium, basically a pedal-operated little organ in the small Catholic church where our Protestant group met. He had in some trips to Germany made a point of picking up music for the harmonium. There was quite a literature. So he always had something to play for preludes and offertories and postludes for the services. From time to time, at the holidays, we would put together a small chorus. We did Christmas concerts. We did them at the DCM's residence, where there was a big hallway and a staircase with landings that, in effect, produced a spiral, and we could do a pretty effective processional down those steps. We made a lot of music together. Carol and Rose did some duet recitals in the country, down in Skopje and down at the coast and up in Zagreb. There was an American soprano living in Split who was the first lady, the *prima donna*, of the Croatian National Opera in Split. She came to town and did her Belgrade Opera debut while we were there, and we gave a reception for her afterwards. She and Rose did duet recitals as well. Her name was Cynthia Hansell-Bakić. So we had musical fun on the side, and did a lot of music with the Gilmores. They were our closest friends. We were close with the Nicholses and the Andersons as well, but the Gilmores were our closest friends in the embassy. Sometimes it would happen with Sunday coming up, maybe on a Friday afternoon or whatever, Harry would call me on the phone or we'd meet in the hall or on the steps in the embassy, and he'd say, "Shall we get together and prepare some music for Sunday, or shall we just shake hands and blow?" This is an old jazzman's expression. Harry played jazz while he was going to school at the Carnegie-Mellon Conservatory, and he was an old jazz buddy. We did some musical comedy reviews that I would direct and produce, and Harry would be the main keyboard guy. We brought in people from other embassies and had a lot of fun with this while we were there.

Harry would sometimes be in on the financial consultations and negotiations and sometimes not. I kept him up to date or Ambassador Anderson did, on the negotiations. But somebody had to run the embassy while these negotiations were going on, so Harry was always in a dilemma, because when the ambassador was in town, he expected Harry to be there as his deputy and executive officer, and when the ambassador wasn't in town,

then Harry had to run the place, and the question then was when the hell did Harry get his vacation? Harry is retired now, but he was ambassador to Armenia. It was apparently a pretty ungodly place to go, but he did good work out there, and we were all glad to see him get his ambassadorship. He came out of it alive, which we couldn't say about our colleague back in the '60's, Spike Dubs, who went to Afghanistan and was shot to death in the horrible confrontation between the Afghans and the Soviets.

It was a real pleasure and source of pride to be able to serve with such great people. We had several rounds of negotiations and managed to help the Yugoslavs pull through their crisis — their cris*es* — which were still threatening when my tour came to an end in 1985.

Q: Did the Yugoslavs appreciate the American role in this?

PRICKETT: At the time, they did. Certainly the people that we were dealing with did. Our role was not publicized. And like many other people, the Yugoslav attitude was often "what have you done for us lately?" So there's hardly any residue these days going back decades ago as to what was happening then. It's a matter of considerable chagrin for us that we helped them through a serious financial emergency, and they threw it all away. I guess we'll get to that a little later.

Q: Also your book might be based on that.

PRICKETT: Not quite. The book takes them up to their highest point of success.

Q: Which is?

PRICKETT: Which was January of 1990, at which point the economic reforms put in by Prime Minister Marković really took effect and really "bit." The trouble with that was, of course, that that meant that they put the screws on a lot of the inefficient businesses who had been spending all this money.

Q: In other words, privatization? Is that what you're saying?

PRICKETT: I need to go back and talk a little bit about that. The Yugoslav socialist enterprises were not state-owned enterprises in the usual socialist sense. Their concept of social ownership was rather vague. Social ownership was kind of "in the air." The state was not the owner of record of the factories and such, but rather the assets were considered to be "owned" — in quotes — by the society at large, and the stewards of that society were the workers in the factories, whose job it was to represent the societal interest as well as to be the workers. They actually had elections for the officers of their enterprises. Now it was the Party who nominated the officers, so the electoral process wasn't something that we would recognize as being open and democratic.

Q: Do you recall any trade unions?

PRICKETT: No, because, you see, they didn't need trade unions. They were the owners. But what was meant was that the workers' councils, as they were called, represented the workers' collective. The workers' collective amounted to everybody who worked in the outfit, from the guy who swept up the floors at night, the guys that worked on the lathe or the machine shop or the assembly line, and the guy in the front office who wore a white shirt and met with the foreign executives who came to town, to the managing director. They were all members of the workers' collective. The workers' collective, then, elected a workers' council, a kind of company legislature which had and exercised functions that were comparable to both that of a very tough labor union and of a very interested board of directors representing shareholders.

Q: But the council was nominated by the party.

PRICKETT: The workers' council was elected, actually, by the workers, from people who were already there. But when they then hired the managers, the directors, those were the people who were nominated — read "installed" — by the party.

Q: Fascinating.

PRICKETT: Now what we saw, in fact, was a complete spectrum of these enterprises — some operating extremely well and quite democratically, others operating very well but very autocratically, being run from the top by a tough Party boss, and still others not being run well at all. Some of these outfits were making money and were doing very well, and some were not. There again, the Yugoslav Communist theory said that you didn't have to have welfare, because you didn't have unemployment. But what this meant was that all the enterprises had to hire everybody. They had to provide jobs. If an enterprise was losing money, there would often be forced mergers with enterprises that were good money-makers. The efficient outfits would have to take the inefficient ones in under their umbrella. This had a dumbing-down or an averaging-down effect on the overall economy that was really too bad. You could imagine this in theory, and we could sort of sympathize with the theory back in the '60's, when this quasi-independence of the businesses was just coming into being. By the '80's, when it had been around for a long time, we could see that sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't, and it depended more on the individuals in charge and, after all, whether the business was a logical one to be operating in that country or not.

Q: Yes.

PRICKETT: For instance, Belgium and Switzerland and a number of European countries don't make cars. They buy their cars from somebody else. Well, the Yugoslavs were determined they were going to make cars, and the example that came over to this country sort of represents what kind of cars they made. What they did was they made a car off of an outdated license from Fiat in Italy; that's basically what the Yugo was. It provided basic transportation and filled a real need in Yugoslavia, but it wasn't about to compete in

the American market or anywhere in Europe. They tried hard to make it compete, but it wasn't working.

That was the picture of ownership, and it wasn't state-ownership in the usual sense. So some Yugoslavs argued that they didn't have to privatize. But when they did get around to considering privatization, it took a different form.

I had mentioned the financial straits that the Yugoslavs were in and the government-to-government and the government-to-bank and the government-to-international financial institution negotiations that they carried out. There were private-sector implications to their financial straits also. American and European creditors on the commercial side — not just bankers — sometimes weren't getting their money, weren't being paid. One such example was the Douglas Aircraft Corporation, which had supplied the bulk of Yugoslav Airlines' civil air fleet. They were being paid regularly, and the Ex-Im Bank was getting its money for the airplanes themselves, but Douglas had a service contract with JAT, Yugoslav Airlines, to service their planes at many locations around the world. Yugoslav Air served the United States, Australia, and most of the European countries. They flew to Africa and Asia. They were an extensive airline, and they were a money-maker. Their pilots were very accomplished. They were a well-respected organization, and they flew American planes. There were times when Douglas and Boeing were in very stiff competition with Europe's Airbus to provide planes for Yugoslav Airlines, and we worked pretty hard on behalf of the American firms. Obviously we couldn't take sides between Boeing and Douglas (which combined much later), but we did manage to freeze out Airbus, even though the German former defense minister Strauss was down there throwing his weight around.

Butt Douglas wasn't getting its money for <u>servicing</u> Yugoslav Airlines planes; the Yugoslavs were in arrears by several millions of dollars. I got a call from John Wallace, who was Douglas' chief sales representative for Europe who usually came to Yugoslavia with the latest word on new airplanes that Douglas was developing or just to keep Douglas in the mind of the Yugoslav Air people. He was very effective. (I had first met him back in the '60's, when the Douglas DC-9 replaced the Caravel in the Yugoslav fleet.) I got a call from him one afternoon inviting me to dinner at the Intercontinental Hotel that evening. He was there with a team of people from Douglas who wanted to know what our ambassador would say if they, Douglas, told the Yugoslavs that they had to get their money or they would stop servicing the airplanes — which would have the effect of shutting down Yugoslav Airlines. I told John and his people that I thought the ambassador would say the same thing that I was about to say, which was, if they really believe you, you'll get your money. They had an appointment to see Ambassador Anderson the next morning at 10 or 11 o'clock, and of course the ambassador asked me to attend the meeting, too. They put the question to him, and he put the answer to them. I'm sure he would have given that answer with or without my briefing, but of course I had briefed him. He said, "If they believe you, you'll get your money." They were concerned about whether this would interfere with the bilateral relations between the countries. They were very conscientious about their relations with the U.S. Government. Ambassador

Anderson said that we did not have any foreign policy objectives that would conflict with their getting money in their legitimate commercial transactions. So they started negotiations with the Yugoslavs and with Yugoslav Airlines. The Yugoslavs were hurting for hard currency at the time, but Yugoslav Airlines was a hard currency money-maker. Like a number of families, I guess, in the Depression or immigrant families to the U.S. or whatever, they had to keep close watch on their pennies and figure out which creditors they could afford to make wait a while and which ones they had to pay, but Douglas was not about to wait a while. The Yugoslav's negotiated with Douglas a two-*tranche* arrangement to bring themselves up to date on these payments. The first *tranche* was to be paid while the negotiators were in Belgrade, and the second *tranche* was to be paid three weeks later, and that would bring them up to par. This agreement was reached, the Douglas negotiators went back to California, and all was well — we thought. But one Tuesday afternoon about a month later, I got a call from John Wallace from Long Beach, California. He said, "Russ, they didn't make their second payment, and we're not coming back. If we don't have our money by Friday, we are going to shut them down." Well, I had my work cut out for me. It was Tuesday afternoon.

Q: You were caught in the middle, weren't you?

PRICKETT: The rest of the day, my secretary and I wrote a bunch of letters. We wrote a letter to the director of Yugoslav Airlines. We wrote a letter to the president of the National Bank of Yugoslavia. We wrote a letter to the head of the so-called Industrial Bank of Yugoslavia, which was the bank that had direct relations with Yugoslav Airlines. First thing the next morning, I was on the phone making appointments, and I was running all over Belgrade. My first stop was Yugoslav Airlines. The vice-president for financial affairs came out of a board meeting to meet with me, and when I told him what the problem was, he said, "We were just meeting on that very subject, and you need to talk to our bankers, because we have been paying into our bank." We've been making the payments that are owed, and it's the banks that haven't been forwarding the money to Douglas Aircraft." I said, "I'm going to the National Bank next, and I'm headed over to the Industrial Bank." He said, "You need to go to the Belgrade Union Bank as well, because the Industrial Bank is a subsidiary of the Belgrade Union Bank." I learned this, as I said, when I was already at Yugoslav Airlines. So somewhere along the line, while I was on the run, I got another copy made of my letter. I went to the National Bank. After dropping my letter off and leaving my message and making my pitch there, I called my secretary back at the embassy and said, "I need you to do something for me. I need you to call the Belgrade Union Bank and talk to the president's secretary." The president of the Belgrade Union Bank was a man named Slobodan Milosević. I said, "I want you to apologize for the short notice. I don't even know whether Mr. Milosević is in town, but I need to see him very, very urgently on a most important matter, and I will be at the Belgrade Union Bank at 12 o'clock noon today." I had no idea what would happen, but my secretary was a good secretary, and she made the call. I went from the National Bank to the Industrial Bank. The president of the Industrial Bank was a man that I had known, back in the '60's who was rising in the Party. He was with one of the trading companies when I had known him. He wasn't in town, so I left my letter and my message with

somebody else and then went across the main square in Belgrade to the Albania Building, where the headquarters of the Belgrade Bank was. I walked in at 12 o'clock and there in the lobby Mr. Milosević's secretary met me and took me up to his office. Milosević welcomed me, brought me into his office, and sat me down.

The custom in business calls in Yugoslavia back in the '60's had been to offer a wide variety of refreshments. There would be a choice of different kinds of fruit juice, which were always delicious, thick with the pulp of the fruit. And there'd be mineral water, and Turkish coffee, but there would also be some hard stuff, some slivovitz (plum brandy), often double-distilled plum brandy (*prepecenica*, they called it), or there would be what they called *lozovac*, which was a double distilled wine brandy. It was totally clear in appearance but packed a real punch. So I came in, and Mr. Milosević asked, "Would you like some refreshment?" He asked me in English, and I answered him in Serbian: "*Neki sok, možda"* (some juice, maybe). He said, "Oh, won't you have something stronger?" I said, *"Možda jedno lozo*" (perhaps a *lozovac*, this wine brandy). And then he said, "Do you know our *Viljamovka*?" I didn't know what that was, and he said, "It's a pear brandy." And this is also double-distilled, like the *lozovac* — your basic white lightning but with an aftertaste of fresh pears. That was my first acquaintance with what is I think still my most favorite brandy drink. It's really something.

Q: Like Poire William.

PRICKETT: That's exactly what it is. *Viljamovka*, the *poire William* or pear William, *Wilhelmsbirne* in German.

Q: It is sweet.

PRICKETT: Not sweet.

Q: I mean it's good.

PRICKETT: Yes, but not sweet. It's a really strong drink, but it has the aftertaste of the fresh pears, unlike some of the other syrupy brandy drinks. At any rate, that's my digression. I did pick up two bottles of that on my way home from the office that very day and have always tried to find some when I've been back in the country or, for that matter, back in Europe since.

Well, then we got down to business, and Milosević called into his office his executive vice-president, a woman named Borka Vučić. She was a neighbor of ours whom we had known, and she was just about every American banker's favorite Yugoslav banker. When they came to town they wanted to talk to Borka. She looked like the Wicked Witch of the West. She was a dark-haired widow who wore black all the time. She had very sharp, witch-like features, lovely sparkling eyes, a beautiful voice, and an almost angelic personality. We were neighbors, and we saw each other socially from time to time — wonderful woman, very, very bright. She's the one, by the way who set up the Belgrade

Bank's and Milosević's financial stash offshore on Cyprus, prior to the present-day troubles. So she, for all her sweetness, was one tough cookie when it came to business.

Q: A woman in a powerful position.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. At the time, I saw her experience and that of other women who were rising by merit in the Yugoslav system as perhaps foretelling a more general improvement in the position of women as executives. There were a number of such women, more in the banks than in the industrial companies.

At Milosević's request I laid out the problem to Borka Vučić as the Douglas Aircraft people had laid it out to me. I told her about my calls around town, and particularly that the vice-president for finance of Yugoslav Air had told me they'd been making their payments; that they, Yugoslav Air, did not have a hard currency shortage, and they were not happy about the possibility of being shut down because their bills weren't being paid. "Well," she said — I had mentioned the Friday deadline set by Douglas — and she said, "I don't think we can have it all by Friday, but we can have something over a third of it by Friday and the remainder on Monday." I said, "I can't speak for the company, but I'll tell them what you said." We both knew that that was going to be just fine, if Douglas knew they'd have their money by Monday, all of it, and that there would be an earnest payment of good faith by Friday, that that would be a satisfactory conclusion. Indeed, they did make the payment, and they didn't shut them down, and I thought I learned something about Milosević and his people at that point. Number one, that my first advice had been correct — if they really believe you, you will get your money; secondly, that he will push the envelope just as damned far as he can; and third, that when he sees that that's as far as he can push it, that's the end of the matter. Now I think there have been times in the more recent adventures in Yugoslavia that that lesson could have been applied. Right now, when there have been such heavy commitments to war, I suspect a point of no return has been passed. But I learned on that occasion that, number one, Milosević couldn't be bluffed, but number two, he could be coerced.

Q: As in the Bosnia case.

PRICKETT: Well, before Bosnia, really, in 1991, I'm convinced that when the Yugoslav national army first crossed the borders into Croatia, ostensibly to insert itself between the Croats and Serbs who were engaged in local fighting inside Croatia, that was a time for those of us who knew the country to get the ear of our leaders and put forward a United States position, basically to strong-arm our NATO allies into imposing a blockade on what was then still one single country. Hungary and Romania had been making noises about wanting to get closer to NATO. We could have said, "Here's how you make your bones, boys. You close off all the land border crossings between yourselves and Yugoslavia, and you help us close off the Danube." The Sixth Fleet would steam into the Adriatic and put a cork in all the Yugoslav ports, and NATO air forces would start patrolling the country and make a total no-fly zone out of all of Yugoslavia. Now we would have had to, as I said, tell our NATO allies, "We're going to do this, and you can

come along with us or not, but this is a European problem. We have interests in Europe, and if you want it solved, you come along with us. If you want to muddle around and let it go to hell, then that's your affair." Once with NATO on board, we would have said to the United Nations, "If you want to be relevant, you'll bless this operation; if you don't, you wash your hands of it and fade into history."

However, we had just won a smashing victory, we thought, in Desert Storm, and our good President figured he was on his way to reelection on the strength of that, and it would have been a very difficult, very touchy prospect to try to persuade the American people that we ought to get that involved in a country that they knew so little about — and cared less. Now, of course, we're facing much more difficult prospects, and as any of us know when we see something on the horizon that troubles us, we know that things will get worse if we don't do something about it at the time. Sometimes we speak up, and sometimes our advice is heeded, and sometimes not. I was long out of the Department by that time, and I was not burning up the wires to Larry Eagleburger to say, "This is what we ought to do." Frankly, I thought, How could Larry be missing the point? My own daughter was in Belgrade at the time. It wouldn't have been easy to slam a blockade on the country. But it was what we needed to do, and I'm convinced that when nothing happened. . . . First the Yugoslav army crossed the border into Croatia; then there was a pause. And when nothing happened at that point except a lot of talk in New York, they moved on, and I can just imagine the wolfish grin on Milosević's face as that happened.

Q: Because he had his —

PRICKETT: He knew us pretty well.

Q: He knew us pretty well, yes.

PRICKETT: So at any rate, back in the days when it was just a few million dollars at stake, I helped back him down, and I have to say I wish I had been over there to talk to the guy on a few subsequent occasions and had had the kind of backup that I got from my ambassador when I was over there at that time. That was one of them. I mentioned that we had negotiated with Yugoslav Airlines to be the suppliers of their next round of aircraft. That time it was the Boeing 737 and the 757 that were to replace those old DC-9's. The German former defense minister, Franz Josef Strauss, was representing the Airbus consortium, and he was down in Yugoslavia throwing his weight around. But the Yugoslavs had had a good history of dealing with American airplane manufacturers, and they went with Boeing. This was shortly before Boeing took over Douglas. So we got some pictures where several of us, including our ambassador and the representative of the Ex-Im Bank and the Boeing people and the Yugoslav negotiators, the Yugoslav Airline people, were signing the deal to buy a bunch of 737's. I think that pretty well sums up the highlights of my second Belgrade tour.

Let's pop back in time just a little bit. During the financial negotiations, Larry Eagleburger returned to Belgrade on a visit. He had been ambassador previously, and I

think he was undersecretary for political affairs at the time of his return visit in ‘82 or ‘83. At any rate, he had a meeting with the prime minister which Ambassador Anderson and I accompanied him to. The prime minister was Milka Planic, a Croatian woman, whom people were comparing to Margaret Thatcher. The Yugoslavs would say, “She’s our Margaret Thatcher.” She was a pretty effective leader, but the prime minister’s powers had been diminished. She was the first prime minister after Tito’s death, so we and other countries were anxious to, number one, see how effective she would be and to help her keep the country together. People had feared what might happen when Tito died. Well, like so many other projects, it just took longer than we thought it would before the country came apart, a little over 10 years.

Before going over to see Mrs. Planic, Larry had a meeting with the embassy staff, especially the local staff, with whom he was very, very popular. This was in the main meeting room in the American Club, called the Elbrick Room, after the ambassador who had been there when I was there earlier. Larry stood in the middle of the room, and everybody else made a great big circle around him, standing — there wasn’t room to seat everybody — and he went around one at a time greeting everybody. First, he made a little speech, and he was sort of theater in the round, turning to one side and then to the other, talking to everybody, partly in English, partly in Serbian. His language was pretty good. Then he greeted everybody affectionately, going around from one to the other. There was a very close personal affection that all the Yugoslavs in the embassy had for Larry. And he was very funny in his remarks. He was bringing greetings from various people, and he said, “My sons greet you, who are taller than I am, and my wife greets you — ” and I said, “ — who’s prettier than you are.” He turned over and pointed his finger at me, and said, “I’ll take care of you, Prickett.” It was a buddy-buddy kind of thing; Larry was a lot of fun, a lot of fun to work with and deal with. After this love fest, we got into the ambassador’s car and drove across the river to New Belgrade, to the prime minister’s office. On the way, Larry said, “If I’d had to kiss another mustache, I don’t know what I would have done.” Kissing on both cheeks is the Yugoslav form of greeting, men and women — men and men, women and women. The Serbs do it three times for good luck. Then Larry had a very good meeting with Mrs. Planic, carried on in her language (she did not have English). Sometimes Larry would glance over to David, who would usually supply the missing word, or I would. They were both as good in the language as I was; I had a good rating and was helping. Later on, when the vice-premier for economic affairs, Zvone Dragon, came to Washington, he called on Larry, among others, and they spoke entirely in Serbo-Croatian. I was back for the visit, and taking notes, and it seemed half the State Department was looking over my shoulder afterwards saying, “What did he say?”

I returned to Washington in 1985. I had not gotten a promotion that would have taken me into the Senior Foreign Service, so I had one year left, despite three successive years of absolutely top ratings. I could not count on more than one year left in the Department. So my three top preferences for my next assignment, one, two, and three, were all to the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service. Somebody said, well, there’s the position now of deputy chief of the Finance Division in the Office of Economic Affairs, a plum

job, really, at that rank, I thought, I'm sorry, fellas, I'm not going to take a job that I have to take home with me at night, that I have to worry about. If I've got one year left, I'm going to go where I can do good work and walk home at night and leave it at the office. So that's what I did.

Q: The Board of Examiners.

PRICKETT: Yes. I was in BEX for my last year in the Service. My wife, meanwhile, had been hired to teach voice at the University of Texas at Austin, so our plan was that she would try it out, and I would live in our house on Calvert Street in Washington, DC, for the year that she had been hired for, and if she was hired on the tenure track, then I would consider moving down here to Austin, Texas, and that's the way things worked out.

Meanwhile, I had joined an organization called the U.S.-Yugoslav Economic Council. This was an organization of U.S. businesses who had interests in dealing with Yugoslavia. Dick Johnson, a retired Foreign Service officer, had just been named executive director of this organization, and I had joined it as a private member. I figured to do some consulting, and also had by that time embarked on the project of writing a book about the economic relations between the two countries, together with former Foreign Service officer and University of Maryland professor John Lampe, and Professor Ljubiša Adamović of the University of Belgrade and Florida State University. That effort was underway. I wanted to maintain contact with these business guys, whom I interviewed extensively for the book. I also wanted to smoke out any possible consulting work that I could do. A nice thing about the organization was also that it had annual meetings, usually in Dubrovnik, but sometimes in Split and sometimes in Bled, which is an Alpine lakeside town in Slovenia. Split is a town also on the Adriatic which has extensive Roman ruins — a gorgeous place. The entire Adriatic coast is just heavenly. We've been back there on a number of occasions, usually in connection with meetings of the Council. I became an active member of the Council and served on its board of directors for several years after my tour of duty in Belgrade.

I had a couple of strong nibbles on some consulting work that grew in part out of the experience with the council and in part out of the experience of writing the book. One, which came directly from the Council, was with Mobil Oil Corporation. There had been a bit of offshore exploratory drilling in the Adriatic Sea, for possible oil reserves. Other oil and gas reserves had been found up in northern Yugoslavia, but the geological layout offshore was such that the companies expected there might be some substantial reserves there, too, especially off the coast of Montenegro. Mobil Oil was interested in this. Through a neighbor in Washington, whose sister worked for Mobil, I talked with them and went over and made a little presentation about Yugoslavia to some of their officers who were considering this project, and they asked me for a proposal, which I gave them; they were ready to have me on their negotiating team for a month or more or however long it took, which would have been good consulting work. However, the rumbles in 1990 were already being heard that the country was in tension, and people had even used the words *civil war.* I raised this point at one of the meetings of the Council — I think it

was in Split — because when people started talking like this, Mobil pulled back instantly, and their plans to go over and negotiate were completely withdrawn. They wound up doing a deal in Vietnam, if you can imagine. Well, now it's easy to imagine when we look at what's going on in Yugoslavia, but in those days, Vietnam had such history to it that the idea that a company would pull out of Yugoslavia and go to Vietnam was sad. I made the point. I said, "You're losing investment possibilities here. Clients don't like to hear talk about possible civil war." Some old diehard Communist got up and excoriated me on the floor of the meeting — these are joint meetings with the Yugoslav Chamber of Commerce and their wing for foreign dealings, and specifically their section for dealings with the U.S., and so we were always meeting with Yugoslav counterparts. But that was one of the things that happened in connection with the Council.

Later on, when we first put sanctions on the truncated Yugoslavia, after the Croats and the Slovenes and the Bosnians and the Macedonians had seceded, among the things that happened as a result of our sanctions was that the U.S. Department of the Treasury froze both financial assets and other physical assets that were in the control of the United States; this included ships that were in American ports. A law firm in New Orleans was trying to get the Yugoslav ships out from under these sanctions. The wording of the Treasury's decree pertained to state-owned assets, assets owned by the state of Yugoslavia. My familiarity with the peculiar structure of the Yugoslav socialist enterprises dated back to the 1960's, when I had been the resident scholar on that subject, and so somebody referred them to me. I wrote a brief and was prepared to testify on behalf of the Yugoslav ships (not that it would have mattered a whole lot; the Treasury could have simply reworded their decree). But the law firm that was handling it was interested anyway, and what they finally did was take my affidavit. I didn't go to New Orleans to testify. I would have enjoyed the trip. The court ruled in Treasury's favor, and that was that. But I was still right.

Q: Yes, of course. You're on record, anyway.

PRICKETT: Yes. It took me a while to get my fee for that piece of work because the law firm was asking me to wait until they got paid by the Yugoslav firm. I had to stress with them that I had not taken the job on a contingency fee basis; I had agreed to work for them on a time basis. They kept putting me off until I wrote to the Louisiana Bar Association; then I got a very quick answer, their letter and their check.

Another consulting job that I had came from a pharmaceutical executive in California. He was interested in the process of privatizing Yugoslav enterprises. His company had purchased an interest in a Yugoslav pharmaceutical manufacturer. He was interested in the privatization process, how these particular peculiar socialist enterprises in Yugoslavia could be privatized. He had asked the ambassador who succeeded David Anderson, John Scanlan — another Minnesota guy, by the way — who might be able to do this work for him, and John had referred him to Professors Adamovic and Lampe and me, the authors of this book, as being qualified to do this work. Well, both Adamovic and Lampe had full-time jobs, and I was retired, so I shared about a third of the fee with them, to put their

names on it. I did the traveling, the interviewing, the conceptual analysis, and the writing, and I ran it past them for their editing and approval and so forth, and then sent the bill as well as the product to the client in California, whose name was Milan Panić. A few days after I delivered the product to Mr. Panić in California, he accepted the position of prime minister of Yugoslavia! That's who Panić was. He took the job, frankly, trying to stop the war, which had by then advanced into Bosnia, but eventually Milosević forced him out. Milosević was president of Serbia at that time and was in the process of consolidating Serbian control over the federal government. Again, not to get into all the messy details, he was emasculating the powers of the federal government at the same time that he was asserting Serbian control over it. This was what eventually forced the secession by first the Slovenes and then the Croats, and then the others, Bosnia and Macedonia, because they saw that gradually they were being painted into a corner. What was happening was a return of the old pan-Serbianism that, to them, resonated of the old days of the monarchy. If Milosević would not negotiate a looser confederation with more autonomy and more voice in the federal affairs for the constituent republics, then they were going to opt out. That's basically what happened.

That basically concludes my reflections on Yugoslavia. I came back to the States, as I said, into the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service. It was fun dealing with the young people who were interested in Foreign Service work, and the daily routine of the examination cycle and our review of records, was interesting and fun. It had to be done on a collegial, consensus basis, which meant that all of our negotiating skills came into play again. Our evaluating skills came into play too. We had the sense that we were helping improve the stream of the folks coming into the Service. It was a good way, I think, to conclude a career in the Service. It's easy to have regrets that I didn't get that last promotion, but it would be hard also to imagine a more satisfying final tour of duty than what I had, working with Harry Gilmore and Ambassador Anderson, and the really good work that we were able to do over there, even though the Yugoslavs didn't take advantage of it. And it would have been a tough act to follow. So looking back, I found it to be a good career. I had the opportunity then, for the next couple of years, to put the cap on it by taking part in writing this book, Yugoslav-American Economic Relations Since World War II. I wrote the introduction; I wrote the chapter on the commercial dealings; I wrote the chapter on the financial dealings, "Paying the Piper," I called it; and because I was the guy without a full-time job, I was the final editor of the whole text. I have to say that Professor Adamovic's English didn't always flow, and also his successive subchapters didn't always track. I was sure that he had graduate students or others who were writing pieces, because every now and again we'd reinvent the wheel as we went along. There was a lot of rewriting to do, and we spent a lot of time on the telephone with each other. We had several meetings in Maryland, where John Lampe lived, in Florida, where Professor Adamovic taught regularly at Florida State — every spring he'd come over — and here in Austin. That put a very satisfactory cap on the career. I also imagine Stu is encountering a lot of retired officers who are finding this oral history experience to be a good way to reflect and feel good about what they've done.

Would I do it all over again? Probably. I might choose to take an advanced degree in

economics rather than a law degree. But my law degree was very helpful too.

Q: Of course.

PRICKETT: Especially in consular work and just the sense that technicalities don't baffle you. It was helpful to the mental processes to be able to handle things. I got good training in economics at the Foreign Service Institute and the University of Oklahoma.

Meanwhile, it's been very rewarding to come here to Austin. I think I mentioned, my wife, Rose Taylor, was hired to teach voice at the University of Texas, and she came down here for an academic year while I was spending that last year of my career in Washington. She was hired on the tenure track, I came down to live with her, and a few years later she actually got tenure. Then a few years later she reached the rank of full professor. She has found that rewarding while still being able to continue her performing career in opera and concerts. I've been doing some singing, for as long as I can remember. I sang with the Paul Hill Chorale at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and I've been singing in the Austin Lyric Opera Chorus since I came here. I've done some musical theater and some Shakespeare in the Park and some small roles with the Austin Lyric Opera. I'm enjoying life. The climate is hard to beat — except in the summertime, and then it's always possible to travel. I'm looking forward to trips to the DC area, where two of my four daughters live, I hope to see Stu Kennedy while I'm there. I've enjoyed this, Lou.

Q: Well, it's been my pleasure.

PRICKETT: Thanks for the coffee, thanks for the cookies, and thanks for the sympathetic ear.

Q: I just wish we'd served together. You would have been a good colleague. Shall we cut it off on a high note like that?

PRICKETT: Good.

End of interview