Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

# ELEANORE RAVEN-HAMILTON

*Interviewed by: Edward Dillery*
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: It is November 18, 2009, this is Ed Dillery, and I will be interviewing Eleanore Raven-Hamilton. A small personal note, we were members of the same Foreign Service A-100 class when I knew her as Eleanore McGroarty. Now we will start with the questions. So first could you tell us something about your early life, when you were born and where and something about your family.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was born in 1935 in Brooklyn, New York. My father was a lawyer, while my mother was a homemaker. Both my parents were active in the community and church. I came from a Catholic family, mostly Irish descent. My mother's family had been in New England and New York for generations, and my father's family had been resident in Brooklyn for at least six generations. In 1898, my paternal great grandfather played a role in making Brooklyn, once a separate city reachable by ferry from the island of Manhattan, a borough of New York City. The Brooklyn Bridge was built to connect Brooklyn to Manhattan, and my great grandfather, a member of the Brooklyn Borough Council was one of those voting to approve it.

My father, the oldest of five, graduated from Fordham law school in 1930, right after the 1929 stock market crash. While he was in law school, he worked at one of the oldest law firms in Brooklyn and remained there for most of his career, eventually becoming a senior partner. Later, he became a Justice in the State (New York) Supreme Court -- in New York State the Court of Appeals in Albany is actually the highest state court. He also taught at the American Institute of Banking and was very active in the Democratic Party as his forebears had been. My father was a legal advisor to the Democratic Party and also ran several campaigns, including Averill Harriman's campaign in Kings County (Brooklyn), when he was candidate for governor. My father was also very active in community, professional and church groups and won an award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, as well as awards from the Boy Scouts and other community groups.

My mother was born in Manhattan and educated in Brooklyn, where she graduated from Berkeley Institute. She was a leader in church groups and in the community, especially working with women's groups to alleviate poverty. She also won an award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

I was the oldest of four. I had a brother two years younger, who was killed in an automobile accident in 1965. My sister, five years younger than I am, has an MA in Education and has retired as a reading specialist in the New York public school system. She lives in Manhattan and is married to a lawyer. They have two children and three granddaughters. My brother, ten years younger than I am, lives in Connecticut. He started in the business side of radio and television and was one of the founders of MTV. Then, he worked at Citibank on its capital markets portfolio. Now, he is a partner in an investment management firm. His wife worked for a non profit in Stamford, Connecticut, finding affordable housing for people working in the area. They have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

I have two sons and three grandchildren. One of my sons has an MA in History and teaches in a public high school in Vallejo, California, where he coaches the team that takes part in the regional Academic Decathlon. His wife has an MA in special education, has worked in journalism, and is now in the education field in Marin County, California. My other son is a practicing architect and ecological urbanist. He is Associate Professor at the New York Institute of Technology. He has an MA in sustainable urbanism from Cambridge University and is LEED certified. His wife has a Ph.D. in engineering and has developed software applications to help cities maintain their water pipes. Two of my grandchildren are at McGill University in Montreal, and the third is in high school in Novato, California.

When I was growing up, sports were big interests in my family. I had decided at a young age that boys seemed to have more fun, but I couldn't do sports very well -- I was terrible. I decided I could only keep up with my father and brother by becoming very knowledgeable about baseball. I was a wild Dodger fan and used to go to ball games at Ebbets Field whenever I could. The other main subjects of discussion in the family were

history, current events and politics. I could hold my own easily in those areas. It was really pretty lively, especially at dinner.

When we went on trips, the two younger ones were in the back with my mother. My brother and father and I always sat in the front seat. We in the front determined which routes we would take and what sites (especially historical ones) we would visit along the way. The three of us in the front wanted to see everything we could, so we stopped often. My mother was not as interested, and she had to cope with the small children in the back.

The old country? No one really knew exactly where we came from, except that our paternal ancestors were mainly Irish, from Donegal probably. My mother's family had English and Irish roots, and apparently Dutch too. Her great great grandfather was a lawyer in Dublin, who came to New York in 1850. Her great grandfather was French from a town near the Swiss border. Census records say he was born in Switzerland, and he did live there. I am working on family genealogy to try to fill in the blanks.

*Q: There was no village that everybody remembered? For how many generations had they been in the U.S.?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, no village. We even have some difficulty establishing general regions. I have documents showing that my mother's Irish great great grandparents came to New York from Dublin in 1850 with several unmarried children. That great great grandfather read law at Trinity College, Dublin, but he did not practice law in New York. He seems to have been a landowner, who managed his properties.

*Q: So, it was quite a well established American family.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it seems so. The paternal side of my mother's family was mainly English and seems to have been in New England in colonial times.

My father said his family came from Donegal. My family name was McGroarty. When I was posted to Belfast, I learned that it is a very Donegal name, an Anglicized version of a Gaelic name. There is a neighborhood in Derry called Bally (town of) McGroarty, and there are many McGroarty's on an island off Donegal, Tory Island, once infamous for its "wreckers" (who plundered ships the inhabitants had tricked into wrecking on its rocky coast). Tory Island is now famous for its painters.

*Q: But you only learned about them at that point -- when you were in Belfast?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: More or less.

My earliest memories were of the Depression. For example, people who had lost their jobs and had been put out of their houses or apartments with their possessions on the street. That may have been a much more common sight in New York City, perhaps than in some other parts of the country.

*Q: Yes, I never saw that in Seattle.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It upset me very badly, and I never forgot those scenes. It enabled me, I think, to deal with the homelessness I saw when I lived in India, particularly in Calcutta. But, people in India seemed to have built a sort of community in the street, unlike people in New York during the Depression, who obviously were not used to being on the street and seemed more desperate and alone.

*Q: Brought back some memories there.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes but I was able to…

*Q: Understand the situation, yes.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: And concern about social welfare was very important in the family. Other early memories were of the Battle of Britain. Because I lived in New York City, I felt a great affinity with children in London. I lived in a port city, and, before the war, I had seen people boarding ships to vacation in Europe, even had been to sailing parties. Some of my family went... my mother had visited Europe before she was married…

*Q: So you thought about those children on the ground there…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was very concerned with, well, the bombing. We had searchlights over New York at night, and I realized they had to turn off the searchlights when there was a raid coming over London. We still had the lights on in the house, but with blackout curtains, and during air raid drills we had to turn off the lights. I was very concerned about the children in London during the Battle of Britain.

Then, I remember very clearly the attack on Pearl Harbor and sitting on the stairs in our living room listening to FDR's "Day of Infamy" speech. It made a very big impression. I knew how to read at a young age, and I used to read parts of the newspapers even before I started school, so I was conscious of the war. In addition, one of my father's brothers was draft age and unmarried. He was called up quickly. My father's young sister had several young men in her life who were also called up.

Well, another thing that made a big impression on me was the sinking of the French liner "Normandie." I was puzzled because no one wanted to tell me how it sank. Nobody really knew, I think. Only educated guesses. Anyway we used to see the "Normandie" when we went down the West Side of Manhattan along the piers. The ship was half submerged and always seemed to be very mysterious.

We used to see constant streams of ships sailing out of New York, especially when we went to our beach club in Rockaway on the western tip of Long Island, close to the exit from New York Harbor. I guess it was lend lease at first. Then, the American troops and equipment sailing to Europe. There was U-Boat activity along the beach sometimes. The

beaches were evacuated. Sometimes there was a lot of debris in the water, but only U-boats were reported to have been sunk along the coast. There were also reports of spies being landed. There was a famous case of saboteurs who came ashore on Long Island. That was rumored all over the place, but everyone kept denying it. Now, we know they were caught and executed.

*Q: It was very real to you.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, very much. That was what probably led me into becoming a news junkie.

We were talking about the war. Our house in Brooklyn had room for a Victory Garden, so I dug one and produced occasional tomatoes and a few other odds and ends, not a great production. I remember the stamp books and the rationing. I used to do some of the shopping for my family. One time I caused a drama, by losing the whole family's ration books, but a very kind woman found them in the street and brought them back to us.

We didn't do much in the summers because of the gas rationing. We mostly went to northern Connecticut. In the summer of 1945, my brother and I were sent to camp because my mother was having a difficult pregnancy with her fourth child. We were at camp on VJ day. I remember that day well.

After the war, my father took us to see the battleship "Missouri," which was visiting New York. The Japanese had signed their surrender on the "Missouri," so visiting the ship was important to us. We had watched the troop ships and then the ships carrying postwar U.S. aid to Europe. Needless to say it was a lot easier to watch Marshall Plan and other aid going to Europe than it was to watch the troops going to war.

Education? I went to high school in Brooklyn. In 1956, I graduated from Rosemont College, a small Catholic girls college near Philadelphia. I had a double major in history and political science. We received a very broad education with heavy doses of philosophy, theology, science, language, literature, and the arts and all sorts of courses outside our major fields. That probably made the Foreign Service exam a lot less difficult for us. In fact, according to an article in the New York Times some years ago, for at least a decade Rosemont apparently had an unbroken record of success on the Foreign Service exam. There were not that many women from Rosemont who took the Foreign Service exam, but we all passed it.

*Q: Fabulous. What year did you take the exam?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: 1955.

*Q: 1955.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I took the orals after I graduated from college in 1956. I was encouraged by the Chairman of our History department, who was a wonderful

Englishwoman, a nun, a Holy Child Sister. Mother Lawrence had graduated from Oxford, although women in her generation were not actually granted the degree. She had to take the entrance exam for Oxford decades later in order to receive her degree. That was after she had earned her doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. She had become friends there with Dr. Robert Strausz-Hupe. One evening, she invited Strausz-Hupe and his wife to have dinner at Rosemont with one of my classmates and me. He suggested that my classmate and I go to Penn (University of Pennsylvania) to hear a talk his stepson was giving about the Foreign Service.

Mother Lawrence, encouraged Mary Ann Casey (now Bentz) and me to take the Foreign Service exam. We did, and we both entered the Foreign Service. Mary Ann drove out to her first post in Vancouver with Gil Sheinbaum, a member of our (Ed's and my) A-100 (incoming training) class, and a very close friend. Mary Ann eventually decided the Foreign Service was not for her and resigned to go into the new field of computers. We were lucky to have had several professors encourage us and influence us to think we could do something like being Foreign Service Officers -- even though we were women!

*Q: Yes, let me just interject one small thing there and that is to say of course Doctor Strausz-Hupe later became a very famous United States ambassador to Turkey in his old age. I think he qualifies as a famous diplomat.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and I had the great pleasure of meeting him again when I was on the Greek desk working for you, Ed. He used to come in and see us in the Office of Southern European Affairs. At one point, he told me that the Reagan Administration was taking Muammar Qadhafi much too seriously. Strausz-Hupe barely came up to my shoulders, and he wagged his finger up at me and said, "We should just tell Qadhafi that he is a very naughty boy." That always stayed with me.

*Q: He was an old school gentleman.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and he could be funny too.

*Q: So teachers, also any books that influenced you at that time during college or in your early days?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, many books. I read a lot. But one of the things that fascinated me and enlarged my horizons was the fact that I was generally taught by women in girls' schools. The nuns ran the schools with a strong hand. It was the first time I had ever seen women really fully in charge of anything and responsible to other women.

I realized in grade school that most of the priests were afraid of them. That was a widespread feeling. When I was in Belfast at a Catholic-Protestant forum, a Protestant asked a Catholic bishop on the panel what the bishop could say to make "this Protestant man" less afraid of nuns. All the Catholics in the audience roared with laughter, and the Bishop said, "I don't know; I am still scared of them." Anyway they were strong, capable women. This was an important experience for me.

*Q: And so different from today when sadly, there are not many nuns left even in Catholic schools.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I know there aren't, but there are a lot of religious women around. Some of them are living outside their traditional milieu, but they are a very strong force in the church pushing for reform. They sometimes are considered quite radical, but they are influential, and I am glad they are there.

*Q: Now were there any particular teachers that you remember?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, my history teachers were the ones who influenced me the most because history was one of my favorite subjects. I told you about the professor who introduced me to Strausz-Hupe. There were others, religious, laymen and women in college from whom I learned so much. There were also several teachers in elementary and high school, teachers who pushed me to read not only history books, biographies, and fiction, but about current events too. I learned more about the UN for example, which was just being formed in my city, and I read the newspapers. I had to take the subway to high school, and, if I went with my father, he would buy two copies of the New York Times, hand me one of them, and bury his head in the other.

*Q: Very nice. He didn't even make you read the second shift. You got the first. That is all right.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I also had two special professors in graduate school. After I was forced out of the Foreign Service, which we will get to later, I went to American University in Beirut (Lebanon) and got an MA in Education, with a year of study in the archeology of the Middle East.

*Q: And that was before you came into the Foreign Service? After you had taken the test but before…?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No. It was after I had been in the Foreign Service for almost three years, when I had to resign because I had married. I had to find something else to do. So I changed careers.

*Q: I see, OK.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: At AUB, two people greatly influenced me -- my archaeology professor, Dr. Dimitri Baramki, and my professor and faculty advisor in the Department of Education, Juanita Soghikian. She inspired and guided my thesis, which was the development of a short course in the basics of archeology for sixth grade students (11 year olds) in schools with an American curriculum. The course was archaeology in the Middle East for students, who would be studying ancient history in that grade. She is a wonderful American woman and an experienced teacher, who helped me enormously in so many areas. We later became great friends.

Dr. Baramki, a well known Palestinian archeologist, obviously had a great influence on my approach to the course I was trying to develop. He was skeptical at first that 11-12 year old students could understand basic archaeology. I laid out concepts students should learn, and he agreed that young students would understand the basic principles. I was very grateful when he agreed to support my thesis and advise me. He and a very well-known French archaeologist in Beirut, Dr. Henri Seyrig, did a lot to help me produce the thesis.

Some of my other AUB professors were also supportive, but some were critical that I was writing a "practical" thesis, not the kind of thesis usually demanded for a master's degree at AUB. They wanted me to do a more theoretical and intellectual thesis. However, with my professors' support, I took my oral exams, and my thesis was accepted. I almost received my degree. Our graduation and AUB's centennial celebrations were supposed to take place in June 1967. That was not a good time for Beirut. The "June War" with Israel forced cancellation of our graduation and the anniversary celebration, and more importantly deepened the cycle of violence still plaguing the region. My degree was later mailed to me. That was that.

*Q: You first came into the Foreign Service in 1957?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, in January 1957 in the A-100 class with you. But you had actually come in earlier.

*Q: I had been there since 1955.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: You were one of the experienced ones. There were several of you -- Mike Ely as well. I was still 21, but I was 22 in February.

We were welcomed by the Director General of the Foreign Service, who said how pleased he was to see a woman in the group (a second woman was going to join us later). He said that women officers generally married one of their colleagues and were excellent Foreign Service spouses, and, if they didn't get married, they made very good officers. Well, I felt as if I were a predator and wanted to crawl under the table. But apparently my male colleagues never even noticed.

*Q: Yes, that is the first time I have heard of it. I didn't remember it.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It didn't strike you as odd, I am sure. He was actually someone who was very nice otherwise.

*Q: Probably typical for that time.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: True. Anyway, I wasn't sure at that point if I really wanted to stay at State, but people were very nice to me, and I knew it would be a great career working on issues that interested me so much. So, I did not leave, and I was very happy I

stayed. But those comments by the Director General really affected me. I did not date very much for the first year. I mean I went out with male friends, often in groups, but I did not "date." I especially did not want to date any of my colleagues, and practically everyone I knew in Washington was in the Foreign Service.

*Q: Aside from that Mrs. Lincoln, what did you think of the course?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It was very long. It was three months wasn't it? Three months of sitting in lectures.

*Q: It wasn't very imaginative, the curriculum at that time.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, and I used to read whenever I had the chance. I decided this was a great time for me to read "War and Peace," which I did. I had never read it before, and I had always meant to read it. I always enjoyed Russian novels.

When we finished the course, we all received our assignments. I was assigned initially to New York to the State Department's Visitors Center because someone assumed that, since I was a New Yorker, I would know everything about New York. But my New York wasn't exactly the New York that people, who had received State Department grants to visit the U.S. for specific purposes, needed to see. I did learn a lot about the world, the State Department and even New York and met some fascinating people.

*Q: If I could just throw in a little aside there, this was during the Eisenhower period. There was a travel freeze on. So, unlike today, they were not making permanent overseas assignments for new Foreign Service officers in early 1957. So, Vancouver was probably as far as anybody got.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: A couple of our colleagues did go overseas.

*Q: Did they? Not many.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Probably not -- I don't remember. Gil Sheinbaum went to Laos, for example.

*Q: Yes, that is right. Well, was that his first post or his second?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: First.

*Q: Actually, I was thinking of my own situation, why I was in Washington for two years before the A-100 class. So scratch that.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I went to New York and was in the New York Reception Center. I am not sure if it was in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at that time. It turned out to be very interesting. I arranged programs for high level visitors, most of whom had U.S. government travel grants, especially the so-called PL-480 Leader Grants.

The grants were called that because, under the provisions of (Public Law) PL-480, the profits from the sale of our surplus agriculture, especially wheat, overseas could be used to fund certain educational and cultural travel to the U.S.

Then, I was assigned back to Washington to what they called the "Voluntary Visitors" program. That was a program whereby experts of various sorts, who were coming to the States anyway, could be given short grants for professional experience, educational and cultural travel in the U.S. We arranged for overseas visitors to meet American counterparts to learn about aspects of America, such as how U.S, political campaigns were organized, the operation of our schools and universities, scientific research, newspaper publishing, language and literature, etc., a broad range of topics, including events in the U.S. that were very important. The idea was to have people from other countries, who were becoming recognized as experts/leaders in their fields, meet and establish links with American counterparts while learning about America and seeing some of the country.

Some of the visitors were scientists, doctors, engineers, writers, professors, politicians, all kinds of interesting people. Because I had to plan individual programs for them, they had to come to my office and sit and talk. Sometimes, we would go out to lunch afterwards, or I might invite them to dinner. I was able to get to know them a bit. That was very good. I liked that.

This was in the late 1950s, and there was tremendous interest in the civil rights situation in the South and how Americans were struggling with race relations. We arranged programs for foreign journalists, young politicians, and others to meet people who could show them what was really happening in the South, beyond sensational news reports. The people for whom we developed programs were able to go where they wanted and meet people foreign visitors really ought to meet. We worked with the visitors to develop a travel program and then put them in touch with a network of local people who had volunteered to help implement these programs.

Some visitors were Africans, often journalists, professors, etc., who would be going to Jim Crow areas (where racial laws were in force). We had to advise the Africans to wear tribal dress because, for some reason, they didn't have trouble in the South, even though they were black, as long as they were wearing tribal dress.

*Q: That is an interesting point.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It was even more interesting to have to explain all this in a cable. One African visitor that I never saw until he walked into my office, turned out to be an African all right, an African citizen all right, but he was from an English family, and he was not at all black.

*Q: And did not have a tribal dress.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, he did not have any tribal connections and did not know what to make of my tribal dress instruction. A lot of other Africans were from urban families and had also never worn tribal dress. They had no idea what to put on. So, I learned a lot about the complexities of modern Africa as well as about the workings of the "New South."

Americans all over the country were acting as hosts for foreign visitors, giving them home hospitality, taking them sightseeing or to cultural or sports events. I was very impressed with the generosity of Americans, who were ready to host people they had never seen, from places they had never been, and take them around and buy tickets, at their own expense to take their guests to events. The Americans wanted these visitors to learn about diverse aspects of American life, but it turned out to be an important mutual learning experience.

*Q: By the way, these exchange programs were among the better programs we ever had developed, I thought.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh yes. International travel was not that common then, and mass travel, as we have now, was not even a dream for most people. This was only about ten years after World War II had ended. Of course, many Americans had gone abroad in the military, but that was different. Postwar currency controls in many countries made travel difficult, and not many people had crossed the oceans to visit America. People had generally come to the United States as immigrants and not as short term visitors. These exchange programs were very effective in bringing people together and helping them learn from each other.

*Q: We really developed a lot of friends for the United States from those programs.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Absolutely. And, especially, the leader program where we paid for about a six week trip here for people from a wide range of backgrounds. Everybody who was anybody at that time, including the young Maggie Thatcher, seemed to have had one of our leader grants.

*Q: Almost every future prime minister.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Our Foreign Service posts did a wonderful job identifying future leaders in various fields. We don't seem to have missed many at that time.

*Q: Did they have escorts when they went to these places, or did they go on their own?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Africans?

*Q: Well, anybody.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, they generally went on their own from one local contact to another, unless they needed an interpreter, or unless one of the volunteers we had along the way thought it might be best that they not go to an appointment alone.

*Q: You gave them an airplane ticket and sent them on.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I set up a schedule with points of contact at each step of the way and made hotel and ongoing transportation arrangements. Local volunteers would meet them in the various places and assist them as needed.

*Q: The kind of informal group of people we have around the country that helps with that.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, to meet them, go over the proposed schedule, and send them to appointments that had been set up for them. The visitors had at least a rough schedule when they left Washington. Schedules were flexible, except for appointments, so they could be changed to take advantage of new opportunities. The foreign visitors had "panic button" phone numbers to call if they suddenly needed more help. It worked out very well.

The whole idea of bringing people from abroad, especially Europeans, here was not so necessary once Europe had recovered from the war and loosened currency controls so people could take money out of the country. International travel was becoming more common, but it was still difficult for most people around the world to travel. People needed to buy expensive plane tickets, stay in hotels, and travel here for several weeks. The visitors all benefited from assistance in making appointments to meet Americans who could give them serious briefings on all sorts of things and help establish points of contact for them here after they returned home. International travel and communications in the 1950s were not as easy as they are now. It was in America's interest that influential people abroad had a more accurate picture of the U.S. than the sometimes distorted picture in the media.

*Q: And really it was probably a better training ground for you than even the A-100 class in terms of being with people from overseas and getting to know how they think and look and being easy with them.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, don't forget I grew up in New York.

*Q: There are a lot of foreigners; that is true.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: One of my delights as a high school student was being on the subway and listening to all the different languages being spoken and trying to figure out where people might have come from. Once people, often refugees, started pouring in to the U.S. after the war, many of them came to New York, to Brooklyn. I saw many people with concentration camp tattoos on their arm. New York has always been an international city from its very beginnings. Even when it was a Dutch colony, there were about 25 languages spoken in New Amsterdam.

*Q: So that was never a problem.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Not really.

*Q: A learning experience. You learned that even as a child.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, yes, very much so. New York is a port and such an international center. I loved going to ship sailings. I was used to seeing foreigners, even if I did not actually meet them. As soon as the war ended and gas was available, my parents took us on a car trip to explore eastern Canada, and I went to Europe after college.

During my first assignment in Washington, I met someone whose family had become citizens, Jacques Raven, an economist working for USAID. He was born in Paris, but his immediate family came to America when they had to leave France during the war. He had had great uncles who had come to California in the gold rush north of San Francisco.

Part of his family was still in California, so the family went there. My husband's uncle and mother and their spouses and children went to San Francisco to one of their relatives. The two men went back to join de Gaulle in London. My uncle-in-law was bilingual, because they had had an English nanny as children, but the nanny had had much less success with my mother-in-law whose English was charming, but she always retained her strong French accent. Her brother, however, sounded exactly like James Mason, which caused some problems with the British navy which inspected their passenger ship on the high seas and could not understand how they could be brother and sister. He became a liaison with the American army during the war.

*Q: Interesting family. How did you meet Jacques?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We met at a party in Washington.

*Q: So what happened, why did you leave New York?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Because I was assigned back to Washington.

*Q: How long were you in New York?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: About six months or so.

*Q: It was a rather short period. Then you were assigned back to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I had been working with them in New York.

*Q: But now you were back, and what did you do in that job?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: That is when I was working with the Voluntary Visitors program. In New York, I was working with the leader program that provided funding and a program for a three month visit to the U.S. They were both in the same Bureau.

Then, I was assigned back to Washington to what they called the "Voluntary Visitors" program that I described before.

*Q: Right.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: So that was a very interesting assignment. However, it was ending. Jacques and I had been dating for 5-6 months, and we were both going to be assigned overseas. We had to decide whether to fish or cut bait, so we decided to get married. I was disappointed that I would have to resign from the Foreign Service.

*Q: You knew you would have to resign when you were making your decision. You knew from your experience in the Foreign Service that was going to be the case. Did you consider not confessing?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, I didn't. I wouldn't have wanted to do that. In addition, it would not have worked. We were going to be assigned to different places. Jacques was supposed to go to Peru. I had been assigned initially, but not definitively, to Naples. That would have been a bit of a commute. But then, after we had set our wedding date, Jacques was re-assigned to India. I was delighted. We both wanted to go to India, so after we were married, we went to India. We arrived in New Delhi just before Christmas in 1959.

*Q: Stop right there and tell me what was your experience like when you actually had to do the resigning. Did you just put in papers?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I had to write a letter of resignation to the Secretary of State and put in various papers to separate from the State Department. I was told not to date my resignation, which would not be accepted until several months after we had been married, because of the "needs of the Service," namely, my office did not want me to leave during our busy summer season. So, I worked for several months until my replacement arrived in the autumn. The State Department did not fall apart because of the presence of a married female FSO!

I found out more about the end of that career, when I went back to State in 1975 and was able to access my old performance evaluations. In Washington, I had worked for a wonderful woman, Mary Stewart French. She was an institution. I had had a chance to talk to Miss French when I was in Washington in 1973 looking into the possibility of returning to the Foreign Service. She was very ill and couldn't see me, but we talked for quite a while. She told me she had wanted to give me a very good evaluation, even though I would be leaving the State Department, just in case I ever wanted to return. I was able to thank her and tell her that, my life had altered with my divorce, and I did want to return. We had gotten along quite well, and I was very fond of her. Miss French,

as we all called her, had always done what she could for me, so I was grateful to be able to thank her.

When I was able to see her performance evaluation for the first time, I saw that it was, indeed, excellent. But several times in the report she wrote that it was a shame and a loss to the Foreign Service that I had to resign because I was being married. The Promotion Board obviously did not pay much attention to my good evaluation, and, of course, I was not promoted.

I had been on language probation until early 1959, because I kept failing the written French exam. After a year of early morning language training at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), I finally passed the French exam and became eligible for promotion. With that barrier removed and strong performance evaluations, I undoubtedly would have been promoted. That would have been a big help when I returned to the Foreign Service years later. However, we were married about the time the Boards were meeting. And that was it.

*Q: It wasn't important at that point.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, it was important to me that I pass the French exam and be promoted. I had worked hard to go beyond the academic, classical French of my college days. It would also have made a big difference to my income when I returned to the Foreign Service in 1975. Ironically, when I was tested in French in 1975, I had a 4/4 in spoken and written French (that means fluent in reading and speaking), which gave me a two step increase within my grade level. I earned more and was no longer at the very bottom of the FSO-7 grade. In addition, it gave me a permanent pass for a world language.

*Q: So for how long were you in the Foreign Service that first time?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Nearly 3 years.

*Q: And that was either in New York or Washington. You never went overseas in that time?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No. After my Washington assignment, I would have gone overseas. When I was married, my assignment in Washington was just extended until my replacement arrived. One October day, someone in Personnel called me and said they were dating my resignation as of the end of that pay period. I was given two weeks notice, I think. But, by that time we were getting ready to go to India, and I was also beginning to wonder why I was feeling sick every morning. Anyway, that was it. I was delighted to be going to India and focused on that. I looked forward to having time to read and learn about India, instead of having to work all day and learn about the country at night.

We arrived in India just before the famous visit of President Eisenhower. It was the first visit ever of a sitting American president. Delhi went wild. The excitement was extraordinary. Because hotel rooms were so scarce, we had to stay in Old Delhi, away from most of the action. We stayed in a lovely old government house from the British Raj, now a hotel, out on the "Civil Lines" (a British division of cities to denote areas with civilian buildings and residences). The house had wonderful gardens and high ceilings with fans -- and aggressive monkeys in the garden and some very large bugs. It was like being in a novel or watching a film about the Raj.

In fact, at the hotel, we met another American guest, James Ivory, who went on to make so many famous films about India with Ismail Merchant. We did a lot of things with Jim during the time we were all at the hotel, including going to hear Eisenhower speak to the huge crowd.

*Q: Now this was 1959 right?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, just before Christmas, 1959. After the Eisenhower visit, we moved to a hotel in New Delhi closer to the Embassy. Then we moved to a "bungalow" (an Indian word) that turned out to be a two story building housing four families, three Indian and us. That was a great experience. Sunder Nagar is now considered a posh area of New Delhi. We visited it in April 2010, and it looks very prosperous, indeed. I was pleased to see how some of the nondescript maidans (large grassy squares surrounded by houses) had been transformed with trees and flowers into beautiful gardens. Some houses were unchanged, but our bungalow has been replaced by a very large house built for a single family.

We lived on the second floor, in a three bedroom apartment with a balcony veranda, again very high ceilings, and thick walls. We also had access to the flat roof, part of which was covered -- a great place for an evening dance party. The house was built to protect against the heat in a pre-air conditioning time. In the winter, without any central heating, it was quite cold despite some small heaters. But it was bearable in the summer, even when we lost electricity. We did have air conditioning units in the bedrooms, so we could sleep. However, in the heat of summer, just before the monsoon, the air in Delhi was thick with sand because there had not been any rain since the previous summer. The winds were so high that dust was everywhere, including inside the air-conditioning units. We had ceiling fans in every room, another touch of the Raj. The fans helped but mainly blew around the dust.

I got to know two of the women in our bungalow fairly well. They were Punjabi sisters-in law, and I discovered how strong Punjabi women were. They ran the house and their husbands, but even they probably had little power outside their immediate family and outside the house. Our neighbors all lived in nuclear family arrangements, but were tightly woven into the family of their husbands, whose father ruled the whole family.

Our other neighbor in the bungalow lived a more restricted life. Her family came from a small sub-caste in the middle of the country. Her husband owned a travel agency, but his

wife never went anywhere. Their very bright daughter started university, but was pulled out, because, in the culture of their sub-caste, they might never have found her a husband for her if she were too educated. She also should not have been in mixed classes and associating with boys. She told me she loved it and was doing well academically.

But, she was married off -- into a family that mistreated her. Our neighborhood Punjabi women were angry about that. Shortly before we left India, our Punjabi neighbors confronted the girl's father and forced him to intercede on her behalf with the husband's family and also demand that she be allowed to visit her family alone. They succeeded. Just before we left I was told that the girl would be allowed to visit. Those Punjabi women were tough.

*Q: How did they manifest that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, for example, they invited me sometimes, to join a group of women for morning coffee. One Punjabi woman asked me how many children I wanted. I said, "Oh, my husband and I thought we would like to have two children." The women jumped on me and demanded, "What does your husband have to do with this? This is your decision."

*Q: Oh, that kind of tough. I see. And you were about to greet a newcomer around this time. Is that right? Your first child.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, Rob was born July 5, 1960, the day before the monsoon broke.

*Q: So you were pretty well acclimated by the time Rob was born.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We had been there about six months. Rob was born in a very good hospital, Holy Family hospital, run by an American order of sisters, who were doctors, nurses and medical technicians and administrators. His father was able to be in the delivery room for the birth and was given an introduction to the process of childbirth by the American obstetrician-surgeon who ran the hospital, another nun. She explained to Jacques what she was doing and why. When we were leaving Delhi, I was about six months pregnant with our second child. We planned to stop in Afghanistan, Turkey, Austria, France and New York on the way back to Washington. She said, "Don't worry, I don't think the baby will be early. I told your husband exactly what he has to do if the baby starts to come. It is going to be all right, don't worry." Which I didn't, and we went ahead on our indirect travel home.

*Q: Did you meet other Indian families?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, in addition to the three families sharing our building, a lot of foreign and Indian women supported the Holy Family hospital, and I worked with them. An English woman with whom I volunteered became a life-long friend. We had several close Indian friends too.

We also met a lot of foreigners and Indians when we joined the Delhi Gymkhana Club, which was an old institution of the Raj. It used to cater to the British and Europeans, but now has mainly Indian members. It was the kind of place you would find in a film of the 1920s or 30s. High ceilings, portraits of the "good and the great," many servants in turbans and livery, and all that. There was a covered swimming pool in the gardens, the "Lady Willingdon Swimming Bath," where I practically lived. It was so hot, and we didn't have much running water except in the middle of the night. I would collect water then and fill bathtubs and various containers, so we could cook, wash ourselves and clothes, and flush toilets.

It was such a sight in the Gymkhana to see the Indian Army and Navy officers, who were leading members of the Club in postcolonial India. We watched them walking along with their swagger sticks in a way no other group of officers seems to manage. Another vestige of the Raj.

I also met some members of the legendary Indian Civil Service created under the British Raj to help run the country. They were such an amazing group of people. Their training and exams were formidable. I was delighted to have had the chance to talk to a few of them and even more delighted that I never had had to meet their standards to join the American government.

We traveled as much as possible and met Indians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians, many of whom seemed more British than the British. The Anglo-Indians lost their place in society when the Raj ended. They had been educated for a world that no longer existed and had lost their privileges and the jobs reserved for them. Many were impoverished and sadly rootless in independent India. Some spoke to me of England as their home, even though they had never actually been there.

We went to Kashmir at one point and spent two wonderful weeks on a house boat on a Dal Lake (Nagin Lake). That was an amazing experience. Absolutely wonderful. Kashmir is so beautiful!

At that point, Rob was just a year old. I had filled our suitcases with jars of American foods for toddlers. But the cook on the house boat started feeding him curry.

*Q: He liked it?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: He loved curry. He ate fish and duck and chicken and curries of all sorts. He absolutely refused to have anything to do with the tasteless "junior food" I had brought for him. We flew part way from Kashmir in a DC 3 through the mountain valleys and then had to take the train from Pathankot, a cantonment town on the Indo-Pakistani border, back to Delhi. It was tense at that time, and Indian and Pakistani troops were confronting each other along the border. We had a very long wait in Pathonkot's train station before trains were allowed to move again. I was pregnant and not feeling very well.

Rob would not eat the baby food, nor would he eat the rather awful "Western" food we had ordered. His Ayah, Kamila, said, "Don't worry; I will take him to the Indian restaurant. Don't you come with me." Rob was as happy as could be and seemed to have eaten well -- but I never asked questions. He drank tea whenever he could possibly manage to get some. He still drinks tea Indian style, maybe not with quite as much sugar now. He still loves curry and rice.

Another trip we made a little later was to Nepal. Katmandu seemed to me to be a Shangri-La accentuated by the giddiness I felt because of the high altitude. On the way back to India, our plane was delayed by several hours, and we lost our hotel reservation in Calcutta. We did not know exactly what to do. It was quite late, and, as usual, when I was pregnant and tired, I was not feeling too well. A young man we met on the plane said, "Why don't you come home with me? My wife is also pregnant, and we are all about the same age." He took us home, and we took them out for dinner. We spent, I guess, two days with them, and he introduced us to Calcutta. We had a wonderful time with them. I was surprised when he started singing a long nineteenth century American sort of music hall ballad that my father used to sing and that I had never heard anywhere else. They were a terrific couple. Although we never saw them again, we kept in touch for a while. I am very grateful for their welcome and for teaching us so much about Calcutta, which I think is an amazing, vibrant city with so many beautiful buildings in the midst of such poverty. I thoroughly enjoy the Bengalis, the literary leaders of India.

*Q: Did you miss working?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, to some extent. Shortly after I arrived in Delhi, about three months pregnant, I was at a party having after-dinner coffee with the Embassy's admin counselor and someone in the political section. They were bemoaning their fate because the assignment of a junior political officer to Delhi had had to be broken. I had learned quite a bit about India by that time, reading as much as I could and talking to people. So, I reminded them of my experience at State and told them that my security clearance should still be good. I offered to work until someone could be assigned to the Embassy. The admin counselor turned to me rather angrily and said, "How dare you ask for a job now. You have made your choice. You knew the rules on marriage."

*Q: Another memorable encounter.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was so floored; I was at a loss for words. After that, I just stayed away from the Embassy as much as I could. My husband was working with USAID (United States Agency for International Development), and I found that group much nicer. I really liked them very much.

*Q: And they weren't in the same building or anything?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No. They were in another building. I only had to go to the Embassy for shots and things like that.

*Q: It didn't do you any good.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, and I never mentioned it again.

This was in 1960, and the American elections were coming up. Everyone was interested in our elections. All kinds of people, European and Indian, would ask me about the election. My close British friend, who had read economics at Oxford, and I agreed that, while our children played in the maidan (the little park like space in our neighborhood), I would teach her about American history and politics and she would teach me economics. Our children were the same age and were easy to supervise. So, Mary and I did that, but excitement over the upcoming American election focused our minds. I did not learn much about economics!

*Q: Everyone was so curious about our election.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh yes. It was Kennedy-Nixon. People were fascinated by Kennedy, the young man who represented the changing of the guard. The Embassy was able to get the TV footage of their debates, and invitations to watch them at the Embassy were prized. We took as many friends as we could to see them, including Mary.

*Q: Reminiscent of what happened in 2008.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. There was so much interest abroad and a feeling that the torch really was being passed to a whole new generation.

When we were in Kashmir, I used to have long talks with a Kashmiri man who spoke English quite well and was very well informed about the American political system. He asked me questions about the election process and about Kennedy. He really knew a lot of the ins and outs of technical parts of our electoral system, even asking about voting in the electoral college. I was impressed and asked him what he was reading to have kept up so closely with our elections. He replied that he listened to the radio, but he did not know how to read. His granddaughter read the newspapers to him every day. Here he was, illiterate in his own language, and he practically could have taught, in English, an American high school class about the American political system.

*Q: Amazing, and all second hand through the newspapers and radio. Did he listen to Voice of America or BBC?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: BBC probably. Maybe both and Indian news. I don't remember anymore. I was stunned when he said he couldn't read.

*Q: How long were you in New Delhi?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Just two years. Jacques was reassigned to Washington in November. On our way back, we stopped in places I had always wanted to see. Kabul

was one. I was fascinated by Babur, the first Mogul emperor, and also wanted to see his famous gardens of which there was not much evidence. One of the interesting things I remember was being outside the big market in Kabul and seeing a woman completely covered in a burqa (head to toe covering) leading by the hand her son, who was wearing a New York Yankees baseball jacket. There was a big market for second hand clothes in Afghanistan. That is where his mother must have bought it. We could not see the Bamiyan Buddhas, later destroyed by the Taliban -- the roads were too rough for me -- but we saw a lot.

Then, we went to Istanbul, a city I had long wanted to see and have visited many times now. We went to Vienna, where we had friends, and then spent several weeks in Paris, where Rob met his French grandmother and his great grandparents and to New York to meet his American grandparents. When we arrived in Washington, Rob and I started looking around for a house.

*Q: Jacques was being assigned to Washington?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. There were changes with the election and some big cuts in personnel. Kennedy wanted to change a lot of things. Jack Fobes, the man Jacques worked under in Delhi, had talked to some people in USAID about Jacques. So, they interviewed him over the phone and offered him a job, which was really good because we would soon have two children.

*Q: Yes. That was another one of those actions that happens so often early in an administration.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, then Administrations sometimes realize they don't have enough people to implement their programs. So, Jacques was assigned to Washington. Our second son, Jeffery, was born in Virginia on February 21, a few days after we had signed the papers for our house.

*Q: That was what year?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The winter of 1962. We bought a house built in 1927 that needed a lot of renovation, much of which we had to do ourselves or with friends. We had almost finished it by 1964 when Jacques was offered a job in Lebanon with the UN Development Program, and we moved to Beirut.

We put our three year old in the College Protestant preschool and his younger brother later went to a multi-lingual (French, Arabic, English) nursery school. There really weren't any parks or playgrounds or play areas for children, and we lived in an apartment, so we joined a beach club. We again met several life-long friends, and the children happily used the swings, played in the sand, and paddled in the sea.

With the children in school part of the day, I enrolled in the American University of Beirut (AUB) to work on an M.A. in Education, into which I managed to inject a course

in archaeology. Again we traveled as much as we could all over the Middle East. We went to Jerusalem several times but only to the "old" East Jerusalem (the part then under Jordanian control) and to Syria and Jordan. We could not go to Israel.

*Q: And all was peaceful at that time to go from…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, you couldn't go to Jerusalem the easy way south from Tyre (Lebanon). We had to go through Syria and down through Jordan. We crossed into the West Bank from Jordan.

*Q: Then there was that famous crossing point also……*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Allenby Bridge? We crossed the Jordan River there. We went to Aqaba several times. Once, we camped there with an Indian friend, Prem Jha, who was with the UN in Damascus. My sons and I were able to meet him again during our recent trip to Delhi. We also literally ran into King Hussein in the water one day. He was charming, played a bit with the children and was very interested in our opinions about the tourist facilities we had used in Jordan.

At one point, when we were camping with Prem outside Aqaba, we started a short hike. The area was very close to the border of Saudi Arabia and the old Hejaz railway and near Israel. All of a sudden a very tall attractive Jordanian showed up with a couple of obviously underling Jordanians all dressed in well-pressed casual clothes. He had a string and a safety pin. I asked him what he was doing, and he answered, "Oh I am just going fishing." They were fishing for information, obviously intelligence officers wondering what we were doing there. It was interesting. We stayed three years in Lebanon, and I loved it.

*Q: What about the American University of Beirut? Do you have any other thoughts about it and its history?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It is so well respected in the Middle East and elsewhere. It is an outstanding university with a very good medical school and hospital. It had the first Arabic printing press in the Middle East. AUB was founded by American Presbyterians as Syrian Protestant College.

My husband had gone to the University of California at Berkeley and was surprised to find that American University in Beirut was older. In June 1967, when I was to graduate, AUB was planning to celebrate its 100th anniversary, but, of course, the university had to close because of the June War. Our graduation was canceled.

The University was wonderful because I was with people from all over the Middle East. There usually were no other Americans in my classes, but there were a number of Americans doing Middle East studies and also in the Education and other Departments of the university. We became friends with some people, who were studying Arabic in the

State Department's Arabic studies program, which was located in Beirut. Later, I would run into them at the State Department.

I also see friends from Beirut at ANERA, an organization created after the 1967 war that is helping the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and also Lebanese and Jordanians, especially refugees.

*Q: Was there any interaction with Israel or Israelis at the University?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: There probably were students who were Jewish. There was a substantial Jewish population in Lebanon, but they were Lebanese. My son's teacher was

Jewish and taught in a Catholic school in Beirut. I assume Jewish Lebanese would qualify for "the right to return" to Israel, which would then give them Israeli citizenship. So, some Lebanese may have had dual citizenship, but they would not have flaunted it. To get to Lebanon, you had to go to Cyprus and use a passport without an Israeli stamp in it. Some Lebanese may have moved to Israel over the years but still had relatives in Lebanon they wanted to visit. Being Jewish does not seem to have been a problem, but being Israeli would have been.

I met a young American woman studying at AUB for a semester or so, whose mother was Israeli and her father Palestinian Moslem. When she was in the Arab states, she was an Arab and a Muslim, and I think she had a Jordanian passport. She had the "right of return" to Israel because her mother was Jewish. So she went to Israel, with an Israeli passport, to see members of her mother's family. It was an interesting situation. Her parents had emigrated to the U.S. and married, and to find a religion that would welcome both of them, they became Mormons. She visited both families, but I am not sure that her parents would go together.

AUB had students and faculty from everywhere, and probably had students drawn from the large Jewish population in Lebanon at that time. A Lebanese Jewish friend told me Jews did not have any trouble in Lebanon, but they could not go into politics. They seem to have been businessmen, doctors, etc. The gold souk was, I have been told, mainly Jewish.

There were people from all over the world at AUB. Almost anyone who is anyone in the Middle East, outside Israel, seemed to have graduated from AUB -- or American University of Cairo. I have been told that there were more AUB graduates in San Francisco at the founding meeting of the UN than from any other university.

*Q: Every prime minister from a country in the Middle East?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Many of them. Later, when I was working on a part of the Middle East peace process, I found that a number of people in the Arab delegations were also AUB graduates or graduates of American University of Cairo, so we had mini-reunions and exchanged stories. That was helpful in initiating our early contacts with Palestinian

delegations. I was asked several times to arrange quiet meetings between the head of the Palestinian delegation and the head of the American delegation, when the Palestinians did not want to approach the U.S. delegation directly.

I had other AUB friends who were Palestinians. My closest friend was a Palestinian from Jerusalem. I recently met her brother, who lives in Washington, and we are back in touch. She is now in Jordan with her husband and children. Her family had fled Jerusalem in 1948 because the Israeli forces were moving. They ended up in a refugee camp, but all the children managed to get at least a university degree. Jerusalem was divided by a wall until 1967, but they were able to look over the dividing wall, and see Israelis who had moved into their house picking fruits from the trees their family had planted.

That is where I learned about the Palestinian families with the keys to their lost houses passed down from generation to generation. I can see why it is such a thorny issue. For an American, it might not be such an emotional issue, because we tend to move often and don't usually have a real tie to the land, unless it is a family farm or perhaps a family vacation place or a childhood home.

*Q: Right. For them it is so important. I have seen a couple of TV programs about the keys.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It is really important. I have seen some keys. People have gone on with their lives to a certain point, but they are held back partially by the fear that if they go too far away, they will never get back to their houses. That was difficult for a while for me to understand. Just because it is so different.

*Q: Yes, a truly different outlook.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and I grew up in the city, rather than on the land. I don't have any attachment to a piece of land or a house. I just live in houses for a while.

*Q: That's right, and the land, of course, is an important part of that whole because the citrus trees…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: And the olive trees.

*Q: The olive trees, yes, and they are so old too.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, some are very old. That is why it has been so awful when the Israelis have brought bulldozers in to dig up the olive trees. It is such a catastrophe for them. Anyway that is a situation that, I hope very much, will be resolved before too much longer, and peace will be restored to the region.

While we were in Lebanon, we went to Greece several times. One time, we drove back to Beirut along the coast of Turkey. So, I knew all those places, which was very helpful when I went to work for you.

After three years in Beirut, my husband was offered a job in the International Department of Wells Fargo bank. Our children were all excited about that because of the Wells Fargo stage coaches and all of the wild west connections. It was fun living in San Francisco, but I did miss being overseas. I always felt it was about time to move. We lived there for several years, and I became a legal and voting resident of California.

I worked at Head Start in San Francisco as a volunteer, and sometimes as a paid substitute. Later, I was hired to teach at the French-American Bilingual School where our children were students, I taught there for almost a year and then we moved to Paris. I was hired by the American School of Paris, initially as a replacement and then permanently. I worked there for about five years. I also worked for a year at Marymount, a bilingual school, as a third grade teacher and librarian.

*Q: So when was this?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was at Marymount in 1970-71 and after that at the American School.

*Q: This is about 12 years after you joined the Foreign Service roughly. Anyway, in the 70s.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. It was some time around then. One evening, friends from our time in Beirut came to see us in Paris. He was just retiring from the Foreign Service and had stopped at Embassy Paris. He had picked up an announcement at the Embassy saying that State would consider applications for reinstatement from women who had been forced to resign because of marriage.

*Q: And that was '69?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, that was after that.

*Q: This would be early 70's.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. I believe Ambassador Macomber started the process of bringing back some married women. The information appeared to have been circulated in limited circles, at least overseas. I had never heard about it, so I was fortunate that my friend had picked it up at Embassy Paris and given it to me.

*Q: Oh really? How did you know Macomber?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I only met him after I was back in the Foreign Service and had been posted to Iran. When he visited Tehran, I had a chance to thank him.

*Q: This was William Macomber.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. When my friend gave me the announcement, I put it aside, but found it after Jacques and I were divorced in 1972.

In 1973, I was still teaching at the American School of Paris and had a grant to do post graduate work in education at Harvard during the summer. I stopped in Washington before going to Cambridge and met with some people at State who told me that I could apply to be taken back into the Foreign Service. I was given papers to sign, but I wanted to talk it over with my sons before making any decision. When we were all back in Paris, we talked about it. They said that they had enjoyed living overseas, as I did, and we agreed "Why not?" We decided that I should apply.

*Q: They liked life overseas.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, we were living in Paris.

*Q: Oh, that is overseas.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Both my sons are bilingual in French. Rob has always been very proud of being a Delhi-wallah, born in New Delhi. Jeff has never really forgiven me that he had not been born in Delhi too. He was born just after we had left Delhi to return to Washington.

We decided that I should apply to return to the Foreign Service. So, I filled out the endless forms and brought them to the Embassy. Luckily for me, there was a very sharp and very nice young woman personnel officer at the Embassy. I don't think we ever actually met, but I talked to her on the phone a lot. She called me at one point and said she could not find anyone in Washington who would be responsible for processing my papers. She said I was falling though the cracks, because I was not living in the United States, nor was I married to a Foreign Service Officer, nor was I the widow of one. I was not working for the American government either. There were procedures in place for women in those categories. I don't know how widely the information about women being taken back into the Foreign Service was disseminated. I have wondered whether State was actually only doing the minimum required to let women know that they could apply to return. I never met any "retread," as we were called, in my situation, although there may have been some. I think I was very lucky indeed to have been given that information and to have found people willing to help me.

*Q: Literally no programs for you?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Apparently, no process in place for women like me. So, the wonderful Personnel Officer in Paris took my papers with her when she went back to Washington for consultations and literally went from office to office and asked people to sign my papers. This was rather daring because she was, perhaps, a second tour officer.

When my embassy mentor came back from Washington, she told me that State would probably have to offer me a job. But, she advised me that it was unlikely to be a job I

would want with my background. She said I would probably be offered the lowest grade level possible, the lowest salary. "They really don't want you," she told me. She said that I would have to decide whether to fight for a better offer or to accept what was on the table. She advised me not to worry about taking an entry level appointment because I was unlikely to be given a better offer. She told me that promotions were coming fairly quickly at that time for junior grade officers, who had good performance evaluations. Of course, as soon as I started again at State, the era of fast promotions ended.

I was offered an appointment as an FO-7, bottom step. I had expected more, because I had already worked at State for three years and had earned an MA and was now fluent in French. I had been an FO-8 when I left State, so it was not much of a step forward. My failure to pass the written French exam for several years in the 1950s, which had made me ineligible for promotion then, had come back to haunt me. I had passed the French exam finally in 1959, but that did not help me. The Promotion Board met just after I was married and knew I had resigned. I was disappointed by State's offer in 1974, but I took the advice I had been given and accepted it.

I think the State Department tried again to get rid of me, although I did not realize it at the time. I was taking everything at face value. I was still in Paris. Embassy Paris arranged for us to be packed out and our effects put into storage, but I still did not have my orders to return to Washington for the A-100 class (training for new officers). Our air freight was in the basement of our apartment.

The people who owned the apartment had been in Washington at the French Embassy. After their three year assignment, they were returning to Paris, and we had to vacate the apartment. I was anxiously awaiting my orders.

Out of the blue, I had a phone call from Washington, from people claiming to represent MED (Medical Office). I was told that my medical clearance had been pulled on the grounds that I had migraine headaches. I argued that I had been having migraines occasionally since I was a teenager and that State had my full medical records, including during the period when I had worked there (January 1957-end 1959). No doctor had questioned me about my migraines, and no one at State or elsewhere had complained that my occasional headaches had affected my work. Nonetheless, I was told that MED would be looking into "the problem" of my headaches.

*Q: Did you have a feeling that they were looking for other excuses?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I didn't at that point. I was bewildered, but I had recently read about speculation that people with migraines might be unstable or might develop certain medical problems. I thought that perhaps speculations such as that might be at the bottom of the delay with my medical clearance.

I couldn't believe this might be a deliberate ploy to make me go away. That would be a horrible thing to do. I had children who were in school. One was entering seventh grade and the other ninth. I had resigned from my teaching job at the American School of Paris,

when State accepted me back and started the process of moving me. I just took it at face value that MED really did have some strange problems with my headaches. The people who telephoned so frequently said they were from MED and needed more information about my migraines. I kept giving them the same information.

At that point, we had to leave our apartment in Paris. Our effects were in storage. Rob and Jeff were spending the summer with their father. I went to a town in Normandy, Bagnoles de l'Orne, for treatment for a problem I had had with my leg following an automobile accident while we were on home leave from Beirut in 1966. I had broken my pelvis and developed blood clots while I was in the hospital in Flagstaff, Arizona. My swelling leg was ignored by the senior doctor at the hospital. The nurses had tried to tell me something was seriously wrong, but they could not challenge a doctor in those days, and I had no idea what they were trying to tell me. I finally left the Flagstaff hospital and flew to San Francisco, where I was quickly put into a hospital in nearby Redwood City. I had excellent medical care, but it was considered too late to operate to remove the clots. So, for years I continued to have problems with swelling in my leg and had to wear surgical stockings most of the time.

A French friend (a friend I had met in Delhi) had suggested that I might benefit from treatment at a thermal establishment in Bagnoles de l'Orne that specialized in treating circulation problems. My doctor in Paris agreed and gave me a prescription for the treatment, which was covered by French Social Security. That was why I was in Normandy for three weeks in a medical thermal center. MED called frequently during this time, but I never dared tell the MED people that I was in a thermal center being treated with naturally radioactive water. However, the treatment did work, and I have rarely had any problems with my leg since the summer of 1974.

During the three week treatment, I stayed at a small inn in the countryside and went to the medical center in town about six times a week. I often returned to the inn to be greeted with "Madame, there has been another telephone call from Washington." The very kind innkeeper, who had been taking such good care of me because I was there alone, started looking at me as if I were…

*Q: Who are you? Yes?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. This was the summer of Watergate, the Nixon resignation, and the attempted coup in Cyprus, organized by the colonels then running Greece, that led to the Turkish troops landing in Cyprus. The innkeeper was becoming uneasy. So I finally had to explain to her why I was receiving so many phone calls from the State Department.

They were asking for information about my migraines, I tried to explain. She replied, "Half the world has migraines."

When I arrived back in Paris, I still did not have my medical clearance, nor did I have a job or a place to live. Fortunately, the American School of Pars (ASP) took my sons, Rob

and Jeff, back on scholarships. I rented a small furnished apartment in a working class suburb and started substituting at ASP as often as possible and picking up odd jobs in Paris.

Finally, I talked to one of my close friends at ASP, the chairman of the Middle School where I had been a full time teacher. I told him I needed to send a letter from the American School to State Department Personnel regarding my migraines and asked him if he would sign it for me, since he had been my supervisor. My colleague was English and balked at this, saying that he did not like American foreign policy or the State Department and thought I should remain teaching in Paris. Finally, I drafted a letter saying that the American School had not found that my rare migraines had caused any problems and that I had followed a normal teaching schedule and rarely took sick days for any reason. All of this was true. The letter was typed on the school's stationery, and my friend signed it. I don't know if that scared people in Washington, but my medical clearance was soon reinstated, and I had my orders to travel to Washington. No one ever again asked about my migraines, during my whole career, and I was never told to see a doctor about them.

The situation had created a terrible problem for my family. My sons had missed the whole first semester in the demanding private school, which had accepted them for September 1974. That was very hard for them.

*Q: Not a good…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It was not good. The schools in Paris and Washington were covering different materials and sometimes in different order. My sons had to start in mid-stream. This did not help their grade point averages. I was really angry about the incompetence of people at State. But, it was only later that I started to wonder if some people at State might have thrown up this roadblock on purpose. I could scarcely believe people would do something so callous, but I could not help wondering if this had been a ploy all along to force me to withdraw my request for reinstatement.

*Q: Just to make it as hard as they could. Discourage you into saying call it off.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. I began to think so. And they might have -- I nearly ran out of options to remain in France, and the people calling me from Washington told me I could not leave France until the migraine issue was resolved. My French residence and work permits were expiring and with them our coverage under France's national health plan.

*Q: So although the policy had changed, the attitude had not changed.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Maybe not. I didn't want to be paranoid about this. But, as they say, even paranoids have enemies.

*Q: In 1957, when we all started, we had the rank of FSO eight.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, but, when I had had to resign in mid-1959, I was still an FO-8. I passed the written French exam in 1959, so State would have been in the process of removing me from the probation list just before the Promotion Boards met in the summer. However, the fact that I was about to resign because of marriage would have been much in evidence in my file. So, in January 1975, I was re-appointed at the very bottom step of FO-7, despite my MA.

*Q: Also your experience.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, just short of three years. I noticed when I started the A-100 course that some of my very young just out of college male colleagues had been appointed at the FO-6 level. However, I followed the advice of my mentor at Embassy Paris and did not comment.

I had worked at State for nearly three years, but I had to take a small cut from my teaching salary at ASP (American School of Paris) when I was reinstated. Then, when I was tested in French and received a fluency rating (4/4), I received a two step raise, as well as a permanent pass in one world language. I became an FO-7, step 3. At least, that gave me a little higher salary, which I really needed.

I never joined the Foreign Service Officer women's discrimination lawsuit because so many of the men I was dealing with at State, especially at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), did a lot to help me. For example, because I was the only person in the A-100 class who was a single parent going overseas with high school age children, I was given a few hours before assignments were handed out to check on the schools at posts on the assignment list. Everyone seemed to realize how important it was that I find a post with a good secondary school for Rob and Jeff. Otherwise, I might well have lost custody of them. State would have gotten rid of me fast under those circumstances. I appreciated the help my male -- and female -- colleagues gave me, when I really needed it.

*Q: Now when was this?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: This was in 1975, January '75. There were several other women in the class who were "retreads," as we were called.

*Q: You did have to take the A-100 class again?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, yes. This time it was about six weeks long, but I only took it for four because I had been assigned to Iran and Farsi language training. I had been put into the consular cone and would go to Tehran as a visa officer. I had wanted to go to Tehran because I knew Iran was a fascinating country and, more importantly, Tehran was the only post on the list of assignments for our class that had a good, international secondary school which even had an American curriculum. I had heard about the school from an Iranian student in the American School in Paris, "just in case you might be

assigned there" he told me. I was able to thank him when I saw him as I was registering my sons at Community School.

After four weeks of the A-100 course, I began to study Farsi, which was awful for me.

*Q: Awful in what way?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, FSI was doing an experimental program, which was interesting, but one day's study did not build on the previous day's work. I was in a class with two other FSO's who also spoke another Indo-European language well. We were not taught Farsi grammar. We were asked to figure out the structure of Farsi, having been told it was an Indo-European language. That was sometimes fun -- better than the usual dry grammar study in the initial stages of learning a language. It was a wonderful way to learn the structure of a new language.

However, we did not have organized vocabulary lists. We made vocabulary lists from class discussions and newspapers. I would often go home with perhaps a hundred words to memorize because of the unstructured way in which we were learning. The next day, we would have new words. I found that part too haphazard and overwhelming. I was becoming depressed and demoralized, because I was falling further behind each day. I could not memorize so many words every night or review the day's work in depth, since I had a full schedule at home and had to do my studying rather late at night. I was exhausted.

Since my sons had missed the first semester of all their courses, they needed help with homework. They had not actually lived in the States, except as very young children, so they had some culture shock on top of the shock of having to start seventh and ninth grades in the middle of the school year. I felt terrible about that. It was also difficult for them to make friends because they knew they would only be in Washington for about six months before spending the summer with their father in France and then going to Iran. I was asking a lot of them.

Gradually, they started making friends and caught up with their classes. Their report cards were all right, and we all passed our classes. Life for all three of us started to improve.

People at FSI had been very helpful. Some colleagues even lent me their credit cards, so I could rent a car on weekends from a local garage. I could not get a credit card because my credit history only covered my former husband. I was considered not to have a credit history, even though I had long paid the mortgage on our house and had been paying all our bills and had a high level security clearance.

I began to connect again with former Foreign Service friends (one couple -- Gil and Inger Sheinbaum lent me a car for several weeks, and Gil, who was also in my original A-100 class, advised me on building a credit history. I finally got a credit card about a year after we returned from Iran. Neighbors, and two wonderful distant cousins, my "Aunt' Nan

and “cousin” Meredith, who had moved to Washington some years earlier, helped us tremendously. We became very close.

So, we went to Tehran and another culture. I was in the Visa Section, working on non-immigrant visas (visas for people planning to be in the U.S. temporarily). It was a difficult job that I found physically demanding. I did learn to speak Farsi more fluently, even if with a limited vocabulary, because I used Farsi most of the day to conduct visa interviews.

*Q: When you say that, it was a consular job.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it was on the visa line with only a few minutes for each applicant.

*Q: So, it was just seeing all the people one after another.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it was continuous -- an unending line of applicants. After hours of asking questions in Farsi to find out in several minutes if the applicant before me qualified for a non-immigrant visa, I was exhausted. I found it stressful. I wanted to give each applicant a fair chance and hoped my language competency in Farsi was equal to the task.

*Q: Everybody putting pressure on you of course.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: There were a lot of people I didn’t want to turn down. Sometimes you really had to deny the non-immigrant visitor visa to people who seemed to be planning to move to the U.S or obviously intending to work.

Sometimes, you could suggest some other solution, such as a different category of visa. For example, a recent widow, married for years to an American military contractor, arrived at the counter with three or four school age children. The children were American-born but too young to petition for their mother to have an immigrant visa. Her husband, their father, had just died, and the mother wanted to take their American citizen children back to the U.S., where they owned a home. But, she was from the Philippines, and her husband had never gotten around to filing for an immigrant visa for her. I could not issue a non-immigrant (tourist) visa to her. I suggested that she talk with her husband’s American company. I think they worked out something through their lawyers.

*Q: And this was really the first time you had ever done visa work.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. There was a lot of money in Iran at that time, so people could travel easily. Many people wanted to visit the U.S. temporarily for the usual reasons -- sightseeing, visit friends or family, study or conduct business. An annual medical exam at a major U.S. medical center, sometimes with an Iranian-American doctor, had become almost a status symbol. Iranians sought medical treatment in the U.S. for a variety of reasons and had the money to pay for it.

When we arrived in Iran, we found the oil boom still going strong or perhaps just having reached its peak. It was like being in Alaska and Canada for the Klondike gold rush or San Francisco after gold had been found. Money seemed to grow on trees to the point where it almost didn't have any value. It was quite amazing. Tiny plots of land, really tiny plots of land in Tehran and in other cities, were sold for a fortune. Corruption, of course, was tremendous.

My sons were studying at Community School, an international school with an American curriculum that attracted many Iranians, especially students with one American parent or whose parents wanted to send them to an American university. There was a cross section of students from many nations and economic strata. Some were American. Others were Filipinos, whose fathers had worked, for example, for Bell Helicopter or other defense companies, and had followed U.S. military involvements across Asia. Some were the children of international business people or diplomats, while others were wealthy Iranians, especially from minority communities. Rob found out that one of the girls in his class lived in a house that had fascinated us. It was a copy of the Petit Trianon, part of the palace complex in Versailles.

Later, a few of the girls in Rob's class asked him why he never had any money. It was strange they told him, "because your mother works for the government." It was a learning experience about government service for my sons. I gather from Iranian friends that the mullahs today in the Islamic Republic are just as corrupt, if not more so, than their predecessors. Business in Iran was still booming. Hotel rooms were so booked that a French relative by marriage, who worked for a major American corporation and had come to Iran on a business trip, called me for help. He said he had just arrived in Tehran. His company had arranged hotel reservations for him. He told me that the "appropriate" bribes had been paid, but the hotel room he was supposed to have had was gone. Someone had out-bribed his company. He had no place to stay, and he asked if we had a couch he could use. Well, we were staying in a temporary flat in the embassy compound because we had just arrived and did not have an apartment yet. I said that, of course, he could come and stay with us. He stayed two or three nights and was very grateful.

*Q: Right.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: That was typical of what was going on in those days. It was a wild time. I kept telling my sons to watch what was happening and to realize that Tehran was probably like San Francisco had been during the California gold rush. Oil exploitation was giving parts of Iran a kind of "gold fever" and an explosion of wealth for some. Not something most people will ever see.

*Q: It must have been a very high stress period for everybody, I suppose. There was no sign that the Shah was in trouble at that point.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Actually, there were signs. Several people at the embassy had raised concerns, and I gradually learned enough in Tehran and during our travels across

the country to agree with them. I have to say that politics was a subject that my Iranian friends and I never discussed. This was a country with a highly effective secret police, SAVAK.

We, in the Consular Section, did a report at one time on the amount of money we saw leaving the country in the pockets of people to whom we had given American visas. It was all legal, but It was starting to look like capital flight. While money lasted, people were leaving Iran with enough cash to buy property or businesses in the U.S. or to finance the entire secondary school and university study for their children, investing in safe havens of one sort or another.

*Q: It was OK?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it was legal, but was it capital flight? We had thousands of people applying for visas to visit their children studying in the United States. The parents often said that they would be buying property to house their student children.

The influx of oil money was enabling young people from all sorts of backgrounds to leave in droves to study in the U.S. I remember an attractive woman whose daughter was studying in California for a doctorate. She wanted to go to her daughter's graduation. And this woman put her fingerprint down on the visa application. She couldn't read or write her own language -- not even sign her name -- but her daughter was getting her doctorate.

On one of our trips -- to Hamadan -- I met several girls, who wanted to talk to me because they thought I might be American. They only spoke Farsi and wore chadors (a garment covering the hair and body but not the face), and they all planned to study in the U.S. One was leaving in a few months, alone, to study agriculture at the University of California at Davis, so she could help her father run the family's large farm. I could barely imagine her culture shock when she, who covered her hair and body, saw young women in bikinis on California beaches and was asked for a date by a college classmate.

I wondered if Iranian society could absorb all this rapid change. It was such a big stretch. I had not spent much of the Sixties in the U.S., but I was aware of the effects of rapid social change in my own country, a country fairly well used to change, between the 1950s and the '80s. The social strains in the traditional society of Iran would be magnified many times from the strains we had seen, still see, in the U.S. as a result of the changes the U.S. had experienced. I worried that there would be a serious problem in Iran soon because of this rapid social change.

I had realized that Iranian families would do almost anything for their children. Iranians had always valued education, and the Iranian universities attracted many of the best students for undergraduate study, but there were not that many places available. People began thinking that a university education was for everyone and should be available for their children. If there were not enough places in Iranian universities, people like the woman who couldn't read and write thought nothing of sending their daughters, as well

as their sons, to America. The visa lines at the Embassy were so long. There were such a huge number of people applying for student visas. They began lining up outside the Embassy in the afternoon.

*Q: For the next day?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. It became a big party. It was probably the first time boys and girls were together by themselves -- and all night! A great time was had by all until the Shah drove by one night and saw this clamoring of people waiting to get into the American Embassy for visas to study outside his country and spending the night on the sidewalk having a wonderful time. The Shah had the lines abolished, and we had to do something else. We decided to open at night with special student visa lines and also worked on Saturdays, which was a holiday for us, but not for the Iranians. Their weekend was Thursday and Friday, and ours was Friday and Saturday. So thousands and thousands…

*Q: I was going to say it is interesting how these days you notice an awful lot of people who are Iranian who studied in the United States, who are now economists and bankers. They are on TV all the time, and they came from that period.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, they may well have come then. They are very good students and well prepared for university, even when they had to learn English to start.

When I came back to Washington, I had to go with a colleague to speak in North Carolina at a conference of university administrators. We were asked to talk about the large number of Iranian students in the U.S. and explain the process for issuing student visas. We didn't know what to expect. We both had been involved in the process of sending so many Iranian students to the U.S. But, we didn't know if the Iranians were irresponsible students in the less restricted social climate in the U.S., or if they were a wonderful asset to their universities. The State Department was not responsible for students inside the U.S., so no one seemed to know what we could expect. We felt as if we were low level types being thrown to the lions.

We arrived at the conference and started to give our presentations to the university administrators. In fact, even before we started to give our spiels, we began hearing comments about how wonderful the Iranian students were. During the question period, we were told that the Iranian students were raising the quality of education on some campuses because they were so studious and well prepared. We were asked if we could send more Iranian students to the U.S. We could hardly believe the wonderful reception we received. The Iranian young people were really good, serious, hard working students, even working in English. We heard that Iranian students often "traded up" -- starting in small, less prestigious schools and community colleges, and moving on to more challenging schools, perhaps as their English improved. The smaller schools were concerned that they were losing some of their best students -- the Iranian students.

*Q: They were going to better schools?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Going to more prestigious schools because their grades were so good. They were often doing better than many of the Americans. A lot of the Iranian students were in sciences and math, perhaps partly because you don't need as high a level of fluency in English, a foreign language, to do well. However, Math and Science are areas where Iranians have long been very strong. We were very pleased -- and relieved -- to hear all this.

*Q: Tell me something about the embassy itself. Who was the ambassador when you were there?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Richard Helms. He was sent there partly because he had personal contacts with the Shah. The Iranian government was also prepared to welcome him as Ambassador. Helms had connections with the Shah that we thought were very close, but I wonder now how much access to the Shah he really had and how much the Shah told him. The Shah does not seem to have told any American about his eventually fatal illness.

Ambassador Helms was very nice to us, especially going out of his way to be kind to my sons. I was one of two single parents at the Embassy. Just before he left Iran, I thanked him for his kindness to my sons. He said, "Well, I know it is difficult for you being here, and the boys don't have a father here. So I tried to be nice to them."

*Q: Very nice.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, very. One time I was playing tennis with my son, Rob, who was a little bit wild when serving. Ambassador and Mrs. Helms were playing with the British Ambassador and his wife. As the British ambassador's wife was about to serve, Rob was serving to me in the adjacent court. His serve went wild, and it hit her right in the face. I ran over to her to apologize and make sure she was not hurt, but she must have been shaken. I was shaken too, and so was Rob. I thought this was the end of my tour in Iran, etc. However, Helms immediately went over to Rob and shook hands and reassured him. Helms said how nice it was seeing him playing tennis with me. I am not quite sure he really felt that, but anyway….

*Q: He smoothed it over.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: He smoothed it over. I don't think the British Ambassador's wife was terribly happy with me though. I used to run into her sometimes at various…

*Q: Where did you play tennis?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: At the embassy. There were two courts.

*Q: At his residence or…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, at the embassy compound.

*Q: Well, it was all the same there.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it was all the same compound.

*Q: I visited there in ''73 actually, and I saw it. Any other notables at the embassy?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. There were some people who became prominent in the Foreign Service and some who remain an important part of my life.

One was the other single American parent at the Embassy -- the Ambassador's secretary. We remained very close friends, and eventually she lived across the street from me in Washington. Unfortunately, she died a few years ago. Our children were very close too.

Peggy introduced me to a wonderful Iranian family, who remain very good friends. They live in England now, so I can see them often. The wonderful wife, Zia, died from cancer some years ago, but Rostum married a lovely English woman, who has accepted his friends from Iran and has kept all of us as part of their family. Our five children -- Peggy's daughter, Zia and Rostum's two daughters and my two sons -- became instant family, with sibling connections and rivalries, as if they had grown up forever in the same family. It was very nice. We spent a lot of time together, and met many of their friends, Iranian and European mainly. We sometimes traveled together. For example, we went to the Caspian several times where we stayed with Zia and Rostum's friends.

I also had friends from the Embassy, especially Lange Schermerhorn and Archie and Anne Bolster, who were also in Europe when I was stationed there. Lange became Ambassador to Djibouti and was in Africa for a while, and then she bought an apartment in my neighborhood in Washington. Archie represented the U.S. in The Hague on our post-hostage negotiations over Iranian and American claims, and I was at our embassy in The Hague at that time. Another very close American friend, Diane Magagna, was at Community School, and she and I could still see each other after she moved back to Pennsylvania. She has also sadly died of cancer. We were very close.

*Q: Where did you live after you moved from the embassy's temporary quarters?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We were there longer than we had expected because my father died a few weeks after we arrived in Iran, and I had to go back to New York. In addition, the rents in Tehran had risen well above embassy allowances. The embassy finally found apartments in the same building for another Embassy family and for us. We moved to a quiet street, a kuche (a small street) off "Television" Street, north of the embassy and across the street from the Egyptian embassy.

We were in a nice three story building with one apartment on each floor. It was fine. My (former) mother-in-law came out to visit us for several weeks, and we had other guests stay with us too. We had three bedrooms, but we could also use the large entry way as a

guest room. We had a long balcony in the back, unfortunately not looking toward the splendid mountains just to the north of us. It was a good apartment for us, and we entertained a lot. We even managed to put a ping-pong table in our largest bedroom -- a great success with the teen-agers and with the adults.

*Q: I mean, aside form the heaviness of the work, were those pretty satisfactory years? How about the Farsi? How did that go?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, my Farsi improved a great deal, and I learned a lot about Iranian society from talking to visa applicants. In addition, being on the visa line brought me into contact with a senior police officer who asked me how I was enjoying Tehran. I told him that, right after we had moved into our apartment, we had been robbed, and all of the rugs that I had bought in Beirut years earlier had been stolen. Fortunately, they were distinctive old rugs and were apparently considered "too hot" to put on the market. I called one of my British friends from Beirut, who was back in London. He had taken photos of my rugs and was able to send them to me. I went to the central police station to see the police officer I had met, and I was given a tour of the very large station, which had a number of rooms jammed with rugs that had been stolen. I gave his staff the photos. Eventually the police got the rugs back, which was really wonderful. The rugs meant a lot to me. I had bought them over a period of time. I had haggled with the sellers and done all the things you do. So, I was happy to see them once again.

We were also relieved when our car finally arrived. When I was assigned to Iran, I had ordered a small Peugeot. I made the necessary arrangements through Paris, and Embassy Paris was to send the car to Iran. I was told that, as usual, they would send it through Beirut and then overland. I reminded Embassy Paris that a civil war was raging in Lebanon and the port of Beirut was being bombarded. In fact, we had landed in Beirut on the way to Tehran several weeks earlier, and there were fires all over the city, including in the port area. Beirut was being shelled as we landed and taxied to a far corner of the airport. Only terminating passengers were allowed off our PanAm flight. Passengers were brought out to the plane and transferred to the terminal in armored personnel carriers. Nonetheless, I was assured that the car would be fine because this was done all the time.

After we had been in Tehran for about six weeks without any word on our car, I called Embassy Paris and asked, "Where is my car?" I was told that there was "a little problem" because of heavy fighting in Lebanon. I was told that everything would be fine because the car was shipped to Cyprus and would be sent from the Greek-held portion of the island to Turkey and driven to Iran from there. I pointed out the political realities that made it impossible to ship the car from the Greek part of Cyprus to Turkey. In the end, the car was sent to Italy and shipped to Turkey. After about five months of wandering around Mediterranean ports, some with hostilities taking place, my car safely completed its odyssey and arrived in Tehran without a scratch on it.

*Q: What about the consular section itself. How many people were in it?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I can't remember exactly. We had the non-immigrant visa section, the immigrant visa section (which had one or two American officers and several local employees) and the American Services section with one or two American officers and again several local employees.

*Q: Big?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Reasonably big. When I arrived in Tehran, we had an unfortunate Consul General, who had little consular experience. Then, all of a sudden Lou Goelz, who had been in our A-100 class, came for a "visit." I saw Lou, who had become a well-respected and experienced senior consular officer. We all had good talks with him. Then an inspection team from State came out, and Lou was appointed the new Consul General. So I worked for Lou, and that was a very good experience. He really ran the place very well.

*Q: So things looked up work wise when he took charge.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh yes, very much so.

You asked me before if we, serving in Tehran, had a feeling that something was going wrong in the political sphere. Yes. In the beginning I thought the situation seemed stable, although the Shah had lost a lot of respect and popularity, especially after his elaborate coronation celebration in Persepolis, near Shiraz.

In addition, many Iranians still remembered Mohammed Mossadegh as the democratically elected and "progressive" (some said left-wing) Prime Minister (1951-53), who clashed with the U.S. and Britain over his nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which is now the National Iranian Oil Company. The Americans and the British were blamed for having engineered Mossadegh's removal in 1953 and having restored the Pahlavis to the throne. I thought that the foreign-orchestrated departure of the nationalist Mossadegh still rankled Iranians, because it demonstrated their impotence in influencing events even within their own country.

However, despite the role of the U.S. government in overthrowing Mossadegh, Americans remained popular -- and I understand still are, even after the revolution. The U.S. was regarded as "the place to be," trendy, exciting, modern, great universities, great music, and a great life style, welcoming new ideas and new people, a land of possibilities and the future -- and a safe place for money.

My Iranian friends never discussed politics, and I hesitated to ask questions. The power of SAVAK (the Shah's secret police) inhibited political discussion and kept the lid on opposition to the Shah's rule. My Iranian friends trusted me, but I was sure mutual trust had limits in a country with such a strong secret police.

Opinion on the future of the Shah was divided at the Embassy. Some people focused on the importance of Iran as a partner to the U.S., a strong military force in the region and a

major supplier of oil. Others expressed serious concerns about Iran's future because of weakness in the Shah's government, its rampant corruption, its repression and its ruthless secret police (SAVAK).

The Shah had lost support with his flamboyant celebration in Persepolis of the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian empire by Cyrus the Great. That was "the party of the century," but mainly for international aristocrats and high society. There was so much propaganda celebrating him -- the "King of Kings and Light of the Aryans" -- and his rule.

While I was there, the Shah's government changed Iran's Islamic calendar to coincide with a date when the reign of Cyrus the Great -- the Shah regarded him as a predecessor -- could possibly have begun. Muslims, especially the clerics, would be very angry that the Muslim calendar had been marginalized. Most people, including us, were just confused as we struggled with the Islamic and Western calendars and with this new calendar. It was hard to know what year we were in. That was not an intelligent thing to do at all, I thought.

While we were in Iran, I thought it was important to see as much of the country as we could, in case we could not go back for one reason or another. My sons and I traveled all over Iran from the Caspian region to Tabriz, Hamadan, Isfahan, Shiraz and across the mountains to Kerman, Yard, and Qom, to Mashed, and the area around Ahwaz, and took short day trips from Tehran to see many of the UNESCO World Heritage sites. We saw towns and farms, and I tried to stop in food markets, so I could see how much was for sale and could talk to people.

I was surprised that there did not seem to be a lot of prosperity in the hinterland, despite the booming economy we saw in much of Tehran. On the surface, Iran seemed very prosperous, but below that, the economy could not keep up with the people's expectations. For example, there were not enough places in Iranian universities for qualified students with money to study. Goods of all sorts did not seem as plentiful or as high quality as I would have expected in towns along our routes. "Trickle down" did not seem to be happening, but everything looked more or less fine as long as the oil money kept flowing.

Iran suggested to me a massive Potemkin village, a facade with people at the top partying and people below struggling. I couldn't quite understand what was happening early in my tour, but several colleagues with more experience in Iran than I had thought the Shah was really in trouble. So many people seemed to be "on the take," and the oil boom economy was starting to look as if it were running out of steam -- petering out. The Shah talked about modernizing the country and had made some changes in that direction but he had made enemies too, especially among the mullahs. Social changes may have come too fast for traditional Iranian society to absorb, while corruption and massive military purchases were devouring government money and the oil revenues.

*Q: So, I mean Iran is all Muslim but it is not Arab.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, yes. Except for some people in the South around the Shatt-el-Arab, around the border with modern Iraq, Iranians are basically Indo-European, not Arab. Farsi is an Indo-European language, although it is written in an Arabic alphabet.

Most Iranians are Moslem, but there are a large number of Christians, such as Armenians, and there were a lot of Jews. There had always been many Jews, ever since Cyrus the Great had welcomed them to Babylon. There are Bahais; the Bab, founder of Bahaism, had been an Iranian Muslim, which is why Moslems think of him as an apostate.

Also, there are still some Zoroastrians, who follow the oldest religion in Iran. It is an ancient monotheistic religion of Persia, whose followers worship the Creator, Ahura Mazda, and consider fire, air, water and earth sacred. They see the duality of good/evil in the world and see fire as representing God's wisdom. Zoroastrians are very much respected In Iran and in part of India where adherents are called Parsees.

Zoroastrians have greatly influenced Persian culture. When the Ayatollahs came to power, they tried to suppress the pre-Moslem practices of Zoroastrians without success. For example, Iranians traditionally celebrate New Year (NowRuz) on the first day of spring when new life appears on the earth. People jump over small fires a few evenings before NowRuz to burn out the bad from the previous year and to pray for light and prosperity (gold) in the new year. A few days after NowRuz families have a picnic in the countryside and try to sit on the new grass to be in touch with the renewal of life on the earth. We were able to visit a Zoroastrian center and fire temple in Yard where there is a perpetual flame. That concept is well-known in Western culture too.

So, there were a lot of Iranians who were not Moslem. However, most Iranians are Shiite Moslem, but some are Sunnis or Sufis or follow other practices.

*Q: So, let's back up. You had three different jobs while you were in Iran? How long were you in each one?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I worked for about a year in the Non-immigrant Visa Section (NIV) interviewing, mainly in Farsi, people applying for visas to visit the U.S. or do business here on a temporary basis -- they were not emigrating to the U.S.

Then, I had a three month assignment to the Commercial Section, which I really enjoyed. I learned so much about Iran talking to American businessmen/women and helping them resolve problems. Several of them told me they were not optimistic about the future of Iran.

After that, I worked mainly in the American Services Section and was given other short assignments in the Consular Section. We had a lot of Americans visiting Iran for business or tourism. Others arrived in Iran after having spent some years living a perhaps unsettled and unconventional life in Afghanistan. They were leaving Afghanistan because of the increasing instability in the country. Some came to the Embassy for assistance. We could

help them contact family in the U.S. and Iranian groups who could help them deal with daily needs. I met some families, who had very little money and were staying in campgrounds around Tehran waiting for money from home and selling possessions. I was worried about some of their children who looked malnourished.

One day, I was called to the hospital to see about an elderly American woman who had collapsed while sightseeing in Tehran and had been hospitalized. She opened her eyes and said, "Thank goodness you are here." It was a touching scene until she told me I should telephone Kathmandu immediately and postpone her reservations. She was determined to go on to Nepal by herself as she had planned. I tried for days to meet her more reasonable demands and to convince her that she needed to return to the U.S. She was often confused, but she would not listen until I pointed out that Thanksgiving was only a few weeks away. She finally agreed to leave Iran because she told me she was expecting guests for Thanksgiving.

We also visited an American soldier who had killed his wife and was in prison. The head of the prison had an advanced degree in penology from an American university and was proud of running the prison on the most modern American concepts. Our soldier said he preferred to remain in Iran rather than, as an Hispanic, go to a prison in Texas. He did not want to be in the prisoner exchange program and be returned to Texas.

At one point, we were called about an American who, it turned out, was more than confused. He had walked out of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental hospital. We found a hostel that accepted him, while we worked with the VA to get his records, airline tickets, and money for room and board until we could arrange for his travel back to the U.S. I was also in touch with his mother, who was very worried about him.

He was quiet and did what we told him to do, which was a help, but he was convinced that people with machine guns were hiding in air conditioning ducts and elsewhere. He wanted protection from them. I had to tell him we had sharpshooters on roofs to watch out for him and that persuaded him not to leave his room, except to eat at the hostel. We had so much help from the people running the hostel. I had to keep doling out money to the hostel for his room and board. He was not capable of handling that, and we were afraid he might just run away again. I went to see him several times a day to ensure that he was all right and not causing any trouble at the hostel.

*Q: Yes I remember people like that in my American Services days.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: So, we had to convince him that Iranians at the hostel were really good and protecting him, and that he would love getting on a plane and going back to America. We finally got him on a flight, and it all ended well.

*Q: Now that is not an easy thing.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, that wasn't.

*Q: Let me go back to the Shah. Did the Embassy have a sense of trouble there?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I never worked in the Political Section, so I can't really answer that question. Our public policy was that the Shah was doing very well.

*Q: Or was the Embassy too close to the Shah? We were providing him with everything -- they were buying so much military hardware.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Everything. Iran was very important to us too, not only for buying our military equipment, but also for its oil. The Shah kept insisting oil was too precious to burn. He was starting a petrochemical industry, and he was also initiating nuclear energy projects so Iran could turn to nuclear fuel rather than just rely on burning oil.

*Q: They may still be doing that.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and doing it in a place that we, and some of our allies, helped them build. In addition, Iran shared a border with Russia and was a listening post to the Soviet Union. It was very important to us for many reasons.

*Q: Yes, again important. Well, so the Embassy was pretty much pro-Shah?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: U.S. policy was strong support for the Shah, who was considered an important cold-war ally.

*Q: And really together?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, there was some talk that things were not going well in the country. I already mentioned the Shah's lavish coronation, which did little for the Iranian people, despite the large amount of money he spent and his new calendar based on some ideas of when the reign of Cyrus the Great might have begun. The Pahlavi family definitely could not trace their ancestry to Cyrus. These signs of hubris did not sit well with the Iranian people, but they could not complain openly. Then, the flow of oil money was slowing down, which meant that the economy was also slowing down.

When I was working in the Commercial Section, I met some American businessmen who said that things were really going badly. One big American company sent an Indian employee to Iran to look into an investment possibility. He told me that he was going to recommend that the company not invest in Iran, because he did not think the stability in Iran was going to last. I couldn't tell him I agreed with him, but I did not argue with him either.

Many Iranians still had lots of money to invest in the United States and in other safe havens. As I said earlier, we drafted a cable that was sent out from the embassy saying we, in the Consular Section, thought a lot of the money leaving the country might be

capital flight. People seemed to be preparing their escape hatches because their children certainly didn't need big houses when they were students.

*Q: Not undergrad students or even graduate.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Although some students were renting out rooms in their families' houses in the U.S. It was an investment. A lot of money was leaving Iran. I knew people who had paid their children's full university tuition in advance -- just in case. A lot of people told us they did their business in Iran and in the U.S. One foot in each country -- just in case?

I had another indication of the situation under the surface perception of stability. I went to the University of Tehran at night to take a course in Persian poetry, in English. One night during class, all the lights suddenly went out and not just in our class or on the floor of our building. After a few minutes, they went back on again. Our professor was very nervous, and we were uneasy. The following week, the same thing happened. The lights went out, but they didn't go back on again. The whole campus was in total darkness. The professor said, "I don't want to be here, and you shouldn't be here either. I will help you go downstairs. Go to your cars and get off the campus as quickly as you can. Don't come back." We all just left in the dark and stumbled across the darkened campus looking for our cars.

*Q: So was that the end of your class then?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh yes. We only had one more class to go -- on Rumi.

*Q: But I mean were those the infamous students who later……*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, some of them may have been involved in the Embassy takeover and hostage crisis, but we weren't sure when the lights went off who was responsible -- anti-Shah students, a terrorist group, or SAVAK, the secret police. The secret police were so powerful. They would have been watching us all. We all knew the university was a center of opposition to the Shah, so it was hard to tell who was responsible for turning out all the lights on campus.

*Q: What would they have found subversive about Persian Poetry?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Poetry is actually very powerful in Persian culture. But, the target would have been the university. There were a lot of evening classes, and there was a lot of anti-Shah sentiment among the students, who were active on the streets, as students often are. SAVAK might have wanted to scare people at the university.

There were also several terrorist groups active in Iran. They had assassinated two American military officers just before we arrived. A young Iranian man working in the Consulate had also been murdered, although the circumstances of that are not clear to the general public.

*Q: Because the authorities could already see the unrest at the university as well?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. There were a lot of rumblings of discontent and arrests. It was becoming nasty. So, as I said, our poetry professor canceled our final class and told us we should not be on the campus, especially not at night.

Signs of unrest were growing in residential neighborhoods too. We lived in a mostly professional neighborhood, solidly middle class, but not terribly wealthy and not flashy. People seemed to be quite well-educated and definitely prosperous. Our neighbors began putting out black prayer flags that meant prayer meetings would be taking place in that house. No one had been doing that when we first arrived. People were much more secular during the boom times. It was almost as if people were going back to a tradition of turning to the clergy when Iran was in trouble. They were turning to Ayatollah Khomeini this time and away from the Shah's regime.

Then a few days before I left, I was driving downtown to the Embassy, and I had the sliding roof on my car open. I had to weave between some lines of demonstrators taking part in a big religious procession. I could read Farsi and read banners above the street saying the Mahdi, the missing Imam of the Shiites, was coming back. I thought I knew who wanted the mantle of the Mahdi -- Khomeini. I told a few people at the Embassy about the procession and banners, but it was lunchtime in summer, so very few people were around. I was in the process of checking out of the Embassy. I think the packers were coming the next day. As soon as I was back in Washington, I discussed that and other things I had seen and gave my own views about the stability of the regime. I was told I was not the only person expressing those views.

*Q: When did you actually leave Iran?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Middle of September.

*Q: 1975?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, September 1977.

*Q: When did the takeover occur?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The hostage crisis began in November 1979. But discontent with the Shah and the Iranian government was becoming stronger between our arrival in Tehran in the late summer of 1975 and my departure in the fall of 1977, shortly before the revolution actually began.

*Q: Were we kind of holed up before the Embassy was actually seized?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Not then. A few months after I left, President Carter made a state visit to Iran with a dinner on New Year's Eve during which the President made a toast calling Iran "an island of stability" and giving fulsome praise to the Shah.

*Q: That was in what year?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The turn of the year 1977-78. There had been more confrontations and demonstrations, and some casualties by the end of 1977. Violence, instability, and repression increased over the next few months in 1978. A cinema fire in Abadan in 1978, which killed at least 400 people, is considered to have been a terrorist attack by anti-government groups, but there was also talk that SAVAK had set the fire and many were ready to believe that.

In January 1979, the deteriorating situation in Iran forced the Shah to leave Iran for an uncertain future, not sure where he would finally go or where he would be welcomed. Some people insisted this was an anti-Shah coup that could be reversed, while others insisted it was a revolution.

The American government came under strong pressure, when it was later learned that the Shah was seriously ill with cancer, to admit him to the United States for treatment. That was a very worrisome decision and led to the takeover of the embassy and the hostage crisis. We had hoped he would have gone to Switzerland, where he had studied, or elsewhere in Europe, where he also had connections.

The reason I hesitated, when you asked earlier about the closeness of our relationship with the Shah, was because no one outside some of his immediate family and perhaps closest confidants apparently knew that he had a serious cancer. They had managed to keep his illness secret. I gather he was treated by a French doctor.

*Q: So to get back to you, what did you do when you got back to Washington? Where were you assigned?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Visa Office. After I left Tehran in the fall of 1977, I was assigned to Washington to the Visa Office in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. I was responsible for the security aspects of visa issuance, mostly dealing with visa applicants from the Middle East, so I worked very closely with the Department's Near East Bureau (NEA).

There were a number of active terrorist groups operating in the Middle East in the 1970-80's doing high profile attacks, such as hijacking international aircraft and the December 1975 kidnapping of eleven OPEC oil ministers by Carlos Ramirez, "The Jackal," from their meeting in Vienna. The hostages were taken to Algeria and released after a ransom paid by the Saudis. The ministers were mostly Arab, but the Iranian oil minister was also one of those seized. The kidnapping occurred during my first night as embassy duty officer. A baptism of fire.

In Washington, my focus in the Visa Office was to help make sure terrorists would not be issued visas to allow them to travel to the U.S.

*Q: So the purpose of this assignment was to identify those people who should not get visas.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: That is right. We were keeping current on the terrorist situations in the Middle East and on the players, in order to improve our screening procedures. I was also responsible for adjudicating visa applications from people about whom we had some security concerns and questions that might be valid enough for the Department to instruct our Foreign Service posts not to issue the applicant a visa. I had to look at information our posts had sent in and check with a number of places in Washington before I could adjudicate a case and recommend issuance or refusal of the visa.

There were a lot of cases that were quite controversial, including some applications from well known Palestinians who were not involved, as far as we could determine, in terrorism or support for terrorism. For example, applicants might be deemed to be "part of the PLO" (the Palestinian Liberation Organization), because they were connected with constituent groups within the PLO. The PLO was a federation consisting of constituent organizations. People were members of those constituent groups, not of "the PLO" as such. These constituent groups include the Palestine Red Crescent Society (i.e. Red Cross) and organizations of professional people, teachers, social workers…

I tried to get better screening put in place, so we did not keep moderates and Palestinians opposed to terrorist activities out of the United States. Such a blanket determination could tar too many people who should not have been judged ineligible for visas to enter the U.S. People were upset that they…

*Q: The point here was everybody was not a terrorist. I mean it would be easy to follow the rules to suggest that they were.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, the way the law was written, they could be considered terrorists. But people didn't always understand what the PLO was. They didn't appreciate, I discovered, that members of these constituent groups, like doctors for example as members of the Red Crescent Society, could be considered terrorists, regardless of the reality of an individual's actions and associations. This was not in the U.S. national interest.

We also had to do something to clean up the visa look out system. We had the names of hundreds of Palestinians in our lookout system whose names were misspelled or were bad transliterations of Arabic names. Many other names had literally been dumped into our lookout system without careful examination of people's identity or backgrounds. This became one of my special projects on a part time basis. Although a colleague and I spent a lot of time on this, we realized the magnitude of this project required a team of people, some of whom had to be fluent in Arabic, which we were not. Lookout lists are essential, but compiling accurate lists of non-English language names and maintaining them

requires various types of expertise that my colleague and I did not have. What we were trying to do was ineffective. Then, other things became more important.

*Q: How long did you do that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I was three years in that office and worked on security cases as well as on our screening procedures. We had had to adjudicate some cases that sort of broke the back of nearly automatic exclusion, ended an almost automatic presumption of ineligibility.

For example, we had a case involving a group of teenagers, young teenagers, who had confessed, in an Israeli court, that they were leading a PLO cell in a mainly Christian town on the West Bank. It turned out that this town had, for decades, seen many of its Christian citizens emigrate to the United States. So, these young people had close relatives in the United States, who had invited them to America to go to high school and live in a safe area.

It seemed odd to some of us that these teenagers had not been convicted of throwing rocks or something like that, but of actually being leaders of a cell and receiving weapons. I checked with contacts in the NEA Bureau and elsewhere and was told that weapons were very scarce in the Occupied Territories at that point. Most people thought that it was inconceivable that the PLO would have given scarce weapons to these teenagers. It just did not stand up. The young people claimed later that they had been tortured into making their confessions. We had no other evidence linking them to terrorism. I wrote the advisory opinion and cleared it with everyone under the sun to authorize the Consulate General in Jerusalem to issue student visas to them.

After the visas were issued, we heard reports that one of their neighbors in the town had been feuding with the family of one or more of the teenagers and had given information to the Israelis accusing the young people of being terrorists. He was said to have collected a bounty for providing the information. We felt much more justified in having issued the visas. It was a dismaying situation.

*Q: Yes, and it shows how the Arab-Israeli conflict and resulting tensions can filter down to all aspects of our work.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. That was what normally would have been my day to day job in the Visa Office, protecting American security by keeping people who could be security threats to the U.S. out of our country. You probably remember that at least one person, who was supposed to have been on one of the flights on September 11, was refused a visa, while the arrest of another person in the plot was connected to his student visa for flight school training.

The focus of my work in the Visa Office began shifting as the situation in Iran was deteriorating. The Shah had left Iran, but had not been admitted to the United States, and our foreign service posts were still able to function. The intensifying violence of

revolutionary Iran, led the State Department to set up an Iran Working Group (IWG) under the Office of Iranian Affairs. The working group brought together a wide range of people to analyze the unfolding situation, develop appropriate American responses to protect our interests, and safeguard the many thousands of Americans living in Iran.

I continued my work in the Visa Office, and I also volunteered, like so many others, including you, Ed, to work on the IWG. I sometimes worked on the IWG for a few hours during the Department's normal working hours, but the Iran Working Group became my after hours home away from home.

In the early stages of the revolution, in 1978-79, we were focused on taking our nationals and Iranians who had worked with us out of the country, if they wanted to leave. Later, countries agreed to work together to get all our citizens out efficiently and safely in groups rather than evacuating them by nationality from the same airport or port. We pooled our resources.

I was not involved in organizing this process, but Iran was divided into sectors with specific countries taking responsibility for evacuating all foreign citizens living in their sector. The U.S. was responsible for the Tehran area and airlifted foreign citizens from Northern Iran. The British had the Persian Gulf, the Gulf ports. Canada took other people, as did other countries.

The British Navy took out all documented foreigners in the Gulf area who wanted to leave -- but they would not take dogs. So, a British couple living in the Gulf sector suddenly arrived in Tehran with their dog asking to be evacuated by the United States. They had actually driven from the Persian Gulf to Tehran, across a country in the middle of revolution, somehow getting gas for their car and food. The U.S. took them and their dog out of Iran on one of our evacuation flights.

Many Iranians wanted to go to the United States, where they might have been educated or had family and friends. While we were prepared to issue visas quickly to Iranians who needed to leave because of close contacts with the U.S., we still had to act within our visa laws. We recognized that there was a revolution going on in Iran, and not just a coup, and we were determined not to leave behind our citizens or Iranians who had worked with us or were connected to the U.S., if they wanted to leave.

We were in a quandary. People, who were in danger because of the revolution and their ties to the U.S., needed to get out of Iran very quickly, and we wanted to help them do that, if we could. However, the only type of visa we could issue quickly was for people who planed to visit the U.S. to do things like tourism, see family and friends, or for a business trip -- visas that would permit them to request a reasonably short term admission to the United States when they arrived at our borders. Iranian applicants who needed to leave the country generally had substantial assets (e.g., a house or a business) and economic and family ties to Iran, but could we maintain that they intended to return to Iran after a short visit to the U.S.?

They probably did intend to return when they could do so safely. No one knew what would happen in Iran, but Iranians fleeing the country wanted to go back to their homes -- as soon as they could. The consular sections in Tehran and the consulates (when they were still operating) were interviewing people about their ties to Iran, their backgrounds, their eligibility for a visa under U.S. law and issuing B1/B-2 visas for visits, not really indefinite stays.

Lou Goelz, who was our classmate in the January 1957 A-100 class, was still Consul General in Tehran. Lou supported the issuance of non-immigrant ("tourist") visas to people who needed to leave Iran. We could issue these visas quickly. I had been in Tehran with Lou, but now I was in Washington, in the Visa Office, where I managed the process of having the applications approved as rapidly as possible, so the posts in Iran could issue the "tourist" visas. Most of the Visa Office, including me, was very much in favor of working closely with Lou on this, but not everyone. Some people kept a very legalistic approach, while the rest of us were bending the rules by not looking too closely at applicants' declared intention to make only a short trip to the U.S.. This made it possible for "our people" to get out of Iran to safety -- if they wanted to leave.

The Embassy did an initial scrutiny of visa applications, including examining lookout lists, before sending the applications to Washington for additional scrutiny and approval. All visa applications had to be referred to Washington for final approval. If the visa application was approved in Washington, I sent out the cable to our missions in Iran authorizing them to issue the visas. Most of the applications we received in Washington were approved.

It was a relief to see so many of my friends and our contacts and their families being approved to come to the U.S. Many had studied here and had family and friends here. I knew they would be safe. When the cables from Iran came…….

*Q: They came to you, and you were the approval person in Washington?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, not really. I obtained all the clearances and approvals we needed so we could authorize issuance of the visas. I gathered the information we needed, answered questions, and wrote advisory opinions, which I cleared widely. Then, I sent cables to the posts telling them whether they could go ahead and issue the visas. We were inundated by cables. It must have been nearly impossible in Iran, where our American and Iranian staff had this enormous workload and were so concerned about the safety of their families and their own safety in the midst of such chaos.

*Q: Did you have a day job and a night job?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes.

*Q: So you were working your day job in the Visa Office and then in the evenings you would work with the Iran Working Group.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I worked with the Iran Working Group whenever I could during the day, and about three or four nights a week. I volunteered for the midnight to 8 a.m. shift, so I could go home and have dinner with my younger son, Jeff, who was still in high school and be back home in time to get him off to school in the morning. My other son, Rob, was away at college.

I could park in the basement from midnight until about 7:30 a.m., when the day shift arrived along with people coming in for their normal work day. The day shift could be briefed about what had happened in Iran, which is nine hours ahead of Washington. The night shift operated during Iran's day.

*Q: Say a little bit about working groups and how they operate.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I can only talk about the way working groups operated when I was on them. In the case of Iran, Henry Precht, director of the State Department office that dealt with Iranian affairs, headed the Iran Working Group (IWG). Two other officers, who were on the Iran desk, worked with him. They were the core of the operation, especially handling the policy issues. The rest of us were mostly volunteers on the working group, working there and also on our "day jobs." There were three eight hour shifts in the IWG.

It could be crowded during the day, especially if there were more than one crisis at the same time. Many people came in for meetings at the IWG because the issues in their "day job" touched on Iran, e.g., people who dealt with oil exports or military cooperation often came in. We also had a support staff. People from other agencies were often there for meetings, as were people who worked on Capitol Hill in some capacity.

There was a small office where private meetings could be held. Most of us worked at a long table where we had a bank of telephones so we could respond to inquiries from the public or government offices, and we could prepare cable responses as needed. We were still in direct touch with our embassy during the early stages of the revolution. When the Embassy employees were taken hostage, some of their wives came together in an adjacent room to organize a support group for the hostage families, especially for families not living in the Washington area.

As I said, we worked in the Department's Operations Center, our communications center which operates 24-7 with a "Watch Officer" in charge and people working on cable traffic, recording it and directing it to the right offices. It is a complex operation. When working groups were set up in the Operations Center, incoming messages of all sorts related to our particular crisis were also brought to us, and we gathered them to go to the right people. We logged in messages and were responsible for writing a situation report at the end of each shift, so that people arriving for the next shift would be aware of what had happened on the previous shift. It was particularly important for the night shift because of the time difference between Washington and Tehran. Since Tehran is about nine hours ahead of Washington, when it was night in Washington, Iran began its work day.

Henry Precht and a few others had access to the small private office. More highly classified messages were given directly to them. Other messages were on clipboards in the area where most of us were working. We collated information so there was a record of relevant messages coming in to the Department or sent out.

As far as our missions in Iran were concerned, the Iranian government, as is always the case for the host government, was responsible for the safety of the staffs of foreign missions. When the revolution began, Iranian and American employees were working more or less as usual, but then the State Department decided that the situation was such that we should close our consulates and bring everyone to Tehran.

There had been some very dicey moments at the consulates, and the embassy in Tehran also had its share of danger. For example, a mob in Tehran tried to march on the embassy, but very senior Iranian government officials managed to defuse the situation. That was a very short lived threat to the embassy. Ambassador Sullivan was the ambassador then and also when there was another, more serious, threat to the Embassy which the Iranian government at that time was not strong enough to keep under complete control, although the demonstrators did leave. The Iranian government fell, but, it was a Parliamentary system, and ministries continued to function as well as they could during a revolution.

During the early part of the revolution, we were on the phone a great deal trying to find out what was happening in Iran, keeping track of the oil Iran was still able to export, making contact with various people in the U.S. and in Iran. We still had phone connections with the embassy. Sometimes we were instructed to call Americans who, we knew, were still in the country to see how they were managing and ask if they needed help. A few Americans told me, “Don’t call me again. This could really be dangerous for me.” So we stopped calling them.

All of those contacts ended In November 1979, when a mob seized the embassy compound after the Shah had been admitted to the U.S. for cancer treatment. Not all of the people working at the embassy were caught. Some people, who were in the consular section, located in a separate building at the back of the compound, managed to get out the back door when the mob entered the embassy compound. A group of Americans eventually made their way to the nearby Canadian Embassy and were hidden and then carefully taken out of the country as part of a Canadian film crew The Canadians were brave in hiding the Americans and working with the CIA to slip the Americans out of Iran with Canadian passports through the airport and on to normal commercial flights.

Our local employees in the consular section fled home or to some safe place. One of them went home and packed a bag, while her husband, an Air Force general, wrote a permission for her to visit their ostensibly sick daughter studying in the U.S. He got her to the airport and on a flight before anyone knew she had left the country. Married women needed permission from their husbands to leave the country.

Chargé Laingen and a colleague of mine from the Visa Section at the Embassy, later a Political Officer, Victor Tomseth, were at the Foreign Ministry and were held there. They had gone to the Ministry to demand that the Iranian government live up to its treaty obligations and protect the staff and property of the American mission. The Americans who had not escaped, diplomats and visitors alike, were held in the American Embassy compound.

*Q: Bruce Laingen?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it was Bruce Laingen.

*Q: He was at the embassy?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: He was Chargé. Victor and he were being held at the Foreign Ministry, as "Guests of the Ministry".

*Q: That is right, and he stayed there.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: They were kept there until the attempt to rescue the hostages. When that failed, Bruce and Victor were brought from the Foreign Ministry back to the Embassy compound with everyone else.

During the period when the hostages were being held, we actually did get through to the Embassy a few times and tried to have messages passed to our colleagues. I spoke to a couple of the people holding them hostage and thought they must have spent a lot of time in the U.S. Their command of English and their accents were very good, but they did not pass messages. I also had a brief conversation with Victor at the Foreign Ministry, but I don't think that happened again.

Right after the hostage crisis began, the U.S. canceled all visas in Iranian passports. President Carter issued a directive that no visas would be given to Iranians, unless they were from minority groups (such as Bahai, Jews, Christians). I had trouble with such a broad directive that could affect innocent people. We had a few reports of conversions for visas!

Some of those holding the hostages were indeed students who were going back and forth to their schools in the U.S. until the President ordered the cancellation of all U.S. visas in Iranian passports. However, the broad brush also affected the innocent. For example, there was a young Moslem woman, a student at a very prestigious American college for women, who had been on a student trip to London. The young woman, who was 18-19, had never lived in Iran. Her father was a UN Civil Servant in New York. Her visa was canceled, and she was stuck by herself in Europe. She could not return to her college. I wrote an appeal asking that she be exempted from this decision and allowed to return to the U.S. The appeal was approved all the way to the White House. The President himself finally refused the visa, blocking her return to the U.S. We were quite upset about that.

*Q: How long did the Working Group last?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, a lifetime. I thought it was going to be forever. The Iran Working Group was set up as the revolution was taking place and continued through it, the evacuation of foreign citizens, the fall of the Shah and the rise of Khomeini, the hostage crisis…. As the revolution continued, the situation in Iran became more precarious and even more dangerous. In November 1979, after the Shah had been admitted to the U.S. for medical treatment, we had the takeover of the embassy and the hostage crisis….

*Q: So you were there all that time then?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes.

*Q: Now did you leave the Visa Office?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I actually had two assignments to the Visa Office, one in 1977-80 when I returned from Iran, and the other from 1983-85. From 1980-1983 I was working with you on the Greek desk.

*Q: In other words you kept working your day job the whole time you were there? How many years was that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was in the Visa Office from 1977-80 and from 1983-85. During the period that I was assigned to the Visa Office, I was much more involved with Iran and the IWG, but I only worked occasionally on the IWG when I was on the Greek desk -- only when I was needed.

For example, I was called in on Inauguration Day 1981, when Jimmy Carter left and Ronald Reagan took over. As soon as the new President was sworn in, the hostages were taken to the airport in Tehran. I was one of the few in Washington who had worked with many of them in Tehran.

I managed to get through the inauguration crowds and to the State Department. I arrived just before noon, as the names of the Carter administration appointees were being removed from the doors and the hostages were being released. We were confused about who had the authority in the State Department to make decisions on behalf of the new administration, even down to the point of arranging for the travel of American officials, including the outgoing Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher, to meet the released hostages in Europe and arrange for their travel to Washington. With the change of administrations, we wondered who had the authority to authorize travel funds. The only people in the new administration, who had been sworn in, were the President and the Vice-President -- and they were busy.

We sat in the Operations Center and watched the television as our colleagues were released and put on the plane.

*Q: A very interesting moment. Did you work at all with Sheldon Krys and all of that? I remember he got an award.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Sheldon had overall responsibility for the evacuations and did a great job. I was not involved in the actual evacuation of foreign citizens or in the negotiations for the release of our colleagues and the few Americans who happened to be visiting the Embassy at the wrong time. Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, who is now the UN mediator in Syria, played a leading role in negotiations resolving the hostage crisis.

*Q: It is April 15, 2009. This is Edward Dillery and we are continuing our interview with Eleanore Raven-Hamilton. My first question will then be about her assignment in Washington after she came back into the Foreign Service and returned from her assignment to Tehran.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. When I left Iran in the fall of 1977, I was assigned to the Visa Office and worked on security concerns in connection with the issuance of visas to people from the Middle East. When the Iranian revolution began, I became responsible for screening Iranian visa applicants and running applications through the various agencies here. In addition, I volunteered on the Iran Working Group (IWG) because I had served in Iran.

*Q: What did you do there?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I worked in my regular office for most of the day and took the midnight to 8:00 a.m. shift on the IWG several nights a week. As I said, I still had one son in high school, so we would have dinner together and I would go back to the Department for the midnight shift. After the morning crew had been briefed on events in Iran overnight and the situation report written, I went home and made sure Jeff had breakfast and got off to school.

*Q: You are kind of a midnight person.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I am a night person anyway.

On my second assignment to the Visa Office from 1983-85, I became involved with Iran again, although I was then responsible for visa operations at our European posts.

On January 21, 1981, our hostages were all released and left Iran. Our embassy in Tehran was closed, and we longer had any diplomatic or consular presence in the country. We were not providing any consular services in Iran, e.g., issuing visas or passports or protecting American citizens who might be in Iran. The Swiss government opened a Foreign Interests Section in its embassy in Tehran and took on the responsibilities of "Protecting Power" for the United States in Iran.

Iran was still in chaos as the revolutionary government sought to consolidate its power, and thousands of people were seeking to leave Iran. Many wanted to go to the United States where they may have studied or worked or may have had family and friends who could help them. Their U.S. connections had become dangerous in the new Iran.

Although the U.S. was prepared to issue visas to Iranians again, with our foreign service posts in Iran closed, people who wanted to go to the U.S. had to get out of Iran and go to American missions in other countries to apply for visas for the U.S. So, they would first have to obtain a visa from a country with an embassy still operating in Iran and willing to admit Iranians for the length of time they would need for their American visa applications to be processed. Then the Iranians would go to that country to apply for a U.S. visa and wait to see if it would be issued to them.

It was difficult for the Iranians sometimes to find a country that would let them stay long enough to apply for the visa and to receive approval for visa issuance. Some, perhaps, hoped that they would get a visa more easily if they applied off the beaten track. As a result, almost all of our posts had a few or hundreds of Iranians applying, but only a few Foreign Service Officers had ever served in Iran. Very few spoke Farsi.

Some countries in Europe, including Turkey, and the Gulf States would admit Iranian nationals and permit them to wait until their applications for a U.S. visa could be processed -- and hopefully issued. This put an immense workload on our consular sections in these countries. They were not staffed for this level of demand and did not have consular officers who could work in Farsi.

Many of the Iranian applicants for a U.S. visa could not speak much English. Most Foreign Service officers processing visa applications far away from Iran did not speak Farsi nor did they know that much about Iranian society or the revolution. It was difficult for them to adjudicate applications, especially with regard to ineligibilities or fraud. We were worried about unscrupulous people “helping” Iranian applicants with their visa applications and interviews at an American mission.

We also had Iranian applicants who were statutorily ineligible for visas. Sometimes there was something in their background which made them ineligible for a U.S. visa, for example, membership in the Communist party (the Tudeh in Iran) or having been convicted of a crime, or drug addiction. Sometimes we could get a waiver, and sometimes we could not.

People who knew little about Iran might not pick up these things.

The need for Farsi-speaking officers had become obvious, but the Foreign Service had ended Farsi language training. Farsi-trained officers could no longer go to Iran, and Farsi would be only minimally useful in, e.g. Afghanistan, where Dari is related to Farsi.

In addition, with the closure of our embassy and consulates in Iran, we no longer had the eyes and ears of an American diplomatic presence to tell us what was going on in Iran.

We realized that, in addition to helping with consular work, Farsi speakers could also give us access to people, such as visa applicants, who had just come from Iran and could tell us what they saw happening in their part of the country.

In order to help our posts process these Iranian applicants, I started to write background cables for all of our Foreign Service posts. I began gathering whatever information I could find about conditions in Iran and sending out weekly briefing cables to all our posts around the world. Consular officers at almost all our posts had to adjudicate many applications from Iranians, but they knew little about Iran that might affect a visa applicant's case. Officers were having difficulty judging the validity of applicants' claims and detecting fraud.

We were still operating under U.S. visa regulations, although we were still bending the rules to some degree for Iranians regarding the "temporary" nature of their trip to the U.S. Iranian applicants usually intended to return home when it was safe, but it has not always been safe to go back to Iran.

We had one officer, our Consul General in Krakow, Poland, who spoke Farsi fluently. He had served in Iran at the Embassy and in the Peace Corps and had been one of the hostages. I knew him well; we had worked together in Tehran. He still had many Iranian friends and colleagues who had worked with him in Iran. So, a small stream of Iranians began to go to Krakow to apply for U.S. visas. They were fortunate that Poland, unlike many European countries would issue visas to Iranians, and there was a Polish embassy in Tehran where they could get visas for Poland. So, Iranians could go to Krakow to apply for a U.S. visa. The applications were adjudicated by our consular staff in Krakow and sent through our usual clearance procedures, but we used to joke that we had a branch of Embassy Tehran in Krakow.

We realized all our posts needed more information about Iran, and we decided to see if we could ask the Iranians who had received visas at our Foreign Service posts all over the world to tell us about life in Iran. We would know from their visa applications in what area of the country they lived, whether they were members of a minority community, what they did for a living, how well the economy was functioning, etc.

We set up a system to ask Iranians who had already been issued a visa to talk to us about what was happening in Iran in general and in specific areas where they might be especially knowledgeable, such as in their occupational fields. Every week, I pulled this information together and wrote a classified cable sent to all our posts giving them information we had gleaned from our discussions with Iranian visa applicants. It was an onerous task, but it seemed to be very worthwhile because of the quality and quantity of the information we received. However, we had to be very careful that no one got the impression that, if they talked to us, they would get a visa. We only asked them if they would be willing to talk to us after they had been issued a visa. We also did not identify people who had talked to us, even though the cable was classified.

*Q: Interesting.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Asking applicants to talk to us and then discussing issuance of a visa would have been construed as offering them a bribe to talk to us. We needed to keep the visa issuance process clean, legal, not compromised.

We could not allow linkage between providing information and the issuance of a visa. That would have been unethical, if not illegal. But, people who had already received their visa could be asked if they would be willing to come back, perhaps to talk about their businesses or the business climate to someone who also had expertise in that area, e.g., the global oil business, or about the treatment of minorities, such as the Bahai. The visa application had already told us about the applicants' jobs and backgrounds, so we knew what applicants could tell us, if they wanted to talk to us.

*Q: Some would.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Some would. A lot of them actually did. Some of them did not. We pulled together what we were learning from visa applicants and from a variety of other sources. Each week, I would draft (and send around for clearance) a cable of background information about Iran.

This was very controversial because some people believed it created a link between political reporting and visa issuance. But, our foreign service posts and other agencies kept telling us how useful it was to them. It was really an important source of information about Iran.

*Q: I was going to say you were sort of a pseudo political officer while you were doing that.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and while I was in Iran too because of the things that we were seeing in the consular section and reporting, such as possible capital flight, and Iranians who were establishing possible safe havens in the U.S. "just in case".

*Q: Yes. Right.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Eventually, the Department began training some officers in Farsi and sending them to places with the bulk of Iranian applicants, such as Turkey and the Gulf States

Ed, I want to go back to the fall of 1980, if we can, when I was assigned to the Greek desk and began working for you. I really enjoyed that job tremendously. I had studied a lot about ancient Greece and had taught ancient history at the American School in Paris, mostly Greek, and studied some Archaeology at the American University of Beirut. This gave me a good background for finding material for toasts and public statements that really pleased the Greeks. How accurate it all was historically may have been open to some discussion, since modern Greeks are not exactly the same as those of the ancient world.

Although I had never lived in Greece and did not speak much Greek, I had traveled all over the country and had spent quite a lot of time there. However, I had to do a lot of reading about modern Greece and discovered the wonderful world of Greek writers, especially novelists and poets. That is a great way to learn a lot about a country.

I remember the first day I walked into the Office of Southern European Affairs (EUR/SE) . It was late August, and there had a big gap in time between my predecessor's departure and my arrival. I was told that by evening I had to do a briefing paper for the Secretary, who was to have a meeting at the UN with the Greek Foreign Minister. It was a rather wild day with half the office pitching in to help me find materials I needed to write the paper. We sent it up to the Secretary on time, and no one complained. The second day on the job was easier.

I was the Junior Officer on the desk. The Senior Officer, Mort Dworken, spoke Greek and had a lot of experience in Greece. He had just married a wonderful woman he had met in Athens, a diplomat from New Zealand, and they were still in New Zealand. So. I was alone on the desk for the first few weeks. Mort and Anna were warmly greeted when they arrived. We are still close friends with them, as you are.

*Q: It was an interesting time to be in the Office of Southern European Affairs. It was not long after the rule of the Colonels, and Cyprus and the relationship with Turkey, were hot issues.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Delicate too.

*Q: The domestic situation within Greece?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and also within the United States because there was a very strong Greek lobby which prided itself on being the second most effective lobby after the Israelis. We certainly heard from them a lot, but we also became good friends with some of them.

The Greek government was then led by Constantine Karamanlis, who was highly respected for his strong support of democracy. He had been in politics before World War II, had held cabinet posts, and had been a progressive Prime Minister leading several governments. He was courageous during the German occupation and went into exile during the rule of the Greek colonels who had seized control of the government. Karamanlis came back to power in a very dramatic fashion when the colonels were overthrown and democracy restored to Greece. One of our colleagues in the Office of Southern European Affairs, Bob Pugh, had been at the airport when Karamanlis returned to Greece to great public acclaim and to power as Prime Minister. It was an exciting moment for Greece.

However, a lot of people in Greece believed the United States had strongly supported the colonels' dictatorship partly because President Nixon's Vice President, Spiro Agnew, the

first Greek American to hold such high office, was considered to have sympathy for the colonels, as did some other important American officials. There was also a certain amount of pressure on Agnew to use his Greek contacts and heritage to advance our relationship with the dictatorship. That strengthened the impression that the United States government, as a whole, strongly supported the Greek colonels.

*Q: Our ambassador at the time of the colonels was pretty open in his support for them.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, he was. You were in Cyprus at that point. That was a very interesting time in the eastern Mediterranean.

*Q: Well, say a little more about working on a desk. This is the first time you had done that. How did you find that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, I loved it -- it was fascinating.

*Q: Why?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Because it was so varied. I worked on all aspects of our relationship with Greece, and I liked working with the Greeks. I had already traveled extensively in Greece, studied some archaeology, taught Ancient History, and had read a fair number of Greek authors.

Working on the desk pushed me to learn more about the politics, culture, and economy of modern Greece, about American interests in Greece, and, also, political military affairs. We had agreements with the Greek government to operate important military facilities in Greece. We also had agreements covering the operation of USIA (United States Information Agency) Voice of America transmissions from communications facilities in Greece. They were especially important for broadcasting to Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

We also had several American schools and close cooperation between some of our universities and Greek institutions, especially with regard to archaeology. A vibrant Greek community lived in the United States, so we needed to be connected with them and their interests. There was a lot of work to do on the Greek desk, but it was intellectually stimulating. I really enjoyed it, and I learned so much. And we did help put our relationship on an even keel with now democratic Greece.

As you know, we were still dealing with the aftermath of the partition of Cyprus which occurred just as President Nixon was leaving office -- not willingly. I don't think that some of the strong voices in the Greek-American community and the Cypriot-American community ever really believed that the U.S. government had been so overwhelmed by the upheavals in Washington in 1974 as a result of the Watergate scandal and the near impeachment and then resignation of the president -- that the American government wouldn't have had the energy or the focus to have been encouraging the Turks to invade Cyprus.

The move of Turkish forces into Cyprus crystallized opposition to NATO and the EU and, of course, to the U.S. and the UK. It also brought back memories of the Greek civil war. All sorts of difficult times for Greece and for us.

Greece had a political life changing election in October 1981 with the election of Andreas

Papandreou, a Harvard trained economist who had lived for a long time in the United States and in Canada, especially during the dictatorship of the Colonels. He had become an American citizen, but he gave up his American citizenship when he entered Greek politics.

Papandreou had returned to Greece when the colonels were toppled and democracy was restored. He became the head of PASOK, the Socialist Party. Papandreou was running strongly against the center right parties on a nationalistic platform with an anti-American undercurrent. He was also suggesting that the United States would never allow him, as a Socialist, to take power in Greece. There were insinuations from some that the U.S. might even have Papandreou assassinated. There had been political killings in Greece in those years.

We thought Papandreou and PASOK were probably going to win the election. We believed we needed to show as quickly as possible that the United States was prepared to work with the new government. So, under your direction, Ed, we decided to get a congratulatory message from President Reagan to Greece as rapidly as possible on election night.

*Q: Go back and tell me about how Papandreou took office as Prime Minister and you wrote the famous.....*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, you were there then. It was your idea, and it was an inspired one.

*Q: I know I was there, but we want to hear it from you.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We planned to have a congratulatory telegram pre-cleared in Washington, so that we could send it out fast enough to have it delivered right after Papandreou was sworn into office. It worked very well. We had the congratulatory cable cleared all the way into the White House up to Presidential level. President Reagan was out of Washington at a G-7 meeting in Virginia. The whole thing was very complicated. One of his staff members was very worried that we might accidentally send this cable out prematurely or that it would leak before the election winner was declared. But nothing happened. You kept our cleared cable tightly held, Ed……and we had a draft of another cable to be sent around for clearances just in case our expectation of the election results turned out to be wrong.

Our expectations were not wrong. As soon as PASOK's and Papandreou's victory was declared, we flashed the already cleared cable to Embassy Athens, where a secretary was waiting to type it on the appropriate paper with the right seals and ribbons for a formal diplomatic note. Our Ambassador, Monty Stearns, who spoke Greek fluently, went to Papandreou's residence (they had known each other from Stearns' earlier assignment to Athens). As Ambassador Stearns approached the residence in the embassy car with the flag flying, Papandreou had just finished his acceptance speech. The television and press were still there. The TV and press people turned toward the embassy car and to the American Ambassador in the car. They asked about the official letter the ambassador was waving. Stearns was able to say in Greek and in the full glare of Greek television that he was bringing congratulations from President Reagan and America. The timing was perfect for huge coverage of our congratulatory letter, which we quickly released as a press statement.

*Q: I think we were probably the first to do it.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, absolutely by far. The British apparently couldn't believe it. We got the letter to Papandreou -- and the Greek public -- almost immediately, and it firmly contradicted Papandreou's charge that the Americans would never let him take power. To the contrary, the conservative American government, headed by the Republican President Ronald Reagan congratulated the newly elected Socialist Prime Minister Papandreou and told him -- and the Greek people -- that the Reagan Administration looked forward to working with him.

*Q: That really was a high point of our work on the desk, because that whole initiative came from us of course.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Specifically, the idea came from you, Ed. I wrote the message and got it cleared everywhere, but you were the catalyst for doing it. We all had to convince senior officials in the State Department and the White House that we needed to assure the new Greek government immediately that the U.S. was not hostile to it and wanted to work with it, as we would with any other allied government. You were really good about insisting that we could and should do it. That message put our relationship with Greece on a much better footing than it might have been.

*Q: Actually the relationship with the Papandreou government was not so bad.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, it wasn't because we were there right away with our message. He couldn't say that the Americans would not allow him to take power because it was obvious and clear to the media that we had congratulated him and said that the U.S. government looked forward to working with him.

*Q: I should add one little thing. Had we not done two telegrams?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We did, but one was in draft and not cleared. The congratulatory cable to Papandreou had been cleared everywhere, including through the White House.

We were holding both cables, but only one of them was ready to send. The other was in draft and had to go through the normal clearance process. We only sent the one to Papandreou.

*Q: We really only sent the Papandreou one after we knew he was in.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, we had the Papandreou message cleared and really ready to go. As soon as his election was announced, we called the State Department Operations Center, which was then holding our congratulatory cable to Papandreou, and ask them to flash it to Athens. Embassy Athens was waiting for it. The other message was in draft form and in our office.

We had been working hard to restore bilateral relationships and to have Greece, a valued ally, re-integrate into the NATO alliance. So, we thought it was a very positive step forward when President Karamanlis, a moderate conservative leader with PASOK's Papandreou as Prime Minister, invited Secretary of State Alexander Haig to visit Greece.

I argued to have Secretary Haig say "thank you" in Greek when he ended his major speech. The Secretary was famous for his sometimes mangled English and avoided foreign words, but he finally agreed to say "Epharisto" (thank you). This caused enthusiastic cheering from the large Greek crowd and sighs of relief from his staff that he had managed to say it. The trip was a great success, but, soon after the trip, Secretary Haig resigned. We had to start all over again from scratch.

*Q: Actually, I think I had left by that time. Didn't I go to the United Nations then? I think I missed out on your "Epharisto."*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I am not sure. I think you were there because you were still heading the office when Greece was re-integrated into NATO, weren't you? Because that was…

*Q: I am not sure because I was with Jeane Kirkpatrick on the day Secretary Haig resigned.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, I see.

*Q: It was about that time anyway.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, we were working hard to have Greece re-integrated into NATO. Greece had also been invited to join what is now the European Union. The Left in Greece was very upset about these things and thought that being in NATO or joining the EU would be a sell out to "the Imperialists."

So, Papandreou's party, PASOK, condemned NATO in its election campaign but Greece was re-integrated into NATO, after negotiations with NATO and after the PASOK

government had decided that NATO membership was good for Greece. (Greece had withdrawn from NATO in protest of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus).

PASOK had also condemned the European Community (now the European Union), but Greece decided to become a member, again seeing membership as substantially benefiting Greece.

Ironically, because of a fluke in the way the presidency of the now European Union rotates (it is an automatic process), Greece actually became the Presidency country a short time after having become a member. It was a big stretch for the Greeks. They had not been working within the European Community, which was in the process of changing rapidly. The whole concept of the European Political Cooperation Process was in its very early stage of development and few outsiders knew much about it.

I tried to find people at State who could brief us about the new political cooperation process, which fascinated me. Then, I ran into Ambassador George Vest, who had been our ambassador in Brussels at the European Community. Vest agreed to come over to talk to a few of us in EUR/SE about what was turning out to be an important process for institutionalizing European political cooperation that, eventually, led to the formation of the European Union.

When it came time for Greece to become the Presidency Country for six months, the Greeks managed to lead the political cooperation process, even though there wasn't yet a real model to follow, and Greece did not have many government officials trained to do it. Perhaps it was just as well that the process was in its infancy, almost experimental stage, so all the member states were struggling. I wasn't there when Greece actually assumed the presidency responsibilities. I was disappointed in that because it would have been very interesting, and I would have learned a great deal.

We did achieve our objective of putting together support for bringing Greece back into European structures -- NATO and the European Community. We thought that would help stabilize Greece and keep its democracy strong because the EU is a community of democracies. There were forces that might have destabilized Greece -- the remnants of support for the colonels or else the far left and terrorist groups. Being closely tied into the European structures really helped protect Greece and helped put the country where it belonged -- as part of the heart of democratic Europe. We also, with your lead, managed the renewal of our base agreements with Greece and continuation of our agreements on Voice of America operations in Greece. Those were things that we had really wanted to do.

*Q: Those were good accomplishments.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, they were. And it turned out that our relationship with Greece, with the Papandreou government, was generally positive. We had a great ambassador there. It was a really good time to be working on Greek affairs.

*Q: Now was Mort Dworken there the entire time you were?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No. He arrived a little after I did and left before I did.

*Q: Who replaced him, or did anybody?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Nobody could really replace Mort. He had experience in Greece and spoke good Greek. He was very knowledgeable about the country. I was lucky that Mort was replaced by Dick Thompson, who was also a very effective political officer. I enjoyed working with him too.

Mort and I did work together most of the time, sometimes at long distance. Mort was often in Greece because of our extended negotiations on renewal of our base agreement. He was on our negotiating team. I depended on him because of his long experience in Greece, but there were others in the office, including you and Bob Pugh, who had had spent a lot of time in the region.

*Q: So, you really were doing it.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was doing a lot of it and all of it, when Mort was gone.

*Q: Do you think two people were too many for the Greek desk?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No. I often felt overwhelmed by the volume of work, but this may have been an unusually active time. The Greek people were just coming out of decades of conflict and instability. We were focused on rebuilding our relationship after the fall of the military junta that had ruled Greece from 1967-1974 following a period of instability that followed the Greek civil war that followed World War II and the Nazi occupation. The Greeks had been through a long period of suffering. Then, in 1967, a group of Colonels had led a coup and established a military dictatorship. The dictatorship of the junta led by the colonels was harsh and did further damage to Greek society. Some Americans had strongly supported the anti-Communist junta, but the dictatorship had also damaged the American-Greek relationship, as well as Greece's position in Europe.

*Q: And then on the domestic front you have got to say there was an awful lot of congressional interest that probably does not exist for every country.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, yes because there is a strong Greek lobby. There was always tremendous interest in Greece. We had very good people working on Greek affairs. Monty Stearns, our Ambassador, was a fluent Greek speaker with a lot of experience. He managed the Embassy's side of the relationship very well, while we on the desk tried to keep the Washington side of the relationship on a steady even course. So, I was delighted, Ed, that you had taken a chance and offered me the job.

*Q: I was very glad to have you as a matter of fact.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Thank you. It was always such an interesting job. For example, after you left, it was decided that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) should leave its Beirut headquarters and move to Tunis. NATO would be involved, but ships were needed and not American naval vessels. I was at a meeting in the Political Military Bureau to discuss how this could be accomplished. I suggested that we ask Greece for help. Greece would have access to a large number of privately owned passenger vessels that could be rented, and they might also draw on Cyprus for support, if needed.

Greek Prime Minister Papandreou was quite friendly with Yasser Arafat and the PLO. Supporting the PLO was part of Greek foreign policy with its Socialist government. I thought that helping the PLO would make the Greek government look good to the Palestinians and to their own supporters, so it would appeal to Papandreou. Greece had already been reintegrated into NATO, albeit with reluctance in some quarters, and this operation, with its NATO partnership, would put NATO in a good light with many people who ordinarily would oppose anything NATO did.

I didn't realize how much the Greeks and Cypriots were going to charge us for renting their transport! However, negotiating those contracts was not the responsibility of the European Bureau. The PLO was relocated in Tunis without any problem, and it all worked out very well.

*Q: Then what did you do?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Right after being on the Greek desk I had a second assignment in the Visa Office (1983-85). Since my formal responsibilities in the Visa Office were the visa operations in general at the European posts, and not just issuance of visas to Iranians, it was decided that I should go for consultations to our posts in Eastern Europe. They were having their own problems behind a seemingly shaky "Iron Curtain." Change was really very much in the air.

I went to the former Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania for the first time. I had spent a day in East Berlin after the wall had been erected, but that was the extent of my Eastern European experience. I spoke French but I didn't speak any other European languages at that time, so I was limited in the conversations I could have.

I went to Zagreb and Belgrade, which were quite affected by the money being brought into the country by Yugoslavs working abroad. There were so many large houses and German cars, and the shops were fairly well stocked. The government seemed willing to let many people come and go to Western Europe, as long as they brought hard currency back with them. However, this was not a free country. I was on the overnight train from Vienna to Belgrade and put alone into a carriage. At the last minute, I was joined by a young English speaking woman who started a conversation with me and quickly claimed to be anti-government. Rather than join in her conversation, I decided to go to sleep.

Government control in Romania was much more harsh. When I was in Bucharest at one point looking into a bookstore window, a man came up behind me and said in English,

"Don't buy any of those books; they are just propaganda from Ceausescu." I thanked him quietly but did not turn around. He had taken a risk in speaking to me, so he walked away quickly. It was a harsh dictatorship.

That night, I was having dinner by myself at the hotel. At one point the waiter came over and asked if I would mind if a young woman, an actress, also eating alone, joined me. Of course, I knew this was a plant. I had noticed that the foreigners were all seated only at certain tables, so I had been feeling carefully under the table to see where the microphones were attached, but I could not find them. Just as well, probably.

My dinner partner asked me to go with her to see films that had been banned by the government. She said that a group of her friends, who were dissidents, would be there. I felt as though I were taking part in a grade B movie spy thriller and wished I could tell her I had seen this movie before. I expressed my regrets that I could not join her because I had an early train to Constantza, which the government would have already known. She began to criticize the government and saying she wanted to leave Romania. Mindful of the microphones, I praised the beauty of Romania. I had been taken to the countryside and walked around Bucharest, so I knew Romania was a beautiful country with an horrific government. I also had the feeling that I had to protect this young woman, who was supposed to deliver me, and hoped my early train argument did that. At least, she would have had a good meal, somewhat of a rarity at that time. I had gone shopping in Bucharest and saw there was not much food available.

*Q: I was going to say you felt that was she an agent?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh, yes.

*Q: So in other words it was not a group of dissidents.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well. I think there might have been a small group of people -- maybe even dissidents they were planning to arrest. I don't know. But, I think she was being used because it seemed that, at one time or another, everyone was being used by that government. The only people who seemed to be left alone, to some degree, according to what contacts told me, were people who were known to be religious, such as seriously practicing Orthodox Christians. I went to a monastery with some Romanians who worked at the Embassy and saw how warmly they were greeted by the priests. Apparently, the government considered such people beyond the pale and ignored them to a certain point, but it also restricted their lives and futures. However, I went to church in Constantza and found a good size congregation of worshippers wandering in and out but praying and lighting candles.

I decided to rent a car to go to an archaeological site on the Black Sea not far from Constantza. So I went to a big hotel, showed my American diplomatic passport and asked if I could rent a car to go to this site. They agreed at once, and we signed a rental agreement. This amazed me. I thought that the car, too, must have been wired so the police would know where I was. That gave me confidence that, if I had a flat tire,

rescuers would quickly be on the way. I got in the car which was a Dacian (a Romanian Fiat). One of my students in Paris, who is now in the Foreign Service himself, had written a long paper on the Dacians, so I knew who the Dacians were and appreciated the car. It was an interesting drive, but I could not buy food anywhere. I was tired and quite hungry. When I arrived at the archaeological site, I went into the "restaurant," but they did not have food either. Finally, I took out a package of Kent cigarettes, which were used as bribes by everybody.

*Q: Shades of WW II.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Someone quickly exchanged the cigarette packet for a half of a baguette sandwich -- most likely the rest of his lunch. I could not get coffee or the Pepsi Cola which supposedly was being sold in Romania. This was a time when…

*Q: And what year was this?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: 1984 or so.

*Q: Well, still in 1984 that's, I meant…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Berlin wall fell in 1990, didn't it?

*Q: 1991.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: This was the mid 1980s -- 1983-4. You could feel that something was happening. Perhaps not so much in Romania, but decidedly in Czechoslovakia. We were doing what we could to help the process.

*Q: I was going to say Romania was a different sort of communist country, especially with regard to their foreign policy. But that tough dictatorship held on for a long time. The ferment didn't occur there quite as early as in other places.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It was very tightly controlled, and the police were everywhere. The Romanians were able to be somewhat free in their foreign policy, whereas their domestic situation was absolutely terrible.

*Q: Well did you travel to other places? How did you feel about the other Eastern European countries?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Budapest had clearly been a beautiful city. But it was grey and a bit depressing in the rain. "Goulash Communism" was in full swing, so food and consumer goods seemed more widely available than they had been in Bucharest. In Romania, I tried to buy aspirin at a pharmacy. There was a long line of people, but the pharmacist, who spoke French, asked me what I wanted. When I told him, he said, "We haven't had aspirin in years." Some people on the line just laughed. In Budapest, there were some nice restaurants, and I could buy gifts for my family.

East Germany was rather an experience. My plane was delayed, so I missed the car the U.S. Mission in Berlin (West Berlin) had sent for me, and I had no local money. Because I was coming from Prague, I had landed in East Germany. We were not supposed to show our American diplomatic passports or allow them to be stamped. There was nothing else I could do. I had to show my diplomatic passport, and it was stamped.

I had to find a telephone to see if someone could pick me up. I didn't even know where I was supposed to go, but I assumed it was to the U.S. Mission in West Berlin, although I had meetings at our Embassy in East Berlin, not far from the airport where I had landed. I thought being a loose diplomat in East Germany was probably not a good thing., so I did not try to find a taxi to go to our Embassy in what was then East Berlin.

It all became rather ridiculous, but there were strict "Berlin rules" in play because of the divided nature of the city. An official car was finally sent over from West Berlin to East Berlin, where I was waiting at a bus stop. The car had to take me to the U.S. Mission in West Berlin before it could take me back to East Berlin to the embassy. By that time, the traffic jams in West Berlin had caused me to miss half the meetings scheduled for me in East Berlin, including one with Ambassador Roz Ridgway, with whom I had once worked.

I was able to talk to a few colleagues about life in East Berlin and problems of working there. I was told that it was generally recognized that most of the local employees at the embassy were compromised in one fashion or another. They had to be. Everybody understood that. Society was under tight control and there were listening devices all over. We have learned more about that in recent years.

I did have the experience of going through Checkpoint Charlie three times that day. I had gone through a few years earlier when my sons and I were in Berlin to visit some British friends and crossed over to see the museums and the other side of the wall. This time, I only saw a little of East Berlin from the car, but I noticed many new buildings, and people seemed a little more prosperous than on my first visit. The solidity of the wall dividing the city exemplified the differences in our political systems and showed me a lot about life in Berlin.

*Q: Say a little bit about the relationship between the visa operation and the embassies. I am thinking of the Washington end of visas.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was able to talk to many of our colleagues as I wandered around our embassies and could ask them about their concerns. It was helpful to have made contact with so many of them. It made it easier to work with them when I was back in Washington. I also understood better the circumstances under which they worked. Conditions in the various countries differed greatly, and that affected visa operations and the ability of applicants to get exit permits. In several posts, supporting dissidents and helping people to leave were priorities. I had little glimpses of these efforts as I wandered around and talked to American officers.

There were a number of things which the missions wanted to do in support of their goals. I talked to several of our ambassadors who had specific requests that I supported in Washington, but not always very successfully. That disappointed me.

However, I could see there was a lot of movement in the societies in Eastern Europe.

Prague was pretty sad after the Prague Spring had collapsed, and people seemed very depressed. So, I wandered around a lot and talked to everyone I could at the embassy. I was especially interested in the embassy's active support for dissidents. Change was taking place more and more rapidly in one country behind the "Iron Curtain" after another. More people were able to leave. In 1991, the Berlin Wall was breached, and everything changed. Oddly enough I was driving across Northern Ireland when I heard on the car radio that Belfast was now the only divided European city, so I knew the Berlin Wall had been forced open.

*Q: Everything was there.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: My next assignment was actually to Belfast. Belfast, a major UK ship building site, had been badly bombed by the Germans during WW II, and forty years later, areas around the port were still in a bad state. The situation was made worse by the sectarian conflicts and riots. There was a lot of effort to bring people together, but strife was a fact of life, and there were some bad periods of bombs exploding, riots and other violence, and heavy army and police patrolling. The city was divided by a "peace wall" intended to keep the religious factions apart. The Belfast "peace wall" is still there, but now there are openings in it -- physical openings as well as emotional ones.

*Q: Tell me a little more of how that assignment to Belfast occurred.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, as I said, I was working in the Visa Office on the management of consular operations at the European posts. I was appointed head of the consular section in Belfast and would be the deputy to the Consul General. It was an interesting assignment politically, and I had also done a lot of work on terrorism, mostly Middle Eastern, but still…..

*Q: So it was a good fit really.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It was a very good fit. In addition, by this time I was married to someone who had been born in Northern Ireland, but had left. When I told him about the great job in Belfast, he pointed out that he had emigrated from there and did not want to go back. But, we finally agreed that I would apply for it, and Mike would take a year long sabbatical and join me. After a year in Northern Ireland, Mike said that if Belfast had been in 1949 the way it was in 1985, with the gradual breakdown of religious animosity, he probably would never have left. We go back nearly every year and see friends. It was good for him to tie those loose ends, see people he had known and the few cousins he still had.

When I arrived in Belfast in the summer of 1985, politicians had been struggling over next steps in the dialogue between the British government, the Irish Republic, and the leaders in Northern Ireland. There had been some steps forward, but then Prime Minister Thatcher had broken off the process because she felt it would compromise UK sovereignty. There was also a great deal of suspicion in some circles that the Irish government would make a grab for Northern Ireland. Not likely, I thought.

After that debacle, some very forward looking people agreed that an Anglo-Irish Agreement was the only way to go, and the dialogue was resumed. The Irish government and John Hume, who was the head of the SDLP (Social Democratic Labour Party-basically a Catholic party), and others worked out another draft agreement, in which the British government invited the Irish government to "share in the burden of administering the troubled province of Northern Ireland." The Anglo-Irish agreement was signed in Dublin on November 15, 1985, by Margaret Thatcher for the UK and Garret Fitzgerald for the Irish Republic. The agreement was an umbrella agreement and was very European in structure in the sense that it was an over arching framework agreement and not too specific.

I was Acting Consul General in Belfast at the time and hastened to report to Washington about the reaction to the agreement in Northern Ireland. This was an agreement between the UK and Irish governments, and Northern Ireland political leaders had not been involved in drafting it.

Reaction in Northern Ireland's political parties reflected their sectarian character. The Protestants were divided. They did not want any diminution of their power in Northern Ireland. Many in the North did not like the structure of the agreement and its lack of specificity.

However, supporters of the agreement, who came from several countries and several interest groups, including churches and reconciliation groups in Northern Ireland and abroad, had helped prepare the ground for this breakthrough agreement. The Anglo-Irish agreement was the first really successful agreement between the Irish Republic and the British government, which had control over Northern Ireland (also referred to as Ulster).

Of course, Embassy London was also informing Washington, but few people from the embassy had been in Northern Ireland. There was really a dearth of interest in Northern Ireland across the UK and in the embassy too. Embassy London had a lot of other issues on its agenda with the British government.

*Q: It was not on their regular circuit.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, it wasn't. When we asked for volunteers to come to Belfast to help out -- I was acting Consul General again -- and I needed help for a month, only two Foreign Service Officers, both women, volunteered. They enjoyed their two week

TDY's in Belfast, but it was not on Embassy London's regular circuit, although the Consul General in London, Ed Kreuser, used to visit us and we had a few other visitors.

I think it should have been on the embassy's regular circuit. Northern Ireland was being governed from London, by Parliament, and the situation was literally explosive. There really were bombs going off, and there were police checks in stores and checkpoints on streets. The British army was rolling through the streets in armored cars or personnel carriers and patrolling on foot. The army did not bring in tanks, which would have looked really bad -- and would have torn up the streets too.

*Q: But how about you? Did you have to be careful yourself because of that? What kind of security precautions did you take?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: One of the things I did was to link my garage and my house. I had a machine installed to raise and lower the garage door from my car. Then, we broke through the garage wall into the adjacent kitchen. I could go directly from the locked garage into the house, which was wired with an alarm system. We had blast protected windows, which were effective when there were bombs in the neighborhood.

Actually, Northern Ireland was one of the very few places that I had ever been, where no one was going after Americans. In fact, I felt fairly safe, even as a woman. My husband was working in Washington for more than half of my tour, so I was generally on my own. When I would leave dinners and drive home across the countryside late at night, I would be more worried about drunk drivers than about terrorism, but I knew there were bombs, sometimes, set along the roads, generally placed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or one of its affiliates. One could be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

*Q: And would people know that you were American from your car?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I drove a car I had bought second-hand in London, so I actually had diplomatic license plates rather than consular plates, but the British just let me keep them. The United States was the only country with a diplomatic presence in Northern Ireland -- our consulate in Belfast. The French had had a consulate in Belfast, but after their consulate was bombed, the French closed it and had a local French citizen act as Honorary Consul.

But, as I said, I really felt safe, except from drunk drivers on a dark, maybe rainy, night, when I was driving back to Belfast. I drove all over the province, often alone. I reminded myself that I couldn't do this in some parts of America late at night. It is true that the Irish can talk for half the night, so I was often out late.

*Q: I know that, and you do too.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. That is the Irish still in me. Serving in Belfast was a very good experience. I had a wide range of responsibilities. On the political side, I usually

covered the SDLP and the Alliance party, which is a nonsectarian party, a very moderate, middle of the road party, and also several smaller groups.

*Q: How many Americans were there?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: There was a consul general, a deputy also responsible for consular operations (my position), and a junior consular officer. The Visa Section was run very effectively by experienced, really outstanding local employees. When I was there, the three American officers actually divided up the other duties of the consulate assisted by several of the local employees. In a small post, lines of responsibility are not set in stone. We just worked together.

The consulate handled the various exchange programs sponsored by the United States. In addition to the usual programs, such as leader grants for travel in the U.S., there were extensive programs in Northern Ireland sponsored by American groups to bring together Catholic and Protestant young people. These young people were invited to vacation in the United States in the summer as guests of American families. Catholic and Protestant students went together to their host families in the hope that young people who made friends "across the religious divide" would help bridge that divide at home. The American hosts were so generous, and the young people were often given amazing experiences.

After I had been there about a year, the consulate was asked to do more outreach to encourage cultural links with the U.S. The cultural side of the consulate's work became important, and we were asked to introduce people from Embassy London to cultural leaders in Northern Ireland. I arranged a dinner for a visitor from the cultural branch in Embassy London with a group of poets and writers to discuss ideas for cultural links. Ideas we heard aplenty, and at about 1:30 in the morning, I had to press our guests to go home, since my colleague from London and I had meetings in Derry/Londonderry the next morning. It was a great evening, really stimulating, and it did lead to greater interaction, including travel to the United States by Northern Ireland theatre groups, the Ulster orchestra and various other cultural institutions that were very good but not known in the United States.

*Q: What about visa problems?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, yes. We had the usual refusal of visas to people we believed were emigrating to the U.S. by using tourist visas or planning to work here for a while. We also had a number of visa applications from people who had or had had connections to various Catholic and Protestant paramilitary groups or groups believed linked to the paramilitaries. The United States took a dim view of some of these organizations. We had to look carefully at these applications and refer them to Washington as prescribed under U.S, law.

Other applicants had been convicted of violent acts or of supporting violence, so under American visa legislation, we had to reject their applications. We did not normally

second guess the verdicts of foreign courts operating under recognized legal systems, but we still considered the applications very carefully and referred them to Washington. The applications are handled on a case by case basis. The consulate was sometimes under intense pressure to issue visas to some who were believed to be closely involved with paramilitary groups, and we would not issue the visas but referred the case to Washington.

The situation has changed a lot with the creation of the power sharing government in Northern Ireland, where people considered to have had paramilitary connections have now renounced violence and are leaders of the new government. I left before the power sharing government was created. I don't know how these visa applications are processed, except that the U.S. media sometimes reports on visits and has indicated that individuals, such as Gerry Adams, reportedly a leader of the Provisional IRA, had been issued a visa.

*Q: Were our relations about equally good with both sides?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Our official relations were with the government, which was the British government that had instituted direct rule from London in the face of the violence in Northern Ireland. There were even British troops in the streets. The British government had set up a Northern Ireland Office in Belfast, and we dealt with that and with security officials, who were mainly British. We also saw Northern Ireland political leaders who were not connected with the violence.

The Consul General and I divided covering the political parties, and the Vice Consul, who did the visa interviews, also met sometimes with political leaders outside the visa interviews. He also obtained political and economic information. The politicians in Northern Ireland at that time just didn't have any power; people used to joke that the politicians were mainly responsible for garbage collections. But there was a lot of jockeying for power. The Irish are very political.

*Q: I was just wondering if you were received by Catholics as warmly as by Protestants or vice versa.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. I got to know the leadership of the SDLP, and I became friends with several SDLP politicians and party officials and with John Cushnahan, head of the nonsectarian Alliance Party. I also used to see Gerry Adams, head of Sinn Fein, a Catholic party, which has been linked to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), in church a lot, but we studiously avoided each other.

I used to see people from the Ulster Unionist Party (Protestant) too. I had one special contact there, who would talk to me, unlike some of his colleagues who boycotted us because the U.S. had strongly supported the Anglo-Irish Agreement from its beginnings and the Unionists were strongly opposed to it. My friend was a bit on the outs for a while with his more rigid Unionist colleagues. There were a lot of businessmen behind the Unionist party, and the Consul General usually took the lead in following them, although the Vice Consul and I both had contacts among them.

We also occasionally saw people involved with small political parties on both sides, who represented groups in Northern Ireland that had eschewed violence.

My friends, the people with whom I spent my time, spanned the political spectrum, but tended to be moderates who had long supported the various peace movements. Some were journalists, professors, or political writers. They were Catholics and Protestants, more Protestant perhaps given the makeup of Belfast. Several of the Protestants, I discovered, had Irish, not British passports, and one of our closest Protestant friends has moved to the Republic. Many of my friends' children also moved there. The Irish resisted pigeonholing.

*Q: Yes. How many consuls general did you have?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I served with two consuls general in Belfast, and Ed Kreuser, Counselor for Consular Affairs at Embassy London, wrote the reviewing part of my performance evaluation. Ed was one the few in London particularly interested in what we were doing. He came to Northern Ireland several times.

*Q: So really in essence a good part of the time you were it while you were there.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, part of the time. In the beginning, the consul general was on home leave. He was gone quite a while. Then he left Belfast, and there was a gap before the new consul general, Bob Myers, came.

Bob and I worked very closely together. He generally covered the business oriented part of the Unionist Party. I used to meet with the Presbyterian leadership at their Church House in Belfast; they played a major role in Northern Ireland. They elected their leaders, annually rotating between a conservative leader and a liberal. It made for interesting changes in policy. I used to bring American Presbyterians to meet with them. The conversation was quite different, depending on whether the Presbyterian leader that year was conservative or liberal. I also had good talks with Catholic clergy and lay leaders in Belfast and Derry, especially those actively working toward reconciliation.

A lot of people were trying to improve the situation in Northern Ireland. Bob and I met with human rights commissions, fair employment officials, and union leaders. I spent an afternoon with a remarkable man in Derry, who had been active with a paramilitary group but had decided to work for peace and was now working with at-risk people.

Equal housing was an issue. The British government decided it was responsible for housing, so it began clearing the worst slums and replacing those houses with houses that had indoor plumbing and indoor toilets. The quality of the new housing was very high because the government wanted to minimize repair of the housing stock. Better housing improved morale in all the communities. People in the conflict areas could now have front doors with large glass panels and take pride in their front gardens. The changes in Belfast have been tremendous.

*Q: Yes.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: One of the interesting things about serving in Belfast was that I had to visit all the prisons, because we had to report on the conditions in the prisons.

*Q: Oh yes, the human rights report.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes and other reports too. Conditions in the prisons were of great concern to many in American, who went over those reports word by word. I made very interesting visits to all of the prisons. I have been to the Maze and all of the different maximum security prisons for men and for women. I have been all over them. I never expected to be in so many prisons.

I rewrote the human rights report after big battles with the embassy. People resisted changing a word because, as they say, every word had been blessed. I insisted on rewriting it to throw out many words and start all over again to reflect the changes in Northern Ireland -- to reflect the reality of the place.

*Q: London did not know that.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I think people just wanted to get the Human Rights report written and out on time. They did not want to rock the boat. I did. I finally managed to do that and write an accurate human rights report that covered both progress made and progress still needed.

*Q: Had anybody ever done that before you?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. The human rights reports were very carefully written. In some situations, like in Northern Ireland, every word would be examined and the slightest change would be noticed. So, when language had been accepted one year, there would be some reluctance to make changes the next year that might unleash a storm of controversy, unless there was good reason to do so. People preferred to make small changes that were needed, but keep most of the wording intact. So, the reports became very set, and the slightest change was noticed and created a problem.

*Q: You didn't have any record of earlier reports anyway.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I only remember seeing recent reports. One issue of concern to us was strip seating of women prisoners. I would go to the women's prison, to talk about conditions, especially strip searching. It had become a really explosive issue in a culture where many married women were said to change into night clothes in the closet, not in front of their husbands. Modesty was very high, so it was traumatic for many of these women.

*Q: Now would these be political prisoners?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: There were two kinds of prisoners. There were prisoners, who could be defined as political, but some of them had done very bad things, and so therefore they were criminal in a way. Women were sometimes carrying bombs and weapons. There were some dreadful stories of women carrying bombs in baby carriages with a baby in there too. So there could be paramilitary activity involved too.

Then, we had what they used to call the ODC's (the ordinary decent criminals) who were not involved in para military activities. They had committed ordinary crimes.

*Q: Interesting.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Many Irish-Americans wanted to see what was happening in Northern Ireland, so we had a really active consulate especially once Bob Myers arrived.

One thing that surprised me was the number of mixed marriages in Northern Ireland. A mixed marriage was a Protestant-Catholic marriage.

*Q: Since you were in one yourself.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Since I was in one myself. When I first arrived, I was invited to dinner by a group of couples. They had contacted me through an acquaintance. It turned out they were all Protestant ministers with Catholic wives. Perhaps five or six couples. They asked me if I would like to join their group. I said I didn't think I had better because I thought that would be a little bit too much -- too political for me to be doing.

*Q: Although Michael would have fit the…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It would have been fine had I not been at the American Consulate. Mike came later for a year and did a lot of work with both Catholics and Protestants. But I thought that was a little too political for me to do.

However, even in the roughest parts and most difficult conflict areas, where there were murders and intimidations, we might find a Catholic-Protestant marriage. Sometimes, the couple had difficulty finding areas where they could live, although there were many middle class mixed neighborhoods.

One time, we had the visit of the brother and sister-in-law of one of the paramilitary leaders, a really nasty piece of work, very violent. The couple were in a Catholic-Protestant marriage and decided it was too dangerous for them to remain in Northern Ireland. Bob Myers talked to various people, and various things happened and various steps were taken to protect this family.

*Q: A thing you have to do on occasion. That is real diplomacy.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and a sort of responsibility not to just send them out and say we couldn't do anything for them. Bob pulled all kinds of strings and managed to do something for them. He was very good.

There were positive developments, such as the opening of "integrated" schools, i.e. nonsectarian, and the rewriting of the curriculum in the schools, especially the history curriculum. The study of History in Northern Ireland had been quite sectarian and reflected the religious divide. A one sided view of the past was helping to keep the communities divided and all this violence alive.

*Q: Totally segregated schools.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, all the public (state) schools were basically Protestant. And they taught Protestant viewpoints.

*Q: And so the Catholics didn't go, of course.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, Catholics hardly ever went to those schools. But the Catholics had their own schools, and the Protestants would hardly ever go there.

*Q: All right, they just weren't public schools they were essentially church schools.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, the state schools were fairly, but not completely, sectarian and so that helped perpetuate some of these struggles. Students only knew other students as "the other." People lived in sectarian neighborhoods, so people of different faiths rarely met -- except, eventually young people could meet in downtown places where they shared an interest in music like reggae once the level of violence decreased.

That is why the integrated schools movement was an important development. Several of these schools had been opened by the time I arrived in Belfast. They drew students from both communities, and they were struggling along. One of their projects was to write a new nonsectarian history of Northern Ireland.

It was hard to write new history books that would help bridge the divide because there were wrongs on all sides. The Protestants were on the top, and there was a tremendous amount of anti-Catholic discrimination. It was very hard for Catholics to get jobs at the shipyards or in a lot of the other industries, and Protestants would not want to work in a Catholic establishment.

But things were changing slowly. The reconciliation community had an impact, and the integrated schools. People were traveling abroad. The British government, which governed Northern Ireland, put in Fair Employment and Equal Opportunity laws. They have also demolished slum areas, including the old war damaged areas, and built very nice housing in the conflict, rough areas. People all over have well-tended gardens, once the hallmark of a Protestant working class or a middle class neighborhood, with hanging plants and glass panels in the doors. We would say "gentrification."

*Q: What is the actual proportion of the population which is either, roughly?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well I am not sure. It was roughly becoming 60-40 -- 60% Protestant and 40% Catholic, but the Catholic population was creeping up because a lot of Protestants were leaving. Many did not return after university outside Northern Ireland.

Change seems to have come rapidly since I left in late 1987. Some of the children of my Protestant friends moved to Dublin, which was then a booming and "cool" city. This made Dublin 'the place to go." Some of my older Protestant friends moved to the Republic too, as have some Catholic friends.

Movement across the island of Ireland has become much easier. In fact, at this time, the border between the two parts is rather hard to find. It used to be heavily guarded, but now the strongest indication of crossing from one side of the island of Ireland to the other is that signs are in miles or kilometers and prices are in Euros or sterling.

*Q: And there are enough other kinds of people there by that time?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, even earlier than that. In addition to young people moving to Dublin from Belfast, with the free movement of people in the EU, many other Europeans found jobs in the Republic. They were scattered across the island during Ireland's "Celtic Tiger" period. I imagine many have gone back home with the decline in the Irish economy.

While many young people seemed to have decided Dublin was more fun for them, I enjoyed Belfast, which had its own wonderful theater, as well as visiting troupes from Dublin and elsewhere. There were excellent concerts -- a lot was going on in Belfast.

Jeff was in Belfast for two summers working at the Consulate. He used to go to the city center at night with a Protestant friend. As violence decreased in the city, the whole center of Belfast was open to everyone. Young people like them would go to night clubs. There was a big reggae crowd there, for example.

*Q: We should make a point that Jeff is your son.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Jeff is my younger son, and he was finishing architecture school. He did his senior project on Belfast, using urban development and architecture to bring communities together. He has done a lot of work in this area since Belfast. He worked in the South Bronx and the Middle East and various places. He loved Belfast. I really enjoyed it immensely myself.

My husband, Michael Hamilton, an Episcopal priest, would often work in the conflict areas with inter-religious groups. He worked, especially, with a Catholic priest from a church on the Falls Road, a militant Catholic area, and a Methodist minister from another

militant area. The Catholic and Protestant had made a practice of going to call on the parents of people killed in the sectarian violence on both sides. One of the Protestant families from East Belfast, whose son was involved and had been killed, gave the Catholic priest a crucifixion painting his son had done. The priest put the crucifixion painting on the altar of his church on the Falls Road. A number of people were surprised to say the least, but the painting stayed on the altar. That is where Gerry Adams and I went to go to church.

These two clergymen were among those working hard to bring about a rapprochement between the communities. The Presbyterians had a wonderful center for reconciliation on the north coast of Northern Ireland -- Corrymeela. It was a center which would bring people from the different communities together, such as couples who had lost children or people who had been living in terribly unnerving circumstances, maybe had even been burned out of their houses. They put Protestants and Catholics together. They used to have a mixed group help make dinner and wash the dishes. The center did not put in a dishwasher, so everyone would have to work together. However, even if people became friends at the center and were able to have deep discussions that even opened old wounds, it was very difficult for the families to meet after they left this protected area. That was unfortunate.

*Q: Nice but not totally satisfactory.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, it actually did help bring down barriers and sometimes the families could communicate by phone when they returned home. Gradually as things opened up, it would have been easier to find a neutral place to get together.

In addition, scores of children went to the U.S. each summer in programs to live with American families -- a Catholic and a Protestant child to each family. These were children from deprived communities often experiencing violence and in neighborhoods where the vision of the world was narrow. When couples married, they often lived very near their parents and grandparents. So this was an amazing experience for these children.

Then charter flights came to Belfast, and people from Northern Ireland could afford charter flights to warm sunny lands. People started traveling and discovered the big world beyond their tightly woven communities. They started meeting new people on these trips, just as the children in exchange programs were doing. Perhaps, this was a slow change of heart or a broadening of minds rather than something that bore fruit right away. I mean that this was diplomacy, patiently doing things, in the expectation that eventually it would work out.

The decline of traditional industries in Northern Ireland had helped stoke sectarian tension. There seemed to be a feeling in some quarters that any kind of progress in one part of the population had to lead to loss in the other part. There was a lot of unrest and sometimes riots in blue collar areas as people who were once almost assured of good jobs faced competition from the other community. The competition was exacerbated by the

decline of traditional industries, such as the linen and rope industries. The shipbuilding industry was once famous and the source of many jobs, particularly for the Protestant community. The Titanic and other well-known ships were built in Belfast, but that industry has really closed down, despite government efforts to bring contracts to the shipyards.

*Q: Right, very famous, those shipyards. But there is nothing happening there now.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Germans bombed them pretty badly. Then, some shipbuilding resumed for a while because of increase in demand for vessels. But those kinds of jobs, like factory jobs, have gone.

In recent years, many jobs demanded workers with a high level of technology. Some of these formerly prosperous blue collar workers found it very difficult to make that kind of adjustment. They are reasonably well educated for the kind of work they have always done, but they were hands-on workers used to factory work which gave them their special identity. You see this situation in a lot of countries, including the U.S., with the technological revolution.

More Catholics were going to universities. Many Protestants went to university too, but

a lot went to Scotland. As a result, the universities in Northern Ireland became over 50% Catholic. Students who don't go on to higher education risk being left behind because so many of the old skilled labor jobs are gone. Now Northern Ireland seems to be overrun with lawyers.

Do you want to stop now?

*Q: No, how about you?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I am all right.

*Q: Let's keep going. At least for a while. We have been doing it for an hour and 45 minutes. How about 15 minutes more anyway?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: When I arrived in Northern Ireland, I found both communities were not particularly open to enhancing the position of women. I was acting Consul General, and our secretary received a phone call about celebrations for the 350th anniversary of the Port of Belfast. There would be a big black tie dinner to which they wanted to invite the Consul General. When told that the Acting Consul General was a woman, the reaction was that at least one hundred men would be attending. Our secretary told me that she thought I would not really want to attend, but I said I thought that ratio was fine. They did send me an invitation and found another woman, who headed the British Airways operation and who should have been invited anyway. They gave us corsages and were very welcoming.

It was an important event at which the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Tom King (later Defense Minister), made his maiden speech. The waiters started passing around port and cigars. I only took the port. A waitress asked us if we wanted to leave and "powder our noses." Although we weren't sitting together, we both decided independently we were not going out the door, because we might never be allowed back. I think I was the first woman to be Acting Consul General. There have been several women Consuls General now.

*Q: Very good.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I made some good friends whom I still see. We go to Belfast every year or two. My friends and I used to go to the theater and to concerts, and I also explored Northern Ireland with the aid of material from the Tourism Office. One couple, a newspaper columnist, and his wife and I used to go for long drives almost every weekend. They were delighted to do this, because for so many years they had not been able to travel freely in Northern Ireland because it had been too dangerous. We had great fun despite picnics in the rain with the windshield wipers going, or sometimes sitting outside with an umbrella.

My other son, Rob, who lives in California, came to visit, and as we were getting ready to go for a picnic, he said, "It is raining; we better wait." Everybody laughed. It was always raining sometime during the day. We traveled all over with him, including to Donegal, which is in the Republic of Ireland and is where my family is believed to have lived. Soon after his visit, I left Belfast and went back to Washington.

*Q: This was back in the Bureau of European Affairs?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I went back to Washington to head the BENELUX desk (Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg). I was surprised to find that the Belgian ambassador was an old friend of mine from New Delhi. That was helpful. And we had a very close relationship with the Dutch.

*Q: What office were you in?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: EUR, European Bureau.

*Q: I understand that, but what, northern Europe? Who was the head of that at that time?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, Northern Europe. Ford Cooper headed the office.

*Q: Good. We like to have names.*

*Remind me again what year that was.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We left Belfast at the fall of '87.

*Q: '87, so you were there for two years. You went in '85.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I went in June of 1985.

*Q: And came back in…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Late August or September of 1987. I became Country Director for the BENELUX countries.

*Q: Was there just one officer for all three?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: There were two officers on the BENELUX desk most of the time. The second desk officer handled Luxembourg and a lot of the economic issues. In order to make my colleague's work more substantial, I tried to send as much work as I could to him or her.

Belgium and the Netherlands had somewhat similar relations with us partly due to their active roles in NATO and the EU. Their embassies were very active in developing contacts all over Washington. The Belgian Ambassador and his wife had one of the best cooks in the city, so invitations to the Belgian Embassy were coveted, and the Ambassador was well-connected with many of the movers and shakers here.

The Dutch are always so very active. We said the Dutch punched above their weight, and this put them in the company of Europe's leaders. They had considerable influence here because they are involved in everything. It is a small country that has always been very active internationally. The Dutch are also major investors in the United States. I was amazed that so much in America is owned by the Dutch. When I was on the desk, they owned companies like Good Humor Ice Cream and Giant grocery stores.

*Q: I know about Giant, but I didn't know about Good Humor.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and FAO Schwartz, an American institution, was bought by the Dutch. The Dutch were, in some years, the second largest investors in the United States after the Canadians.

*Q: More than the British.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Well, they were vying with the British on that.

*Q: Businesses owned by the Dutch. That is their thing to do of course.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Absolutely, and since it is, geographically, a small country, the Dutch invest heavily overseas. They have always been global investors, ever since the Middle Ages when a few ships slipped out to fish commercially and went on to win an empire in Asia and territories in the Western Hemisphere from New York to Suriname.

I worked very closely with the Belgians and the Dutch. Their DCMs in Washington and the DCMs at our embassies in Brussels and The Hague and I developed a close working team that enabled us to resolve problems quickly. We could pick up the phone and do business.

This was useful, for example when Secretary of State Baker and President George H. W. Bush were going to have consultations with the French in St. Martin, on the French side of the island. We had to alert the White House that the island's airport, Princess Juliana airport, is located in Sint Maarten, which is Dutch territory. The Dutch would not appreciate being ignored.

*Q: This wasn't Baker though.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I believe It was Baker. Baker and Bush.

Secretary Baker didn't want anything to do with ceremonies on Dutch territory, because the President, who would be arriving on a separate plane, and he were on the island to meet the French. I kept insisting to the Secretary's office and to the White House that they would be landing at an airport with a Dutch flag flying over it. They had to meet the Dutch officials. I had found out from my Dutch colleagues that there would be an honor guard at the airport and that the head of government in the Netherlands Antilles, a woman who had publicly supported our invasion of Grenada, would be coming to St. Maarten for the occasion. I had a nightmare scenario of these Dutch officials standing at attention when the Secretary's plane landed, and the Secretary not deplaning until the President's plane landed. Then the President and the Secretary, in my nightmare scenario, would walk past the Dutch to meet with the French, while the two planes and crews sat on Dutch territory.

Finally, the Secretary's staff convinced him that he could not do that, and the White House was also convinced. The Dutch were delighted as the President and the Secretary greeted the Dutch officials appropriately, and the President was gracious as always.

*Q: I would be a little bit more worried about the Secretary in that case.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I was, very much so. It worked out all right in the end, but it took a lot of time. It was rather embarrassing, but I could call my Dutch colleagues and say, "Listen we have a problem."

They could call me sometimes and say they had a problem. For example, we had some rocky moments with Greenpeace, which is headquartered in Amsterdam. There were several situations, one in particular where we had to pull out all stops and get everybody to work together. We managed to diffuse this confrontation. So that was very good.

We also had some awkward situations with the Dutch possessions in the Caribbean. The Dutch kept offering independence to their Caribbean islands, but they kept refusing the offer.

*Q: They didn't want independence.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: That's right, but they sometimes wanted to act as if they were independent and conducting their own foreign policy. I was forever having the Dutch call me and say they…

*Q: They?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: "They" meant that the representative from one of their possessions would be on Capitol Hill, meeting with members of Congress or staffers, and acting as if he represented an independent country. Congressional offices generally accepted them at face value and did not realize that our close ally, the Netherlands government, was responsible for the whole Kingdom's foreign policy. I would be asked to do something, to get the Congressional offices to pull back and not allow part of the U.S. government to conduct foreign policy with an unauthorized Dutch citizen. The Dutch government would rein in their citizens, and I would try to explain to Congressional offices that they could not meet officially with people who did not actually represent a sovereign country and did not have the legal authority to meet with them officially. Most Congressional offices were not aware of the legal status of the Dutch possessions.

*Q: I was going to say I have heard of other places like that in which the island countries would like to act independently but not be independent.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: To be independent but not have the responsibilities of independence, yes. This was always very difficult. We had other problems with the Dutch islands, such as obtaining blanket landing permission on these islands for USG aircraft in the Caribbean monitoring drug trafficking. We were working with the Netherlands on interdiction operations to curb drug trafficking, but the islands did not necessarily see landing rights as a Kingdom issue.

This was also the time when we were having strains with the Dutch and Belgian governments over stationing ground launched nuclear missiles (GLCMs) in both countries. Neither Belgium nor the Netherlands wanted to have the missiles on their territories. The Belgians finally agreed to take them, but the Dutch considered their response for a long time and finally said they might take them. Fortunately, outside events settled the issue; the Cold War was winding down.

However, we did have GLCMs in Belgium. The American military was moving them all around the country -- they were mobile and designed to be moved. But they were moving the missiles without even informing the government. I was horrified and insisted that the Belgian government had to be kept informed. They were our NATO allies. We couldn't have our missiles moving around the countryside without anyone knowing where they were. We had to keep the Belgian government informed.

*Q: An interesting problem.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: It was very interesting. There was never a dull moment. Our goal, of course, was to keep relations with these important allies on an even keel.

*Q: Did the fact that NATO was headquartered there, SHAPE was headquartered in Belgium and NATO as well, have any effect on you or did they just do their own thing?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, they sort of did their own thing, but not always. Sometimes it had an effect, yes, like the need to do something with those GLCMs roaming around the countryside.

*Q: You should probably define GLCM -- a Ground Launched Cruise Missile.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: And we also had problems connected with having American military stationed in Belgium and in the Netherlands. We had issues ranging from the imposition of taxes to a murder case where an American soldier based in the Netherlands had killed his Turkish wife. The Dutch had the soldier in custody but refused to extradite the soldier to the United States for a military trial. The Dutch, as EU members, oppose capital punishment and were concerned that the U.S. court might decide to execute the soldier. That dragged on and on, but we eventually resolved it. The U.S. would not seek the death penalty.

We also had a diplomatic problem regarding a very young Belgian soldier assigned to the Belgian Embassy in Washington. I understand he spoke very little English and was lonely here. He developed some connections in Washington, with whom he had traveled to Florida, but he does not seem to have known his travel companions very well. Somehow, he was left alone, and became involved in a fight, apparently sparked by remarks about his possible sexual orientation. He killed someone in the fight and later that night killed someone else. He was quite young and was said to have been in a distraught frame of mind and drinking. The state of Florida intended to try him and to request the death penalty. The Belgians would not give up the soldier's diplomatic immunity because…

*Q: Because?…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Because he was going to be tried for capital murder. Belgian law also did not allow capital punishment. I was working with the State Department's legal department and members of Congress and with various other people on this case. We started negotiating with the Belgian embassy to develop terms on which the Belgian government would withdraw diplomatic immunity from the young man. Fortunately, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Belgian Embassy was a lawyer. We began exchanging draft diplomatic notes with the Embassy that I would show to our legal experts. When we had effective wording that met the needs of our lawyers and the Belgian legal experts, we exchanged formal diplomatic notes to which the U.S. and the Belgian government had already agreed. We had to stretch the rules, but it worked out.

*Q: It worked.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Our legal department did a wonderful job, and it did work. State's lawyers finally managed to get Florida to state officially that they would waive the death penalty, that they would not try the case as a death penalty case. At that point, I called the Belgian ambassador and informed him that the state of Florida had agreed it would not impose the death penalty, if the soldier were to be found guilty, and Belgium agreed officially to lift his diplomatic immunity. He was convicted and received a life sentence. I don't know if he is still in prison, but we have an agreement with Belgium and many other countries that our nationals serving long prison terms can be repatriated to serve their sentences in their own countries, near their families.

During my assignment, the Berlin Wall fell and Europe watched the integration of the former East Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany, the Germany we now have. The Dutch, Belgians, and Luxembourgers had had very bad experiences during World War II, the last time Germany had been whole, and there was a certain apprehension and watchful waiting as Europe was changing.

*Q: Germany reunited.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: That was a very interesting time. At least it did get rid of the INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) problem, and GLCMs were no longer moving across the Belgian countryside. That resolved that problem.

The USSR had collapsed, so NATO and the EU were focal points for activities. The BENELUX desk had always been working closely with our offices dealing with European political/military and economic affairs, because of the American role in NATO and interest in the European Union. Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg were founding members of NATO and of the European Union, so they had big voices in what was taking place. I was on the BENELUX desk for three years, and I must say we were very busy.

*Q: Now one word you haven't mentioned in this connection is Luxembourg.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I did work a bit on Luxembourg.

*Q: You had responsibility for Luxembourg too, didn't you?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I had overall responsibility, but our junior officer was the…

*Q: Was really the desk officer.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: So he or she carried the Luxembourg workload. But, I did also follow our relationship with Luxembourg and was always available to meet officials when the desk officer asked me to do so.

*Q: Did we have issues?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, because Luxembourg was a founding member of NATO and the EU, we did have those issues as well as some bilateral ones, such as Luxembourg's role in the international financial world. Sometimes, both the desk officer and I had to argue for the Luxembourgers to be included in meetings at State.

However, I learned that neither the Belgian nor the Dutch ambassador had been able to get meetings on the seventh floor, really serious top-level meetings. At one point, the Dutch Ambassador called me about the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Lubbers and told me he had never met James Baker, then Secretary of State.

*Q: Baker really didn't like to have meetings with people.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, we knew that. The Ambassador told me that it would be really embarrassing for him to have to explain to his Prime Minister that he had never met the Secretary of State, even though the Dutch were so active with the United States. I agreed with him completely and finally managed to get him a meeting with Secretary Baker. They got along quite well and saw each other periodically after that.

The Belgian ambassador had finally had a meeting with Secretary Baker by using personal contacts. At one point, I was standing with the Belgian ambassador when Baker came by, and the ambassador introduced me to my Secretary of State. I had written many papers for him, but until then had not met him.

*Q: As I recall, a lot of people had that problem with Baker.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes they did, but I kept pointing out that Belgium and the Netherlands -- and Luxembourg -- were founding members of NATO and very close allies. When we had troubles, we turned to these long term allies, which were also major investors here and active in international organizations. We could not ignore them in Washington. So, they began to be invited to high level meetings.

The Dutch are exceptionally strong players in foreign affairs. No matter what happened, the Dutch seemed to be involved. They are a very wealthy country and a prime supporter of globalization. For hundreds of years, from the age of Exploration until now, the Dutch have been a global power. The Dutch navy is one of the largest in the world, and they have always been active in peace keeping because they are strong supporters of the UN.

The Dutch were active in peace keeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia. There was a tragic situation in Srebrenica after Yugoslavia collapsed. You probably remember that, in July 1995, a Dutch force was sheltering a large number of Bosnian Muslims in what was supposed to be a UN safe area. A larger force of Bosnian Serbs arrived commanded by Ratko Mladic. The Dutch were isolated and undersupplied. The Dutch commander appealed to NATO for support, but the support they received was insufficient and ineffective. I was in The Hague at the time and remember the shock when the Dutch

surrendered, and the Serbians took away all the Bosnian men and boys and executed them. The horror was compounded when the beleaguered Dutch commander accepted a drink from the Serbs. Mladic had a TV crew, so we saw it on television. The Netherlands was in profound shock, and I will never forget the horror of it.

*Q: Did that cause any repercussions here?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, yes. An international arrest warrant was issued for Mladic, who was caught after some years of hiding out in Serbia. He is in The Hague on trial at the International Court.

*Q: Now, but at that point? Why didn't we step in?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I don't remember exactly what was happening in Washington or in Brussels, but the Dutch were part of a NATO operation. I was in the Economic Section at the Embassy in The Hague.

*Q: Because of the NATO aspect of it, wasn't the United States a little embarrassed that we didn't get NATO to do something for the Dutch?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Dutch force, operating under NATO, was able to get out. It was the horror of all of those Bosnian men and boys being killed, the Bosnian Muslims. We had thought atrocities like those occurring during World War II would never occur again in Europe.

*Q: Yes, I remember that.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Everybody remembers it probably. It was a terrible thing.

*Q: Then what happened?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We also had happier events, such as the official visit from Dutch Prime Minister Lubbers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans van den Broek. It became complicated when we "lost" the Foreign Minister. We were all standing by the State Department entrance waiting to greet van den Broek and take him to the Secretary's office, when one of the Dutch asked to go to the men's room. I had to ask the guard to admit him. Had the guard not mentioned that this was the second Dutchman he had seen in the last half hour or so, we would never have thought of racing upstairs to the Secretary's outer office where we found a fuming Minister cooling his heels. Van den Broek had arrived at State a half hour earlier than expected. We had expected him to do a little sightseeing on his way, but van den Broek does not sight see. So, he had arrived early at State. No one was there to meet him from the Embassy or from the State Department. He didn't ask anyone for information or tell anyone who he was. He just walked in and was cleared in like any visitor. He was outside the Secretary's office quite annoyed that that no one was there to meet him. Of course, the seventh floor didn't

operate in the same time frame as van den Broek, and the Secretary was not available to see him until the time of his scheduled appointment.

The Dutch Ambassador had escorted his Prime Minister to the White House, where they had a very good meeting with the President, and Van den Broek had his meeting with the Secretary, which also went very well. This visit and subsequent meetings with senior State Department officers strengthened our relationship with the Netherlands.

Then I worked with Maryland's late Congressman Charles 'Mac' Mathias, who wanted to set up a diplomatic exchange program that would have diplomats from various allied countries working in each other's foreign offices. That was very good. We had Dutch diplomats working at the State Department.

*Q: Did we?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Oh yes, doing desk officer jobs because they had fairly high security clearances.

*Q: Wow!*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Not working on the Netherlands for example, but …

*Q: I mean could they have security clearances?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, maybe not top secret……

*Q: And did we send…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. We had some very good Dutch speaking American officers working in The Hague. It went well. It took a lot of effort, but Mathias thought it was a very good idea for allies to understand how we all operate. I also think it was very good.

Then, I started to work more with the Dutch on environment issues. The Dutch were so active on these issues. That involvement led me to my next assignment in the Bureau of Oceans Environment and Science. I think this is a good break, and we should stop here.

*Q: Ok, so we are going to stop here and this is at the point at which Eleanore had finished her tour as the Benelux country officer. We will proceed the next time to The Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science.*

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*This is Edward Dillery. It is April 27, 2009, and I am interviewing Eleanore Raven-Hamilton. We will commence now and say that we left at the last interview when you had left the Benelux desk. So we will start from there.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. As Benelux country director, I had responsibility for Belgium, Netherlands and often Luxembourg. Those, and other responsibilities I had had earlier, enabled me to apply for -- and receive -- a multi functional skill code, which is the one I had for the rest of my career. That gave me also a tremendous amount of flexibility. It also meant that I could be a real generalist, which I liked.

*Q: Right. And I must say that also the promotion possibilities for officers competing as multi functional officers are a little sketchy as well, aren't they?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, in a way, but they are not too bad.

*Q: It is not as bad as competing as a consular officer. Let's put it that way, when you get up to the upper middle ranks, there are fewer jobs available.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. But I was really more interested in the job than in promotion possibilities.

*Q: Oh, great. So what happened then?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: After I left the Benelux desk, I worked in OES in the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science on environmental affairs. I had become interested in that when I was working on the Benelux desk because the Dutch were so active on ocean pollution and all kinds of environmental issues. A great deal of my time on the desk seemed to involve dealing with Dutch concerns on these issues.

When I went to OES, I began working on ocean pollution and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), which you know. That was really very interesting. You know how bad ocean pollution is, and the concerns that the islands have about pollution and about climate change. The islands aren't very wealthy for the most part, so SPREP was important to them.

*Q: That must have started some time after my time in the South Pacific because saying it that way doesn't ring a bell.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: South Pacific Regional Environment?

*Q: Yes. Do you know when that began?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Formally, in 1993, but it grew from decisions taken in Rarotonga in 1982. They were just building the organization when I was there.

*Q: Yes. I think it was a little after me. Well, say a little bit more about it. Who were the members of it?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: All the South Pacific islands, because they are all independent countries or most of them are. Britain was a member because of Pitcairn island but has

since dropped its membership. And France. So, it was Britain (at that time), France and the United States.

*Q: Not Australia or New Zealand?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, Australia and New Zealand, but they are members as independent countries. At that time, SPREP headquarters was in New Caledonia, an absolutely beautiful island. Now, it is headquartered in Apia, Samoa. I visited New Caledonia as part of the U.S. delegation to SPREP's annual meeting.

Although we spent all day together working on SPREP's environment issues, I gained more understanding of the culture of the South Pacific from the delegates to the meeting and from a visit we made over the weekend to a New Caledonia village. We met local people still living in a traditional setting, and I was also able to have a long talk with a French speaking young woman, the daughter of the village chief. She talked about local concerns and the career opportunities -- or lack thereof -- for young people like her in villages on the island. As the educated daughter of a chief, she said she had more opportunities than other women on the island and would be able to take a leadership role in her community.

Our short lunch break became useful as a way to get to know people too and maybe have a quick swim. Some of the environmentalists claimed that the coastal waters were too polluted for swimming, but we swam more or less inside a well-known French resort -- that had shark nets! One of the Greenpeace representatives went with me too sometimes. People from environmental organizations, particularly Greenpeace, were at the meeting, but they didn't really want to be seen with Americans because of policy differences. Eventually, we realized that we shared many of the same concerns and were not as diametrically opposed to each other as we had originally assumed.

On the final day of the meetings, I became head of the U.S. delegation. New Caledonia is a French possession, and the French had allocated a car and driver to the heads of delegation. So, while we were waiting for the final papers to be translated and prepared for adoption before the meeting could be adjourned, I jumped at my driver's suggestion that we go into Noumea to visit a museum. He turned out to be a young French draftee, extremely interested in anthropology. He guided me though the anthropology museum and shared with me some of the knowledge he had acquired on his tour of duty. I have wondered if he ever went to university after completing his military service to continue with anthropology.

*Q: And what did you produce from that meeting?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The concerns of the SPREP countries, which are mostly smallish islands, focused on rising sea levels and climate change; protecting wetlands, especially mangroves; protecting coral reefs and their marine life; controlling pollution, especially safely disposing of waste products; and managing ecosystems.

We discussed how we all could address these concerns under the SPREP umbrella, and we had developed a working paper to bring our recommendations back to governments.

SPREP was in its infancy, and it had been agreed that it should move its headquarters to Samoa, formerly a U.S. possession, now an independent country. SPREP did not have much money, so the US delegation was looking into the possibility of American assistance to SPREP with the move. Unfortunately, as I discovered when I returned to Washington, the idea was not going to fly. The Defense Department would have had to authorize and implement the project. There were worries, such as insurance and cost to the U.S.. Good idea, but no traction, so I had to call Noumea and tell the SPREP leadership the U.S. could not do it. It was very disappointing.

When I returned to Washington from New Caledonia, the Gulf War was winding down, and Saddam Hussein had set the oil fields in Kuwait on fire. I became involved in efforts to extinguish the oil fires. Ideas, some exotic, about putting out the fires, were pouring into the State Department and to the technical agencies. We had all sorts of well-known experts in the oil fire business offering help.

*Q: I remember newspaper headlines about that time when that happened. You were involved in that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Very much so. I was the State Department's liaison on the multi-agency task force, which was operating in a UN framework. All the agencies that had interests in issues created by the fires, including how to extinguish them and assess damage, were on the task force.

The other agencies on the task force were technical agencies and, to some extent, rivals for leadership. They decided that the only agency that had "no dog in the fight" was the State Department. We just wanted to put out the fires, no matter how it was done, or by whom.

State focused on working with the international community, especially with countries in the region, whose cooperation and clearances would be needed for the work that had to be done. So, my colleagues from the other U.S. agencies told me I was in charge and would chair all the meetings. We all got along well and worked very well together, perhaps because my colleagues quickly realized that this was something I knew absolutely nothing about, so I would not interfere with them on technical issues. I would not have done that anyway.

Obviously, I learned a lot. My colleagues were very patient with me. They made the technical decisions, and I made sure we observed the "niceties" required for U.S. operations in foreign countries. Initially, the technical agencies were creating models to predict damage from the smoke as it rose through the atmosphere -- how high did it go and where, how much pollution was being created and what effect could the fires have on world heath? I was quite startled to find out that even when the people creating the models went back to their models from a day or two earlier and entered data collected

after that, they were often not getting the results that they had predicted. So, we were dealing with the limits of predictability at that time, which was challenging for the model makers.

Then, we had the oil companies, the well-known oil fire fighters, scientists, and all sorts of experts, who had schemes they insisted would extinguish the fires quickly. Some were ready to rush in to implement their ideas. We had a few instances of free-lance American experts in the oil fields close to Kuwait calling press conferences, without telling the American ambassador or the State Department or anyone else, about what they "intended" to do. These press conferences were unofficial, but they were "American," so they were newsworthy. They created a certain amount of confusion -- was this an official American undertaking? I felt I was always pulling back American experts, who wanted to have a press conference to announce what Americans would do to extinguish the fires or help the wildlife being affected. Few of them had any experience in dealing with foreign policy, and why should they?

*Q: Concepts that were not understood in those communities that never had anything to do with foreign policy.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The scientists and technological experts had a different perspective from the foreign policy community. The scientists often tried to be very open and say exactly what they were thinking. We couldn't be so open and frank because the reality was that these were sovereign countries. Americans could not arrive and announce what they were going to do to the oil fires that your government is trying, unsuccessfully, to extinguish. We will show you how to do it. It was a good thing to have someone from State on the task force. Some of our experts were doing their own thing, as if they were in the U.S.

We also had public relations problems with some American environmental groups. One environmental group had extensive TV coverage of oil covered birds, possibly the same bird, but it was still a pathetic sight. Photos of damaged birds were all over television. There was a lot of controversy over how to save oil covered birds and great enthusiasm for washing the oil off the birds. People felt good about washing birds, but I learned that this does not save them, if they are really covered with oil. The birds almost always die, as scientists had found out from earlier oil spills.

*Q: Because if you get the oil off, their normal protection will all be destroyed.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I guess so. It just doesn't work, but people were trying to race out to save the birds. I was always writing press statements about the birds and what could be done to save them. Almost nothing if they were covered with oil.

I want to say that scientists and our technical agencies were really doing a tremendous job on this. They were rationally -- and scientifically -- dealing with this horrific act of deliberate destruction. Although exotic fire fighting strategies were proposed, we learned that the very best way to put out the fires was to pour water on them. Of course, the fires

were burning in the desert, so the biggest problem was how to get enough water to put on the fires.

We all collaborated on the final reports, and we wrote a booklet for public release that I was asked to help edit. It was good to come together to agree on what we had done, how well it had worked, and what had been learned. The data collected was in the public domain.

Then, one of my colleagues from NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency) proposed a follow-up project -- a study of the Persian Gulf. We called it the "Gulf," because the Arabs called it the "Arabian" Gulf, and the Iranians (the Persians) called it the "Persian" Gulf. We proposed to do this scientific study using a NOAA research ship, the 'Mt. Mitchell'. NOAA organized the funding and the program. We had the usual sovereignty issues because we could not bring an American government ship, even a research ship, into a foreign port or collect data in coastal waters without the agreement of the governments concerned.

*Q: I am sure, but not only that, don't they claim those as territorial waters?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes.

*Q: So, therefore, you also need permission to conduct scientific activities especially on the sea bottom of those places and in territorial waters.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. We were back to the need for recognizing sovereignty. No matter how noble the goals were, we could not just go in and do this. We had to get official agreement within the U.S. government, notify our embassies and obtain permission from the countries involved. We could not steam into a port and announce that we were there to do scientific work.

*Q: Although we have been known to do activities in that manner before.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: That was not going to work this time. It was a fascinating project, because the Gulf had never been scientifically explored. There was almost no serious data on the Gulf. We needed to involve all the Gulf states, including Iran. We needed Iranian participation because Iran has such a long coastline. Negotiations would be delicate; we still don't have any diplomatic relations with Iran. NOAA was very good about handling all this as a scientific non-political enterprise.

*Q: How did you finally do it? How did you negotiate with the Iranians? Did you have somebody else do it, because obviously we weren't talking to them?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We had some of the Arab states talking to Iran and some discussions within international organizations. Iran was interested in doing a survey of the Gulf because it was really needed. It was a cooperative effort with everybody helping push it along the way.

*Q: But the Iranians, they saw the benefit of doing it? They were willing to work it out?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. It was worked out. One of the most important reasons for working it out with Iran was the fact that, because of the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf was heavily mined. No one except the Iranians knew where they had dropped the mines. We just hoped the Iranians knew where the mines were located, and, apparently, they did. So, we had Iranian naval officers on the bridge of an American government ship, as well as Iranian scientists. That caused a certain amount of consternation.

It is also customary to fly the flag of the host country as a courtesy when a ship enters a foreign port. Therefore, at one point, in addition to the American flag, we flew an Iranian flag briefly over this American government ship. The American Merchant Marine crew on the Mt. Mitchell objected to having the Iranian flag flying on their ship. This news became public. Some newspapers in the U.S. reported that the State Department had insisted on flying the Iranian flag on an American government ship. Iran refused to have an American flag flying in its waters, and Iranian naval officers refused to be on our ship flying the American flag. Our whole project was in jeopardy.

We finally calmed things down by agreeing that the Mt. Mitchell would remain just outside Iran's territorial waters. We decided not to fly any flags, which might have been dubious under international law, but seemed to be the best option under the circumstances. Everyone agreed that the small boats, the Zodiacs, which were carried on our research ship, would enter Iranian waters with both flags -- small ones. The Zodiacs would only carry researchers, who would be collecting the data along the Iranian coast.

*Q: Just to go back to the negotiations, sort of technically the simplest thing. When we were talking to the Iranians was that another thing we did through the Arabs?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I think so, partly, and possibly through the Swiss, our protecting power in Iran, but mainly, I think, through the UN and its various agencies. It was an international study.

*Q: Your communications were to New York or…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I was not really involved in this. NOAA and the other agencies wanted to keep all the focus on the research goals of the voyage -- the technical side and the scientific benefits to everyone. I was more an advisor behind the scenes, advising the interagency group on what we needed to do and notifying our embassies in the Gulf states, so they could request the necessary host government clearances and help identify scientists to take part. Every time the "Mount Mitchell" docked in one of the Gulf ports, it would pick up a crew of local scientists and naval officers from that country and also other experts who would be on that leg of the voyage. Logistics were very complex.

NOAA and the other technical agencies consulted widely on the scope of the voyage, which experts should be invited to take part on the Mt. Mitchell, and what the

international community wanted to learn from the voyage. We wanted the whole project to be a completely open scientific endeavor. All data was to be shared. The U.S. joined in data collection and in organizing the studies, but it was an international effort with American leadership.

The American scientists were very supportive. They worked closely with the pick up group of international and local scientists who boarded the ship at different ports and made sure all the data was shared with them. It was an open process. That made it acceptable to everyone. It was really fascinating seeing how this disparate collection of scientists came together. Everyone had input into the planning and agreed on what the voyage should accomplish. There was a lot of enthusiasm about being part of such an historic voyage.

We had wonderful cooperation from our embassies, especially from Dick Boehm, our ambassador in Oman and your great friend. The Omani government was also very supportive. As I remember, Dick hosted a successful event in Muscat. Embassies saw the benefits of involving host governments and raising awareness about the first oceanographic study of the Gulf. There was good press coverage of this organized study sponsored largely by the United States.

However, we sometimes ran into our old sovereignty problem and had to warn U.S. participants that they could not, willy-nilly, issue a statement on behalf of this project with its American government connection. They needed to be careful of what they were going to say, and our ambassador in the country certainly needed to know about it. It all worked out well in the end, and we enjoyed working together. NOAA even gave me an award and a signed and framed picture of the research ship, which is on the wall in my study.

After this, I became involved in the multi-national working group on the environment that followed the signing of the Oslo peace accords designed to bring peace to the Middle East. We were trying to build bridges between the Arabs and Israelis through cooperation on environmental issues, such as dealing with oil spills, wastewater treatment, and other water-related issues shared across the region. We thought this would be a good way of bringing the Israelis and Arabs into the same room to address common concerns.

We started with a wastewater treatment project, because that is really important. When you have very little water, it makes sense to use wastewater. We had Arab and Israeli participants and discovered how far apart they were on water issues. Our Israeli colleagues were excited about working with the Arabs to “green” the Middle East the way Israel had done with the Negev. (Our Israeli participants had been among the leaders of that effort.) However, by 1990 or so, the Arab countries were among countries negotiating a UN agreement to protect fragile desert environments, not “green” them. The U.S. was actively engaged in those negotiations too. People were no longer thinking of pouring water on the desert to make it bloom. Back to reality.

A few of us went with the group to Maryland, to the Chesapeake, to see basic but effective wastewater treatment plants that experts had determined would be most useful in the Middle East. Later, USAID contractors took the group to California where they saw projects with very high tech "bells and whistles" that were expensive to build and run. Those plants did tertiary treatments of wastewater and, literally, made drinking water out of the wastewater. It was important for the group to see what could be done to recycle wastewater, but those plants would not have been very useful across the Middle East. The group loved being in California and were impressed by the high tech plants and by a big league baseball game where they were introduced to the crowd from home plate. Our basic wastewater plants were very pale in comparison!

Our next project to foster cooperation took place in Monterrey, CA, and dealt with handling oil spills, including the question of when oil spills should be cleaned and when nature could clean them better than man could do it.

*Q: But this was also with the Israelis and the Arabs?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. A lot of oil comes through the narrow waterway of the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Straits of Hormuz at the entrance to the (Persian) Gulf. We organized training for dealing with spills on different kinds of coastal land -- on sandy beaches or on rocky coasts -- and the effect on the coastal environment, especially on coral reefs.

A number of our American experts had worked on the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. We saw a film about that spill, and we talked about what had been learned. Exxon had insisted that an extensive clean up take place. Some of our scientists and people from our technical agencies, who had worked on the Alaska spill, thought it might be more effective to let nature take its course. They were persuaded by what they saw in some test areas left untreated that nature was apt to be more effective than human intervention in restoring contaminated areas. Doing nothing might sometimes be better than doing something. That viewpoint was highly controversial. The public wanted to know what was being done to clean the coastal environment, so teams of people had been employed to clean the shoreline and to clean the oil-coated birds and other animals, most of which died with or without care.

The scientists and other experts argued that replacing single hulled oil tankers with double hulled vessels is the most important step in avoiding oil spill damage. The experts in Monterey maintained that, if people wanted to do something about oil spills, they should press for mandating double hulled vessels.

*Q: But that was never actually done?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I have noticed that we seem to have many more double hulled vessels.

*Q: So for now all new construction is double hulled pretty much?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I don't know, but people seem to have learned that it is a lot easier to prevent oil spills than it is to clean up after a spill.

A big oil spill creates a very emotional situation. Think of the recent oil well spill in the Gulf of Mexico. People's livelihoods are lost. There may be tar all over the beaches, a sort of asphalt road where there used to be sand. That happened in Kuwait. Oil spills also damage coral reefs badly. In Kuwait, the oil spilled into the Gulf, coupled with the destruction of sewage plants that allowed large amounts of raw sewage to flow into the Gulf, killed many corals and badly damaged others. I have been reading about damage to coral reefs. They are so fragile and so important in the ecosystem.

Well, we had organized two projects to bring people together, but we did not bring peace to the Middle East. We had developed a mechanism for communication between the participants in our projects, so it would be easier for them to continue their dialogue and share ideas with each other. Then political realities intervened. We understood that several of our participants were uneasy about being part of our network after they returned home. We were relieved to have a message from one participant who had returned to a chaotic situation in his country but managed to send word that he was all right. He asked us all not to be in touch with him for the time being.

*Q: Side issues there, personal things affected by political changes.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We had intended to keep this community going by establishing a means for the participants to keep in touch through an international closed network…..

*Q: So did the whole effort stop at some point or…?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. That had to be scrapped. However, we had all worked together when we were in Monterrey. We had talked about the various geographic features in the area and what should be done in an area like this or that, if there were to be an oil spill. We talked about the need to alert neighboring countries when an oil spill occurred and how best to do that. Those conversations are unlikely to have disappeared into the ether. We all would have taken away what we had learned, what we had discussed together.

*Q: And was there a product coming from this whole enterprise, an agreement?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, our goal was not to reach any formal agreement, but rather to discuss procedures for dealing with wastewater or oil spills. It was more of a teaching thing, a sharing of experiences, and of "best practices" to date. We were saying that these procedures have been found to work. Here are possible pitfalls, etc. The main thing we had planned, that was supposed to happen, was development of this sort of round robin of communications, so people could be in touch with each other, continue to learn from each other, and work together. As I said that political realities…

*Q: That broke down.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, it became too dangerous for several of our participants…

*Q: Would the countries that were involved still be following those procedures? You don't know now of course.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I don't know at all. But we do know that we trained a lot of people and gave them technical information and resources. People also saw that they could work constructively with each other, no matter where in the Middle East they came from, so that was a step in the right direction.

During my next assignment in The Hague, where I took part in an international environment meeting, I found one of the participants from our oil spill symposium on his delegation as an advisor to the Environment Minister. We only had time for a quick greeting, but he seemed to be doing well.

*Q: I was going to say, if you are going to take a lesson from this, it is that this is the kind of diplomacy that perhaps does not result in a formal agreement that could be advertised, but, on the other hand, the results may be continuing until this day as they try to follow procedures they have learned. They also may still be able to communicate with each other in surreptitious ways.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: We hope they will be able to use what they learned to help their countries develop national plans to deal with oil spills and to do that from a regional perspective as well. Oil spills do not recognize national boundaries. Our participants might run into each other at a future international meeting. They probably will stay in the environment field, since that was what they had been trained to do. We might not see any results for years from our efforts -- not until the next oil spill in the region, but I think it was good training for the future. Who knows if, eventually, there might be an agreement setting up a regional mechanism for handling oil spills or another series of training programs parallel to critical negotiations of Israeli-Arab issues?

*Q: What did you do next?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: In 1993, I was due for re-assignment, and I was asked if I wanted to be a Labor Officer. After a very good six week Labor Officer training course, I went to The Hague for four years as Labor Officer.

The Dutch labor management structure is different from what we have here. Until World War II, Dutch society had traditionally been organized in three parts or pillars, broadly speaking along religious or political lines -- Catholic, Protestant and Socialist. People had certain kinds of jobs, belonged to certain unions, and read certain newspapers, etc. depending on whether they were Catholic or Protestant or Socialist. During the war, much of the Dutch leadership had been imprisoned together by the Nazis, and many Dutch decided that the pillar divisions should not be sustained in a post war Netherlands.

The FNV, a federation created largely from Catholic and Socialist unions, and some small Protestant ones, is today the largest labor union federation. It was the one I worked with the most, but I also worked with the other important union federation, the CNV, created mostly by more conservative Protestants. Management had also been divided into the three pillars, so you also had Catholic, Protestant, Socialist management groupings -- like three Chambers of Commerce or National Associations of Manufacturers.

Labor, management and government meet together for bargaining every year to set wages and reach agreement on what we would describe as labor-management issues. The government, unions, and management negotiate in the context of national budget preparations and economic conditions. This system is not without pitfalls, but it does ensure that the major forces in the national economy come together annually to address economic issues and bargain together.

You asked about relations between the Dutch and American unions. They were good but seemed to be based mostly on personal relations established among union leaders active in international labor affairs, who met with each other periodically. The embassy had had little high-level contact with Dutch unions for some time, when I arrived in The Hague. Then, the Ambassador invited the head of the FNV, the largest union federation, to lunch at the embassy. This was the first time a union president had been a guest of honor at the embassy, as far as we knew. We had a “tripartite” guest list -- union, government and management. The Dutch all spoke English well and connected with the Ambassador, who had been a businessman. Conversation around the table flowed easily, and people had more in common than they might have expected.

Closer relations between the embassy and the FNV helped when the AFL-CIO was trying to have a well-respected Indonesian union leader, imprisoned by the Suharto regime for his union activities, released from prison. I was asked to see if a prominent member of the FNV, who was my good contact and a friend of the imprisoned Indonesian, would go to Indonesia to work with our embassy and others to get him released. Finally, through the combined efforts of the American and Dutch unions and our embassies, the Indonesian was freed from prison and was able could go abroad for the medical care he needed. The Dutch and American unions had had reason to fear that he would be murdered in prison.

To a certain extent, despite obvious differences in scale and the impact of the European Union on the Dutch economy, the Netherlands and the United States faced many of the same problems. These include relatively high unemployment, the impact of globalization, and the need for extensive technological training because of demand for a more highly trained, tech-savvy workforce.

The Dutch unions were strongly supportive of globalization. International trade has been a mainstay of the Dutch economy for over 400 years. Broadly speaking, Dutch unions argued that if jobs were outsourced abroad, they were usually jobs that Dutch workers didn’t want. Dutch workers were confident they could raise their level of technological expertise and could find better jobs if their jobs went overseas.

The most obvious place where this view did not hold up terribly well was in Rotterdam. Rotterdam was rapidly becoming a highly automated and major container port with far less need for the physical labor of stevedores. They needed computer skills, not muscles, and a higher level of education than such jobs had demanded in the past. Poorly educated dockworkers, who lost their jobs, were unlikely to be able to retrain for jobs, for example, with computers in one of the expanding sectors, such as the financial sector.

*Q: Stevedores don't do that kind of work.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Exactly. So, Rotterdam had a high level of unemployment. Some younger workers might have been able to retrain for tech jobs, but many liked the manual labor they had always done and did not even want to be retrained. I reported a lot on the Dutch approach to the economic change wrought by technology and globalization. It provided a different point of view for American labor unions and others in the field of labor-management relations.

*Q: Who at that point….*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: „„were fighting the movement of jobs overseas.

*Q: The Americans were.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Americans were. I realize that what more or less worked in a small country like the Netherlands could not be transferred to the scale of the U.S. or to our culture, but …….

*Q: Did you have contact with the American unions directly?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, some. Mostly during our training in Washington, but I had contacts I could call from The Hague. I usually was in touch with the unions indirectly through the Department of Labor. I was in close contact with the Dutch unions and management federations and frequently met with people from the Ministry of Labor. I reported extensively on labor, and this meant meeting often with union officials, management and government and keeping them briefed on information we were receiving from the U.S.

When the Labor Officer function was established after World War II, the focus had been on countering communism, which had been gaining support among workers in the difficult post-war period. So, there was a history of European unions working with American unions, but it had not been as active a relationship in recent years.

*Q: I remember that, in the past, Labor Officers had a very close relationship with American unions. Well, they weren't working for the unions, but they knew people in the union movement, and the union people were able to let them know what they wanted in terms of reporting.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, they did that. In our six week training course, we had met with officials from the unions, Chamber of Commerce and other management representatives, and with people from the Department of Labor, all sorts of people involved in the labor movement, management and government.

*Q: Where you in the political section?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No. The Hague is one of the places where the labor portfolio is in the embassy's economic section. My position gradually became a labor and most global issues portfolio. I first became responsible for environment issues, and it was decided I should follow narcotics and transnational organized crime too. In the end, I handled, with the help of my highly capable Dutch colleague, Mieke Gronheid, narcotics, transnational organized crime, environment, EU space programs, science, population, technology, health, and social issues plus labor.

This was manageable except when the Dutch had the Presidency of the European Union. Mieke and I were inundated because of Dutch activism on international issues. We were physically incapable of covering all the international conferences the Dutch had organized. Sometimes, we were supposed to cover several meetings at the same time, and we had to ask the American delegations to the meetings for notes on the meetings, so we could report to Washington. The Ambassador later told me that, during this six month period, most of the embassy's cables were written by Mieke and me.

We cooperated with the Dutch on many environment issues, especially on issues in multilateral fora, like climate change. We also had a formal cooperation agreement with the Netherlands to implement Vice President Gore's GLOBE project that brought together school children in many countries to do basic collection of weather and other data in their own countries and enter the data on computers. This data was accessible world-wide. For example, young children might be taught to measure rainfall and temperatures every day. Older students might measure how acid rain was affecting small lakes and ponds in their area. They all entered their data, which had been collected all across their country and not just from airports, into computers. I went several times to watch the children gather data from The Hague. They were so enthusiastic because scientists all over the globe were using their data. The program ended shortly after the 2000 election.

*Q: Talk about your narcotics portfolio.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: The Dutch attitude towards drugs was not appreciated very much in the United States, although their approach was actually largely based on the recommendations of American experts in the 1970's that were not implemented in the U.S. At least one U.S. commission had recommended decriminalization of marijuana and treatment and harm prevention over prosecution…

*Q: So marijuana was legal there?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, it was not really legal.

*Q: Not legal but it is easily accessible.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. Marijuana is not actually legal. Trafficking is definitely illegal, and the Dutch are party to the international narcotics treaties, as well as partners in our anti-trafficking efforts. The Dutch divide drugs into "soft" (marijuana) and "hard" (cocaine, heroin etc.).

Buying small amounts of marijuana and using marijuana is tolerated for Dutch citizens over 21, who can only buy small amounts in what the Dutch call "coffee shops." But larger amounts, which would obviously be needed to stock "coffee shops" in order to provide small amounts for their customers, is, in theory, against the law. This poses a quandary for "coffee shop" operators -- what is illegal at the back door is not illegal at the front under certain rules. So, the strict rules for selling marijuana put "coffee shop" operators and law enforcement in a tricky position.

Interestingly, I compared Dutch and American rates of drug addiction over the years and found that they were about the same in the United States and the Netherlands. I did a lot of reporting on Dutch drug policy and treatment of people convicted of "serious" drug offenses.

The Dutch had extensive treatment programs in society and in prison. However, they had found that someone addicted to drugs for twenty years was highly unlikely to get off drugs. So, to reduce the threat of crime, the Dutch started supplying small amounts of drugs under very strict controls and supervision -- heroin and cocaine and other hard drugs -- to people considered hopelessly addicted.

Then we had the XTC (Ecstasy) scene -- the rave parties that were so alluring and dangerous for young people who spent nights dancing and taking XTC. There were rave parties in the Netherlands, the UK and the U.S. and probably elsewhere.

Do you remember that? No? You just weren't traveling in the right crowds.

*Q: No, I am sorry.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Young people would rent some really big place, and set up strobe lights. They would dance the night away and keep the action going by taking XTC pills, which might be cut and mixed with something else to increase the supply. This could be fatal if the pills had been adulterated badly or if the young people were not drinking copious amounts of water, which they often did not do.

The Dutch knew trying to stop these "house parties" probably would not work, so they insisted on controlling the circumstances under which these parties could take place. Dutch police were at the parties and actually examined all pills to be certain they had not

been adulterated. If they had not been and were "safe," the police would return the pill. If they had been adulterated, the police would confiscate the pills. Another instance of "harm reduction."

*Q: It was something you had to report on.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, I reported a lot on that because it was also a big craze in the United States.

*Q: Yes, and because it was a whole different approach to solving the problem.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, because it was killing young people in a number of countries. They would overdose or take something adulterated or not drink water, and it would kill them. So that is harm reduction.

I also worked on transnational organized crime and money laundering. Illegal funds can be transported across borders increasingly easily. There was even a sort of credit card on which you could put money that could be sent even by telephone. There were special phones on the receiving end that could receive the money or transfer it to another card. So you could move things along.

*Q: Launder money.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, and money is usually why people commit crimes!

Toward the end of my tour, the embassy nominated me for the new Christopher award for my work on global issues, but the award was supposed to go to someone who did outstanding work in one area. I had…

*Q: A lot more than one area.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Right, so I couldn't compete. Then, after four years in The Hague, we left to return to Washington.

*Q: What year was that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: 1997. I was offered a job by a political appointee who was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Jonathan Winer. You met him. He came here for my birthday party.

*Q: I remember that, yes.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: He is a lawyer and an international expert on transnational organized crime and money laundering. We had worked together when I was in The Hague, and he asked me to be his senior advisor.

Winer led efforts to create a group within the G-7 (the leading countries -- U.S., Canada, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Japan -- later the G-8 with the addition of Russia in certain areas -- to work on transnational international crime. The country which chaired the G-7 meetings also headed this group, called the Lyon Group after its first meeting in Lyon when the French chaired the G-7.

I arrived in Washington in the middle of the year-long American chairmanship and organized the last meeting of the year in Boston. Senator John Kerry was the keynote speaker, and I worked with Winer on his speech.

Transnational organized crime had become highly technical -- high tech operations -- and globalized, mirroring legal corporations. I used to say it was the dark side of the international economy, but some people were not happy with that description.

We were dealing with cyber crime and paperless records, all those modern "tools of the trade." For example, when you are indicting someone, you need evidence, but where is the evidence? In many kinds of contemporary crime, the evidence is in cyberspace. Where is it physically located? How can you establish jurisdiction for prosecution and whose laws prevail? We were at the beginning of dealing with these questions. How do you track records, if they are not physically located somewhere? Are they considered to be physically located in your computer, or a company's computer, or floating in space? The Lyon Group was asked to address these high tech quandaries and the issues resulting from them.

*Q: This was an international group or…*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: International, G-8 actually because we had added Russia to the Lyon Group. The U.S. delegation had people from the FBI; Treasury; Secret Service; Department of Commerce; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and Department of Justice.

It was a cutting edge group of experts who were also often among America's best in computer technology. Several of them were enticed away from government service with offers of very lucrative jobs in the private sector. They could do amazing things with computers.

The need for international cooperation in our new hi-tech world was underlined when a group of Russian prosecutors from Siberia came to the State Department. The leader of their delegation appreciated our welcoming them and then asked me why they were at the State Department, when they were local prosecutors? I asked them if they had ever tried to obtain computer evidence as a basis for an indictment or for a trial. They said that was very difficult, because it often was not clear where the evidence even was and harder to find out how they might get hold of it from a foreign country. Then, they understood why they were at State.

I explained to them that the Lyon Group, which included Russia, was setting up a 24-7 notification system to locate and obtain records being sought by prosecutors in other countries. Our system is in the Department of Justice. Prosecutors needing records from the United States now have one point of contact available day in and day out to handle requests and direct people to prosecutors in one of our states, if that is needed. Prosecutors in foreign countries would probably start with a designated person/office in their own Justice Ministry, who would know the point of contact in the foreign country from which the information/evidence was needed. The points of contact in each member country would have the names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc. of their foreign counterparts. We expected this would help avoid the long delays involved in trying to find someone in the maze of a foreign government structure, especially a federal government with various jurisdictions, who could handle these requests, which are becoming more frequent. That point of contact could legally authorize the transfer of documents that could be used in a foreign court. We said this whole process would be explained for our Russian guests at their meetings at the Department of Justice.

The Lyon Group had already expanded access to these points of contact to the EU countries and were expanding it further. I imagine the system has been substantially improved in recent years.

*Q: And probably a lot of governments now have a point of contact whereas they did not have such person or office before.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. We hadn't had one either. But, by 1997, the Lyon Group was dealing with cyber crime; human trafficking; pedophilia; trafficking in child pornography -- an enormous and sickening business; environmental crime especially the illegal disposal of hazardous waste, another big crime business. We dealt with trafficking in firearms, money laundering and anything else that came up in the G-8 issues.

We worked very closely together. In fact, at one point, the G-8 meetings were to take place right at the time when the Germans, who would be chairing the meetings, were moving from Bonn to set up their capital again in Berlin. The new head of the German delegation had arrived from his last overseas posting to find papers and even people scattered all over the place. He could not find any materials or anyone to advise him, so I ended up faxing pages of information to him. He did not even have a staff or, I think, even an office in Berlin. So I ended up staffing both the German and the American delegations.

*Q: The German delegation had no files I guess.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: They apparently could not find the files, which were being moved. They had nothing. As I remember, not even people appointed to their delegation. He and I worked over the telephone and with faxes to prepare the agenda for the meeting. Since we all worked so closely together, this was not a big problem. There was nothing confidential anyway about what we were doing, nothing classified. We never had a Secretariat in the Lyon Group to maintain records.

*Q: You were the secretary.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Every country kept its own records. I just took on that job. Because we did not have a site for the Group's records, I took what I could find in cupboards and closets and wrote a history of what the group had done over the years, the meetings and decisions taken. I cleared it with all the American participants and with the other heads of the G-8 delegations who cleared it within their governments. We communicated by fax and phone in that stage of world-wide internet development. Other countries added bits and pieces to fill in what was lacking in our records.

*Q: And does that group still continue today.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes it does. The G-8 seems to be morphing into the G-20, but we still have the same crime problems, probably more complicated, in a world where borders are pretty much absent in the global economy and in the world of global crime.

*Q: Computers do not recognize borders.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: No, they don't. We took my papers and had them copied on to disks and gave disks to every delegation, so that no one would have to re-invent the wheel. All the G-8 delegations had seen the material and cleared it.

Then, I had to retire -- I was 65 -- and the Canadians took over maintaining the Lyon Group records.

I went to work in the European bureau as a WAE (when actually employed), no longer as a Foreign Service Officer.

*Q: How long did you do that?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Nearly four years, mainly in the European bureau, first dealing with Russia and the former Soviet Union countries. Our office director was Nerissa Cook, a civil service officer -- now in the Senior Executive Service -- with whom I had worked on the Lyon Group. Then the responsibilities of that office expanded, and we were handling all the global, transnational issues for the European bureau. We had more and more work and were given responsibility for anything that did not seem to fit neatly anywhere else. I left with regret, but they needed a full-time employee, and I was not able to start another full time job.

*Q: So does that mean you really retired when you were 68 or so?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I finally retired just before my 69th birthday.

*Q: So, looking back at it, what kind of general comment do you have about the Foreign Service and your time in it.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I think I was very lucky. I really loved it. I enjoyed the hodgepodge of jobs I had and being able to travel widely and live in different countries and cultures.

That is the reason multi-functionality was really a good fit for me. I liked handling a variety of different issues. That was one of the things I liked about being a desk officer. I was very pleased when I received performance awards. It was good to know that my efforts were appreciated. I was certainly happy with my assignments, although some days I felt that State could not pay me enough to do this job with all its frustrations, but mostly I could scarcely believe I was being paid to have such a great career.

On the other hand, I am not alone in being delighted now, as a retiree, to be able to say what I think; it is rather liberating. On another hand, I miss working at State -- not on cold rainy mornings -- but I miss spending my days mostly with such interesting people and doing such interesting things.

*Q: That is interesting, but did you ever feel constrained in expressing yourself? I mean we all know we had to follow the policy line or else, but on the other hand, it was never a real problem for me. Did you feel strongly at times that you would like to have taken positions differently from the government?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, from time to time. For one example, I thought the U.S. should have looked very carefully into the way the Dutch were handling the drug addiction problem, although I realized the American public would not have accepted that. There were a few other things….

*Q: That you would have done differently? Yes, but one thing you do when you are in the Foreign Service is you give up your own opinion.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Exactly -- except in meetings and using our dissent channel, or sometimes when we had the option of giving pros and cons in papers we wrote -- it depended…..

*Q: Because that is part of the cost of doing it.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes.

*Q: One last question. Did you ever have sort of hard feelings about the way you had been treated when you had to leave the service when you were married?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Well, I had some difficulty in finding a niche for myself, but I was happy to be able to enjoy my sons' young childhood. When they went to school, I did too -- to study education at American University in Beirut and go on to a different career for a while. I really enjoyed that whole experience.

Hard feelings about the State Department did develop when I discovered that making women officers resign when they married was not a law or regulation. I never did find out what it was. But, I was really disgusted with the way I was treated when I was trying to rejoin the Foreign Service. I had gone through the whole process, and the State Department had moved all our effects into storage, while I awaited my orders to go back to Washington for training. My children suffered a great deal because they had to start seventh and ninth grade in the middle of the year in Washington, where they had not lived since they were babies. I thought that was absolutely a terrible way of treating us.

*Q: Well could it have happened faster do you think?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. All my paperwork was in place, and I was scheduled to leave Paris during the summer. My children were enrolled in a school in Washington. I was just waiting for my formal orders to arrive. However, the Medical Office, or someone claiming to be from MED, called me to say that my medical clearance had been revoked and was on hold because I had migraine headaches that needed "to be investigated." I had hardly ever even spoken to a doctor about my occasional migraine headaches. They had not affected my work, and I was not taking special medicine for them. I did not know what to do and wondered if MED might want to see if I had a brain tumor. However, I was not asked to see a doctor, and no one at State, even during my normal physicals ever mentioned my migraines.

*Q: So, was the net result that they were just taking a lot of time? It did not appear that it should have...*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: MED had the results of the physicals we had taken to return to State and my medical records from the three years during which I had worked at State before my marriage.

This last-minute delay forced me to scramble to find an apartment for a short term rental and to find short term jobs. The American School of Paris took the boys back on scholarships, and I started working as a substitute whenever I could. Finally, I decided to have my former supervisor at the school write to the State Department on official stationery saying that I had never missed work because of headaches and had been a very responsible teacher. My medical clearance and orders arrived quite soon after that letter had arrived in Washington. This whole episode angered me -- the whole process of going back to State seemed an exercise in deception and harassment. It had affected my sons' grades in high school; they had such a difficult time. I decided I would go back to State but would start looking around for other options. I never actually did that.

*Q: Did you have the sense that it was sort of the establishment resisting the legal requirement that they had to bring you back? In other words, I just wondered if you sensed, I don't mean there was a person who had onus for you, but do you think the institution couldn't bring itself to accept this idea.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. I think some of it was the institution's inability or unwillingness to accept women like me back unless we had developed a CV of obvious use to State. Some people seemed to feel very threatened by us, some of the men did. Not because we were all such outstanding people. I certainly wasn't in that category, although some women were.

I remember going to a meeting that upset me a lot. It was a big meeting, perhaps a Foreign Service Association type meeting (AFSA). Some men stood up and said that the women who were being taken back or who were just coming into the Foreign Service could not have passed the exams without special breaks and so on. Those of us who wanted to go back into the Foreign Service had, obviously, taken exactly the same tests as most of the men. Of course, some of the men, like you, had passed the old three day exam, but some of the women would have also passed that earlier test. And some of you had, deservedly, extra points for being veterans. I doubt if any women complained about that.

*Q: I remember those days. Well, not to end this on a negative note, but sort of looking back on it all, would you say this was a satisfactory career?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes, after that rocky second start, it was great.

*Q: Would you recommend it for a young woman starting out now?*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. I have told my granddaughters it was a wonderful career. When I think of other things that I could have done….. I did enjoy teaching, but I think I was so lucky to have had this career, to do all these things and learn all the things I had been able to learn. It was like being in a doctoral program without having to write a dissertation.

*Q: Although you wrote plenty of other things.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Yes. We all do a lot of that. But, it was a great career -- really terrific.

While I was treated badly when I was trying to get back into the Foreign Service, as soon as I started working at State, I was treated very well. Both men and women helped me so much. They seemed to realize that being a single parent posed certain difficulties and often went out of their way to help us. I declined to join the women's law suit on discrimination at State, because the men around me could not have been more helpful. I could not point to a single act of real discrimination against me once I returned to State.

I don't have any regrets at all about being overseas or being in the Foreign Service. My life has been so enriched by it. I am still very interested in what happens in the Foreign Service to women and to men too and especially to families. I am concerned about what happens to young Foreign Service officers as they wrestle with the problems of their generation. I think they have embarked on a great career. I hope they can make it work.

*Q: Well very good; thank you very much.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: Thank you.

*Q: This will conclude the interview of Eleanore Raven-Hamilton.*

RAVEN-HAMILTON: I also want to thank you, Ed, for putting me on the path that became so interesting for me, when I was assigned to the Greek desk.

*Q: Nice to be a part of that.*

*End of interview*