

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

**AMBASSADOR J. STAPLETON ROY**

*Interviewed by: David Reuther  
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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 2013. This is an Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History interview with Ambassador Stape Roy. I'm David Reuther. Ambassador Roy, as you've seen with my interview chron, I'd like to start at the start, if you will. You were born in Nanjing, China in 1935.*

ROY: That's correct.

*Q: Can you tell me something about your background and family?*

ROY: My parents were Presbyterian educational missionaries in China. They arrived in China in 1930 and spent a year and a half studying Chinese at the Peking Language School. Following their training, my parents were assigned to the Presbyterian mission in Nanjing in 1932, where for the next four years my father taught courses at the Nanking Theological Seminary, while also teaching English at various government high schools. My brother was born in Nanjing in 1933, and I followed in 1935.

In 1936, our family returned to the United States for two years of furlough, which we spent in Princeton, New Jersey while my father earned his master's degree in philosophy from Princeton University. My only recollection of those years is of being terrified by an approaching thunderstorm while playing outside on an upstairs open veranda. My father rescued me just in time. It must have been around my third birthday.

We returned to China in 1938. The Sino-Japanese War had already begun, but of course Americans were noncombatants at that time. Our ship stopped in Shanghai and my father was able to take the train up to Nanjing to see what had happened to the household goods that we had left in storage there. He found the house had been looted, and there was nothing recoverable from the house. Conditions were too unsettled for our family to remain in Nanjing, so my father accepted an invitation from the University of Nanking, which had relocated to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province in western China, to teach and be director of religious activities. The university, along with a number of other refugee colleges, had found temporary quarters on the campus of West China Union University, across the river from the walled city of Chengdu.

Getting there was an adventure in itself. We took a ship from Shanghai down to Haiphong, in French Indochina, where we transferred to a train from Hanoi up to Kunming in southwestern China. From there we proceeded on to Chengdu by air. My only recollection of the trip is standing beside the train during a rest stop in a rural area. I became alarmed when the train began to move, but my father picked up my brother and me and placed us on the steps to our carriage. I have no memories of the rest of the journey.

We spent seven years in Chengdu from 1938-45. While Chengdu was the capital of Sichuan, the government of the Republic of China had moved from Nanjing to Chongqing, a major city on the Yangtse River protected from Japanese incursions by mountain ranges on its eastern side. Foreign embassies were located in Chongqing, but there was a sizable missionary community in Chengdu at that time, consisting largely of British and Canadian missionaries.

The only existing English language primary school in Chengdu at that time was the Canadian school. When my brother and I reached schooling age, we began at the Canadian school. However, the foreign community in Chengdu, consisting largely of missionaries, was gradually decreasing as people were somehow making their way to England and North America. I don't know how they were able to do that. The Canadian school ended up closing sometime in 1942. For the next three years, my brother and I were home-schooled in the residences of university faculty members, mostly in kitchens and dining rooms. The spouses of the professors were all well-educated and quite capable of teaching primary school classes.

These were wartime conditions in Chengdu. Because the Sino-Japanese War was going on, Chengdu was subject to Japanese bombing. China lacked an air force, and the famous Flying Tigers did not operate in the area of Chengdu, which was well removed from the front lines. For the first few years the Japanese engaged in daytime raids. Some of my earliest memories as a four-year-old are of having to trek to the public air raid shelters approximately a quarter mile from our house whenever the sirens sounded.

The air raids were so frequent that we ended up excavating a dugout in our backyard. This consisted of a pit with wooden steps at one end and wooden planks to sit on. Overhead were wooden boards covered with a layer of dirt. It provided protection against the shrapnel from the anti-aircraft guns but would have been useless against a direct or nearby hit. The Japanese, at the time, were bombing the city of Chengdu.

We were located just across the river from the city, but the bombing wasn't terribly accurate. I can remember that we would return to the house and find that floorboards had been broken loose by the concussions, along with broken windows and things of that sort. After the all-clear siren, my father would lift me up to peer over the wall between our house and the river to see the fires burning inside the city wall on the other side of the river. We never had any direct hits, but it was unnerving when a string of bomb explosions would get louder as they approached. You never knew where the string would stop.

Of course, we Americans became combatants in the war in December of 1941. However, it took more than two years for the U.S. Army Air Forces to show up in Chengdu. They built four big air bases surrounding Chengdu that were used for long range bombing of Japan. Building the airfields was a fascinating process. There wasn't enough gravel. For months at a time, we would see hundreds if not thousands of Chinese women sitting in riverbeds with straw ropes wrapped around large rocks while they tapped them with hammers until they broke into smaller pieces. These were collected into piles of gravel that were used to pave the runways.

The arrival of the American servicemen was a great event for us young kids. They brought movies, chocolate bars and chewing gum with them. We had visits by American politicians, who amused us with their political jokes. One of the visitors was Henry Wallace in his last year as vice president. Hank Greenberg, the famous baseball player with the Detroit Tigers, came and gave me his autograph. Periodically, they would mount sheets on poles on the university campus as screens for American movies and newsreels. One of the newsreels showed views of an American farm where the piglets were all scrubbed clean, in contrast to the Chinese pigs that were always filthy. It gave me a lasting, and not entirely accurate, impression that America was a haven of tidiness and order, in contrast to the chaos around us in China. The movies were often thrillers featuring sinister Gestapo agents using dogs in vain efforts to track down valiant resistance fighters. It felt good to be an American.

On Thanksgiving and Christmas, we would have some of the servicemen into our house for dinner. Most were young men in their teens and twenties, thousands of miles from home. Their gratitude was unbounding. They would give us kids rides on their motorcycles, which was very exciting. Occasionally, my parents would allow my brother and me to overnight in their tent cities around Chengdu and watch the air operations up close. The fighter aircraft protecting the airfields would practice their dogfights over our house, and we would watch them engage in mock combat while honing their skills. I vowed that I would become a pilot when I grew up and indeed got my orders to Pensacola to begin flight training on the same date that I passed my Foreign Service oral exam. The lure of the Foreign Service proved to be stronger than my childhood dream. One of the servicemen had been an artist for the Disney Corporation and thrilled us by drawing some examples of Disney cartoon characters.

On one occasion, my brother and I accompanied a group of servicemen on a hunting trip into the Himalayas. They didn't know any Chinese, so they took us along as interpreters to assist them in arranging lodging in mountain temples. My brother must have been eleven at the time, while I was nine. For us, it was exciting to hike through the mountains with these young servicemen armed with their carbine rifles, even though we did not encounter any animals larger than squirrels. We slept on the wooden dining tables in the temples, only to be distracted by middle-of-the-night Buddhist ceremonies with the loud beating of gongs and drums.

With the arrival of the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1944, the Japanese shifted to nighttime

raids. We did not have night fighters at the time. We soon learned that the Japanese were targeting the military airfields around Chengdu rather than the city itself, so we no longer bothered to go to the dugouts when the air raid sirens sounded.

Even before the arrival of the U.S. Army Air Forces, life in Chengdu was fascinating. On a clear day, from the attic of our house, we could catch glimpses of Minya Konka, a 24,780 foot Himalayan mountain that was always snow-capped. Chengdu itself is on the western edge of a level plain that for two thousand years has been the rice bowl of China thanks to a massive system of canals that distributed water throughout the plain. It is notorious not only for its hot cuisine but also for its heat in summer. My father liked to go on expeditions into the Himalayas as part of his student work at the university. He would round up some college students and take them on two-week hikes up into the Tibetan hinterlands, coming back with great adventure stories.

Our family's practice during the hot season was to spend at least a month in the mountain areas of China, usually staying in Buddhist temples at elevations of several thousand feet. One year we went to Èméi Shān, which is one of the famous mountains of China in south western Sichuan. Another year we went to Yaan, which is a remote city in the eastern hills of the Himalayas. The Buddhist monastery there was in a mountainous tea growing area, and the monastery was surrounded by tea fields. A room in the monastery was used as a storage place for freshly gathered tea leaves. My brother and I liked to romp in the tea leaves, until we discovered a freshly shed snakeskin and realized that snakes were also occupying the room.

During our last summer in Chengdu, we went to a mountain retreat on the summit of a peak called Bailu Ding. It was developed decades earlier by missionary families in Chengdu, including the parents of John Stewart Service, one of the famous China Hands in the Foreign Service during World War II. It took hours to hike to the top via a long winding staircase that wound up the side of the peak through dense groves of bamboo. On the summit the missionaries had developed a compound with widely separated bungalows and tennis courts. Although very rustic in their furnishings, the bungalows were far more comfortable than the Buddhist temples we were used to, and they had glorious views of the mountain valleys thousands of feet below.

While there, we made a day-long trip to a nearby mountain that was filled with limestone caves, some of grand proportions and some dark and eerie. We were exploring one such cave, when we were startled to find that it was a nesting place for bats, who suddenly engulfed us in a torrent of flapping wings that extinguished our candles and left us in total darkness. Fortunately, we were able to grope our way to the exit, but it was a memorable experience. We were exhausted by the lengthy hike, while still facing the prospect of mounting the endless staircase to the top of our mountain.

Fortunately, when we reached the bottom of the staircase, our parents were able to rent two "biandan," for my brother and me. These are simple conveyances consisting of two long bamboo poles with cross bars at each end for the carriers and a simple canvas seat in the middle. They are found throughout the mountainous areas of Sichuan. The carriers

raced up the staircase at a fast clip, leaving our parents in their wake. We were grateful for being spared the ordeal of climbing the steps in our exhausted states.

The war in Europe ended in May of 1945. We had been seven years in war-torn China and were overdue for a furlough in the United States. As American citizens, we were able to get permission to be evacuated by the U.S. Army Air Forces from Chengdu to India. We were first flown to Kunming. From there, we continued on a U.S. military aircraft with canvas bucket seats for the flight over the “hump,” the high range of mountains between Yunnan Province and Burma. This was a dangerous flight because the aircraft could not fly above the clouds, and the mountains had not been fully mapped, increasing the risk of a mountain collision.

For the trip from Kunming to a refueling stop in Burma, everybody had to wear parachutes. Alas, there were no parachutes small enough for us kids. My brother and I were instructed, in the event of an emergency, how to link our arms through the straps of our parents’ parachute harnesses, enabling them to put their arms around us. The hope was that this would enable us to resist the shock when the parachute opened if we had to bail out. Fortunately, we did not have to test this procedure. Our flight from Kunming to a little airport called Chabua in Northern Burma was uneventful. We stopped there in the middle of the night. The flight from there to Calcutta provided us with our first exposure to monsoon weather conditions. We were surrounded by giant cumulus clouds that caught the aircraft in lengthy updrafts, followed by sudden drops of several thousand feet. This process kept repeating itself. We were grateful when we finally landed in India.

In Calcutta, there was an American missionary community. We stayed in the missionary compound for a week and then took a train from Calcutta to Bombay. It was about a three or four-day train ride across India, which was still under British rule at the time. In Bombay, we spent a month waiting for a refugee ship called the Gripsholm to arrive. It was the first ship built for transatlantic express service as a diesel-powered motor vessel, rather than as a steamship. From 1942-46 it was chartered by the U.S. Department of State as an exchange and repatriation ship for U.S. and Canadian citizens. It sailed under the auspices of the International Red Cross with a Swedish crew. Since a few Japanese submarines were still operating in the Indian Ocean, it had great red crosses painted on its sides, which were illuminated by floodlights at night in hopes this would deter torpedo attacks.

The Gripsholm departed Bombay with a full load of missionaries and other Americans leaving China and India now that the war in Europe had ended. Its route took it through the Red Sea to the Suez Canal, with a brief stop in Piraeus before proceeding on through the Strait of Gibraltar to New York. The Indian Ocean portion of the voyage was incredibly rough, and I was happy when we reached the Red Sea, which was smooth as glass.

During the voyage, my brother and I had our first paying jobs when we developed a shoeshine business. We found that we could make 10 cents per pair of shoes by shining the shoes of passengers at night, if they left their shoes outside their cabin doors. This

enabled us to accumulate what seemed like a vast fortune by the time we reached New York.

We arrived in New York a couple of weeks before V-J Day. We were met by my maternal grandfather, whom I could only remember from family photo albums. He showed us the sights of Manhattan. America struck me as a land flowing with milk and honey. On debarking from the Gripsholm, we encountered a USO (United Service Organizations) operation that offered us free glasses of milk. This was my first exposure to homogenized milk. Unfortunately, the milk had been kept a little too long, and it was just turning sour. I assumed that homogenized milk always tasted sour and wouldn't touch homogenized milk for several years, until I discovered that the sourness had nothing to do with the homogenization process.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Our family home was in Pittsburgh, but we spent two years living in Princeton from 1945 to 1947 while my father worked to get his PhD in philosophy. I attended fifth and sixth grades at the Nassau Street Princeton Elementary School. Since I had been home-schooled for the previous three years, the school initially was not sure what my grade level should be. They started me in the fourth grade, but within a week moved me up to the fifth grade, which was more appropriate for my age.

We lived in two different places in Princeton. For the first year, we were in a small house on the campus of the Princeton Theological Seminary. It was a nice house but involved a long walk to school, about thirty minutes each way. We then moved to an apartment building on Alexander Street in Princeton, just around the corner from Albert Einstein's house. I can still remember seeing him on the porch of his house when I was walking to and from school. Princeton University at the time was filled with demobilized soldiers. On my daily walks to school, the campus would be filled with students wearing sailor hats and other bits and pieces of discarded uniforms. It was a very different environment from the campus a few years later.

We made regular trips to our family home in Sewickley, a suburb of Pittsburgh. The trains were packed with demobilized troops who overflowed into the aisles, barely leaving any standing room. As a young male boy, it was years before I was able to get a seat on a train, making do by sitting on my suitcase.

*Q: Let me interrupt for a moment. You're saying the family's home was in the Pittsburgh area?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: So where are your father's people from, if you will? And your mother's people?*

ROY: Both my parents were from Pittsburgh, but my father was born in Laredo, Texas. His ancestors were Scottish mining engineers who had come to the United States in the

early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They had settled in Ohio. My paternal grandfather was working in Laredo, Texas as a mining engineer when my father was born. His older sister Jean was also born in Laredo two years earlier. Unfortunately, grandfather Roy became ill with yellow fever and died two years after my father's birth. His widow moved back east and married an astronomer named Jordan in Pittsburgh. He was raised by the Jordans in that city and has a half brother named John Jordan. Which is how my father ended up in that city. My mother was the oldest of eight children. Her family was originally from Kentucky, but her father had moved to Pittsburgh as a young man, where he was involved in the fresh fruits and vegetables business and helped found the Pittsburgh fruit auction.

My parents were both devout Christians and met through their involvement in religious activities. They married in 1928 after two years together recruiting for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions in some 240 American and Canadian colleges. As a married couple, they went to Edinburgh, Scotland, to study theology. They then transferred to Oxford to continue their study of the Christian faith. While there, my father was asked to serve for a year as a Foreign Student Secretary of the British Student Christian Movement in London.

In 1930 they returned to New York and were interviewed by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, which offered them a job either teaching in a high school in Mexico City or working in universities in China. My father wanted to be a missionary in Mexico because of his Laredo connection. My mother had heard a China missionary give a talk, which had inspired her to want to go to China. They decided to pray for guidance. My father's guidance was that they should go to China, while my mother's guidance was that they should go to Mexico.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: So they prayed again and ended up in China. This explains why I was born in China instead of in Mexico.

*Q: Now you were talking about Princeton's public schools, fifth, sixth grade.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: So that would be '47 --*

ROY: That would be 1945 -- from 1945 to 1947. Having lived in Princeton on two occasions when back in the United States, in my mind it had become a surrogate hometown in the United States. It was the only place where I had local friends. So when it came time to go to college, the only college I was interested in going to was Princeton, which caused fear and trepidation on the part of my high school management because it was not easy to get into Princeton (*laughs*). They insisted that I apply to other colleges as well, which I did, but my heart wasn't in it.

*Q: Before we get there, as a young man in China living through the war with the*

*American bases around, how familiar were you with what was going on worldwide?  
Your news?*

ROY: Chengdu was a remote city. We had no radios or daily English language newspapers. The embassies were in Chongqing. Our local war was the dominant issue in our daily lives. We had very poor communications with the outside world. Japanese and bandit attacks on the Burma Road periodically cut off communication or resulted in lost shipments. As a result, we didn't pay a lot of attention to international news.

The two exceptions were Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the death of President Roosevelt in 1944. I remember both very clearly. My parents were deeply shaken up by news of the Japanese attack. At the time, I would have been six-years-old. I can remember my mother trying to explain to my brother and me what had happened. I had a smattering of childhood Chinese, because we lived quite far from the other foreign children. My playmates were largely the Chinese children of the local Chinese official whose family shared our duplex house with us. As a result, my childhood Chinese was entirely in the Sichuan dialect, which is quite different from the Beijing dialect used by my parents. I can still remember my embarrassment at hearing them speak Chinese because it sounded so wrong in pronunciation. When I forgot my Sichuanese after we returned to the United States in 1945, I relearned the Beijing dialect when we returned to China. All of a sudden my parents' false accent went away. *(laughs)*.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I still have that distinct memory of how their accent corrected itself. But that's -- what was your question?

*Q: Your sources of the news and --*

ROY: Oh, the news. The main foreign news we had was when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into World War II. When Roosevelt died over three years later, I can remember trying to learn the Chinese word for president, which I didn't normally use in my conversations with Chinese playmates, so I could explain to my Chinese playmates what had happened. The word is "zǒngtǒng," and it was not part of my vocabulary at the time.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: *(laughs)* Without that word, I couldn't explain what had happened.

*Q: Now, there's a large military, U.S. Military presence in due course in Southwest China, as you said.*

ROY: The troops lived in tent cities out at the airbases, several miles removed from the city of Chengdu. There were hundreds of tents. We didn't normally see them on the streets.



*Q: Pretty Spartan living.*

ROY: It was definitely Spartan living. These were basically tents with wooden platforms as floors. The beds were cots. My brother and I would occasionally go out and stay with the troops, and I can remember sleeping in the cots under brown GI (government issue) blankets. The troops had chocolate bars that were absolutely divine.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: This is when the air bases were operational, which took a long time. It was fun for us to visit the bases because you could see the air operations taking place.

*Q: Now, the Japanese launched a ground offensive in Southwest China in '44, I think, to take out those bases. Were the ones in Chengdu treated as well?*

ROY: Chengdu was too far from the front lines. Sichuan is protected by mountains, and there was never a serious threat of a Japanese land incursion, although occasionally there were rumors of potential Japanese parachute attacks. The Japanese threat was in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces. When our forces established forward air bases that were better able to inflict damage on the Japanese, the Japanese would launch land assaults and take out the bases.

This got involved in the dispute between General Chennault and General Stilwell. Chennault thought air could do the job, and Stilwell's position was that if you couldn't defend the airbases, the best you could do was to establish a temporary presence. It was largely the southwestern air bases that were affected by Japanese ground actions. In Chengdu, I don't recall there ever being any threat of a Japanese ground attack. First of all, Chongqing, the temporary capital of Nationalist China, would have been the target, not Chengdu, and Chongqing was several hundred miles to the east. We never were in fear of a Japanese land action affecting us.

In fact, in the spring of 1939, shortly after our return to China, a department of the Church of Christ in China asked my father to join a small group of Chinese and missionaries on a trip to carry blankets and comfort to isolated hospitals serving wounded Chinese soldiers in Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces. My father, being an adventurer, was eager to join the trip, which included an American correspondent. The trip took place during a period of temporary cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists. They traveled in an American Dodge with a teakwood body and hoped to complete the trip in four weeks, but it actually took them eight weeks. They drove through the nationalist and communist lines up to Yan'an, where the communists had their headquarters, and spent several days there before driving back to Chengdu.

*Q: Who was the journalist? Ted Green?*

ROY: Actually it was a woman journalist. She later wrote a book about it called Dawn

Watch in China.

*Q: Smedley*

ROY: No, it wasn't Agnes Smedley. Her name was Joy Homer. She died in 1946 at the age of 31. The New York Times report called her an author, traveler, and relief worker. Her book is now out of print. Later, my father was very frustrated because he had really made the trip more or less as a lark, and he hadn't kept records of whom he met with in Yan'an (*laughs*). Apparently, at the time Mao Zedong was away to the northeast, and Zhou Enlai was in Chongqing representing communist interests. Later on he would wrack his brains trying to figure out whether he'd actually met Deng Xiaoping, or Zhu De (Mao's military commander), or any of the other communist bigwigs up there.

*Q: Now when your father finished his studies there in Princeton, did he go back to China?*

ROY: Right. What happened was we spent two years in Princeton. Then my father was under growing pressure to complete his doctorate. As a result, the rest of our family moved to my grandfather's home in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. This freed my father to work night and day in Princeton getting his PhD completed.

While in Sewickley, I started seventh grade at the Glen Osborne school. Unlike the situation in Princeton, this was a tiny two room primary school, with grades one to six in one room, and grades seven and eight in the other. The teacher soon discovered that I could handle the eighth grade work, so she decided that I should skip the seventh grade. This had a big impact on my later high school experience.

My father completed his PhD in the summer of 1948. We then went back to China, traveling on the *President Wilson*. It was my third crossing of the Pacific Ocean, but the first one that I remembered. We arrived in Shanghai in September of 1948, stopping in Hawaii, Manila, and Hong Kong. In Manila we were shocked by the extent of wartime damage still visible from the port. En route from Hong Kong to Shanghai we encountered a ferocious typhoon in the Taiwan Strait. Fortunately, the *President Wilson* was a large ship, but I still have vivid memories of the waves towering above us and smashing into the bridge when a large wave hit the bow. Shanghai, in contrast to Manila, showed no physical effects of the war.

My brother, who was entering the tenth grade, stayed in Shanghai to attend the Shanghai American School, while I went on with my family to Nanjing and began ninth grade classes at the Hillcrest American School. Within two months, however, the American school closed because of the approaching communist forces. Nanjing was now the capital of Nationalist China, and the embassies had begun to evacuate some of their staff. There was also a mass exodus of the foreign community.

*Q: Since that's where the embassy was, Nanjing, at the time?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Leighton Stuart and --*

ROY: U.S. Ambassador Leighton Stuart was still there. This was September 1948. The school bus was an army weapons carrier, guarded by a Sikh with a magnificent turban. My main accomplishment at the Hillcrest School was learning to touch type, which proved later to be a vitally important skill. I also developed my first crush on a beautiful girl in my ninth grade class, Kjeryn Ronning, who was the daughter of Canadian ambassador Chester Ronning. She had an older sister, Audrey Ronning, who later married New York Times journalist Seymour Topping. My incipient romance, unknown to her, was cut short in November, when the school closed because of the approaching communist forces.

As a result, my parents sent me down to Shanghai on an American destroyer that came up the Yangtze River to Nanjing to assist in evacuating a large part of the remaining Americans, who were dropped in Shanghai to continue on to the United States. Five months later a British destroyer, the HMS Amethyst, en route to Nanjing, was shelled by communist forces on the northern bank of the Yangtze and badly damaged, creating a major international incident. It eventually escaped down river. Our passage had been uneventful. Later, my American relatives told me they had seen me in a Life magazine photograph of a group of Americans on the U.S. destroyer.

I was 13-years-old at the time. What has always been interesting to me (*laughs*) is that when you live in crisis situations, you become used to different behavior patterns. My parents sent me unescorted down to Shanghai, where the U.S. destroyer docked as the sun was setting after a two-day trip down the Yangtze. I was met by a Presbyterian mission representative, who helped me find a pedicab for the forty-five-minute trip to the Shanghai American School. I can remember feeling very lonely as I traveled through the dark and unfamiliar streets of Shanghai. The pedicab dropped me at the school, where there was no one to meet me. The school had shut down for the night, the buildings were all dark, but the iron gate at the front was ajar. Lugging my small suitcase, I began to wander around the large campus looking for a human being. Finally, I spotted a small light in one of the buildings. It turned out to be the dining hall, where the boarding students were gathered for dinner, including my brother and some missionary children whom I had known in Chengdu during the war. I breathed a great sigh of relief.

*Q: (laughs*

ROY: For me, it felt like finding an oasis in the desert. Despite my nervousness, this was characteristic of how you did things in those days. You were more self-reliant in coping with unfamiliar situations. Nowadays, I would never treat my own children in this fashion. (*laughs*).

To give you an example of economic conditions in China in those days, when we arrived back in China, the Nationalist government had just introduced a new allegedly

gold-backed yuan to replace the badly inflated currency. It was valued at four gold yuan for one U.S. dollar at the official exchange rate, meaning one gold yuan was worth 25 cents in U.S. currency. When I paid the pedicab driver for my nearly hour-long trip to the school, the fare was less than one gold yuan. I generously let the driver keep the change. Within five months, the currency was inflating at the rate of several hundred million yuan a day. Beer companies were using 25,000 yuan notes as labels on beer bottles because they were cheaper than using paper. Silver dollar coins, minted in Mexico, became the only viable units of currency. The streets were filled with money vendors, who balanced a long stack of silver coins on one arm, which they flipped every few seconds so the coin on top made a clacking sound. If you needed inflation-proof money, you listened for the clacking sounds to find a vendor.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: In any event --

*Q: So how long --*

ROY: In any event, I entered the ninth grade in Shanghai, only to find the same process occurring in Shanghai that I had encountered in Nanjing. The American community in Shanghai began to evacuate. By April, Nanjing had fallen to the communists, so my brother and I were cut off from our parents. Our relatives in the United States kept bombarding us with telegrams telling us to take the next ship out to come home. In consultation with my brother, we ignored the requests and decided to remain in China and face whatever lay ahead.

Despite the unsettled conditions, the school was very permissive in terms of rules for the student body. Boarding students could simply sign out and take public buses to various parts of the city, signing in again on their return. Older students were notorious for bringing back racy English language novels, pirated editions of which were readily available from vendors around the racecourse. In the evenings, groups of students would periodically descend on their favored Chinese restaurants. Life was interesting.

The Shanghai American School completed the school year at the end of May 1949, just as the communist forces were fighting their way into the city. The Battle of Shanghai began in the first week of May and continued for about three weeks. The communist occupation of Shanghai took place while we were having our final exams. By that point, the student body had shrunk to less than twenty, including just a handful of my ninth-grade classmates.

I still have vivid memories of those days. After completing our exams in this or that subject, we would return to the boys dormitory, climb onto the roof after dinner through an attic window, and sit on the roof watching the tracer shells being fired into the city by the communist forces surrounding Shanghai.

The most dangerous situation occurred when the nationalist forces began to withdraw,

leaving the city with no authority in control. One of the teachers, who was Master of the boys dormitory, organized the boarding students into nighttime patrols of the school grounds. Armed with baseball bats, in groups of two or three, we spent two nights in shifts patrolling the perimeters of the school to provide a deterrent to intruders. Fortunately, there were no incidents.

On one occasion, I was returning to the boys dorm across the soccer field after one of my exams. I looked up and saw a fighter aircraft diving towards me with curious spots of flames on the front of its wings. There was no sound. I ran for cover when I belatedly realized, just as the boom of the rattling machine guns reached me, that this was a strafing aircraft. While it had looked to me as though the aircraft was heading straight for me, it is more likely that the target was communist forces several blocks away who were occupying our part of the city.

*Q: Certainly get your attention.*

ROY: After the communists took over, we spent a month wondering whether and when the new communist authorities would grant us permission to rejoin our parents in Nanjing. To add to the uncertainty, we also did not know whether the Shanghai American School would be able to continue functioning in the fall. By this time, there were only a handful of boarding students left. Because some of the faculty and staff were long-term residents of Shanghai, the hope was that the school could remain open.

It took us a month to reestablish communications with our parents in Nanjing, and we finally gained permission to return there. At the end of June, three of us American teenagers – my brother and I, plus a classmate of his named Joan Smythe, who was the daughter of missionaries in Nanjing – returned there by train. As usual, the train was so crowded that the roofs of the carriages were covered with low-fare passengers. The American embassy was still in Nanjing, since the civil war was continuing in southern and western China. At that point, the outcome of the civil war was a foregone conclusion, but Washington had not yet decided on what our relationship with the new communist government would be. Life for the American diplomats was complicated by the refusal of the communist authorities to recognize the official status of diplomats from countries that had not recognized the new communist government.

A few days after we arrived in Nanjing, U.S. Ambassador Leighton Stuart held a Fourth of July reception for the tiny remaining American community. I remember going to the ambassador's residence with my parents for the event. This was my first exposure to a diplomatic residence, which was on a far grander scale than our modest missionary residences. Ambassador Stuart, a former missionary himself, was a very gracious host.

By the end of the summer, it became clear that the Shanghai American School would not be able to open. The communists forced it to close by assessing it with so-called "back taxes" covering the four decades since its founding. Fortunately, it was able to send us textbooks for the next school year.

Home schooling posed a problem because my brother and Joan Smythe were a class ahead of me. Our parents made a collective decision that it would be more efficient for me to join their eleventh-grade studies and make up later for my missed tenth-grade courses. We were joined by the younger son of the Dutch Charge. Most foreign embassies had remained in Nanjing pending the outcome of the civil war. So for a while there were four of us taking eleventh grade classes in Nanjing. The teachers were various American professors at the University of Nanking and Ginling Women's College.

When the People's Republic of China was established in October 1949, the new government moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing. The embassies of those foreign governments that recognized the new Chinese government, one after another, began to pull up stakes and move to Beijing. Over the next few months, the diplomatic presence in Nanjing dropped sharply. Ambassador Stuart departed in early August 1949, and the rest of the embassy staff departed later that fall.

Our family had gotten to know Ralph Clough, a Third Secretary at the U.S. embassy, and I remember being very impressed by him and his wife at that time. You may have interviewed him for one of the oral histories. He was later the Deputy Chief of Mission in the U.S. embassy in Taipei when I was assigned there as a foreign service officer in 1962.

With the withdrawal of the U.S. embassy, the British became our protecting power. In July 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean War, our parents sent my brother and me back to the United States, accompanied by Joan Smythe. We all had to travel on British documents because the practice at that time was for children to be included in the passports of their parents.

*Q: Oh. Yeah.*

ROY: Since my parents were trying to stay on in China, we couldn't take their passports to travel. In any event, during that first year under the communists, we did not really encounter any unusual difficulties or harassment. We'd go to the Chinese church on Sunday, and then sometimes we would hire a horse carriage to take us out to Purple Mountain, which is outside the city wall, to visit the Sun Yat-sen Memorial out there and climb to the top of the mountain. The tomb of the first Ming emperor was at the foot of the mountain. All of this was done without any interference by the communist forces.

My brother and I had both lost our childhood Chinese, but once resettled in Nanjing, we began daily spoken Chinese lessons. Soon I had enough Chinese to form friendships with some of the children of Chinese faculty members. This made life less lonely. We would play basketball together on the university courts, or go on excursions to Lotus Lake, a short distance outside the city wall, where we could rent rowing boats. Even though I was the only foreigner in these groups of Chinese students, I encountered no difficulty with the guards who scrutinized our documents when we exited the city walls.

The Chinese communists initially had no air force. As a result, we were subject to occasional daytime bombing raids by the Nationalist Government that had taken refuge in

Taiwan. They did not target the civilian areas of Nanjing where the university was located. Nevertheless, it was dangerous to remain outdoors during air raids because whenever the planes showed up, there would be heavy anti-aircraft fire. After the raids, we would find pieces of shrapnel in our yard from the exploded anti-aircraft shells. It was much safer to remain indoors. We never knew when the Nationalist air raids would take place.

On one occasion, the three of us remaining American teenagers decided to spend a day over the weekend hiking all the way around the Nanjing City Wall, a distance of over 20 miles. Most of the wall was in walkable shape, but there were a few ruined sections. When we were about halfway through the hike, one of these Nationalist air raids occurred. The bombers were directly overhead, and a lot of flack was going up. We were in a very exposed position on the top of the city wall. We looked for a place to shelter, but there was none, so we just hunkered down and hoped for the best. I remember feeling very vulnerable during that particular experience.

In the spring of 1950, the Soviets finally provided the new Chinese communist government with some MIG-15 jet fighters. In Nanjing, when the first jet fighters arrived, two of them streaked across the city at rooftop level with a shattering roar. At the time, we were attending a high school history course with University of Nanking Professor Searle Bates. All four of us had wartime experience in China, and we all dove under the dining room table where we were sitting when this sudden, unbelievably loud roar occurred. As the roar faded, we rushed to the window, just in time to see the smoking exhausts of the MIGs in the distance. That marked the end of any further Nationalist air raids on Nanjing.

Our house was right across a narrow cobblestone street from the playing fields on the university campus. As the PLA (People's Liberation Army) began preparing for the expected invasion of Taiwan, they used these playing fields to train the soldiers. In the afternoons, they would set up coils of barbed wire and other obstacles on the fields, which soon would be covered with soldiers crawling across the fields with rifles cradled in their arms. We had front row seats for these exercises.

The other thing I remember is that the communist authorities set up loudspeakers on the top of the university buildings. As part of their indoctrination program for the students, every day the loudspeakers blasted out patriotic speeches and communist songs, such as "The East is Red," "Welcome the People's Liberation Army Crossing the River," and "We the Workers Have Strength." After hearing these songs every day for several months, I found I had learned the words by heart, even though my Chinese wasn't advanced enough to know exactly what the words meant. Eighteen years later, when I was attending the State Department's Advanced Chinese Language School in Taichung, Taiwan, I still remembered the words accurately enough to be able finally to understand what the words meant (*laughs*).

Our house in Nanjing was large enough to provide lodging for three Chinese university students, who lived on the third floor. We also shared the house with Lee Swan, the first

black Presbyterian missionary to China. The communist authorities also used traditional Chinese folk dancing, featuring rhythmic beating on small waist drums, as part of their propaganda operations. Soon, it seemed that everybody in Nanjing was beating these little waist drums. One of the Chinese students staying with us taught me how to use the waist drums, and I took one with me when I returned to the United States.

This occurred soon after the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, when the situation for Americans in China worsened immediately. Our parents quickly recognized this and made the decision to send us children back to the United States. They were concerned that for us to stay on in China under these conditions might compromise our college education. I had two more years of high school to complete, and my brother and Joan Smythe each had one more year. Our parents planned to stay on in China, so they sent the three of us American teenagers to Hong Kong.

We first took a train from Nanjing to Shanghai, where we had enough time to visit the Shanghai American School, which had been taken over by the local authorities. We were only able to peer through the fence around the school. We then took a train from Shanghai to Guangzhou (Canton), a three-day trip. On the second day, a young suspicious communist authority on the train came into our compartment and demanded that we open all of our luggage for a thorough search. When he came to my waist drum, he asked to whom it belonged. When I demonstrated that I knew the rhythmic motions for using the drum, he immediately closed our luggage and wished us a good journey.  
(laughs).

From Guangzhou we took a feeder train down to the border with Hong Kong, where we had to overnight in a primitive hotel consisting of loosely spaced wooden boards over a swamp, with hanging grass mats to separate the rooms, and beds consisting of wooden planks over sawhorses. During the night, a violent fight broke out among some of the Chinese occupants of the hotel, which fortunately did not spill over into our rooms. The next morning, we carried our scanty luggage across the Lowu footbridge to Hong Kong, where we were met by a Presbyterian mission representative. The place where we crossed consisted of rice fields at the time. It is now the modern metropolis of Shenzhen with towering skyscrapers and a population of over one million.

We arrived in Hong Kong in July of 1950 and spent a week under the care of the missionary community in Hong Kong waiting for the *General Gordon* to arrive.

*Q: That's a British ship, wasn't it?*

ROY: No, it was a troop transport that served with the United States Navy in World War II. After the war it became part of the American President Lines. With the outbreak of the Korean War, it rejoined the U.S. Navy. My recollection is that it was still under American President Lines when we boarded it, but it was configured as a troop ship, with tiered bunks rather than cabins.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*



ROY: We stopped briefly in Japan at Yokohama, where some of the former teachers at the Shanghai American School who had relocated to Japan came out to the ship to greet us. A number of other former students at the Shanghai American School were on the General Gordon as well.

We arrived in San Francisco in late July or early August 1950. My brother and I had bought new Raleigh bicycles in Hong Kong because they were cheaper there than in the United States. Raleigh bicycles were considered to be among the best bicycles at the time. Two memorable events happened when we arrived in San Francisco. I found that as refugees from China, we were an object of interest by journalists, and I gave my first press interview (*laughs*) --

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: -- I didn't have a clue what I was doing. Nevertheless, we got a story about us in the San Francisco press. The other thing I remember is going through customs. The customs officer asked us what was in the two boxes with our luggage. I said, "These are bicycles." The customs officer asked, "Are they new or used?" I replied, "Well, they're new bicycles." He smiled and said, "No, they're not. Those are used bicycles," and he waved us through without assessing any duty (*laughs*). It was nice to be back in the United States.

From San Francisco, we took a train east along the southern route. I remember that we stopped at the Grand Canyon. We ended up in Philadelphia, where my father's older sister lived with her husband, who was a surgeon. They had two daughters, the younger of whom was the same age as my brother. They had agreed to serve as our home base in the United States while our parents remained in China. The plan was for my brother to stay with them while he completed his senior year in high school.

The question was what to do with me since I had completed my freshman and junior years in high school (*laughs*). To ease the burden on my aunt, we finally decided that I would be enrolled in Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, which had agreed to give me credit for my junior year of homeschooling. So I entered Mount Hermon as a sophomore, and then spent my final year of high school as a senior. This was a bit unusual, but it worked out alright.

*Q: So you started there in—?*

ROY: The school year had already begun.

*Q: In September 1950.*

ROY: In September 1950. The dormitories were all full. So I was admitted as an extra student and had to spend my first two weeks living in the school's infirmary until a spot opened up in one of the dormitories.

*Q: Ugh (laughs).*

ROY: *(laughs)* In any event, I spent two years at Mount Hermon. It was a good fit because both Mount Hermon and its sister school Northfield across the river had a number of former Shanghai American School students whom I had known in China.

My brother's experience in Philadelphia was also a bit unusual. Unlike me, who was primarily interested in spoken Chinese, he had become fascinated by China's written language. He persuaded my parents to hire one of the three Chinese students living with us to teach him to read and write Chinese characters. The student in question had an intellectual bent and willingly devoted substantial time to the task. There were few distractions, given our relatively isolated situation in China. In one year my brother was able to master enough Chinese so that as a high school senior in Philadelphia he was able to enroll in the graduate Chinese language program at the University of Pennsylvania, demonstrating the remarkable progress he had made in the course of that one year in Nanjing.

I also discovered that while I had forgotten all of my spoken Chinese within a few months of leaving China at the age of ten, when I left China at the age of fifteen, I retained all of the Chinese I had learned during my one year in Nanjing. When I joined the Foreign Service in 1956, I was still quite fluent in spoken Chinese, although my vocabulary was very limited.

The problem was that I found that you could not be promoted in the Foreign Service until you had been tested at a minimum level of professional fluency in a foreign language. The only language I had was spoken Chinese, and I was far below the level of professional fluency. As a result, on my pittance of a salary (\$4,750/year), I enrolled in a night course in beginning Chinese at Georgetown University. When I completed the course, I hired the teacher to come to my home twice a week to tutor me in spoken and written Chinese for two hour sessions. Over the course of a year and a half I was able to get enough Chinese, including written Chinese, so that the State Department made an exception and permitted me to go directly to the Advanced Chinese Language School in Taichung, Taiwan and skip the initial year of Chinese training in Washington.

*Q: About that.*

ROY: So my Chinese study in the State Department was for only one year rather than the two years normally required.

*Q: Now, you were saying earlier you picked Princeton because you were already familiar with it (laughs).*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Been there for a couple years. But you're at Mount Hermon at the time of the Korean*

*War. Were you immersing yourself in geography? Did the Korean War make that much of an impression on you? Were you a guide to some of the other students?*

ROY: No. At Mount Hermon I was an ordinary student. I did join the International Club, and there were a couple of Chinese students there with whom I would occasionally use my Chinese, but basically I was not focused on international relations. Generally, I found math and science courses easier than ones that involved writing essays or papers, such as English and history courses. This was a factor in my applying to enter Princeton as an engineering student, with the intention of studying aeronautical engineering, reflecting my fascination with the U.S. Army Air Forces in Chengdu during World War II. However, I quickly discovered that I did not have a comparative advantage in science and math when you were up against strong people in those fields. So after two years of engineering, I switched to a history major at Princeton.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: So I went from aeronautical engineer to basic engineering, and then by the end of my sophomore year it was quite clear that I would probably do better in some other field, and I ended up in history.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: At Princeton at the time you had to fulfill a requirement either in math or a foreign language. Since I had fulfilled the requirement in math in the engineering course, I didn't have to take a foreign language. Initially, I intended to switch to the newly-created Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs School. However, it required a foreign language, so I ended up in the history department, which did not. It ended up as a perfect fit. In history, the papers you had to write required research rather than eloquence. That I found easier. Creative writing was the area that I found most difficult.

*Q: Who were some of the history professors that you found were particularly stimulating?*

ROY: Jinx Harbison taught medieval history, but he was also one of the lecturers in a humanities course that all freshmen were required to take. It was a yearlong survey of western thought. You began with the Greeks and worked your way up to the present. It was a fabulous course. A series of professors taught the course. I remember Paul Ramsey was one of them. He gave some of the religion lectures. In the history department, Gordon Craig was famous for his lectures. He was a specialist on Germany. His lecture on Hitler was so good that graduates would come back to Princeton to hear it again. He would actually take on Hitler's characteristics, working himself up into a rage to illustrate Hitler's oratorical style. *(laughs)* It was fascinating and very well done.

In the history department, my thesis advisor was Robert Butow, B-U-T-O-W, who was working on international post-war diplomacy after World War II. Lockwood taught a course in the political science department on East Asian politics. Princeton did not have a strong Asia department at the time. The year after I graduated, they hired a wonderful

professor named Fritz Mote whom we had known in Nanjing when he was doing graduate work at the University of Nanking. I actually attended his wedding there. His arrival at Princeton greatly strengthened the East Asia history department.

I did a joint major in American history and Asian history. To fulfill the Asian history requirement, the only available courses were one on Chinese art taught by Professor George Rowley. It was notorious for having the worst grade curve in the university, the top grade in the course usually being the equivalent of a B+. I took a course in the sociology department taught by Professor Marion J. Levy Jr. It looked at the comparative modernization processes in China and Japan during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, examining how differences in family structure helped explain why Japan's modernization succeeded while China's failed. I took Lockwood's course on the politics of East Asia. Butow taught a course on the modern diplomatic history of East Asia. These were the four courses offered in the Asian field. Princeton at the time did not have courses on the history of China or Japan.

*Q: Now, by this time had the World War II GI bill people pretty much gotten through college, or?*

ROY: We had Korean War vets in our class. Some of them had been in the tail end of World War II and then had been pulled back into service in the Korean War. At least one of them, Dick Penn, had been an Air Force pilot? He was still in the Air National Guard and flew jet fighters on weekends. The World War II group had been supplanted by the Korean War veterans.

*Q: Now, during your college time, which is 1952 to 1956, things are bubbling along with China as Mao consolidates his hold. But you've got a couple of Taiwan-related crises in there.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Now, did you pay attention to that as a student, or were you focused someplace else?*

ROY: I wasn't paying much attention in college to international affairs. I was an engineering student for two years and my courses had nothing to do with what was going on internationally. This changed beginning with my junior year, when I switched to the history department. That's when I began to take courses related to international affairs, especially books related to U.S. involvement in China during and after World War II.

My senior thesis was on the subject of the revisionist interpretation of Pearl Harbor. After World War I there were a number of revisionist histories that reinterpreted the origins of the war, stressing the importance of economic interests, notably by Charles Beard and other authors. They detailed how there had been cooperation between the corporate interests in the United States and Germany even while we were fighting each other in Europe.

After World War II, an enormous number of books were published, essentially saying that Pearl Harbor was a set up, that it was all a fraud perpetrated by Roosevelt to get us into the war. These revisionist histories were written from two aspects, some of them focusing on Japan and the war in the Pacific, while others focused on the war in Europe. In both cases, they tried to show that there was no need for the United States to have entered into World War II.

For my senior thesis, I read all of the revisionist books and everything else I could find on the subject and then provided an analysis of the validity of their assessments. What I discovered was that the revisionist arguments wandered all over the map. They were documented with thousands of footnotes. However, the unifying element among all the revisionist assessments was their denial that Japan or Nazi Germany posed any threat to the United States. In the absence of a threat, the authors concluded that the only explanation for the behavior of President Roosevelt and U.S. government officials during the 1930s leading up to the war was provided by a conspiracy theory.

The conspiracy theory posited that Roosevelt and his top officials schemed to get the United States into the war, even to the point of facilitating the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. They rejected or ignored evidence supporting the view that Roosevelt and other American officials genuinely believed that victory by the Axis powers would pose a dangerous threat to the United States. The revisionists put major emphasis on the absence of any specific plans by Hitler to invade the Western Hemisphere.

My research supported the view that the Roosevelt administration genuinely believed that an Axis victory in Europe, reinforced by Japanese hegemony over East Asia, would represent an existential threat to the United States. Hitler recognized that the United States represented a massive potential threat to his plans to dominate Europe, but he had to conquer Britain before he could develop plans for invading the Western Hemisphere. U.S. support for Britain and the Soviet Union, far from representing a scheme to get the United States into the war, frustrated Hitler's grand strategy, just as the U.S. position in the Philippines was a fatal flaw in the achievement of Japanese goals in East Asia.

If one accepted the legitimacy of Roosevelt's concerns about the Axis threat, then the conspiracy theories collapsed as an explanation for the behavior of the Roosevelt administration before and during the war.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Hitler did have plans for invading Britain. But he turned his attention to defeating the Soviet Union when he lost the Battle of Britain in 1940. On Pearl Harbor, the revisionists focused on the failure of early warning, and the failure to provide U.S. commanders in Hawaii with information that was available in Washington that should have been shared with them. They attributed this not to human error but to a plot to get us into the war. The underlying element was the same, which was that there wasn't a threat

and therefore our behavior essentially was designed to force the Japanese to attack us so we could get into the war.

*Q: (laughs) You entered the Foreign Service right out of Princeton then?*

ROY: In your junior year in college you begin to worry about what you're going to do after you graduate. In the winter of my junior year, a State Department recruiter came to Princeton and gave a talk about the Foreign Service. I went to his presentation. He was a great speaker. In my history reading, I had learned about the role of the so-called China Hands in China during World War II. The recruiter's talk kindled my interest in foreign affairs by bringing together my own overseas experiences with a potential job opportunity. From that moment on, my interest in the Foreign Service rose to the top of my thinking about possible careers following graduation. I didn't have a clue what diplomats did, but he had made the life sound exciting. My history major was also more relevant to the Foreign Service than my engineering background would have been.

However, there had been a slowdown in Foreign Service recruiting because of the State Department's difficulties with Senator Joe McCarthy. Moreover, the pattern seemed to be that the Foreign Service did not admit candidates right out of college. In most cases, if you passed the written exam and looked promising in the oral exam, the examiners would give you a conditional pass with the advice that you do your military service and come back in a couple of years. You would not need to retake the written exam and would be eligible for a second oral exam, with the expectation that your chances of passing would be very good.

Since I was a year younger than most of my classmates, having skipped seventh grade, my assumption was that my chances were not good of being able to go directly into the Foreign Service. At the time, in an effort to attract college graduates, the U.S. navy had something called the Air Officer Candidate (AOC) Program. The normal route into naval aviation was by becoming a naval cadet. You did your basic training and flight training at Pensacola as a noncommissioned officer and were commissioned when you got your wings.

Under the AOC program, you were sent to three months of basic training and officer candidate school, following which you were commissioned and did your flight training as an officer. If you successfully got your wings, you had to serve three years. If you flunked out of flight training, you only had to serve another two years. So I applied for that program expecting that if I passed the Foreign Service written exam, the best I could hope for in the oral exam was to get a conditional pass.

At the time, I had no interest in doing graduate work. Completing my senior thesis at Princeton had been grueling, and I did not relish the thought of more of the same. Most of my classmates who went on for graduate degrees were planning academic careers. Both the AOC program and the Foreign Service seemed more attractive.

Happily, I had passed the Foreign Service written exam earlier that spring but had heard

nothing from the State Department regarding scheduling my oral exam. I had taken my flight test for the AOC program in May, but also had no idea when the U.S. Navy would complete processing my papers. On graduation, I needed to be self-supporting.

During earlier summers in college, I'd always had to work in construction jobs or technical jobs in electric utilities to earn enough money to get through the next year. Now, I could take a fun summer job instead of a high-paying one. To tide me over, I took a low paying job as a camp counselor at Camp Dudley on Lake Champlain in New York, which is a fabulous boys camp where young boys go for one to two months; you don't just go for a few weeks. The program included three-day canoe trips in the Saranac lakes and five-day mountain climbing hikes. It was a wonderful adventure, and just what I needed after the stresses of my senior year.

I'd told the State Department that I had to have my oral exam before June 22<sup>nd</sup>, when I would begin my summer job, or later that summer. They had responded with a letter scheduling my oral exam for June 26<sup>th</sup>. In some trepidation, I wrote back noting that I would have to reschedule the oral exam for some time after late August. The State Department agreeably gave me an appropriate date in late summer.

When I graduated in June 1956, I was pasty white and out of condition. Completing my senior thesis had been, for me, such an enormous chore that I'd literally spent a year in the bowels of the library and looked like your typical college nerd. By the end of the summer I was a bronzed outdoorsman (laughs).

To my great surprise, I passed the Foreign Service oral exam in August and was offered immediate employment, as soon as I received my medical and security clearances.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Bronzed, healthy, filled with vigor, conditioned by a three-day canoeing expedition, and with a good college record -- I think that's what persuaded the Foreign Service to admit me. So glowing with pride, I flew back to Pittsburgh, where I was staying with my grandfather after graduation. My brother met me at the airport and handed me a letter from the U.S. Navy ordering me to Pensacola.

*Q: Oops.*

ROY: Yes. I immediately took the train to New York to consult my draft board. It was in Manhattan because after my parents were forced out of China in '51 my father had served as the Personnel Secretary for the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York. We lived in Manhattan from 1951 until 1954.

My draft board said it was 50/50 whether I would be drafted. If I was drafted, it would be a maximum two-year period of service. If I went with the Navy program, it would probably be three and a half years. It was only if I failed flight training that I'd only have to serve an additional two years. I didn't expect to fail flight training. Since I hadn't been

sworn in yet, I rejected the Navy program and decided to join the Foreign Service and take my chances with the draft.

*Q: Now, the Foreign Service entrance procedure has changed over the years. What did you think of the written exam?*

ROY: Well, I still remember it because I was so nervous about the exam that I had trouble sleeping the night before. They gave the exam in Trenton, not in Princeton. After tossing and turning all night, I ended up sleeping through my alarm, and awoke literally about five minutes before the bus that took me to Trenton for the exam was leaving. So unshaven and with my clothes half on, I raced across the campus and just barely made it to the bus. In Trenton all of the candidates were ushered into a room, where they gave us the exam booklets and explained the procedures. When we began the exam, it was much easier than I'd anticipated. We were about 45 minutes into the exam when all of a sudden we were told, "Pencils down." They had given us the civil service exam instead of the foreign service one.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: The error mangled our time schedule, which allowed for occasional breaks. When they issued the Foreign Service Exam, all the rest breaks were eliminated. We were under heavy time pressure to get through the exam in the reduced time available. I decided that the best approach was to go through the exam and answer all the questions that I was confident I could answer correctly and skip over the others. Then in any remaining time, I went back and started working through the unanswered questions, giving an answer where I thought I had a better than even chance of being correct. This approach was sufficient to earn me a passing grade on the written exam.

*Q: Well, you were fairly qualified with being in history coming in, you graduated magna cum laude. So you had some background.*

ROY: I think it would have been a *much* more difficult test to pass if you were several years out of college.

*Q: OK. What was the interview, the Foreign Service oral interview part of the procedure like?*

ROY: I remember several things about the interview. The letter telling me where to go had somehow gotten lost while I was off at camp. I had the date of the exam, but I didn't know where to go. I flew down to Washington the day before and started to call the guards at all the State Department annexes to try and find where I should go the next morning. I finally found a guard who confirmed that they gave Foreign Service Oral Exams in that building. So I at least knew where to go.

The other problem was that I was strapped for money. I had to borrow money for airfare from my aunt to come down to Washington. The only suit I had was a woolen tweed, and



this was the end of August in Washington (*laughs*). I stayed in a hotel on 13<sup>th</sup> Street, which is no longer there. In the morning, I walked down Constitution Avenue to the State Department annex where they were giving the oral exam. I had to walk slowly because the suit was so damn hot (*laughs*). On arrival at the annex, I walked the halls until I found someone who could tell me which room to go to.

There were three examiners. One seemed friendly, one delighted in asking impossible questions to see how I reacted, and one was sort of in the middle. I was asked to list the chief exports of Brazil, to name the chief iron mines in Argentina, and things of this sort. One noted that I seemed to be knowledgeable about European history since I had written a paper on the balance of power in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Italian city-states (this had been my only excursion into European history, about which I knew very little). He asked me something about the Battle of Lepanto. All I knew about the battle was from a poem by G.K. Chesterton called "Lepanto." One passage from the poem had always stuck in my mind, "Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far, Don John of Austria is going to the war." I mumbled this passage under my breath and was startled when he congratulated me for knowing the leader of the western forces in the battle with the Turks.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: (*laughs*) I think that poem got me through the exam. In any event, at the conclusion of the exam, the examiners told me to come back in a couple of hours. It was noon, it was a bright sunny day outside, I was wearing a wool tweed suit, and had nowhere to go. State Department annexes in those days only had room air conditioners at best. So I wandered down to the Washington Monument and stood on the shady side of the Washington Monument for two hours (*laughs*) with sweat running down my legs. When I returned, the examiners, to my great surprise, told me that I had passed the oral exam and should begin processing for an appointment.

*Q: Now, what day was that? That's August you're saying.*

ROY: August of 1956. The examiners handed me a giant sheaf of papers to fill out in preparation for my medical and security clearances. And --

*Q: Entrance was dependent upon all that?*

ROY: Entrance was dependent on all that. I had several months to kill and needed temporary employment. My girlfriend at the time, the daughter of China medical missionaries, lived in Boston, so I went up to stay with her family. I got a number of short term jobs doing research for professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and then got a job wrapping packages in Filene's Basement for \$37 a week. That covered my existence until the end of November, when I got a call from the State Department saying that I should report on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Foreign Service Institute. The entry salary in those days was \$4,750. Compared to what I had been making, that sounded to me like a king's ransom (*laughs*).

If you look back on it now, my take-home pay in those days from the State Department, after deductions for taxes, was \$144 every two weeks. So you had to watch your pennies. After six months of riding on streetcars and buses, I decided to get a motor scooter, which cost about \$400 in those days. I went to Sears and tried to buy the motor scooter on credit. They turned me down because I had no credit record. I naively thought that having a steady job with the U.S. government would be sufficient to establish your reliability.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: The irony was that I then walked into the State Department Federal Credit Union and immediately got a signature loan for \$400, which I used to buy a Lambretta motor scooter from a commercial shop. I was so offended by my experience with Sears that I wouldn't buy anything from them for the next ten years *(laughs)*.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I didn't have any idea at that time how credit decisions were made.

*Q: Now, you're starting the A100 course, which is Foreign Service boot camp.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Let me ask you, who were some of your classmates, and how did you see them? I mean were their backgrounds similar to yours, very different? How did they look to you?*

ROY: Well, I found them to be from diverse backgrounds but all very impressive. At thirteen members, we were the smallest Foreign Service class in recent history, and ours in a sense was the most unfortunate. The State Department had just completed restructuring the Foreign Service. They had just gone from FSO-6 as the bottom grade to FSO-8 as the bottom grade. If we had joined the Foreign Service two months earlier, we would have entered at the FSO-6 level, but would then have dropped down to FSO-7 when they instituted the new system. By missing the cutoff date, we entered at the FSO-8 level.

Technically, we were appointed as Foreign Service Reserve officers, pending confirmation by the Senate, when we became regular foreign service officers. I think we were the first class of FSO-8s. It took us two years to qualify for promotion to FSO-7. I not only joined at the very bottom but was the youngest person in the Foreign Service for the next five years. The oldest person in our class was 31 and had a law degree. I was 21.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: *(laughs)* They used to issue age charts showing the age distribution of foreign service officers.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: I would occasionally look at the charts and found that the Foreign Service wasn't admitting 21-year-olds (*laughs*). Everybody in my entry class was older than I was. There were quite a few in their mid twenties. We were a very diverse group, much more diverse than I would have expected. We came from a wide range of university and college backgrounds. We were geographically diverse. A number had graduate degrees. One member of our class who did very well was Mike Calingaert. He not only was very, very competent, but he was in the economic cone. He got promoted very rapidly, reaching the FSO-3 level well ahead of the rest of us. That became the FSO-1 level when the Senior Foreign Service was created.

For some reason that I've never understood, Mike never got an ambassadorial appointment. I think this was a systemic failure. Economic cone officers were in high demand for challenging economic assignments. But they rarely became deputy chiefs of mission, which would have made them more competitive for ambassadorial assignments. This situation may have improved over the years, but it was an impediment for economic officers in earlier decades.

*Q: Now, the cone system, was that in operation at your time?*

ROY: It was in operation but very loosely. We didn't join in cones, and the formal cone system hadn't been created yet. The big development at the time was the Wriston Report. USIA was being separated from the State Department. My first job, right out of FSI (Foreign Service Institute), was to OIR (The Office of Intelligence and Research). It became a Bureau several decades later. I replaced somebody who had left the State Department because he wanted to be in USIA.

*Q: Where was FSI at this time?*

ROY: It was in State Annex 6, which was one of the temporary buildings on C Street. That is the building where I took my oral exam in August 1956. The State Department was still in a building on 21<sup>st</sup> Street that later was used by AID. They were about to begin the construction of the new State Department building that extended from 21<sup>st</sup> Street to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and included the former building. When they began the construction, they demolished the state annexes along C Street.

When I finished FSI in State Annex 6 on C Street, I was assigned to the Office of Intelligence and Research, which was located in State Annex 1 on the northeast corner of E Street and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. We were on the eighth floor, which gave us a panoramic view of the construction of New State as it took place. Annex 1 was later demolished for a new building housing the Pan American Health Organization. That's where State Annex 1 was. We were on the eighth floor, which was the top floor, so we had an eyeball view of the construction of New State. The construction continued for the year and a half that I worked there.

*Q: Now, you were saying, you hadn't been that familiar with the Foreign Service in*

*college. What did this A100 course introduce you to, or what were they --*

ROY: Well, some of the courses were useful, and some not so much. The challenge was to give people who were completely unfamiliar with Foreign Service work a sense of what the Foreign Service does. Our instructors accomplished this to a degree, but we finished the course with a rather shaky grasp of exactly what the nature of our work would actually be.

I remember one of the courses was on Foreign Service drafting. I thought it was mostly a waste of time because it didn't involve hands-on exercises. We learned about airgrams and telegrams. The Foreign Service had just recently abandoned the practice of beginning messages with the phrase: "I have the honor to report . . . ." There was much emphasis on the importance of omitting unnecessary words in telegrams, that is, how to draft in "cable-ese," in which all particles are dropped. Having spent a dozen or more years learning how to write correct English, we now had to adapt to a new style of composition. This was quite an adjustment. We learned the principles at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), but I mastered the skill from actually drafting telegrams in embassies and consulates.

FSI did give us a sense of how the State Department was structured, of the respective roles of embassies and consulates, and of the relationship between diplomatic and consular ranks and titles, which determined the pecking order with other foreign embassies and consulates, and the foreign service rank structure, which reflected your promotions in the Foreign Service. None of us had that sort of background. The instruction on consular rules and regulations was also very useful.

*Q: Was there a heavy emphasis on consular responsibilities?*

ROY: Yes. I think at least a week was spent on the Immigration and Naturalization Act and on consular responsibilities.

*Q: Now, a lot of people coming out in A100 in other periods immediately went to consular officer assignments. Was that the case for your A100 group?*

ROY: We got a range of assignments. I think about half of our class went overseas, and half were assigned to jobs in Washington. This was very relevant to my personal situation. If you were given a foreign assignment, and lacked the requisite language, you were given language training before departing for post. In languages such as Spanish, French, and Italian, the three-month training was usually sufficient to pass the language test at the minimum professional level that made you eligible for promotion. My problem was that I only had childhood Chinese, and the State Department did not offer language training for FSOs who received domestic assignments.

*Q: Right.*

ROY: Therefore, those of us who were stuck in Washington assignments without a

sufficient level in a foreign language couldn't be promoted. That confronted me with a decision over whether to enroll in a language course where I could make rapid progress, but that might not be related to my first overseas assignment, or to build on my relative fluency in childhood Chinese. It was a tough call, but I finally decided to use my limited salary to pay for tutoring in Chinese.

As for the foreign assignments received by our entering class of FSOs, these were generally related to existing language skills, but not always in the ways you might imagine. The Italian speakers ended up in posts like Italian Somaliland rather than Rome or Milan. One went to Khorramshahr. Quite a few went to Latin America. No one got a cushy assignment. Most of the overseas assignments were to consular positions.

*Q: But those who went overseas, did they just have consular assignments, or they were political officers, or?*

ROY: It depended.

*Q: Depended?*

ROY: Well, I'll cite my own experience in terms of how this worked. I spent a year and a half in Washington in the Office of Intelligence and Research. And then, as I said, they made an exception for me. I was the first officer who hadn't had a foreign assignment to be assigned to the Advanced Chinese Language School in Taiwan. The practice at the time was to require an overseas assignment before you could become eligible for hard language training. I think they wanted to make sure you were suitable for diplomatic work before they were prepared to make an investment in you for one or two years of language training.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: My guess is they made an exception for me because I'd already lived in China for 10 years and had made rapid progress in my self-financed Chinese language studies. In a sense that substituted for having in-country experience in an embassy or consulate. When I graduated from the language school, I was assigned to our embassy in Bangkok as a political officer. At the time, we had Chinese language positions in most of our Southeast Asian embassies because of the importance of the overseas Chinese.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: I spent two years as a political officer in Bangkok, following which I was assigned to our Consulate General in Hong Kong as a political officer. That's when I got a lesson in how the Foreign Service actually works. When I arrived in Hong Kong, they told me that I would start out in the consular section handling immigrant visas. When I protested that my orders specified that I was assigned as a political officer, I was told that the needs of the Consulate General came first, and I was needed in the consular section. "We decided to move one of the consular people up in the political slot, so you'll do consular

work.” As a result, I processed immigrant visas in Hong Kong for five months, sitting back to back with John Negroponte, who later became one of the stars of the Foreign Service. We were literally back-to-back.

To my surprise, I was pulled out of Hong Kong after five months and transferred to Taipei to be the aide to our new ambassador to the Republic of China, Admiral Kirk. The aide position was in the political section. After a couple of months, I was called in and told that the consular section was overwhelmed with student visa applicants, and I would need to spend three months there handling non-immigrant student visas. So I processed student visas for three months.

*Q: OK, but your understanding of how the visa system worked was first introduced in the A100 course?*

ROY: Yes. Without that background, I would have found the consular assignments very difficult. They were difficult anyway, for substantive reasons. But at least I was familiar with the Immigration and Naturalization Act and the distinctions between immigrant and non-immigrant visas.

*Q: Mr. Ambassador, thank you for your time today.*

ROY: OK.

*Q: I think this is a good place for a break.*

ROY: Good break.

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*Q: Today is the 19<sup>th</sup> of March and we are returning with Ambassador Roy. We had finished off last session by finally getting you into the Foreign Service after Wristonization. And we were talking about your class. After you finally get in and you have the A100 introduction, you're getting an assignment.*

ROY: -- That's right. I was assigned to the Division of Research for the Far East (DRF) in the Office of Intelligence and Research (OIR). At the time OIR did not have bureau standing, but it was headed by an assistant-secretary-equivalent Foreign Service Officer, usually an officer who had served as an ambassador.

The Division of Research for the Far East was headed by Joe Yaeger. My recollection is that DRF had at least three geographic Branches: China, Japan/Korea, and Southeast Asia. My job was in the Southeast Asia Branch handling research on Australia and New Zealand, which clearly was not a major focus of intelligence interest.

At the time, there was a major project in the intelligence community called National Intelligence Surveys, intended to fill out a global database of basic information about all

the countries of the world. This was a legacy of World War II, when we had discovered that we totally lacked the information base for military operations in many of the regions of the world where we were fighting. I mentioned earlier, for example, that the mountains between China and Burma in many cases hadn't been mapped in terms of their altitudes. We also didn't know where the bridges were.

The National Intelligence Surveys were intended to correct these deficiencies. They drew largely on unclassified sources and included information about foreign countries, including their political and economic systems, their road structures, their transportation networks, and so on. My job was to collect the information and prepare the volumes for Australia and New Zealand.

*Q: This became the country studies that were put out under the Library of Congress.*

ROY: I think they were called NIS, the National Intelligence Survey. We produced multiple volumes covering all of the countries of Asia and other parts of the world. The fit was very good with my college training as a history major, because essentially you were collecting information and then organizing it into reports on particular subjects. It was mostly descriptive rather than analytical. It meant that I became an expert on vital subjects such as mutton and wool prices, or the great snowy mountain scheme. This was the great engineering project in Australia at the time to harness the waters of the highest mountain range in Australia, which is a relatively low mountain range, but high enough to develop some snow cover in winter. I also learned that QANTAS, the Australian airline, derived its name from its original moniker, which was Queensland and Northern Territories Aerial Services, Ltd.

Obviously, these subjects were not the focus of intelligence attention. Of greater interest were the battles between Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies and his archrival "Doc" Evatt, the leader of the Australian Labor Party, which was suspected of being penetrated by communists. Also of interest were the reverberations from the notorious "Petrov" affair, involving the defection in Canberra of a Soviet diplomat. These issues drew a higher level of attention.

For me, it was an introduction to the Foreign Service, a time to get your feet on the ground, and to gain a better understanding of how the Foreign Service operated. From that standpoint, it was a good assignment. You were learning something of potential future use, you had terrific colleagues to interact with, and you gained a better understanding of the region as a whole. The work was interesting, even though it was largely, as I said, research type of work.

*Q: Now, how was the bureau or the office organized? Who was your immediate boss?*

ROY: My immediate boss was the officer in charge of the Southeast Asia Division Branch. I can't recall his name, but he was highly experienced and gave me excellent guidance.

This was a traumatic time for Australia and New Zealand. I am talking about the period from January 1957 to the summer of 1958. This was the early formative period of the European Community, which eventually became the European Union. Great Britain had to make fundamental decisions as to whether it was going to give priority to Europe or to the commonwealth, which enjoyed special trade privileges from London. When Britain made the decision to go with Europe, it had to end the special trade subsidies it had provided to commonwealth members. The special import privileges for milk, wool, and meat were especially important for Australia and New Zealand. When they lost these subsidies, it was a critical factor in their decisions to link their futures to Asia rather than to the British Commonwealth.

Britain's decision to join the European Economic Community was a major blow for Australia and New Zealand, who at the time had a strong European orientation. Reflecting these shifts, the State Department in January 1956 had moved responsibility for Australia and New Zealand from the European Bureau to the Far Eastern Bureau. So there was an identity problem for Australia and New Zealand.

It was made worse by the fact that Australia at that time had what was called a white Australia policy, designed to preserve the European ethnic character of the country. The government did not permit any Asian immigration, even to the point of not permitting entry for Asian war brides of Australian military personnel who had fought in World War II. Australian policy also favored immigrants from Northern Europe, as opposed to Southern Europe. This policy was gradually breaking down because it was too rigid. Earlier, immigrants to Australia had largely come from Britain, Scotland, and Ireland.

In the lead up to World War II, Australia had been heavily dependent for its security on British forces in East Asia, and especially the British base in Singapore, as their bulwark against Japanese aggression from the north. The loss of Singapore dealt a devastating shock to Australia. It was a country with only a few million people on a continent-size plot of land, with teeming millions of Asians to the north of them. The Japanese, in the course of their southward aggression, had occupied the former Western colonial regimes in East Asia, sounding the death knell for Western colonialism in the region.

For Australians this was viewed as an existential issue of the utmost magnitude. The Japanese were already in Papua New Guinea, which of course had been a German colony before World War I. There was a real threat of a Japanese movement into the northern part of Australia. What saved them was the Battle of the Coral Sea. This was a major naval battle fought entirely by aircraft. For Australia it was the most important naval engagement of the war, comparable in some ways to the Battle of Midway for the United States in the Pacific.

From the standpoint of Australia, it was the decisive battle because it dealt enough of a setback to the Japanese Navy to remove the possibility of a Japanese invasion. To this day, the Australians every year commemorate the Battle of the Coral Sea with a big ceremony, usually bringing over ranking Americans for the event. For them, it was the equivalent of Trafalgar for the British, which removed the threat that Napoleon would



invade the British Isles. Or the Battle of Britain in the air, which ended the threat of a Nazi invasion. The Battle of the Coral Sea was a significant psychological factor in shifting Australia's defense orientation away from Great Britain to the United States.

I was covering these countries at a time when they were still psychologically rooted in Europe, with Great Britain as their protecting country. Nevertheless, a fundamental reorientation for them was underway. It took place more rapidly in Australia than New Zealand, which was better protected by distance from these winds. It strengthened Australian determination to try to become part of East Asia, which is the orientation of their policies now.

It has been a difficult process, as reflected in the efforts by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir several decades ago to treat Australia as a non-Asian part of Asia. This slowed Australia's entry into some of the organizations constituting the new Asian regional architecture that was being formed under the aegis of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. So I learned lots of useful things from my first Foreign Service job in the Office of Intelligence and Research. Nevertheless, this was not a high-pressure job in terms of demands from senior department officials for input and analysis on Australia-New Zealand.

*Q: Now, how did you get this specific assignment right out of the A100?*

ROY: I have no idea. They had to fill the jobs, and I had a lot of childhood Asian experience. We were the cannon fodder of the Foreign Service. Essentially, we could be sent anywhere. I don't recall being consulted on the matter. I would have *much* preferred to have had an overseas job, anywhere in the world, because of the language problem I was facing.

*Q: That's right.*

ROY: I could have attended the State Department's early morning classes in various European languages, but I chose to attend personally-financed evening classes in Chinese, rather than trying to learn French or Spanish or German from scratch. Ultimately, that turned out to be a sound decision, but it was a very costly one for me at the time. I was making a minimal salary. Adding language training costs to expenses for rent and food didn't leave much for saving purposes or an extravagant lifestyle. That's why I had to share housing during this assignment in Washington.

*Q: Now, who was your immediate boss?*

ROY: My big boss was Joe Yager, the director of the Far East Division of the Office of Intelligence and Research, but my immediate supervisor was the head of the Southeast Asia Branch. I can't remember the organizational structure very precisely. I shared a large open office on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of State Annex 1 on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. My colleagues were people working in the countries of Southeast Asia. The China Branch was in a separate room. So while we rubbed shoulders with them a bit, they were not part of our office structure.

The way we were organized, we were in SA-1, which was the annex on the northeast corner of D Street and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. We had the top floor of the annex. Initially, there was no air conditioning, and in summer, it was extremely hot. We had to have the windows open in order to keep the temperature acceptable, along with electric fans to try to keep the temperature bearable. The problem is that at times we were dealing with classified information that could blow off your desks or potentially blow out the windows. We had to be very careful to keep that from happening. New State was being built right below us, so we could watch the construction process. Later, the State Department installed window air conditioners, which made an absolutely enormous difference in terms of the comfort of our workplace.

I had come to Washington with a meager amount of money borrowed from my aunt. As a result, my first few months in Washington were difficult until I began to receive biweekly payments of my salary. I relied on the streetcar system to get around Washington. It was a convenient but extremely inefficient way to get around. I liked to watch old French films in art theaters on Capitol Hill which showed old Fernandel movies. To get to Capitol Hill from Georgetown by trolley took nearly an hour. So if I went home after work, had a quick dinner, took the trolley to Capitol Hill, watched a two-hour movie, and took a trolley back to Georgetown, it was pushing midnight.

This convinced me that I needed a motor scooter, which some of my State Department colleagues were using to commute to work. That's when I encountered the problem with credit from Sears, where my credit application was rejected, and I ended up getting a loan from the State Department Federal Credit Union. I used the loan to purchase a Lambretta Motor Scooter for \$400. There was no special licensing procedure at that time. You basically bought your Lambretta, they gave you some cursory instruction at the shop, and then you rode it home. It was marvelous for parking, because you could park it horizontally between cars.

It was extremely efficient in getting to the State Department in the morning. I found there was a cohort of other junior Foreign Service Officers who had motor scooters. I specifically remember Peter Lord and Jay Pierrepont Moffat (Pete Moffat) were a part of the motor scooter crowd at that time. There was no special clothing for riding around on motor scooters, so you basically went around in whatever you were wearing. To go to work you went in a business suit. You wore a soft cap because there were no helmets at that time adapted for motor scooter riding. So it was not without its dangers, the two biggest being car door openings and potholes. If there was snow, you had to be ultra careful because bicycles and two-wheeled vehicles don't do well on slippery road surfaces.

*Q: Now, in this first exposure with the Foreign Service, were there any drafting standards that you picked up?*

ROY: In OIR the drafting standards were simply to adhere to the rules of good grammatical English and to organize your thoughts in a reasonable fashion. This was

consistent with the standards expected of us in college. Later, when I was a consular officer, our drafting consisted largely of preparing responses to incoming queries. Our supervisors discouraged innovation. We were given books with standard “boilerplate” language that we were supposed to draw on in preparing responses. My initial instinct had been to provide as helpful responses as possible, but these drafts were consistently rejected. I gradually realized that given the volume of incoming mail, it put too much of a burden on our supervisors if we deviated from boilerplate responses since innovative language increased the risk that the responses would not accurately reflect the relevant consular laws.

My biggest problem in OIR was overcoming the taboo on plagiarism that had been drilled into us history majors in college. The National Intelligence Surveys were not intended for public consumption, and sources did not have to be footnoted. It was considered permissible to incorporate language from relevant sources into the drafts. This eased the burden of drafting on unfamiliar topics, especially of a technical nature. The drafting in OIR bore little relationship to the demands of Foreign Service reporting that I encountered later.

Nevertheless, I was impressed by the high caliber of my Foreign Service colleagues in OIR, all of whom seemed wiser and more experienced than I was. They were intelligent, dedicated, and global in their outlooks. These were not people who had only served in one part of the world. At the time, the Foreign Service seemed to favor generalists over regional specialists. This was changing, and I later ended up in fields such as Soviet and Chinese affairs where specialization was necessary. Then the pendulum swung back to programs designed to give regional specialists assignments in other parts of the world.

*Q: Speaking of specialization, you're paying for your own Chinese language lessons. But in the summer of '58, you got the opportunity to go to FSI Chinese at Taichung. How did you manage that? Was that a foregone conclusion or did you --*

ROY: No. It was anything but a foregone conclusion. New recruits were generally not given hard language training assignments until they had at least served in one Foreign Service post. I think the reason I got the exception was because I had made remarkable progress through my evening study of Chinese. I was tested regularly by Dean Howard Sollenberger at the Foreign Service Institute, who had tested me when I first joined the Foreign Service, and had discovered that I had serviceable but very basic Chinese. By the summer of 1958 I was reading Chinese character material and had a much broader vocabulary. So I suspect it was partly a reward for hard work, and partly recognition that I was un-promotable until I got off of language probation. I had already been in the Foreign Service for nearly two years, and if I hadn't been assigned to the language school, I would have languished as an FSO-8 for God knows how many additional years. So I think it was a combination of those two factors.

*Q: Now, in the summer of '58, how does one get to the language school?*

ROY: My parents had been expelled from China in 1951 and had moved to Manhattan,

where my father was the Personnel Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. In 1954, he moved back to Hong Kong to work in Chinese education there. He was associated with a church-supported college called Chung Chi, which was one of the three colleges in Hong Kong that later joined together to form the Chinese University of Hong Kong. My mother remained in the United States for a year until 1955. By the time I joined the Foreign Service, both of my parents were resident in Hong Kong. So instead of flying directly to Taipei, I wanted to fly to Hong Kong and then back up to Taipei.

There was an extremely rigorous and authoritarian person in charge of Foreign Service travel at that time. Making exceptions was contrary to her concept of how things should be done. We were permitted even as junior officers in those days to travel en route to our assignment by first class. This was the pre-jet period, so you flew in propeller aircraft. In order to pay for the slight additional cost of flying to Hong Kong and then back to Taipei, I had to give up the first-class ticket and fly economy class.

My recollection of the flight to the Far East, which is what we called East Asia in those days, is that it was *endless*. It consumed the better part of two days. I flew on Northwest Orient Airlines. To cross the country to Seattle took something like eight hours. It was eight more hours to Anchorage in Alaska, eight more hours to a refueling stop in Shemya Island in the Aleutians, and then eight more to Tokyo. I changed planes in Tokyo, and it was then six hours to Hong Kong. So it was a seemingly endless flight.

I visited my parents briefly in Hong Kong, and then flew to Taipei where I had a few days of orientation with the American embassy. I was met by a political officer named Bill Cunningham and his wife, Patsy. Both were very nice to me. I was put in the Grand Hotel, which was one of the nicest hotels in Taipei at the time. They sent an embassy car to pick me up the next morning. I can remember my discomfort at sitting in the rear seat of a car with a driver, which seemed pretentious. But it was certainly convenient. My missionary parents did not like special treatment for foreigners in China and were gratified when the communists ended all such privileges. I realized I had to adjust to my new status as a diplomat.

I had a few days of orientation in the embassy and then went down to the language school in Taichung, a small city which seemed primitive compared to Taipei. Taiwan was much less developed in those days. The road between Taichung and Taipei had not yet been paved, and I arrived in Taichung covered with yellow dust from the dirt road. This was the early fall -- late summer of 1958. By the end of the year they had completed a paved road to Taipei that made an enormous difference.

There wasn't much traffic on the road. The problem of driving in Taiwan in those days was not traffic jams but the mixed nature of the vehicles on the roads. Automobile traffic shared the road with bicycles and horse-drawn carts and you had to be very careful, especially at night.

I'd barely arrived at the language school, when I was summoned to Taipei, in connection with the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary McNamara. As it happened, in the course of

Georgetown social life in Washington, I had met the daughter of Secretary of Defense McNamara. She had accompanied her father to Taiwan and had specially requested that I be included in one of the dinner parties (*laughs*). So from the very casual atmosphere of the language school, I had to make my way to Taipei and attend a formal diplomatic affair for the Secretary of Defense of the United States. It was an interesting early exposure to Foreign Service life.

In general, the language school couldn't have been improved on as a location for improving your language skills. It had a terrific group of teachers. You rotated through them so that you didn't have just one person working with you. Your colleagues were all highly dedicated people working hard on their Chinese. Most of them were married, which gave me an edge because I could use my evenings almost exclusively for language study. This meant that I was generally better prepared than my colleagues who had family responsibilities in the evening. We had six hours of instruction a day, four hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, either right after lunch or before dinner. When I had the late afternoon classes, I found that it was best to take a nap after lunch. Otherwise you would fade rather badly at the end of the day. That left you fresher in the evening preparing for your next-day classes.

I encountered an early problem. Some of the bachelor officers at the school had Chinese girlfriends. One of them was a local Taiwanese girl, whom I met shortly after my arrival when the officer invited me to a dinner party at his home. She offered to show me around Taichung, because I was in the process of trying to locate a house and buy furnishings. She gave me a superb tour of Taichung, at the end of which she asked if I could buy something for her from the PX (post exchange). I felt obligated to her, but it was illegal to buy things at the PX for unauthorized people. I had gotten myself into a fix. In Chinese culture, if somebody does a service for you, you're expected to return the favor in some fashion.

Fresh from the United States, I had forgotten my earlier exposure to Chinese culture and had naively assumed that her offer of a tour was a friendly gesture, as opposed to something that created an obligation to do something in return. Back in Asia, I realized that to avoid such problems in the future, I needed to adopt a consistent approach that comported with ethical standards. So I politely refused her request and found another way to repay her kindness. I've always stuck to that rule in the Foreign Service, and in the future sought to avoid actions that created obligations I could not meet. To illustrate the problem, when I was a consular officer, both in Hong Kong and Taipei, I never received an invitation to a meal from a Chinese acquaintance that didn't involve a visa request. This was not the case when I was a political officer.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I recognized that there was a contradiction at the root of this ethical dilemma that allowed for various resolutions. After all, making potential sources obligated to you is a tried and true method of collecting useful information. Accordingly, I was comfortable working with colleagues who adopted a different approach to handling this dilemma. We

do not live in a perfect world. Nevertheless, it was frustrating at times to work in an environment where you could not establish normal friendships because there was always a hook in any social invitation you received. It is not surprising that in many Asian countries local citizens consider the head of the consular section in a U.S. embassy as more important than the ambassador. This was a relatively minor problem in Taichung.

My group of fellow Chinese language students was intellectually interesting and very active in seeking opportunities to gain as much as we could from our assignments in Taiwan. We organized a three-day hike across the central ridge of mountains that runs down the spine of Taiwan, the highest peak of which tops out at nearly 13,000 feet. It was a fascinating experience, and for me a terrifying one. Since my childhood in Chengdu, when I fell out of a tree, I have had a phobia about heights.

*Q: Vertigo?*

ROY: Well, vertigo I always associate with a loss of balance. My phobia is simply an irrational fear when I am exposed to certain types of height situations, even when there is no real danger.

We spent the first night of the hike in a little village across from a sheer cliff. We could see a narrow trail traversing the cliffside to the top, which we had to climb in the morning. I spent a sleepless night worrying about the next day's climb. Fortunately, we were already high in the mountains, and the next morning the upper two-thirds of the trail was shrouded in a heavy cloud cover. Just as I was reaching my limit, the clouds cut off the view of the valley below, and I was able to make it to the top.

We could occasionally borrow jeeps from the American embassy so groups of us could circumnavigate the island. At the time, the eastern side of Taiwan was relatively undeveloped, and there were no highway bridges across the rocky riverbeds between Hualien and Taitung, requiring us to ford the rivers or cross on railroad trellises. We overnights in Japanese style inns that were still prevalent throughout Taiwan. Three years later when I was reassigned to the U.S. embassy in Taipei, I continued the practice of using my weekends to take car trips around Taiwan. Taiwan was a perfect size for weekend travel because you could circumnavigate the island in two days.

*Q: Well, back to the language school. Who was the linguist at this time, do you recall?*

ROY: Harold Levy was the head of the language school. We enjoyed him. He had a scholarly interest in China and had published a book on Chinese foot binding. It gave us a better understanding of why a practice that we considered cruel and disfiguring actually had a lot of erotic content associated with it. For Chinese men, a three-inch golden lotus, as they called the bound feet, became an erotic symbol of feminine beauty. During my childhood in Chengdu, there were still older Chinese women with bound feet. I still consider it a barbaric practice.

*Q: Was the language program a two-year program, one year in Washington and one year*

*in Taichung?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: So the people that you joined had already been together for a year in Washington.*

ROY: They'd already been together for a year in Washington. When I arrived, I was unsure as to where my Chinese was going to fit into the levels of the other students. At first, they had a stronger character base than I had. However, my spoken fluency and my pronunciation were better than most of them because of my childhood experience in China. For me, it was largely a question of building up vocabulary as rapidly as possible. You go through a stage in learning Chinese characters where it seems that you are forgetting old characters as rapidly as you are learning new ones. That stage seemed endless. It was at Taichung that I finally crossed the threshold to expanding my character base.

*Q: Part of the communist social programs on the mainland was to go to the abbreviated characters.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Were you introduced to abbreviated characters?*

ROY: Yes. We had mainland China language materials that were not permitted in Taiwan at that time. The language school had a special exception from the government. So we were able to get The People's Daily, Red Flag and other communist materials. Our teachers were cleared to use these materials in teaching us. Because the mainland materials were printed in simplified characters, we had to learn the simplified characters along with the regular characters. But our base was in regular characters because in our early Chinese language study we were not using the simplified characters. It added an additional complexity, but it wasn't that difficult. We didn't have a special course. Our teachers would show us how the complex characters were simplified. Many Chinese knew the simplified characters because in hand-written Chinese, simplified forms of the complex characters were often used to save time. In many cases, these simplified forms became the basis for the official simplifications that were introduced on the mainland.

We were dealing entirely with modern Chinese and mostly mainland Chinese materials. although we were also exposed to some of the modern writers of China, people like Lu Xun. Before the communist revolution, many of the most prominent writers in China had favored the communist cause, and their writings were banned in Taiwan. As a result, we would make expeditions to Hong Kong, where you could purchase these materials and bring them back to Taichung. Unsurprisingly, many of these leftist writers suffered under communist rule, and their best works were produced before the communist revolution.

What you could find in the local Chinese bookstores in Taiwan, however, were simplified versions of classic Chinese novels with phonetic guides to pronunciation beside each

character. This is because the residents of Taiwan had been under Japanese rule for 50 years and did not know Mandarin. The Nationalist government in Taiwan had introduced Mandarin as the official language and was trying to raise schoolchildren with a strong base in Mandarin. The Mandarin pronunciation of Chinese characters differed radically from the pronunciation of the Minnan dialect of Chinese spoken in Taiwan.

As a result, bookstores in Taiwan had many versions of classic Chinese stories and myths with pronunciation guides beside the characters. This was an enormous benefit for foreign students of Chinese. One of our biggest problems was that the Chinese-English dictionary resources at the time were *grossly* deficient. We had to use Mathews' Dictionary, which organized its entries by an outmoded pronunciation scheme. If you did not know the pronunciation, you had to identify the character by one of the 214 Chinese radicals that are used in forming Chinese characters. You first had to identify the principal radical and then, using the number of strokes making up the remainder of the character, scan the entries under that number for the desired character. This was a slow and frustrating process. Matthews Dictionary had also been produced long before the communist revolution and was worthless in terms of the new terminology that the Chinese communists were introducing and that we were encountering in reading the Chinese mainland materials.

I read all of the Chinese classic novels in these simplified versions used in primary schools. I discovered that by reading them in Chinese, I could remember the names of the various protagonists, which I had been unable to do when I read them in English. Secondly, I found that these simplified versions were of enormous benefit in vocabulary building. I could look up unknown words more rapidly since I knew the pronunciations. I remember I read The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, The Water Margin, Journey to the West, and Strange Tales from Liaozhai in these simplified versions. In Hong Kong I collected modern Chinese detective stories and traditional Chinese martial arts fantasies featuring heroes and villains who could leap up onto rooftops, as in the movie “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.”

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: These books provided relief from reading The People's Daily and other boring Chinese communist material.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: -- My goal was to build up a library of books I wanted to read in Chinese because they were interesting, in contrast to our lesson materials.

*Q: Now, when you went to Hong Kong of course you stopped by the folks and whatnot. What were they -- their attitude toward all this Chinese study at this level?*

ROY: I also stayed with my parents on my trips to Hong Kong. Chung Chi College was out in the New Territories, which was easily reachable by train. My parents had already



settled in Hong Kong when I had to make my basic career decisions after college and got my Foreign Service appointment. My father had sent me a droll letter asking whether I really wanted to associate with all those hard drinking diplomats. He also sent me a gaudy necktie featuring a prowling tiger as my graduation present from Princeton (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: My parents were teetotalers, but they didn't make any effort to discourage me from pursuing my career interests. I think they were proud of the fact that I had entered the Foreign Service and was specializing in Chinese affairs, since they had devoted their lives to working in China.

*Q: Now, this is Chinese language studies in 1958. There's not many jobs at that time to go to. So it's a small class. I was just looking at the names, David Dean --*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Herb Horowitz.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Jim Leonard.*

ROY: Yeah.

*Q: I mean these are all icons in the business.*

ROY: Absolutely.

*Q: But, but that's it.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: So once you finish language training, how did you get into language training for the purpose of an ongoing job or for getting off language probation?*

ROY: Well, in my case I was killing two birds with one stone. I wanted to gain a knowledge of Chinese that would qualify me for promotion, and I wanted to pursue an area of specialization in the Foreign Service. I had been three months at the language school when I passed a test at the S-3, R-3 level in Chinese, which made me eligible for promotion, which occurred at the next promotion round.

Here, again, I encountered one of the anomalies of the Foreign Service, caused by the fact that officers at higher levels of one class were paid at a higher rate than officers at lower levels of the class above them. For example, three months after my promotion to FSO-7,

another FSO-8 at the language school also got a promotion to FSO-7, but at a higher step level than mine, even though I'd been promoted first. This reflected the way the salary system was structured. Nevertheless, living overseas and having a rental allowance had made me feel affluent in a way that I had not felt in Washington during my first two years in the Foreign Service. Unlike in Washington, I could have afforded a car in Taichung, but I found that a bicycle was all I needed to get around the city.

You mentioned Cal Mehlert. Cal Mehlert was in a special advanced program in the school. He was being trained as an interpreter. He had marvelous Chinese.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: -- He had far and away the best Chinese among those in our class at the language school. Other standouts were Burt Levin and Herb Horowitz. Herb Levin arrived with the next class, and later we all tended to mix his name up with the Burt and Herb in our class.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Our Burt and Herb had both served in our embassy in Taipei before coming down to the language school. They had been bachelors and had an active Chinese social life. They had excellent pronunciation and a more solid base in spoken Chinese than most of the rest of us, because of the exposure they had had in Taipei for a couple of years before coming to the language school. I remember them as standout students at the time.

*Q: So you've been given the language training, but you already know that your next assignment is going to be Bangkok.*

ROY: No. Actually, my next assignment was supposed to be Hong Kong. During my last two months before graduation, I began taking Cantonese along with my regular Mandarin classes to prepare me for Hong Kong, where Cantonese was the predominant dialect. However, just a few weeks before my departure, Burt Levin, who had been assigned to Bangkok, broke his ankle very severely in one of our softball games, making it impossible for him to go to Bangkok.

So at the last minute, the Department switched my assignment to Bangkok without consulting me. That was fine with me because it meant that I would be going to an embassy on my first diplomatic assignment, rather than a consulate. At that time we had Chinese language officers in every embassy in Southeast Asia, because the economies of Southeast Asia were largely in the hands of the ethnic Chinese communities in those countries. Many of those countries still had extensive Chinese school systems and substantial Chinese-speaking populations. We were concerned about communist infiltration into the Chinese ethnic groups in these countries, and therefore we had Chinese qualified language officers in our embassies to follow developments in the local Chinese communities. That was my specific job in Bangkok. I replaced an officer who also had Chinese language ability and had established extensive ties with the Chinese language community in Bangkok.

*Q: When you got to Bangkok then did you have a good turnover with him?*

ROY: No, we didn't overlap actually, but I inherited his files and contact lists. My recollection -- I had not been to Southeast Asia before -- is that I arrived there in early September or late August.

*Q: August 23.*

ROY: August 23. OK, it was the end of August. I still remember vividly the experience of waiting to deplane, having the door open, and then being hit with a blast of furnace-hot air of a heat that I had never previously encountered in China or India. That was my introduction to the tropics. Bangkok and Rangoon are much hotter than Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and Jakarta, which have a different monsoon cycle, different wind patterns, and get cooling sea breezes in a way that Bangkok and Rangoon do not.

So those posts are suffocatingly hot at the height of the hot season. During the monsoon, you get some mitigation from the heat when the rains are falling. However, in Bangkok in those days, one of the characteristics of the monsoon was that you had clear sunny skies part of the time, punctuated by torrential rains that came down when the monsoon clouds rolled in. Bangkok has a delightful period from November through February when the rainy season has ended, and it was pleasantly warm during the day.

*Q: Let's situate this job in the political section. Was the political section divided into internal and external at that time, and who was the political counselor?*

ROY: The political counselor was somebody named John Guthry and his deputy was an officer named Doug Batson. Our functional coverage was differentiated. For example, my primary responsibilities were to follow the Chinese community, but I would be diverted to any job that needed doing in the political section. There was an older officer named John Getts, I shared an office with a Foreign Service Officer who was a couple of grades senior to me named John Reed. I immediately queried him about his name, which is the same name as John Reed who is buried in the Kremlin Wall, who wrote Ten Days that Shook the World about the 1917 revolution, and who was a famous communist sympathizer. To my amazement, I discovered that my office mate was the nephew of the famous John Reed. He had joined the Foreign Service, believe it or not, during the McCarthy period, but it took him two years to get his security clearance (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: He was as apolitical an officer as I've ever encountered, and a very pleasant colleague to work with. It was a relatively small political section, in part because Bangkok was a major intelligence post, so we had a large intelligence component in our embassy and scattered around Bangkok. Over the years, in many cases the chief of station was a more prominent and flamboyant character than the ambassador. Our ambassador, however, was U. Alexis Johnson, who of course is one of the iconic figures of the

Foreign Service. In my eyes he was a model of what an ambassador should be. He conducted himself with great dignity and was very knowledgeable about how to handle relations with the Thai government. He had sufficient personal stature to keep the various elements of the mission fully coordinated.

He also had a good relationship with the staff of the embassy. We had a large staff meeting in his office every Friday. We all looked forward to those staff meetings because we junior officers didn't rub shoulders with the ambassador very often. Nevertheless, I found there were some benefits to being a junior unmarried officer. I found I was invited quite frequently to dinner parties at the residence. Later, I learned that the ambassador had a daughter who was rumored to have fallen in love with a young Thai from a well-connected princely family. Her parents were concerned about the relationship, and evidently hoped that I might divert her affections. In any event, the scheme, if there was one, did not work, but I gained useful exposure to Foreign Service diplomatic entertaining.

The residence in Thailand had been built for tropical conditions before the advent of air conditioning. In the 1950s in Bangkok, room air conditioners began to be installed in bedrooms, but most of the houses, including the ambassador's residence, still relied on ceiling fans for cooling living and dining rooms. The living room of the ambassador's residence was a large screened-in area, which together with the living quarters, was built on stilts over an unscreened patio area underneath the second floor, which was set up with sofas and as a normal living room type of area. A long narrow enclosed dining room was also on the ground floor and was air conditioned. For dinner parties, guests were received in the screened area on the second floor and then descended to the dining room, where the food was served. During the cool season, a long thin dining table could be set up in the patio for larger dinner parties, with the ambassador and his wife playing host at opposite ends of the table.

Needless to say, most of the time, even in the evenings, it was too warm to be comfortable in business suits in unairconditioned spaces. A fair amount of entertaining was done in more casual dress. Thailand was famous for its silks, and Thai guests often wore prem jackets, named after Prime Minister Prem, who frequently wore them for formal occasions. These consisted of a long-sleeved shirt with a mandarin collar. For evening wear, these were made of elegant silken materials and were very handsome. For less formal occasions, these could be made of cotton, and there was a short-sleeved version for casual wear. For informal dinner parties, even for embassy functions, silk prem jackets were considered suitable attire. This eased the problem of the lack of air conditioning.

At diplomatic receptions, we junior officers were assigned sectors within the reception area. It was our job to make sure that no guest was left unattended within our sectors. We were expected to arrive early enough to provide for a briefing before the guests arrived. It was all very regimented. You had to stay on your toes during receptions to avoid reprimands.

A compensation was that at large dinner parties at the ambassador's residence, seating by protocol order would place the most important guests at each end of the table, while we junior officers were clumped in the middle, where we could have a roaringly good time. This contrasted with the ambassador and his wife, who bore the burden of making conversation with the senior guests at each end.

Among the tasks I was assigned as a junior member of the staff was to serve as the embassy's protocol officer. To perform the function, I had to study the voluminous materials on protocol in the Foreign Service Manuals. This turned out to be very useful training. We had a large and complex diplomatic mission in Bangkok, with big AID and USIS components (USIS was the designation used overseas for United States Information Agency personnel).

In those days, diplomatic passports were much more restricted than at present. Many of the embassy's support staff, including our secretarial personnel and some of our administrative officers, were on official passports rather than on diplomatic passports. This was true of the AID mission as well. We had a lot of attachés in the embassy, which you had to rank appropriately among the third, second, and first secretaries, counselors, and minister-counselors. Rank inflation had not yet occurred. Even though Bangkok was a gigantic mission, our DCM, Leonard Unger, was only a minister-counselor, while the heads of our Political and Economic Sections were counselor level officers. (That was also the case in Moscow when I served there in the late 1960's and early '70s.) John Getts, and Doug Batson were first secretaries. John Reed was a second secretary, and I was a lowly third secretary. I got promoted from vice-consul to consul when I reached the FSO-6 level, and I made second secretary shortly before I left Bangkok.

Life in Bangkok was fabulous. There was a large foreign community, and a large international diplomatic community. There were lots of young people, and we in the unmarried set were very active socially. We would often organize car trips to various points of interest. Thailand at that time had very few paved roads outside of Bangkok. There was a paved road to Hua Hin, which was about a three-hour drive to the south from Bangkok, but if you went north, the roads were unpaved. For example, if you drove to Ayutthaya, an hour north of Bangkok, you were driving on hard gravel roads. The famous "Highway from Nowhere To Nowhere" was actually in Thailand. It went from Saraburi, a town north of Bangkok, to Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat) in the northeast. It was beautifully paved, but the road up to it from Bangkok was not paved, and the roads beyond Nakhon Ratchasima were not paved.

This was the situation pre-Vietnam War. I can remember, because I had to visit Chiang Mai periodically, where we had a consulate headed by George Barbis. Chiang Mai at the time was a marvelous little city with all the charms of Bangkok but without the traffic, which was a horrendous problem in Bangkok in those days. I usually made the trip by air, but I wanted to make the trip by land to get a better feel for the different parts of Thailand. A missionary with a leper colony outside of Chiang Mai offered me a ride in his truck, which he was using to take some lepers and supplies up to the colony, and I jumped at the opportunity. It took over 12 hours of driving over unpaved roads. We left

Bangkok at about 4:00 am and arrived at the leper colony in the late afternoon. It was a very bumpy and dusty trip. I flew back to Bangkok the next day.

Flying to and from Chiang Mai was an adventure in itself, especially during the monsoon season. The propeller aircraft could not fly above the clouds. That was fine for the trips up in the morning, when the skies were clear. However, the trips back to Bangkok in the afternoons, when the monsoon clouds had rolled in, were terrifying since you were buffeted by severe turbulence and flashes of lightning all around the aircraft.

The embassy's hours were from 7:30 am until 4:30 pm. This struck me as strange until I learned the reason. There is no twilight in the tropics. It turns dark immediately when the sun goes down. If you wanted to work in some tennis before dinner, you were racing against the sun. Diplomats got preferential memberships in the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, which had excellent tennis courts. Our practice was to break at exactly 4:30 pm and race to the Club for several sets of tennis. If you did not leave promptly, you'd get caught in the afternoon traffic and would arrive at the Club too late to complete a set of tennis.

Adjusting to life in Thailand took some adaptation. I remember two things about my early days in Thailand. On my first night in Bangkok I was invited to the home of John Reed and his wife for dinner. Halfway through dinner, we were startled to hear loud cracking noises that could have been bursts of gunfire or Chinese firecrackers. My hosts assumed the former and we all dove under the table. It turned out to be the latter, probably in connection with a wedding. Apparently, there had been two failed coups in recent weeks, in which there had been some shooting in the streets, resulting in skittish nerves on the part of local residents.

My second memorable experience occurred when the political section took me out to a Thai restaurant for lunch shortly after arriving. Having grown up in Sichuan province in China, which is famous for its spicy food, I was looking forward to sampling the local cuisine, also known for its fiery flavors. The meal began with a well-known Thai soup called tom yum goong. I accidentally bit down on an ultra hot pepper in the soup, which filled my mouth with excruciating pain for nearly fifteen minutes, while tears flowed from my eyes, all to the great amusement of my companions. After that, I grew to love Thai food, but always treated the peppers with great respect.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: The culprit was a small green pepper called prik kee noo, which is exceptionally hot.

*Q: Green.*

ROY: The name literally means rat dropping, because it's about the size of a rat dropping. *(laughs)*.

*Q: (laughs) Now, your responsibilities are to keep up with the Chinese community. What*

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ROY: What I did on arrival was I called on all of the principal leaders of the Chinese community in Bangkok. Then I arranged a travel program taking me to various parts of Thailand where there were significant concentrations of Chinese. For example, the population of a town called Hat Yai in south Thailand, close to the Malay border, was almost entirely ethnic Chinese. In the towns I visited I would tour the bookstores to see the nature of the Chinese language books they carried, visit the Chinese schools, and meet with leaders of the Chinese community. On my return to Bangkok, I would prepare an analytical cable reporting on what I had learned.

One of the economic officers named Sidney Weintraub and I took a driving trip from Bangkok down to Kuala Lumpur. I still remember the trip very well. We drove to Hua Hin on the west coast of the Gulf of Siam, where the paved road ended. From then on, all the way to the border with Malaya, we traveled on gravel roads in various conditions of repair. We were in an embassy Jeep. When we got down to the Malaya border area in southern Thailand, we visited towns such as Songkhla, Hat Yai, and Yala, where we got briefings from the local security people. They showed me Chinese language propaganda material that they had confiscated from guerillas that had fairly recent dates from mainland China. These demonstrated that there clearly were communications links between communist China and the communist elements in South Thailand. When we headed for the border crossing into Malaya (Malaysia had not yet been formed at that time), two Thai military jeeps with machine guns mounted in the rear escorted us through the jungle to the border.

The other thing I remember is that when we were driving through southern Thailand, I was stricken with a strep throat for the first time in my life. My throat became so painful and clogged up that I couldn't swallow. We were finally able to find a local doctor, who gave me antibiotics that cleared up the infection in a few days. For me, it was a frightening experience to be stricken in the boonies with an illness when there was no ready access to western trained doctors. The strep bug must have lurked in my system, because for the next five years, I would periodically get recurrences of severe sore throats, until they gradually faded away.

I generally did not have any trouble with hygienic issues in Thailand, partly because I'd grown up in China where eating cold food was absolutely verboten. All food had to be hot and freshly prepared, and fruit had to be peeled. As a child, when I accompanied my parents to visits with Chinese friends, the adults would drink hot tea, while my brother and I would be offered cups of steaming hot water. The thesis that local residents develop immunities to infectious diseases is not accurate. Thai doctors told me that the principal afflictions they encountered with Thai patients were diseases such as diarrhea and dysentery.

*Q: Now, you're coming to this assignment out of Mandarin training at Taichung.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: But the overseas Chinese in Thailand are from non-Mandarin speaking areas.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: -- Cantonese speaking areas?*

ROY: In Thailand it was mostly the Chaozhou dialect, which is totally unintelligible to a Mandarin speaker. However, the Chinese schools in Thailand were taught in Mandarin. When I called on Chinese community leaders, they generally had enough Mandarin so we could converse in Chinese, but they would speak the Chaozhou dialect among themselves. The Chinese schooling system was very extensive at that time. When I returned to Thailand for a second assignment twenty years later, the Chinese school system had been completely closed down. This was true throughout most of Southeast Asia.

In other words, between 1959 and the early 1980s, you had a transformation of the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, making it much more difficult for them to maintain a Chinese lifestyle. By the 1980s, most ethnic Chinese in Thailand had taken Thai names, and the younger ones had been educated in Thai schools. If an ethnic Chinese family wanted to preserve a Chinese tradition, it would select one child to be educated in Hong Kong, Taiwan, or mainland China. In a family the children would all be raised as Thai, with the exception of one child who would be sent to Hong Kong or some Chinese-speaking place to be raised in a Chinese cultural tradition. The other children would become culturally Thai, even if they continued to speak Chinese at home. We no longer had any need for Chinese language officers in our embassies in Southeast Asia because the Chinese communities had been forced to assimilate to the local cultures.

*Q: Now, part of the reason for having Chinese officers in posts like Bangkok was to see how the Chinese community was -- saw things internally, but also saw things externally. And you had the Great Leap Forward going on in China at this time. So what was the essence of your reporting over this assignment?*

ROY: Reporting on the Great Leap Forward and developments in the People's Republic of China was the responsibility of our Consulate General in Hong Kong. Chinese-speaking foreign service officers in Southeast Asia were focused on the political orientations of the overseas Chinese. During my first assignment in Bangkok, we also had Chinese speaking officers in the intelligence component of the U.S. mission, with whom I worked very closely.

To cite an example, I recall being invited by a Chinese acquaintance to lunch at a Chinese restaurant in a remote part of Bangkok. During the meal, I was taken into a back room, where I was introduced to a Chinese who claimed to be the leader of some of the remnant KMT forces conducting guerrilla warfare in southwestern China. He spread out a big map showing where his purported forces were located and proposed that the United States provide funding to strengthen these forces. I was noncommittal, of course, but took



careful note of his pitch. When I returned to the embassy, I turned over my notes to an intelligence colleague and washed my hands of the matter. (*laughs*).

Our concern was communist infiltration in Thailand and within the Chinese community. We had a Chinese speaking group in Bangkok. I became involved with a group of Chinese-speaking businessmen who loved to play bridge. We would rotate hosting bridge evenings, where we would play bridge for several hours, break for a Chinese meal, and then continue playing bridge for several more hours. All the conversation would be in Chinese. These were serious bridge players. Occasionally, I would team up with a member of the group to participate in contract bridge tournaments.

We also had a separate poker group, in which the assistant air attaché from the Chinese embassy, which represented the Republic of China on Taiwan, was a regular participant. He was a skilled poker player and an absolutely superb bluffer (*laughs*), as you would learn to your dismay.

He was a useful contact because the KMT government on Taiwan was providing clandestine air support to remnant KMT military forces who had settled in areas of Burma along the northern border of Thailand after the Chinese communists extended their control to southwestern China. One of these clandestine flights was attacked by two Burmese fighters, which crashed in the jungles of northern Thailand. I was immediately sent to Chiang Mai to visit the crash site, where I encountered my poker colleague, the assistant air attaché from the Chinese embassy, who had been sent north for the same purpose. I collected as much information as I could, both on the ground and from him, and was able to submit a detailed report.

On my visits to northern Thailand, our consul in Chiang Mai, George Barbis, was always very generous in driving me up to remote border areas in his Land Rover. One of our trips was to Chiang Rai, a village in the remote northeastern bulge of Thailand between Laos and Burma. Some of the roads around Chiang Rai were so bad that it would take us an hour of constant jolting to cover two miles over cratered, tree-rutted roads. Nevertheless, it was a very interesting area bordering on the Golden Triangle that was notorious for its narcotics production.

On that trip, we overnighted at the ranch of Harold Young, whose family had been missionaries in Burma. He had been raised in Burmese tribal areas. We spent a fascinating evening with him. His workers were mostly Burmese ethnic minorities, with whom he conversed in Lahu, Lisu, and other Burmese tribal languages. He recounted amazing ghost stories from his childhood in Burma. His house was located in a remote jungle area, a heavy mist had set in, and there were horses stomping around outside. It created a very eerie atmosphere.

To illustrate what Bangkok was like in those days, even local employees in the U.S. embassy had no way of telling whether I was a regular foreign service officer or an intelligence officer.

*Q: Was the ROC (Republic of China) embassy also of interest to you? I mean was anybody reporting on what the ROC was doing in Thailand and Thai attitudes toward them?*

ROY: Yes, it was. Here's where my father's contacts proved useful. For example, the nationalist Chinese ambassador in Washington back in the 1960s, Chou Shu-kai, was a friend of my father's going back to the 1940's.

*Q: Oh goodness.*

ROY: Even though I was a very junior Foreign Service Officer, I would regularly be invited to ambassador Chou's residence in Washington because he was very skillful at keeping in touch with people who had a China orientation. The Nationalist Chinese ambassador in Bangkok was a very distinguished, courtly older gentleman who also had known my father in China. As a result, I was frequently invited to the Chinese embassy for functions, or for small private lunches. This made it easier for me to keep up contacts at levels that normally would have been out of reach for a third secretary.

*Q: While you're collecting all this information, the next step is communicating it back.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: To Washington. This is pre-email days.*

ROY: We were still using airgrams and telegrams. Telegrams were only used for urgent communications.

*Q: Which means?*

ROY: This meant that if I made a trip to South Thailand and visited the Chinese community, my report would be transmitted by airgram, not by cable. We only used cables for time-urgent communications, and they had to be drafted in cable-ese to reduce the number of words. This was a cost-saving measure. Cables were very expensive to transmit, and the cost was based on the number of words, which meant you omitted all unnecessary words in order to lower the cost of transmission. Airgrams weren't under any length restrictions because they were sent by pouch rather than by cable.

Bangkok is where I began to master the knack of foreign service drafting, aided by experienced supervisors. Under their tutelage, I learned the importance of putting the most important information at the front of a cable, adding details and analysis in subsequent paragraphs. This reflected the reality that busy officials in Washington rarely had time to read a cable in its entirety, so smart drafters ensured the most important information was at the beginning. This could also be accomplished, in longer cables, by putting a summary at the front.

During my first assignment in Bangkok, we were still in the early stages of building up

our presence in Vietnam. For us, the more immediate issue was the bitter dispute between Thailand and Cambodia, then ruled by Prince Sihanouk, over their conflicting historically-based claims to a temple on the border called Khao Phra Wihan (Preah Vihear Temple), which was eventually resolved in favor of Cambodia.

Meanwhile, the situation in Vietnam was gradually deteriorating. When I got to Bangkok in 1959, it was still possible to take your personal car and drive to Saigon. By the time of my departure two years later, the eastern parts of the road were considered unsafe. The guidance was that we were not supposed to risk driving because of the danger of guerilla attacks on cars on the road. However, in 1960 a group of us young people in the Bangkok embassy organized a trip to Angkor Wat by car. The Thai portion of the trip consisted of an unpaved, washboard road, on which our cars kicked up great clouds of dust. We had to space ourselves out to try and reduce the dust problem. Once we crossed into Cambodia, we had a much better road system left by the French. From that point on, we traveled on paved roads all the way to Siem Reap.

While the roads in Cambodia were better than in Thailand, the Cambodian entrance procedure when crossing the border was the most inefficient I've ever encountered. A lone Cambodian official took each of our passports in turn and laboriously hand-copied everything in each passport into a notebook. It took almost an hour to process each person in our group, resulting in a long delay. In Siem Reap, we drove out to Angkor Wat, where there was a lovely little hotel directly across from the entrance to the temple complex. We stayed there for a couple of nights and spent the day touring Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom, which are truly magnificent places to visit.

When we had congressional visitors to Bangkok, which occurred frequently, we would often fly them in the air attaché plane out to Siem Reap to give them a quick look at Angkor Wat. If time was limited, we would simply circle the temple without landing so they could get a good view from the air.

Bangkok provided my first exposure to institutionalized corruption in the U.S. government, related to the use of so-called "counterpart funds." Our AID (Agency for International Development) activities often generated substantial amounts of local currency, which would be deposited in a U.S. government-controlled bank account. When members of congress visited Thailand, we were authorized to distribute great wads of these counterpart funds, worth hundreds of U.S. dollars, to each member of the Codel (congressional delegation), supposedly to cover local expenses. In practice, the amounts were far in excess of local expenses, and the funds were mostly used for personal purchases. Sets of Thai bronzeware were particularly popular. Codel members would often skip briefings with the ambassador in favor of trips to the local bronzeware shops. I can remember being upset by this practice at the time.

As a very junior officer in the embassy, I was frequently assigned to be the control officer for these Codels. One of them almost cast a cloud over my fledgling career as a foreign service officer, when I was the control officer for a congressional delegation headed by Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina.

*Q: Who was --*

ROY: He was a relatively new senator at the time. The Codel arrived at the height of the tourist season, when space was extremely limited in the premium hotels. Their schedule had them arriving at 6 am one day and departing at 6 am the next day. We pulled some strings and were able to get them rooms for two nights in Bangkok's best hotel so they would have hotel rooms available on their arrival. The cost for the rooms was covered by the counterpart funds. When the CODEL was checking out the next morning, Senator Thurmond looked at the bill and said, "We were only here for 24 hours. We're being charged for two days. This is outrageous. We won't pay." He was supported by other members of the delegation, so they left with half of their hotel bill unpaid, which left me in an awkward position with the hotel management. We subsequently got feedback from their next stop that members of the delegation were still grumbling that their control officer in Bangkok had tried to subject them to an outrageous rip-off.

Ambassador Johnson called me in to explain why he had heard complaints from the next post about the way I'd handled the CODEL. I explained to him exactly what the circumstances were. He laughed and told me to forget it. Nevertheless, I learned a useful lesson, which is that you should always clear such arrangements with the Codel in advance, even if they seem completely reasonable.

*Q: Now, you've mentioned that you were a protocol officer. That would have put you on the spot for the July Fourth parties.*

ROY: Yes, it did. I was directly involved in drawing up the guest lists and arranging special treatment for key officials and guests. The official July Fourth party was a large reception held in the patio area of the ambassador's residence. There were separate events for government officials, diplomats, and ranking members of the American community on the one hand, and a more informal function for the entire American community on the other, with hotdogs and hamburgers. While this entailed a lot of work, from my standpoint the advantage was that I really had to master the protocol rules, which served me well throughout my career.

The protocol rules actually made sense once you understood the underlying logic. In those days, the Department of State was much more restrictive in authorizing diplomatic titles. Members of the American mission with official passports, as opposed to diplomatic ones, generally held attaché or assistant attaché titles. Attaché ranks depended on the grades of the individual officers and were treated as equal to but below the equivalent diplomatic ranks. Thus, assistant attachés would be ranked just below third secretaries, while attachés would be ranked just below counselors, first secretaries, or second secretaries, depending on their personal grade levels.

Naturally, especially in larger diplomatic missions, there was a lot of jockeying among agencies over these titles. Generally, you had to hold a diplomatic passport in order to make it onto the diplomatic list, which conferred additional privileges and immunities.

With the separation of the United States Information Agency from the State Department and the creation of the Foreign Commercial Service, the old system began to break down. The rivalry also resulted in a gradual escalation in diplomatic titles as the Foreign Service tried to favor its officers over those of other agencies, such as when the State Department tried to deny counselor titles to the Foreign Commercial Service. The FCS responded by getting congressional authorization for counselor titles, so the foreign service responded by granting minister-counselor titles to the heads of economic sections in embassies.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: This was a losing game, although one rooted in human nature. It is ironic that at the height of our relative power, we lacked a more efficient way of managing titles.

*Q: Let me get two quick questions in here. You were talking about you being one of a number of junior officers at the post. Who were a couple of others that you recall?*

ROY: Oh. Let's see. George Roberts, Al Francis, Jere Broh-Kahn, and Marsh Thomson. We had a terrific group of junior officers there, although we were all quite different. George Roberts was steady and mature. Al Francis was effervescent and a brilliant language officer. He was fluent in Thai. He shot up through the ranks during the Vietnam War and reached Senior Foreign Service status way ahead of the rest of us. The Vietnam War provided superb opportunities for action-oriented officers like Al. After the war, his career topped out.

*Q: Ambassador Johnson departs in April 1961 and Ambassador Young --*

ROY: Ken Young.

*Q: -- comes in that next June. You know, you're down in the third secretary level. But do you have any sense of comparison between the two gentlemen's styles?*

ROY: Totally different. Let me bore you with trivia. When Ambassador Johnson was about to leave for a senior State Department post, his last staff meeting was on the Friday before his departure. I left my home early that morning for the ten-minute drive to the embassy, only to get stuck for over an hour in a horrendous traffic jam caused by a Chinese grave sweeping festival. As a result, I missed the staff meeting, which for me was a great disappointment since I had ultra high regard for Ambassador Johnson.

Ken Young was a political appointee who had been nominated to be the replacement for Ambassador Johnson. He was rumored to be close to the Kennedys. His style was the polar opposite of Ambassador Johnson's. He was younger, he had young children, and he had a much more folksy and outgoing style. The contrast appealed to some of the younger Thai, as opposed to the older generation of Thai leaders, who were more staid in their behavior.

His arrival was marred by bad timing. Vice President Lyndon Johnson was scheduled to

visit Thailand in May 1961. The new U.S. ambassador to Thailand, Ken Young, had been confirmed by the Senate in March, but he lingered in Washington and arrived in Bangkok as a member of the delegation accompanying Vice President Johnson before he had presented his credentials to the King as the new U.S. ambassador. This was a mistake since it placed him in a subordinate role, in his first official exposure to the Thai government, because of his lack of official status. Nevertheless, Thai officials treated him with great courtesy, and he participated in most of the events. The Thai were miffed, however, when he continued on with Vice President Johnson to his other Asian stops rather than remaining in Bangkok to assume his position as U.S. ambassador.

When he returned to Bangkok, he authored an exuberant cable addressed to the Vice President assessing his visit in extravagantly positive terms. The cable became notorious in Washington because of the laudatory language, especially the phrase: "You have carried the pedestal of power into the open places of the people," which raised eyebrows because of its Freudian symbolism. Ambassador Young ended up being a very good U.S. envoy to Thailand, but the contrast with his predecessor was striking at the beginning of his assignment.

Aside from such considerations, the visit by Vice President Johnson was an event in itself and highlighted the more free-wheeling style of the new Kennedy administration. The Thai Foreign Minister at the time was Thanat Khoman, who was a French educated, very distinguished figure, quite reserved in his style. He sat with Vice President Johnson in an open convertible for the trip in from the airport on Johnson's arrival. There were crowds along the road, and Johnson kept insisting that the car be stopped so that he could jump out and "press the flesh" with the assembled multitudes, leaving Khoman awkwardly sitting in the car awaiting his return. This happened several times, and for us onlookers symbolized the enormous difference in style between American politicians and strait-laced Thai officials at the time.

Even by American standards, Vice President Johnson was irrepressible in his behavior. On an excursion to view the khlongs (canals) that laced Bangkok in those days, Johnson stopped his vehicle, climbed down to the khlong and beckoned for an elderly Thai woman who was paddling by to come to the shore. After a brief conversation through an interpreter, he climbed into her tiny boat and vanished around a bend in the khlong, throwing his Secret Service escorts into a panic. They were able to commandeer some other passing boats and eventually located Johnson sitting on the floor mat of her humble home, sipping a cup of tea with her and her family.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: The other notable thing about my departure from Bangkok has to do with Jim Thompson, the famous Thai silk magnate. I had never met him. I'd seen him at receptions, but I'd never actually met him. About three months before my departure from Thailand, a friend of mine in USIA (United States Information Agency) told me that Thompson was going back to the United States for two months home leave and had approached him to see if he would like to housesit Jim Thompson's house. He was unable

to do so because of other commitments, and he wondered whether I would be interested in substituting for him. It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

Having made a fortune developing Thailand's silk industry, Jim Thompson had built a magnificent Thai-style residence raised on stilts by assembling six traditional teak Thai houses into one residence, reversing the walls so that the latticework wood patterns on the outside of the houses were on the inside. He had turned the windows into recessed niches with special lighting for his magnificent collection of Southeast Asian art, featuring sculptures of Buddhas and dancing figures. He had paved the entrance with Italian marble floors. Guests mounted a beautiful teak-wood staircase leading to an open living room furnished with tasteful furniture upholstered with cushions and throw pillows in the brilliant colors of Thai silk.

During the rainy season, you dined under the raised living room surrounded by lush plantings of tropical bushes and flowers. During the cool dry season, guests descended a few steps to an outdoor patio built of ancient bricks set with antique tables and chairs. Beyond the patio, shielded from sight by tropical foliage, there was a little khlong (canal). Many of Thompson's weavers lived on the far side of the khlong. At night they would be weaving in their homes, and as you dined you could hear the faint clicks of their shuttles and the soft sounds of their singing. It was a truly magical setting.

Jim Thompson's house was open for tourists to visit two days a week. I had taken a tour of the house, and it was an unforgettable experience to see it. I couldn't resist the opportunity to live in it for two months. Jim Thompson invited me over to two of his dinner parties before he left to personally introduce me to the house. The only requirement was that I had to pay the wages of the servants. There were five -- a cook and four staff. Otherwise, the house was mine for two months. I used it to make up for all of the entertaining that I had neglected to do as a third secretary.

My practice was to host two dinner parties a week, on the evenings when the house had been open for tourists during the day. This enabled me to take advantage of the magnificent floral displays that decorated the house on those days. Not surprisingly, in those two months, I did not have a single invitation refused. I even had the Mayor of Bangkok as a guest, when I offered on behalf of the Embassy's political section to host one of our periodic lunches with the Interior Ministry, with whom we had a good working relationship. It was several more decades in the Foreign Service before I had a residence that was (*laughs*) even roughly the equivalent of what I had as a very junior second secretary.

The bedrooms had tiger skins on the floor, and the walls were covered with Thai paintings and tapestries. There have been books published on the house. Among the amusing events associated with the house, my parents were resident in Hong Kong at the time, and my father stopped in Bangkok when returning from a trip to the United States. I had not given him advance notice of where I was staying. I met him at the airport and drove him back to Jim Thompson's house.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: *(laughs)* We got out of the car and were mounting the stairs to the living quarters on the second floor. My father was looking around with a baffled expression, clearly perplexed by the magnificence of my accommodations. Finally he said, “We pay our diplomats too much money.”

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: *(laughs)* The one problem with the house was that it was infested with big spiders.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: That was a problem because to go from the master bedroom to the bathroom, you had to pass through a beautiful little anteroom with lovely, framed paintings on the wall. The spiders liked to lurk behind the picture frames. This was not a problem in daytime, when the anteroom was well lit. However, if you got up during the night to go to the bathroom, you had to pass through this constricted anteroom where there might be big spiders on the wall. I found this an unnerving experience.

One night I came home from a party and found there was a big spider on the ceiling right over my bed. The ceiling was something like 14 feet high, putting the spider well out of reach. I took a bug spray gun, stood on the bed, and tried to spray the spider on the ceiling. It was so big that the spray had no immediate effect on it. I had to sit on the bed for two hours waiting for the spray to take effect. Finally the spider fell off the ceiling, and I was able to dispose of it.

*Q: Getting back to the Chinese community for a second, were they beginning to integrate into the Thai Civil Service and whatnot, or were they still at that time into the business?*

ROY: In most of Southeast Asia ethnic Chinese were not welcome in the civil service and military, which were reserved for the dominant ethnic groups in each country. This was the case in Thailand, it was the case in Indonesia when I was there. It's largely the case in Malaysia, where they have a much larger ethnic Chinese component in the population. It was rare if ever that you would have ethnic Chinese in the military or in the civil service. They were largely confined to the business community.

*Q: Why don't we take a break?*

ROY: OK.

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*Q: Today's the 12<sup>th</sup> of April and we're here returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. We finished up with your tour in Bangkok, but I wanted to ask you a little bit more about your duties and reporting on the KMT remnant groups that had been*



*in Burma. We talked about the February crash of the supply airplane. How much emphasis was there on watching that? Because the KMT had pulled a group out in the early 1950's or something, I think. And these were even remnants of the remnants.*

ROY: First, there were KMT remnants scattered throughout the region, some in Northern Thailand, but more across the Burmese border in the Shan States. We were interested in monitoring what was going on in these groups, because their presence created potential political problems between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the local governments. From Bangkok, we couldn't get into the Shan States. There was also a narcotics angle because in supporting themselves, many of the remnants had gotten into opium cultivation and were part of the Golden Triangle narcotics problem.

This was a bigger problem in my second assignment in Bangkok 20 years later, because by that time the issue of support from Taiwan had vanished and our interest in the KMT remnants was largely a function of our anti-narcotics efforts in Thailand. Back in 1959/1960, we were concerned about Chinese communist penetration into Thailand. There were parts of the country that were not safe for travel. Our ability to monitor them was limited. Our consulate in Chiang Mai would pick up whatever information was available there. I had close ties with the Republic of China embassy, including the ambassador and the assistant air attaché, who was actually their person on the ground. He was the person the Republic of China embassy sent to investigate the crash of the supply plane. He provided information about the circumstances of the crash that wasn't available from open sources.

*Q: Now, you had come to Bangkok as the Chinese affairs officer.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: So was this already part of that portfolio, or did your bosses say --*

ROY: All of our Southeast Asian embassies at that time had a Chinese language officer assigned to them because of the importance of the overseas Chinese communities in regional countries. They were significant because of their economic role and because they were targets for communist infiltration. So we stayed in touch with what was going on in the Chinese communities. Nevertheless, my reporting responsibilities included matters that weren't directly related to the Chinese communities. I was the junior officer in the political section, so I handled whatever additional political reporting chores were necessary, as determined by the political counselor. I was not restricted to handling Chinese community affairs.

*Q: Now, you were there during the transition to the Kennedy administration. At the time of this crash, in February 1961, the Kennedy administration had seized on that to make a number of protests to the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan through the U.S. embassy there. We've been looking at the foreign relations of the U.S., in connection with the declassification of some of those documents. Were you aware that the administration was taking this apparently more intense interest in the issue of ROC actions against mainland*

*China?*

ROY: The short answer is no, not while I was in Thailand. Such matters were handled at senior policy levels and were held very closely. I got more involved in 1962 when I became the aide to Admiral Kirk, our new ambassador to the Republic of China on Taiwan. Admiral Kirk had commanded our naval forces supporting the Normandy landings in World War II, and he had later served as ambassador to the Soviet Union. He had been sent to Taiwan specifically to urge Chiang Kai-shek to ease off on his raids on the Chinese coastland because we felt they were both ineffective and needlessly provocative.

*Q: Well, then why don't we go ahead and move on from Bangkok and --*

ROY: The KMT plane crash occurred early in the Kennedy administration, about a month after the inauguration. Most of my assignments in Bangkok were under the Eisenhower administration.

*Q: Yeah.*

ROY: Most of the officials of the new Kennedy administration were not yet in place. U. Alexis Johnson was still ambassador in Thailand. Ken Young hadn't arrived as his replacement. Vice President Johnson visited later that spring.

*Q: Well, then let's move on to your next assignment. Because you left Bangkok in the summer of 1961, and I have you arriving at Hong Kong on February 18, 1962.*

ROY: 1962, that's right.

*Q: But you're only there for a short period of time. How was it you went to Hong Kong? What was that all about?*

ROY: My original assignment on leaving the Chinese language school in Taiwan had been to Hong Kong. At the last minute, that assignment was broken when Burt Levin, who had been assigned to Bangkok, fractured his ankle playing softball at the language school. As a result, the Department sent me to Bangkok in place of Burt Levin. After my assignment in Thailand, it was normal for me to be transferred to Hong Kong, because it was the post that gobbled up the bulk of our Chinese language officers. Taipei and Taipei were the two posts that used the most Chinese language officers.

The only thing that was unusual from my standpoint was that I'd already spent two years as a political officer in an embassy. The other junior officers in Bangkok, for example, had come in as rotational officers. They would spend a half year or a year in the Consular Section and then they might be rotated to one or more of the other sections of the embassy. My transfer orders to Hong Kong specified that I was assigned to one of the political officer positions in the Consulate General. The reality, I found, was quite different. The powers that be in the Consulate General treated me as they would any other

junior officer and assigned me to the Immigrant Visa Section, with the expectation that I might move to the political section after a year.

Five months later, I was stunned to receive transfer orders out of the blue assigning me to the political section of the U.S. embassy in Taipei as the aide to Admiral Kirk, the new U.S. ambassador to the Republic of China (ROC). Only later did I learn what had happened behind my back.

When my family returned to China in the fall of 1948, I had become briefly acquainted with James C. Thomson, the college-age son of fellow Presbyterian educational missionaries at the University of Nanking, where my father was assuming a teaching post. Jim Thomson and I shared a Chinese language teacher for several weeks, before he returned to the United States to continue his university education. Following his graduation, Jim had become associated with Chester Bowles, who in 1961 had been appointed Under Secretary of State in the new Kennedy administration. Jim Thomson had become a member of his staff in the State Department. When Admiral Kirk was appointed as the new ambassador to Taipei, the State Department began looking for a Chinese-speaking aide for Ambassador Kirk, and Jim Thomson had thrown my name into the hopper, because he knew of my China background. This had resulted in my transfer orders to Taipei from Hong Kong.

*Q: When you went to Hong Kong in February '62, how long were you told you would be in Hong Kong? Was it a two-year assignment?*

ROY: It was a normal two-year assignment.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: That's right.

*Q: So that was basic -*

ROY: What probably would have happened in Hong Kong was that after I'd done a year or so in the Consular Section, I would have been rotated to one of the political officer positions. In fact when the Department broke my assignment in Hong Kong, the consul general called me in and tried to persuade me to stay in Hong Kong, offering me an immediate transfer to the political section. This was tempting, but the reason why I wanted to go to Taipei was actually less because of dissatisfaction over my job in Hong Kong, where I learned a lot about consular affairs that later on was useful to me. However, in Taiwan I could improve my Chinese much more effectively than I could in Hong Kong, where Cantonese was still the main local dialect. I was still very interested in improving my Chinese, and there was no post in the Foreign Service where I could do this more effectively than in Taiwan.

*Q: Let's look at Hong Kong for a bit. This is a very typical first, second tour assignment to a Visa Section.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: You covered IV's, immigrant visas. Was there much of a workload? Wasn't Hong Kong considered a visa mill?*

ROY: It was a very heavy workload. We were operating under our old immigration law that placed prohibitive restrictions on Asian immigration, and especially Chinese immigration. The immigration quota for Chinese was something like 50 slots a year for non-family members, and these slots had already been filled extending into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So the only hope an applicant had of qualifying for an immigrant visa was to be the relative of a Chinese-American citizen. Unsurprisingly, under these circumstances, during my five months in the Hong Kong consular section, every case I handled was fraudulent.

To circumvent the inability of Chinese to get immigrant visas, Chinese-Americans in the United States had created false family records. The San Francisco fire of 1906 had destroyed all the birth records in the city. To restore the database, American citizens were encouraged to re-register their birth data. This opened the door for Chinese undocumented aliens, of whom there were tens of thousands, to register themselves as being born in San Francisco. I forget the exact statistics, but it was later calculated that if every Chinese woman in San Francisco at the time had actually given birth to the Chinese who registered as having been born in San Francisco, each Chinese mother would have had to have given birth to over 900 babies.

As newly documented American citizens, these Chinese-Americans would make periodic trips back to China, in each case reporting the birth of a male child on their return to the United States. This created a potential slot for an immigrant visa for a Chinese male that could be sold to the highest bidder. There were no daughters in such families. The purchaser of an immigrant slot, however, had to create an identity as a member of the new family, which necessitated assuming a false surname. Most Chinese-Americans from this period have false surnames.

The Hong Kong Consulate General actually had an anti-fraud unit that conducted raids on refugee camps to acquire documents that would be helpful in establishing the true identity of visa applicants. Those of us doing the actual visa interviews were not involved in such raids, but we were supplied with information about the hometowns of the Chinese who were applying for immigrant visas. We actually had detailed street maps of the villages in southern Guangdong Province that supplied most of the immigrant visa applications, enabling us to know where different families lived so we could quiz applicants on the surnames of their neighbors. Since the applicants were all from fraudulent families, this meant they had to familiarize themselves with places they had never lived. It was a dispiriting process created by our immigration restrictions, where the only way for Chinese to go to the United States legally was to cheat. The incentive structure was all skewed in favor of cheating.

Having grown up among Chinese, I knew that cheating was no more prevalent in Chinese society than in other societies, so it was disheartening to find some of my fellow consular officers concluding that Chinese were all thoroughly dishonest because they never encountered an honest immigrant visa case.

*Q: Mm. Well, in one sense though this is an improvement on the Chinese Exclusion Act. Which the Americans changed in '44 or --*

ROY: Later, well after my experience with immigrant visas, we had an immigration reform, which raised the immigrant visa slots for Chinese to something like 20,000 a year. This enabled us to provide visas to highly qualified people that it was in the interest of the United States to have come to our country.

*Q: You mentioned refugee camps in Hong Kong. And this was the time of the Great Leap Forward. Were --*

ROY: This was the time of the big famine in China, induced by the failure of the Great Leap Forward and by the institution of the commune system, which had had a disastrous effect on agricultural productivity in China. Estimates are that tens of millions of people starved to death in China. Our agricultural attaché in Hong Kong at that time, Brice Meeker, was a real expert on this. He used different analytical methods to estimate the size of the Chinese grain harvest. Then he would interview people coming out of China in order to get on the spot information about nutritional conditions in different parts of China. It was a fascinating process.

In our spare time, people like me, who were Chinese language officers but serving in the Consular Section, conducted an active social life with my Taichung language school classmates who were working in the political and economic sections. Hong Kong was the U.S. government's principal China-watching post so that everything that was going on in China was of interest to our China-watchers in the consulate general. From that standpoint Hong Kong was a thoroughly fascinating assignment. The complicating factor for me was that my parents lived in Hong Kong at that time, and my father was the vice president of Chung Chi College, which was one of three separate colleges that later joined together to form the Chinese University of Hong Kong. One of my father's jobs was to facilitate U.S. visas for Chinese students hoping to study in the United States. Although I did not handle non-immigrant visas, any involvement by me in my father's visa recommendations to the consulate general would have represented a conflict of interest, so I established the principle that I would not touch any visa referrals from my father.

*Q: Was there much of a refugee flow-in to Hong Kong --*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: -- at that time?*

ROY: The British authorities did their best to limit the flow, but they could not block it completely. We would occasionally go out to the New Territories adjacent to China, and the hills across the border would be covered with Chinese refugees trying to cross the border into Hong Kong. On the Hong Kong side, there would be rows of policemen assembled to block them from entering. Those who made it across lived in squalid refugee shantytowns that covered the hills of Hong Kong at that time. My father was deeply involved in social work designed to alleviate the miserable conditions of the refugees who were living there.

*Q: In addition to Hong Kong being a China watching post for the Foreign Service, it also attracted a fairly heavy academic group of graduate students and professors and whatnot. They were trying to figure out what was going on in China. Did you meet any of those people? Or the journalists, Bob --*

ROY: I did, but they were less interested in me because I was doing consular work. The journalists wanted to rub shoulders with the consulate China specialists who were doing the political and economic reporting from Hong Kong. We had a first-rate group of China specialists there at the time. Nevertheless, it was very difficult to follow developments in China, which was in chaos at the time. Reporting from Hong Kong helped to debunk the extravagant claims of the Chinese communist authorities about the production successes of the Great Leap Forward.

The declassification of the CIA's National Intelligence Estimates at that time showed that initially the U.S. intelligence community was inclined to believe the statistics that were coming out of China about the success of the backyard steel furnaces and the resulting increase in steel production, all of which was baloney. There are some interesting parallels to the great famine in Ukraine in the early and mid 1930s caused by the destruction of the kulaks and the collectivization of agriculture.

*Q: Now, you're saying the State Department personnel system at this time was -- you're given transfer instructions without much input. So you go to Taipei then in July of '62 to be the staff assistant to new Ambassador Kirk.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: And Kirk was explicitly sent out to --*

ROY: Reign in Chiang Kai-shek. They wanted an admiral because he was an expert in amphibious operations.

*Q: He had done Normandy, I believe.*

ROY: Admiral Kirk was the commander of the naval forces supporting the Normandy landings. He was later our ambassador to the Soviet Union in the late 1940s.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: Admiral Kirk's son Roger was a foreign service officer who had joined the Foreign Service shortly before I did. He had played a role in our Foreign Service Institute orientation program and had impressed me mightily. During their tour in Moscow, Ambassador Kirk's wife had edited and partly translated into English the journals of the Marquis de Custine, a French nobleman who had made extended visits to Russia in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and recorded his impressions. The book was published in 1951 under the title *Journey for our Time: the Russian Journals of the Marquis De Custine: An intriguing look at the continuities in Russian politics and society*.

In 1965, when I began a nine-year period working on Soviet affairs, I read the book in its entirety. I found it thoroughly fascinating because it revealed that suspicion of strangers and the prevalence of surveillance had been a part of Russian society long before the Bolshevik revolution and was not a new feature introduced by the nature of communist regimes.

Ambassador Kirk turned out to be a very pleasant, interesting, and elderly person. My assignment was basically to the political section, but when Ambassador Kirk would make calls on Chinese officials, I would accompany him as the note taker. That's what being aide to the ambassador amounted to.

Ironically, my travails as a political officer were not yet over. Later that summer, because of understaffing in the Visa Section, I was diverted from the political section to spend several months as a non-immigrant visa officer, handling student visas. The job was interesting because it was so totally different from handling immigration visas in Hong Kong. Non-immigrant visas can only be granted based on the assumption, at the time of issuance, that the recipient would return to the country of origin. However, the return rate for students from Taiwan was less than ten percent. With a non-return rate that high, in principle you shouldn't be issuing non-immigrant visas at all based on the statistical evidence.

The anomaly was that most of the student applicants had never been to the United States before and sincerely intended to return to Taiwan on completion of their education. This met the requirement of the relevant U.S. legislation. The visa officer had to weigh this intention against the statistical probability that once acclimated to the United States, the student would decide not to return. If you were a first-time applicant from a particular family, the applicant could usually make a credible case of an intention to return. If the applicant had an older sibling who had gone to the United States on a student visa and hadn't come back, then a refusal was more likely. The beleaguered non-immigrant visa officer often had to rely, in deciding whether to issue the visa, on arbitrary rules of thumb based on the number of older siblings who had failed to return from the United States.

The desire to get student visas was so strong that occasionally an attractive young female applicant would hint strongly during the interview that she was "prepared to do anything" to acquire a visa. This was the only time in my foreign service career that I encountered such situations. I was never influenced by such hints, but they left me with a better

appreciation of the special importance of integrity in officers who handle decisions of such importance to the future prospects of fellow human beings.

*Q: Now, as you were looking at the stream of people coming in for these applications, were most of them from mainland Chinese families?*

ROY: Many were the children of mainland refugees, who tended to have higher educational backgrounds. But there were local Taiwanese applicants as well. In between interviewing non-immigrant visa applicants, another of my responsibilities was to go down to the courthouse to witness weddings by American citizens with Chinese nationals. Since the marriage certificates were in Chinese, my function was to issue an English language certification that a valid marriage had taken place.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: Most of these were weddings of young American soldiers with local Chinese girls. Often, the girls were in advanced stages of pregnancy. There was a very ritualized marriage procedure, which was all in Chinese and of course, therefore, not intelligible to the American groom. You had to coach the American groom regarding the nature of the ceremony. There was a point where the judge would instruct the bride and groom to stand face to face and respectfully bow to each other when the judge said “jugong (bow).” He would repeat “jugong” three times, following which he would declare them man and wife. Following the ceremony, the bride and groom would come to the U.S. embassy, where I would give them a certificate of witnessing the marriage covered with impressive seals. Technically, the certificate was not, in itself, a valid marriage certificate, but as an English language document, it served that purpose in the United States.

*Q: One of the reasons I think there were fewer Taiwanese going to the United States was the KMT had quotas at the universities on the number of students who could study abroad. Did you see this tension between the Mainlanders and the native Taiwanese?*

ROY: Not so much in the visa process. The tensions were there, but they were the legacy of the KMT’s violent suppression on February 28, 1947 of a massive Taiwanese demonstration protesting the corruption of the new KMT authorities who had replaced the Japanese as the rulers in Taiwan. When I was covering local elections, many older Taiwanese were unwilling to speak Mandarin to us as a form of protest against the predominantly mainlander officials who staffed the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan and had imposed Mandarin as the official language. If they knew English, they’d speak English to us. If you could speak Taiwanese dialect or Japanese, which I could not, they would use either one. But they would not use Mandarin.

Years later, when I was studying Russian at the U.S. Army Advanced Russian School in Garmisch, Germany our class visited Poland and found that Poles were unwilling to converse with us in Russian, even though they knew it. So I’ve had several encounters in my diplomatic career with the resistance of people to using languages that they associate with oppressive outsiders (*laughs*).



*Q: Now, Ambassador Kirk would take you with him from time to time into some of his meetings. How did the ROC leadership respond to his message?*

ROY: Badly. Admiral Kirk was very firm in conveying the message that the U.S. government believed the Republic of China should halt its harassing military activities along the Chinese coast. In the process, he offended ROC President Chiang Kai-shek, who pulled his political strings in Washington to seek the ambassador's removal. Admiral Kirk was not in good health, so the combination of the ROC's political pressure in Washington and his poor health resulted in his departure after barely half a year in Taipei.

*Q: January '63.*

ROY: That's right, January 1963. He was replaced by another naval officer, Admiral Jerauld Wright, a former Commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, so in that sense Chiang Kai-shek did not accomplish his purpose.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: -- *(laughs)* The message he got from Ambassador Wright was the same as the message from Ambassador Kirk.

*Q: The issue at hand was the ROC arguing that the Great Leap Forward was bringing China to its knees, making this the time to attack all along the border, wherever it was. How much of what they were doing did we know about?*

ROY: This was above my pay grade. I accompanied the ambassador on his routine calls. But if he was going in to see Chiang Kai-shek, or if he was making a major demarche, he would be accompanied by a more senior officer, such as Deputy Chief of Mission Ralph Clough. Instructions on important sensitive issues were held very closely, and I normally had no access to such messages. As a relatively junior political officer I did not routinely see the most restricted cables, such as NODIS or EXDIS messages. I might occasionally see LIMDIS cables if I had a need to know. The types of policy issues that we've touched on here normally were handled by more senior officers in the embassy. so that I didn't get personal exposure to difficult demarches that the ambassador handled.

An exception occurred in 1964, when France broke ranks with its NATO allies and established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. On that occasion, the volume of NODIS and EXDIS messages was so high that I was brought in to manage the messages, giving me exposure for the first time to the details of a highly sensitive foreign policy issue.

*Q: What was Ralph like to work for, work with?*

ROY: Ralph Clough was terrific. When I was a 13-year-old in Nanjing in 1948, Ralph had been a third secretary in the American embassy in Nanjing. He and his wife at the

time were regular attendees at the Chinese language church that the Roy family attended every Sunday. We would briefly socialize with them after the services. Ever since that time, he had been the model in my mind of the ideal American foreign service officer, polite, friendly, diligent in studying the local language and culture, and engaged in the local community. My family always had fond memories of the Cloughs, and my parents were devastated when his wife suddenly died of a rare disease shortly after we closed our embassy in Nanjing in 1949. So I was delighted to discover when I was transferred to the U.S. embassy in Taipei in 1962, some thirteen years later, that he was the DCM.

*Q: Well, you've got a non-career ambassador, you've got a career Foreign Service Officer as the DCM, how did they work together? I mean how was the DCM role at that time? At least as perceived by you down in the bowels of the embassy?*

ROY: I didn't really have much opportunity to observe DCM-ambassadorial interactions. When you're a junior officer, your immediate supervisor is the person you deal with mostly. Occasionally, I handled an issue that would involve contacts with the political counselor, but those were exceptions. During most of my assignment in Taipei, Jim Leonard was the political counselor. He had been a fellow student with me at the Taichung language school, so I knew him and his wife Ellie very well. He had been the most senior of the language students. With this background, I would see him socially quite a bit in Taipei, but more rarely in the office. During my final months in Taipei, Bob Lindquist replaced Jim Leonard as the political counselor.

I rarely dealt directly with the DCM, other than attending occasional dinner parties at his residence. There were two exceptions, both in 1964. The first was when the French decided to transfer diplomatic recognition from the ROC to the PRC as the government of China. The second was when I was offered the opportunity to spend a year at the University of Washington in Seattle studying the Mongolian language, with the possibility of helping to open an embassy in Mongolia at the end of the language assignment. With mainland China closed to American diplomats, this struck me as an exciting opportunity to get a different perspective on China. However, everyone I turned to for career advice counseled against the assignment for a variety of good practical reasons. So I sought a meeting with Ralph Clough, the DCM, to discuss the assignment because I had great respect for his views. He did not try to discourage me from accepting the assignment, although he noted, as had others, that it would probably slow down my prospects for promotion, which turned out to be very accurate.

*Q: Then let's --*

ROY: Ambassador Kirk and Ambassador Wright had very different leadership styles. Ambassador Kirk was open and approachable. You would see him around the embassy from time to time. Ambassador Wright was the polar opposite, featuring remoteness. Three weeks after his arrival, none of the junior members of the embassy staff had seen him or had any contact with him. This became embarrassing when Chinese officials and friends asked for our impressions of the new ambassador. We had to admit that we didn't even know what he looked like (*laughs*).

First impressions can be misleading, because Ambassador Wright turned out to be very warm and friendly once the ice had broken. He liked to host parties for embassy staff at his residence, where he would take charge of preparing magnificent crepe suzettes at the end of the meal. When I was later assigned back to Washington, where Ambassador Wright had retired, he would occasionally round up some of us junior officers from the Taipei embassy to have lunch with him at his little club on F Street.

*Q: No kidding.*

ROY: For us it was all the more surprising since he had been so aloof when he first arrived in Taipei as the new American ambassador.

*Q: Now, what was it like working for Jim Leonard then?*

ROY: Jim Leonard was an ideal mentor in the Foreign Service. He knew a lot more than the rest of us about all of the subjects that we were dealing with. He improved your drafting. He never diddled with your messages, but if he made a change, it was always an improvement. So you learned how to hone your drafting skills by having someone like that looking over your work. And of course I knew him well from being a fellow language student in Taichung. But of course I'd been a very young and junior student, and he'd been the most senior student at the language school when we were there. So he was well above me in rank. But I would rank him as one of the best foreign service officers I ever met.

In fact, he gave me some excellent advice. During a discussion with Jim Leonard of my performance, I commented that I was more interested in stimulating work than in getting promotions. He complimented me on that attitude, but he added that I should bear in mind that the most stimulating jobs in the foreign service are at higher ranks and that without promotions I would not qualify for those higher-level jobs. That gave me a new perspective. However, I found that by joining the foreign service at such a young age, I could indulge in the luxury of pursuing career interests, such as hard language training, even when those assignments resulted in slower promotions. Older officers couldn't afford that luxury without endangering their careers.

*Q: When you were in the political section what was basically your portfolio?*

ROY: I had a whole range of odd jobs. I would prepare the weekly catch-all summary of significant developments. I would assist Jay Taylor on election coverage. Jay had had some Taiwanese training, in addition to his Mandarin, and he excelled at establishing rapport with local politicians, which enhanced his effectiveness in covering local elections. When Jay was absent on home leave during one election, I filled in for him, traveling around Taiwan to meet local leaders from various parties and preparing the report to Washington on the results. These were provincial level elections because national elections were not feasible under the Republic of China constitution, which applied to all of China.

I also covered some Mainland issues, preparing a report on an organization informally called the “Duck Egg Society,” a quasi-Taoist religious sect called the I-Kuan Tao that the Nationalist Government suspected might be a channel for communist influence to enter Taiwan.

*Q: Oh yes.*

ROY: I met with various intelligence people in the Nationalist government and picked their brains on their latest assessments of this organization’s activities that were of concern to them. I then submitted a definitive report that proved to be of great interest to all those analysts in Washington focused on Duck Egg Societies.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: But mostly it was local politics. We were encouraged to get out and meet Chinese journalists, and so I set up a series of contacts with journalists, which I found very interesting. But then I discovered that one of the journalists was reporting alleged interviews with me that hadn’t taken place. This provided a valuable lesson concerning the importance of being careful with journalists until you know how reliable they are.

*Q: How big was the political section?*

ROY: It was roughly the same size as the one in Bangkok. Under the political counselor, there was a deputy head, Chris Nelson, who was an old China hand. Peter Colm handled political-military affairs, and there were two of us who handled general political reporting. Aside from me, there was first Sherrod McCall, with whom I later served in Moscow, and then Jay Taylor. Sherrod had first served for a year in the economic section and then moved to the political section for a year. Harry Thayer was in the economic section and covered intellectual property rights. Taiwan at the time was awash with pirated English language books ranging from the Encyclopedia Britannica to text books and current novels, all of which could be purchased for a fraction of the price in the United States.

Jay Taylor and I did the local political scene. I followed Mainland developments. Most of the officials who followed Mainland developments were in intelligence organizations. Mainland materials were restricted in Taiwan, and ordinary government officials wouldn’t have access to communist documents. Our contacts were with the officials who analyzed what was going on in the Mainland.

*Q: In fact, didn’t they at that time have a shadow government?*

ROY: They did, but it did not include the Chinese analysts who followed Mainland developments.

*Q: Because I thought I read a report at one time that the KMT had a shadow government*

*so there'd be a governor for Szechuan Province and a mayor for Chengdu and that served --*

ROY: They may have, but we didn't deal with those people. Mostly those positions were filled by older Mainland refugees and were strictly sinecures.

*Q: Who worked on the National Assembly?*

ROY: National Assembly? Jim Leonard, and to a lesser degree Carl Nelson.

*Q: Jim Leonard.*

ROY: Jim Leonard would often have members of the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan at his dinner parties.

*Q: Because they were elected in '47.*

ROY: That's right.

*Q: And then sinecured through the years.*

ROY: They were older people who had held senior positions on the Mainland and continued in those jobs even when the authority of the Nationalist government no longer extended to those portions of China under communist rule. They were covered by our more senior officers. Jay Taylor and I covered local politicians.

*Q: Now, at this time, the issue of Mongolia and Mauritania appeared in the UN. The Africans wanted Mauritania and the ROC said that they were going to veto the Mongolian application. Did you get into any of that?*

ROY: I was not involved in that. I was involved in the crisis in 1964 when the French transferred diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China. It generated an enormous amount of workload for a short period. The DCM, Ralph Clough, handled that, and he brought me in to assist him. For a brief period I was given access to the EXDIS cables that were flying back and forth.

*Q: And what did that involve regarding Embassy Taipei's reporting responsibility? What do you mean you --*

ROY: We were largely covering how the Republic of China was reacting to the French action, so we also had access to the cables that were going to Paris as well. The French were playing a delicate diplomatic game. In transferring diplomatic recognition to the PRC as the government of China, they deliberately did not break diplomatic relations with the ROC. They assumed that under the "one China" principle, the ROC would have to break diplomatic relations with them, which is what in fact happened. My task was to keep close track of all the restricted cable traffic related to this, so that the DCM would

be fully aware of what was taking place.

*Q: Let me shift subjects on you for a second. Given the lobbying back in the States and whatnot, the political section would generally handle CODEL's (congressional delegations).*

ROY: Yes

*Q: And I assume there was probably a fairly steady flow of CODEL's to Taiwan.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Remember any particular ones of interest?*

ROY: I don't actually. I was less involved in handling Codels than I was in Bangkok, where I can remember driving senators around in my little Volkswagen bug to take them to parts of Bangkok they were interested in seeing. In Taiwan, I have a much vaguer recollection of CODELs there. I do recall a visit by Michael Forrestal, who was a member of the senior staff of the National Security Council under McGeorge Bundy. I was his control officer and accompanied him when he was flown out to Kinmen (Jinmen, Quemoy).

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: Which was within sight of the Mainland. But curiously, I don't really have much recollection of CODELs in Taiwan. I wasn't involved in briefing them. And I'm not sure that we had all that many.

*Q: There was a fair U.S. military presence on the island?*

ROY: Yes. We had a large contingent of military advisers and some troops. There was a Military Assistance Advisory Group and a United States Taiwan Defense Command. We would interact with them socially, such as on trips to the Penghu Islands that included both embassy personnel and U.S. military advisers. On official matters, Peter Colm handled the pol-mil slot. So our contacts with U.S. military advisers were mostly unofficial.

*Q: Now, as in the French case, there were outside events that had a local impact in Taiwan. In October '62, you must have been interested in and reported on the local reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis on one.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: And the Sino-Indian War on the other. How was the political section workload affected by those two events?*

ROY: We did cover the Sino-Indian War. I remember being bemused by the discovery that privately Republic of China officials shared the viewpoint of the Chinese communists regarding the territorial issues in the war, although they did not reveal this publicly. In other words, their views were shaped by Chinese nationalism rather than by ideological differences with Beijing. They viewed the war as defense of Chinese territory rather than as aggression against India. They thought the Chinese communists were within their rights in defending Chinese territory.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was different. It had little impact on us locally since it did not involve a confrontation in Asia. The ROC was concerned about the willingness of the Kennedy administration to stand up to the Chinese communists, but they had no such qualms regarding U.S. firmness against the Soviets.

The assassination of President Kennedy in 1963 was another matter. As reflected in the ROC's problems with Ambassador Kirk, Chiang Kai-shek did not like or trust President Kennedy and was not inclined to mourn his death. For us Americans, on the other hand, the assassination was a traumatic experience.

I was shaving one morning when an American graduate student in Taiwan, Mark Mankell, telephoned me to say he had just heard on the radio that President Kennedy had been shot and wounded. It was a Saturday morning in Taiwan, and I immediately drove to the American embassy to see what needed to be done, hoping against hope that the president would survive. I was at the embassy when his death was confirmed. Our principal task consisted of organizing a memorial service, the main question being whether or not President Chiang Kai-shek would be prepared to attend. My recollection is that he did, but the ROC government was not devastated by this development, although they handled it with diplomatic correctness.

*Q: Now, in '63, as you said, Ambassador Kirk departed in January 1963. And I believe Ambassador Wright arrived in May, although he did not present his credentials until a bit later. My paperwork wrong, or do you recall?*

ROY: Different governments have different procedures for handling credential presentations. I encountered this in my own career. Sometimes they will make a special effort to complete the process. Sometimes they won't. I don't recall there being any unusual delay for Ambassador Wright in presenting his credentials to President Chiang Kai-shek.

*Q: You were saying earlier that Ambassador Kirk was eased out of office probably by successful ROC lobbying in Washington.*

ROY: Right, there were rumors to that effect.

*Q: This is the China Lobby, the Committee of One Million. I mean how did Foreign Service officers perceive the success of this lobby? Were we worried --*

ROY: Well, I'm talking about the rumor mill here.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: I don't believe that I heard this in Taipei at the time, where the justification for his leaving was his health. It was only when I got back to Washington that I heard that there may have been more to Ambassador Kirk's departure than simply health, that he had incurred the displeasure of Chiang Kai-shek. The story was that Chiang Kai-shek had conveyed the message to Washington that he had lost confidence in the American ambassador. I was skeptical of these rumors since Ambassador Kirk had faithfully represented the views of the Kennedy administration.

*Q: But in one sense they've still got a Navy man in right.*

ROY: Yes, and that was deliberate. The administration wanted somebody who had a professional understanding of the nature of the small naval raids that the ROC was running against the Chinese Mainland at the time.

*Q: Because I think there was a major naval battle at this time, in which the ROC lost a couple of destroyers.*

ROY: I don't remember such an incident while I was in the U.S. embassy in Taipei from 1962-64. I arrived in Taiwan for the language school in 1958 shortly after the second Taiwan crisis involving Quemoy (Jinmen). There was the Gulf of Tonkin crisis in 1964, but that was with North Vietnam in the South China Sea. During the period that I was in the Taipei embassy, I don't recall any high tensions with the Mainland. To the extent that ROC naval raids on the Mainland were causing tensions, it wasn't filtering down to my level.

*Q: Let's do a little background on the Kennedy assassination. How did the American community and then how did the local government respond to this terrible news?*

ROY: The Republic of China was always very good at protocol. So they handled it properly. But beneath the surface there was a clear recognition that Chiang Kai-shek and the Kennedy administration had not gotten along well together. Chiang Kai-shek was not devastated that Kennedy had been removed from the scene. The memorial service was conducted with all the proper trappings, but there was no strong feeling of shared grief. Most of the American community was devastated.

*Q: Along those lines, Secretary Rusk visited Taipei in April of '64. The political section would have been deeply involved in background papers and escort duties and whatnot. Can you talk about being a junior officer at an embassy that's just about to receive a secretary of state visit?*

ROY: I don't have specific memories of the Rusk visit to Taiwan. I do recall that while I was serving in Thailand, Secretary Rusk had visited the country in March 1961 for a



SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) meeting. At a meeting with embassy staff, Secretary Rusk had announced that he was bringing Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson back to Washington to serve as Under Secretary of State, a very significant promotion since at the time this was the number two position in the State Department.

In the case of Taiwan, I remember that Secretary Rusk came, and we had to go into the embassy in the middle of the night in order to translate editorials that were coming out in the newspapers and have them available by opening of business in the morning. However, we junior officers weren't directly involved in the talks, which were all at higher levels. We were included in some of the social functions, such as receptions and banquets, but our duties were to look after the VIP guests. Mostly, our involvement in the visit was to engage in the drudge work of keeping the visiting group informed of what was going on, which required a lot of night work.

*Q: Now, you're talking about translating editorials. That was always big business in Hong Kong to look at the vocabulary, look at the tone of things that were coming out of the Mainland. While you had contacts in Taiwan that you could follow up with, was there still this kind of textural analysis of the official media? Because I mean the KMT was a Leninist party and all the newspapers were owned by the KMT.*

ROY: We followed the press in Taiwan in terms of tracking attitudes towards the United States and domestic policy developments, but the importance of our coverage was far less than in the case of Hong Kong, which was focused on the China mainland, where we had no physical presence. Another difference between Hong Kong and Taipei was that Hong Kong had a massive translation service, whereas we relied mainly on Chinese language officers. Most foreign service officers in Hong Kong worked from English translations of mainland materials. In Taipei, we relied less on translations and tended to read the material directly.

Moreover, in Taipei the number of editorials that would be directly relevant to U.S.-China relations was limited. When we translated editorials, for example, we rarely did a word for word translation. Normally, we would read the editorial and then do a quick précis of any points of interest, while giving fuller coverage to comments on official visitors or U.S.-ROC relations.

*Q: Now, as 1964 proceeds, you were given this offer of Mongolian language training.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: How did that come up?*

ROY: It came in the form of a letter to me from the State Department concerning my onward assignment.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I think it came from the personnel division of the State Department noting that consideration was being given to establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of Mongolia, so with that possibility in mind, they intended to send two officers to Mongolian language training: a Russian language officer and a Chinese language officer. The question was whether I was interested in the Chinese language slot. I was, but everybody I consulted thought it was a bad idea. This was good advice in the sense that I was at a stage in my career where additional language training, as opposed to operational experience in the field, would probably delay my promotions.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: You were always assured, of course, that language training would not adversely affect your promotions, but common sense told you that it would. At least in my case it always did (*laughs*). You had to be philosophical about it. You knew you would be competing with officers engaged in substantive work, where high standards of performance would carry more weight with promotion boards than praise for being a diligent language student. This was true from a short-term perspective, but as we'll discuss later, it was the decision to take Mongolian language training that probably had the biggest positive impact on my subsequent career.

*Q: OK. Was Mongolian language training an ongoing program?*

ROY: No.

*Q: -- They were just starting it?*

ROY: At the time, the Foreign Service Institute did not offer Mongolian language training since we had no relations with Mongolia. So they had to start from scratch. The plan was to send two foreign service officers to the University of Washington in Seattle, which was one of the few universities in the United States that offered courses in Mongolian, to prepare for the possibility that the United States would establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia in the mid 1960s.

As luck would have it, we had barely begun our language training when the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred, resulting in intensification of the Vietnam War. This increased the importance of retaining access to airfields in Taiwan to support the U.S. supply chain to Vietnam.

The fly in the ointment was that Republic of China President Chiang Kai-shek considered Outer Mongolia, which had gained a degree of international recognition as the People's Republic of Mongolia, to be part of China. In contrast, Mao Zedong, under pressure from Moscow, had recognized the independence of the Mongolian People's Republic.

Under normal circumstances, Chiang Kai-shek's objections would not have been the determining factor. The heating up of the Vietnam War after 1964 changed that. While we were at the University of Washington, the Johnson administration made the decision not

to go ahead with the effort to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia, largely because of Chiang Kai-shek's objections. All this transpired after I had left Taiwan and begun studying Mongolian at the University of Washington.

Since we were already several months into our Mongolian language studies, the Department of State decided to let us complete the training program rather than simply canceling it. I supported this decision, even though it removed the possibility of having the opportunity to be part of opening a U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar at the end of the training.

*Q: So you were the Chinese language representative to this program. Who was the Russian language officer?*

ROY: Curtis Kamman.

*Q: Oh.*

ROY: He had very strong Russian, which gave him a big leg up on me because the best dictionary resources of Mongolian were in Russian. Outer Mongolia had been under the thumb of the Soviet Union for decades, and the Soviets had carried out a language reform that resulted in abandonment of the old Mongolian writing system in favor of a new modernized spelling written in a slightly revised form of the Cyrillic alphabet. The Cyrillic alphabet is easy to learn; anybody who is familiar with the Greek letters used in mathematics can master it in an hour or two. This contrasts with the Thai alphabet, which is horrendously difficult to learn, being borrowed from an old Khmer script with roots in Sanskrit and Pali rather than Greek.

The biggest problem I encountered was dictionaries. The only Mongolian-English dictionary was not suitable for everyday newspaper reading, while there were very good Russian-Mongolian and Mongolian-Russian dictionaries. At the time, I didn't know any Russian. To read newspapers, I literally had to buy Mongolian-Russian and Russian-English dictionaries. I would laboriously find the Russian translation of the Mongolian word, following which I had to look up the English translation of the Russian word. Often there would be several different Russian words for the Mongolian word, forcing me to find the English translation of each Russian word and determine which appeared to be the best translation of the original Mongolian word. It was very time consuming and dispiriting.

*Q: Now, why was the University of Washington chosen for this?*

ROY: Two reasons. The principal one was Professor Nicholas Poppe, who taught in the Far East and Russian Institute of the University of Washington. He was probably the world's leading specialist on Mongolic languages. He had written the definitive grammar of Khalkha-Mongolian, the principal dialect spoken in Mongolia. He was a refugee from the Soviet Union, and a former member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, who left the

Soviet Union during World War II and settled in the United States. He was the resource person on teaching us Mongolian grammar.

In addition, the Foreign Service Institute had arranged for an inner-Mongolian, Unen Sechen (Pao Kuo-yi), a Khorchin Mongol who had come to the United States via Taiwan, to teach us spoken Mongolian. He had studied the Khalkha dialect, which was the principal dialect spoken in the Mongolian People's Republic.

*Q: Now, was this under the Sino-Soviet Institute? Michael and Taylor's outfit?*

ROY: Our program was specially set up for us, but it was associated with the Far Eastern and Russian Institute at the University of Washington headed by Professor George Taylor. Professor Franz Michael was with the Institute, but he was away during the period we were there. We also participated in the Inner Asian Research Colloquium. We took the courses it offered and prepared papers there. We also had a reading program on Mongolia-related subjects. We read everything by Owen Lattimore that we could get our hands on to learn from his Mongolian experiences. Inner Asian Frontiers of China was a fascinating work that improved my understanding of China's history.

*Q: And how did you like living in my hometown for a year?*

ROY: Seattle? Loved it. I bought myself a convertible and would spend my weekends driving off to the Olympic Peninsula and around the Cascade Mountains. Following my graduation from high school 1952, I had picked strawberries in Everett, Washington, just to the north of Seattle, and had worked in an apple-packing factory in Wenatchee on the other side of the Cascade Mountains. As a result, I was somewhat familiar with the areas around Seattle.

The University of Washington offered many possibilities. I joined the sailing club and learned how to sail small boats on Lake Washington. I took skiing lessons available through the university and spent many weekends skiing in the Cascades. There were ski slopes at Snoqualmie Pass just 45 minutes away by car. While this was very convenient, you usually had to ski in thick mist. The Crystal Mountain ski area was an hour and a half away but offered much better weather conditions. There was a local gasoline war going on between competing brands during my year in Seattle, so gasoline cost between 25 and 30 cents a gallon. So I took full advantage of the outdoor recreational activities available in the Seattle area.

And we had a very good Mongolian program. Curt Kamman, the other foreign service officer in the program, was a very diligent student so keeping up with him forced me to keep my nose to the grindstone. Professor Poppe taught us the old Uighur script traditionally used to write Mongolian, in addition to the modified Cyrillic script that the Soviets had imposed on their Mongolian satellite. The old Uighur script exposed us to a completely different type of writing system and added to the interest of the program.

Naturally, it was an enormous disappointment to learn, as we were studying Mongolian,

that the intensification of the Vietnam War had forced the State Department to abandon its original plan to establish diplomatic relations with the Mongolian People's Republic. Nevertheless, we were far enough along in the program for us to be grateful when the State Department decided to let us complete a full year of the program rather than abandoning it in mid-stream.

My spirits were dashed during the summer, however, when the State Department picked Curt Kamman, because of his excellent Russian, to accompany a U.S. delegation to a UN conference in Mongolia that was held that summer. This made sense because Russian was the second language of Mongolia, while Chinese was far less useful there. Nevertheless, I had to wrestle to curb my resentment that I had not been given this opportunity as the more senior officer. Fortunately, the logic of sending Curt was so overwhelming that my resentment was short-lived, and never aimed at him. His first-hand accounts on his return of conditions in Mongolia provided a fascinating capstone to our program together.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: *(laughs)* Naturally, we were both eager to see Mongolia. My satisfaction came many years later when I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary responsible for China and Mongolia in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs in the State Department and supervised the actual establishment of diplomatic relations with Mongolia. But that's another story. My wife and I were able to spend several days in Mongolia in the early 1990s, when I was the U.S. ambassador in Beijing. We stayed with the American ambassador in Ulaanbaatar, who was a marvelous host.

*Q: Once the Mongolian training comes to an end, there's nothing to go with it..*

ROY: Right.

*Q: So how did they decide what to do with you?*

ROY: I have no idea how they decided it, but they did a very sensible thing. Without consulting us, they assigned Curt Kamman to Hong Kong and assigned me to the Soviet Desk in Washington. In other words, as long as we weren't going to immediately establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia, they took the Russian language officer and gave him China exposure, and they took the Chinese language officer and gave him Soviet exposure. As a result of that decision, I began a nine-year period when I worked exclusively in the Soviet Union.

*Q: And in fact, over time you find people who have sort of a Sino-Soviet connection, or a China-Japan connection.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: And it isn't until later when one could have a straight China career. So you're coming back to Washington in about August 1965. You haven't had a Washington assignment yet,*

*except for your initial INR assignment.*

ROY: OIR at the beginning, that's right.

*Q. How was the Soviet Desk organized and where did you fit in?*

ROY: The Soviet Desk was a big desk, as you might imagine. You had a director and a deputy director, both senior people. Mac Toon was the director and Jim Pratt was the deputy. You had separate sections handling Soviet domestic developments and U.S.-Soviet bilateral relations, a multilateral section handling Soviet international relations, an economic section, headed by Jim Colbert, which handled Soviet economic affairs, and an exchanges section that handled U.S. cultural interactions with the Soviet Union. The multilateral section was headed by Vladimir Toumanoff, with Sol Polansky as his deputy.

I was the new boy on the block with no background in Soviet affairs other than a college course on Russia. The bilateral section was larger. Our work didn't overlap that much. I covered Soviet involvement in Asia. I think there was somebody else there also. Sol handled the European aspects of the Soviet Union. Toumanoff was an experienced Soviet hand and could handle anything.

I spent three years on the Soviet Desk and loved it. I mean it was a great experience for me. I began to take early morning Russian lessons, which was a strain because you had to show up at FSI at seven a.m. over in Rosslyn, and take an hour of Russian. One of the other officers in the class -- this was beginning Russian -- was Mark Palmer, who later was our ambassador in Hungary at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the democratization process in Hungary. He had spent some time in the Soviet Union before joining the Foreign Service and had infinitely better Russian than I did as a new student. There were other beginning students in the class as well.

It quickly became clear to me that once I got away from Chinese, I had to scramble to keep up with fellow students. I didn't have the natural advantage of having grown up in the country that we were learning about. I'd taken a course on Russian history in college, so I knew something about the Soviet Union, but my assignment to EUR/SOV provided marvelous exposure to one of the key relationships for the United States at the height of the Cold War. Everything I encountered was intensely interesting.

*Q: Well, you were there of course as the American build-up in Vietnam occurs. So there'd be a lot of Soviet commentary on that issue.*

ROY: That's correct. There was a first secretary in the Soviet embassy at the time named Igor Rogachev, who followed the Asia portfolio for the Soviet embassy. I met him through receptions at the Soviet embassy, and he used to invite me out to lunch every few months. His English was not that strong at the time, and my Russian of course was primitive. However, he was a Chinese-speaking officer who had served in Beijing, so our lunch conversations were always in Chinese (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: We had an intense common interest in China. His father had been a professor of Chinese literature, and his sister was actually born somewhere in China, so like me he had a family connection to China. Curiously, years later when I was the American ambassador in Beijing, Igor Rogachev was the Russian ambassador to China. At the time, our relationship went back 25 years. When I was serving in Moscow, he was the political counselor of the Soviet embassy in Beijing, and when he came to Moscow we'd get together for an exchange of views. So it was a good long-term relationship, marked essentially by a common interest in China. He never spilled any state secrets, nor did I, but we both found it valuable to exchange views on our different perspectives of developments in China and Asia more broadly.

A lot was going on in U.S.-Soviet relations at the time. There was the Glassboro Summit between Johnson and Kosygin. There was the Vietnam War, which occupied quite a bit of my time. The Russians would periodically send over notes accusing us of having dropped bombs near Soviet freighters in Haiphong Harbor. We would ask the Pentagon for a report. They would respond that they had checked and there were no U.S. aircraft in the vicinity of Haiphong harbor at the time of the incident. We would send back a note to the Russians reporting what we had learned from the Pentagon. Two weeks later the Pentagon would send us a follow-up report saying, "Whoops, we have discovered that there were some U.S. aircraft in the vicinity at the time of the incident and they had dropped some unexpended ordinance in the harbor before they left." We would send another note to the Soviet embassy reporting this new development.

This pattern didn't happen just once but repeatedly, which taught me the lesson that initial reports are often inaccurate. Nevertheless, I was impressed that there was enough integrity in the system so when incriminating evidence belatedly emerged, it was brought to your attention.

I should also mention that around this time, after ten years of bachelorhood in the Foreign Service, I had finally met the girl of my dreams. Her name was Elissandra Nicole Fiore, and she was a graduate of Vassar College, where my mother had been educated. After a courtship spread over a year, we were married in St. John's Episcopal Church, within sight of the White House, in January 1968. Her father was a retired U.S. army colonel who had served as army attaché at the U.S. embassy in Madrid in the early 1950s, where Elissandra, known as Sandy, had spent three years attending primary school in a Spanish convent.

Given her Italian surname and convent schooling, I feared on first meeting her that she might have been raised as a Catholic, which would have posed a potential conflict with my Presbyterian upbringing. Happily, it turned out that her family was Episcopalian. As an army brat with part of her childhood spent in Spain, Sandy was well suited to the peripatetic nature of foreign service life. She made my remaining decades in the Foreign Service and after the happiest years of my life.

During three years on the Soviet Desk, I had never had an opportunity to go to Moscow. Perhaps for that reason, I was rewarded for taking three years of early morning Russian lessons by being selected to go to Garmisch in the West German alps, which is where the U.S. Army has its Advanced Russian School. My Russian was not quite good enough for the assignment, but it was just what I needed to get my Russian up to snuff.

As luck would have it, the path to Garmisch was not a smooth one. As the wheels in the EUR Bureau were falling into place for the assignment, the State Department out of the blue (meaning no advance consultation) assigned me to the China Section of INR. This would have wasted my three years on the Soviet desk, leaving me with inadequate Russian and limited experience in Soviet affairs. Moreover, I had already spent five years in the United States after returning from Taipei in 1964, and I needed more foreign service experience abroad.

It turned out that John Holdridge, with whom I was acquainted from my consular assignment in Hong Kong, was the Head of the China Section in INR, and he had picked me for the job. The personnel washed their hands of the matter, leaving it up to me to persuade John to release me. He was reluctant to do so, but he eventually relented, enabling me to proceed with the Garmisch assignment. This enabled me to translate my three years on the Soviet Desk into a career-enhancing opportunity to gain on-the-ground experience in the Soviet Union. I am very grateful that he did.

*Q: OK. So the assignment to the Soviet Desk was three years, so that'd be '65 to '68.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: And then Garmisch would be '68 to '69.*

ROY: That's right. I had to work my tail off in Garmisch because the U.S. Army Advanced Russian School was run as an approximation of a Soviet university. It didn't use English. Everything was in Russian. All of the coursework was in Russian, including all of the lectures, reading assignments, and the school notices. The teachers were emigres from the Soviet Union. It was a wonderful experience.

One of the terrific features of the Garmisch program was that you began the academic year with two months of familiarization travel through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The usual pattern was to spend a month in the Soviet Union and a month in the various countries of Eastern Europe. I paid the cost of adding my wife to the group, as did one of the U.S. Army officers in our class. In our case this paid dividends when we were later assigned to embassy Moscow, where my wife took a temporary job in the consular section. When American tourists stopped in with questions about various parts of the Soviet Union, she could authoritatively answer their questions based on personal knowledge of the localities.

We were scheduled to begin our trip in mid August with stops in Prague and Warsaw.



However, shortly before our departure from Garmisch, U.S. Ambassador Toon in Czechoslovakia prudently decided that the mounting tensions between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union made it inadvisable for us to stop in Prague, so we flew directly to Warsaw instead. From there, we went by train to Lithuania. I can remember arriving at the train station in Vilnius, where our Intourist guide informed us in Russian that the “allies” had moved into Czechoslovakia. In our minds the Russian term for allies, “soyuzniki,” meant the NATO allies (*laughs*), so our initial reaction was that this was a more serious problem than we had anticipated. Fortunately, the Intourist guide quickly clarified that the allies, of course, were the Warsaw Pact allies that had made the intervention. We recognized the gravity of the situation and wondered whether the Soviet authorities would permit us to continue with our itinerary in the Soviet Union. Fortunately, they did, and after a couple of days in Vilnius, we proceeded on to Leningrad and Moscow.

After several days in Moscow, we flew to Volgograd on the great bend of the Volga River in southern Russia. It is a historic city founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and bearing the name of Tsaritsyn until 1925, when it was renamed Stalingrad in honor of Joseph Stalin when he replaced Lenin as General Secretary of the Soviet communist party. Khrushchev changed the city’s name to Volgograd in 1961 as part of his de-Stalinization campaign. The city is noteworthy as the location for the Battle of Stalingrad during World War II and for a gigantic victory statue commemorating the heroes of that battle. It is the tallest statue in Europe, and the tallest statue of a woman in the world.

From Volgograd, we flew nearly 4,000 miles to Khabarovsk, a city in eastern Siberia bordering China at the intersection of the Ussuri and Amur rivers that was notable for the brown water that flowed from the taps in our hotel. We then spent three days on the Trans-Siberian Railroad traveling to Irkutsk, a city in central Siberia near to Lake Baikal, the world’s oldest and deepest lake, with nearly a quarter of the world’s supply of fresh surface water. We made what was supposed to be a one-day side trip to Bratsk to see the giant Hydroelectric Power Station there. However, an unexpected blizzard, unusual for September 7<sup>th</sup>, stranded us there for two more chilly days with only light summer clothing. We were told the city has only 90 days a year when the temperature does not drop below freezing.

On our return to Irkutsk, we flew to Tashkent in Central Asia, with additional stops in Bukhara, Baku, and Erevan in Soviet Armenia. We then continued on to Sochi, a delightful resort town on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. From there we took a Soviet steamer across the Black Sea to Yalta in the Crimea. The captain graciously invited us up to the bridge as we entered the harbor at Yalta and assured us that we could freely take photographs of the stunning scenery.

Our last stop in the Soviet Union was in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine. We had requested an opportunity to visit a police station there. To our surprise, the request was granted. The police agreed to answer our questions. We were assured that the most significant crime in Kiev consisted of jaywalking. The session then turned ominous. The police accused the group of multiple violations of Soviet regulations during our weeks in the USSR. Our

group leader, an Army lieutenant colonel who was Deputy Commandant of the Garmisch language school, was accused of surreptitiously searching the luggage of Soviet passengers on the Trans-Siberian railroad during our trip from Khabarovsk to Irkutsk. They claimed we had had improper contacts with Uzbek students in Tashkent. They said we had all violated Soviet security regulations by taking photographs of the harbor at Yalta. It was far from clear where this was heading. We were all traveling on regular passports and had no more protections than ordinary tourists. Fortunately, the meeting ended with nothing more than a severe admonition from the Kiev police for us to mend our ways. We headed for the railroad station to take the train to Romania reflecting on this timely reminder of the nature of the Soviet regime, which had left a sour taste in our mouths.

We could never come up with a fully satisfactory explanation for the police episode in Kiev. We had been well-briefed before the trip. We were all experienced travelers and had been on our best behavior throughout the itinerary. We had not earlier encountered any difficulties with the Soviet authorities. Granted, we were an unusual group, consisting entirely of U.S. army officers and American diplomats. However, these trips had been a basic part of the Garmisch curriculum for some time. The most likely explanation is the worsened climate in U.S.-Soviet relations that was exacerbated by the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of our trip. Regardless, we were glad to be leaving the Soviet Union.

At the Romanian border with the Soviet Union we were delayed for several hours while they jacked up the train cars to replace the wheel carriages with the narrower gauge used in Eastern Europe. Apparently, the Soviets, as a security precaution, had adopted a different railway gauge from their neighbors. After three weeks in the USSR, which was far less well developed than quite a number of the countries in East Europe, Romania seemed like a breath of fresh air. The hotel in Bucharest was more modern. We were starved for news, and for the first time in our travels, the International Herald Tribune was available to read at breakfast. It was easy to overlook the deficiencies of the regime. As a minimum, we felt half-way back in the West.

From Romania we flew to Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. It was an attractive city but clearly less developed than Bucharest. After two days, we took a bus north to the Danube River, where we boarded an attractive low-slung Danube river boat for the trip back to Vienna, with anticipated stops in Belgrade and Budapest. We received an excellent briefing from the American embassy in Yugoslavia, but our stop in Budapest was aborted by factors beyond our control.

Budapest is a beautiful city as viewed from the river, but the Hungarian authorities would not let our group disembark from the boat, as opposed to the other passengers, who spent the next two days touring the city. We later learned that the Hungarian government had refused to admit us in retaliation for the defection the year before of Janos Radvanyi, the Hungarian ambassador to the United States. Ironically, when we continued up the river after two frustrating days confined to the boat in Budapest, we discovered the Danube was too high to pass under one of the Hungarian river bridges, forcing us to disembark

and continue on to Vienna by bus. It was a fitting end to my first exposure to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

*Q: Let's switch back a little bit to the Soviet Desk. Your immediate boss was Vlad. What did you pick up from him in terms of Foreign Service skills and analytic skills?*

ROY: Well, it was --

*Q: Or what was this assignment to you in terms of your own development?*

ROY: I had to focus on delving into the background of events, since I lacked the historical memory that I had on Asian matters. I had a lot of catch-up to do in that respect. I had a general understanding of the Soviet Union through my college courses. And I'd had some limited exposure to Soviet diplomats in the Far East during my assignment in Bangkok, where we would occasionally encounter Soviet diplomats at receptions and diplomatic corps events.

When the Berlin Wall went up in 1961, I remember an encounter with a Soviet diplomat at a reception in Bangkok, where he laughably contended that the wall was necessary to stem the flow of West Germans into East Germany. That was my first exposure to diplomats who had to spout nonsense in order to adhere to their government's official line.

Vlad Toumanoff was a very experienced officer. He had served in Moscow from 1958-60 with Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson and through him had become acquainted with Nikita Khrushchev and his wife. Vlad came from a Russified Georgian family that was part of the Georgian nobility. His father had fought with the White Russian Army against the Bolsheviks during the Russian civil war and after emigrating to the United States had strongly opposed Roosevelt's decision to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. With this background, Vlad not only spoke fluent Russian but had an unusually strong familiarity with Russian history and culture. I could not have had a better boss to introduce me to Soviet affairs.

Vlad was also a good writer who knew how to couch analytical memos in the best possible way. Like Jim Leonard in Taipei, Vlad was the sort of boss that if he made changes in a draft memo, it was always an improvement from which you could gain useful pointers.

*Q: Now actually, when you're at an overseas post, you're confined to drafting cables and longer air grams.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Writing on the desk?*

ROY: In Washington, you're writing in normal English prose and mostly drafting

memoranda based on research, or proposing courses of action, or preparing briefing books. It's a different type of drafting. But once again, I was a history major in college. That type of background, I think, is superb preparation for Foreign Service work because you have learned how to do research, to have properly documented sources for any judgments you make, and to write as clearly and logically as possible.

What you had to learn in the State Department was how to sequence your presentation of information. This depended on the preferences of the senior officials for whom you were drafting. Some wanted a summary paragraph at the beginning of every memo. This made sense but resulted in repetition. Others did not require a summary at the beginning. Usually you described the issue, suggested alternative ways of handling it, and then added as much background and context as was necessary to understand the implications of different approaches. You basically tailored your presentations to meet the needs of the recipient.

*Q: I only have the telephone book, I think. Yeah, I've only got the telephone book.*

ROY: Is there a McCracken in it?

*Q: Colbert. No, in fact they summarize it even less. They only put the directors in it.*

ROY: Mm-hmm. In other words, there was one additional officer. So our multilateral unit would have been Vlad and Sol, with me handling Asia and McCracken handling everything else except Europe, which Sol handled. So I think that's the way we were structured.

*Q: So McCracken would have handled the Six Day War in June of '67 and Russian reaction to it.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: What was a -- I don't want to say typical work day, but typical product that would come out of your side of the Russian desk in those days? What was the Front Office interested in?*

ROY: Well, the Sino-Soviet dispute was becoming much more intense during the middle of the 1960s, and this was of great interest to the Secretary of State and other senior State Department officials on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. I stayed in close touch with the China desk, which of course was also following these developments closely, so I could keep Vlad and Mac Toon informed of relevant considerations. That's where my periodic contacts with Igor Rogachev in the Soviet embassy proved useful.

Secondly, we were becoming more deeply involved in the Vietnam War, and the Soviets were increasing their support for Hanoi. When we began bombing North Vietnam, the Soviet embassy would periodically send us diplomatic notes claiming that U.S. aircraft had dropped bombs dangerously close to Soviet ships in Haiphong harbor and demanding

that we halt this practice. I would contact the Pentagon for information on the alleged incident and then draft responses to the Soviet embassy conveying our position on their accusations.

This happened repeatedly and developed a familiar pattern. The Pentagon would initially deny that there had been such an incident. A few weeks later, there would be a follow-up report from the Pentagon stating that further information had become available: on the date in question some U.S. aircraft had dropped unexpended ordnance in Haiphong harbor at the conclusion of a mission, which might have fallen near a Soviet ship. I would then draft a follow-up note to the Soviet embassy conveying the new information. These episodes taught me a useful lesson that initial reports of incidents are often inaccurate.

I also learned a useful lesson from another experience. Mac Toon had a very forceful personality that could be intimidating. On one occasion, Vlad took me with him to a meeting in Mac's office to discuss what our position should be on some Asian issue, I can't remember exactly what. As the junior officer present, I assumed my role would be that of notetaker. At one point in the conversation, Mac turned to me and said, "What would you do?" I wasn't prepared for the question and fumbled some sort of response. But I never went into his office again without being prepared to offer a considered opinion if he wanted one.

On another occasion, I again learned a useful lesson. In the mid 1960s the Soviet Union still did not have diplomatic relations with the Philippines. As a result, Moscow resorted to various stratagems to gain access to the Philippines. We received a report that a Soviet trawler in the East China Sea off of the Philippines had radioed that it had run out of water and needed an emergency stop in the Philippines to replenish its water supply. The issue was briefly discussed at the morning staff meeting, and Mac Toon reacted in his usual fashion, saying "Those sons of bitches, they're pulling their usual tricks." Vlad Tumanoff wasn't around at the time.

When we went back to the office. The acting head of the Multilateral Section drafted an instruction to Embassy Manila asking it to inform the Philippine government that the Soviet trawler's request was a scheme to get ashore and recommending that the request be denied. I argued as forcefully as I could that Mac had just been sounding off at the staff meeting and wasn't taking a considered position. Even if it was a Soviet scheme, the ship had come up with a valid reason for requesting a shore visit, and the request should not be rejected. I urged the acting head to go back to Mac with the counter argument before sending the cable. The acting head would not budge, contending we should not challenge Mac's judgment, and sent the instruction as drafted. The cable had barely gone out, when the secretary of state personally revoked the cable and instructed that the Soviet ship's request to replenish its water supply should be approved.

Mac Toon was beside himself with rage because he had been posturing at the staff meeting. All it took was for somebody to walk into his office and say, "Mac, you can't turn these guys down. You've got to let them come in." I am confident he would have agreed immediately. (*laughs*). But his posturing at the staff meeting had been

misinterpreted by an officer who didn't think that you should walk back into the boss's office and challenge an apparent opinion of his.

The lesson I drew from this episode is that you need a certain amount of gumption in the Foreign Service. If you think something's in danger of being mishandled, you shouldn't hesitate to make the opposing case, whether it's Henry Kissinger's office or Mac Toon's office. You've got to be willing to go back in and make the counterargument.

My point is that I picked up all sorts of useful guidance from more experienced officers in the European Bureau, just as I had in the East Asian Bureau. In EUR/SOV, I was rubbing shoulders with a completely different crowd of colleagues and being exposed to a very different set of issues. Before that, most of my State Department friends had been exclusively in the East Asian Bureau. As was the case with the China specialists in the State Department, I found in the European Bureau that the demands of dealing with the Soviet Union, our principal opponent in the Cold War, attracted a very high caliber of colleagues stimulated by the challenges of dealing with an important but difficult relationship.

It was also a very sobering experience, because for the most part I was working with colleagues where I felt that I was the least well prepared and the least competent in terms of handling Soviet matters. It really made you work harder. One of the career-enhancing aspects of working on Soviet affairs was that there was heavy demand from the top levels of the government for your inputs. You had to be prepared to work your tail off. Another aspect was that there was a big staff in Washington working on Soviet-related issues, just as was the case with China. After working on Soviet and Chinese affairs for several decades, it required some adjustment to be assigned to a place like Singapore, where there might be one officer in Washington paying attention to your cables.

In Moscow, for example, we did all of our outside work in the morning when we got to the embassy, because in the afternoon you had to draft your cables. There was an eight-hour time difference with Washington, and senior officials in Washington expected to have your cables on their desks when they came to work in the morning. So you couldn't do late night drafting. You had to get your drafting out by mid-afternoon. This created a discipline in the way that you worked that was not typical of most other posts where I worked.

For example, when I became the U.S. ambassador to Singapore -- we'll get into this later -- I discovered that embassy officers thought that if you called on the foreign minister, they had a week to get the cable out reporting on your conversation. In Beijing, as in Moscow, most of our reporting was done the same day. If you had the secretary of state visiting, you might have to get out 23 cables before leaving the office. Officers worked until three a.m., on occasion, to get the cables out. You always had a clean desk in the morning. In Moscow that's exactly the way it was too. There was such demand for your inputs that you had to meet that standard. I thought it was very good training for demanding positions in the Foreign Service. I began to get that sense on the Soviet Desk in the State Department.

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*Q: Great. Well, let's break it off.*

*Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. We're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. You finished first secretary, is that as a diplomatic title?*

ROY: We let the definition of first secretary get wildly out of kilter with what it should have been. Under the old ranking system, you had to be an FSO-3 to gain the title of First Secretary. That could be FSO-1 in the new system when they created the Senior Foreign Service and the titles of Career Counselor, Career Minister, and Career Ambassador. In Moscow virtually all of our substantive officers were second secretaries, but our counterparts in other embassies, with comparable levels of experience to us, were all first secretaries and counselors. I think later they lowered the threshold for becoming first secretary.

*Q: Well, let's start with that because --*

ROY: In my case, I was never a first secretary or counselor. I left Moscow in 1972 as a second secretary, spent six years in various domestic assignments, and was assigned to our Liaison Office in Beijing in 1978 as a minister counselor (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs) Good diplomatic promotion. Where we left off last time, you had just finished Garmisch --*

ROY: Right.

*Q: -- and Russian language. And you'd been assigned to Moscow.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: In March of '69.*

ROY: March of '69, correct.

*Q: And the Garmisch assignment was attached to the Moscow assignment, wasn't it? I mean that was one of those things where --*

ROY: Garmisch assignments for Foreign Service Officers normally resulted in onward assignments to Moscow. In the late 1960s, when I attended the U.S. Army Advanced Russian School in Garmisch, we didn't have any consulates in the Soviet Union, so Moscow was the only post requiring advanced Russian language ability. The military officers at Garmisch normally did not go directly to Moscow assignments. They often were assigned to liaison functions with the Soviets in Eastern Europe.

*Q: So by mid '68 you knew what this Moscow assignment was going to be. Now,*

*according to the Foreign Service --*

ROY: I knew I would be assigned to Moscow, but I didn't know in what capacity.

*Q: Ah, OK.*

ROY: The school year in Garmisch ended in June. However, because of an unexpected vacancy in Moscow, I was pulled out of Garmisch in early March 1969 to become the deputy administrative officer in the Moscow embassy. The administrative counselor in Moscow was a senior officer who often did not speak Russian or had a very limited grasp of the language. The practice, therefore, was to have a Russian-speaking foreign service officer as the deputy in the admin section of the embassy. I was pulled out of Garmisch to fill that position, thus missing out on the final three months of the Garmisch program.

*Q: So you were the number two in the Admin Section of the embassy.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: And of course you've had all this admin training (laughs).*

ROY: Fortunately, the Admin counselor was an experienced administrative officer, so that compensated for my lack of administrative experience. Actually, I learned far more about the Soviet Union and the Russian people in the admin job than I did when I was moved to a political officer position.

Remember that I arrived in Moscow in early March 1969, just over six months after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. U.S.-Soviet relations were in a deep freeze. Our Moscow embassy had very little contact with Soviet officials. The Nixon administration had just taken office, and the new National Security Advisor, Dr. Henry Kissinger, preferred to handle any important matters with Moscow through the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin. Embassy Moscow was largely cut out of what was going on in U.S.-Soviet affairs.

As the deputy admin officer, I was in the one job in the Moscow embassy that involved constant direct contacts with the Soviets on matters ranging from the trivial (clearing diplomatic shipments through customs, managing the travel and language programs, acquiring tickets to the Bolshoi, etc.) to the more important (concluding negotiations on the site for a new embassy, beginning negotiations on conditions of construction for the new embassy, acquiring space for a new consulate-general in Leningrad, clearing periodic special flights permitted under a post-WWII agreement with the Soviets, etc.).

Just getting to Moscow from Garmisch was an adventure in itself, since we decided to make the trip by driving the small Volkswagen station wagon we had acquired on arriving in Germany rather than risking the delays of shipping it. Early March is still very wintry in northern Europe. My wife and I had to drive to a German port on the Baltic Sea, take an icebreaker to Helsinki (the Baltic Sea was still frozen), spend a day shopping for



necessities in Helsinki, and then make the two-day drive to Moscow, with an overnight in Leningrad.

The Soviet border was about midway between Helsinki and Leningrad. The contrast could not have been starker. The border station on leaving Finland was neat, courteous, and efficient. We then drove a half mile across a bleak no man's land of forests and deep snow drifts to be greeted by two menacing Soviet border guards with machine guns at the ready and decked out in magnificent ankle-length sheepskin coats, hats, and boots to ward-off the subzero cold. After checking our documents, they passed us through to the Soviet customs station several hundred yards beyond them.

Here we had a renewed taste of Soviet bureaucracy. After scrutinizing our documents, the Soviet officials informed us that we had to return to Helsinki since our Soviet visa issued at the Soviet embassy in Bonn was not properly signed, as indeed turned out to be the case. We argued as best we could that this was a Soviet error of which we should not be the victims. They were obdurate. We persisted, noting that Embassy Moscow had sent a diplomatic note to the Soviet Foreign Ministry informing them of the date and time of our expected arrival at the border. We had a copy of the note with us. Fortunately, we also had the foresight to have several copies of Playboy magazine in our luggage. The Soviet officials finally relented and let us drive on to Leningrad, after confiscating the magazines and some fresh oranges we had brought with us for the trip. We felt as though we had won our first battle of the Cold War.

We overnighted at the Astoria Hotel in Leningrad, which was reasonably comfortable until we discovered that the water on the bathroom floor was caused by the bizarre fact that whenever anyone flushed the commode on a higher floor, the toilet in our bathroom sent a geyser of water into the air. On the 300-mile drive to Moscow the following day, we were reminded of the ever-present Soviet surveillance system. On long stretches of road, rather than following you, the Soviet's monitor your progress through periodic check-points. If you deviate from your route or fail to show up at the expected time, they send out security personnel to find you. When we stopped at a town where we knew there was a gasoline station we could use, we found we had picked up a trailing vehicle. When we had difficulty locating the station, the occupants of the vehicle pulled us over and told us to follow them. We were relieved when they helpfully led us to the gas station.

*Q: You mentioned that your job involved more direct contact?*

ROY: Well, the first task I was handed at the embassy was to do the staff work for concluding the site agreement for our new embassy in Moscow. So, after several negotiating sessions at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, we got that out of the way by May of 1969. Then I was tasked with the job of beginning the negotiations with the Soviets on the conditions of construction for our new embassy. We soon got hung up over the right to use an American contractor if we wished. The Russians were insistent that we had to use a Russian contractor. We considered that to be an unacceptable security risk, so we wouldn't concede on that. As a result, the negotiations didn't progress at the speed that we had hoped for. Nevertheless, it was an interesting experience conducting those

negotiations.

My other responsibilities involved such things as running the embassy language program. I arranged to rotate my Russian language classes through each of the teachers. That gave me a better grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the different Russian teachers. On balance, they were all pretty good.

I also ran the travel program. Large sectors of the Soviet Union were off-limits to travel by foreign diplomats. We had maps showing which were the open areas, but even travel to open areas in the Soviet Union required at least 48 hours of advance notice to the Russians, who would approve or disapprove the travel. As a safety precaution, all American personnel of the embassy, including the military attachés, traveled in pairs, both to discourage provocations and to increase the likelihood that we could get an accurate depiction of an incident, if one occurred.

We also had a practice at the embassy of giving embassy officers an opportunity to get out of the Soviet Union to relieve the pressure of constant surveillance by taking the unclassified mail pouch up to Helsinki. Embassy staff were encouraged to sign up for these opportunities. Since all international mail was scrutinized by the Soviets, all of our personal mail was transmitted in diplomatic pouches and kept separate from classified material since we were not professional diplomatic couriers. As long as you remembered to sign up, you could usually count on escorting the unclassified diplomatic pouches to Helsinki at least once a year. The trip was by train and took about a day and a half. You would spend three or four days in Helsinki, and then bring back the unclassified mail pouch to Moscow.

In general, we tried to keep all personal information out of the reach of the Soviets. We read our personal letters in the embassy and never left any personal letters in our apartment. We didn't send any mail through anything other than the diplomatic pouch because of the security threat. Our apartments were generally scrubbed clean of anything but basic reading material, such as books and novels. Everything else was kept under secure circumstances in the embassy.

One of the more interesting aspects of the deputy admin officer job was that I had the opportunity to help set up our new Consulate General in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg again). When I moved into Soviet affairs in the mid-1960s, neither we nor the Soviets had any consulates in the other country. Our earlier consulates had all been closed down during the early stages of the Cold War.

The Soviets were eager to have a consulate-general in New York, a city that from a business, financial, and cultural standpoint was far more important than Washington, DC. The Soviets had a mission at the United Nations in Manhattan, but we did not permit the Soviet UN mission to perform consular functions. With the onset of occasional periods of détente in the bilateral relationship, we had a reciprocal interest in reopening a consulate-general in Leningrad. As a result we had negotiated an agreement with the Soviets permitting each side to open a consulate-general: New York for the Soviets and

Leningrad for the Americans.

We had selected Culver Gleysteen to be our new Consul General in Leningrad, and he had a personal interest in getting the consulate general open as rapidly as possible. Since he was still assigned in the Department, he would draft instructions for embassy Moscow on how to proceed with regard to the consulate general, and then fly to Moscow to participate in implementation of the instructions. As the deputy admin officer, I would accompany him on trips to Leningrad to inspect potential properties for the new consulate general.

We shared a common background since we were both the children of Presbyterian missionaries in China. Three of the Gleysteen boys ended up in the foreign service.

We had an interesting incident while I was the travel officer. The assistant agricultural attaché was taking the diplomatic mail pouch up to Helsinki. The Helsinki train departed at 11 pm on a track adjacent to the overnight train to Leningrad, which left at roughly the same time. He had accidentally boarded the wrong train, while his diplomatic pouches were loaded on the Helsinki train. When he went to his compartment, he found it occupied by a Soviet woman, who objected to his presence. An altercation occurred. The Russian female conductor sided with the foreigner with diplomatic status and forced the Russian woman to give up the compartment.

The next morning I got a call from the benighted diplomatic courier, who had arrived in Leningrad only to find that his pouches had gone to the Soviet-Finnish border, where they were awaiting his presence to clear them through customs. To make matters worse, the Soviets had closed Leningrad to diplomatic travel for a few days, which was the Soviet practice when they moved a submarine down the Neva River to the Baltic Sea. So we not only had a diplomatic courier in the wrong place, separated from his diplomatic pouches, but he was in a city temporarily closed to diplomatic travel.

I immediately called my usual contact in the Foreign Ministry to explain the problem and request his assistance in restoring the diplomatic courier to his wayward pouches. (*laughs*) The situation was so bizarre that he burst into laughter, which I couldn't help joining. Apparently, laughter was the right approach because the Foreign Ministry arranged a tour of Leningrad for our diplomatic courier and put him on the next train to the border, where he recovered his pouches and proceeded on to Helsinki. (*laughs*). There were no indications that the pouches had been tampered with. The incident, of course, would have been more serious if the pouches had contained classified material.

I handled another incident when embassy personnel reported that they were finding stray bullets in our dacha about an hour's drive north of Moscow. The dacha was a lovely country house, with a main cabin and several adjacent cottages where we could sign up to spend the weekend, have picnics, or go cross-country skiing in the adjacent forests. The main cabin was reserved for the ambassador if he wished to use it, but he rarely did, and embassy staff could use it in his absence. The dacha provided a nice break from the pressures of Moscow. We could find no explanation for the stray bullets.

I raised the situation with the Foreign Ministry, which said it would investigate. I expected this would be the last we heard of the matter. To my surprise, a few weeks later the Foreign Ministry contacted me to say they had discovered there was a rifle range near the embassy dacha, and apparently ricocheting bullets were somehow landing in our dacha compound. They said they had taken corrective action. Whatever the explanation, we did not discover any more stray bullets.

As I mentioned earlier, another aspect of my admin job was to clear diplomatic supplies through Soviet customs. We were authorized under post-World War II agreements to bring in a U.S. military transport aircraft every three months with diplomatic supplies. We used these flights to bring in classified equipment and supplies needed for embassy operations. The U.S. Air Attaché would secure Soviet clearance for each flight, and it was my job to clear the cargo through Soviet customs.

This became increasingly difficult because the Vietnam war was at its peak, and the only U.S. military aircraft we could secure for these flights all had olive green camouflage markings on their bodies, suggesting to even a casual observer that these were U.S. military aircraft that might have flown directly from Vietnam to Moscow. The Soviets had been honoring the postwar agreements, but these U.S. aircraft were becoming an embarrassment for them.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: -- The Soviets were of course very interested in the cargo on the aircraft, but the supplies were covered by diplomatic immunity and could not be directly inspected. They compensated for their embarrassment by stepping up their harassment of the shipments. They began to require that every item in the shipments be carefully weighed at the airport before being admitted. I would have to spend long hours out at the airport, along with the embassy's GSO (general services officer), making sure that the weighing process was handled in a satisfactory manner. They never challenged our right to bring in the planes. We had a self-interest in continuing the flights because, aside from the importance of the cargo, they provided another opportunity for embassy officers to fly out on the airplanes, if they needed a little leave from Moscow.

*Q: Now, in the Admin Section you would have been very much aware of embassy morale issues? I assume there was a commissary?*

ROY: There was a commissary, and it taught me a very instructive lesson about embassy morale. I discovered there were a certain number of embassy personnel who were only interested in complaining, not in correcting problems. For example, one of the principal sources of complaints had to do with the pricing and selection of the goods in the commissary. I always encouraged embassy personnel to come to me if they had any questions about the commissary, so I could look into the matter and take corrective action if necessary. This did not take care of the problem. Too many people were more interested in complaining than in identifying corrective action.

This realization provided an early lesson that was later reinforced as I moved up to more senior levels of management. You cannot passively wait for others to identify the problems. You must have a program of active outreach to identify the problems. When I became a DCM and ambassador, I tried to interview each departing officer to learn where there were areas for improvement. As DCM in Bangkok, I had regular lunches with the junior officers in the embassy to hear their complaints and ideas for where we should be doing things differently.

*Q: Now, how big was the Admin Section?*

ROY: It was small. We were outnumbered by the local employees. It really consisted of the counselor and me, plus the GSO who managed the General Services section, which was responsible for embassy and apartment maintenance and other matters vital for the wellbeing of our staff.

*Q: Now, the counselor was Harlan Southerland.*

ROY: Yes, Harlan Southerland.

*Q: What was he like to work for?*

ROY: Terrific. He was very friendly. He had a strong background in admin work, but he was quite comfortable letting me do most of the work of dealing with the Soviets. We got along very well.

The first problem I discovered when I moved into the section was that we were intermingled with the Soviet staff. Harlan had his separate office, but my desk was in the larger space adjacent to the desks of the Soviet employees. This was fine for normal admin work, which didn't involve classified material. However, when I got involved in the negotiations over the conditions of construction for the new embassy, I was working with material and drafting cables that should not be shared with local employees, even though it was not particularly sensitive. I quickly realized that this was untenable from a security standpoint because there were no barriers between my desk and those of the Soviet local employees.

So one of the first actions I took was to have a railing put up outside of Harlan Southerland's office so my desk could be located on the side of the railing away from the Soviet employees, who were instructed not to cross the barrier without permission. That improved our ability to isolate potentially sensitive information from unwanted eyes. Nevertheless, the Admin Section, by and large, did not deal with any highly sensitive issues.

In one case I spotted an article in a Soviet newspaper referring to electronic emanations from the roof of the American embassy. I immediately brought it to the attention of the DCM, who treated it as a very sensitive matter. Apparently, we were at odds with the

Soviets over whatever we were doing on the roof of the embassy, which they didn't like. They responded by radiating the embassy with microwaves, which we didn't like. Inadvertently, I was involved in issues that were way above my need to know (*laughs*). My job was to bring these matters to the attention of senior people and let them handle the questions.

*Q: One of the duties you would have had would be the frequent cost of living surveys or whatnot.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Did those take place in the Soviet Union in those days?*

ROY: Yes. We had a cost of living differential, and we had to handle the forms and circulate them in order to collect the data. Our job was to go out and collect the prices of commodities such as milk, eggs, and bread, as a reference point for determining whether the prices were what you would consider normal or abnormally high. That was another of the functions of the deputy admin officer. We enlisted the assistance of embassy spouses in collecting this data.

I also worked closely with one of my fellow Garmisch students, Charles McGee, who had arrived at the embassy to become the book procurement officer. He traveled extensively around the Soviet Union looking for books of potential interest to the U.S. intelligence community. We were particularly interested in acquiring telephone directories, which were virtually nonexistent. Nevertheless, we were always looking for them.

The Soviets were so security conscious that they didn't provide any detailed street maps of their cities. They also deliberately falsified the position of cities on their country maps so they couldn't be used for missile-targeting purposes. The only available Soviet map for Moscow, for example, only showed the main artery roads, but none of the smaller streets. To locate a particular address, you had to use an accompanying book which listed all of the names of streets in Moscow, with notations that this or that street was located between this main street and that main street, a frustrating and laborious process.

This was so inefficient that the U.S. intelligence community had declassified satellite imagery of Moscow, which was used to produce a booklet containing highly accurate street maps of Moscow by sectors, which showed street names and the locations of foreign embassies, main Soviet buildings, and other points of interest. This map became a hot commodity in the diplomatic community because foreign embassies were desperate to acquire copies to ease the work of their diplomats in moving around Moscow.

One of the functions of American diplomats in Moscow was to verify the map by visiting different parts of Moscow to check the location of features shown on the map. For example, we found that this or that embassy might have moved to a different location, while the map still showed its former location. Or a Soviet office building might have been misplaced. We discovered quite a few errors, although the sectoral maps were

generally highly accurate. We reported these discrepancies to Washington, so the next edition of the map could be corrected.

Decades later, when I was serving in Indonesia, an incident occurred in 1999, when we accidentally bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade thinking the building was a warehouse. Based on my experience in Moscow, I was confident that this had been an error caused by using a map where the location of buildings had not been verified on the ground. I explained this to the Chinese ambassador in Jakarta, but the Chinese remained convinced that our bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was deliberate. My takeaway from my experience in Moscow was to be careful about becoming overconfident in the accuracy of the information on which you are basing your decisions.

*Q: Now, you're a fairly new officer.*

ROY: I was already an FSO-4 and had been in the foreign service for nearly fifteen years, including three hard language training assignments.

*Q: Yeah.*

ROY: So I was a junior middle grade officer.

*Q: Did the embassy have any program for young junior officers? Or were there many --*

ROY: The practice coming in from Garmisch was that usually you would begin in a consular job, or one of the admin jobs including book procurement. The deputy admin officer was one of those jobs. You would do those jobs for a year or more and then rotate into a political or economic position.

*Q: Embassies like the Philippines and whatnot have these massive consular sections --*

ROY: Right.

*Q: -- with dozens of junior officers. That kind of staffing wasn't the pattern in Moscow.*

ROY: No, we did not need a large Consular Section because there was very little travel between the Soviet Union and the United States. One of my colleagues from the Soviet Desk before I went to Garmisch, Bob Barry, had been in Garmisch the year before I was there. He was still the head of the Consular Section when I arrived in Moscow, but he later moved on to one of the positions in the political section. So that was the practice. I was not surprised to be assigned to the admin position, rather than going directly into a political officer position.

The key difference was this. In the 1960s, the Department had become concerned that too many foreign service officers were staying put in one bureau and failing to develop a broader sense of the diversity in the world. So it had launched a program designed to provide foreign service officers with greater out-of-area experience. It was called the

Global Perspective program, which was referred to as GLOP. It provided incentives for officers to seek out of area assignments, including language training if necessary.

In the case of the Soviet Union, the program made a lot of sense. For a number of years officers with experience in Latin American, Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East were picked to spend a year in Russian language training, followed by a two-year assignment in embassy Moscow, with the expectation that they would then return to their original geographic areas taking with them a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of the Soviet Union. The problem had been that in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and to a certain degree in East Asia, officers had no experience in dealing with Soviets. This adversely impacted on their ability to evaluate the actions that the Soviets were taking in their regions of the world.

For a decade prior to my arrival in Moscow, a series of Chinese language officers, following a year of Russian training, had been assigned to the Moscow embassy's political section for two year tours as part of the GLOP program. Marshall Bement, who had been a fellow student with me at the Taichung Chinese language school in 1958-59, was one of the first officers selected for this program. He was followed by William A. Brown, and then by Sherrod McCall.

Sherrod had served with me in Embassy Taipei before I switched over to Soviet Affairs. He was handling the East Asia portfolio in Embassy Moscow's political section when I arrived in Moscow in March 1969 as the deputy admin officer. He was a superb political analyst. He had given me invaluable pointers on public speaking when we served together in Taipei. He left Moscow in 1970 when he was reassigned to the American Consulate General in Hong Kong, where he excelled at penetrating the mysteries of the power struggles underway in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution.

Unfortunately, the GLOP program withered away in the early 1970 because of funding restraints. When I moved up to the political section in the summer of 1970 to replace Sherrod McCall, I did so as a Soviet-track officer, not as a GLOP specialist from East Asia. Sherrod went back to an East Asian job on leaving Moscow, whereas I was reassigned to the Soviet desk in Washington when I left Moscow in 1972.

However, in 1970 the external division of the Moscow embassy political section was still staffed by GLOP officers. Pierre Shostal was the Africa person. Norm Anderson was the Middle East person. Wayne Smith was the Latin America person. So the external unit of the political section was still mostly staffed by people who had received Russian language training but were not Soviet specialists per se.

*Q: Was that part of GLOP, or was that the way the embassy had always operated --*

ROY: No, this was part of the GLOP program. I got to Moscow in early March of 1969. In the summer of 1970 I moved up to the political section, which is when Sherrod left, so his two-year assignment would have begun in 1968. He had a predecessor in the job who I think was William A. Brown, who must have been there from 1966 to 1968. He was



preceded by Marshall Brement, who I think was the first officer in the GLOP job in Moscow. But this was the same with the other geographic people.

I thought GLOP was a very useful program. It was particularly useful for us in the embassy because that meant that our political section had people who actually knew the geographic areas regarding which they were covering Soviet activities. If you just assigned a random Soviet specialist to cover these areas, they would have had to learn on the job the characteristics of the geographic regions they were covering.

*Q: Now, you were mentioning that from time to time you would report to the DCM, Emory Swank?*

ROY: Yes, Coby Swank. Emory C. Swank. He went by his middle name, which was Coblentz, shortened to Coby. He was followed by Boris Klosson.

*Q: So did you have fair access to the Front Office?*

ROY: Yes. I didn't use it much, but in my negotiations on a new embassy site and the conditions of construction for a new embassy, I often needed front office clearances.

*Q: What kind of atmosphere did the Front Office have? I think the Ambassador was Jacob Beam?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: And Swank. How would you characterize the atmospherics of the embassy under their guidance?*

ROY: It was very collegial. Most of us didn't have any compunctions about bringing matters to the Front Office when necessary. There was a shared sense of having worked together in the past, often through assignments to the Soviet Desk. We knew each other, and our patterns of assignments had overlapped to some degree.

DCM Swank was a friendly and open person, who was respected for having a lot of experience on the Soviet Union. Ambassador Beam had a pleasant and rather quiet personality. He was steady and reliable, but low-key in manner. He was a Soviet hand, but he was not in the Chip Bohlen-Tommy Thompson school. His Russian was not very strong. He had been out of the Soviet Union for an extended period. He was our ambassador in Warsaw before coming to Moscow. He was familiar with the Soviet Union, but he was not comfortable using his Russian. He was replaced by Walter Stoessel, who had much stronger Russian and used it more than Ambassador Beam did.

*Q: Now, Moscow would have been an interesting or unique post because of the housing arrangement. Wasn't there one building that everybody lived in or something like that?*

ROY: No, not one. We were scattered around in several diplomatic apartment buildings,

which differed substantially in terms of convenience and size of apartments. The most desirable apartments were located on Kutuzovsky Prospekt, within walking distance of the embassy. They were newer buildings. The other major compound was on Leninsky Prospekt.

My wife and I spent our first year and a half in Moscow living in a tiny apartment in a diplomatic compound on Donskaya Street, not far from Gorky Park. This was a nice, quiet area several blocks from the Donskoy Monastery, with an active Russian Orthodox church right across the street from our apartment. This gave the street a more traditional atmosphere than the broad Soviet-era boulevards where the other apartments were located. The main liability was the tiny parking area which was clogged with snow drifts during the winter months. We spent a year and a half there, and then through embassy rotation we were able to move into a lovely apartment in the Kutuzovsky compound with over double the space.

*Q: Now, these compounds, were the buildings all-American or all-diplomatic?*

ROY: The diplomatic compounds were all-diplomatic, not exclusively American.

*Q: Right, but I mean the Russians can --*

ROY: We were mixed in with other nationalities. Diplomats were not permitted to live on the local economy; they had to live in the diplomatic compounds. Many of us would have preferred not to be cooped up in diplomatic compounds, but the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the Soviet security authorities did not want us to be scattered among the Russian population of Moscow. Also, given the housing shortage in the Soviet Union, it would have been next to impossible to find suitable apartments for rent.

We all envied the longtime foreign residents who in some cases, either by being considered friendly to the Soviet Union, or by virtue of some other special consideration, had been able to acquire homes or apartments that were not located in special compounds for foreigners. The foreign journalists in Moscow did not live in the diplomatic compounds, but they also had to live in specially designated apartment buildings.

A universal problem was that in winter the snow drifts would pile up in the parking lots, making parking very congested. Shortly after our arrival in Moscow, my wife and I encountered a problem that turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The new VW mini station wagon that we had purchased in Germany was one of the first to have a fuel injection engine. It had performed perfectly while we were living in Garmisch, but after a half year in Moscow, it began to cough and lurch, and we had increasing difficulty starting the engine. The West German embassy had a mechanic who would service German automobiles from other embassies, but he lacked the equipment to deal with fuel injection engines. We ended up having to ship the car to Helsinki on a flatcar to be serviced. The problem undoubtedly was the Russian gasoline, which had impurities that were clogging up the fuel injection system.

So for about two months, my wife and I were without a car. The benefit was that we got to know the Soviet public transportation system extremely well because I was commuting to the embassy by bus and subway. I was three and a half years in Moscow and never used a taxi because I'd gotten to know the local transportation system so well that I used it all the time.

*Q: Now, in the summer of 1970 you were rotated into the political section --*

ROY: Right.

*Q: -- as the China watcher or what was your portfolio?*

ROY: Asia basically. Initially, the Political Counselor was Jim Pratt. He was followed by Tom Buchanan. You had a domestic section that was headed by Ed Hurwitz and an external section that was headed by Mark Garrison. Under each of those sections you had officers who would be assigned to particular functions, such as following Soviet domestic politics, or arms control, or Soviet relations with various parts of the world. In the external section of the political section we had an officer who followed Asia, and other officers for Africa, Latin America, Middle East, and Europe. The counselor or his deputy usually followed Europe. These were officers with more experience under their belts.

*Q: And following the Asia portfolio, would you have gone over to Soviet foundations, lectures, universities? Who were your main contacts?*

ROY: Well, essentially the Russians wouldn't give us any contacts. I tried to call on the China Section of the Foreign Ministry, but they wouldn't give me an appointment. I tried to visit the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Far Eastern Institute. They wouldn't give me the time of day. So we would go to Knowledge Society lectures. Any activity that was open to the public I attended. Ed Hurwitz had served in South Korea, and he and I would sneak off to attend Soviet-North Korean friendship events to get a feel for how that relationship was developing. I remember we went off one evening, dressed very casually, to a commemoration of 30 years of DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)-Soviet friendship, or something like that. We kept our heads down and listened to the speeches, joining in the applause as though we were Soviets.

That's what you basically had to do. We would read the journals and magazines, we would comb the bookstores, we would follow the news that was published in the papers. This was the best we could do since our contacts with specialists, academics, and ordinary people were all highly restricted.

That's why Kissinger's trip to Beijing in July 1971 had such a dramatic impact on my work in Moscow. His unexpected appearance in Beijing shocked the Russians to the core of their being. They had not anticipated this development, and they had difficulty believing it was possible. They recognized instantly that this was a turning point in the Cold War, with negative implications for their own position in the world. From holding us at arms length, they became intensely focused on finding out what the Americans were

up to with China. For the first time, I had access to Soviet China specialists. When we received a film of the Nixon visit to China, I was able to invite a group of China specialists from the Foreign Ministry to dinner at my apartment, followed by a screening of the Nixon visit to China. They enthusiastically identified all of the Chinese officials who made appearances in the film, while I identified the Americans. (*laughs*).

*Q: As part of the background, what was the Soviet attitude toward the Vietnam issue?*

ROY: Frosty. After President Nixon went to Beijing in February 1972, he was scheduled to visit Moscow in late May. To prepare for that visit, Kissinger made a secret visit to Moscow in April, when he met with Brezhnev on April 20 without U.S. Ambassador Beam being aware that he was in Moscow until just before Kissinger's departure. Under Secretary Larry Eagleburger visited Moscow in early May to assess the likelihood that stepped-up U.S. bombing of North Vietnam would disrupt the Nixon visit, and to oversee preparations for the visit. The U.S. bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong was in retaliation for major incursions into South Vietnam by regular military forces of North Vietnam.

The intensified hostilities in Vietnam just before the Nixon visit to Moscow were clearly an embarrassment for the Soviet leadership. Nevertheless, in the wake of the successful Nixon visit to Beijing in February 1972, Brezhnev and his colleagues were not about to scuttle the Nixon visit to Moscow. I can remember my surprise when Eagleburger dropped into my tiny office in the embassy to discuss the likely Soviet reaction.

*Q: Yeah. Kissinger's trip was in April 1972?*

ROY: Correct. What had happened was Ambassador Beam would occasionally see Gromyko for discussions of Vietnam, either to deliver a message under instructions from Washington or because Washington wanted him to get Soviet views on the topic. He would normally take me along as the note taker if it was an issue involving Asia. I had accompanied him to several meetings with Foreign Minister Gromyko in which there had been discussions of East Asia and Vietnam.

When Henry Kissinger made his secret visit to Moscow in April of 1972, unbeknownst to Ambassador Beam, the ambassador was puzzled when the Soviet Foreign Ministry summoned him to a meeting in the Ministry one afternoon. He called me in just before lunch to ask me to standby to accompany him if the topic had to do with Asia. Later that afternoon I learned that the Foreign Ministry had asked him to come unaccompanied and that he had already completed the meeting.

At the meeting he was shocked to be introduced to Dr. Kissinger, who was en route to the airport after spending several days in Moscow, including a meeting with Brezhnev. Needless to say, this had been a humiliating experience for the ambassador, who chose to swallow his pride and bear up as best he could. Later I attended a small private lunch that Ambassador Beam and his wife hosted for a visiting American astronaut, at which the subject of Kissinger's visit arose. The ambassador's wife, who was refreshingly outspoken, made no secret of her view that the ambassador should have resigned on the

spot. That was not Ambassador Beam's style, but there was no question it had been a painful episode for him.

*Q: What was Kissinger's intent, as the embassy understood it?*

ROY: He was there to prepare for the Nixon visit and to press Brezhnev to complete the Strategic Arms Limitation negotiations so an agreement could be concluded at the summit. The Nixon White House, which included Henry Kissinger as the national security advisor, basically kept the State Department at arm's length on the key relationships with China and the Soviet Union that were managed from the White House. Dr. Kissinger went to considerable lengths to develop good relationships with American journalists, who understandably were flattered to be taken into his confidence. We often could learn more from American journalists about what was going on in U.S.-Soviet relations than we could from the State Department.

That was just the reality. To illustrate the problem I can cite two episodes. I learned from British diplomats that they had a special classification for information shared with them by the White House that could not be revealed to the State Department. Second, after I left Moscow in 1972 and was heading the Multilateral Section of the Office of Soviet Union Affairs in Washington, I was detached to Helsinki for a month in February 1973 to serve as the Soviet advisor to Ambassador George Vest, who headed the U.S. delegation to the multilateral negotiations in Finland in preparation for the initial meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe scheduled for Helsinki that summer.

So I spent a month in Helsinki in the middle of winter. George Vest, who was a superb diplomat, would have a weekly lunch with the Soviet ambassador to the negotiations and would take me along as the note taker. In one case, I was preparing a reporting cable to Washington on the most recent lunch when the Soviet ambassador telephoned Ambassador Vest in a near panic and begged him not to report some of his comments at the lunch. He said he had accidentally revealed information acquired from the White House under conditions that it could not be shared with the State Department. If we reported the information, he would be in deep trouble. Ambassador Vest instructed me to omit the information from the cable and said he would handle the matter privately himself. While he did not tell me how, I assumed that he discreetly shared the sensitive info orally with the key people who needed to know in the State Department.

*Q: Did you get a chance to do much internal travel in your Moscow jobs?*

ROY: -- Well, I've already mentioned the Garmisch trip through the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In my admin officer and political officer jobs, I traveled as much as I could, but work pressures sometimes got in the way. I accompanied our book-purchasing officer on a trip to Minsk shortly after our first moon landing in July 1969. In the evening we attended a Knowledge Society lecture, where the audience was intensely interested in learning more about the U.S. mission to the moon. The Soviet press had given grudging coverage to the American moon landing, but much less than it deserved. In the Minsk lecture, which was not aimed at a foreign audience, the speaker treated the landing as a

great achievement, noting that the remarkable thing about it was the reliability of the systems. We reported this to Washington, which was very interested in getting this peek behind the curtain into the Soviet assessment.

A group of us made a trip by car to Vladimir and Suzdal. We made another trip by train to Ryazan, a historic city about 120 miles southeast of Moscow. The Foreign Ministry made us buy expensive tickets on the overnight sleeper to Ashkhabad in Turkmenistan, even though we would only be on the train for a few hours. We decided to change our return plans, walked into the Ryazan station, and found we could simply purchase much cheaper return seats on a train to Moscow, where we were seated with ordinary Russians. Evidently Soviet travel controls were not as oppressive as they were in Moscow.

On another occasion, I accompanied an American youth orchestra on a trip to Alma-Ata and Novosibirsk. It was spring, and Novosibirsk was coated in mud spattered by trucks entering the city since the roads outside the city were unpaved.

Another fascinating trip with an embassy colleague was to Pyatigorsk in the Caucasus, the town where the famous Russian poet Lermontov was killed in a duel in 1841. We rented a car and drove to Gori, high in the mountains, the birthplace of Stalin. Khrushchev had suppressed references to Stalin in most of the Soviet Union, but in Gori a giant statue of Stalin dominated the central square, and we spent several hours in a fascinating museum devoted to the life and achievements of Stalin. We took a side trip to Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe. We were delayed on our return by a horrendous blizzard in Moscow, forcing us to spend a day and a half in the Kislovodsk airport. When our flight finally took off, the snowfall was still so heavy in Moscow that the pilot had to make two unsuccessful attempts before he landed the aircraft.

My wife and I accompanied a Codel to Tashkent. We brought with us numerous string bags that we loaded with fruit and vegetables on our return, items unavailable in Moscow for most of the winter. I accompanied Senator Hugh Scott, the minority leader of the Senate, on a trip to Kiev, during which we found we had a common interest in Chinese art and culture. I was impressed by his ability to outsmart the young female cashiers in the omnipresent Beryozka stores, state-run retail stores that sold goods for hard currency to tourists. The cashiers were skilled at manipulating exchange rates to earn a personal profit on each sale, often returning your change in obscure foreign currencies. We formed a friendship that later gave me interesting insights into the Watergate scandal, as I will mention later.

I also was the control officer for a visit by the White House fellows, an enormously impressive group of rising young leaders who were selected for influential internships in a variety of U.S. government departments. I accompanied them on their trip to Kharkov in the Ukraine Soviet Socialist Republic. I was also the control officer for visits by David Rockefeller and Milton Eisenhower, then the President of John Hopkins. To my surprise, I found the Russians were greatly impressed by both names.

My tour in Moscow was also notable for the trips I did not take. I tried repeatedly to get

Soviet Foreign Ministry permission for a trip down the Volga River on the regular passenger boats that shuttled back and forth on the river. These trips were open to foreign tourists but not to diplomats. I also repeatedly tried, without success, to get permission to visit Tannu Tuva, on the border with Mongolia.

*Q: Now, you were there when Brezhnev was head of the Soviet Union. What did the embassy see as Soviet leadership styles as they transitioned there.*

ROY: Well, I was in the external unit of the political section, which covered Soviet foreign policy, not internal developments. However, I was intensely interested in every aspect of the Soviet Union. Technically, the triumvirate of leaders that replaced Khrushchev was still in place. Brezhnev was the top dog as general secretary of the party, Kosygin headed the government, and Podgorny was the chief of state. By the late 1960s, Brezhnev had clearly emerged as the first among supposed equals in the leadership.

This arrangement created protocol difficulties. Top leaders throughout the world have giant egos and expect to deal with the top leader in any country they visit. When Pompidou replaced de Gaulle as President of France, he visited the Soviet Union in 1970. In protocol terms he was the French Chief of State, which made Podgorny his official host. But Pompidou wanted to deal with Brezhnev, not Podgorny. This required some complicated workarounds.

The Soviets finally solved this problem in 1977, when Podgorny stepped down and Brezhnev took the title of Chief of State along with his position as head of the Communist Party. The Chinese eventually adopted the same approach, which is why Xi Jinping is the Chief of State of China, although his power flows from his position as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party.

We Americans are very obtuse on this. Under our constitutional system, the President is both Head of State and Head of Government. The Vice President is only Deputy Head of State, not Deputy Head of Government. The Vice President, as originally conceived, can preside over the Senate because the incumbent is not technically part of the Executive Branch. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, administrations respected this arrangement, and Vice Presidents played no role in the Executive Branch, unless and until they assumed the presidency because of the death of the incumbent while in office.

This changed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the vice presidency gradually began to be treated as part of the Executive Branch, while continuing to preside over the Senate. The Vice President is now both a statutory member of the Cabinet and of the National Security Council. We are now treating the Vice Presidency as a de facto deputy head of government, which is inconsistent with its constitutional role of presiding over the Senate.

This creates both constitutional and protocol anomalies. It is easy to understand why the top leader in one country wants to deal with the top leader in another country, regardless

of protocol equivalence. However, power relationships within regimes differ from one country to another. Moreover, some countries are sticklers for protocol, while others give it less importance. For example, President Nixon would send messages to Mao Zedong, who was the Communist Party Chief in China, not the Chief of State. Mao did not have any government or state functions. The response would come from Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, who was President Nixon's counterpart as head of government. The Obama administration treated Vice President Gore as the counterpart of Premier Medvedev in Russia, which was a mismatch, while the President would deal with Putin, when he was President of Russia. In fact, the U.S. president was the counterpart of both.

*Q: As your portfolio begins to unfold, you have on April 10 of 1971 the U.S. ping-pong team going to China. That made a big splash. Then Kissinger went to Beijing in July.*

ROY: Right, the visit to China by the U.S. ping pong team did indeed make a big splash, since it was the first visit to the People's Republic of China by a U.S. delegation since 1949. The Kissinger visit made an even bigger splash.

*Q: But still, it isn't until the president's visit that you start getting some attention.*

ROY: No. Kissinger's visit was a gigantic event since it was a visit by a senior U.S. official, while the U.S. ping pong team consisted of ordinary unofficial Americans.

*Q: Kissinger, then on July 9<sup>th</sup>.*

ROY: Opened official contacts. It was a gradual process. When I first arrived in Moscow in 1969, we would occasionally be at diplomatic receptions that were also attended by Chinese diplomats. We would studiously ignore each other since neither side was authorized to have any contacts with the other. After the Kissinger trip, and especially after the president's trip, these rules gradually were relaxed. First, we were authorized to have informal conversations with Chinese diplomats at diplomatic receptions, but we could not invite them to our homes. Generally, this was coordinated by Washington with Beijing, so the Chinese diplomats received comparable instructions from their government, permitting them to talk to us. It was amusing because I would always speak Chinese to them, not Russian, and the other foreign diplomats who were trying to eavesdrop on our conversations usually didn't know Chinese. *(laughs)* --

*Q: Actually, that raises another point. In all capitals in the diplomatic world, certain embassies get together and share information and whatnot. Who would you say the American Foreign Service Officers worked most closely with? I mean, was there a Friday afternoon econ officer's meeting of the Anglo-Saxon embassies?*

ROY: There was nothing formalized like that. But that's true in any post I've served at. You learn who are the givers and who are the takers. Generally you don't waste much time developing relations with people who don't have many contacts locally, don't have any background or analytical abilities, et cetera, because it's a waste of time from a substantive perspective. They may be nice people, you're delighted to spend the weekend



with them, but you don't necessarily call on them.

The Romanians were always interesting, because they had a special relationship with China at the time. And they purported to be a little more independent from the Russians than some of the other East Europeans. East Europeans were generally not useful contacts because they were under too tight ground rules themselves.

Among the Asians, the Japanese were worth paying attention to. So were the Australians. Singapore didn't have an embassy in Moscow, but they had a representative. The Indians and Pakistanis were both worth staying in contact with. I would go to Burmese functions, but you wouldn't get anything from them because they weren't really doing anything there. The Indians had a superb embassy. The Pakistani ambassador was first rate. The Indo-Pak War of '71 occurred at that time, which resulted in the separation of Bangladesh, the former East Pakistan, from Pakistan.

*Q: That's right.*

ROY: This was a big event that we spent a lot of time covering. I was very active with the Indian and Pakistani diplomats.

*Q: That war broke out December 3, 1971.*

ROY: Right. The Soviets played a much better hand than we did in that war. Kissinger felt, for understandable reasons, that Pakistan's role in facilitating his trip to Beijing meant that we had to tilt toward Pakistan during that war. From a substantive standpoint, however, that was a difficult position for us to be in because Pakistan was in the process of breaking apart because of differences between West Pakistan and what became Bangladesh. The Russians had positioned themselves on the side of India, and it was a better position for them to be in. So it was an awkward spot for us.

At the same time, it was painful to watch the Pakistan embassy, which then had to divide into two embassies. The Pakistani ambassador was named Jamsheed Marker. He was a very skillful diplomat and handled the painful separation of Pakistan into two independent countries with great wisdom and compassion. He held over ten ambassadorial assignments for Pakistan.

The Indian diplomats in Moscow were also very professional. They had very good people there, so we would see a good deal of them. Latin Americans usually had very little to offer, as did Africans. Among European embassies, the Brits were good, the French were good, as were the West Germans and the Finns; the Italians, not so much. We would do a lot of socializing with the better-informed Europeans.

*Q: Back on the Asian scene in March of '72, the North Vietnamese made a big push, which resulted in U.S. bombing. How were the Soviets reporting that to themselves? What were you getting from them on that?*

ROY: Not much. I can't remember details on it. The Soviets would occasionally call in the ambassador to protest some action on our part. But essentially, we were not in the thick of what was going on in Asia. Where possible I would try to talk to Russian journalists, and in some cases Foreign Ministry people. They were not eager to share information with us. At the ambassadorial level you couldn't do much. The serious interactions between the United States and the Soviet Union were handled in Washington.

*Q: And talking about being in the thick of things, May 22-30, 1972 is the Nixon visit to Moscow.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: I assume that's all hands on deck sort of experience for the embassy, with all the pre-arrangements and whatnot. Can you go through what it meant for you in terms of participating in that visit, and the embassy's participation.*

ROY: We were all lined up like marionettes and assigned functions, which we carried out to the best of our ability. The peculiar thing about the visit was that the senior members of the White House group chose to stay in the Kremlin, whereas the State Department group, headed by Secretary Rogers, was put in the Rossiya Hotel on Red Square next to St. Basil's Cathedral. This reflected the way the White House functioned at that time.

Secretary of State Rogers was assigned a largely ceremonial role. Because President Nixon was in the Kremlin, we had to have a courier system to take messages to them because they couldn't have secure communications equipment in the Kremlin. I was part of the messenger service that would deliver classified messages in locked pouches to the White House group in the Kremlin.

That's where I saw Henry Kissinger for the first time. I had delivered some classified material to the White House control room in the Kremlin and was walking along a corridor in the Kremlin returning to my car when I heard a Germanic voice behind me. I glanced over my shoulder and recognized Dr. Kissinger walking behind me conversing with another member of the White House staff. That was the closest I came to meeting him during the Nixon visit. Aside from serving as a courier for classified messages, I was also given the formal function of serving as the embassy gift officer for the visit. That experience turned me against the practice of exchanging gifts.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: It was outrageous, unnecessary, and wasteful. We ended up with rooms filled with all sorts of gifts that were given to every member of the delegation. The size of the delegation that came with President Nixon was unbelievable. I mean you had hundreds and hundreds of people there. The non-professional behavior of the people was stunning for those of us who were Soviet specialists. Most of the White House staff had no interest whatsoever in using the visit to learn more about the Soviet Union and the Soviet leadership,

This was my first exposure to seeing how high-level U.S. officials handled an important country relationship. The Soviets hosted a dinner for Nixon in the Kremlin. Nixon responded by hosting a dinner at Spaso House, the ambassador's residence, for the Soviet leadership. Their top leaders all turned out. These were leaders that we normally had no, or very limited, access to. The occasion was made-to-order for learning more about these inaccessible Soviet officials. The guest list was top-heavy with White House staffers, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and a bunch of less well-known officials, none speaking Russian or familiar with the Politburo. Only a few Russian-speaking embassy officers were included.

When the Soviet guests arrived, they all clustered at one end of the reception room, while the White House officials clustered at the other end, exchanging gossip about Washington. There was no intermixing. There was no exploitation of the opportunity to find out a bit about these guys, who were very important to us in terms of our national interests. Obviously, what takes place in formal negotiations and official exchanges is more significant. Nevertheless, we had giant bureaucracies in Washington working on the Soviet Union in the intelligence community, the State Department, and the National Security Council trying to figure these guys out. I found it surprising that no effort was made to exploit this opportunity. As I gained more experience in the government, I realized how naïve my initial reaction had been.

Nevertheless, the opportunities were not entirely lost, thanks to the embassy political officers present. We had heard rumors that Shelest, the Party Boss of Ukraine and a Politburo member, was in trouble. When he arrived at Spaso House with the other Politburo members, he broke loose from the group and headed straight for the banquet hall to check on where he had been seated by the Soviet protocol officers. He was dissatisfied with the arrangement and took his place card and exchanged it with another in a higher protocol slot. We interpreted this behavior as confirming that he was in trouble with the leadership. Sure enough, he was replaced as the Ukraine Party Secretary a few days later.

*Q: Now, this summit had certain deliverables. Certain things were signed. Did the embassy have much to do with the negotiation of those --*

ROY: No. The main achievements of the Nixon visit to Moscow were the SALT I interim agreement (the first U.S.-Soviet agreement beginning the process of limiting strategic arms), the Anti-Ballistic Missile Agreement, and the Incidents at Seas agreement. However, this was the period when we were trying to produce all sorts of symbolic documents in U.S.-Soviet relations. So the 1972 Moscow summit also produced the Agreement on 12 principles of U.S.-Soviet Relations. In addition, the two sides produced the outlines of a U.S.-Soviet Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War, which was signed the following year. Both are long since forgotten documents.

As a sidelight, the preparations for signature of the SALT I agreement produced a behind-the-scenes battle between Dr. Kissinger and Gerald Smith, the head of the Arms

Control and Disarmament Agency and the chief negotiator in Helsinki for the agreement. The final arrangements for the signature were taken out of his hands in Moscow and put under White House control. Smith was cut out of the arrangements and was very upset, resulting in an altercation in the embassy courtyard where tempers were frayed.

*Q: Altercation between Smith and --*

ROY: Yes, Smith vented his frustration. Decades later, Dr. Kissinger gave me his side of the story, which is plausible from the White House perspective. But the lack of cohesion within the U.S. delegation was very evident.

*Q: Looking back on your admin experience, any major security problems or issues come up? Because it's a tough environment to work in.*

ROY: We had superb security officers in Moscow, the best I've encountered, and we got really good security briefings. When we arrived in Moscow, we received a half-day security briefing. It wasn't just talk. In case after case, the briefer would describe how someone had been compromised, illustrating each step the KGB had taken to entrap the employee. We were shown how bugs were planted, in many cases showing us the object that had been bugged, such as the sculpture of an eagle in the U.S. ambassador's residence.

The briefings were reinforced by our experience on the ground. During our three and a half years in Moscow, we constantly encountered examples of how the KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti: Committee for State Security) was keeping track of us. During our security sweeps of the public spaces in the embassy, such as the lower floors where the consular and admin sections were located, we regularly discovered new bugs that had replaced ones that we had earlier neutralized. The Soviets did not have access to the classified areas of the embassy, which had to be cleaned by American staff, but even there we were guarded in our conversations.

What struck me, however, was the constant evidence that human beings are the weakest link in any security system. Despite the superb security briefings, the professionalism and high quality of the security staff, and the above average qualifications of the Foreign Service personnel assigned to the Moscow embassy, there were more examples of indiscretions by highly intelligent people than there should have been. Examples include conversational speculation at in-house cocktail parties as to who might be the embedded CIA agents among the embassy staff. In another case, an American embassy secretary was discovered to be secretly dating one of the handsome young KGB guards stationed at the entrance to the embassy. Likewise, there was an embassy officer who, as a kindly gesture, stopped to pick up an attractive young Soviet girl who was hitchhiking on a highway on the outskirts of Moscow, in violation of embassy rules about avoiding potentially compromising situations. The girl showed up at his apartment later that night with some story about how she had lost her bus fare and needed a place to spend the night. Fortunately, he had the good sense to avoid the trap and briefed our security personnel about the incident.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Later, several years after I had left Moscow, we had the so-called “top hat” episode where we discovered that our newly constructed embassy, which was nearing completion, was riddled with embedded listening devices placed there by the Soviet construction crews who had somehow evaded the watchful gaze of American security personnel overseeing the construction. With the structure of the new building hopelessly compromised, the State Department decided to solve the problem by adding three additional floors to the building using American construction crews. These additional floors were used for the classified activities of the embassy, while the lower floors were used for less sensitive consular, administrative, and public affairs functions.

I found this ironic since when I was the deputy admin officer, I had started the negotiations with the Soviets over the conditions of construction for our new American embassy in Moscow. An early sticking point was over our insistence that we have the right to bring in American and non-Soviet contractors to build the embassy, a vital necessity to protect the integrity of the new building. Years later when the project was still stalled over this point, a senior U.S. official made the decision to allow the use of Soviet construction crews, in the mistaken belief that close American supervision of the construction could prevent the installation of bugs.

As an outgrowth of this problem, top State Department officials also decided to stop the practice of using Soviet local employees for non-sensitive support functions in the embassy, requiring the addition of well over a hundred additional U.S. staff to carry out these support roles. I always thought this was a misguided approach. In the case of Soviet employees, we knew they could not be trusted with any classified or sensitive information. The risk was greater if you brought in scores of additional Americans with little or no Soviet expertise and lacking experience in working under the constant surveillance of aggressively hostile security services like the KGB that are skilled in exploiting human weaknesses. The dangers of having somebody within your own mission who has been turned or blackmailed is much higher because you do not suspect them of being security risks.

As an example of KGB behavior, they ran a provocation against one of our public affairs officers in Moscow. This officer was very effective in developing contacts among Soviet cultural figures. He noticed, however, that he was experiencing a number of bizarre events that didn't seem quite right. He was at the theater and had gone to the washroom, when somebody at an adjacent wash basin struck up a conversation with him. He reported the occurrence to the embassy security officer. On another occasion, he was taken aback when a stranger approached him on the street with some seemingly innocuous request. This again struck him as unusual, so he reported the event to the security officer.

A few weeks later, the Soviets demanded his expulsion based on a phony scenario in which they cited these earlier occurrences as evidence that he had initiated these

approaches in an effort to recruit informants. All of the elements in the scenario involved unusual occurrences that he had already reported to the embassy security officer. This history made clear that the Soviet purpose was to limit embassy contacts in the Soviet cultural world. It also underlined the importance of briefing embassy security personnel on unusual occurrences.

Such precautions did not preclude limited contacts with Soviet citizens. For example, the Intourist tour guide who had accompanied us on our Garmisch trip around the Soviet Union contacted me when I was assigned to the embassy and said his wife was a journalist who was interested in getting old copies of Amerika magazine. Amerika was a Russian-language publication by the State Department that through a reciprocal agreement with the Soviets was permitted to have limited circulation in the Soviet Union. Copies were in high demand and hard to acquire. We always assumed that Intourist guides had KGB connections so we did not consider this approach to be entirely innocent.

I consulted the embassy security officer, and we agreed that we would treat this as a legitimate request and see where it led. Every month or so I would meet briefly with the Intourist guide to provide copies of Amerika. We then agreed to have occasional family dinners at Russian restaurants with the guide and his wife. He then invited my wife and me to join them at their dacha outside of Moscow for a home-cooked meal of Russian pancakes (blinis) and meat dumplings (pelmeni). We sat around talking about Chekhov and Tchaikovsky and comparisons between American and Russian culture.

This was the only time in our three and a half years in Moscow that we were invited into a Russian home. I always briefed our security people before and after these contacts. We never had any doubt that the KGB were monitoring these interactions, but nothing untoward ever developed. The guide and his wife were both college-educated with diverse interests. She had a Jewish background and discussed freely how this affected her place in Russian society. The contrast with our official contacts was noteworthy.

When I went to Beijing as DCM, I wanted to set up security briefings based on the Moscow example of using concrete examples of actual security penetrations and provocations to illustrate the threat. Our problem was the Chinese had the capability, but unlike the KGB, the Chinese did not like to be caught. So they did not put bugs where you would expect to find them, even when we knew they had the technical capability to do so. This prevented us from creating briefings based on concrete examples, because we didn't have enough examples, even though the threat remained just as real.

In the case of Moscow, you encountered constant reminders that the security threat was ever-present and that any indiscretions entailed a credible risk they would be used against you. We learned to always leave our luggage unlocked when we traveled in the Soviet Union since we knew our bags would be searched when we left the room, and if we locked our suitcases, the locks would be broken when we returned to the room. Invariably, when we returned to a hotel room, the phone would ring. When you answered the phone, the caller would hang up. This was the KGB way of confirming that you were

in the room. When I traveled with my wife, every time I left her alone in the room, she would receive a telephone call from a suave male voice inviting her to go dancing. We decided to treat these practices as routine. Rather than worry about them, we simply assumed that we were always under surveillance, whether or not this was true, and behaved accordingly.

Another important takeaway from these Moscow security briefings was the realization that intelligent people are often the most vulnerable to sloppy security practices. The State Department employs people who are so smart that if they don't see the logic for something, they won't rigidly adhere to seemingly illogical security practices. They have to be convincingly shown both the right way to handle security concerns and the specific reasons for the practice. Our security officers in Moscow were good at this. I've been at other posts where the security people were automatons who said you had to follow this or that procedure without adequately explaining why this was necessary. Smart people are all too prone to ignore what they consider to be foolish instructions (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs) Speaking of which, out of Moscow your next assignment, as you said, was the Soviet Desk in the department. How early on was that organized? Did you have much input in this next assignment?*

ROY: Zero input. I was expecting another embassy assignment, because I'd been six years in Washington before I went to Garmisch and Moscow for a total of four years. I was interested in going back to East Asia, but I was assigned to return to the Office of Soviet Union Affairs, where I'd already spent three years. However, this time I was assigned to head the multilateral section, which was my first supervisory position in the Foreign Service. The new assignment actually was quite exciting because I now had considerable experience in the Soviet Union under my belt.

To prepare for my new responsibilities, I stopped in West Germany and NATO Headquarters in Belgium on my trip back to Washington for consultations with our embassy in Bonn and the U.S. mission to NATO in Brussels. It was my first real exposure to conditions of service in western Europe as opposed to in Moscow and East European posts. It was a real eye-opener. The Bonn political section hosted me for lunch in a charming outdoor restaurant on the banks of the Rhine, where we ate an elegant meal with a glorious view of a German castle on the mountain across the river. The contrast with conditions of life in Moscow was striking. In both posts, the briefings were excellent, and I arrived in Washington with a better grasp of our foreign policy challenges in working with our European allies in dealing with the Soviet threat.

*Q: So you come into the desk late summer '72. How was the desk organized at that time?*

ROY: When I took over my new responsibilities as the head of the Multilateral Section of the Office of Soviet Union Affairs, the director of the Office was Jack Matlock and the deputy was Bill Luers. A few months later, in December, Bill Luers got promoted to be one of the two deputy executive secretaries of the Department. To my surprise, Matlock moved me up from multilateral affairs to replace Bill Luers. So, basically, Jack Matlock

was my boss. He knew the Soviet Union as well as anyone and better than most. He was fluent in Russian, had a PhD in Russian history, had served in Moscow during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, and was a very impressive person. At the same time, he was a total workaholic and seemed oblivious to the concept that his subordinates had any right to a personal life (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs) So you were on the external relations part of the desk.*

ROY: Until I moved up to be deputy director. Largely, I was responsible for the quality of material leaving the desk on foreign policy issues involving the Soviet Union. I didn't get involved in visa matters, refusenik issues, or problems in the bilateral relationship, which were handled by the Bilateral Section. For example, if there was going to be a high-level meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Multilateral Section would be responsible for preparing briefing books with talking points on any subject likely to arise at the meeting.

*Q: And who was in the EUR Front Office at that time?*

ROY: The assistant secretary was Art Hartman. Walter Stoessel may have been there for a brief period, but he then went out to Moscow to replace Jake Beam. Art Hartman was the EUR assistant secretary during most of my time in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs following my return from Moscow.

I had an interesting experience with him during one of Secretary Kissinger's visits to Moscow in the spring of 1974. Kissinger was making a concerted effort to reduce the size of the support groups that accompanied him on his overseas travels, an effort that I thought was long overdue. However, the result was a severe limit on the number of available seats for support personnel on his U.S. government aircraft. At the time, his two principal Soviet advisors were State Department Counselor Hal Sonnenfeldt and Assistant Secretary Art Hartman, both of whom felt they each needed a support staffer with them in Moscow. Bob Blackwill, who later was our ambassador to India, was then the support staffer for Hal Sonnenfeldt on Soviet matters, and I often worked with him in preparing the final talking points on the Soviet Union for the Seventh Floor.

Since there were no available seats for Blackwill and me on Kissinger's aircraft, Sonnenfeldt and Hartman sent us out ahead on commercial flights. No sooner had we arrived in Moscow than Ambassador Walter Stoessel invited us to a private dinner with him at Spaso House so we could update him on what was going on in Washington. When Secretary Kissinger arrived and found that Blackwill and I were in Moscow, he threw a hissy fit. We accidentally discovered that he had sent a back channel message to Under Secretary Eagleburger in Washington instructing him to launch an urgent investigation into how Blackwill and I had somehow evaded his efforts to limit support staff on his travels. When we briefed Sonnenfeldt and Hartman on this development, they laughed and said they would take care of it. That was the last we heard of the incident. Nevertheless, for me it was an unnerving experience to have incurred the wrath of the Secretary of State in this fashion.



I had another interesting experience in the spring of 1974, when the Watergate problem was heating up for President Nixon. I was attending a reception at the Soviet embassy in Washington and ran into Senator Hugh Scott, the minority leader in the Senate. I had been his control officer when he visited Moscow in 1972, and we had hit it off because he was a collector of Chinese art. We got into an animated conversation, which Agriculture Secretary Butz kept trying to break into because he wanted to query Scott on Nixon's chances for impeachment in the Senate. Scott preferred to talk to me and kept brushing off Secretary Butz. I was a bit nonplussed at finding myself in the middle of such high politics.

*Q: Now, this is the period when Kissinger was Secretary of State.*

ROY: Yes, he was already secretary of state.

He evidently felt that our presence in Moscow was a challenge to his authority. In reality, this was a minor tempest in a teapot and not something he dwelled on. Years later, when I was the U.S. ambassador in China, Dr. Kissinger visited Beijing as a private citizen, and I reminded him of that incident in Moscow, noting that it was the first time that I had come to his attention. We had a good laugh over the episode (*laughs*).

*Q: Once you're on the Soviet Desk did things like the Yom Kippur War of October '73 also impact on the desk?*

ROY: Yes. I was on vacation in Spain with my family when the war broke out. I had to advance my return to the United States. As I recall, during the initial stages of the war, when we mounted an emergency arms airlift to Israel, we couldn't get approval from our European allies to overfly Europe or use airbases in Europe. We had to use aerial refueling and run our planes through the Strait of Gibraltar. We had real differences with our European allies over the Yom Kippur War.

One of my memories of the Yom Kippur War was that senior leadership on the various country desks in the State Department had been getting intelligence briefings of what was occurring on the ground during the war. We noted that some of the intelligence was revealing information that conflicted with our public line. All of a sudden, the Seventh Floor cut off our access to this intelligence for the remainder of the war (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs) Now, as part of that effort Kissinger actually goes to Moscow and sees Brezhnev.*

ROY: As I recall, at the time Dr. Kissinger was still double-hatted as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State. President Nixon was increasingly embroiled in the Watergate investigations and was rumored to be consuming lots of alcohol, so Kissinger was wielding an unusual degree of authority on foreign policy matters. During that period he went to Moscow, saw Brezhnev, and reached an agreement to impose on the combatants an immediate ceasefire in place. Nixon was barely functioning and sent

Kissinger contradictory instructions in Moscow that Kissinger ignored.

Then a dangerous crisis occurred. The Soviets accused the United States of violating the agreement on a ceasefire in place, which had some basis in fact since the Israelis were surrounding the Egyptian Third Army in the Sinai and storming up the Golan Heights. Brezhnev threatened to send forces to the Middle East to enforce the agreement. Kissinger responded by putting U.S. forces on a DefCon 3 alert, while using the Soviet pressure to shut down the Israeli offensives, with most of Tel Aviv's objectives already accomplished. This removed any need for a confrontation with the Soviets.

However, Nixon then got into the act by taking credit for the DefCon 3 alert and declaring publicly on TV that he had gone eyeball to eyeball with Brezhnev and forced him to back down. This humiliated Brezhnev and infuriated the Russians, who felt it was the Americans and Israelis who had violated the ceasefire in the first place.

This was the impression I had of the war sitting on the Soviet Desk, with no direct involvement in the conflict. From this perspective, the threat of a nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union was less acute than it seemed at the time. It also illustrates the difficulties of managing international crises when the White House is distracted by domestic scandals. Regardless, Kissinger's skillful shuttle diplomacy over the next few months consolidated the U.S. position as the ultimate power-broker in the Middle East and marginalized the Soviet role.

*Q: Nixon resigned in August of '74.*

ROY: Right. Kissinger had kept the national security advisor hat when he became Secretary of State under Nixon, but he had to give up the national security advisor position when Gerald Ford became president while remaining as secretary of state. And, incidentally, when Kissinger became secretary of state he actually was very good at using State Department people.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: The State Department people then became his subordinates, and he used them extensively. This suggests there may be some validity to the view that the secrecy Kissinger practiced in the White House reflected the way Nixon wanted things done, as opposed to his own personal preference.

Nevertheless, he attached supreme importance to discretion, which is one of the reasons why he retained his access to top leaders around the world for decades after he left the government. He never betrayed confidences. He was very comfortable working with people that he believed were loyal members of his team. That extended broadly to the State Department. So he had a very different behavior pattern as secretary of state, as opposed to when he was national security advisor.

*Q: Do you think that impacted on the desk fairly quickly?*

ROY: Yes. When he was secretary of state, our briefing memos went directly to him. When he was in the White House, our briefing memos for him and the president would be sent over to the National Security Council, but would be rewritten or discarded by the NSC staff.

*Q: In this period, if I recall, the desk has two or three deputy directors.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Exchanges, political, and economic. How was that?*

ROY: When I returned from Moscow, the Soviet desk (the Office of Soviet Union Affairs) was larger than before. Jack Matlock headed the office, and Bill Luers was his deputy. As I recall, there were four sections: bilateral, multilateral, economic, and exchanges. I headed the multilateral section. Bill Dyess headed the Bilateral Section of the Soviet desk. Bill was a terrific officer who skillfully handled the bilateral aspects of US relations with the Soviet Union that were constantly generating problems. He later became ambassador to the Netherlands. Sol Polansky was in charge of cultural exchanges, and Milt Kovner handled economic relations.

When Bill Luers was picked to be one of the Deputy Executive Secretaries on the Seventh Floor, Jack Matlock picked me to take his place as Deputy Director. Since I was still relatively junior, Jack reshuffled titles, and some of the other section chiefs became Deputy Directors as well. The Soviet desk was a big one, but the different issues were relatively compartmentalized, and I don't recall any clashes over responsibilities. Jack Matlock was a capable leader.

*Q: Milt Kovner?*

ROY: Kovner had been assigned to Moscow and got PNG-ed (declared persona non grata) shortly after his arrival in the Soviet Union.

*Q: Oh.*

ROY: We expelled the Soviet economic counselor in Washington for some valid reason, and Milt got expelled in retaliation, which was very unfortunate for Milt personally. He was devastated. He had just spent a full year in Russian language training, and now, through no fault of his own, he could no longer serve in the Soviet Union. He was a good and very capable person.

*Q: The other name was Polansky?*

ROY: Sol Polansky. He had been my immediate supervisor when I was first assigned to the Soviet Desk after Mongolian language training. We then served together in the political section in Moscow where he was the external chief first of all, until Mark

Garrison replaced him. He was handling U.S.-Soviet exchanges in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs when I came back under Matlock.

*Q: I think what I'm getting at is the way the desk is organized is a reflection of what the main issues were with the Soviet Union at the time. And I think the phone book says there's a political deputy director and economic deputy director and exchanges deputy director. Does that sound about right?*

ROY: I can't remember who precisely had deputy director titles. The exchanges function may have technically been part of EUR/SOV, but it was quite separate. Bill Dyess may also have had a deputy director title when I was moved up to replace Bill Luers. I think Milt Kovner, when he was forced out of Moscow, may have been brought in as the economic deputy. He was the economic person pretty much, assisted by Jim Colbert, who had handled Soviet economic issues for decades. I don't recall any jurisdictional struggles, since our portfolios were all quite distinct.

If an American citizen got in trouble in the Soviet Union, Bill Dyess would handle that. He got caught up in the Kissinger spat with Senator Jackson over Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, which resulted in the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which was misguided legislation, which actually damaged Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. It was a classic example of congressional intervention for a worthy purpose that was undermined by the nature of the intervention.

*Q: Now, in 1972 you're in Moscow for a presidential visit. In June of 1974 you're on the Soviet desk and President Nixon goes to Moscow.*

ROY: Matlock took me along for that.

*Q: How was it prepared, the desk participation?*

ROY: We were up to our ears in preparing the briefing books. And then in Moscow the 1974 trip had three components. There was an initial phase in Moscow. Then President Nixon went to Crimea for further discussions with Brezhnev, after which he returned to Moscow for the final phase of his visit. Matlock and I stayed in Moscow negotiating the final communique with the Soviets.

During the final phase, we had three days without sleep. I was virtually a zombie by the time the Presidential party departed. My flight out of Moscow involved a 12-hour layover at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, where I slept the whole time.

*Q: Why wasn't some of this done in advance?*

ROY: You can't do the joint communiqué until you know the outcome of the talks. Everything came to a head in the final days in Moscow. Then trying to agree on the language for the communique involved constant negotiation, much of it in the wee hours of the morning.

*Q: Any of it between the components of the American delegation?*

ROY: No, there were no problems on the American side. It would be Matlock and me negotiating with the designated Soviet counterparts and then reporting to our respective chiefs in terms of the final language. It was what I would call relatively routine Foreign Service work, but it was under intense pressure and intense high-level scrutiny.

*Q: So when the delegation left you didn't leave with them, you made your own way back?*

ROY: I'd flown out separately. The only time I flew in the secretary's plane was when I went back out to Helsinki for the opening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, when I was on Secretary Roger's plane. That would have been 1973. Rather than studying his briefing books, Secretary Rogers spent much of the trip playing bridge. I was invited to join the foursome, which was my first extended exposure to a Secretary of State in action.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Do you have any other thoughts on the Soviet Desk? I'm thinking we might want to break it off here.*

ROY: My second tour in EUR/SOV, after returning from Moscow, was intensely interesting work. You were working on the core U.S. strategic relationship, and I was up to my ears in it. I went from there directly to the National War College. I felt sorry for all the other Foreign Service Officers there because everything at the National War College was so relevant to what I had been doing with the Soviet Union. If you had been dealing with African or Latin American affairs, all the strategic stuff basically had nothing to do with your work.

*Q: How did that assignment come up? The National War College?*

ROY: I was offered training, and I desperately needed a break. Working on the Soviet Union was very intense. My wife and I had just had our second baby, and I had been handling the most demanding job so far in my foreign service career. So I jumped at the opportunity.

I was offered a year at Harvard in the international relations course there known as the Bowie Seminar, which was one of the components of the State Department's senior training program. I would have given an arm and a leg to go there, but it would have involved either being absent from my family or having to move to Cambridge right after we'd settled in on coming back from Moscow. So I turned it down and ended up at the National War College, which was a perfect fit for me. It was a great year.

*Q: It's the 25<sup>th</sup> of July and we're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Now sir, we had just finished off your time on the Russian Desk and you're about to move to the National War College. Let's repeat a bit. How did that opportunity come up for you to go to the National War College?*

ROY: I'd reached the rank for officers to be selected for some form of senior training. And my position as a deputy director of the Soviet Desk had been extremely demanding. I was interested in having a little rest during which I could do some more serious thinking.

There was also a personal factor in my case, which is that our second son at the age of 10 months had been discovered to have a cancerous neuroblastoma. So he had to go through a very difficult operation, involving the removal of a kidney. As a result, I wanted to spend more time at home. So the combination of factors resulted in my expressing interest in having a senior training opportunity.

*Q: Now, is there a senior training office that you would have expressed your interest in.*

ROY: I forget exactly how the procedure worked, but I think that you could submit bids on various positions, and the bidding material included senior training opportunities, if you were at the appropriate rank.

*Q: Right. Because my understanding is these are well sought after by very talented people, so it's very competitive.*

ROY: It was competitive, but I was in a very competitive job. I didn't think it was out of reach to get such an assignment.

*Q: Excellent. Now at that time -- let's talk about the National War College. Now it's called National Defense University. Is that the same thing?*

ROY: At that time the National Defense University hadn't been created. You had the National War College, and you had the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Because the name National War College had a negative connotation, they later decided to join the two institutions under an umbrella organization called the National Defense University. They were both located at Fort McNair in southwest Washington.

*Q: OK. So let's talk about your classmates for a minute. How large was the class and who were representative people in it?*

ROY: I entered the class of 1975 that began in the summer of 1974. The class was roughly 120 students, divided relatively evenly among army, air force, navy/marine/coast guard, and civilian government officials. The civilian component was drawn from a range of civilian agencies. I think the State Department contingent consisted of six or seven foreign service officers.

*Q: Do you remember who some of the other State people were?*

ROY: One was Terry Healy. Another was Sam Wise. I can't remember all the names.

*Q: Well, it sounds like a representation of what the American national security apparatus looks like.*

ROY: What made it interesting was that the military officers were mostly at the lieutenant-colonel/colonel level. They usually had a minimum of 20 years of military experience under their belts. And they'd done everything from flying navy jets to operating missile sites. In other words, they had very extensive operational experience in the military. They had reached a level making them eligible for promotion to general officer and admiral ranks. So these were people who had been successful in their career patterns. We also had two former prisoners of war (POWs) who had spent six to seven years in Vietnamese prisons.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: When I entered the National War College in 1974, our involvement in Vietnam was still very recent. The other point of interest was that while we were going through our first week of orientation, President Nixon was forced to resign because of the Watergate scandal, with Senator Scott, as minority leader in the Senate, playing a significant role in persuading him to resign. That night I got a call from the Senator's office inviting my wife and me to a small dinner with the Senator and his wife at their home. We didn't know what to expect. There were just five of us, the fifth being the senator's personal aide.

It turned out the Senator just wanted to unwind from the pressure he had been under for months. He described at length his process of gradual disillusionment with President Nixon. This process culminated with his conclusion that Nixon had to resign when Scott discovered that Nixon had been lying to him about the White House tapes. It was quite an experience for my wife and me, since we were not used to socializing in such circles in Washington.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: So when I was at the National War College, we were having domestic difficulties at the same time. And our position in Vietnam was under heavy pressure. So there was a lot to think about, both on the domestic front and on the foreign policy front.

*Q: How was the class divided up, and who were the instructors?*

ROY: The instructors were a range of people. Some of them were part of the faculty staff at the National War College. This included academics. Some were doing short-term tours at the National War College. Others had been on the staff of the National War College for a substantial amount of time. Some of them were military officers. The commandant of the War College was a vice admiral, Admiral Bayne. He had previously been in command of our Persian Gulf naval detachment in Bahrain.

I found the faculty was very good. They knew their stuff. The curriculum covered a wide

range of topics. You could select particular courses that you wanted to participate in. I quickly discovered that on international relations matters, the foreign service officers were quasi-teachers. But on the strategic issues, all of our military classmates became quasi-teachers. So I avoided the international relations courses and focused on the strategic courses because then my fellow classmates were essentially resource people from my standpoint.

What made it particularly interesting for me is I had just finished nine years working on the Soviet Union. As deputy director of the Soviet Desk, I'd been involved in a trip to Moscow with President Nixon just a month before entering the National War College. So I had been involved in a lot of the strategic issues involving the Soviet Union. Against this background, the opportunity to rub shoulders with a range of experienced military officers and discuss strategic issues made my year at the National War College particularly fascinating.

*Q: Now, what was the class work? Would that involve writing as well as reading materials?*

ROY: There was more emphasis on reading. I formed the practice of doing all of the reading, no matter how boring some of it was. Our classes would usually end in mid-afternoon. My practice was to leave before the traffic set in and go directly to the neighborhood library a block from my house. Then I would spend several hours at the library completing the reading assignments.

When you're doing a lot of heavy reading, you quickly become accustomed to the difference between writers who stimulate your thinking and those who are pedestrian in the way they present issues. There was a lot of pedestrian reading, but sprinkled among the reading assignments were authors who really got you thinking on serious questions.

*Q: Do you recall any?*

ROY: Well, I remember one of the reading assignments involved Raymond Aron's *Peace and War: a Theory of International Relations*. I found it totally fascinating, especially the parts dealing with militarized societies.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: And how countries adapted to that type of situation, the changes in the marriage patterns and other things. This was part of a discussion of how other societies had developed militarized cultures and how they formed and organized themselves. It was intellectually challenging material.

*Q: Now, did you do papers for classes or have to end up with a dissertation at the end?*

ROY: In the course of the year I had to prepare two papers. You had to prepare a longer thesis if you were trying for an optional MA degree, which did not interest me.



*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: At that time there was a voluntary master's program that involved heavier writing assignments. I was more interested in reading than in writing. As I mentioned, I was unwinding from a demanding job and didn't want the added pressure in the evenings of preparing longer papers. So I used my daytime hours to complete the reading assignments, and then the evenings were free. Which was very unusual for me.

*Q: Now, I understand there's a fair amount of orientation travel involved in an NDU (National Defense University) experience.*

ROY: Our course of study placed significant emphasis on U.S. domestic issues, industrial capacity, etc. We did some domestic travel and also made a trip to Canada. The big trips were in the spring, when we divided up to visit different geographic regions, such as East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America.

I wanted to visit a region of the world that I knew nothing about, so I selected the Middle Eastern trip. It was absolutely fascinating from beginning to end. It took me to Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Israel, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and India. In each place we met with senior leadership. I hadn't been to the Middle East before, and the trip gave me a superficial feel for the region.

The Latin American or the African trips would have served the same purpose, but the Middle Eastern trip had a particularly good reputation at the National War College because our relationships with Middle Eastern countries tended to get us high-level access there. From my standpoint, it was also particularly interesting because the Soviets had major interests in the Middle East.

While we were on our Middle Eastern trip in the spring of 1975 our position in Vietnam collapsed. The television screens were filled with images of our chaotic evacuation from the U.S. embassy in Saigon. of the final members of our embassy staff. We were exposed to foreigners who were wondering the same thing we were, that is, was our position in East Asia under serious threat.

*Q: And that was querying you got from the people that you were meeting on this trip.*

ROY: That's right. And of course we had our own questions. A lot of the military officers in my War College class had substantial experience in the Vietnam War. It was painful to see the chaotic way in which our involvement in Vietnam came to a dismal end, at least for the moment.

*Q: I would suspect the military colleagues had very strong but mixed emotions about that whole process. It was probably raised in every class.*

ROY: There was a lot of discussion about the Vietnam war, with useful inputs by people

who had experience on the ground. Some of the State Department personnel had also had Vietnam exposure. I hadn't set foot in East Asia since 1964 because I'd switched to the Soviet field. In any event, the international trips were a particularly valuable part of the War College curriculum. They arranged terrific programs for us in the various countries that we visited.

*Q: So the embassies were heavily involved as being escort officers and setting up appointments?*

ROY: Largely, we were in the hands of the defense attachés in the various missions, because the War College was a military institution. Nevertheless, we met with the ambassadors at each stop. I remember it was Ambassador Eilts in Egypt and Ambassador Helms in Iran. In meeting with the ambassadors and the senior defense people, we could pepper them with questions in trying to get a better understanding of the issues.

*Q: Because the Middle East had just gone through the Yom Kippur War of '73.*

ROY: That's right.

*Q: So there would have been things still right up front and in people's minds only a year and a half later.*

ROY: Very much so. It was quite fascinating. And of course we were in Iran in 1975. It was only four years later when the Shah's government fell.

*Q: Did Ambassador Helms see that coming (laughs)?*

ROY: Nobody saw it coming. My view is that the Shah was brought down by the spike in oil prices that was caused by the 1973 war. The sudden influx of wealth into Iran essentially corrupted the ruling class. It was like winning the lottery and losing your incentive to work.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: Japan fell victim to the same thing in the 1980s. One of the reasons why Japan crashed at the end of the 1980s was because the yen had doubled in value because of adjustments in the exchange rate. Japan's purchasing power had gone through the roof. That was the period when they were buying up all of our golf courses and owned half of Hawaii. However, they made a lot of bad investments and essentially were corrupted by the sudden increase in their purchasing power. The Shah fell victim to the same problem. Too much money flowed into his pockets. Instead of confronting the Shah over his support for high oil prices, we chose to recycle the dollars by selling him any arms he wanted.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: This was one of the issues that we pursued with Ambassador Helms. We wanted to know what the strategic purpose was behind our selling all these arms to Iran. His response was, "Ask Washington."

*Q: (laughs) Now, these trips, were you on commercial air or military air? Because you'd be a fairly large group, wouldn't you?*

ROY: I think it was mixed. We used military aircraft whenever we could and used commercial aircraft for the rest. It was mostly on military aircraft.

*Q: Mm-hmm. The traveling group, would that be as many as 20 or 30 people?*

ROY: No, I think our group was something like 15. One of the problems that we encountered is that in Egypt, right at the beginning of our trip, about two-thirds of the group got stricken with very severe stomach problems, a malicious variant of diarrhea. We went through a three-day period when many of the members of our group were barely functional. It was a harsh reminder that when you travel in regions you're not familiar with, you may encounter all sorts of lurking threats. I was miraculously spared.

*Q: Now, after the National War College, you went back to Asia for an assignment?*

ROY: Well, during the spring of 1975 our class naturally began to focus on onward assignments. I wanted to get back to Asia, in part because we now had a very limited relationship with Beijing, and I wanted to get in on the action. However, I discovered people have very short memories. I was now looked on as a Soviet specialist, not as an Asian hand, even though I had studied Chinese and Mongolian and spent three assignments in Thailand, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The State Department personnel people found that the East Asia and Pacific Bureau had very little interest in me.

The job I was interested in was the position of deputy director of the China Desk. Fortunately, one of the deputy assistant secretaries in EAP at the time was Bill Gleysteen, who handled the China portfolio. I had been his control officer in Taipei when he visited Taiwan from his post in the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, and he remembered that I spoke Chinese fluently. The director of the China Desk, Al Jenkins, was not personally acquainted with me.

I went to call on Al Jenkins in his office and discovered him standing on his head doing yoga exercises. Fortunately, we hit it off, and I was programmed into the deputy position. However, by the time I formally got the assignment, the director had become Oscar Armstrong, who was an old China hand. I was on the China Desk from the summer of 1975 until the late spring of 1978.

About midway through my three-year assignment, Harry Thayer came back from serving as George H.W. Bush's deputy at the Liaison Office in Beijing and replaced Oscar as the director of the China desk, EAP/PRCM. Harry had been at the advanced Chinese language school in Taichung during my first year in the Embassy Taipei political section,

after which he was assigned to Taipei as an economic/commercial officer, so we knew each other well.

*Q: So those connections through Bill Gleysteen got you rebranded as an EAP (East Asia Pacific Bureau) officer and landed you a job on the China desk?*

ROY: It was something like that. I don't know the details of what happened in the EAP Bureau, but that was certainly the end result. The fact that I was well qualified for the job may also have been a contributing factor.

*Q: Who's in the Front Office at that time?*

ROY: The two EAP assistant secretaries during my time on the China desk during the Ford administration were first Phil Habib and then Art Hummel. The Front Office changed when the Carter administration came in and Dick Holbrooke became the EAP assistant secretary. His style couldn't have been more different from that of Art Hummel, his predecessor.

*Q: So let's start setting the table for that. You come into EAP in the summer rotation of 1975. It's the Ford administration, and Kissinger is the secretary of state. Shortly after you arrived, Kissinger visited China from October 19/20 through 23. Is the desk deeply involved in the preparation for that trip? How was Kissinger working with the China Desk?*

ROY: In 1975 the big event was President Ford's visit to China.

*Q: Actually, Kissinger had been going to China almost every year in the later part of the year. In 1974 he was in Beijing from November 25 through 29. In 1975 he went to Beijing from October 19 to 23. President Ford's visit was from December 1 through 5.*

ROY: Kissinger went to China to prepare for the Ford visit. We were involved in preparing papers for the trip. Dr. Kissinger tended to have his own personal staff prepare the policy papers for him. Everything involving relations with Beijing was still being held very closely. He tended to play his cards very close to his chest, but once he came over to the State Department from the NSC, he relied more heavily on Foreign Service Officers.

*Q: But still you understood at that time that your papers weren't the final papers? Was that a little disconcerting?*

ROY: No, because we were the experts on the technical issues that had to be resolved in establishing diplomatic relations, such as outstanding U.S. monetary and property claims against China. These may not have been the issues of greatest interest to Secretary Kissinger, but they were intrinsically important.

Sensitive policy recommendations from the EAP Bureau regarding China were usually jointly authored by the EAP Assistant Secretary (first Phil Habib and then Art Hummel),

Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Gleysteen, Director of Policy Planning Winston Lord, and NSC China expert Dick Solomon. They were held very closely and were not distributed to the China desk. The papers we prepared were on the technical issues. Secretary Kissinger's briefing books would always have papers dealing with such issues in them.

*Q: One of those issues were the railroad bonds or something like that --*

ROY: Yes, Qing Dynasty railroad bonds were one of the issues. These railroad bonds had been issued in the waning years of the Qing Dynasty and during the early republican period in China that followed. The problem was that the Chinese only had a dim understanding of the legal complexities of these issues.

For example, private bond claims against the Chinese government were a personal matter involving private investment decisions by investors. If the current Chinese government did not pay interest on the Qing Dynasty railroad bonds, that was a problem between China and the bondholders. However, if China formally repudiated the bonds, then it became a government-to-government issue. The U.S. position is that successor governments assume responsibility for government bonds issued by previous governments.

The complication was that China was teetering on the edge of repudiating the railroad bonds. If Beijing repudiated them, then it became an issue that we had to address as a government, introducing an additional complication into the normalization process. An additional problem we needed to address as part of the normalization process related to the claims of each country against the other over private and governmental property confiscated following the 1949 revolution in China. These were the types of technical issues on which we, in conjunction with the Bureau of Legal Affairs, were expert and Dr. Kissinger was not.

*Q: It's kind of an interesting twist to contemporary Chinese history that the government in Beijing is having to deal with issues going back as far as the Qing Dynasty. That is to say, they are the legitimate successor to the Qing Dynasty.*

ROY: That would be true once we recognized the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, which would occur at the time of normalization. At the same time, it is not difficult to understand why a revolutionary government might not consider it self-evident that it must take responsibility for actions by its predecessor governments.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: The root of the problem is that governments can't simply repudiate their debts. That's one of the responsibilities of being a sovereign entity. Article VI of the U.S. constitution provides that "All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this

Constitution, as under the Confederation.”

*Q: Now, let's turn to the December 1975 visit to China by President Ford and Secretary Kissinger.*

ROY: The problem for President Ford was that President Nixon had led the Chinese to believe that his intention was to try to complete the normalization of U.S.-China relations before he left office in January 1977. Then Nixon was forced to step down in 1974. So President Ford inherited the question of whether he would try to make good on Nixon's intention before the 1976 elections. President Ford had concluded that for domestic political reasons he could only make that effort after he got reelected. So one of the purposes of his 1975 trip to China was to try to mitigate the potential negative impact on U.S.-China relations of this conclusion and, if possible, achieve some interim progress in the bilateral relationship short of full normalization.

These goals proved to be unattainable. During Secretary of State Kissinger's preparatory visit to Beijing in October 1975, he met with both Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (as his principal interlocutor) and with Chairman Mao. (Premier Zhou Enlai was gravely ill – he died in January 1976 – and had fallen out of Mao's favor). Kissinger found the Chinese difficult to deal with. While both Deng and Mao professed unconcern about President Ford's decision to postpone his effort to complete normalization until after the U.S. presidential elections in 1976, they rebuffed efforts to signal progress in the relationship, accusing the United States of trying to stand on Chinese shoulders to enhance its position in dealing with the Soviet Union. Efforts to negotiate a joint communique to be issued at the end of the Ford visit were abandoned.

I should have prefaced this by saying that the details of the private discussions in Beijing during the earlier visits by National Security Advisor Kissinger and President Nixon during the first half of the 1970s had been denied to working levels of the State Department. So we didn't have any insights on the private discussions between President Nixon and Kissinger on the one hand, and Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai on the other, from that period.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I was not on either Secretary Kissinger's October 1975 trip to China nor the December 1975 trip to Beijing by President Ford, so I learned all this after the fact. Essentially, the Ford visit put the bilateral relationship on hold from 1975 through 1976. This may have been just as well since unbeknownst to us, Mao's failing health was launching China into a period of intensified domestic political turbulence during 1976.

*Q: Well, Zhou Enlai dies in January of '76 and Deng is purged—*

ROY: That's right. Zhou Enlai had been the protector of Deng Xiaoping.

*Q: Right. And then Deng was purged four months later in April.*

ROY: Actually, Deng dropped out of sight in January 1976, right at the time of Zhou Enlai's death. For the next nine months the Gang of Four was riding high. In April there were brief demonstrations in Tiananmen Square protesting the communist party's failure to properly commemorate the death of Zhou Enlai. Then in early July General Zhu De, who was the top PLA (People's Liberation Army) leader during the communist revolution, died. A few weeks later, you had the devastating Tangshan Earthquake, which leveled the city and killed up to 300,000 residents. The earthquake severely damaged buildings in Tianjin as well as Beijing, which was 100 miles away. Then, on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1976 Mao Zedong died. Finally, on October 6<sup>th</sup>, Premier Hua Guofeng presided over a military-backed bloodless coup against the Gang of Four. The coup ended the hold on power of the extreme leftists and paved the way for the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping, who by 1978 was effectively the top leader in China.

So 1976 was truly a disruptive year in China. If you are a believer in divine portents, then you can view the earthquake as signaling the beginning of the end of the Maoist period in China and heralding the impending arrival of the era of reform and openness.

The noteworthy fact from my standpoint was that I had returned to Chinese affairs at a time of momentous change in China. I had not set foot in the People's Republic of China since I left it in July of 1950, three weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War. Now that I was Deputy Director of the China Desk, I was able to make three consecutive visits to the PRC from 1976-78 as the State Department escort for congressional delegations going to China.

The first delegation, consisting of members of the House Armed Services Committee, visited China in April of 1976, two weeks after the conclusion of the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. The senior leader we met with was Vice Premier Zhang Chunqiao, a member of the Gang of Four. Representatives from the U.S. Liaison Office were not allowed to attend the meeting, so I turned over my notes of the conversation to a member of the Liaison Office so he could send a report to Washington.

Zhang Chunqiao spoke in highly ideological communist jargon, referring to the United States as the head of the imperialist camp. He sought to disabuse us of any notion that China was unstable, sardonically noting that if we visited Tiananmen Square, we would not find any instability there. The irony is that six months later, Zhang Chunqiao was purged, along with the other three members of the Gang of Four.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: This was a fascinating period in China. It was in the final throes of emerging from the decade of turbulence during the Cultural Revolution. Mao Zedong was no longer fully functional. His death in September 1976 eased the way for the process of restoring a normal situation in China, a process that took over two years.

Each year from 1976 to 1978, I accompanied a congressional delegation to China exactly

one year apart, in April of each of those years. Each time the political line was completely different: first Deng Xiaoping was the villain, then the Gang of Four was the villain, and finally, Deng Xiaoping was the good guy who was back in a position of authority. Each year, we had the same handlers for our CODEL from the Chinese People's Institute for Foreign Affairs. Each year our handlers had to adhere to a completely different political line on what was going on in China. It illustrated the difficulties of authoritarian systems that are in upheaval.

The net result was that 1976 was largely a waiting period in terms of U.S.-China relations. We had to wait for the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections in November before we could seriously address the question of how to develop a negotiating position for getting to diplomatic relations with the PRC. It was only after the election of President Carter that normalizing U.S-China relations became the dominating feature of the work of the China Desk.

This was just as well, since if the Gang of Four had remained in power, there would have been no hope of normalizing the relationship. To illustrate the atmosphere in China at that time, during my first Codel visit to China, we visited a kindergarten. The students put on a song and dance show for us, singing a ditty accusing Deng Xiaoping of being an out and out capitalist roader. At Beijing University, the professors tried to persuade us that shortening the university curriculum to three years and requiring the students to alternate every few months between classroom study and working on farms did not have an adverse impact on their educational accomplishments. In a specially arranged meeting of the delegation with senior PLA officers, the atmosphere was frosty. It turned out that some of the Chinese and American participants had fought on opposite sides in the Korean War. Efforts to address strategic nuclear problems went nowhere. Asked how the PLA was addressing the problem of accidental launches, the Chinese side seemed not to understand the question. Finally, the top PLA general present simply responded that China did not make accidental launches of nuclear missiles.

On that first trip, following our talks in Beijing, we traveled to Dalian to inspect one of the tunnel systems constructed all over China in response to Mao's admonition that Chinese should dig tunnels deep, store grain everywhere, and never practice hegemony. While there I developed a severe sore throat, so painful that I was forced to leave an evening banquet to return to my room. Fortunately, the delegation included a U.S. naval doctor who was loaded with antibiotics. However, our Dalian hosts also sent a Chinese doctor to my room, who offered me a local remedy consisting of ground up antelope horn embedded in a large soft black ball to be taken with hot water. He prescribed two of them. I consulted with the U.S. naval doctor, and we decided to see how the local medicine worked overnight and postpone taking antibiotics until the next morning. To our astonishment, the sore throat was gone in the morning.

We continued on to Shanghai, where we were entertained at a theater one evening by viewing an unbelievably professional Chinese puppet show based on stories from *The Journey to the West*, a well-known Ming Dynasty novel. The plot was based on a famous trip to India by a Chinese Buddhist monk during the Tang Dynasty to bring back



Buddhist sutras. The different puppet characters in some cases made dramatic entrances on wires strung over the heads of the audience.

The second delegation, in April 1977, consisted of a bipartisan group of senators who were united by their common disdain for the congressional liaison personnel in President Carter's White House, whom they considered to be total amateurs at their jobs. The political atmosphere in China had greatly improved with the downfall of the Gang of Four. The top leader was now Premier Hua Guofeng, who had been endorsed by Chairman Mao as his successor with the saying, "With you in charge, I am at ease." Hua was not well known by outside analysts and had been initially misidentified by the U.S. intelligence community as being from Mao's province of Hunan, where Hua had spent much of his career as a party official. He was actually born and raised in Shanxi province.

On this trip I heard for the first time a Chinese government official offer veiled criticism of Zhou Enlai. The official noted in a private conversation that it had been fortunate that Hua Guofeng had been Premier when Chairman Mao died rather than Zhou Enlai. Zhou, he said, was a compromiser who would probably have hesitated to approve the coup against the Gang of Four after Mao's death, whereas Hua Guofeng was more decisive and had given the go ahead.

My third trip to China with a congressional delegation took place in April 1978. By this time, Deng Xiaoping was clearly re-emerging as the most powerful leader in China, although Hua Guofeng remained in his position as Premier, while Deng was only a Vice Premier. President Carter had already made his decision to try for full normalization of relations with the PRC, although this was only known to a tiny handful of officials in Washington. U.S. Liaison Office chief Leonard Woodcock had already picked me to be his deputy, so the visit gave me a useful opportunity to consult with my future colleagues in the Liaison Office.

*Q: Let's go back to the election of President Carter in 1976. Now, one of the projects of any desk at the time that administrations change is to do the transition papers.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: That must have been interesting if you're saying the desk didn't always know what kinds of promises the previous administration had made. Did that enter into the transition papers that you were writing for the new administration?*

ROY: In the transition papers we flagged this issue as one that needed to be addressed. The issue in itself was highly classified. At the time we did not have knowledge of the inside picture. What happened after the elections once the Carter administration had taken office this situation radically changed. Cyrus Vance was appointed as Secretary of State. Dick Holbrooke became the Assistant Secretary for East Asia. Zbig Brzezinski was the National Security Advisor, and he selected as his China person a scholar named Mike Oksenberg.

Mike Oksenberg had access to all of the Nixon-Kissinger papers. One of the first things he did was take these mounds of documents and prepare a lengthy summary of the U.S.-China discussions. I was assigned as a liaison person to work with Mike Oksenberg. So it was in the spring of 1977 that for the first time I, on behalf of the State Department, began to have access to these ultra secret background papers. In order to read them, I had to go over to the NSC and read them there.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: This was the initial stage of our preparations to develop a negotiating position on normalization. In the State Department, EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Gleysteen, under Dick Holbrooke's guidance, became the manager of that process. So at the beginning of the Carter administration, the State Department and the NSC were actually working very cooperatively together. Within the State Department, the only people knowledgeable about this, other than the secretary of state, were basically Dick Holbrooke, Bill Gleysteen, Director of Policy Planning Tony Lake, his China expert Alan Romberg, Harry Thayer and myself.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Now, did any copies of the Oksenberg summary get into Secretary Vance's hands and files?*

ROY: Not to my knowledge. But Secretary Vance had access to the information. He may have read it at the White House, or Mike Oksenberg might have brought it to his office for him to read. In any event, the key officials involved with formulating our negotiating approach were all brought into the loop.

The result was that we now had a basic understanding of what had been discussed with the Chinese during the earlier Nixon and Ford administrations. However, knowledge of these exchanges did not resolve the basic questions relating to what our bottom line should be in the negotiations. The Chinese had made clear that their bottom line was that for full normalization of relations, we had to meet three conditions: break diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan, end our security treaty with it, and withdraw our military personnel stationed on Taiwan.

We also had to consider the experience of other countries who had established diplomatic relations with Beijing, including our close ally Japan. None of these countries had been successful in establishing a full diplomatic relationship with Beijing while retaining an official presence in Taiwan. The British, because of their special interests relating to their colony in Hong Kong, had moved early to recognize the People's Republic of China, while keeping a small consulate in Tamsui, Taiwan, a small city outside of Taipei, the capital city of the Republic of China. As a result, the PRC did not permit London to appoint an ambassador in Beijing until the consulate was closed.

We also had to address within the administration the question of prioritization. Two of the Carter administration's top priorities when taking office were to complete negotiations on a second strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union, the course favored by

Secretary Vance, and to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing, the course favored by Brzezinski. There were conflicting views within the administration as to whether moving ahead with China would compromise our ability to negotiate a SALT agreement with Moscow.

To reduce that danger, Secretary Vance gained approval from President Carter for Vance to make an early trip to Moscow to give a boost to negotiations on a SALT II agreement. Unfortunately, the new administration made an amateurish error when Vance informed the press on his departure from Washington that his goal was to gain approval to make “substantial reductions” by both sides in strategic force levels, an issue of great sensitivity to the Soviet Union. The result was that the Soviets had rejected this goal even before Vance had arrived in Moscow. I remember that as a former Soviet hand, I was appalled that the administration had publicly put the Soviets on the spot in this fashion. In any event, the Vance talks in Moscow went badly, slowing prospects for progress on SALT and moving forward the China agenda, resulting in a decision for Vance to visit Beijing.

An important goal of Secretary Vance’s trip to Beijing in August 1976 was to make a determined effort to secure Chinese agreement for the United States to retain some form of sub-ambassadorial official relationship with Taiwan after we recognized Beijing as the sole legal government of China. Deng Xiaoping, who by then had returned as Vice Premier, was unyielding and firmly closed the door on that possibility. This was an important factor in convincing President Carter that full normalization of relations with Beijing would require us to meet the three Chinese conditions.

*Q: That was the August 20 to 26 trip then.*

ROY: Yes. Essentially, Deng Xiaoping slammed the door on that idea. He made it quite clear that we could not retain any official entity on Taiwan under conditions where we had established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. So based on that, we developed a negotiating position that recognized that there was no prospect of having an official presence on Taiwan after normalization. Instead, we decided that we would handle in our own way the steps necessary to retain an unofficial relationship with Taiwan that was consistent with our legal requirements. Essentially, this was an unprecedented situation. We had dozens of treaties and agreements with the Republic of China on trade and other issues that needed to remain in force in order to continue commercial, cultural, and other unofficial relationships with Taiwan. That was the problem we had to deal with. The Taiwan Relations Act was designed to deal with that problem.

*Q: And I would suspect the discussions involved not only the desk, but also any number of interagency offices.*

ROY: That’s correct. The Taiwan Relations Act in essence created a legal framework under U.S. law for managing an unofficial relationship with Taiwan. This process took a substantial amount of time. In July 1977, Leonard Woodcock had been sent to Beijing as

the head of the Liaison Office, at a time when there was tension between Secretary Vance and National Security Advisor Brzezinski over the order in which relations with China and the Soviet Union would be addressed. Secretary Vance was concerned that moving ahead with China would make it more difficult to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union on SALT.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: In any event, progress on the SALT II negotiations with Moscow was slower than originally hoped, enabling Dr. Brzezinski to give greater priority to China. He visited Beijing in May of 1978 and reached agreement with the Chinese to begin formal normalization negotiations in July.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: By that time, Woodcock had selected me to be the new Deputy Director of the Liaison Office. I was very junior for that position. In fact, I was two grades below the position at which it was classified.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: I think Woodcock recognized that I was intimately familiar with all of the background information involving the normalization questions, because I'd been involved in drafting the decision papers for the president on the subject. He also knew me better than the other candidates since I had escorted him around Washington as he was preparing to take up the assignment. In any event, I was assigned to the Liaison Office in June of 1978, with the non-diplomatic title of Minister-Counselor. When I had left my previous overseas assignment six years earlier, I had still been a Second Secretary.

Within two weeks of my arrival, Liaison Office Chief Woodcock began the secret negotiations with Foreign Minister Huang Hua on the normalization of U.S.-China relations, supplemented by occasional meetings in Washington between Brzezinski and PRC Liaison Office chief Chai Zemin.

The negotiations were unusual in a number of respects. They were so secret that we did not use State Department reporting channels to prevent unwanted dissemination of the reporting cables in Washington. Instead, we relied on a special back-channel communication line that went directly to the White House. I was the only person who accompanied Ambassador Woodcock to the meetings since nobody else in the Liaison Office was aware that we were engaged in these negotiations. We found it very awkward to have secrecy so intense that your own staff were kept completely in the dark. After each meeting, I would prepare a hand-written reporting cable, which I would clear with Ambassador Woodcock before delivering it to the one communications clerk who was cleared to handle the transmissions. Often this was in the middle of the night. Our instructions came from Washington through the same channel.

*Q: That was my next question.*

ROY: The reason for this intense secrecy was that we still formally had diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan, and if news of the negotiations with Beijing had leaked out, there was a strong likelihood that Congress would have forced us to abort them. Washington is not very good at protecting this type of sensitive information, so an extra effort was made to limit the number of eyes that had any access to the messages involved.

*Q: Now, which channel was used, Roger channel?*

ROY: I won't go into the technicalities of it, but the channel we used was not run by State communications personnel.

*Q: OK. And how long did -- well, let's stick with those negotiations. What seemed to be the opening opportunity, if you will? Or, you know, what did the Chinese position start out as I guess?*

ROY: Well, we had already concluded that the only way to establish full diplomatic relations with the PRC had to be on the basis of ending our diplomatic relationship with the Republic of China, ending our Defense Treaty with the Republic of China, and removing our military forces from Taiwan, which had already been reduced to several thousand personnel.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: Nevertheless, we had concluded that we would have to continue arms sales to Taiwan because otherwise, they would be in a defenseless position. So our negotiating position was based on acceptance of those three conditions, which the PRC (People's Republic of China) had made crystal clear were their bottom lines. We had divided our presentation into three issues that needed to be addressed: a) the nature of the post-normalization unofficial American presence on Taiwan; b) our respective statements on the occasion of normalization; and c) American trade and other unofficial relationships with Taiwan after normalization, which included not only the commercial and cultural relationships but also the acutely sensitive issue of continued American arms sales to the island. We had worked out very careful language on arms sales that in our view conveyed clearly that we would be continuing such sales but did so in an indirect way.

The other decision we made was that we would deal with the legal aspects of maintaining an unofficial relationship with Taiwan on our own and would not negotiate that with the PRC. So in the session devoted to handling the unofficial relationship with Taiwan, we merely told the Chinese that we would take the necessary U.S. domestic actions to be able to maintain an unofficial relationship with Taiwan. What that consisted of was the creation of the American Institute in Taiwan, which had to be legally constituted, and the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act, which was necessary to provide the legal basis for

conducting the unofficial relationship with Taiwan. We did not brief the Chinese on how we were going to do that since we considered that a domestic matter.

*Q: Now, during these discussions, you would probably be aware of what the Japanese had done in reestablishing relations with the PRC.*

ROY: I had been in our embassy in Taipei in 1964 when the French had transferred diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China on Taiwan to the People's Republic of China on the mainland. The French had deliberately not taken action to break diplomatic relations with Taipei. After recognizing the People's Republic of China, they did not close their embassy on Taiwan, forcing the Republic of China, which was as adamant as was Beijing on a one-China policy, to expel the French diplomats. We were also familiar with the 1972 Japanese action in jumping ahead of us to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC after the Kissinger-Nixon visits to China. That included establishing an unofficial Japanese representation office in Taipei. So yes, we were aware of that. However, no other country had the defense relationship with Taiwan that we had. As a result, they did not encounter the same difficulties that we had to deal with.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: The net outcome of this was that we ended up with a clearly defined basis in domestic law for conducting an unofficial relationship with Taiwan at the same time that we had an official relationship with the PRC. The French and the Japanese handled it in a fuzzier way because they didn't have the same obstacles that we had to overcome.

Incidentally, as I mentioned earlier, the Vance visit to Beijing in August of 1977 had confirmed definitively that it would be impossible to normalize our relations with Beijing while maintaining some form of official relationship with the ROC.

*Q: Vance, yes, August 20, 26.*

ROY: Yes. That visit provided the basis for concluding that we had to base our negotiating position on ending the security treaty, removing our troops, and breaking diplomatic relations with the ROC, while continuing arms sales. I had initially expressed skepticism, during the preparations for the Vance visit to China, over having the Secretary of State, on his first substantive engagement with China, press for the retention of a lesser form of official relationship with Taiwan after normalization, fearing that this would be interpreted by the Chinese leadership as signaling that we were not really committed to normalizing the relationship. Later, I realized that I had been wrong since the U.S. domestic sensitivity over the issue meant we had to go the extra mile before concluding that we had to sever all official ties with Taipei.

Before we began the negotiations, we briefed a tiny handful of the top leadership in Congress, on both sides, regarding the position we were going to take. I accompanied Dick Holbrooke up to the Hill when he carried out those briefings. So the position we took in our secret negotiations was one that had already been communicated to the top

leadership in Congress before we began the negotiations. We did not encounter any fundamental objections to our negotiating position. Indeed, some of the leaders we briefed said we were doing the right thing but that they were going to publicly criticize us for doing it. In any event, we had a reasonable expectation that Congress would recognize that this was a step that we had to take. So while the announcement of the successful normalization agreement came as a shock to most members of Congress, the top leadership had not been kept in the dark.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Now, the leadership being Senator Goldwater? Others?*

ROY: No, the briefing was not for prominent members of Congress. It was for the Speaker of the House, the President pro tem of the Senate, and the majority and minority leaders in each house of Congress.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: In other words, on both sides of the aisle. We did it for the House, and we did it for the Senate.

*Q: Let's turn to another subject at the moment. We were talking about the policy leadership, you, Harry, through Bill Gleysteen on to Holbrooke, on up. How was the China Desk itself put together? Who were some of the other officers that served with you?*

ROY: Oh boy, I'd need the staffing pattern in order to tell you that.

*Q: Right.*

ROY: I can still recall the physical arrangements of the office. When you entered the China Desk (EAP/PRCM), the director's office was straight ahead. I was in an adjacent office on the right that had a connecting door to his office. The secretaries for both of us occupied open space outside of that. If you turned right as you entered the door to the China Desk, there were offices off to the right for the people who handled all of the technical issues the desk handled: consular and visa issues, protection of American citizen issues, Hong Kong-Macau issues, Mongolia. All of these were part of the mix.

*Q: I guess part of my question is, I assume the desk was beginning to expand its staffing in the way --*

ROY: It didn't begin to expand until after we normalized relations. First of all, the other members of the desk were not aware of what was going on. The drafting of the policy papers was held very tightly.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: I noticed that in your outline you also raised a question about why EAP/PRCM

became EAP/CM.

*Q: Yeah.*

ROY: The basic reason was that until 1979, our official China relationship was with the Republic of China on Taiwan. Beginning in 1973 we had an unofficial office in Beijing when we established the U.S. Liaison Office. EAP/PRCM was established to handle our relationship with mainland China. With the normalization of U.S.-PRC relations in 1979, we recognized that we would need a separate expanded office to handle the unofficial relationship with Taiwan, including the newly created unofficial American Institute in Taiwan, which had offices in Washington and Taipei.

Because of our one-China policy, our organizational structure needed to be in conformity with the fact that we did not treat Taiwan as an independent country. We also had not yet established diplomatic relations with Mongolia, which did not occur until January 1987. Hong Kong and Macau had also not yet become part of the PRC. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, we transformed EAP/PRCM into an umbrella China office (EAP/CM), whose various components handled relations with the PRC, Taiwan, Mongolia, Hong Kong and Macau. At the beginning, Taiwan was a sub-office within the China Desk.

*Q: Now, one of the things we like to ask is, you were saying that Oscar Armstrong was the first director and then Harry Thayer. How was it working for these two gentlemen?*

ROY: Actually, the first director was Al Jenkins, but he had left the desk by the time I arrived. Armstrong and Thayer were both terrific. You couldn't have asked for better bosses. They were both very solid China people who knew China well. And they both had marvelous personal characteristics. One of the pleasures of being on the China Desk was having colleagues of that caliber to work with.

*Q: So no particular change in the atmospherics from one person to another?*

ROY: No, both of them paid attention to detail when detail was important but didn't get bogged down in detail. Both of them were able to delegate effectively. I spent a lot of time working with Mike Oksenberg over at the NSC. I would always keep Harry Thayer and Bill Gleysteen informed of what I was doing, and they were comfortable having me as the point person.

*Q: Now at some time another officer set up EAROC for Taiwan and Harvy Feldman was the director of that office.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: What's the timing of that in terms of what normalization was going to require and what our publicity needs were going to be?*



ROY: Dave, I would have to go back and check the record on that. I'm sure it's in the public domain. I was not so focused on the Taiwan aspect of the issues. I was really much more involved in the policy issues on dealing with the People's Republic of China.

*Q: Now, on that side, the PRC had its own Liaison Office in Washington. They're at the hotel by the bridge on Connecticut Avenue over Rock Creek Park. Did you have much opportunity to interact with them?*

ROY: Yes. Essentially, we were the only people they could deal with in the U.S. government other than the NSC. Our Liaison Office in Beijing was similarly restricted. We could not simply go out and make calls on other government ministries. Our Liaison Office in Beijing had to operate through the American and Oceanian Division of the Foreign Ministry.

*Q: That was kind of an SOP (standard operating procedure) that was established by us or by them?*

ROY: Basically by them. The liaison offices were technically not diplomatic. For example, Ambassador Woodcock's title was Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office. It was not Ambassador Woodcock. "Ambassador" was a courtesy title for him because he had been confirmed with the ambassadorial title when he had led a U.S. delegation to Vietnam.

It would have been inappropriate to have an ambassadorial title confirmed for somebody in a non-diplomatic mission. One of the loose ends during the Nixon-Kissinger years was the problem of trying to negotiate the equivalent of diplomatic immunities for an entity that was not considered diplomatic. The PRC would not agree to signing any documents with us, so we had to make do with oral agreements.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: The informal arrangements for diplomatic immunities were reported in top-secret NODIS cables and did not have any status under international law. Nevertheless, both sides had a shared interest in not having our respective Liaison Office personnel involved in legal disputes. One of our Liaison officers in Beijing was in a car that had a fatal accident with a Chinese bicyclist. We had to spirit him out of the country to avoid complications.

In practical terms, these informal arrangements served their purpose. They reflected an intent on both sides to establish a liaison arrangement in a way that did not imply that we had established an official relationship.

*Q: And that basically meant that both sides were doing a bit of a wink and a nod.*

ROY: Yes. It illustrated a common-sense point: in a variety of situations it is better not to confront people on issues of principle, rather than developing practical workarounds.

*Q: Now, you're deputy director on the desk through 1978.*

ROY: Right, through mid-June 1978.

*Q: And then you go off to the liaison office itself in Beijing. How did that opportunity appear?*

ROY: David Dean had replaced Harry Thayer as the Deputy Head of the Liaison Office when Harry came back to head the China Desk in the State Department. The deputy position was being treated as a two-year assignment, while the first three Liaison Office chiefs – David Bruce, George H.W. Bush, and Thomas Gates, Jr. – were each in Beijing for just over one year.

Bruce's assignment in Beijing was from May 1973 to September 1974. Bush was there from September 1974 to December 1975, when he came back to head the CIA. And Thomas Gates, a former Secretary of Defense, was in Beijing from May 1976 to May 1977. Leonard Woodcock served as Liaison Office chief from July 1977 to March 1979, when he was confirmed as the first U.S. ambassador to the People's Republic of China in Beijing.

Many people are unaware that from 1844, when we established our first diplomatic mission in China, until 1935, we had legations in China headed by ministers, not by ambassadors. Our first ambassador to China was appointed in 1935, when the legation in Nanjing was raised to the status of an embassy. From 1935 until 1979, our embassies in China were located either in Nanjing, Chongqing, or Taipei, Taiwan. So when we established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1979, and the U.S. Liaison Office became an embassy, this was the first time we had an embassy in Beijing.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: Harry Thayer had come back to head the China Desk in the late summer of 1976 from being Deputy Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office. David Dean went out to replace him.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: I had been Deputy Director of the China Desk since July 1975. So I had one year with Oscar Armstrong from 1975 to 1976, and two years with Harry Thayer from 1976-1978. Leonard Woodcock in the spring of 1978 was looking for a replacement for David Dean. Dick Holbrooke had decided that I was the best person for the job and sent a cable to Leonard saying, "Stape's the person for you." Woodcock came back saying he wanted to interview all of the potential candidates, of whom there were nine or so, all senior to me in the Foreign Service. Woodcock came back and interviewed all of them. He ended up picking me.

*Q: That's a singular complement because Woodcock is not a shabby bureaucrat. He's a*

*very talented --*

ROY: I was flattered that he showed he had confidence in me. On the other hand, there was also a substantive reason for it. I had been immersed in the issues that were becoming the dominating feature of his job in Beijing for several years. I had a close relationship with Michael Oksenberg at the NSC and had worked closely with Dick Holbrooke and Bill Gleysteen. The other candidates would have been less fresh on China issues and therefore, in a sense, less helpful to Woodcock in Beijing.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: Nevertheless, I had considered the China position out of reach. For career reasons I had decided that I needed a DCM position because too many of my colleagues had already become DCM's. So I had focused on trying to get the Nepal DCM position. Our ambassador in Nepal had interviewed me for the position and, to my delight, ended up selecting me. That same afternoon, Ambassador Woodcock told me that he had picked me for the Beijing position. So I had to go back, hat in hand, to our ambassador to Nepal and ask his permission to withdraw. He agreed, saying it was clearly in my interest to take the China position. He was very gracious about it.

*Q: Well, that's great. So when did you go out to the Liaison Office? June?*

ROY: I arrived in mid-June. My wife was in advanced pregnancy, but they needed me in Beijing because of the negotiations that were about to start. So we were able to arrange it so that when my wife was near her due date I was brought back on consultations to Washington, which were necessary in any event because we would be partway through the negotiations. Fortunately, it worked out as planned, and my consultations in Washington coincided with the birth of our third son. My wife then came out and joined me with a six-week-old baby at the end of September, accompanied by a young female recent college graduate who had jumped at the chance to be our nanny for a year in Beijing.

*Q: Now, the Liaison Office in Beijing, in addition to the press and policy issues that we're discussing, as DCM you are sort of the overseer of how the embassy operates.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: And where people get assigned housing and whatnot. Were you able to get out of those issues or did you have to handle them in addition to the policy --*

ROY: I handled them in addition, but the admin officer was principally responsible for them. We were a tiny post, meaning that there were 35 members of the Liaison Office, and that included the military component, the USIA component, and all of the Foreign Service officers who, among other things, handled the limited consular function.

*Q: So it's still fairly manageable. But what were the living conditions for staff members at*

*that time?*

ROY: Very uneven. We had two very nice apartments which the MFA had made available when we first opened the Liaison Office. At that time, the rivalry between the NSC and the State Department resulted in the unusual situation of having two DCMs, one from Kissinger's NSC staff and one from the State Department. Both were Foreign Service officers. This arrangement only lasted for a brief period, but we were able to hang on to both apartments: one for the DCM and one for the senior foreign service officer, which was the economic counselor. They were adjacent to each other across a hallway. Beijing had an acute shortage of housing space, both in the diplomatic compounds, where most diplomats lived, and in the hotels, none of which met international standards. We were totally dependent on getting apartments assigned by the Foreign Ministry.

We had an adequate number of apartments for the staff at the beginning. It was only after we established diplomatic relations, when the staff began to expand quickly, that we ran into horrendous problems of housing. Since there were no apartments available, most of our newly-added staff had to live in hotels, some of which, at the low end, had communal bathrooms shared with others on the same floor. We were lucky if we could get them into the Peking Hotel, which had the best facilities, but many were not that lucky.

*Q: Oh goodness.*

ROY: The situation was so unusual that many visitors were not aware of the acute lack of housing space in Beijing. I remember when the foreign service inspectors came to Beijing in the spring of 1979, soon after we had established diplomatic relations. Despite frantic efforts on our part, we could not get confirmation of their hotel rooms until after their arrival. They arrived on an early morning flight, and as a holding operation, I had them come straight to my apartment for breakfast, while the admin officer continued his efforts to confirm their rooms. They thought we were playing games with them to exaggerate our hardships. After a few days in Beijing, they began to realize that Beijing was not a normal post.

*Q: Now, during the Liaison Office time, weren't there senior officers above you?*

ROY: In the mission? Some of the officers were senior to me in terms of foreign service rank, but I had the diplomatic title of Minister-Counselor, which placed me at the top of the pecking order. In other words, I was the ranking officer after Ambassador Woodcock.

*Q: OK, there was an earlier period I think where they had --*

ROY: Well, as I mentioned earlier, when David Bruce was the head of the Liaison Office, there was a dispute between the NSC and the State Department over who should be the number two. They resolved the dispute with a compromise providing for a dual DCM arrangement. John Holdridge, a Foreign Service Officer who had been working on Kissinger's staff, became one of the DCMs, while Al Jenkins, who'd been head of the China Desk, became the other DCM. So under Bruce there were two DCM's.

That ended with the departure of the three individuals. When George H.W. Bush became the Liaison Office Chief, Harry Thayer became his sole DCM. He had known and worked with Ambassador Bush when Bush was the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

*Q: OK. Despite the difficult living conditions, how would you rate the morale of the office?*

ROY: I think all the officers were excited to be in China. Our problem was that we were very limited in what we could do. Unlike most posts, we were under travel restrictions and had to get MFA approval to travel outside of Beijing. Because we lacked diplomatic status, we were not permitted to deal with other elements of the government. Even in the Foreign Ministry, we could only deal with the Department of American and Oceanian Affairs.

Nevertheless, morale was pretty good because of the novelty and challenge of the jobs, and the intrinsic importance of what we were doing. There was still an aura of China being a new country to discover after two decades of bitter enmity when we had been shut out of the China mainland. Foreign Service Officers had dreamed of getting into China, but for over 20 years that had not been a realistic possibility.

As a result, the opening of the Liaison Office in 1973 had suddenly opened the door to becoming reacquainted with an enormously important country that for two decades we had only been able to view from the outside. So we generally did not have difficulty staffing the Liaison Office, but working and living conditions were difficult.

Woodcock was held in high respect by all of the staff of the Liaison Office and later of the newly-opened American Embassy. I had some personal difficulties with our political counselor, who was older than I was and resented being subordinate to a younger colleague. Nevertheless, he was a good supervisor, his staff all worked very hard for him, and we were able to contain the problem.

*Q: Now, you're talking about this period of the Liaison Office where you have very restricted connections to the Chinese side. But when you have a CODEL or something, wasn't that a big complication?*

ROY: The CODEL's were not handled by the Liaison Office. They were handled by the Chinese People's Institute for Foreign Affairs.

*Q: So that was the work around there.*

ROY: Yes. For example, in the CODEL's that I accompanied to China, the Liaison Office was not able to assign people to accompany us. So, for example, when we had our meeting with Vice Premier Zhang Chunqiao in 1976, I took notes and then gave them to a Liaison Office staffer to do a reporting cable based on my notes.

*Q: But you were in the meeting.*

ROY: Yes, not as a State Department official but as a member of the delegation. We had reached an agreement with China for exchanges of one or two delegations a year. Our delegations consisted of members of Congress, that is Representatives and Senators. When congressional delegations came to China, it was under these agreed arrangements. When a Chinese delegation came to the United States, there would be someone from the U.S.A. division of the Foreign Ministry who would accompany them. I was an official when I accompanied the congressional delegations, but the Liaison Office people were not officials. This was all smoke and mirrors, of course, but it worked.

*Q: Yes. And again, as you say, very exciting for the people who got to be assigned there.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: You know, who would have thought you'd have the opportunity to go to China?*

ROY: Exactly.

*Q: Now, all kinds of -- well, in the inspection group you said they came in the spring of '79 or '78? I've forgotten.*

ROY: It was in the spring of 1979. I'm not sure whether they were able to carry out inspections when we were a liaison office.

*Q: I have a note here on inspection, says Hemmingway. Does that make any sense?*

ROY: Yes. He may have been one of the inspectors, if not the chief inspector.

*Q: Now, as we're coming to the normalization announcement, you're aware as the DCM that the negotiations have moved forward. But at this same time other things are happening around the Asia region. Wasn't this when the Vietnamese moved into Cambodia. Were there international events that might have impacted on your negotiations?*

ROY: The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia actually occurred before we'd established diplomatic relations but after we had completed the normalization negotiations. The disruption for us occurred on Christmas Eve. I was at home asleep in bed when I received a mysterious call from Ambassador Woodcock at midnight asking me to come over to his residence. My recollection is that it was Christmas eve, but it might have been the night before.

I bicycled to his residence and found him with an American journalist, Elizabeth Becker, who had been in Cambodia as an American member of an international delegation when the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia occurred.

The delegation had spent the previous day huddled in a Cambodian government guest house while gun battles took place outside. Members of the delegation had hidden in bathrooms for eight hours, expecting to be slaughtered at any moment. From time to time, armed soldiers roamed the guest house, and a British member of the delegation had been shot and killed.

Then some soldiers escorted Ms. Becker and the British corpse to the airport, where they were put on a PLA aircraft and flown to Beijing. Arriving in the middle of the night, Ms. Becker, accompanied by the corpse, had gone straight to Ambassador Woodcock's residence, where they were considering what next steps should be. Unsurprisingly, Ms. Becker's nerves were totally shot.

I called in the Liaison Office consular officer and admin officer to join the group. Through them, we brought in a British consular office in the middle of the night to take charge of the British corpse. In the meantime, we located a hotel room for Ms. Becker to use after her nerves had settled down. I didn't get back home again until three or four in the morning.

*Q: How did they get the body all the way from Cambodia?*

ROY: A Chinese military aircraft flew them out. These were very bizarre circumstances. Given our distance from Cambodia, we were only vaguely aware of what was going on there, but the spillover hit us in Beijing.

*Q: Interesting. Now, when on December 18<sup>th</sup> the White House announces it's going to extend diplomatic recognition of the PRC --*

ROY: It was the morning of Saturday, December 16, 1978 in Beijing, which was the evening of December 15 in Washington, DC. President Carter made his announcement at nine p.m. on Friday, which was Saturday morning December 16<sup>th</sup> in Beijing. We had coordinated all the arrangements for the announcement with the Chinese in Beijing. We had cleared the text of what each side was going to say.

Deng Xiaoping had asked that we not refer to the fact that we would be continuing arms sales to Taiwan when the normalization announcement was made so as not to sour the atmosphere. President Carter had responded that for domestic political reasons, we had to state at the time of normalization that we would be continuing arms sales to Taiwan. However, we would not make the statement as part of the normalization announcement but rather in response to a planted question during the question-and-answer period immediately following the announcement. Deng said that in that case, China would have to denounce such arms sales. We agreed to exchange in advance the texts of what each side would say.

At three a.m. on the morning of December 16, seven hours before the formal announcement, I rode my bicycle to the Foreign Ministry to provide the text of what we

would say on arms sales to Taiwan and to receive the text of the Chinese statement of disagreement. I then bicycled on to the Liaison Office to show the texts to Leonard Woodcock and reported through the back channel to Washington, after which I bicycled home for a few additional hours of sleep. Only then did I reveal to my wife for the first time what would be announced shortly.

On Saturday morning, we assembled the staff of the Liaison Office at nine a.m. to listen to an important announcement on U.S-China relations that President Carter would be making at 10 am. Our public affairs officer arranged for live reception of the broadcast. None of the staff had any inkling of what had been taking place before the Carter announcement. Ambassador Woodcock then spent an hour with the staff answering an outpouring of questions. For some of them, it was very emotional since their spouses were from Taiwan.

The Chinese announcement took the form of a special edition of the People's Daily, with the key news printed in red type. Needless to say, most Chinese were surprised by this unanticipated development. The diplomatic community in Beijing was stunned by the announcement, and we were flooded with requests for briefings. Our negotiations with Deng Xiaoping had all been squeezed into the week before the announcement, with the key meetings occurring from December 12-15.

By December 14, we thought we had an agreement nailed down and were focusing on the Joint Communiqué that the two sides would issue. The first draft had ballooned in size so thankfully we had agreed to make it a bare bones statement no longer than one page in length.

Just when everything seemed to be falling into place, Washington, very sensibly, sent us a query asking whether Deng Xiaoping clearly understood that we would be continuing arms sales to Taiwan after normalization. We responded that the language in our instructions that we had used with Deng Xiaoping should have made this clear, but we added that we could not exclude the possibility that Deng had heard what he wanted to hear rather than what we said. Woodcock and I both recognized that this response might force a confrontation over the issue, but the issue was too important to paper over.

Sure enough, Washington instructed Woodcock to seek another meeting with Deng Xiaoping and make our intention to continue arms sales to Taiwan very explicit. Deng was furious and declared that continued U.S. arms sales to Taiwan after normalization were unacceptable. All our progress thus far seemed in danger of falling apart. After Deng calmed down, he asked Woodcock what we should do. Woodcock expressed his personal view that we would be better able to handle this disagreement from within a diplomatic relationship than without one. After a long minute of silence, Deng expressed agreement. The crisis had been surmounted, with the agreed time for the announcement less than a day away. So you can see that the timing was pretty tight.

*Q: Yeah. Yeah. Speaking of pretty tight, I recommend that we break off at this point so that we don't get too deep into the enormous avalanche of events that occur with*



*normalization. We can start it fresh in our next session. How about that?*

ROY: I think that's an outstanding idea.

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*Q: OK, today is August the 2<sup>nd</sup>. We're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Mr. Ambassador, we left it last time that the U.S. on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December announces it will recognize the People's Republic of China. How did you hear about this and how aware of you that this was coming?*

ROY: Well, of course I was part of the secret negotiations so that I was intimately familiar with the fact that we had reached an agreement to establish diplomatic relations. And I was involved in coordinating with the Chinese the timing of the announcement. So the announcement did not come as a surprise to me. Both Ambassador Woodcock and I had been surprised when the administration informed us of its desire to advance the timing of the announcement to mid December.

The original plan had been to try to complete the negotiations in time for a January 1, 1979 announcement. When the first few sessions with Deng Xiaoping went well, Woodcock and I assumed that January 1 was so close that the announcement might have to be pushed back to later in January. As a result, when the administration proposed mid December as the target date for the announcement, with January 1<sup>st</sup> as the date for the establishment of diplomatic relations, we were surprised. However, Deng was very receptive to the earlier date. So once the negotiations had reached a successful conclusion, we were ready for the announcement.

*Q: Now, this timing issue, you're getting this from the State Department or directly from the White House?*

ROY: All of our instructions came directly from the White House, through the back channel, not from the State Department. However, the instructions were coordinated with the key knowledgeable officials in the State Department. None of our staff was aware that the negotiations were taking place through the Liaison Office.

*Q: And the staff realized right away that this meant a lot more work and a lot more interesting work. In fact, one of the first things to come out of it is Deng's January trip to the United States. How much preparation did you have to organize that?*

ROY: A lot. We had to negotiate three agreements before Deng's departure for the United States in late January. However, the first order of business was to get ready for the official establishment of diplomatic relations, which was due to take place on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1979. Ambassador Woodcock held a reception for Chinese leaders to mark that occasion. It was quite an event. Deng Xiaoping came with his wife, and we had a substantial group of other senior Chinese leaders with their wives, all squeezed into Woodcock's cramped residence. To our surprise, we discovered that many of the senior Chinese wives were not

mutually acquainted.

However, the Liaison Office remained a Liaison Office until March 1<sup>st</sup> 1979, when it officially became an embassy. The reason for the delay was that it took nearly two months to shut down our embassy in Taipei. The Chinese were not prepared to have an embassy in both capitals at the same time. As soon as we established diplomatic relations, of course, we were able to function with our embassy diplomatic titles as opposed to our unofficial Liaison Office titles.

We then immediately began the negotiations on three agreements for signature during Deng's visit to the United States in late January: a consular agreement permitting each side to open two consulates in the other country, a cultural agreement, and a science and technology agreement. I personally handled the negotiations on the consular agreement and on the science and technology agreement. My recollection is that our political counselor, Charlie Sylvester, handled the negotiations on the cultural agreement, assisted by our USIS officer. We were successful in completing the negotiations before Deng's departure, but it was a close call.

*Q: That's right. He arrived on January 28.*

ROY: Ambassador Woodcock had returned to Washington to prepare for the Deng visit and his own appointment as ambassador to the People's Republic of China. He left for Washington in mid January, and I was left as the chargé of the Liaison Office. The negotiations were very intense, and we only wrapped up the agreements on the evening before Deng's departure.

These were to be the first signed agreements between the two governments, so the plan was to have them typed on treaty paper. In those days, of course, we did not have word processors. We used typewriters, and the Chinese had to have the Chinese language versions printed, which was a very slow process. If we discovered a typo in the Chinese version, it took six to eight hours to produce a new page.

An unexpected problem was that our terrific secretaries were so exhausted from working long hours under pressure that we had difficulty producing error-free pages on treaty paper, where you cannot make erasures. As a result, we ran out of our limited supply of treaty paper, which we had gotten from the MFA, and were delayed by the process of getting more in the middle of the night before Deng's departure for the United States. The net result was that we could not prepare signature-ready copies of the three agreements in time for Deng's trip to Washington and had to tell the State Department that they would have to prepare the texts there.

To add to the drama, Deng's departure coincided with the beginning of the Chinese New Year celebrations. These were marked by volleys of firecrackers all night and the firing of home-made bamboo rockets, which would come sizzling across the streets as we drove past. To make matters worse, in those days in Beijing cars were not allowed to use headlights at night, only parking lights. This despite the fact that the streets were poorly

lighted, making it difficult to see the pervasive bicyclists, who wore dark Mao jackets and had no lights on their bicycles.

On the date of Deng Xiaoping's departure, my wife and I went out to the airport to see him off. It was an exciting moment, and he was in high spirits. After the delegation had boarded the aircraft, the crowd of Chinese officials dispersed. As I was returning to the Liaison Office to report Deng's departure, I received a call from the Foreign Ministry saying that Deng's plane had been delayed by fog in Shanghai. I was heading back to the airport, when the Foreign Ministry notified me that Deng's flight had finally been cleared. Deng's trip to the United States was an enormous success. He had been to New York in the early 1970s to attend a session of the United Nations General Assembly, but that had been his only exposure to the United States.

On his return in March, after being confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to China, Woodcock recounted an amusing episode at the White House state dinner for Deng. He was seated at the head table which included the actress Shirley MacLeane. She had visited China during the Cultural Revolution and had been greatly impressed by the commune system. She enthused to Deng how she had met a famous physicist on a commune hoeing cabbages. He had told her that in his view hoeing cabbages was as important as the work he did as a physicist. Deng, who had been a victim of the Cultural Revolution, was not impressed by the story and gave a blunt response: "He was lying."

ROY: Our next challenge was to complete the arrangements for transforming the Liaison Office into an embassy. Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal had been asked by President Carter to be the senior U.S. government representative at the ceremony. He did the actual flag raising. We had to get the bronze placard for the front entrance of the new American embassy prepared and make all of those types of administrative arrangements. We had a very small staff in the Liaison Office, so this was a considerable burden on the staff, but everything was in place by the time Secretary Blumenthal arrived.

As a child, he had been a refugee in China from Nazi Germany during World War II and had been interned in Shanghai. He still had a few words of Shanghai dialect Chinese that he remembered from his youth. He wanted to give some remarks in Chinese at the various functions that he attended, and I spent a lot of time with him trying to correct his Shanghai pronunciation so it would sound more like Mandarin than Shanghai dialect.

*Q: Now, you have a Shanghai connection? Did you go down to Shanghai with him?*

ROY: My recollection is that I did not. He completed the official part of his visit in Beijing. His trip to Shanghai was a personal visit so he could stroll through the neighborhoods in Shanghai where he had spent his childhood from 1939 to 1947 with his parents as Jewish refugees from Germany.

*Q: Oh.*

ROY: Air travel in China was still very inconvenient in those days. They had acquired

some Boeing 707 aircraft from the United States, but they were largely used for international flights. They spent most of their time sitting in hangers, because there weren't many airfields in China at the time that could handle jet aircraft.

*Q: Now, the plane that took Deng to the States, that was a Chinese plane. Were there any special things about diplomatic clearance and the flight clearances, and that sort of stuff?*

ROY: We had a U.S. Air Force officer assigned to our Liaison Office. My recollection is that he handled the clearance arrangements for the aircraft. Much of that would have been done at the Washington end.

*Q: At that time I think we were still requiring Chinese aircraft to have a U.S. official in the cockpit. Do you recall anything like that regarding this trip?*

ROY: I do not. I do not recall the technicalities of the flight. I'm not sure the Chinese had an aircraft that could make it across the Pacific at that time.

*Q: The Deng trip of course is always one of those things where a lot of briefing books and papers and whatnot are put together. Was most of the embassy time on the agreements or briefing paper materials?*

ROY: We were still a Liaison Office until March 1<sup>st</sup>. Our role was to negotiate the agreements. The briefing books were prepared in Washington. The main burden of reporting on China throughout this period was still handled by the American Consulate General in Hong Kong.

*Q: Were there any special things that the Liaison Office said to Washington, you know, avoid this or don't do this sort of thing? Just to make the trip go well?*

ROY: No. Don't forget that Woodcock was in Washington preparing for his confirmation hearings and in a position to speak for the Liaison Office.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: The State Department had prepared a draft of the Taiwan Relations Act, but it encountered difficulties in Congress, in part because many members of Congress felt the security assurances to Taiwan were not strong enough, given that our security treaty with the Republic of China was being abrogated in accordance with its terms. This was an extremely sensitive issue, made even more so by our determination to continue arms sales to Taiwan, even in the absence of a security treaty. There was a danger that the normalization agreement would unravel if Congress insisted on making the Taiwan Relations Act the equivalent of the security treaty.

A complicating factor was that members of Congress were up in arms because the notification of ROC President Chiang Ching-kuo had taken place at the last minute when

the date for announcement of the normalization agreement with Beijing had been advanced to mid-December. This had required Ambassador Unger in Taipei to wake Chiang Ching-kuo in the middle of the night to inform him of the U.S. government decision. So the mood in Congress was not as cooperative as we had hoped.

The original briefing papers for President Carter had provided that both Taiwan and Japan would be given several weeks of advance notice before the announcement that a normalization agreement had been reached with Beijing. From a bureaucratic standpoint this was a sensible provision, but in the real world it was hopelessly unrealistic since Taiwan would have been able to use its influence with Congress to scuttle the agreement if it had advance notice. That was the reason why preserving the secrecy of the negotiations until the last minute was so absolutely essential. This was a classic case of the contradictions with which diplomacy has to deal. Nevertheless, dealing with such contradictions can have real world consequences, as it did in this case.

Against this background, getting agreement on the final text of the Taiwan Relations Act took a lot of time in Washington. There were some substantive changes, especially in the areas dealing with the security interests of the United States with respect to Taiwan that were inserted into the agreement. We were in regular contact with Washington while it was making these judgments, but we were not in a position to dictate the outcome. The handling of the Taiwan Relations Act was essentially a Washington project involving the State Department lawyers and the East Asia Bureau in dealing with Congress.

*Q: Going back to the Deng trip, were you aware of how Washington wanted to organize it? And were there any specific recommendations from the embassy to visit this or that city?" Or was that all organized in Washington?*

ROY: That was all handled in Washington. Ambassador Woodcock was back in Washington and involved in the final preparations for the Deng visit. He also escorted Deng throughout his visits to various cities in the United States. This meant the Liaison Office did not have to get involved in the details of Deng's trip.

*Q: I think he stopped at the West Coast first and then went on to Washington? I've forgotten how it went. Or did he go to Washington directly and then hit Texas and the West Coast?*

ROY: My recollection is that he went to Washington, D.C. first and then he went to Atlanta, Georgia where there was a conference of U.S. governors. From there he went to Texas, where he attended a rodeo. His last stop was in Seattle, Washington, where he visited a Boeing manufacturing facility.

*Q: In overview, how did the Liaison Office view that trip?*

ROY: The trip went extremely well from our perspective, although he encountered a number of hostile demonstrations throughout his travels. He received special treatment, including a special performance at the Kennedy Center. National Security Advisor

Brzezinski hosted him at a dinner in his home on his arrival. Deng seemed to thrive in the role that he was cast in as the first senior Chinese leader to make an official visit to the United States. You recall the pictures of him wearing a cowboy hat at the rodeo in Texas. He handled the public relations aspects of his trip extremely well.

In the Liaison Office we were getting ready for the opening of the embassy, in addition to reporting on the consequences of the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia and the growing Chinese military build up on the Sino-Vietnamese border. So right at the time when we were getting ready for Secretary Blumenthal's visit, we also had the possibility of a Chinese-Vietnamese conflict emerging in a more serious form. We had our hands full both with the bilateral aspects of establishing the embassy, and with the international aspects of a possible clash between the Chinese and the Vietnamese.

*Q: One last question on the Deng trip, were the Chinese officials surprised, confused, at how the Americans were going to conduct this security, living, housing arrangements, that sort of thing? I mean because not many Chinese officials had much international travel.*

ROY: My recollection is that Han Xu, who later on became the Chinese ambassador in Washington and who had been chief of protocol in Beijing, was involved with the visit. He was a very skillful official who had a lot of experience on diplomatic protocol issues. Those issues were largely handled on the Washington end, rather than at our end. Of course, the Chinese were very solicitous regarding the treatment that Deng would receive, and there were lots of interactions between the administrative people on both sides.

*Q: Going back to the Vietnamese thing. Lots of documents have been declassified from that border clash. One is a cable on February 16<sup>th</sup> which instructed you, as chargé, to approach Deng and dissuade him from an invasion of Vietnam. How did that conversation go (laughs)?*

ROY: The instruction I received right after the outbreak of the fighting on the Sino-Vietnamese border was to see Deng Xiaoping and call for a halt in the fighting. The instruction came in the middle of the night. I contacted the Chinese Foreign Ministry and requested an urgent meeting with Deng Xiaoping. As I expected, I was instead received by Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Wenjin the next morning. I conveyed the message to him, with the request that he convey it immediately to Deng Xiaoping. After reading the message, politely said the Chinese would of course take our views very seriously, and he would immediately convey the message to Deng Xiaoping. That's the way the instruction was handled.

What we subsequently learned, but did not know at the time, was that Deng had mentioned to President Carter that there would likely be a clash between the Chinese and the Vietnamese. President Carter had apparently responded in a way that indicated the United States understood the Chinese position. So the instruction to me was largely a pro forma exercise in positioning ourselves on the question. This was in mid-February before Secretary Blumenthal had arrived.

The Sino-Vietnamese fighting on the border had intensified by the time Secretary Blumenthal arrived. We were immediately seized with the question of what, if anything, Secretary Blumenthal should say on the subject at the Chinese welcome banquet for him that night. We didn't want to accuse the Chinese of aggression, but we didn't want to be seen as turning a blind eye to the outbreak of a border clash between Vietnam and China initiated by the Chinese. After some frantic phone calls with the White House, he ended up expressing disapproval of actions that "transgressed" borders, thus avoiding use of the term "aggression."

*Q: And actually I think shortly after Blumenthal was there the Chinese sort of finished their part of that and by early May had begun to withdraw.*

ROY: It was an interesting and instructive episode. The overwhelming sentiment in the diplomatic corps in Beijing was that the Chinese would not attack the Vietnamese, putting their fresh troops up against Vietnamese forces battle-hardened by the war with the United States. I shared that judgment at first. However, we had sufficient information concerning the scale of the Chinese military buildup for me to have second thoughts. As a result, we did not go out on a limb and predict to Washington that the Chinese would not launch an attack, as many of our fellow embassies did to their capitals.

The Chinese always justified the border clash as necessary to "teach the Vietnamese a lesson" for ignoring Chinese interests in Cambodia when Hanoi invaded that country in December 1978. We always believed that the Chinese attack had limited objectives. So we were not surprised when the Chinese pulled back their troops after breaking through the Vietnamese border defenses, rather than choosing to push on to Hanoi.

Nevertheless, the reality is that the Chinese military forces were severely unprepared for taking on battle-hardened troops. Chinese casualties were severe in the course of the border clash, and the Chinese learned lots of lessons about how they had degraded the combat capabilities of their military forces by measures they had taken during the Cultural Revolution. These included halting the use of military insignia on uniforms. The only way you could distinguish between an officer and a non-officer was that the officers had four pockets on their tunics, and the non-commissioned officers had only two pockets. Under battlefield conditions, where the Chinese troops were taking heavy casualties with replacements pouring in, the troops didn't recognize the new officers and the absence of military insignia created major problems of command and control for the Chinese. So there were a lot of lessons that the Chinese themselves learned from their so-called "lesson" to Vietnam. It resulted in China reverting back to more traditional military practices on the part of the PLA after the attack.

*Q: Now, along these lines, I assume that with normalization, the mission had more regular and direct contacts with the Chinese bureaucracies. Would that have been true with the defense attaché staff too?*

ROY: Yes. Several things were happening at this time. We opened the embassy on March

1<sup>st</sup> of 1979. Then we began to build up our staff, because the Liaison Office, with a staff of only 35 persons, was much too small to handle the expanding responsibilities that we were taking on.

An acute problem was that we had no space in the Liaison Office, which limited our ability to expand. The second problem was housing. There were no apartments immediately available in the diplomatic compounds, and often there were no vacant hotel rooms in Beijing. So a major administrative problem in expanding was that we could not provide normal amenities for added staff. We ended up with quite a few embassy officers housed in very substandard hotels for extended periods.

To illustrate the problem, we had two colonels and a navy captain representing the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy, who had to occupy an office so small that they had to literally climb over the desks in order to reach their seats. We were under tremendous pressure at the time from multiple agencies, especially the military, who wanted to add staff to the new embassy. I joked with the colonels at the time that they could bring in as many staff as they wanted, but they would all have to share with them the one office we had available.

When the Liaison Office first opened in 1973, it was squeezed into a small compound nearly identical to the compound occupied by the embassy of Upper Volta, a former French colony that later changed its name to Burkina Faso. The compound had a small unpretentious residence for the chief of the Liaison Office. On the right as you entered the compound was a small two-story office building. The offices for the chief and deputy chief of the Liaison Office were on the second floor, along with the handful of political and economic officers and the communications unit. The cultural affairs officer was on the first floor, along with offices for a small group of Chinese staff. Behind the Liaison Office chief's residence was a row of garages, one of which had been converted into a tiny health unit staffed by a foreign service nurse.

Before my arrival, the Liaison Office had been able to acquire a second somewhat larger compound about three blocks away. It had been the former Romanian embassy, which had become vacant when the Romanians built a new embassy on a nearby compound. The two separate compounds were colloquially referred to as “yiban” and “erban,” shortened versions of the Chinese for first and second office building (bangonglou).

Erban's acquisition had vastly expanded the initial space constraints of the Liaison Office. However, in the intervening years, the gradual expansion of the skeletal initial staff had filled it to overflowing. It provided space for the consular section and the administrative staff. The tiny American school, covering K-6 and staffed by Liaison Office spouses, was located in converted garages behind Erban. The school had originally used the landing between two Liaison Office apartments about two miles away from the Liaison Office.

This was typical of the embassy as a whole. Everybody was crammed into offices because we simply did not have sufficient space. So we were preoccupied with acquiring



additional facilities.

*Q: Now, the embassy at this time was what, \_\_\_\_\_.*

ROY: When the Liaison Office was converted to the U.S. embassy in March 1979, we were finally able to acquire a third compound, around the corner from Erban, that had been the original Pakistani embassy. It was substantially larger than the other two compounds and became the main embassy chancery for the next quarter century. In addition to a much larger office building, this third compound had a small school building. This became the initial location for the Beijing International School, which opened in 1980, after a year and a half of complex negotiations with the British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand embassies.

We were under extreme space limitations throughout the year and a half that I was there after the establishment of diplomatic relations. The additional point that should be noted is that Washington had pulled out all the stops to try to get Ambassador Woodcock confirmed as ambassador, in time for him to return to Beijing for the opening of the embassy. But because of difficulties with Congress, we were not able to do that. As a result, as chargé I had to preside over the opening of the embassy, whereas it would have been more appropriate for Ambassador Woodcock to have performed that function.

*Q: Mm. Now, in terms of embassy contacts with the Chinese authorities, with the establishment of the embassy does that get a little easier?*

ROY: Well, as soon as the embassy was established, and even before, we were able to broaden our contacts with the Chinese government. Our goal was to establish what you would call the normal types of relationships that an embassy would expect to have with different parts of the government. That would include the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation. I had established contact with the Science and Technology Commission in negotiating the science and technology agreement. The Liaison Office had been in touch with the Ministry of Culture in negotiating the cultural agreement. So we were already engaged in those types of what you would call normal activities.

However, right in the middle of this process, the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act in a form that the Chinese objected to very strongly cast a pall over the initial enthusiasm that both sides had been displaying over establishing the diplomatic relationship. The Chinese made very serious protests over the Taiwan Relations Act, especially the security provisions, but we stuck to our position that we were taking the steps that were necessary to continue the unofficial relationship with Taiwan that both sides had understood we would need to retain. Eventually that issue receded, but for a while it created a very negative attitude on the part of the Chinese officials that we were dealing with.

We also had to sort out reporting responsibilities. Hong Kong had been bearing the brunt of the substantive reporting on developments in China because of the staff limitations in Beijing and the fact that we were not able to travel easily within the People's Republic of China. However, as we began to assume the normal functions of an embassy, we

expected to take on more of the reporting responsibilities for developments, both domestically in China, and in terms of China's relations with other countries. That required close coordination with Hong Kong.

*Q: Who was the con-gen (consul general) in Hong Kong at the time? I've forgotten.*

ROY: It was Tom Shoemith.

*Q: Could have been, yeah.*

ROY: But along with all of this, we were also involved in the process of trying to open our two new consulates in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The Chinese wanted to open more than two consulates immediately. For funding reasons we could only afford to open two consulates general immediately. We were not prepared to let the Chinese open more than two until we had negotiated a consular treaty that provided for the privileges and immunities of our consular staff. So while we were doing all these other things, we also had to begin negotiations on a consular treaty with China.

We also had to begin the process of acquiring properties for our consulates in Guangzhou and Shanghai. I was in charge of that function and had to fly down to Guangzhou and Shanghai to inspect various properties. In Shanghai, we were offered a very desirable property. In Guangzhou the properties were all substandard. We ended up selecting the top floor of the Dongfang Hotel in Guangzhou. There were no international class hotels in Guangzhou at the time, and the Dongfang provided us with the space we needed to get the Consulate General up and running.

*Q: Just as a side note, going to Shanghai that first time must have been very interesting for you.*

ROY: Well, I'd been to Shanghai before because I had escorted three congressional delegations to China in 1976, '77, and '78, and Shanghai was normally included in the itineraries of congressional visitors. So I was not unfamiliar with Shanghai. And of course I remembered Shanghai from my youth, when as a ninth grader I had watched the People's Liberation Army march into the city in May 1949. Guangzhou, on the other hand, was new to me.

*Q: Now, in pushing this process forward, you had a lot of people wanting to come out to China and do something or sign something. So Vice President Mondale came to China August 25-28, 1979 in Beijing and then went down to Guangzhou and formally opened the consulate there.*

ROY: The consulate general there.

*Q: What was that like for the embassy to organize and participate in, and staff?*

ROY: We had been flooded with visitors. We had the Secretary of the Treasury in late February and early March for the opening of the embassy. Then we had the Secretary of Commerce come in May. Ambassador Woodcock had to be back in Washington at that time, so I also had to handle her visit as chargé. The big issue at that time was the settlement of our respective positions on claims and assets. The Chinese were eager to negotiate a commercial treaty between the two countries that would enable them to gain most favored nation status. We were not prepared to negotiate a commercial treaty unless we had first settled the claims and assets issue.

Our goal was to use the visit of the Secretary of Commerce to come to closure on claims and assets. In fact, we got a decision from Deng Xiaoping during her visit on a formula for settlement, which was very favorable from our standpoint. It also, of course, was beneficial from China's standpoint in the sense that it cleared the way for the negotiation of a commercial treaty. Nevertheless, many Chinese viewed the claims and assets settlement as so favorable to the U.S. side that it created political difficulties for the Chinese Minister of Finance. We also had a string of congressional visitors, and a low key visit by Admiral Turner, the Director of CIA.

All of this preceded the visit by Vice President Mondale in August, which was nevertheless very significant because he was the highest-level official of the United States to visit China since the visit by President Ford in 1975. Surprisingly, President Carter never visited China during his presidency, so Vice President Mondale was in fact the most senior official of the Carter administration to visit China.

Unsurprisingly, the Mondale visit involved all of the hooplah-lah that is associated with a presidential visit. In fact, the Chinese leaned over backwards to give him most of the protocol treatment normally accorded a chief of state. For example, he was given a troop review in Tiananmen Square in front of the Great Hall of the People.

Unfortunately, it happened that the King of Nepal was visiting China at the time, and the main streets were festooned with banners saying, "Warm Welcome to the King of Nepal." This caused a minor kerfuffle with some members of Vice President Mondale's staff, who wanted us to demand equal treatment for Vice President Mondale, even though he was not a chief of state. It was a tempest in a teapot. Anyone familiar with international protocol would have understood that the Chinese were fudging it in our favor by giving Mondale better protocol treatment than he had a right to demand, but short of all the bells and whistles reserved for chiefs of state.

*Q: Right. Now, the embassy's still trying to get on its feet and you've got the Mondale visit. I assume that probably entailed a fairly large delegation from Washington. How did that impact the Beijing side?*

ROY: Well, they were still getting used to the imperial presidency. The size of the delegation that came with Vice President Mondale was an eye-opener for the Chinese. We had a 40-member Secret Service Advance party that came several weeks in advance to inspect the various sites the Vice President would be visiting. I went over to the

Foreign Ministry to provide them with a name list of the group. Mondale was also scheduled to visit Xi'an in western China and Guangzhou in the south to preside over the opening of the new U.S. consulate general there. When I handed over the forty names, the Chinese thought I was giving them the name list of the *entire* delegation that would be accompanying Vice President Mondale. I had to explain that this was only a security advance detail (*laughs*).

The planned visit to Xi'an illustrates how reciprocity factors can sometimes intrude on diplomacy. When Deng Xiaoping had visited the United States six months earlier, the White House had included Atlanta, Georgia in his itinerary because the annual U.S. governors' conference was taking place there, giving Deng the opportunity to rub shoulders with a broad swath of U.S. governors. Vice President Mondale was scheduled to visit Xi'an because it was a historic Chinese city that had served as China's capital for many centuries under various dynasties. It had also been the western terminus of the Silk Road.

Some of Mondale's staffers wanted us to demand that the Chinese bring all of the governors from northwest China to Xi'an so Mondale could have a meeting with Chinese governors paralleling Deng's meeting with U.S. governors in Atlanta. The difference, of course, was that the U.S. governors were in Atlanta anyway, whereas the Chinese would have had to summon their governors to be in Xi'an for Vice President Mondale. Not surprisingly, the Chinese refused to do so.

*Q: Now, in prepping for the Mondale trip, did the embassy submit some background briefing papers?*

ROY: Embassies are not expected to provide briefing papers for high level visits. You usually provide scene-setters, in which you provide your assessment of circumstances in China at the time of the visit. We provided that sort of reporting.

*Q: Now, did you go with Mondale down to Guangzhou?*

ROY: I did not. Ambassador Woodcock accompanied him.

*Q: Oh, Woodcock was back by then.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: He was not there for the Secretary of Commerce, but he was there for the Mondale visit.

*Q: And the consul general in Guangzhou was Richard Williams.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: An interesting assignment for a mid level FSO, I suspect.*

ROY: Well, he was perfect for the assignment. He had spent many years in our Hong Kong consulate general so he knew that geographic area of Asia extremely well. He had very good Chinese, and he had a substantial amount of experience. He had been in the Foreign Service for several decades. He later became our first ambassador to Mongolia.

*Q: And in fact, Guangzhou as a province is the major source for overseas Chinese. So having --*

ROY: Guangzhou was important for two reasons. First of all, the region around Guangzhou was the principal source of Chinese emigration to the United States. So as we anticipated, immigrant visa applications from the Guangzhou consulate general were the highest from anywhere in China, in large measure because residents of the province of Guangdong, where Guangzhou is located, have the largest number of relatives in the United States who could submit petitions for immigrant visas.

The second factor was that China had an annual trade fair in Guangzhou, making it the area through which China was managing its foreign trade at that time. That gradually changed as China opened up to the outside world, and the significance of the Guangzhou trade fair faded. However, when we opened the consulate general, trade was an important factor.

*Q: Now, in the trade issues, once you have normalization it's legal to trade with China. Up in the embassy and down in Guangzhou did you have foreign commercial service people assigned?*

ROY: The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) was in the process of being established. Responsibility for the commercial function was not transferred from State to Commerce until 1979, and the FCS was established in 1980. So at first, Foreign Service economic officers were still providing support for commercial functions. This gradually changed as the FCS got up and running.

*Q: Ah.*

ROY: There was an economic officer in Guangzhou, but the principal commercial function was still handled out of the embassy.

*Q: Now, as trade increases and your reporting on that, were there any trends that were remarkable?*

ROY: Trends of what sort?

*Q: Well, the kinds of materials that were entering trade then? Entering the bilateral trade strain?*

ROY: Well, we had resolved the claims and assets issue and actually got that agreement signed during the visit of the commerce secretary. So we were now involved in negotiations on a commercial treaty. That was taking a good amount of the time of embassy personnel. That, of course, was handled in Beijing, not in any of the consulates general.

*Q: Do you think the Chinese bureaucracy at that time understood the kind of open economy that they were just about to begin to deal with?*

ROY: No. The Chinese were appallingly ignorant of conditions in the United States and how to deal with a country such as the United States. Once they launched the four Special Economic Zones, they benefited enormously from the business savvy of Chinese businesspersons in Hong Kong and among the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. This helps to explain why China succeeded in its economic reforms while Russia, in contrast, failed miserably when the Soviet Union unraveled. Moscow did not have a large pool of Russian businesspersons who had extensive experience in western economies.

In the case of the United States, there had only been essentially a trickle of two-way travel after the Nixon visit in '72 under very constrained conditions, and no trade at all for the two decades before that. So the only people in China who had experience of living and working in the United States were people in their seventies and eighties who had been to the United States pre-World War II. So there was cultural shock, shall we say, on both sides, but much greater on the Chinese side.

Later, of course, China flooded the United States with students, many of whom stayed on for extended periods and gained business and financial experience working in American companies. When China's economy started to boom after the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1992, many of these Chinese began to return to China taking their newly gained expertise with them. This contributed enormously to the success of China's economic and financial reforms.

*Q: Along those lines, in civil aviation the Chinese had standard agreements with JL or Lufthansa or whatnot, which were all basically state-owned airlines, as was CAAC (Civil Aviation Administration of China). But when it came to the United States they were presented with this vast plethora of airlines. That must have --*

ROY: Well, negotiating a civil aviation agreement with China was also one of the priority things we were trying to do, but this took several years. In the early years after normalization, air travel out of China was greatly constrained. There were no direct flights to Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, or North America. There were flights to Tokyo, but these had to fly a route over Shanghai in order to avoid North Korean airspace, adding an hour or two to the length of the flights. To go to Hong Kong you had to fly to Guangzhou and take the train from Guangzhou down to Hong Kong. It took two days. The Beijing international airport was also hopelessly inadequate and was only accessible by a narrow road. The Chinese also had a very limited fleet of jet aircraft that could

handle international routes. However, by the time I left China in 1981, Pan American had opened an office in Beijing and had initiated flights to and from the United States via Tokyo. It later became United Airlines.

*Q: Mm-hmm. One of the things administrating the embassy, you'd always had to work through the Diplomatic Services Bureau. Did any of those restrictions or paths change once you became an embassy?*

ROY: No. We still had to deal with all administrative and personnel matters involving local staff through the Diplomatic Services Bureau. The biggest difficulty we had were travel restraints. Not only did you have to get Foreign Ministry approval for trips, but travel within China was still very inconvenient. Not only were flights limited, but if you were visiting several cities, you had to arrange onward travel at each stop on your itinerary. In other words, instead of having a centralized travel system, they had a decentralized one. In those days, it was more common to use train travel than to use air travel. We even used train travel frequently to return to Beijing from Hong Kong, for example.

The Liaison Office, and later the embassy, rented a bungalow at Beidaihe, a well-known sea-side resort village on the Bohai Gulf, just south of Qinhuangdao. Embassy staff could use it for weekend trips to escape the pressures of Beijing. Travel there was by train through Tianjin and Tangshan, a big city that had been leveled by a major earthquake in 1976.

*Q: Let me get into the issue of, you know, you'd mentioned before even under the liaison period you'd be sharing stories with the other Anglo-Saxon embassies and whatnot. Did that process continue, the embassies in Beijing shared things?*

ROY: Well, even as a Liaison Office, we engaged in contacts with diplomatic missions and international agencies in Beijing. We were even included in diplomatic receptions, but we were always at the tail end of receiving lines with other non-governmental organizations, preceded by diplomatic missions and international organizations. As a Liaison Office, we were banned from contacts with Chinese government ministries, and restricted in terms of whom we could deal with in the Chinese government. Essentially, we were confined to dealing with the American and Oceanian Department of the Foreign Ministry. It was the only organ of the Chinese government that we could deal with directly.

That changed when we established diplomatic relations. In terms of our relations with other diplomatic missions, I would say they became normal. Our embassy officers expanded their range of contacts with other diplomatic missions, as did the ambassador and myself. As in most diplomatic posts, you quickly learn which missions have information to share and which missions only want to draw on your information but have nothing to offer in return. You spend your time with the former, rather than the latter.

*Q: (laughs) And who would you consider were some of the better plugged in missions at*

*that time?*

ROY: The British, the Australians, the French, the Germans, the Japanese, the Indians, the Soviets, and the Romanians. Also, the Canadians. There were others, of course, but that is a representative sampling.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Now, talking about expanded contacts with the Chinese, one of our interlocutors said that during this period you were particularly active in contacting some of the Chinese publications, Red Flag, those sorts of things. Again, that's part of being an embassy, having a little status in town?*

ROY: No, we hadn't been permitted to make those types of contacts before. Once we had diplomatic relations, first of all, travel between China and the United States expanded rapidly. If a delegation, for example, of Chinese editors was going to the United States, we would host a function for them before they went. We would then follow-up after their return in order to expand our access to the media. At the time, private travel was extremely limited, although we were beginning to see student travel starting up. Before, it had not been possible for Chinese students to go to the United States until we had diplomatic relations. Early in the process of the new diplomatic relationship, American universities began to establish links with China and to welcome Chinese students to their campuses.

Nevertheless, most of the delegations going to the United States were government officials of various sorts. The embassy practice was to have a reception for each delegation before it went. This was a way of expanding access within the Chinese government. When they returned, we would often host follow-up events with them. I remember hosting a dinner in my apartment for a group of Chinese newspaper editors who were making their first trip to the United States. We hadn't had the opportunity to do that type of entertaining before. It was great fun. Over the food, we could discuss what was going on in China and hear some very interesting viewpoints.

Of course, our staff all had Chinese language capability, which was very important because you couldn't function in China in those days without Chinese. I think it's pretty true today as well, but in those days it was absolutely vital.

*Q: Did you have a large enough cadre of Chinese speakers? I mean --*

ROY: Yes. The Taiwan Chinese advanced language school provided us with a regular flow of graduates. Our most acute problem was that we couldn't build up staff because we had no place to put them. A second factor, which I haven't mentioned before, was that as soon as we established a diplomatic relationship with Beijing, we knew that our mission would be expanding, and the question of a school for the children of staff members became vitally important.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*



ROY: Given the minimal staffing of the Liaison Office, we had previously been able to provide primary level schooling drawing for teachers on the spouses of staff members. We were lucky that a number of the spouses of the Liaison Office staff were actually professional teachers. An additional problem was that we had no space for a school. In the early years of the Liaison Office, the school was squeezed onto the landing between the apartments for the DCM and the Economic Counselor. This was clearly going to be inadequate for the needs of an embassy with an expanding staff.

By default, I became the point person for an effort to establish an international school, in cooperation with the embassies of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The Foreign Ministry was cooperative, in principle, because they recognized that if you had a growing foreign business community in Beijing, they couldn't bring their families with them unless there was some schooling for their children. Nevertheless, the Foreign Ministry was unable to provide space for a school or apartments for the professional staff of a school because it had been overwhelmed by the flood of countries opening diplomatic relations with the PRC after it was admitted to the United Nations in 1971 (59 new recognitions by the end of the 1970s).

It took us over a year and a half in order to work out the charter of the school and the arrangements that we needed to get up and running, the biggest constraint being space. When we were successful in acquiring our first annex, called Erban, meaning building number two, it had a garage space that we were able to convert into a school. That became the physical location of the school, but we didn't have an apartment to bring in a professional teacher as the principal.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: We gradually overcame those difficulties. By the time I left in the summer of 1981 an international school was up and running and providing excellent quality instruction. When I came back ten years later as the U.S. ambassador, the school had already expanded to many hundreds of students in a new location. Now it has nearly two thousand students.

*Q: Oof.*

ROY: The negotiations over establishing an international school were almost as difficult as the normalization negotiations, and far more time-consuming.

*Q: (laughs) Because the Chinese didn't really understand the need, or they didn't --*

ROY: No, the problem was among the participating embassies. We had to draw up a school charter that was acceptable to the State Department Office of Overseas Schools, which was prepared to provide funding support for us. So we had to meet a variety of State Department requirements. Then we had to meld those requirements with the requirements of the other embassies who were cooperating in forming the school. We also had to establish a whole variety of ground rules for the operation of the school on the

basis of unofficial cooperation.

*Q: Sounds tedious.*

ROY: It was tedious. Nevertheless, it was vitally important because we couldn't staff the embassy if we couldn't provide schooling for the children of our personnel.

*Q: Right. Now, the first PRC holiday in which you are a full-fledged embassy would be international day October 1, '79. So you went to the head of the line (laughs).*

ROY: We didn't go to the head of the line. The protocol order is determined by the date of presentation of the ambassador's credentials. That's a common practice everywhere, except in Catholic countries, where the Papal Nuncio is always number one.

*Q: And yet, this time around was the first time it was different.*

ROY: Well, the pecking order in terms of the ranking of ambassadors is not really that important. Far more important are the stature of your country internationally and the reputation of your mission for being well-informed about local developments. We did well on both counts.

*Q: Right. Now, one of the major issues that came up at the end of that year was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.*

ROY: Yes, that occurred in December 1979.

*Q: Obviously you were trying to gauge Chinese reactions to that.*

ROY: Well, it wasn't difficult to gauge. They were as upset by that development as we were. Given their long common border with the USSR, Soviet aggression against neighboring countries was not something the Chinese could treat lightly.

*Q: Anything in addition to just the normal Renmin Ribao editorial and whatnot? How were your contacts at MFA responding to you?*

ROY: Well, without getting into sensitive classified areas, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan opened up possibilities for expanded cooperation between the United States and China in strengthening the resistance in Afghanistan to the Soviet occupation.

*Q: Now, coming forward to 1980 --*

ROY: Yes, let's begin with 1980. There were two significant things about the beginning of 1980. One was that the secretary of defense of the United States visited China. And secondly, it represented one year after the establishment of diplomatic relations, meaning that our arms sales to Taiwan were resuming. We had only agreed that we would not sell arms to Taiwan during the first year after normalization. Nevertheless, the Chinese were

very unhappy when we resumed arms sales.

*Q: And this came more and more to the front? Now, on April 28<sup>th</sup> we opened the consulate in Shanghai. Did --*

ROY: Of 1980.

*Q: Of 1980?*

ROY: Yes, it took substantially more time to get the Shanghai consulate open than the one in Guangzhou.

*Q: And what were some of the factors?*

ROY: In Guangzhou our ConGen was on an upper floor of a hotel. In Shanghai we were able to acquire a stand-alone property, better than anything available in Beijing at the time. It took time to work out the leasing arrangements for the property and then getting it configured. We also had to acquire living accommodations for the staff. The Shanghai consulate building was really a mansion, and it was spacious enough to allow the consul general to live in the consulate building. The rest of the staff had to live elsewhere.

*Q: Now, did you go down for the opening, or Ambassador Woodcock?*

ROY: I can't remember, but I think it was Ambassador Woodcock. Do you have the date there for when the consulate was opened?

*Q: Yes, the 28<sup>th</sup> of April. Interestingly enough, that's the same day that Secretary Vance resigns.*

ROY: Since I had been involved in selecting the properties and getting them up and running, I was very familiar with the properties, so this might have provided an opportunity for Ambassador Woodcock to see the Shanghai property.

*Q: And of course the normal DCM responsibility is oversight of the consulates and that part of your job is increasing.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: And I've read somewhere else that the American school in Shanghai opened, at that time. So the agreement you must have had in Beijing applied to some of the other missions?*

ROY: Originally, the consulate used an annex on the consulate grounds as a small school, similar to what we had had in our Liaison Office. A full-scale Shanghai American School, which served as an international school, took longer to get up and running. When it was established, it considered itself to be a reincarnation of the original Shanghai

American School, which had been established at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I was attending that school as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader in May 1949 when the communist forces fought their way into Shanghai. The original school had been forced to close shortly thereafter. When I left China in July 1950, the property had been occupied by a Chinese research institute of some sort. It was only a short distance away from our new Shanghai Consulate General.

*Q: Now, 1980 starts to get very complicated on the bilateral side because the Americans are in the midst of a political campaign. And one of the Republican candidates, Governor Reagan, begins to make comments about Taiwan.*

ROY: That's correct.

*Q: That must have certainly come to the ambassador and your attention and certainly the Chinese. How were they beginning to react to that?*

ROY: They reacted very negatively. Governor Reagan was talking about reestablishing official relations with Taiwan if he were elected. The Chinese reaction was so negative that Governor Reagan's vice presidential candidate, George H.W. Bush, who had served as the second head of our Liaison Office in Beijing from 1974-75, was sent to China on a mission to meet with Deng Xiaoping. His message was to reassure Deng that Governor Reagan, if elected, would take a hard-line against the Soviet Union, and as a result we could keep the Taiwan issue on the backburner. Deng categorically rejected that approach, noting that with normalization we had reached a new agreement about Taiwan that could not be tinkered with. For Deng, this was a non-negotiable issue. My impression is that candidate Bush had not anticipated such a firm response.

*Q: Of course, he would -- he was sent because he was supposedly well known to the Chinese because of his earlier assignment.*

ROY: During Bush's earlier assignment, when we had not yet established diplomatic relations, the Chinese had agreed in principle to keep the Taiwan issue as a sideline issue to facilitate our cooperation against the Soviet Union. I think that George Bush thought that the same formula could be used in the Reagan administration and that his personal relationship with Deng Xiaoping would lend credibility to the message.

The problem was the assessment was fundamentally wrong. Taiwan had been the central issue in our negotiations over normalization. If Governor Reagan was suggesting during his campaign remarks that he intended to undo those arrangements, it was unlikely that China would be prepared to treat Taiwan as a backburner issue.

Ambassador Woodcock, of course, was a Democratic political appointee who had been the negotiator in Beijing of the normalization arrangements. So he was extremely negative on the comments being made by Governor Reagan. While he was courteous in meeting with candidate Bush, he kept his distance from him as much as possible. So I was thrown into the role of serving as the embassy liaison with the Bush group. I

discovered, to my shock, that he had not been briefed properly. They didn't even have copies of the normalization communiqué with them, or of the Shanghai communiqué. I ended up carrying documents over to them so they could familiarize themselves with key developments in U.S.-China relations before their meeting with Deng Xiaoping.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: Fortunately, I knew candidate Bush because I'd been Deputy Director of the China Desk when he was the head of the Liaison Office from 1974-1975. On several occasions, I had accompanied him during his calls on members of Congress and U.S. government officials. In addition, I was a career Foreign Service Officer, so my role was non-political in dealing with him. I remember being truly surprised at the naïveté and the lack of preparation for the visit on the part of members of his entourage. To make matters worse, even while his vice-presidential candidate was in Beijing, Governor Reagan continued to make public statements about reestablishing some sort of official relationship with Taiwan, which further pulled the rug out from under the mission.

*Q: Who were some of the people on Bush's staff that you had worked with?*

ROY: Richard Allen was with him. Jim Lilley was with him. There were one or two others, but I think on a policy level those were the two principals. I was very surprised in the case of Jim Lilley, because Jim was a very knowledgeable person about China and had served in the Liaison Office when Bush was the head of it from 1974-75. In any event, when they left, Ambassador Woodcock made some public press conference remarks dissociating himself from the views expressed by the delegation. These remarks were viewed by the Bush delegation as undercutting their mission.

This had repercussions after President Reagan was elected. Early in the new administration, the State Department sent a cable instructing Woodcock to remain in place until a successor had been named. Within hours, the cable was countermanded by the White House and Woodcock was given a week to get out of town. I have never had the slightest doubt that the countermanding instruction came from the vice president's office.

*Q: (laughs) During that time, you know, the three arrangements that you had earlier, negotiated on cultural, S&T, and consular issues began to fill out. And in September 1980 Vice Premier Bo Yibo visited Washington to sign the first civil aviation agreement. Obviously that was very much a Washington project. How much did the embassy get involved in prepping or providing inputs to those negotiations?*

ROY: I don't remember very much about the details of those negotiations. They were of great interest to us, of course, because signature of the civil aviation agreement permitted Pan American to begin flights to China in January 1981. To the extent that the negotiations were conducted in Beijing, the embassy's economic and commercial officers would have provided support. I was tied up during 1980 in the negotiation of a consular treaty with the PRC, which was signed in Washington at the same time as the civil

aviation agreement.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: That's actually an instructive situation. The State Department sent a delegation from the Consular Bureau of the State Department to start the negotiations. They were able to reach quick agreement with the Chinese on all of the what you could call routine aspects of the consular agreement. But they were unable to make progress on the really important issues, such as notification of arrests and detentions of American citizens, access to citizens under detention or in prison, the right to attend trials of American citizens, et cetera.

On the delegation's departure, I was left with the task of completing the negotiations. That took a period of months. Nailing down the diplomatic and consular immunities for our staff proved very difficult because the Chinese had not yet adhered to the two Vienna Conventions on diplomatic and consular relations respectively. They are two separate conventions. That meant that the Chinese didn't have much experience in according the consular immunities that were considered normal in international consular practice.

So these were very difficult negotiations because we were asking the Chinese to do things that they had never done before. We finally were successful in concluding the negotiations literally on the eve of the departure of Vice Premier Bo Yibo, who was going to sign the agreement in Washington.

There were some interesting aspects of the negotiations. I was quite familiar with these matters because of my service in the Soviet Union. Therefore, I knew from personal experience the importance of the provisions for notification of arrests and for consular access to citizens under detention. We had substantial leverage because we were not prepared to permit other consulates to be opened unless we had formal treaty agreements affecting the immunities of our personnel. Guangzhou and Shanghai had opened with very small staff and without, shall we say, ironclad protections. That was not a situation that we were prepared to perpetuate.

The most important issue though had to do with notification of arrests and access to detained citizens. Just as we were nearing the end of our negotiations, the French concluded a consular treaty with the Chinese providing for notification of the arrest of French citizens within 15 days. The Chinese tried to use that as their bottom line. With very good support from Washington, I was able to present them with copies of over ten consular agreements that we had negotiated with Eastern European countries, all of which provided for notification of detentions within two days and consular access to citizens within three days. China is a large country and, at the time, its communications were quite primitive, so we were prepared to allow an extra day or two for notifications and access, but the French arrangements were totally unacceptable because of the precedents we had already established with other countries.

The net result was our case was simply too strong for the Chinese to stand up to,

especially given their strong interest in opening additional consulates in the United States. So they agreed to much shorter provisions for notification and access than the French had secured. When the text was finalized, this caused consternation in the French embassy because they'd just negotiated a treaty with less favorable terms than the Americans. The French ambassador came in to express his dissatisfaction, noting that he would now have to renegotiate their treaty in order to get terms comparable to the Americans.

The other thing I learned from this experience only became clear after the fact. It turned out that the Chinese consular people were actually eager to adhere to the Vienna Conventions, but they had not been able to get internal support for this within the Chinese government. Our negotiations served as a stepping stone for them to gain internal support for them to join the conventions, which they did not long after our successful negotiations.

*Q: In fact, that process is one that repeats itself in the annals of diplomacy.*

ROY: Right. I remember the negotiations were coming to a head with the imminent departure of the Chinese leader. We were meeting on Sunday in the dining room of the ambassador's residence for our final negotiating session. The one remaining question was whether American consular officers would have the right to attend the trials of American citizens. The Chinese were holding out against that. From my standpoint, this was a non-negotiable element of the treaty. So I simply relied on the clock. As the afternoon progressed and the departure of the senior official drew closer, the Chinese finally agreed to our terms.

We did not have time to get the treaty prepared in final form before the departure. So we cabled the full text of the agreement back to Washington with the request that they prepare the treaty for signature in the "alternate" format. The Chinese copy had China listed first in all the references, and ours had the United States listed first in all the references.

The treaty was duly signed in Washington. When I received a copy of the text, I was aghast to discover that the text was filled with substantive errors. For example, treaties are either state-to-state treaties, in which case you say the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, et cetera, or they're government-to-government treaties, in which you say the Government of the United States and the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Well, our treaty was a state-to-state treaty, and it had been prepared using the government-to-government format. Moreover, there were other substantive errors in the text, which had not been properly proofread. So in the wake of having concluded the treaty, my next task was to negotiate a formal agreement with China correcting the errors in the text. This was hardly an earth-shattering issue, but it demonstrates how important precision is in diplomatic work.

*Q: I was just noticing, it was signed on September 17, 1980. Secretary of State Muskie, for the U.S., and Ambassador Chai Zemin for China.*

ROY: I think there was a Chinese leader who also was present at the signing. In any event, the Chinese leader's visit was an action-forcing event that was helpful in bringing the negotiations to closure. The treaty was significant because it permitted both sides to open three additional consulates.

The original two Chinese consulates were in San Francisco and Houston. They opted for New York, Chicago, and Honolulu for the next three. After several years they decided Honolulu was not sufficiently important from a consular standpoint, and we agreed to let them move the consulate from Honolulu to Los Angeles.

We selected Chengdu, Shenyang, and Wuhan for our new consulates.. Unfortunately, we only had the budget to open Chengdu and Shenyang. In consultation with the department, the decision was made that we would allow the Chinese to open five consulates, even though we only planned to open four at the time.

One of the ideas coming out of Washington was that we should open a consulate in Xiamen (Amoy), which is opposite to Taiwan across the Taiwan Strait. In Beijing, we suspected that the Chinese would view this as provocative, but since Washington wanted it, we dutifully proposed it to the Chinese authorities. They rejected the proposal on the grounds that they couldn't protect an American consulate in Xiamen from shelling by Taiwan. *This* was their way of sticking their finger back in our eye. We also had a debate whether to open a consulate in Chengdu or Kunming with the decision eventually going to Chengdu, which provided better coverage of Tibet.

*Q: Now, as 1980 comes to an end,, the American elections come. Governor Reagan's team wins. One of the things that everybody experiences is transition teams and preparations of papers for the new incoming administration.*

ROY: What don't we use that as the beginning of our next interview?

*Q: OK. Let us do that.*

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*Q: Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and we're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Where we left off our last session was just as the Reagan-Carter election resulted in a Reagan victory. We were starting to talk about what the transition was like.*

ROY: The Chinese were deeply concerned about the Reagan victory in the 1980 elections. The new Reagan administration made an early decision, however, to appoint John Holdridge as the assistant secretary for East Asia and Pacific. He was an experienced China hand who had been one of the dual DCMs when we opened the Liaison Office in 1973. John came on board very early and was confirmed rapidly. I



believe it was he who sent the telegram to Woodcock asking him to stay on until a replacement had been named, which was countermanded by the White House.

In any event, prior to Woodcock's departure, Deng Xiaoping hosted a small eight-person lunch for Woodcock in the Great Hall of the People. It was my first opportunity to see Deng in a small social setting. He was a very gracious host. His manner indicated he had great respect for Woodcock. Deng and his wife had both attended Woodcock's reception on December 31, 1978 celebrating the establishment of diplomatic relations, but that had been a large event with no chance for conversation.

Woodcock left Beijing by the end of February, leaving me as the Chargé for the next five months. In the meantime, Kissinger's former deputy at the National Security Council, General Alexander Haig, had been designated as the new secretary of state. Later that spring, Art Hummel, who had been our ambassador in Pakistan, got the nod to be the new U.S. ambassador in Beijing. He was not confirmed until later in the summer. He had picked Chas Freeman to be his DCM in Beijing. Chas Freeman and I didn't overlap in Beijing, but the gap between us was relatively short. He was chargé for a couple months before Hummel came in.

The main event that spring, before my departure, was the visit by Secretary of State Haig. We had resumed arms sales to Taiwan in January of 1980, and the big remaining issue was whether or not we would sell Taiwan more modern fighter aircraft. This was the hot issue when Haig came to Beijing in June. Before that, we had had a busy spring.

In March, former President Gerald Ford visited China accompanied by Brent Scowcroft. This was largely a pleasure trip, but he met with Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang for an animated discussion. Zhao outlined China's plans for rejuvenating China's economy through market-based price reforms as a central element of the reform and openness policies. In China's planned economy, he said, a factory will produce 10 million trousers to meet its production quota, but nobody wants the trousers. He smilingly told Ford how lucky he was that in the United States prices, rather than a central plan, determined the volume and quality of what was produced. He placed particular emphasis on China's need to increase the production of consumer goods and light industrial goods. Ford, reflecting Michigan's central role in U.S. auto production, intervened to caution Premier Zhao not to neglect heavy industry. I was struck by the incongruity of a conversation in which a communist premier waxed eloquent on the virtues of a capitalist price system, while a former U.S. president placed a Stalin-like emphasis on heavy industry.

The Chinese had arranged for Ford and his party to make a three-day boat trip from Chongqing to Yichang (a city 180 miles west of Wuhan) through the Yangtze River gorges. Ford flew to Chongqing and was impressed by the size of the massive crowds that lined the streets on his arrival. He was accompanied by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Wenjin, who later became the Chinese ambassador in Washington. I traveled with the party as well.

The next two days were spent in relaxed conversations sitting on the fantail of the river

steamer as it traversed the towering mountains on each side of the gorges. Vice Minister Zhang provided a fascinating account of the factors that led to his decision to join the Chinese Communist Party while a student studying in Germany in the 1930s. Ford and Scowcroft wanted to discuss with me the factors involved in selling an advanced fighter to Taiwan, and I provided them with a handwritten background paper.

As Chargé of the U.S. embassy I was also able to participate in diplomatic trips arranged by the Foreign Ministry for chiefs of mission to Huangshan in Anhui Province and to Tibet, which was just being opened to foreign travel.

The most taxing visit, of course, was that by Secretary of State Haig in mid-June. The early Reagan administration was very ideological, and there was a lot of politicking and infighting in Washington, of which I was mostly oblivious. My later understanding is that Haig made some statements to the Chinese on the issue of an advanced fighter sale to Taiwan that went beyond what the White House thought had been approved. This weakened Haig's position, which is one of the reasons why he only served as Secretary of State for a short period of time. I was not involved in the question of what he would say on the subject, since this was handled by Assistant Secretary Holdridge and Assistant Secretary Richard Burt, both of whom were part of the delegation.

It was clear during the Haig visit that the Chinese were going to make a big issue out of an advanced fighter sale to Taiwan. This issue generated the dynamic that ultimately resulted in the August 17, 1982 joint communiqué, the third communiqué. Those developments unfolded after I departed Beijing, and I had zero role in the third communiqué. I was serving in Bangkok when it was issued, and I can remember being stunned by its content. Nevertheless, it largely diffused the arms sales issue for a number of years. The administration had made a basic decision that instead of continuing to sell advanced weapons to Taiwan, we would instead transfer to Taiwan the technological capability to produce the advanced equipment it needed. This was the thrust of policy during the Reagan administration.

*Q: Now, how quickly did they come to this? Because even at the inauguration you had this business about Madame Chennault inviting Taiwan representatives to the inauguration. And that had to be handled, and of course Beijing is watching. So this administration started, and in fact had gone through the election, as rather suspect, I suppose, in the minds of PRC leaders.*

ROY: Very much so. The Chinese knew Haig reasonably well because he had been Kissinger's deputy at the National Security Council during the Kissinger visits in 1971 and during the run-up to the Nixon visit to China in February of 1972. The same thing applies to John Holdridge. He was well known to all the Chinese who handled U.S.-China relations, and to all the U.S. China hands. But the Reagan administration's first year was chaotic. Judge Clark was deputy secretary of state for a while and then was moved over to the NSC. He did not have a strong foreign policy background. For a time, Richard Allen at the NSC was staking out a position on China.

*Q: Right, at the NSC.*

ROY: I was largely focused on China and was trying to get the former liaison office to begin functioning as an embassy in terms of the scope and breadth of its domestic and foreign policy coverage. We were doing this in parallel with Hong Kong, which still had a very significant reporting role on the Mainland. It really took Jay Taylor coming in as political counselor to effect this change. Jay was a prolific writer, and he drove the political section to broaden its scope and cover China's international relations more extensively than they had before. Of course our staff had been very limited before. However, by the middle of 1981 I think we were really beginning to become the principal point that Washington looked to for assessments of what China was up to in the world.

*Q: And I have to assume with normalization the embassy officers had more and more contacts --*

ROY: Yes/.

*Q: -- in the Chinese bureaucracy. Even to the extent of escorting delegations to do some negotiations.*

ROY: We were building up our staff. We were transferring officers up from Hong Kong in both the political and economic functions. But we were operating under severe space limitations. We had no housing for many of our newly-added personnel, other than subpar hotel rooms. The staff really showed their dedication as Foreign Service Officers by putting up with these very difficult circumstances.

*Q: Now, while you're organizing the embassy and its reporting, you have Guangzhou/Shanghai already opened.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Dick Williams being the CG (consul general) in Guangzhou and Don Anderson in Shanghai. How did you liaison with them and give them direction?*

ROY: Guangzhou was essentially a visa post, with a residual trade reporting function, because of the Canton (Guangzhou) Trade Fair down there. In terms of what was going on politically in China it was almost irrelevant. Its staffing was heavily weighted on the consular side. Shanghai had the consular visa aspect as well, but it had a broader reporting function. Other than Beijing, Shanghai had the most influential think tanks that dealt with international relations. It also had leading universities.

It was harder to get Shanghai up and running. Our consulate was in a hotel in Guangzhou. So they were able to get staff in and functioning there fairly quickly. In Shanghai we were taking over a compound with a large house that had been used for a variety of functions before. It took longer to get that property ready for use. I can't remember precisely the

lag effect, but we had acquired the properties in '79, and by '81 both posts were up and running.

*Q: And of course the Chinese were trying to set up posts in the U.S. Did they connect those to --*

ROY: We were in the process of negotiating the consular treaty, which was the prerequisite for opening five posts. Under the 1979 agreement each side was only permitted to open two consulates. We insisted they open one of the next three consulates in New York, since the PRC mission to the United Nations in New York had been improperly performing consular functions, and we wanted to halt that practice.

*Q: Now, as this administration gets on its feet on China policy, you must have been very eager to understand Washington's point of view. Did you do so by phone calls, back channel, Roger channel stuff? How did you find out what was going on in Washington?*

ROY: We used the telephone very little. International phone calls from Beijing at that time were slow, unreliable, very expensive, and completely insecure. We were generally focused on bilateral relations and local matters and were not very well plugged into Washington affairs. Ten years later, when I became ambassador, the situation was much improved through use of official-informal messages.

I was pinned down in Beijing, so I didn't have a chance to visit Washington in the spring. Also, Washington was in chaos in the spring of 1981 trying to get the new Reagan administration up and running. It took a long time to get ambassadors appointed and the administration staffed up, longer than my recollection of earlier administrations. By the end of '81 they were still only partially staffed in terms of filling ambassadorial posts and completing the staffing of the administration.

*Q: In addition to Richard Allen at the NSC, wasn't Ray Cline involved at that time?*

ROY: I can't remember where Ray was. At one point he was in INR, but he may have moved beyond that. He was more involved with Taiwan than with mainland China. I think Richard Allen was the key player at the White House in terms of Asia policy. Jim Lilley was in the American Institute in Taiwan.

*Q: Yeah.*

ROY: In 1985 Jim Lilley became the Deputy Assistant Secretary in EAP handling the PRC and Taiwan, but by that time I was in Singapore. In 1986 he went as ambassador to South Korea, with the result that I was pulled out of Singapore after two years to replace him in EAP. When George H.W. Bush became president in 1989, Jim moved from Seoul to Beijing as ambassador.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary, Jim had been a major player in implementing the August 17, 1982 communiqué. By the time I came back from Singapore to replace him in

October 1986, they had already completed the transfer of the technology for tank manufacture in Taiwan. One of the first things I had to handle as the deputy assistant secretary for China in 1986 was the transfer of the naval technology for frigate manufacturing in Taiwan. And then in 1988, we were involved in the studies associated with transferring the technology to Taiwan for manufacture of the Indigenous Defense Fighter, the IDF.

*Q: And of course this technology transfer idea solves, quote unquote, the answer of arms sales. You know, you're not selling any arms.*

ROY: We were selling arms during this period. But under the terms of the August 17 communiqué there was supposed to be no increase in the quality of the arms over what had already been sold to Taiwan, and we were supposed to be slowly decreasing the quantities, which was defined in terms of the value. There was a lot of statistical work that went into trying to make those calculations.

*Q: Now, you're talking about the importance of the Haig visit. How much preparation went into that and what was your understanding of why he was coming and what he was doing?*

ROY: Why he was coming was because we were in the early stages of our diplomatic relationship with China, which was still viewed as very important in terms of the Soviet challenge. The Reagan administration had created a lot of anxiety in China about its orientation with respect to Taiwan, and I think the basic purpose of his visit was to reassure the Chinese and to try to stabilize the relationship. But the big bugaboo we were facing was the issue of an advanced fighter sale to Taiwan.

*Q: Now, at what point did you move on to your next assignments?*

ROY: I left Beijing in the summer of 1981 and immediately began the process of getting ready to go to Bangkok as DCM, after squeezing in a bit of home leave.

*Q: Now, how did this opportunity come up?*

ROY: When I was wrapping up as DCM in Beijing, DCM in Bangkok was the job they eventually offered. Initially, they proposed a senior training assignment, but I had already spent a year at the National War College, graduating in 1975, so I was not ready for another senior training assignment. Instead, I indicated I'd like another overseas post, and they came up with Bangkok. I was delighted because I'd served in Bangkok as a junior officer, and unlike Beijing, which was more important in terms of grand policy, Bangkok was one of the largest U.S. embassies in the world, had an enormous cast of government agencies, and the DCM position there administratively was a lot more complex than in Beijing.

*Q: Well, what went into your preparation to get to post?*

ROY: Largely getting briefed up on the issues, many of which were new to me. Bangkok was involved in all of the problems involved with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. We had huge refugee programs there under three different agencies. We had an enormous anti-narcotics program. We had a large military assistance program. None of these components existed in Beijing. In Bangkok you had to maintain control over some 20 different government agencies, all intent on doing their own thing.

*Q: Who was on the desk at this time during these briefings?*

ROY: I can't remember the names now. Is it in any of your material?

*Q: It might be -- in '82 it was Dick Howland.*

ROY: Yes. That name rings a bell. Mort Abramowitz had been the ambassador there and Burt Levin was his DCM. He became the chargé on Mort's departure. Mort left just before my arrival in Bangkok. Totally unrelated to my assignment to Bangkok, my wife and I had taken a vacation while we were in Beijing and had gone to Bangkok. We stayed with Dick and Colleen Hart, who were in the embassy there, and had some meals at the residence with Mort and Sheppie Abramowitz. They were old friends.

Bangkok had the modern sector that we did not have in China at the time. For my wife and me, it was great fun to have lunch on the top floor of the Oriental Hotel and eat excellent western menu selections that were unavailable in China, which lacked any international-class hotels at the time. I knew Mort and Burt Levin very well, going back to when I served in Taiwan in the early 1960s.

Burt and I overlapped for a week to 10 days when I arrived in Bangkok. That was extraordinarily helpful for me because Burt had been there for several years already. He gave me a good sense of the policy issues, as well as the challenges involved in running the mission. The new ambassador to Thailand was John Gunther Dean. I did not know him, and he had selected me for his DCM without knowing me either. I was there for a couple weeks before he arrived.

So my big challenge when he arrived was to establish a personal relationship with him that would facilitate our respective roles in the embassy. Fortunately, that turned out to be an easier process than I had expected because we got along well from the beginning.

*Q: Because actually, the State Department standard operating procedure is the ambassador picks his DCM.*

ROY: He had picked me.

*Q: Oh, he had picked you.*

ROY: He had picked me. However, that was based on reputation, not on personal acquaintance. I can't remember whether I'd met him briefly in Washington before going

out to post, but we had really not had any time together. So the process of getting to know each other really took place at the mission. I had been an FSO-3 as the DCM in Beijing and was promoted to FSO-2 shortly after I arrived in Bangkok. So I was actually junior to some of the counselors in the embassy in terms of my Foreign Service rank, although I now held the diplomatic rank of minister-counselor, as was the case in Beijing. *(laughs)*.

These were still the days when even at large embassies, the heads of political, economic, and administrative sections held the diplomatic title of Counselor, while the DCM was a Minister-Counselor.

*Q: Let me ask one last thing about getting a new administration going. Did you, in your understanding of how Washington was looking at things, have an appreciation for some of the pressures that were coming from the Congress, Jesse Helms?*

ROY: Oh yes. Everything involving China involved Congress because the Taiwan Relations Act had had to be passed by Congress. That had gotten Congress very deeply involved in Chinese affairs. Then, with the shift in the political winds when the Reagan administration took office, the Republicans in Congress were closer to the administration than the Democrats, meaning that congressional factors were very important. These factors were largely handled in Washington, but they impacted on foreign service posts throughout the world to a lesser degree. For example, some of the very capable State Department people who were involved in pushing the Taiwan Relations Act through Congress, such as Roger Sullivan and Bill Rope, ended up taking career-damaging hits. Roger had been the deputy assistant secretary and Bill Rope was the head of the China Desk. Their careers got truncated because they made some enemies in Congress by doing their jobs well.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: So Congress was certainly a factor. My recollection both in Beijing and in Bangkok was that the politics of Washington during the Reagan first term was chaotic, largely because of infighting within the Reagan administration.

*Q: What kinds of schools of thought would that be?*

ROY: You had the moderate wing and you had the more ideological wing, and there was a constant trial of strength between the various groups. Again, I was on overseas assignments during this period. By the time I came back to Washington as deputy assistant secretary in the fall of 1986, it was much better. It followed the usual pattern.

My experience has been that the second term of two-term presidencies functions better than the first term, both because of the experience gained during the first term and because of a reduction in the infighting that plagues it during the first term. That was true of the Clinton administration, which was ideologically driven during its first term and gave a distorted importance to posturing on human rights over achieving practical results. It became more sensible in the second term, but the president got caught up in a domestic

scandal. The George W. Bush administration took us into the quagmires of Afghanistan and Iraq during its first term. It performed better in its second term, once it had curbed Vice President Cheney and gotten rid of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, both of whom were not team players.

It is a curious fact of history that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the United States was at the height of its power, we elected four presidents in a row who were neophytes on foreign policy and national security affairs.

*Q: Going to Bangkok now, Bangkok is one of the largest embassies in the system.*

ROY: Right. Let me make one other comment though because it's relevant to foreign policy. As chargé, I was heavily involved in Secretary Haig's visit to Beijing in June of 1981. The Haig delegation as usual stayed at the Diaoyutai Guest House compound. I can remember watching the interaction among the players. Haig ran an informal shop. U.S. officials like Richard Burt would simply wander into Haig's suite and spend time chatting with him. John Holdridge, in contrast, would wait to be summoned.

It is generally useful for cabinet secretaries to focus on substantive matters before going into important meetings. I kept urging Holdridge to use Burt's technique and drop in on the secretary without being summoned to give him a few pointers before the meetings took place. This simply wasn't John's style. My sense was that he was not as close to the secretary as would have been desirable from a policy standpoint. Haig had a reasonable grasp of Chinese affairs so it was less of a problem than it would have been if Haig had been a neophyte on dealing with China. But this reinforced in my mind some lessons I had learned as Charge in the spring of 1979 during the two visits of Treasury Secretary Blumenthal and Commerce Secretary Kreps.

*Q: Kreps.*

ROY: Juanita Kreps. In the case of Blumenthal, before each of his meetings he would call me in to go over the substantive issues that should be addressed. He would ask penetrating questions about the senior officials with whom he would be meeting. I would ride with him in the car and continue these conversations. This was my first exposure to dealing with senior officials in this fashion, and I assumed this was the way things were done.

With Secretary Kreps it was the polar opposite. She had a great wall around her of staffers who spent all their time gossiping with her about domestic U.S. politics. My efforts to gain access to her were rebuffed. At one meeting with Chinese officials, I literally began to worry that she wasn't even sure with whom she was meeting. As a result, I became more aggressive in insisting on meeting with her before she met with Chinese officials.

In short, the styles of these two U.S. cabinet secretaries were polar opposites. Blumenthal was surrounded by people who were substantively oriented and who were concerned



about making sure that he was fully briefed up for meetings. The people around Juanita Kreps displayed no interest in that and seemed unconcerned if she went into meetings ill-prepared.

These experiences were all part of my education as a Foreign Service Officer. I learned that to be effective, you had to adapt your approach to the personal style of the senior U.S. official with whom you were dealing. You could be marginalized if you did not know how to play the game.

*Q: Now, Bangkok is one of the largest embassies around -- and that's because you have a large component of separate federal agencies there.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) had what, 20, 30 --*

ROY: DEA had around 50 agents in Thailand.

*Q: And Agriculture and Commerce, all these agencies were there.*

ROY: That's right. INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) had people there because of the refugee program. We had three different refugee programs in Bangkok. INS agents screened refugees for potential entry to the United States.

Now, I already had three years of experience in Beijing as DCM and had handled all sorts of senior responsibilities in dealing with government ministries. On the policy issues I was fine in Bangkok, but on the technical issues – refugees, narcotics, large AID mission, etc. – it took me a year in Bangkok before I felt that I was really able to make myself useful. Fortunately, we had good agency heads. They were highly experienced on their issues, on many of which I was starting from scratch. So I had to rely heavily on their judgment, and they proved reliable.

Ambassador Dean ran a tight ship. From the moment he arrived, he made it clear that everybody in the mission was under his authority. At the same time, he leaned over backwards to be supportive of his staff. Any time they needed his support on a project, he was willing to be helpful. His goal was to demonstrate to Thai officials that he had confidence in his agency managers and his staff more generally, not to demean them.

Ambassador Dean had held four ambassadorial posts: he had been Chargé in Laos, and Ambassador in Cambodia, Denmark, and Lebanon. Bangkok was his fourth post. In Cambodia, when the government collapsed he had evacuated his staff smoothly and offered safe passage to any government ministers who wanted to leave. The contrast with Vietnam was striking. Then he had gone to Denmark as a rest and recuperation post. In Lebanon, there had been seven attempts on his life there. So when he came to Bangkok he was returning to a region he knew well. He was an experienced mission manager, and I learned an *enormous* amount from him in terms of how you operate a mission.

At his first staff meeting with agency heads, he passed out copies of the president's letter to him with the portions highlighted where the president defined his responsibilities for interagency coordination and oversight. There were no bones about it. At his first meeting with me, he defined our respective responsibilities for coordination: he would deal personally with the heads of the major components and rely on me to coordinate the other components, which included the narcotics and refugee programs. Of course, I had to keep him informed of what was going on.

I found that working with him was very easy. He had an enormous ego, but it was balanced by self-confidence based on experience. If he had been cocky and egotistical and lacked self-confidence, he would have been impossible to work with. He didn't mind criticism. You could be upfront and direct with him. He was not a good drafter. He was very active in going out and meeting influential people, including the king, the foreign minister, and other key players. On returning to the embassy, he would immediately dictate a reporting cable to his secretary. He would then give the draft cable to me to edit.

He was quite comfortable with my changing his drafts. If I thought there was much too much of what he said in it, I would delete those elements and focus on what the other person was saying. He was happy with that. He would take the edited cable the way I had redone it and out it would go. That was the standard practice. If he was abusive to a member of his staff, I would raise it with him, and he would immediately take corrective action, for example by dropping by the office of the staff member and having a friendly chat, or something like that.

He didn't like to be away from Bangkok. Fortunately, there were two U.S. government planes assigned to the mission: one for the air attaché and one for the military assistance group. They were available for him to use for official business. Thailand was the ideal-sized country for air travel. You could visit a remote province in the morning and get back to Bangkok by the evening. If there was an AID project in the northeast – completing a dam or highway, or something like that – and the AID director wanted him to attend a ceremony, he would go up and be back by the evening. At the same time, he was ruthless in making it clear to everybody that he was the focus of action. He let agency directors do their own thing as long as they kept him informed.

Embassy Bangkok was a very large mission, but it was run as a coherent, unified organization. I can remember seeing cables from U.S. posts in India where there would be vicious internal fights and backbiting cables passing back and forth. Ambassador Dean would not permit that sort of behavior. He made it clear that all parts of the mission were supposed to cooperate together.

Ambassador Dean was also very effective in developing levers of influence with the local government. He gave particular attention to establishing a good relationship with the King, who could not directly exercise political power but was highly respected and wielded considerable influence behind the scenes. In Denmark he had dealt frequently with the royal family, so he was accustomed to dealing with royalty and rather enjoyed it.

His purpose, however, was not just to socialize but also to influence developments when needed.

I watched him very skillfully turn off a near coup by persuading the King to withdraw his support for an effort to remove the prime minister, who was not very effective. His indecisiveness had built up frustration throughout the government, including in the Foreign Ministry, resulting in a plan to have the Army commander oust him.

Ambassador Dean got wind of the plot and was concerned that a coup would threaten the continuation of U.S. military support for Thailand. He met with the King and laid out his concerns. The King withdrew his tacit support for the coup, and it did not take place. All of this was done quietly and behind the scenes, with nobody being aware of what he was doing. Dean followed up by inviting the frustrated Army commander to a private breakfast at which he patched up their relationship.

The crown prince also posed a *major* problem. His abusive behavior towards people had created a number of awkward situations. He was married to somebody who had the queen's favor, but he had a mistress that was his real love. The government wanted to get him out of the country for a while by sending him to the United States for pilot training.

Ambassador Dean was concerned because on a previous visit to the United States, the crown prince's misbehavior had created a number of near-scandals. Ambassador Dean had a session with the crown prince and gave him some blunt fatherly advice. He followed up with the King and persuaded him to let the crown prince's mistress quietly accompany the prince to the United States as the best means of fending off a repetition of the earlier misbehavior. The advice worked, and the prince's visit passed without any incidents.

What impressed me was Dean's skill in taking initiatives to head off problems. He arrived in Thailand not long after Marshal Prem had become the prime minister, replacing the previous prime minister, Kriangsak, who had worked closely with the United States. Kriangsak had been ousted by Prem largely because Kriangsak was viewed by the circles around the King as being anti-monarchy. In contrast, Prem was close to the monarchy.

When Dean arrived he got a message from the palace that they did not want him to deal with Kriangsak. Dean responded by quietly informing the King that "When Kriangsak was prime minister, he was a friend of the United States, and the United States does not turn its back on its friends." For that reason, he could not turn aside occasional meetings with Kriangsak. Nevertheless, he undertook to keep the King fully informed of any dealings Dean had with Kriangsak, including personal briefings of the King if desired. What impressed me was that Dean had backbone in doing what he thought was right, but he did it in a skillful way.

*Q: Now, this is the early 1980's. What did the domestic situation in Thailand look like in those days? They're experimenting with --*

ROY: Well, it was a relatively open authoritarian system. It was not too dissimilar to the system under Suharto in Indonesia. The leader did not emerge from a democratic process. Elections were carefully controlled. Political parties were allowed to function, but the leader generally came from the military. Elections had an impact on the political composition of the parliament, but it did not have strong powers. So there was an active political life, but it was a non-democratic system. The military always lurked as the power behind the scenes.

In this respect there were similarities to Indonesia. Under Suharto there were only three political parties that were permitted to function. In Thailand there were more. However, in Indonesia, Suharto consolidated his power, while in Thailand there was a greater danger of politics in the military causing a removal of the prime minister, who might be replaced by somebody else in the military. Prem was similar to Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia in the sense that he liked to preside over the government, but he was not a strong leader.

*Q: Now, one of the embassy units that would be interested in military politics is your Defense Attaché Office. Was it well staffed at this time?*

ROY: We had a large military assistance mission, and we had a Defense Attaché Office. They spent much of their time feuding with each other. The military assistance mission thought the Thai Army could take on the Russians. The defense attachés thought they couldn't fight their way out of a paper bag. The senior officers in each case were colonels. They were in constant competition over which one should be considered the senior in country U.S. military representative. There was a title called CINCPAC Rep that the military aid mission claimed for itself. In their view this gave them pride of place over the defense attaché, who in terms of date of rank outranked the colonel in the military aid mission. The assessment of Thailand's military politics rested more with the political section than it did with the defense attachés.

At the time, the Thai military had created a position called "supreme commander." It was a paper position that didn't have any real power in the military, which rested with the army commander. Our defense attaches were often shunted off to the supreme commander and his staff.

We had a very good political section. Jim Wilkinson was the political counselor. He spoke good Thai, had extensive experience in Thailand, and had excellent judgment. He was very reliable in terms of understanding how Thai politics functioned. So the political section was pretty good at tracking what was going on. It could provide the best assessments in terms of understanding the role of the Thai military in politics.

*Q: Now, we're talking about controlling large and very active organizations, some of whom didn't have a lot of overseas experience, like the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). A lot of those people were just policemen from Los Angeles, San Francisco, or Saint Louis suddenly put into this role. There was a history sometimes of DEA getting out*

*in front and participating in drug busts and whatnot.*

ROY: I learned a lot from coordinating the anti-narcotics operations. First of all, the DEA mission and the intelligence component of the embassy, which also tracked the drug problem, had difficulty working together because they had fundamentally different roles. The intelligence component was focused on acquiring information about what the drug people were up to. They gave top priority to protecting methods and sources. The DEA agents were focused on using intelligence to bust drug operations, which could compromise the methods and sources used to acquire the intelligence. This misalignment of priorities was inherent in managing our response to the drug problem.

The second problem was the Mansfield Amendment, which prohibited DEA agents from actively participating in dangerous operations by foreign anti-drug forces. Our agents were hard-charging professionals who found it demeaning to participate in planning dangerous operations in which they could not play a personal role. To stay within the strictures of the Mansfield Amendment required firm oversight by the DEA top agents.

I discovered that to work effectively with the DEA agents one had to understand their psychology, which was very different from that of foreign service officers. The embassy had a standard rule that forbade bringing weapons into the embassy. The DEA agents were accustomed to carrying weapons. For them it was a mark of honor, even though there was no rational reason why they should have their weapons in the embassy.

It took a while for me to understand their psychology. They were in a dangerous business, and they worked very closely with their Thai counterparts in setting up operations in which they were not allowed direct participation. So you had to establish a strong relationship with the top of the DEA hierarchy in order to ensure that the rules were being enforced properly.

Aside from the strictures of the Mansfield Amendment, there were practical reasons why it was unwise to have American agents directly participating in Thai narcotic busts. We had American citizens scattered throughout Thailand, whether as tourists, Peace Corps volunteers, or members of the AID mission. If a DEA agent was present in a drug bust, there could be retaliation against Americans because of the widely scattered American presence. So this was not fun and games. You put American lives at risk if an American improperly participated in a dangerous, aggressive action against the drug smugglers. So you had to keep very tight control over this.

To get on top of my job, I found I had to increase the frequency of morning staff meetings with the embassy elements that I was supervising, whether in the form of daily briefings or weekly reviews of operations. Once I got that process started, I quickly gained sufficient knowledge of the operations to be able, when required, to substitute my own judgment for the judgment of others. Embassy Bangkok was much more operationally oriented than Embassy Beijing. To function effectively as DCM I had to learn enough about a host of new issues to make policy judgments regarding the behavior of all of the components of the mission, but especially those I directly supervised.

*Q: Because you assume the DEA also had a police background.*

ROY: These were terrific, dedicated guys. In fact, Dean's philosophy, which became my philosophy, and which fortunately was shared by the good people we had as agency managers, was that we all had to function as a team. We actually borrowed some DEA officers who had excellent contacts among the police in Southern Thailand to help with our refugee program, because the boat people from Vietnam were coming ashore in South Thailand and were being shoved off at the risk of their lives. DEA agreed to let one of their agents be attached to the refugee program for a period to serve as liaison with the local police in trying to bring the boat push-offs under control. It worked.

*Q: They wouldn't have had language?*

ROY: Some of them spoke a little Thai. Language ability in the embassy was spotty. The political officers generally had pretty good Thai; the Econ Section less so. Some of the refugee officers had pretty good Thai; some did not. So you didn't have the uniformity of language skill that we had in Beijing, where the entire mission basically could function in Chinese.

*Q: Now, one of the embassy slots was Mac Tanner as the narcotics officer. Where does he fit in your relationship with DEA?*

ROY: Mac Tanner was the State Department narcotics coordinator. Then you had an intelligence anti-narcotics component, and you had the DEA operation. To coordinate narcotics matters you had to have all three components working in coordination, even though they performed different functions.

*Q: And Mac was the State Department's eyes and ears on narcotics.*

ROY: Yes. He had functional Thai and previous experience in Thailand. He had a good network of contacts. He was good at playing the State Department role. The DEA agents by and large did not have language capabilities, so they had to deal with the non-English speaking Thai narcotics people through interpreters.

*Q: Now, you mentioned the refugee problem was one of the major issues because with the end of the Vietnam War you have a lot of Vietnamese . . .*

ROY: You had Vietnamese boat people (refugees escaping from Vietnam in small boats), and you had Cambodian refugee camps on the border. The Thai did not want them to come into Thailand, so they were restricted to refugee camps on the border. And you had an international operation to provide assistance to those camps. Their status was always tenuous because their presence in Thailand was politically unpopular.

On issues involving the refugees, I had to deal with an official in the prime minister's office named Prasong. Ambassador Abramowitz and DCM Levin had been so assertive

on the subject that they had burned their bridges with Prasong, who by the time I arrived was refusing to see them. That hampered our ability to deal with refugee problems. Under Ambassador Dean, one of my jobs was to try to repair relations with Prasong.

*Q: Now, Prasong was in a Thai NSC-equivalent coordinating sort of function?.*

ROY: Yes, he was the equivalent of a national security advisor to Prem, except with a much smaller staff.

*Q: And his basic frame of mind was that you Americans are responsible for these refugees and shouldn't foist the problem off on us? It's up to you to get them out of here.*

ROY: If you came in and tried to preach to Prasong he became extremely prickly. If you didn't preach to Prasong, I found that you could discuss sensitive issues with him intelligently. What he objected to was Americans telling the Thai how to do their business. If you took an indirect approach with him, you were more effective in gaining his cooperation than if you took a finger-wagging approach. Remember, however, that the refugee problem was much more acute when Ambassador Abramowitz and DCM Levin were in charge of the U.S. mission and required more urgent attention.

*Q: What did we need him to do in handling all these refugees, that included refugees coming down from Laos?*

ROY: The Lao refugees, at least during the period I was in Bangkok, were less of a problem. The problems were concentrated in the refugee camps on the Cambodian border. The border was heavily mined, and there were a lot of people in the refugee camps who had lost arms and legs while crossing the border. It was heartrending when visiting the refugee camps to see the scale of the hospital operations.

The embassy's job was, to the best of our ability, to facilitate getting the medicines and medical supplies delivered to the border camp hospitals when they were held up by Thai custom restrictions and bureaucratic complications. Since the refugee programs were unpopular in Thailand, such problems arose frequently. That's when we needed access to somebody like Prasong to straighten out those types of problems.

*Q: Now, the refugees that were on the border, were those both Vietnamese and Cambodian?*

ROY: Mostly Cambodian.

*Q: Because now in Cambodia you have the Khmer Rouge and that whole problem.*

ROY: Right. Most of the Cambodian refugees were trying to escape the Khmer Rouge. If a Khmer Rouge soldier ended up stepping on a landmine, he might end up in the refugee medical facilities across the border. The gossip among the refugee people was that you could distinguish between the ordinary refugee hospital wards and the Khmer Rouge

hospital wards, because the Khmer Rouge were so disciplined that they would not moan and cry the way the other refugees did. It was dispiriting to visit the camps.

*Q: Did you have an opportunity to?*

ROY: Yes. I went there on several occasions, but our refugee people were there all the time.

*Q: How did you get out there?*

ROY: Helicopter. The head of our refugee operation was a wonderful guy named Mike Eiland. He was actually a U.S. military officer, but he spoke good Thai and had a Vietnamese wife. He got along very well with the Thai military who ran the situation on the border. He was very capable.

*Q: Now, in handling this refugee situation, the embassy had a refugee section, and then there was a big contractor group that assisted with interviewing.*

ROY: Yes. There was an NGO group that handled the interviewing. They were attached to the embassy. We also had an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) contingent because some of the refugees were eligible for being paroled into the United States. INS handled that process.

When I first arrived in Bangkok, INS had an older, very bureaucratic, not very cooperative head that was causing a lot of problems for us in terms of managing the parole situation. However, he made a major misjudgment by taking an action that was directly contrary to instructions. We had a confrontation, which ended up with his being replaced by a superb INS officer who understood the problems and worked cooperatively with everybody. He made the mission function much more effective.

*Q: What were some of the issues?*

ROY: Largely it was a question of how the interviews were handled and whether the judgments were based on the guidelines that we had from Washington.

*Q: Because most of this was family reunification, wasn't it?*

ROY: A lot of it was. I can't remember all the criteria that were being used for parole, but it also included earlier links to Americans in Cambodia. The screening was designed to exclude any Khmer Rouge.

*Q: Do you recall at that time how many refugees were in the camps and in Thailand that we were processing?*

ROY: There were several thousand. I cannot recall the precise numbers.



*Q: So it's certainly not a small problem and not something that would be missed by the Thai government. With Prasong on the job, they were very much aware of how things were going.*

ROY: The Thai military basically ran the border. Given the unsettled conditions in Cambodia, it was a chaotic border.

*Q: What was Prasong's background and how did you interact with him over the time that you were there?*

ROY: My recollection is that he was an air force officer. However, he had been in a civilian bureaucratic position for quite a few years. This was not atypical. The prime minister was a retired general. The foreign minister was a retired air vice marshal. Given the military's influence in the government, it was not uncommon to have retired military officers in senior positions of responsibility. My main problem with Prasong was getting in to see him since he was extraordinarily busy. He handled issues that were outside the competence of the Foreign Ministry, so access to him was vitally important.

Fortunately, I was able to have a reasonably decent relationship with Prasong. I could usually get in to see him when necessary. If you presented issues to him in a reasonable fashion, he did not deliberately throw roadblocks in your way.

*Q: This is, again, a large embassy and there were a lot of functions. Did you have a lot of social requirements to go to, you know, host people or appear at events?*

ROY: Not a whole lot. The ambassador was very active socially and carried the brunt of entertaining the upper echelons of the government at his residence. I did less. I was more active in cultivating contacts in the diplomatic corps and at the working level in the government. Most of the high-level entertaining was done at the residence in the ambassador's name.

*Q: As an indicator of the more sophisticated environment in Thailand as compared with Beijing, one of the major organizations was the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand, FCCT. How was the USIS program in Thailand at that time?*

ROY: They had an active program. It wasn't exceptionally large. They were located in a separate compound, and I used to go over periodically and have lunch with the USIS (United States Information Service) director there. They did the usual things. We would sometimes get access to frontline American movies, such as the first Star Wars movie and the first Indiana Jones movie. USIS would play a big role in getting a theater and inviting the movers and shakers of the local cultural world to attend screenings of the films. They ran their usual book and library programs. USIS also handled the exchange programs, such as the Fulbright scholars.

*Q: Actually, there's a long history of the Thai going to academic institutions in the U.S. and having alumni institutions.*

ROY: We also had an American Field Service contingent, which placed American high school students with Thai families around the country for a year. Many of them were with upcountry Thai families in rural areas and lived under difficult circumstances. My wife and I made a practice of inviting all of them each year to an American Thanksgiving dinner. It was unbelievable the amount of food they consumed with gusto. We were not used to guests going back for third and fourth helpings.

*Q: (laughs) Now, at this time you're looking at bilateral Thai-U.S. problems and multilateral problems: what's going on in Cambodia, what's going on in Burma, what's going on in Malaysia. What was the view of the multilateral issues from your cockpit?*

ROY: Well, we and the Thai had a reasonably good political relationship. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) had been formed, and Thailand was one of the key founding members. You had the Asian Institute of Technology (the former SEATO Graduate School of Engineering) located just north of Bangkok. The diversity of our involvement in Thailand was stunning. And of course we had consulates in Chiang Mai, Songkhla, and Udorn.

*Q: Nick Major was still there in Songkhla?*

ROY: Yes, he was still there, but it was a one-person operation down there, as opposed to Chiang Mai, which was substantially larger.

We also had an MIA (missing in action) program, which was very active. We had a unit of the embassy that was staffed by U.S. military personnel who were extraordinarily diligent in tracking down any information about missing in action or killed in action, and recovering the remains of American servicemen. It was an important program, but it had some farcical aspects.

When the Reagan administration came in, because of Reagan's Hollywood background, people like Clint Eastwood had influence in the White House. Apparently, there were people in Hollywood who were convinced that American POWs were being secretly held in Southeast Asia and forced to do things like building MIG factories in the jungles of southern Laos. These fantasies were apparently shared by some people in the White House.

Well, we had an unbelievable episode when Bo Gritz, a former Green Beret from Vietnam, came secretly to Thailand with tacit White House backing to try to rescue some of these supposed POWs (prisoners of war) that were allegedly being held in the jungles of southern Laos. The Hollywood version of this myth is contained in the 1985 movie *Rambo: First Blood Part II*.

On arriving in Bangkok, Bo Gritz immediately fell into the hands of the chicken bone peddlers. Our MIA people knew everybody in Bangkok associated with the MIA issue, and they had identified certain criminal elements who would try to sell us chicken bones,

claiming they were the remains of Americans killed in the Vietnam War. Well, Bo Gritz stayed away from the American embassy and stumbled into the hands of the chicken bone pedlars.

They teamed up with him to launch a raid by crossing the Mekong River into the southern panhandle of Laos. Once there, his purported allies took him hostage, intending to hold him for ransom. Bo Gritz was able to use his Green Beret skills to escape from their clutches. He swam back across the river to Thailand, where he was immediately arrested by the Thai border police for illegal entry.

The result was that we had a high profile case on our hands in which the White House was interested. Unfortunately, our consul in Udorn at the time was incompetent, so we had to send our consul general from Bangkok up to the border to handle the problem. It turned out that Bo Gritz was totally unreliable. He told our consul general one thing in a private conversation and then went out and gave a totally different version to the television cameras. Our consul general read him the riot act and brought him under control. He was finally able to persuade Thai officials to release Bo Gritz and let him return to the United States. End of episode.

This was indicative of the politicized mood in Washington at this time, which also produced the so-called “yellow rain” fiasco. On the flimsiest of evidence, such as reports that MIGs flying at 25,000 feet were seen emitting puffs of yellow smoke, some Washington officials became convinced that the Communists were experimenting with dangerous mycotoxins in a biological warfare program in Southeast Asia. This view was officially endorsed by the administration, against the advice of embassy Bangkok, with public charges being made in the UN and elsewhere along these lines.

The issue was so politicized that direct opposition only served to damage your credibility in Washington. Instead, we persuaded Washington that the issue was so important we needed to set up a professional biowarfare unit in the embassy to evaluate the evidence. Washington sent us two extraordinarily competent military officers with biowarfare credentials. Anytime we had a report of yellow rain, this group would zap out to the location to gather evidence and submit a report.

In each case the report was negative. Washington never repudiated its earlier farcical position; it simply dropped the issue. I later ran into a former senior Washington official who claimed he had seen highly classified intelligence supporting the claims. He was still convinced it was a dastardly plot. A Harvard chemistry professor later published a paper on “yellow rain” convincingly demonstrating that the evidence consisted of bee droppings containing yellow pollen.

*Q: (laughs) Well, that speaks to the wide range of issues that come up in a place like Bangkok. And I can't help but compare it to Beijing.*

ROY: Some of the issues were similar; but most were different. On aviation issues, for example, we were always in competition with Airbus to sell American aircraft. Once,

when I was chargé in Bangkok, I had to make a demarche to the Thai aviation minister in favor of purchasing American aircraft. That was the sort of thing that we did in Beijing as well.

However, some issues were quite different. For example, Washington wanted to set up a transmitting station in northern Thailand that would be used for broadcast into mainland China. We were instructed to get Thai consent to this proposal. They were reluctant to get involved in this scheme. Washington kept instructing us to overcome Thai reluctance by telling the Thai how important this issue was to Washington. Ambassador Dean finally sent a first person cable to Washington saying, "The Thai know it's important to Washington; they don't know why it's important to Thailand." Washington changed its approach and offered the Thai five million dollars to train Thai radio personnel, plus the ability to engage in part-time broadcasting on the station. We got the permission.

*Q: Secretary Shultz visited Bangkok in June of '83 for ASEAN purposes. You've got a large embassy, which probably can handle these kinds of trips very easily.*

ROY: It's never easy because these trips always involve enormous numbers of people and multi-agency coordination. But Shultz visits were always easier than some visits because Shultz was a sensible person who didn't make unreasonable demands and was not surrounded by people who made unreasonable demands.

*Q: Hm. One of the technical things I think that Bangkok got to experiment with in connection with the Shultz visit was a new computer system where the drafting officer can pass his/her draft electronically and the person that sends it just hits a button and it goes.*

ROY: It was a godsend that was installed in preparation for the Shultz visit. The Shultz group left behind some of the computers, which we used to set up a much more efficient word-processing system. By the time I left a year later, it had been functioning smoothly for months and vastly speeded up our handling of outbound cable traffic.

I had shifted to word processing in a big way when I was back in the State Department because of the deficiencies of our secretarial support. The only way to get your work done quickly was to do it yourself on a word processor. You could make alterations to the text much more quickly and correct errors. So I had become an ardent advocate of computerizing as quickly as possible.

*Q: Now, by 1984 your assignment to Bangkok is about to end. How did the next assignment as ambassador come up?*

ROY: I had been called nearly a year before my departure date from Bangkok and asked if I had any objection to having my name submitted as ambassador to Singapore. I didn't give it a second thought because the State Department doesn't usually succeed in assigning career officers to Singapore as ambassador. So I said I had no objection thinking that was the end of it. Six months before I was due to leave Bangkok, I was again called by the Department with the news that I'd been approved for the

ambassadorial position in Singapore. I was stunned because I hadn't considered it a realistic possibility.

The interesting aspect was that President Reagan had a practice of personally telephoning every person that was going out as one of his ambassadors. So we had to arrange a time for the president to call. Sure enough, President Reagan called me at around 10 am one morning (*laughs*), which I later calculated had to have been late in the evening in Washington. The secretaries were beside themselves with excitement.

I tried to appear as blasé as possible. We chatted briefly before the President asked me whether I had any objections to serving as his ambassador in Singapore. I said I would be honored. He thanked me, and that was that. It was a nice custom on his part. To the best of my knowledge, he was the only U.S. president who followed this practice.

*Q: With a large embassy like this, how is your working relationship with State Department in Washington? Who was the deputy assistant secretary that covered Southeast Asia at that time? Because I think the PDAS was Tom Shoesmith who'd be a China guy. Then you had Tony Albrecht, Bob Brand, and Dan O'Donahue.*

ROY: I think it was Dan who handled Southeast Asia. Tom was a China-Japan person. So he would have handled Northeast Asia. At the time, China, Japan and Korea were still handled by one DAS, with a separate DAS for Southeast Asia. Japan didn't like this setup because China hands held the Northeast Asia position more often than Japan hands.

Later, when Paul Wolfowitz became EAP Assistant Secretary, he combined China/Hong Kong-Macau/Mongolia with Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Islands, a very unusual combination. This made it possible for there to be a DAS for Japan and Korea separate from China. There was a DAS for Southeast Asia, who became David Lambertson, replacing Dan O'Donohue.

All of that occurred while I was in Singapore. In any event, I do not recall having any problems with Washington when I was the DCM in Bangkok. We had policy issues, such as the yellow rain issue, but we got good support from the desk. I don't recall any problems in dealing with the bureau.

*Q: Well, before we get to Singapore I wonder if we should break off at this point.*

ROY: Good.

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*Q: OK, today is Monday the 16<sup>th</sup> of September. We're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Now, we had left off after covering Bangkok when you were DCM. Now, you're heading off to Singapore after two very demanding DCM-ships, Beijing and Bangkok. Now was Singapore a reward for that hard effort, or because you'd made such a reputation for yourself? How did you get the job?*

ROY: David, to be perfectly frank I don't have a clue. Probably, they didn't know what to do with me. After two consecutive DCM positions, it would have been awkward to give me a third one.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I had not been thinking about an onward assignment, when I got the call from the department asking me whether I would be interested in having my name put in for Singapore. I said sure, but I didn't really consider Singapore a serious possibility.

*Q: And in fact, in the back of your mind, Singapore is one of those EAP posts that normally gets a non-career ambassador, isn't that the case?*

ROY: Actually, since Singapore became an independent country in 1965, most of our ambassadors had been career officers, with a few exceptions. My immediate predecessor in Singapore, Harry Thayer, was a career FSO. Most of my successors have been political appointees. When I was sworn in by Under Secretary Armacost for the position, he told me they wanted someone in Singapore who could talk intelligently to Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

*Q: Who was Mr. Singapore.*

ROY: He had been the Prime Minister since independence. In any event, I was familiar with Singapore, in the sense that I'd visited it on several occasions, beginning in 1960, when it was still a British colony. Unlike many of the other posts in Southeast Asia, Singapore was a crossroads and a transportation hub. So despite its small size, it hummed with activity.

When I arrived there as ambassador, I found a much more relaxed atmosphere in the embassy than I was used to. I'd been working on the Soviet Union and China, where there were major bureaucracies in Washington working on the same issues. Reporting from those posts was closely followed in Washington, and there was voracious demand for information and analysis. Singapore was the opposite. Singapore reporting was followed by one officer in the State Department, who only gave us fifty percent of his/her attention.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Unless a problem got to a very high level, Washington simply did not pay much attention to Singapore. I quickly discovered that I could not apply the experience I had gained as DCM in Beijing and Bangkok to Singapore. In Bangkok, where we had a host of U.S. government organizations, the ambassador and I had divided up the job of overseeing the various programs. The work style that I had developed in Bangkok was completely inappropriate for Singapore, which was a much smaller mission. As ambassador, you had to be much more directly engaged with everybody. I also ran into

staffing problems in Singapore that I hadn't encountered in my other posts. Our jobs were not, shall we say, high priority bidding targets for ambitious Foreign Service Officers.

For example, we had a combined economic-political section headed by a counselor. My predecessor, in an effort to get better quality officers bidding on the position, had upgraded the position from first secretary to counselor, which put it in the Senior Foreign Service. It turned out this was exactly the wrong thing to have done. A political-economic counselor in Singapore is simply not competitive in the Senior Foreign Service. The result was that your most capable officers in the Senior Foreign Service did not bid on the position, so I had difficulty getting the quality and quantity of reporting that I was looking for.

*Q: At this point can you give us a little quick background on this bidding process? Because of course when you started your career you weren't exactly given a heads up on jobs or even any preference. You were told where to go. Now the system had changed. What was this change like and what did it mean for the post?*

ROY: You're right. When I joined the Foreign Service in 1956 as a very junior officer, I had no input on most of my assignments, with the exception of hard language training assignments. This applied to my first assignment to Bangkok, to Hong Kong, to Taipei, to the Soviet desk, to the deputy administrative officer position in Moscow, and to the Soviet desk in Washington after Moscow. I did have inputs on advanced Chinese language training, on studying Mongolian, and on my assignment to the U.S. Army Advanced Russian School in Garmisch.

After that it changed. My assignment to the National War College was coordinated with me, and I had some involvement in most of my subsequent assignments. By that time, the system had changed. You could bid on up to six posts as part of the assignment process, but the final determination was by the Department.

*Q: You were given a list of what was open at the time that your next assignment was coming.*

ROY: That's correct. You could express something like six preferences, and you could rank them in priority order. But the needs of the service were considered the determining factor. Once you get to bidding on DCM positions, of course, the ambassador has the final say.

*Q: Right.*

ROY: DCM's are essentially handpicked by ambassadors. At the counselor level, embassies cannot simply pick whom they want for those positions. The other big change was the creation of the senior threshold between the FSO-01 level and the Career Counselor level. It was a significant hurdle to get from 01 to career counselor.

In my judgment, the Foreign Service did not adequately appreciate how the threshold

should be used. I have always been impressed by the fact that an aircraft carrier with a complement of three thousand to five thousand people, with a value of well over a billion dollars in its own right, is commanded by a captain, not an admiral. A captain in Foreign Service equivalence was below the senior threshold. It was an O1 position. And yet we seemed to believe that FSO-O1 level officers were too junior to be political or economic counselors. That was absurd, just as it was to make O-1 the threshold for a First Secretary title. In any event, that's the way the Foreign Service was.

To return to Singapore, I ended up with a combined political-economic counselor position in Singapore that was at the Career Counselor level. We tended to get people bidding on that position who were only marginally qualified and who were not competitive in the senior Foreign Service. For example, I ended up with a political-economic counselor who in the previous 10 years had not had a serious reporting job. He had been the consul general in Auckland, New Zealand, where they didn't even have classified communications capabilities. So his reporting had largely been over the telephone to the embassy. Prior to that he'd served in an African post where there was no reporting demand from Washington.

We had some very capable officers at junior levels, because at junior levels the bidding process wasn't that significant in terms of separating out more or less capable people. I had very capable people on the staff. The problem was that if good work was done the counselor would pass it on up, but if bad work was done, it would also be passed up.

My experience in the Foreign Service was that when you moved into supervisory positions you were heavily burdened by the fact that if the people you were supervising didn't produce first-class work, then you had to make the changes so that the products sent forward were first class. Singapore didn't function that way. I eventually dealt with the problem by downgrading the position to the O1 level. In turn, I promoted the political economic counselor to DCM. I could do this because in a small mission like Singapore, where I was a career Foreign Service Officer as ambassador, the DCM position was not that challenging for a Senior Foreign Service Officer and was focused on management rather than reporting. This was not like Bangkok, in other words.

ROY: In Bangkok you had a big mission with a host of big organizations to coordinate. In Beijing we had had the enormous problems of setting up diplomatic relations and getting the embassy up and running. In Singapore, the former political-economic counselor was a very nice person who got along well with the business community. As DCM he was very effective. So someone who had not been effective as a political- economic counselor actually turned out to be very effective as a DCM. In turn, we got very capable officers bidding on the downgraded counselor position supervising the combined political and economic sections.

This would be different if you had a non-career ambassador in Singapore. In that case, the DCM position would be very important, both in policy terms and in terms of the administrative functions of running the embassy. In the case of Singapore when I was there, I turned down a variety of very good Senior Foreign Service Officers for the



position of DCM because I couldn't conceive of my being able to give them an efficiency rating that would be in their career interest, given the limited demands of the job.

*Q: Does this mean that when you came to Singapore you made this decision of who you were going to use for your DCM, or had you left it open?*

ROY: I was happy with the DCM I had inherited and saw no reason to make a change. As it happened, he was a classmate of mine from the National War College. This was a bit awkward, because now I was his supervisor. We had a frank talk when I arrived, and he indicated he would be happy working with me.

Some of my predecessors had been very relaxed about the Singapore reporting function since there was not much demand in Washington for it. I took the opposite approach. My judgment was that Singapore should be viewed as a training assignment for officers. They should be under pressure to do the best reporting they could do regardless of the demand in Washington for the product. They should leave Singapore with work habits that would make them competitive in highly demanding positions. When I shifted the work style of the embassy, I found that morale improved.

One of the rules that I set, for example, was based on the work style that I had been used to in both Bangkok and Beijing, and before that in Moscow. This was same day reporting, particularly at the ambassadorial level. If I had a meeting with the Singapore foreign minister, whoever was the note taker was expected to get that message out the same day. This had not been the work style of the embassy when I arrived.

I found that officers responded very well to that. The section leaders in the embassy were largely very good people, and we had some extremely talented junior officers. When I downgraded the political-economic counselor position to the 01 level, we got some crackerjack reporting officers bidding on the position, and the new political-economic counselor improved the reporting output of the section enormously.

This approach was contrary to the conventional wisdom in the State Department, which was that if you upgraded a position, this made it more important. In reality, State Department officers know what positions are important. If you're in charge of a motor pool, people know you're a motor pool director regardless of your personal rank. I felt that the Foreign Service hurt itself by not keeping more of the political and economic counselor positions below the threshold level. Once you have crossed the threshold, to be competitive you really should be moving into what I would call management and coordination positions, as opposed to supervising the demanding work of producing reporting from a political or economic section. However, while that was my philosophy, I found that rank inflation in the Foreign Service had already set in as an irresistible tide. This process was given an enormous push by the resistance in the Foreign Service to giving counselor titles to the Foreign Commercial Service.

*Q: Of which you have a representative in this embassy.*

ROY: That's correct. When I was in Moscow, for example, the DCM was a minister-counselor. The heads of the political and economic sections in Moscow were counselors, they were not minister-counselors.

What happened when the Foreign Commercial Service separated from the State Department in the 1980's, was that the economic counselors in our embassies didn't want the top commercial officers to have counselor titles. The Foreign Commercial Service got around the State Department by going to Congress, which essentially forced the State Department to give counselor titles to the top commercial officers. In response, the State Department upgraded the positions of the economic counselors to minister-counselor positions. Once you had minister-counselors at the section level, you tended to get ministers as your DCM's, even though the nature of the jobs hadn't changed. As a result, a lot of jobs that should have been below the threshold ended up above the threshold.

We did not serve our mid-level officers well by not giving them the challenge of running political and economic sections while they were still below the threshold. In any event, I'm talking philosophy, but in Singapore this was actually playing itself out in terms of the dynamics of the Foreign Service.

*Q: One other dynamic that was going on during this time was the Reagan administration placed non-career people into the Foreign Service at lower levels than had ever been seen before. By 1986 you were getting articles in The New York Times and other media about vast numbers of Foreign Service Officers who were being forced to leave the service because of the dearth of demanding jobs where they could hone their skills below the threshold level. This made it difficult for them to get promoted over the threshold. Did any of that hit Singapore or come up in chief of mission conferences?*

ROY: I do not recall that as being a specific problem in Singapore, or as being an issue that we discussed at chiefs of mission conferences. Perhaps the reason is that when they established the Senior Foreign Service with a threshold, Foreign Service Officers remained under a different career pattern from the Civil Service. We were still under an up-or-out promotion system, meaning that if you didn't cross the senior threshold within the window that you had opened, you were automatically selected out or retired. This was not characteristic of civil service positions. I can't remember when this came in.

*Q: I think it came in with the 1980 law.*

ROY: OK, well that was in 1980. During my Foreign Service career, it had always been the up or out principle, meaning you did not have guaranteed tenure for X number of years. If you didn't get promoted, you could be retired or selected out without a job. By the time I was in Singapore, I don't recall that as being an issue at the embassy, except for the senior officers who were facing the prospect of mandatory retirement.

One of my challenges in Singapore was to negotiate a civil aviation agreement with the Singapore government. A second task was to negotiate an agreement on the protection of intellectual property. At the time, Singapore had a 100 million dollar business a year

exporting pirated music and computer software discs to the Middle East. We wanted to shut that down.

Singapore agreed to negotiate an intellectual property protection agreement with us. The department sent out a team to start the negotiations and they made a bit of progress, but most of the work was left to us.

We had a very talented second secretary in the economic Section who had given excellent support to the Washington negotiating team. I gave her the job of conducting the last and most difficult part of the negotiations. My guidance to her was that we should take charge of the negotiations, think through the issues, and recommend to Washington the position that we were going to take. Only if we were countermanded by Washington would we pull back. My experience had been that if we constantly asked Washington for guidance, we would waste enormous amounts of time waiting for a response, because there were so few people in Washington focused on the Singapore account. So we reversed the dynamic by putting the embassy in charge of the substance of the negotiation, while keeping Washington informed of what we were doing.

This second secretary made herself an expert on intellectual property issues and established such a good working relationship with her Singapore counterparts that they would actually show her drafts of proposed legislation that Singapore was thinking of introducing in order to implement the agreement once we completed it. Mind you, this was a very junior economic officer, but she displayed enormous capabilities to carry out a very important negotiating responsibility. Needless to say, her subsequent career in the Foreign Service was a stellar one.

*Q: But that also shows, you know, knowing your personnel, managing your personnel, giving them a chance.*

ROY: Absolutely. This experience reinforced my conviction that we do not challenge our junior officers enough. We could, in fact, transfer a lot of responsibility down in the Foreign Service. We don't have to have important issues conducted only by more senior officers.

*Q: Let me back up a little bit, talk about coming to Singapore for the first time. Was there much of a break between leaving Bangkok and preparing for Singapore, substantively and policy wise?*

ROY: Essentially, there was no break. I'd been serving in East Asia for six years, both in China and in Bangkok, so I was generally familiar with Asian issues. Nevertheless, when I left Bangkok to go back for my confirmation hearings, I had to engage in a crash course to familiarize myself with all of the issues particular to Singapore. So I essentially spent several weeks in Washington boning up on Singapore related issues and making calls around Washington.

The Singapore desk had set up an excellent program to bring me up to snuff. However,

because of time pressures, I was not able to attend the class at the Foreign Service Institute for newly appointed ambassadors, which I didn't take until I was going to Beijing as ambassador several years after Singapore. Nevertheless, I'd been a DCM twice, and Chargé for five months in Beijing, so the step up to ambassador was not that challenging in itself.

*Q: Now, on the desk at that time, I think State had reorganized it so it was now Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma and Singapore. All four were covered in one office. That's why you commented that you had the attention of half an officer most of the time?*

ROY: Yes. That's correct. I would say, Singapore was largely a problem-free post. Many of the issues that we had to deal with in Singapore, as in the case of the intellectual property agreement and the civil aviation agreement, were of primary concern to other departments of government. So the staff in the State Department simply did not give much attention to Singapore.

*Q: When you were first coming out did you have some sense of what the major issues were for bilateral relations with Singapore?*

ROY: Yes, I did. One of the things that distinguished Singapore from, say, Brunei, was that in Singapore, partly because of the drawing power of Lee Kuan Yew, you got a reasonable number of senior level visitors. For example, Secretary Shultz came during my two years in Singapore, as did CIA Director Bill Casey. You also had frequent visits by U.S. naval ships. We would have aircraft carriers passing through Singapore, with an admiral on board. Normally, I would meet with them.

We had a naval support office that provided onshore assistance to the U.S. naval ships that were transiting the Strait of Malacca going to and from Diego Garcia and the Middle East. Technically, that person was not under the ambassador's authority, just as a military base is not under the ambassador's authority in the way that a defense attaché office or a military advisory group is. The officer in charge of the naval support office chose to act as though he was a member of the country team. So without any formal requirements we just included him in our country team meetings. He would consult me on any important issues that arose to get my judgment on them. So it worked out very smoothly.

Let me mention some of the lessons I learned in Singapore. On the civil aviation agreement, we had gotten most of the issues resolved, but we never seemed to be able to come to final closure. I didn't understand why it was so difficult to take the final steps. Finally, I decided that we needed to find some way to give recognition to the Singapore negotiator. So I was able to engineer an invitation for the top negotiator to visit Washington. We arranged it so that the final push for closure would take place while he was in Washington. That did the trick. He was absolutely delighted to get a visit to Washington, and I think his getting the credit for signing the agreement in Washington was the factor that enabled us to overcome the final barriers to signature.

*Q: One of the -- you're talking about ships, and of course Singapore's sitting at the*

*Straits of Malacca there. At that time there was a five-power defense arrangement being discussed.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Did you get involved in that?*

ROY: I was briefed on it, but we were not actively engaged. We knew what was going on, but it was handled mostly out of CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief Pacific Command), the Commander-in-Chief Pacific. But when CINCPAC representatives came through Singapore, they would brief me on what was going on. So we were kept informed.

*Q: Is that CINCPAC or PACOM (Pacific Command)?*

ROY: It was called CINCPAC in those days. PACOM came later, thanks to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who objected to having commanders-in-chief below the top commander-in-chief.

*Q: Right. As you're saying, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was a very notable figure. Did you have much opportunity to interact with him?*

ROY: Yes and no. Most of my routine business with the Singapore government was not conducted at his level. I would deal with the Foreign Ministry at the minister or vice minister level. That was adequate for most purposes. Lee Kuan Yew would occasionally invite my wife and me for little private dinners at the Istana, the presidential residence. These dinners were always highly substantive, such as general reviews of what was going on in East Asia. He was always very interested in what was going on in China.

In typical Singapore style, he would have all the members of his cabinet at the dinners as non-talking listening guests. The conversation would always be between him and me, with the entire cabinet there as spectators. I found this strange at first. Cabinet members in Singapore were some of the most intelligent and impressive people I ever encountered in my Foreign Service career. I finally concluded that this was Prime Minister Lee's way of keeping them informed on broader issues.

One particularly interesting dinner with Lee Kuan Yew occurred just after the crisis resulting in the resignation of President Marcos in the Philippines had come to a head, with Cory Aquino becoming the new president. Steve Bosworth was our ambassador in Manila at the time, and he was a friend of mine. So I called him up shortly after Cory Aquino had taken office and suggested he come to Singapore for a few days of rest and recuperation from the crisis.

He readily agreed and flew to Singapore for a few days, together with his wife. When Prime Minister Lee found out that Ambassador Bosworth was in town, he immediately invited us up to the Istana for a dinner. It was a fascinating evening. Lee wanted to know every detail of how the crisis in the Philippines had unfolded. The conversation then

veered into basic questions of how different political systems functioned and the relative advantages of democracies versus more authoritarian or Confucian styles of government. It was an intellectual discussion with a foreign policy focus. Steve Bosworth was superb because he had complete mastery of the details. It was a memorable evening.

*Q: I hope you sent that in as a cable (laughs).*

ROY: We did.

*Q: That raises another issue. With your China background and with Lee Kuan Yew's connection to Taiwan, I would assume you would have had some interesting conversations about Beijing, Taipei, and his views on those kinds of issues.*

ROY: It's not that the issue didn't come up. It did, but we were not doing things with Taiwan that were troubling to Lee Kuan Yew during the period when I was serving in Singapore. His interests were more focused on what was occurring on the China mainland.

Taiwan had an unofficial representative in Singapore who was very active. Moreover, one of the sons of Taiwan president Chiang Ching-kuo was living in Singapore at the time. The rumor was that he'd been involved in some sort of scandal that made it desirable for him to spend a few years out of Taiwan. I would occasionally have dinners with the Taiwanese people in Singapore and keep up with their view of developments in that fashion.

We also had an Israeli ambassador in Singapore who was very interested in trying to explore possibilities for Israeli diplomatic relations with Malaysia and Indonesia. I tried to be as helpful to him as possible. When Tom Shoesmith, our ambassador in Malaysia, would come down to Singapore, I would host a lunch for him with the Israeli ambassador so he could get Ambassador Shoesmith's assessment of possibilities. These were some of the ways we stayed engaged on regional issues.

*Q: During the time that you're there, Lee Kuan Yew was reelected in December of '84, but I think that election was the first time two opposition MPs (members of parliament) were elected.*

ROY: That's right. The election took place shortly after I arrived. I remember visiting some of the election rallies, and I dropped in on various polling sites on the day of the election. Singapore had a two track education system, which steered students at an early age into either an English or a Chinese language track. While many Singaporeans were bilingual, you still had separate English-speaking and Chinese-speaking constituencies. The Deputy Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, who later became Lee Kuan Yew's successor as Prime Minister, came from an English speaking track. As a result, he didn't speak Chinese fluently. For political reasons, he was trying to hone his Chinese as fast as he could so that he could campaign in Chinese in Chinese-speaking areas of Singapore.

The People's Action Party (PAP) was the ruling political party in Singapore. During my two years there as ambassador, it was in a rare period of economic downturn. This meant support for the People's Action Party was lower than normal. It was used to getting 70% or more of the vote in elections, and it was now getting votes in the mid sixties, which was considered a big setback for it. The fact that one or two opposition members were getting elected to the Legislative Assembly was seen by Lee Kuan Yew as a personal affront because he saw it as an implicit criticism of his leadership of Singapore. The elections themselves were conducted fairly, but the ruling party was skilled at creating difficulties for opposition members.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: If you openly accused the PAP of manipulating the elections, you would end up in big trouble because they would counterattack very forcefully. That meant that if you were an opposition leader, your tax records would be thoroughly scrutinized and your behavior would be subjected to beady-eyed examination to see if there were any issues on which you could be caught up. To be an active member of the opposition, you had to have a certain amount of intestinal fortitude.

At the same time, the political system in Singapore was ruthless in co-opting talented people to serve in the government and military. This posed a problem for the opposition because people with political talents would early-on be co-opted into the People's Action Party, making it difficult for the opposition parties to attract and retain highly-skilled emerging politicians. The result was that the People's Action Party functioned as a kind of self-perpetuating meritocracy.

*Q: Did they have an organizational procedure to identify talented people early on?*

ROY: Singapore had a highly competitive educational system. While children were still in primary school, they were separated into tracks headed for a college level education or for vocational training. Once you were placed in a particular track, it was hard to alter the assignment. Within each track, you were expected to strive for high levels of achievement. If Singaporeans qualified for foreign training assignments, they had to produce a substantial result, such as a graduate degree, to justify their selection.

People in Singapore were under heavy pressure to perform. I was struck by the methodical way they went about achieving their goals. Singapore's population was about three-quarters ethnic Chinese, fifteen percent ethnic Malay, and 7.5 percent ethnic Indian, mostly Tamils from south India.

Lee Kuan Yew was determined to create a Singapore national identity that was not associated with China, Malaysia, or India. He instituted annual lectures, attended by the entire cabinet and other senior leaders, where he brought in experts from foreign countries to describe how their own national identities had emerged.

One of them was from the United States. The speaker cited U.S. literature as an example.

At first, works by American authors were judged by European standards. It was only after we began to develop Hawthornes and Melvilles and Mark Twains that we began to develop a distinctively American type of literature. James Fenimore Cooper was part of this process. Lee Kuan Yew was intensely interested in such questions.

Singapore also had a “productivity” month, during which international experts on productivity would give lectures. Again, cabinet members were expected to attend these talks, which involved detailed discussions of how you improve productivity in society, in business, and in government. The methodical way in which they addressed such issues differed from anything I had seen elsewhere, including in the United States.

*Q: This raises an interesting question of the role of your PAO during the time you were there. I think he was Ed Cunningham. Did we have any programs that picked up on that aspect of Lee’s interest?*

ROY: No. The area where we were striving hardest, without success, was to persuade Lee Kuan Yew that his “presidential scholars” – selected for government-funded scholarships from the best and brightest college graduates – should be eligible to attend American universities. Lee Kuan Yew was adamant that they should only be sent for a couple of years to Oxford or Cambridge. This reflected his own background, since he had graduated from Cambridge with a “double first.” I could never shake his conviction that to be really educated you had to have attended a British university.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I think that prejudice may have been broken now, but when I was there, I couldn’t even make a dent in the armor of his belief that Oxford and Cambridge were the only suitable places for a presidential scholar to go.

*Q: How did you rate the U.S. public affairs program in Singapore or South East Asia at this time?*

ROY: It was a very competent regional program. Singapore was not one of its principal targets. In Bangkok, we had a more active program because we were dealing with a less English-literate population. In Singapore, we had a fair number of educational programs for Singaporeans going to study in the United States. We had far fewer Americans coming to Singapore.

The American presence in Singapore was heavily business oriented. The American Business Council was enormous and was dominated by the major oil companies. The American business community was represented on Singapore’s Economic Development Board. As a result, the need for the embassy to become directly involved on business issues in Singapore was much less than it had been at most of my other posts simply because the U.S. business community was already plugged into the decision making strata in Singapore.



Singapore recognized that its future as a country depended on maintaining its competitive edge. As a result, they paid a lot of attention to the concerns of the business community. They also were remarkably disciplined. For example, an American computer company decided to end its investment in Singapore and move it to Malaysia instead, probably because labor costs in Malaysia were less. I thought the Singaporeans would object to this, but when I discussed it with a senior minister, he stated bluntly, "If a company can operate more efficiently by locating somewhere else, that's where they should go. Singapore will not have a future if we have companies located in Singapore who are not competitive here. We can't base our economic future on trying to hold onto companies when the economic incentives to move elsewhere are valid." You don't encounter that type of attitude among economic development officials in most places.

*Q: That's very sophisticated, absolutely. And speaking of purchases, was Singapore buying U.S. military equipment like F16's and that sort of stuff?*

ROY: Yes, it was. I don't recall any major military sales that took place while I was there, but this was certainly something that we paid a lot of attention to.

*Q: Certainly Boeing has been very successful there. They put out a press release in March of '86 saying they'd just secured a major deal of three billion dollars.*

ROY: They did. Boeing gave me a demonstration flight in one of the airplanes they were trying to sell to Singapore just to make sure that the ambassador was aware of what they were doing. Singapore was a major market for American commercial aircraft.

I recall that a U.S. military team came to Singapore. This was a period when we were officially encouraging foreign countries to buy the F5. It was not in use in the American Air Force, but it was a high capability fighter aircraft. The U.S. Air Force was committed to the F16. I noticed that in their presentation in Singapore, it was not difficult to detect that the team that was supposed to be persuading the Singaporeans regarding the virtues of the F5, in reality seemed to prefer the virtues of the F16.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: In any event, Singapore was not interested in the F5. They wanted F16's, which in fact is a superb aircraft.

*Q: And that kind of arrangement means that they get access to training in the States, doesn't it?*

ROY: Yes, it does.

*Q: As we move into 1986, some things begin to happen in Singapore. For one, you had the business downturn, and the Hotel New World collapsed in March. More importantly, shortly after you left, Singapore got into a dispute with Time Magazine in which they were critical and started closing it down*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Did that begin to be obvious to you?*

ROY: The Asian Wall Street Journal also got into difficulties. Singapore was intolerant of editorials or articles in the media that suggested that Singapore's democracy was manipulated in any fashion. If you published such an editorial or article, the Singapore government's practice was to retaliate against you.

In doing so, the Singapore approach was not to close down the offending publication but to restrict its circulation in Singapore to the point of unprofitability. By taking this approach, Singapore contended they were not restricting free speech but rather making it unprofitable to express views the government considered offensive or inaccurate. For example, instead of banning The Wall Street Journal or Time Magazine, they would permit a few issues of the publication to enter Singapore, but too few to make it commercially viable. This was their way of punishing media organizations that carried reports the government felt were unjustified.

Of course, this conflicted with our view that the media should be able to say what it wished. Nevertheless, we could never shake the Singapore conviction that this was not a free speech issue. For them, it was an issue of denying companies that "slandered" Singapore the right to make profits in Singapore.

*Q: Now, as you were saying, the Philippines had changed significantly. And I've lost track of my timeline. Did Americans still have their bases in the Philippines?*

ROY: My recollection is we were negotiating the renewal of the leases on Clark airfield and Subic Bay when the eruption of Mount Pinatubo occurred in 1991. Shortly thereafter, the Philippine Senate rejected an agreement extending American use of the bases. In addition, the damage to the bases from the eruption was so extreme that it helped precipitate the decision on the American side that we did not need to retain the bases.

*Q: Right. I just Googled it and it gives the date of July 1991. So that's five years --*

ROY: Yes. All this occurred several years after my time in Singapore.

*Q: Yeah. So I guess the question is -- the U.S.-Singapore military relationship is not a basing one. Well, you had that navy base though.*

ROY: We didn't have bases in Singapore when I was there. We had a U.S. Naval Regional Contracting Center to support U.S. naval ships transiting the Strait of Malacca.

Our military worked very closely and effectively with the Singaporeans. From the Singapore standpoint, of course, our military visitors were spending dollars. It was economically beneficial for Singapore to have as many U.S. ship visits as possible. If we

had problems during shore leave by American sailors, the Singaporeans were cooperative in trying to resolve the issue.

*Q: Right. You mentioned that Secretary of State Shultz came to Singapore. One of those trips was June 23-24, 1986, as part of a larger trip. I suppose that would be quite time-consuming for the period before and after.*

ROY: It was, but the Singaporeans were very efficient. My recollection is that senior U.S. visits to Singapore were not as difficult as they were in some of my other posts. I'm trying to think. We had a visit by Secretary Shultz. We had a visit by CIA Director Casey. We had several visits by General Vernon Walters, who was the U.S. Permanent Representative at the UN at the time.

*Q: Yes.*

ROY: We had an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) summit in Brunei that I had to go over for. I may have missed somebody, but those were among the high-level visits that took place. Secretary Shultz, of course, had a long personal relationship with Lee Kuan Yew.

*Q: Did you get in on all those conversations that the secretary had with Lee?*

ROY: The answer is no. He included me in most of his conversations in Singapore, but he would usually carve out an hour or two of private conversation with the Prime Minister, just the two of them talking together. In other respects, he was very decent in respecting ambassadorial prerogatives. I was present in the Casey and Walters meetings with Lee Kuan Yew.

*Q: And Lee's English was perfect and --*

ROY: Perfect.

*Q: -- engaging and would have been a marvelous hour I would suspect.*

ROY: Oh, absolutely. I've had many long conversations with Lee Kuan Yew. When I was later ambassador in Beijing, Lee Kuan Yew visited China on at least three different occasions. Each time, when he came to Beijing, he would seek me out for a three or four-hour conversation about what was going on in China.

*Q: Let me go back to the embassy management point. Did you have in your staffing many junior officers and a rotational assignment? Was there enough to pay any attention to?*

ROY: We had the regular rotational assignments for junior officers. The most difficult case involved a very junior officer who engaged in unacceptable and indiscreet behavior. He was in the rotational consular officer position. He had an encounter with an attractive young woman who had applied for a visa and been turned down by one of his consular

colleagues. We discovered that he had secretly worked with that person to try to get her a visa in Kuala Lumpur. It was completely unprofessional behavior, and we had to reprimand the officer. It was handled in a very straightforward fashion. The officer was contrite and admitted that he had behaved inappropriately.

*Q: Other than that did you have a mentoring program for junior officers?*

ROY: Yes, we did. I cannot recall any difficulties in connection with that. Two other events, however, may be worth mentioning.

The first has to do with the intellectual property protection agreement. I mentioned that a second secretary in the Economic Section had conducted most of the negotiations until we were right up to the final issues, when the U.S. Trade Representative sent out a negotiator to finalize the agreement. The big issue for Singapore was that it was going to take a 100 million dollar hit because once the agreement was concluded, Singapore would have to shut down the pirating operations inside Singapore. To compensate for this, Singapore's principal interest was to retain its eligibility for GSP. GSP is the Generalized System of Preferences under which economies which are below a certain level of economic development are able to get a 5% reduction in their tariffs. This is clearly beneficial for a developing country.

Singapore at the time was nearing a level of development that would have graduated it from the GSP program. The USTR (U.S. Trade Representative) negotiator promised the Singaporeans that if they granted us the final provisions of the intellectual property agreement that we wanted, Singapore would not be graduated from the GSP program at the next U.S. review of the question. Since this concession was not in any written instructions from Washington, I queried the USTR representative as to whether he had the authority to make that sort of a commitment. He assured me he did, so I let the matter pass.

When I left Singapore in 1986 to replace Jim Lilley in Washington as the EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary handling China, I had no responsibilities for Southeast Asia. At the time, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, were the only four Asian economies whose economic development had brought them near the threshold for graduation from GSP. The next review of the GSP program took place a year or so later, at which time the Bureau leaned toward graduating Taiwan and South Korea from the GSP program. The Korean desk officer made a big stink about this, arguing that it would be damaging to the U.S.-ROK (Republic of Korea) security alliance if GSP was taken away from an ally while Hong Kong and Singapore were permitted to continue to have it. He argued that if South Korea were to lose GSP, then all four of the eligible Asian economies should lose it at the same time.

I pointed out to the EAP deputy assistant secretary who handled Southeast Asia that in negotiating our intellectual property protection agreement with Singapore, the USTR negotiator had made a commitment to the Singapore government on this issue. In the meantime, the USTR negotiator had left the U.S. government. The Bureau checked with

USTR, which said it had no record of any such commitment to Singapore, even though this had been a key element in getting the final intellectual property agreement, which had become the model agreement for the region. The net result was that the EAP Bureau agreed to take GSP away from all four of the East Asian economic “tigers”: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

Singapore was apoplectic in its reaction to this decision, which it considered a betrayal of the USTR negotiator’s commitment in finalizing the intellectual property agreement. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was so emotionally outspoken in denouncing this action by the United States that Secretary Shultz asked the Bureau and the intelligence community for an assessment of Lee Kuan Yew’s mental stability. The assessments sent to the Secretary made no reference to the USTR’s negotiator’s commitment, considering it a “non-event.” It noted that Lee had a pattern of irrational behavior going back to the 1950’s, and that his intellectual outburst on this question probably reflected some unsettled personality problem on his part. In other words, our senior leaders were being fed a bunch of hooey in explanation for Lee Kuan Yew’s behavior.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I was truly shocked at the inability of my colleagues in the State Department to understand the connection between these events. In retrospect, I would have handled my response differently. At the time, I felt constrained by the fact that I had pointed out the relevant consideration to those in the Bureau responsible for handling the matter, and they had chosen to discount it. In a sense, the principal fault was attributable to the USTR negotiator, who should have documented his oral commitment to Singapore. Nevertheless, even though I believed that he was acting in good faith, I later concluded that I had been too diffident in my own handling of the matter.

The second Singapore case illustrates how effectively country teams can function when people have the right mental attitudes. The State Department was under severe budgetary pressures during the mid 1980’s, and U.S. embassies in East Asia received an instruction to submit three different scenarios to the Department: one providing for a 5% cut in the embassy’s budget, one for a 10% cut, and one for a 15% cut.

I presented this to our country team as a challenge and rejected the view of our admin people that we should try to take the cuts by deferring procurement. My philosophy was that we had to take a comprehensive and responsible approach. If our overall budget were to be cut, we would have to spread the reductions, including decreases in personnel, in such a way that we could sustain a completely viable embassy. We discussed this openly in the country team as an interagency problem, and we collectively looked at where we could make reductions in the embassy in personnel and procurement in a manner that would enable the mission to continue functioning effectively.

The first problem we encountered was that none of the State Department personnel in our admin section knew how to use spreadsheets. The budgetary work was all handled by

local Singaporean employees. We could hardly ask our local employees to recommend alternative reductions in local positions affecting their own jobs. Nevertheless, we needed to consider how reductions in their positions would affect our alternative approaches to reaching our budgetary targets under the three scenarios.

Fortunately, I had taught myself to use spreadsheets while serving as DCM in Bangkok. So I spent a weekend developing a comprehensive spreadsheet covering all of the embassy positions that enabled the Country Team to weigh the merits of alternative approaches based on concrete estimates. To this day, I cannot understand why the State Department did not have a requirement that admin officers needed to be spreadsheet-literate.

The country team responded magnificently. We came up with ways to trim our Political and Economic Sections and to cut some of our other State Department positions. The Defense Department representative came up with an imaginative way of cutting some of the DAO (Defense Attaché Office) positions by providing for coverage from nearby missions, e.g. an air attaché in Kuala Lumpur might be accredited to both Malaysia and Singapore. All the agencies participated in the exercise. We ended up with a collective recommendation to Washington on how we would handle cuts under each of the three scenarios.

I sent the recommendation to Washington as a limited official use cable cleared by the entire Country Team. It caused an uproar in Washington..

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: All the non-State agencies screamed bloody murder that the American ambassador had come in with a recommendation involving cuts in other agency personnel. They started phoning my country team members wanting to know how the ambassador had run wild in this way. Every one of them said that they had signed off on the cable and it represented their best judgment. I later learned that my other U.S. ambassadorial colleagues in Southeast Asia had sent in NODIS cables, classified at the secret level, recommending cuts in State and other agency personnel. Apparently, they had not discussed their recommendations with their country teams and therefore had to restrict the distribution of their recommendations.

Ironically, the net outcome was that we ended up having such credibility on staffing issues in Washington that they added 10 positions to the embassy staff by transferring a U.S. agency from India to Singapore.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: *(laughs)* Which was not the outcome that I anticipated.

*Q: No, your whole experience in Singapore has been a bit counterintuitive on the personal side.*

ROY: Well, all it would have taken was one or two bad eggs on the country team, and of course we couldn't have produced that outcome. What impressed me about it, however, was that everybody was able to adopt a collegial approach to the question, rather than a parochial agency-focused one. They understood that the budgetary problems were real, and they didn't adopt a "not in my backyard" type of approach. It left me with a good feeling about the ability of different agencies to work together when the chemistry is right.

In another case, I was successful in securing a diplomatic passport for the Internal Revenue Service representative on the embassy staff. She had regional responsibilities for assisting local American businesses with the intricacies of U.S. tax laws and met frequently with foreign government officials. Repeated efforts to get her a diplomatic passport had failed. I ended up drafting myself a detailed message to the Department explaining why she needed the diplomatic passport. To my surprise, it did the trick, and she got the passport.

*Q: Now, you do leave Singapore and your next assignment is back in Washington. How did that opportunity come to you?*

ROY: Well, I first learned about my impending transfer from the Taiwan representative in Singapore, not from the Department. I had been expecting to spend three years in Singapore, not just two.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I ran into the Taiwan representative at a cocktail party, and he idly commented that he understood I would be leaving Singapore shortly. I had no idea what he was talking about. He even told me what my new job would be.

*Q: He had better intel (intelligence) than you did.*

ROY: Yes, he did. In any event, what had happened was that Jim Lilley, who was the deputy assistant secretary in EAP for China, had been approved by the White House to go as ambassador to Korea. The EAP Bureau decided to break my assignment in Singapore and bring me back to Washington to replace him. That involved cutting my tour in Singapore short by a year. This occurred in the fall of 1986, after the school year had started. My wife and I had to make emergency arrangements to get my oldest son, who was already in high school, into a suitable school. Fortunately, Mount Hermon, where I had spent two years when I exited China in 1950, was willing to accept him partway through the fall semester.

*Q: Very good. Why don't we break off at this point and we can pick up the EAP Front Office assignment next time. I think we're scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup>.*

ROY: OK.

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*Q: Today is the 24<sup>th</sup> of September and we're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Stapleton Roy. We have finished up your ambassadorship to Singapore.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: And you come back to the bureau in Washington as deputy assistant secretary. Were you the primary DAS or one of the DAS'?*

ROY: Just one of the DAS's. The principal DAS was John Monjo, who handled Southeast Asia. He left in 1987 to be the ambassador to Malaysia, and the principal DAS became Bill Clark, who handled Japan and Northeast Asia. David Lambertson was the DAS for Southeast Asia.

*Q: Well, I asked the question because if I recall, of the DAS' in Asia Pacific at the time you're the only ambassador.*

ROY: That's correct. However, some of the other DAS's were senior to me in personal rank, including the principal deputy, so I had no problem with the arrangement. Besides, ambassadorial titles aren't that relevant in Washington to your bureaucratic duties.

*Q: Now, the U.S.-China relationship is moving along well, but this was the time when some of the internal reforms in China were really taking hold. As you arrived, how did you perceive both the bilateral relationship in its diplomatic side and its economic side?*

ROY: Quite a few things had happened since I had dropped my primary focus on Chinese affairs in 1981. In 1983 we had negotiated the third of the three joint communiqués, the August 17 communiqué, affecting arms sales to Taiwan. We were still in the process of fleshing out our relationship with Beijing and making suitable adjustments in our relationship with Taiwan. So there was lots to do.

At the time, our relationship with Beijing was still on a positive track. China was struggling with a lot of tough domestic issues. They had pushed through a major price reform in the middle of the 1980's. It had caused an immediate plunge in the economic growth rate, followed by a dramatic surge by the end of the decade to double digit levels. It was a period not only of political opening in China, but of destabilizing economic adjustments.

A lot of people think that the Tiananmen incident in 1989 was a product of the political opening up, but the precipitating factors were much broader than that. The remarkable changes taking place in China had created differences within the leadership in China over the pace of reform, the direction of reform, and what the proper balance should be between political and economic reforms. We were aware of the ferment in China, but had a poorer grasp of factional divisions within the leadership.



I showed up in my office in EAP in October of 1986. The General Secretary of the Communist Party, Hu Yaobang, was forced to resign a few months later because of dissatisfaction within the leadership over his handling of student protests. Premier Zhao Ziyang, a reform-minded colleague of Hu Yaobang, was switched over to become the party general secretary, while a party conservative, Li Peng, took his place as premier.

In our own bilateral relationship with China, a primary focus on the U.S. side was on how to handle the provisions in the third communique regarding arms sales to Taiwan in a manner consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act. The Act provided that the United States “will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.” The August 17 communiqué provided for a gradual decrease in the level of our arms sales to Taiwan.

The approach of the Reagan administration was to transfer military technology to Taiwan for the production of tanks, frigates, and fighter aircraft so that we would not have to make further big-ticket military sales to them in the future. My predecessor, Jim Lilley, in cooperation with the Pentagon, had skillfully handled the transfer to Taiwan of the technology for the production of tanks. However, we were still in the process of approving the transfer of the production technology for frigates and fighter aircraft. So I had to get involved with those issues.

Let me digress for a few minutes to touch on some relevant considerations. The unspoken background factor in handling these issues was that the U.S. military-industrial complex was dead-set against losing the lucrative Taiwan arms sales market, over which we had a virtual monopoly position because of the reluctance of other international arms sellers to incur the wrath of Beijing by selling arms to Taiwan. The U.S. arms sellers had powerful allies in Congress and within the administration among those who had opposed the third U.S.-China joint communique in 1982, providing for a gradual reduction in U.S. arms sales.

During this period, Taiwan also was concerned about our long-term reliability as an arms supplier, despite the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act. They were interested in diversifying their arms suppliers, which later led to U.S. problems with France and the Netherlands.

This resulted in an ironic conundrum in our position on arms sales to Taiwan that continues to this day. The U.S. government always justifies its arms sales to Taiwan in terms of Taiwan’s defense needs. The sole interest of U.S. arms sellers is in lucrative contracts. In principle, given the U.S. commitments in the Third Joint Communique, if our main concern was ensuring Taiwan’s security, we should have welcomed the entry of other western suppliers into the Taiwan arms market. In fact, we did the opposite.

We also have disagreements with Taiwan over what arms are appropriate, given mainland China’s growing military capabilities to launch an invasion of Taiwan. The Taiwan

government uses its arms purchases from the United States both for legitimate defense purposes and to gain political influence with Congress through the big U.S. arms manufacturers. Where we believe Taiwan needs to focus more on urban warfare and resisting an invasion, Taiwan prefers to buy big ticket items such as aircraft and ships because the suppliers have greater political clout with Congress. An additional factor is that public opinion in Taiwan prefers maintenance of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait over getting into an actual conflict with Beijing. Taiwan political parties understand that burdening the population with onerous preparations to resist an invasion would be politically unpopular. So they avoid such measures.

I had to deal with such considerations both as Deputy Assistant Secretary in EAP and later as U.S. ambassador to China. Now where were we?

*Q: Now, this is the time that the indigenous defense project got going, right?*

ROY: The sequencing was to do the land component first, followed by the naval and air components. The immediate issue when I got to EAP was to facilitate the completion of the last two components. The naval component was largely completed, but we still had to transfer the technology for the production of a Taiwan indigenous defense fighter (IDF), as it was called. It was a high capability fighter aircraft.

*Q: Now, this still was a time when other agencies and U.S. businesses and whatnot were quite fascinated with China. So I suppose there was a lot of interaction with the Department of Commerce and others seeking not only a position in the embassy but also their own agreements.*

ROY: Our trade with China had been insignificant until we established diplomatic relations. However, after we negotiated a trade agreement with China in 1979, Beijing began getting most favored nation treatment on an annual basis. This obviously gave a big boost to trade. U.S. investment also began to flow into China. So there were lots of developments taking place in the trade area.

*Q: And as this relationship flourishes and whatnot, what would you argue is the role of the State Department?*

ROY: Well, we were the experts in the government on the policy structure that had been created at normalization and in the three joint communiques, and we provided policy guidance to the entire government on what was and was not permissible in terms of dealing with Beijing and Taipei. We also provided the administrative support structure for our government presence in China. We were adding staff, and that meant we had to acquire additional facilities. Space constraints were a gigantic problem for us in China, both in terms of housing and office space. We had early on opened our consulates in Shanghai and Guangzhou and the Chinese had opened their consulates in Houston and San Francisco.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: In our consular treaty with China, we agreed that each country could have five consulates in the other. China originally opened one of its consulates in Honolulu, but it later moved it to Los Angeles. So they had consulates in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, and New York. Because of financial constraints, we only opened four consulates. The Shanghai and Guangzhou consulates were already open, and we were moving ahead with opening our consulates in Shenyang and Chengdu.

*Q: Now --*

ROY: Don't forget that my job included not only China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Mongolia, but also Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Islands.

*Q: Wasn't this the time -- no, it'd been earlier in New Zealand --*

ROY: Yes, we were having difficulties with prime minister Lange in New Zealand. Our ambassador there from 1981-85 had been an ultra conservative political appointee who was a cattle rancher and race horse breeder. For his first three years in New Zealand, the conservative National Party was in office, and he had good contacts and relations with them. But he shunned the opposition Labour Party, considering them a bunch of crypto-communists.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: When the Labour Party came to power in 1984, our ambassador was ill-equipped to deal with them, having kept them at arm's-length for three years. Under Prime Minister Lange's Labour Party, New Zealand adopted a nuclear-free policy that banned visits by nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered vessels. This in effect prevented port calls in New Zealand by U.S. naval ships, since our policy at the time was neither to confirm nor deny whether there were nuclear weapons on our naval vessels, and many of our submarines were nuclear powered.

This issue had broader regional repercussions affecting our relations with Australia, Japan and South Korea, where we had worked out mutually satisfactory ways of handling the issue. However, there were still acute local sensitivities in those countries that would be affected by how we responded to New Zealand.

The position adopted by the Lange government in New Zealand ended up excluding it from participation in ANZUS (the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty) activities and defense arrangements, while still technically remaining a member of the Treaty. We stopped referring to them as allies.

*Q: Right. And the challenge wasn't just with New Zealand though, because --*

ROY: Australia had also had a big problem with the nuclear issue. However, the Australian prime minister had been able to take the politically sensitive steps necessary to

permit our defense relations to remain solid. The New Zealand prime minister had not, and we ended up with our naval ships unable to visit New Zealand. I have always felt that with a more skillful ambassador, we could have had a better outcome in New Zealand.

In the case of Japan, we and the Japanese accepted a *modus vivendi* under which the Japanese government took the position that the American government knew the Japanese position that there shouldn't be nuclear weapons on the ships, while we were able to have continued access to Japanese ports.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: On a different issue, one of my first actions on coming back from Singapore was to take charge of establishing diplomatic relations with Mongolia.

*Q: Hm!*

ROY: This had been a longstanding goal of the U.S. government. However, our strategy had been to insist on negotiating a consular treaty with Mongolia before we established diplomatic relations. This had resulted in an impasse. My approach was based on the fact that the two most important provisions of a consular treaty were the paragraphs providing for notification of the arrest of American citizens and prompt consular access to them. So we separated out these provisions and negotiated a bilateral agreement with Mongolia on those provisions, while deferring the negotiation of a consular treaty until after we had established diplomatic relations. We then found the process of negotiating diplomatic relations quite straightforward.

*Q: What seemed to be the hold-up on their side?*

ROY: We had tried to include in the consular treaty provisions for U.S. marine guards to provide security at our embassy in Ulaanbaatar, a long-standing tradition at our diplomatic missions. The Mongols were not familiar with this practice and thought we were trying to establish a U.S. military presence in Mongolia.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: The actual negotiations were conducted in New York where the Mongols had a mission at the United Nations. One of our deputy permanent representatives at the United Nations became our negotiator. We would write and clear the instructions in Washington. I would then go up to New York and serve as the advisor to the negotiator. We made very rapid progress and established diplomatic relations with Mongolia within a couple of months. The problem, then, was how to establish an embassy in Ulaanbaatar since we had no budget for this purpose.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: My approach, which was controversial and far from ideal, was to appoint an

ambassador but have the ambassador reside in Washington for the time being until we could acquire adequate facilities in Ulaanbaatar. During this interim period, the ambassador would make periodic visits to Mongolia.

This approach was based on the French model because the French had used a similar approach. It was untraditional and administratively awkward, but it kept us within our budgetary constraints, while moving ahead quickly to establish ambassadorial level diplomatic relations. The State Department didn't like it because this was a departure from our normal way of doing business. My interest was in getting an ambassador in place as quickly as possible.

*Q: Let alone security problems and that sort of stuff.*

ROY: Yes, although security problems were not yet the main issue. Clearly that would be an issue when we needed secure communications.

*Q: Can I go back for a minute to New Zealand? As you're working through that you're probably working very closely with the New Zealand embassy here. Were they very helpful in giving hints as to how to work around things?*

ROY: No, they were very helpful, but more in the way of facilitating travel or meetings with visiting New Zealand officials. The question of how to deal with New Zealand on the nuclear issue was really an internal U.S. government question. There was a lot of resentment in the U.S. government against New Zealand for the position that it was taking. After all, they were a defense ally of the United States. Their position on the nuclear issue made it impossible for our military to deal with them. That did not create good feelings.

*Q: That probably was strongest out of the NSC (National Security Council).*

ROY: Well, the Defense Department also had very strong views on the matter. Of course, it was devastating for the New Zealand military because they had greatly valued their close relationship with the world's best military. It was also relevant that Australia had, at considerable political risk, pushed through an arrangement that enabled our ships to continue visiting there. Having gone the extra mile, the Australians were very firm that we should hold to a tough line with the New Zealanders. It would have pulled the rug out from under the Australians if we had accommodated the less hospitable attitude of the New Zealanders.

*Q: And in fact the Australian-New Zealand relationship itself was pretty unique. They had mutual defense projects. I think they were building a destroyer with each other, or something like that.*

ROY: We in the East Asia Bureau did not get into those types of issues. Undoubtedly, somebody in the Defense Department probably was monitoring it.

*Q: Going back to China, in this period there's a lot of interest in traveling to China. I suppose there was a lot of work with the Congress and delegations and that sort of stuff.*

ROY: Yes. We were trying to promote this as much as possible. The exchange of visits by President Reagan and then Premier Zhao Ziyang took place before I became the deputy assistant secretary, but there were regular congressional visits to China throughout this period. In fact, a high level Chinese official was visiting the United States when the Tiananmen events occurred in 1989.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: We had a visit by the Chinese foreign minister, and Secretary George Shultz went to China in the spring of 1987. He used the visit to make an important policy statement on cross-strait relations between Taiwan and the Mainland.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: The August 17, 1982 communiqué on arms sales to Taiwan had anticipated that over time there would be a gradual relaxation in the relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland. This was reflected in paragraph 7 of the communiqué, which stated: "In order to bring about, over a period of time, a final settlement of the question of United States arms sales to Taiwan, which is an issue rooted in history, the two governments will make every effort to adopt measures and create conditions conducive to the thorough settlement of this issue."

There was a dynamic quality built into the communiqué, in the form of an assumption that the reduction of arms sales would help to create conditions for a thorough settlement of the issue. However, there was a group in the United States government that had been opposed to the Third Communique and wanted essentially to freeze the cross-strait relationship. When I came back from Singapore, there was basically no movement taking place in cross-trade relations.

To address this situation, we developed a position linked to Secretary Shultz's visit to Beijing and Shanghai in the spring of 1987. It took the form of language included in a toast that he gave in Shanghai, which stated: "While our policy has been constant, the situation has not and cannot remain static. We support a continuing evolutionary process toward a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue. The pace, however, will be determined by the Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait, free of outside pressure." He added: "For our part, we have welcomed developments, including indirect trade and increasing human interchange, which have contributed to a relaxation of the tensions in the Taiwan Strait. Our steadfast policy seeks to foster an environment in which such developments can continue to take place."

In advance, I personally briefed the Taiwan representative in Washington, Fred Chien, on this language. He reacted very negatively and pulled out all the stops to try to get us not to use it, to no avail. In the meantime, David Dean, our representative in Taiwan at the

time, had briefed Taiwan President Chiang Ching-kuo on the language. In contrast to his representative in Washington, he expressed appreciation for the briefing and did not express any objections.

Fortuitously, and without any prior knowledge on our part, it turned out that President Chiang Ching-kuo had been thinking along similar lines. On November 2, 1987, President Chiang Ching-kuo, announced that Taiwan residents could visit their relatives on the mainland, ending nearly four decades of estrangement and marking a turning-point in relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Subsequently, in May 1990, Lee Teng-hui, Chiang Ching-kuo's successor as President of Taiwan, in his inaugural address announced that if certain conditions were met, Taiwan would be willing, on a basis of equality, to establish channels of communication, and completely open up academic, cultural, economic, trade, scientific, and technological exchange with the Mainland, to lay a foundation of mutual respect, peace, and prosperity."

So, in a way, we had smoothed the path for the beginning of cross-strait contacts. We didn't know it would have that effect at the time, but it was a fortuitous coming together of a U.S. intent and the intent of the top person in Taiwan to see an opening up of cross-strait contacts.

*Q: Now, that raises an interesting question. Much of foreign policy is domestic policy for foreigners. And that gets you to talking about lobby groups within the U.S. that have a great deal of influence on what policies the U.S. follows. And you were saying that the Taiwan representative pulled out all the stops. Would those stops have included going to Congress and complaining and things like that? What were some of those stops?*

ROY: The unofficial Taiwan representative office in Washington, DC was called The Coordination Council for North American Affairs (CCNAA). It subsequently went through several name changes. It was headed by Frederick Chien, who later became the Foreign Minister of the Republic of China on Taiwan. I had known him since 1962 in Taipei, when he was assigned as a secretary and English interpreter for then Vice President Chen Cheng of the Republic of China. We were both the same age and relatively junior diplomats at that time and became good friends.

Fred was the channel for making unofficial demarches to the U.S. government, and the EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary for China was his normal point of contact. When he had something to discuss, we usually met for coffee at the Four Seasons hotel in Georgetown. In objecting to the draft language in the Shultz toast for use in Shanghai, he was probably reflecting the views of the Foreign Ministry in Taipei, which was not aware of President Chiang Ching-kuo's thinking on the subject.

Fred pulled out all the stops in lobbying me on the language in the toast, even to the point of telephoning me in Beijing during the Shultz visit to plead that the language in question not be used. Since I had confidentially briefed him in advance as a courtesy, it would have been a major breach of decorum for him to have tried to stir up congressional opposition on the subject, and he didn't really have time to do so effectively. In general,

CCNAA was very active in Washington, and its personnel spent a lot of time and money cultivating relations with members of Congress and lobbying them.

*Q: Sounds like he may have been operating outside of his own instructions?*

ROY: No, I'm sure he was operating within the instructions from the ROC Foreign Ministry. But the Foreign Ministry may not have had any inkling of the attitude of Chiang Ching-kuo on the subject.

The language in the toast was not dramatic language. But it clearly signaled that the United States favored a dynamic process in cross-strait relations, not a static process. At the time, there was no discernable pathway to unification, and it was not our intention to promote a particular outcome. That was for the Chinese themselves to decide. I never encountered anyone in the U.S. policy community who thought that the U.S. transfer of recognition from the Republic of China to the People's Republic of China would generate a rapid process of unification. Many of us discounted that as a realistic expectation, but we didn't know what to expect. This was a new situation.

Those of us who were involved in managing the relationship thought that a static cross-strait policy would be dangerous. We preferred to see movement toward a peaceful cross-strait relationship, not a continuation of cross-strait hostility. Secretary Shultz saw it the same way. We did not encounter any difficulties in the U.S. government in getting our language cleared.

*Q: Now, let's see. I think Ambassador Lord, Winston Lord, is out in Beijing at this time. I think he got there in late '85.*

ROY: Yes. He was in place in Beijing when I left Singapore. Earlier, I had been on a visit to Washington when he was trying to get confirmed for Beijing. For some reason the confirmation process had moved more slowly than he had hoped. I had known Win for many years and had very high regard for him. When I was deputy assistant secretary in Washington, I was delighted to have him in Beijing.

*Q: At your China Desk, you had Dick Williams and Chris Szymanski, both of whom were good long-term China hands. I presume the desk was extremely supportive of all the things you were trying to accomplish?*

ROY: Completely. Again, Dick and Chris Semansky were both long-time friends. Dick had opened our consulate general in Guangzhou and served there for several years. In fact, most if not all of his Foreign Service career was within a 300-mile radius from Hong Kong.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: He was one of our leading Hong Kong experts, but he also was a very good China hand. He was the head of the China Desk and someone that I relied on heavily to keep



things moving on that front. I was very lucky to work with a very good China group.

To illustrate this point, a very junior officer on the China Desk had drafted a toast for Secretary Shultz to give during the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister. Secretary Shultz was so pleased with the draft that he sent down a note saying that he wanted to have the drafter of the toast come to his office so he could express his personal thanks. It was a heady experience for the young Foreign Service Officer to be trotted up to the secretary's office. This was typical of the way that Secretary Shultz dealt with his staff.

*Q: It sounded very supportive, yes.*

ROY: Yes. The EAP assistant secretary when I came back from Singapore was Gaston Sigur, who had replaced Paul Wolfowitz. Paul had gone out as ambassador to Indonesia, where he was extremely effective. I had known Gaston when I was working on Soviet affairs and he headed the Sino-Soviet Institute at George Washington University. He was an absolutely superb person to work for. His previous job in the government had been in the National Security Council, and he had the right political connections within the administration. He had an unbelievably well disciplined and efficient work style. He did not come in at unreasonably early hours in the morning, and he left promptly at six or 6:30 in the evening. No late evenings. He delegated responsibility, but expected his subordinates to keep him fully informed of their actions and intentions.

This was the way the Shultz State Department operated. Gaston Sigur was a Japan hand and had a personal relationship with the Prime Minister of Japan, Nakasone. If a problem occurred, such as a riot in Japan because of a rape by an American soldier in Okinawa, Secretary Shultz would send Gaston Sigur to deal with the question, because he could get in at the very top of the Japanese government.

Secretary Shultz relied extensively on his assistant secretaries, which empowered the geographic bureaus. This was a different style from many administrations. We at the bureau level had a sense that we were responsible for coming up with policy ideas for dealing with our region. If we thought something should be done, we would send a memo to the secretary of state proposing that course of action. If approved, we would take the necessary implementing steps. In other words, we didn't sit passively waiting for guidance from the seventh floor.

*Q: Now, this was the time of the Reagan administration.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: There's always discussion that at this time there were large numbers of non-career political appointees assigned to the State Department, not just at assistant secretary levels but even lower. Did EAP encounter that problem?*

ROY: During my period in the bureau, all of our deputy assistant secretaries were career people. That had traditionally been the pattern. However, the practice of assigning

political appointees to bureaus below the assistant secretary level was beginning in the Reagan administration and continued thereafter. This eroded the number of key training slots for upwardly mobile foreign service officers who were reaching policy-relevant positions. I thought it was a very negative trend. For example, I benefited enormously from having recently been the deputy assistant secretary for China when I went to Beijing as ambassador because I was intimately familiar with all of the relevant policy issues.

*Q: The impact is not only on the training of the officers, you're not getting your career guys the experience they need.*

ROY: Exactly. Some of the political appointees at the deputy assistant secretary level were first rate. The problem is that once they completed their assignments in the State Department, most of them returned to the private sector, thus denying to the government the continuing value of the experience they had gained.

*Q: Lost or used in other ways too I suppose.*

ROY: Well, whatever. It's not that there are not good people outside the U.S. government who are capable of handling these positions. It's that you cannot maximize the qualities of a career service in which capable career people are challenged to move up the ladder of responsibility by having key rungs of the ladder taken away from them, especially at the higher levels. That's still a problem today.

In any event, I've mentioned some of the early things of concern to us. There was also a lot of ferment in China in the 1980s. While it wasn't immediately policy relevant, there was intense interest in the intelligence community in trying to understand the pace of development inside China. We still didn't have good insights into that process, which became a problem in the spring of 1989 when we were unaware of the gravity of the splits within the top Chinese Communist Party leadership.

I would say that the years when I was the deputy assistant secretary for China, which is from the fall of 1986 until the spring of 1989, were a time of building the U.S.-China relationship. Our strategy was when we were going to take some action vis-à-vis Taiwan that would be troubling to the Mainland, such as providing new military technology, we would try to develop some positive aspects in the U.S.-Mainland relationship that would help as a balancing factor.

For example, one of our longstanding goals was to get a Peace Corps presence into China, in part to assist in building up a group of young Americans with extensive on-the-ground experience in China. To do this, we had to overcome serious ideological hurdles in China left over from the Maoist period. During those decades, the Peace Corps had been viewed by China's leaders as a dangerous subversive tool of the imperialists.

We were gradually able to convince our counterparts in the Chinese Foreign Ministry that the Peace Corps could play a useful role in China as English teachers and experts on economic development. For our part, the Peace Corps was eager to get their people into

China. We finally achieved the breakthrough during the period that I was the deputy assistant secretary, when the Chinese approved the introduction of a Peace Corps contingent into Sichuan Province.

*Q: Who were the main actors on the Chinese side for that kind of a decision?*

ROY: The instrument was essentially the Chinese Foreign Ministry. They were the people that we worked with, primarily because it required Chinese approval from a foreign policy standpoint. We also had to decide whether we would try to spread the Peace Corps around China or concentrate it in one province. The sensible decision was made to concentrate on one province because the administrative support burden would have been too great if they had been scattered all over China. Moreover, the province selected was Sichuan, which at the time was the largest province in China with a population of over 90 million people. It provided an opportunity for dozens of Americans to go and live in smaller towns and villages around Sichuan and get on the ground experience. Some of them have published very interesting books with insights into what it was like living in China in those days.

*Q: When did that program actually get started? Wasn't there a delay in its startup?*

ROY: It got started while I was the EAP/DAS for China. I remember attending a reception for the first Peace Corps contingent that was going out to China.

*Q: Mm-hmm. One of the things that transpired at this time is that the Americans had their election in November of '88 and the department, like all government agencies, then went through a transition period.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: To the new administration. How did that affect your work or, or how was that perceived?*

ROY: In any transition your key responsibility is to be as helpful as possible to the new officials who are coming in. My recollection is that we prepared one-page papers on all of the major issues in U.S.-China relations and assembled them in a briefing book that was available for the new appointees. That took a fair amount of staff work, but was done sensibly and well.

*Q: And it was probably a smooth transition because it's basically the Reagan administration to the Bush administration, two Republican administrations.*

ROY: Curiously not. That had been my assumption as well, as a career foreign service officer who was not plugged into the political aspects of such transitions. I was stunned to discover that I was wrong. The reality was that incoming Bush administration officials were not interested in talking to the outgoing officials. They almost seemed afraid of being seen as inheriting the previous policies. They wanted total policy flexibility. That

would not have surprised me if it had been a transition from a Democratic administration to a Republican one, or vice versa. But I didn't expect it within one party.

*Q: How did that manifest itself?*

ROY: It manifested itself through a temporary policy no-man's land, where we couldn't assume any policy continuity at all until the new group had decided what they wanted to do. The election was in November 1988. The new president's inauguration was in January of 1989. Shortly thereafter, the Emperor of Japan died. The president decided to go to the funeral and add on a trip to China, which he wanted to visit as president in any event. I was deputy assistant secretary throughout that process and was part of the group that went on from Japan to China.

During the trip, I had some interactions with Bob Zoellick, who had been appointed as the Counselor of the State Department. On my return, I learned that he wanted me to be the executive secretary of the Department. So I moved out of the East Asia Bureau in the spring of 1989 and went up to the seventh floor to be the executive secretary.

*Q: And how did Zoellick come to this conclusion?*

ROY: Well, I would like to think that he was impressed by my policy brilliance, but the real story was that the newly appointed seventh floor under secretary level officials were competing for power. One of them had been promoting a different candidate for executive secretary, while Bob Zoellick wanted his own candidate in the position. He used me for that purpose. So it was not my executive brilliance that resulted in my selection, but rather the fact that I was a pawn in a power play.

*Q: (laughs) Did you actually go with the president to the funeral and then on to Beijing? The trip to Beijing was put together very quickly. It must have been interesting because eight years earlier Bush had had to carry a message to the Chinese that was coming out of the American election about Reagan's attitude towards Taiwan. He was the vice presidential candidate at that time. Now he's coming back as president. How do you think the Chinese saw him and treated the group?*

ROY: Well, they knew him from that period. He was acquainted with all of the top Chinese leaders from his period at the Liaison Office. He had sent his wife to China in 1978 to let the Chinese know that he was going to run for President of the United States in the 1980 elections. Then he ended up being nominated to be Reagan's vice president. He'd been the vice president for eight years, and he had played a role whenever top-level Chinese officials visited the United States.

It was an interesting arrangement, which has relevance today and particularly to the period when Cheney was the vice president. Generally the vice president is not a factor in determining policy positions. During the Reagan administration the State Department would formulate the policies that we thought were wise, and then George Shultz would deal with the president and the NSC at the top levels to make sure the White House was

on board.

As a courtesy, on matters involving China we would always keep the vice president's office informed. They would get copies of policy memos on China that were being sent to the White House. I do not recall any instances where there was any input from the vice president's office.

In other words, the traditional structure of the United States government, where the vice president is the deputy head of state but is not the deputy head of government, was very much in evidence during the Reagan administration. This continued during the Bush administration, where Vice President Quayle essentially had no substantive role in U.S. foreign policy.

One of the big questions in preparing for the Bush visit to China was how to handle the human rights aspect. President Reagan had established a practice when he visited the Soviet Union, and I think when he visited China, to always take some action to show his support for human rights and political openness by meeting in some fashion with human rights activists and/or political dissidents. Could we afford during the Bush visit to Beijing to ignore the Reagan practice, given the risk that this would subject the President to criticism from human rights advocates? That was the question.

In the latter years of the Reagan administration, we had very good coordination among State, Defense, and the NSC/White House on policy matters. We established a pattern where every two weeks I would have a trilateral lunch with counterparts in the Defense Department (Karl Jackson) and in the NSC (Doug Paal), where we would discuss current policy issues looking for opportunities and matters that needed to be addressed. If we agreed on what we thought were sensible things that needed to be done, each of us in our respective agencies would try to move those ideas along. This smoothed coordination because we had very good interagency working relationships.

In preparing the Bush visit to China, these three officials were still in place. In consultation with Ambassador Lord in Beijing, we tried to game out what would be the best way of protecting the president's domestic flanks against accusations that he was giving priority to befriending China over addressing our human rights interests.

We looked at the various options and decided that the best and least provocative approach would be to include the dissident Chinese physicist Fang Lizhi among the 500 guests invited to the banquet that Bush would host for Chinese leaders in response to the Chinese welcoming banquet. We thought this would be less provocative than arranging for the President to have a private conversation with him at the ambassador's residence. Unfortunately, we had not allowed for the degree of malevolent ill will that Deng Xiaoping nurtured toward this particular person. When he saw that Fang Lizhi was on the guest list, he issued orders that Fang should be physically prevented from attending.

When the banquet occurred, the car bringing Fang to the banquet was intercepted by the police and he was detained. The incident generated extensive press coverage, infuriating

President Bush and Brent Scowcroft, his National Security Advisor.

In fact, this is how I became acquainted with Bob Zoellick. In preparing for the visit, I had filled my briefcase with background papers on Fang Lizhi in case the issue arose. The Chinese were already raising objections to having Fang Lizhi on the guest list while we were in Japan. I was down having breakfast in the hotel dining room and Bob Zoellick was at an adjacent table. We got into an informal conversation, and he invited me to join him. This resulted in a lengthy discussion about China. I briefed him on who Fang Lizhi was and gave him background information so that he would be fully aware of what was going on.

Nevertheless, when the incident erupted, President Bush and Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Advisor, were deeply upset that the visit had not gone as smoothly as the president had hoped on his first visit to China as President. He blamed Ambassador Lord. I felt this was *totally* unjustified, because we had worked out this idea in cooperation with Ambassador Lord, but it wasn't his independent idea, and we had coordinated the action at the Washington end. I spoke up and made clear how the idea emerged and had been properly coordinated, we thought, with the NSC. To no avail. The net result was that the incident destroyed Win's relations with both the president and Brent Scowcroft.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: Which I think was very unfortunate. If mistakes were made, they were in Washington, not by the ambassador. Win was blameless.

*Q: Did that go so far at the time that when the president was having his meetings he didn't have his ambassador present?*

ROY: No, the damage came after the visit.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: A contributing factor may have been that the president hoped that he could have a visit to China while avoiding sticky issues such as human rights. I don't think that's a realistic way to deal with China. Not at the political level.

*Q: Let me get straight, the -- at the deputy's level that you were meeting at DoD and the NSC, who were the other two individuals?*

ROY: It was Doug Paul at the NSC and Karl Jackson at the Defense Department. Karl Jackson had been Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia in the Bureau of International Security Affairs at the Pentagon. Doug had been on the embassy staff in Singapore when I was the ambassador and was the Director of Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. He went on to become the Director of the American Institute in Taiwan.

*Q: Yeah. Hm. Yeah, Doug Paul has a good background in China affairs and whatnot.*

ROY: Yes. Karl was an Asian specialist, with a special concentration on Southeast Asia. Later in the Bush administration he became the national security advisor for Vice President Quayle.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: In other respects, the underlying problem was that China was having severe domestic problems. Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping had instituted his policies of reform and openness, which represented a radical departure from earlier policies. This abrupt shift in direction had generated rifts within the top leadership of which we were only dimly aware. In the ten years from 1979 to 1989, three of the top leaders of the Chinese Communist Party were purged.

Hu Yaobang, who had been the General Secretary of the Communist Party, had been removed in 1986 following widespread student demonstrations at various universities around China. Hu Yaobang's handling of the demonstrations had caused Deng Xiaoping to lose confidence in him because Deng attached utmost importance to maintaining stability in China. This was ironic because Hu Yaobang had been considered a strong supporter of Deng's reform and openness policies and was popular among younger Chinese. In fact, it was Hu Yaobang's death on April 15, 1989 that brought the students into Tiananmen Square because they felt the Party had done too little to honor his death. They remained there until their violent removal beginning on June 4, 1989.

When I returned to Washington after President Bush's visit to China in February of 1989, I had lunch with the Chinese DCM, with whom I had established a pattern of regular lunches. I expressed surprise that the Chinese had taken what should have been a fairly low-key event and had turned it into an international incident by blocking the attendance of Fang Lizhi at the banquet. He responded that we didn't understand how "volatile" the situation was in China. I was struck by his use of that term.

When I recounted this episode to a group of top U.S. China experts in Washington, emphasizing his use of the term "volatile" to describe the situation in China, I encountered uniform objections to his use of that term. This illustrates the degree to which we were unaware of the extent of the beneath-the-surface tensions within the Communist Party. Four months later Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang was purged because of his objections to the crackdown.

*Q: That really speaks to a number of things, because of course the embassy is the pointed part of the spear when you're talking about trying to collect intelligence on how a country works and whatnot. And they're supposed to have the contacts and the language and --*

ROY: Well Dave, in the real world getting inside stories of who's doing what to whom in

top levels of governments is next to impossible in authoritarian systems.

*Q: Not like our newspapers here (laughs).*

ROY: IF the dispute would show up in the newspapers we would notice it, as happened in 1991-92.

*Q: Right.*

ROY: I was in the Soviet Union when a member of the Politburo was purged. We could get clues from the pattern of leadership appearances and from anomalies in their protocol treatment, things like that. That enabled us to sense, at times, if a top leader was in trouble, but we wouldn't know the inside story of what the problem was.

In the China case in 1989, those of us in the China-watching community didn't understand why the students were permitted to continue their demonstrations for so long. Under the more liberal circumstances in China, it was understandable that they would permit the demonstrations for a week or two. But Gorbachev was coming, and they would normally shut down the demonstrations before his arrival.

When that didn't happen, it began to raise question marks in our minds, but we weren't able to come up with a satisfactory explanation. Of course, we now know that the reason they didn't clean up Tiananmen Square was because there was a dispute in the top leadership over whether they should do so.

*Q: Why don't we break off here.*

ROY: OK, I think that's an excellent idea.

*Q: Next time we can begin with your time as executive secretary, because that's a very interesting platform to see how the whole Foreign Service and State Department operates.*

ROY: OK.

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*Q: OK, let me see. Today is the 17<sup>th</sup> of October. We're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Sir, when we last left it you had been assigned to the Executive Secretariat as the executive secretary.*

ROY: Right. Perhaps I should first mention two episodes from my final months in EAP. I had known President Bush since 1974-75 when he was the Liaison Office chief in Beijing. As Deputy Director of the China desk at that time, I would accompany him on his calls in Washington as a general factotum. In subsequent years, I discovered that he had an uncanny ability never to forget a name and a face. I had briefly encountered him



on a number of occasions, and he always knew who I was and greeted me by name.

Shortly after his inauguration in January 1989, President Bush called me at the State Department and asked me to round up some of the China hands who had served with him in Beijing, since he wanted to invite them to a barbecue at the White House. I sent him a name list, and he promptly invited them to a small barbecue in the Rose Garden, including my wife and me as well.

He was a very gracious host, giving us a personal tour of the White House, including his living quarters on the second floor. The evening ended with a screening of *Mrs. Miniver*, one of his favorite films, in the White House theater. For all of us, it was a memorable event.

A month later, as the EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary for China, I was a member of the party that accompanied President Bush to Beijing in February 1989. At his banquet for the Chinese leaders, I was seated at an obscure table with White House staffers that was three rows away from the main aisle in the banquet hall. None of my table mates had the slightest interest in China, and their attitude reflected their low regard for an insignificant State Department bureaucrat.

When President Bush entered the banquet hall and was proceeding along the main aisle, he spotted me at my table and broke ranks to come over and shake hands with me, greeting me as “Stape” and treating me as an old friend. I was stunned to be accorded such recognition, but my astonishment was nothing compared to that of my table mates, who accorded me VIP treatment for the rest of the banquet.

A couple of weeks later, I was entering my new job as Executive Secretary of the State Department. When I had broken the news to my wife about the assignment, she smiled and said, “that’s what every young girl yearns to be.”

*Q: That is a unique cockpit in the whole building, because you know, all the communications with all the other governmental agencies go through there and you’re looking at the building as a whole. Bring again to our attention how you got that job in the first place.*

ROY: Early in the George H.W. Bush administration, I was still the deputy assistant secretary in East Asia handling China when the president went to Tokyo in February of 1989 to attend the funeral of the emperor? He decided to add on a brief stop in China. Since I was the DAS for China, I accompanied the party to Tokyo and then went on with them to Beijing.

While in Tokyo, I had a lengthy breakfast conversation with Bob Zoellick about China. About a month after returning to Washington, I was looking for an onward assignment and was approached to see whether I was interested in the executive secretary job. It turned out that Bob Zoellick, who was the Counselor of the Department and close to Secretary of State Jim Baker, wanted his personal pick to be the executive secretary.

Apparently, he had remembered me from that conversation in Tokyo, so I ended up being selected for the job.

*Q: Can you give us a sense of the office organization and how close you are to the secretary himself and other actors?*

ROY: The Office of the Executive Secretary at that time was located midway between the Office of the Secretary and the Office of the Deputy Secretary. All of the paper flow that goes to the secretary goes through the executive secretary. In the Executive Secretariat you have an administrative support unit, SS/EX, which provides administrative support for all of the secretary's travels and daily needs. You have the Operations Center, which is our emergency response mechanism. And you have S/S, which handles all of the paper flow wherever the secretary is. The executive secretary oversees all these functions.

Since I had been the pick of Bob Zoellick, who had become the most influential Seventh Floor principal on policy matters, I was included in all of the Secretary's staff meetings. My role was to make sure he knew who was attending each meeting and to follow up on any decisions made to be sure they were being carried out. Within the Department, that involved ensuring that relevant officials were informed of the decisions.

In performing that function, I also handled liaison with other departments of the government. Each Department had an executive secretariat of some sort, whose role was usually more limited than the one in the State Department. Nevertheless, I had counterparts throughout the government that I could contact for liaison purposes. When Secretary Baker returned from meetings at the White House, he would immediately brief me on any decisions made so I could coordinate the followup process.

It was also my job to screen all of the most sensitive and most highly classified traffic, including determining the distribution of NODIS and EXDIS cables and memoranda. I was assisted by two deputies, and we would divide up the workload. For example, the NODIS traffic would come directly to me, while they would handle the distribution of EXDIS material. The hours were long. I would be in the office before seven a.m., and I usually would not get home until 10 p.m. or later. I literally would not see my family except on Saturdays and Sundays, when the workload was lighter.

On most Sundays I could stay out of the office, but I had to be reachable by phone, which precluded going to movie theaters. I had a crude early version of a cell phone, which looked like a brick and weighed five pounds. It was a godsend since it meant I was not pinned down at home.

*Q: Now, you were saying you did the distribution for NODIS cables. Would your duties also include other channels?*

ROY: The other channels would be handled by a representative of the other channel's agency.

*Q: OK. And who were the deputies at this time?*

ROY: Jim Collins was the most experienced deputy. He later became ambassador to Russia. The other was W. Robert Pearson. Bob replaced me as Executive Secretary after two years and later became ambassador to Turkey and Director General of the Foreign Service. Elizabeth McKune replaced Jim Collins after one year. She later became ambassador to Qatar. They were all highly competent and wonderful colleagues who bore up well under the pressure.

I never traveled with the secretary. We would divide up the trips between my two deputies. I held to this practice against considerable pressure from the secretary's party. I always stayed in Washington. I don't know whether that approach was wise or not, but it was based on my belief that I could play a more useful role in Washington as a coordinator at headquarters if a problem arose. It was also driven, in part, by my negative reaction to what I considered to be the overly assertive behavior of President Reagan's second Chief of Staff, Donald Regan. I felt Regan had been too high profile when traveling with the President. I considered minding the home front a more appropriate function for me to play.

*Q: Because of course your office included S/S, which provides support for the secretary when he's traveling.*

ROY: Yes. We had procedures for making sure that the proper cable traffic was sent to the secretary. I was the person that the secretary's party would call when traveling, and I would make sure that, whatever the issue was, it got handled properly.

I was in a fortunate situation because Bob Zoellick was one of the two insider officials around Secretary Baker who were particularly influential. Margaret Tutwiler, his press secretary, was the other. She had "walk-in at any time" access to the Secretary's office. She had exquisite judgment on media issues, and Secretary Baker had great respect for her judgment on all media matters and more. Bob Zoellick had the title of Counselor, which technically ranked him with but below the Under Secretaries. In reality, within a month he had effectively established control over policy issues. As an inside player, he had much more influence with Secretary Baker than the Under Secretaries.

I also was fortunate that the Deputy Secretary was Larry Eagleburger, with whom I established a close relationship. Eagleburger had a buddy-buddy friendship with Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Advisor to the President, which in some way paralleled Secretary Baker's own close ties to President Bush. This made my job infinitely easier because I had full access to the secretary's meetings and activities, and had easy access to the deputy secretary. I could enlist his help when needed, and I always kept him informed of what was going on.

*Q: Now, one of the ways in which the secretary exercises American foreign policy is of course the traveling aspect, as you noted. He made any number of trips. I have a five-page document of his travels. But do you recall any trips that were particularly*

*outstanding or illustrative of what Secretary Baker wanted to do?*

ROY: Well, this is probably not the best example, but it pops into my mind because I had studied Mongolian. Secretary Baker loved to hunt, and he wanted to visit Mongolia to go on a hunting trip in the mountainous areas of the country.

Normally, I stayed away from foreign diplomats while I was Executive Secretary, because I had too much exposure to highly classified information. I did not want to be cultivated by them as a source of information. However, in this case I offered my assistance to Secretary Baker in contacting the Mongolian ambassador and helping to arrange a hunting trip to Mongolia for him. He agreed, so I arranged to have lunch with the Mongolian ambassador, who naturally was eager to facilitate a trip by Secretary Baker to his country. Everything fell into place, and Secretary Baker made two trips to Mongolia. He was actually in Mongolia in August 1990 when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, resulting in the Gulf War. We had to get the Secretary back to Washington rather quickly.

*Q: Yes, that might have been the August 2-3, 1990 trip.*

ROY: That sounds right. We hadn't yet made the decision to intervene in Iraq, but Secretary Baker became instrumental in setting up the multi-country coalition that participated in Desert Storm when it was launched in January 1991.

This was also the period when the Soviet Union was beginning to unravel.

Both President Bush and Secretary Baker had remarkably intimate relations with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, the Soviet foreign minister. The Soviet relationship was obviously a critically important relationship that was controlled very closely by the secretary and the president.

Jim Baker's role was strengthened by his close personal relationship with President Bush. They had been longtime friends. They thought very much alike. They could speak together in a kind of shorthand because they intuitively understood what the other one was thinking or about to say. On any important issue, Secretary Baker would never act without having schmoozed with the president first to be sure that he was on exactly the same wavelength as the president. This made him an extraordinarily powerful secretary of state. When he wanted to do something, everybody knew that he had the full backing of the president. No one could "end run" Secretary Baker with President Bush.

*Q: Now, any number of incidents happened during your assignment as the executive secretary. Of course June 4, 1989 was when the incident in Tiananmen Square occurred.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: To which you were probably very sensitive. But if you could sort of walk us through, you know, how the building was watching, how events were unfolding in China, maybe*

*how you got the first word, and how did Tiananmen Square look from the Executive Secretariat seat?*

ROY: Well, I'd been a political officer for most of my career, and I'd been handling China right up until the April before Tiananmen. In my role as executive secretary, however, I had to stay out of policy, because it would not enhance the workings of the State Department to have me interfering on issues between the assistant secretaries and other policy level officials. I respected that division very carefully.

All of us, of course, were following what was going on in Beijing. It was getting a lot of attention not only because of the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, but because Soviet leader Gorbachev was making a visit to Beijing in May. Sino-Soviet relations had been bad for a long time, but they had begun to normalize during the 1980's, after the effect of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1980 wore off. So there was a lot of policy interest in the Gorbachev visit to China, which is the principal reason why the world's media were all in China. They were not there to cover the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square; they were there to cover the Gorbachev visit.

The Tiananmen events had an enormous impact, because they were broadcast in real time over media that normally would not have been there to provide that level of coverage. We recognized that the situation was getting tense. The fact that the demonstrations had continued during the Gorbachev visit showed clearly the magnitude of the looming crisis, highlighted by the fact that the noise and shouts from the demonstrators in the square were audible in the Great Hall of the People.

However, it was not at all clear that the crisis was going to have a violent outcome. We remained puzzled over the Chinese government's failure to clear Tiananmen Square of the demonstrators. Under the more open conditions in China in the late 1990s, it was not surprising that the Chinese authorities permitted the demonstrations to continue for several weeks, but after the demonstrations continued beyond mid-May, the options seemed to narrow to two possibilities: that the Chinese government would be forced to make concessions to the demands of the demonstrators, or that the government would finally act to suppress the demonstrations.

The first possibility was made more plausible by the fact that there was considerable sympathy among Beijing residents for the demands of the students. As things got tenser, there were signs that the sympathy for the students extended even to the PLA troops who were stationed in Beijing to provide security, raising the added question of whether or not they would be reliable instruments in acting against the demonstrators.

From the standpoint of those of us monitoring the situation in the Executive Secretariat, the first indication that the authorities were preparing to crack down occurred when new troop units were brought into Beijing. As these fresh troops began moving towards Tiananmen Square, they opened fire on the windows of the diplomatic apartment buildings located several miles from Tiananmen Square along the eastern extension of the broad avenue that runs horizontally in front of the Forbidden City.

This startling development immediately raised the question of whether we needed to begin evacuating American citizens from Beijing, an action that would be coordinated by the Operations Center. It soon became clear that this was necessary, and we launched measures to facilitate the departure of Americans from Beijing, both unofficial and official. We had really terrific people in the Operations Center, whose director was a highly competent and experienced officer. So I didn't have to make any of the working level decisions. My role was largely dealing with higher level coordination.

*Q: Would this involve some coordination with the Defense Department?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: In what way?*

ROY: Well, among other things, you need means of transportation when you are conducting an emergency evacuation. Normally you will use commercial aircraft. But in real crisis situations the question arises of whether to use military transportation. Your basic goal is to ensure that the necessary transportation is available, and in doing that, you have to coordinate with the Defense Department, as well as with the airlines and other agencies. The Operations Center is very skilled in working out such arrangements. As you can see, we were largely involved with the administrative aspects of dealing with the crisis. The policy aspects of dealing with the crisis were handled by the East Asia Bureau working with the seventh floor.

*Q: And that's just it. The executive secretariat is this administrative apparatus to make sure that the secretary's interest and decisions get fully and properly communicated.*

ROY: And to ensure that the recommendations of the bureaus reach the secretary in a timely fashion.

*Q: OK. Right. And of course we've just been talking about the China situation. But as we said earlier, in August of 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait. And that must have alerted everybody from the Op Center on down.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: That would have involved all kinds of coordination with other agencies.*

ROY: Well, what happens if you have a crisis that requires major coordination is you set up a task force. The State Department has special areas on the seventh floor where you can set up task forces. You then can bring in people from other departments of government, and also have multiple bureaus represented on the task force. This creates a team that can coordinate the actions that need to be taken. This is under the aegis of the Executive Secretariat.

*Q: That's right. Special rooms with their own communications --*

ROY: Special rooms with communications facilities. That's where SS/EX plays a major role. They have to make sure that the rooms are available, that the telephones are working, and that the necessary computer systems are available. And you have to arrange for the task force to receive the relevant cable traffic promptly .

*Q: Right. Were there circumstances where you and Zoellick and the secretary were sitting in a room watching some of this stuff go by, or unfold rather?*

ROY: Yes. One such event occurred when we had to send in helicopters to evacuate embassy staff from Lebanon. We had helicopters set up to go in at night. When such an operation is about to be launched, senior officials often assemble in the situation room to monitor what's going on in real time.

One of the crises that occurred early in the first Bush administration had to do with Panama. In early October 1989 a coup was launched against Panamanian President Noriega that coincided with an official visit to Washington by the President of Mexico. Top U.S. officials in the State and Defense departments, as well as President Bush, were tied up in meetings and events with the visitor, making coordination next to impossible. In addition, we had three separate channels of reporting coming in from Panama: a military channel, a State Department channel, and an intelligence channel. Each channel gave a different picture of what was going on. By the time senior officials were able to focus on the problem, the coup had collapsed.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: These developments led to a U.S. decision to intervene and remove Noriega several months later. In the meantime, we launched a review of the unsatisfactory coordination of our response during the failed Panama coup. It turned out that none of the State Department's senior officials was conversant with how to use our secure teleconferencing system that enabled officials to stay in their own departments but be in secure video contact with counterparts in the government. As a result, I got the secretary's backing to assemble all of the seventh floor top officials in the secure conference room for a full briefing on how to use it.

As luck would have it, this proved extremely valuable when a coup was attempted in the Philippines a few weeks later.

At the time, the president was en route to Malta to meet with Gorbachev. The Philippine government had asked us to use our air force assets in the Philippines to assist in suppressing the coup, which had been launched by a disgruntled Philippine army officer. We had only a few hours to reach a decision on whether to commit U.S. forces to a combat situation.

Through use of the secure video conferencing system, we were able quickly to set up a

meeting of top State and Defense officials, chaired by vice president Quayle, and with the Philippine defense minister patched in from Manila, to consider the matter. It resulted in a decision, coordinated by Vice President Quayle with President Bush over a secure telephone, to send U.S. fighter aircraft across Manila at roof top level as a show of U.S. support for the Philippine government. Fortunately, this accomplished its purpose and the coup collapsed. The contrast with the chaotic decision-making over Panama was striking.

*Q: This position would have also put you in a position to be working with all the regional and functional bureaus, not just the Asia Bureau.*

ROY: That's correct.

*Q: Let me give you a leading question here. At this time, which would you have considered the strongest bureau?*

ROY: Well, that's a tough question to answer. From the perspective of the Executive Secretariat, we looked at bureaus in terms of the timeliness and coherence of their policy recommendations and the speed of their turnaround times. In other words, if the seventh floor wanted a memo on some policy question, we judged bureaus by how promptly they could get a memo back up, by how responsive the memo was to the question, and by whether the bureau could produce memos in the proper formats and free of errors. Some bureaus would send up memos to the secretary that were filled with typos. Secretary Baker could spot a typo in pitch blackness.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: He had an eye for spelling and grammatical errors. He would call me on the carpet if I let such errors slip by me. As a result, I had to ensure that any memo that went in to the secretary did not have typos in it. The frustrating thing was that the practice at the time was to send memos with typos back to the originating bureaus to make the necessary corrections and resubmit the memos to S/S. This could delay the memos by one to two days. It slowed the whole process down.

*Q: Now --*

ROY: To make matters worse, the seventh floor computer system was not connected to the computer systems being used in other parts of the department. I wanted memos to come up electronically, as well as in paper format. This would mean that if we saw there were typos, we could simply make the corrections and keep them moving forward without having to spend half a day or more sending them back to bureaus to make the corrections.

So I made it a priority to work with our computer technicians to establish an interface between the seventh floor's system and the bureau's. Secondly, we needed to have a control mechanism to make sure that we were only correcting typos and not making substantive changes to the memos that might inadvertently affect a policy issue. We



would assess bureaus by how efficient they were in adapting to these procedural changes.

*Q: Now, at this time were -- was everybody on some version of the WANG?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Or had they converted to PC's?*

ROY: They were on some version of the WANG. And the problem was the WANG software that we used did not permit you to embed graphs in documents. Many of the economic memos that would come forward were made to order for graphs. But we couldn't embed them in memos that were made using the WANG system.

I would sometimes take the memos and redo them on an IBM system, where you could embed graphs, and send the modified versions to the secretary. He always preferred the versions that had the embedded graphs.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: For example, if you were talking about refugee flows out of a particular country and how they were changing month-by-month, a graph can show what the trends are. Whereas if you simply list it month by month in terms of numbers, it's harder to get a sense of the trend line. I would meet periodically with the WANG people and list the requirements that we wanted the WANG software to meet.

A particular interest on my part was to use spell checking as a way of catching many of the routine typos in the typewritten documents that were coming to the seventh floor. As soon as we got our computer link-up done, we instituted a rule that any document submitted had to have an indication that it had been spell checked electronically. We knew, of course, that electronic spell checking didn't catch certain grammatical errors or use of the wrong word, such as "deer" for "dear" or "hear" for "here." So we still had to scan the documents carefully, but spell-checking greatly reduced the number of routine spelling errors that crept into typed documents.

Interestingly, I encountered a fair amount of resistance over the radical idea that we should make corrections on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor rather than sending documents back to the bureaus for correction, even though this could shorten the time it took to get documents to the principal officers of the Department by as much as two days. The argument was that if we didn't send the documents back to the bureaus for correction, this would encourage sloppy performance in the bureaus. The reality was that certain bureaus had a reputation for sloppiness, even though we had been sending documents back for correction for decades. My goal was to get documents to the principal officers as fast as possible.

*Q: Now, one of the reasons that the computer systems didn't hook up is that each individual bureau had its own budget for procuring equipment, so they could introduce*

*computer word processing at different rates of speed.*

ROY: Right, that was a factor, but there were many other factors as well. Many older foreign service officers didn't know how to type and were accustomed either to dictating drafts to a secretary, or writing out their drafts in long hand. The secretaries then had to enter the drafts into the word processor. To realize the jump in efficiency made possible by the introduction of word processing, we needed to get word processors to the drafting officers as quickly as possible so the secretaries could concentrate on ensuring the documents were in the right format, getting them printed out, and speeding them to the right recipients.

Here a second factor came into play. The computer technicians who procured the equipment did not themselves use the equipment to produce foreign policy documents. They were expert at maintaining the equipment, not at adapting it to the needs of the user. So they would order word processing software but omit the spell-checking function in order to save money, thus making the software less efficient in producing error-free final documents. Administrative officers were not required to use and understand the capabilities of spreadsheets, which were invaluable in making budgetary decisions.

The third factor was that senior officers controlled the budgets and procurement decisions, but they were in most cases not attuned to the advantages of the new computer equipment and software. As a result, the State Department was slower than it should have been in appreciating the importance of the new information age that was emerging and the need to adapt quickly to the possibilities opened up by the internet and global email.

And of course there were all sorts of security problems associated with the emergence of this new technology.

The absence of a coherent top-down guiding hand in the computerization of the State Department was reflected in the problems I encountered in the Executive Secretariat. It had its own administrative unit headed by a first rate officer and had its own computer shop. It had simply developed a support system for the seventh floor, which of course got the highest priority over other parts of the department. But it had not focused on the need for connectivity with the rest of the Department. In the rest of the department, there was some limited interoperability among the bureaus. But they had no interoperability with the seventh floor. Originally, this might have been for security reasons, but it clearly was not keeping up with the times.

*Q: Going back to some interesting policy issues that might have come to your attention or caused the seventh floor some activity, East and West Germany were united once the Soviet Union empire began to fall apart. Were there things that came out of that?*

ROY: Yes. Secretary Baker notes in his memoir that he was hosting a luncheon on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor for some foreign dignitary when I brought him a handwritten note that the Berlin Wall was coming down.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: This was a very exciting and dramatic period of diplomatic history because the Iron Curtain was dissolving in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union was facing its own internal problems, the Berlin Wall was coming down, and German unification was emerging. There were a lot of big issues at that time.

*Q: How would you -- how was Baker's attention to some of these issues? I mean what were the kinds of issues he might prioritize for his own interest?*

ROY: Well, of course his interests reflected the interests of the White House. Certainly relations with the Soviet Union were being carefully monitored by the secretary. Relations with China equally so. Secretary Baker knew that the president had a particular interest in China, so he was less assertive on China policy issues because he recognized that China issues needed to be referred to the president personally. He had amazing rapport with the president on all foreign policy issues, as opposed to trying to send over independent recommendations. Middle Eastern issues required a lot of attention. Some of that was looked after by the deputy secretary, Larry Eagleburger, who had a particularly good relationship with Israel, and he would be used for some of those functions.

*Q: You were talking about the people that you liaised with in other organizations. Who was your primary counterpart in the NSC?*

ROY: The NSC executive secretary was the person I normally dealt with.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: It was the same in the case of the Pentagon. I wouldn't directly contact different bureaus in the Pentagon. I'd always go through the executive secretary. However, the executive secretary in the Pentagon didn't have the close working relationship with the Defense Secretary that we had with the Secretary of State.

I'll give you an example to illustrate the difference. As the situation in Panama continued to deteriorate in the fall of 1989, at a meeting in the White House with his national security team, including the secretaries of State and Defense, President Bush made a decision to begin drawing down our civilian and military dependents in Panama and other non-essential personnel. When Secretary Baker came back from the White House, he immediately briefed me on this decision. I then put in train the necessary steps to get the decision implemented with respect to State Department personnel. When I checked with the executive secretary at the Defense Department, however, I found that he was completely unaware of the presidential decision, despite the fact that the Defense Department had a lot of people in Panama. The presidential decision applied to them as much as to the civilian components of government. This was still in the first year of the Bush administration, and evidently the Pentagon had not yet established a reliable feedback mechanism for implementing decisions made at the White House.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: So you had a presidential decision that was not being uniformly communicated to the relevant personnel. I alerted my Pentagon counterpart to the nature of the decision, and he called back shortly thereafter to confirm that the Pentagon was also initiating steps to evacuate the personnel covered by the presidential decision. For me, this was a lesson that even at top levels of government, especially when you have a new set of senior officials in place, you cannot assume that everything will work smoothly.

Let me comment a bit on operational style, bearing in mind that my instincts were those of a State Department bureaucrat. As I have already noted, I had been the deputy assistant secretary of EAP under Secretary Shultz, and I was now in a close relationship with the secretary of state when Jim Baker was the secretary. I had *enormous* admiration for him. He was a very effective senior policy leader. He could be tough as nails without being nasty. He didn't dither over decisions, and no one in the government could make end runs around him because of his close relationship with the President. It was a pleasure to work for him.

Nevertheless, I felt that the approach of the Baker leadership team to the State Department was seriously deficient. Instead of empowering the regional bureaus to feed ideas up to the seventh floor, and to play a central role in implementing decisions, the desire to maintain control over policy was so strong that the seventh floor actually did not welcome unsolicited inputs from the bureaus. Often the assistant secretaries were not brought intimately into the policy formulation process, which was concentrated on the seventh floor. It didn't take long for foreign governments to become aware of that state of affairs.

The result was that the assistant secretaries under Secretary Baker were not as effective as they could have been. A collateral consequence was that Secretary Baker often had to become personally involved in contacts with foreign governments on matters that could have been handled at lower levels if the assistant and under secretaries had been empowered as authoritative spokespersons for administration policies. The compensating factor was that Secretary Baker was uncommonly effective in dealing with foreign governments, as displayed when he assembled the coalition for the Gulf War and strong-armed Saudi Arabia and Japan into bearing the lion's share of the financial costs of the war.

When I assumed the job of Executive Secretary, I'd just been working under Secretary Shultz, who had the opposite approach. The bureaus were expected to come up with policy ideas for the seventh floor, and he relied heavily on his assistant secretaries to carry out policy actions. I felt that the Baker State Department was inefficient in its use of the capabilities of the department. Its policy decisions were generally good ones, but the secretary spent a lot of his time doing things that could have been done by others.

*Q: That also would have meant that communicating it down to the bureaus who were actually going to execute something was slowed down a bit I would assume.*

ROY: It made the bureaus more passive than they should have been because policy activism on their part was not welcome.

*Q: On a totally different subject, you would have also probably seen the process of selecting ambassadors to go overseas, because the White House always has to clear off on such appointments. How did that function as career and non-career people's names were put forward?*

ROY: I actually sat on the committee that made the ambassadorial recommendations. In the George H.W. Bush administration, it functioned extremely well. The normal tour for ambassadors, both political and career, was three years. This meant that you could anticipate in which year particular ambassadorial posts would be potentially available for ambassadorial replacements.

The Director General of the Foreign Service kept a book with lists of all the potential vacancies by year. The White House would review the lists and identify the posts over which the White House wanted to have the final say on nominations. Of course, the President always had the final say, but the ambassadorial selection committee could usually assume that the State Department candidate would fill positions not reserved for the White House candidates.

Originally, the three year cycle had applied only to career ambassadors. However, during the Reagan administration, the White House had discovered that it was often difficult to get rid of ineffective political appointees because of the person's political connections. To make the culling of ineffective political ambassadors easier, the White House had begun applying the three-year cycle to political ambassadors as well. With some notable exceptions, this new procedure had generally accomplished its intended purpose. The State Department would always recommend a career officer for the ambassadorial positions reserved for the White House so there would always be a career alternative in case the White House had difficulty filling the positions or finding the right candidates.

The ambassadorial committee would meet periodically to go over the recommendations from the different sectors of the State Department concerning officers who were believed suitable for chief of mission positions in their particular spheres of authority. From these candidates, the ambassadorial committee would select whomever they considered to be the best candidate for the position. The system worked very methodically, and I thought it was a good way of handling the selection process.

*Q: Was there any time that you were sitting on this committee that it became clear that the receiving country had its own preferences, career versus non-career?*

ROY: Normally, the receiving country has little if any influence over the selection process, other than the right of final refusal. A notable exception was the case of Ray Seitz, who had been the assistant secretary for European Affairs. He had served as DCM

in London for many years, and the British loved him. He had extraordinary access everywhere in London. The British quietly lobbied for him to be selected when the position of Ambassador to the Court of St. James became open. Secretary Baker ended up getting White House approval to nominate him for the London post. I think it was the first time in our history that we sent a career Foreign Service Officer to London as ambassador. The British were tickled pink.

The only other time I encountered something like that was when I was chargé in Beijing during Secretary of State Haig's visit to Beijing in 1981. My memory is a bit foggy on the details, but my recollection is that the Czech Foreign Minister, who happened to be in China at the time of the Haig visit, requested a meeting with Secretary Haig. His purpose was to plead that the Reagan administration complete the process of confirming Jack Matlock as U.S. ambassador to Czechoslovakia. Matlock had originally been nominated for this position by the Carter administration, which had left office before it could complete the confirmation process. Most of the time foreign governments don't interfere in the ambassadorial selection process, but there are exceptions.

*Q: One of the interesting personalities at this time is Lech Walesa in Poland. The Poles held their first elections in 1990, and Walesa was successful. Is that one of the issues that was followed closely on the seventh floor?*

ROY: Secretary Baker and the president closely followed developments in Eastern Europe, which was in the process of breaking loose from Moscow's Cold War grip. The Secretary was briefed daily on breaking news, drawing on both classified and media sources.

*Q: It raises the question, what might a typical day on the seventh floor for the executive secretary look like?*

ROY: I would usually arrive at the office before 7:00 am and spend 45 minutes to an hour going through the urgent traffic and marking for distribution the NODIS and EXDIS messages. Then I would go into a cycle of staff meetings. The secretary would have a morning staff meeting, and there might be other smaller meetings on policy issues. I would sit in on the meetings and note any matters that required follow up. Then I would have to handle a flood of letters for signature by the secretary, as well as memos to the secretary with recommendations on this and that. You had to keep these moving out of your inbox and on to the secretary as expeditiously as possible.

Then there might be meetings to review the secretary's travel plans to make sure that the necessary preparations were being carried out. In between, you would have to deal with urgent cable traffic and other matters that needed priority attention. Often I found that the pressures were so great that even taking a few minutes to walk down the hall to use the men's room would be tough to squeeze in because of the press of urgent matters requiring attention. I ate lunch and dinner while working at my desk. Outgoing traffic would generally be given final approval by my deputies. They would approve 95% of it themselves, while flagging particularly important matters for my attention. They were

extremely reliable at doing that. You almost never could get away before nine in the evening. More frequently, I got home between 10:30 and 11:00 pm.

*Q: At this time, were there deputy committee meetings where the deputies of the various government agencies would get together?*

ROY: Yes, there were those sorts of meetings. The preparations were usually handled at the bureau level, depending on the topic to be addressed. My two deputies handled particular geographic areas, and memos going to the under secretaries would go through them. I would handle the traffic for the secretary of state and the deputy secretary.

*Q: Now, when a deputies' committee meeting was called, where would that have been held? At the NSC?*

ROY: The deputies' meetings usually took place at the NSC and were chaired by the National Security Advisor or one of his deputies. State would be represented by the Deputy Secretary or one of the Under Secretaries.

*Q: Would the State Department rep go by himself or take someone with him?*

ROY: That depended on the ground rules for the meeting, and the sensitivity of the topic for discussion. If they took somebody it would be from the relevant bureau, not from the Executive Secretariat.

*Q: As I understand it, the deputies' committee meetings would be used to sort through ranking policy issues at the time, not necessarily task force stuff, but broader issues?*

ROY: Usually they dealt with an urgent issue or negotiation. The relevant bureaus would send up a memo to the deputy secretary with recommendations and talking points with respect to the issues that were going to arise at the meeting. If decisions were made at the deputies' committee level, then the State Department representative who attended the meeting, or a bureau official conversant with the issue, would prepare a memo to the secretary to keep him informed and to seek approval for any follow-up actions resulting from the meeting. All of that would move through us.

*Q: Is there any other aspect of the Executive Secretariat that we haven't quite touched? I'm wanting to make sure we're understanding this is a very unique cockpit, a very unique administrative position.*

ROY: The Executive Secretariat was staffed by an extraordinarily capable group of people who were working in high tension, high pressure jobs. The personnel included substantial numbers of relatively low-level Foreign Service officers working in the Secretariat and the Operations Center in their first or second assignments. Often they were dealing with life and death decisions involving evacuations, upheavals, and unexpected developments. It was a heartening experience to see how well capable people

can perform under constant pressure over an extended period of time.

Naturally, human factors do intrude from time to time. Some people break down under the pressure. There can be personality difficulties. These problems have to be dealt with. That's all part of the job. I had an instructive experience dealing with the issue of sexual harassment.

The people in the Department who handled that function had created a questionnaire that went on for five or six pages asking scores of detailed questions aimed at finding out as much as possible about whether sexual harassment was an issue, and if so, the nature of the problem. I was particularly concerned because the Secretariat had a lot of attractive young female officers assigned to it who were constantly traveling on high-pressure trips with senior male policy officials. It seemed to be a situation made to order for the emergence of sexual harassment situations, consensual or non-consensual.

However, the questionnaire being used was so detailed and took so much time to fill out that we were getting a 20% or less return rate, which in my judgment was too small to provide an accurate picture of the situation. So I took the questionnaire and boiled it down to one page designed to focus on the question of whether our staffers were being pushed in a sexual manner in any way that was considered undesirable by the respondents. The short questionnaire got something like an 87% return rate, and, to my relief, indicated that we did not have a problem.

*Q: Now, was this survey department-wide or just your section?*

ROY: The long questionnaire was department-wide. My short questionnaire was just for the S/S staff and was intended to cover the people who were traveling with our officials on these high pressure trips.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: I didn't *expect* that there was a lot of sexual harassment taking place, but I know that stressful situations can produce aberrant behavior. However, the point of my story is that I found, to my surprise, that I had inadvertently deeply offended the people who controlled the regular questionnaire. They thought that I had violated their sacred procedures by not using the full form, even though the shorter version had produced a much higher rate of return, and was thus likely to produce more accurate results.

It was a type of bureaucratic behavior that I was not comfortable with, because the full form did not produce the return rate needed in order to have confidence in the validity of the results. I think they would have done better to have had a much shorter form, while using the fuller form only if it turned out there was a significant problem that needed to be addressed. You know, if there were 25 bureaus in the department you might find that there were three bureaus in which there was a problem, and the rest didn't have a problem. For those three bureaus you might want to have a detailed questionnaire to try to learn more about the precise nature of the problem.



*Q: Now, you're also saying that highly talented people are attracted to these positions out there. Were you in a sort of personnel hiring position or the normal process of assigning officers was how you got your staff?*

ROY: The only personnel I was personally involved in selecting were my direct support staff. Normally S/S personnel and the Operations Center officers were assigned through the regular assignments process. I was never aware of any so-called channels of favoritism, by which you could pick people out of channels.

*Q: Oh, well that's a good point, because of course there's the image in some corners of the Foreign Service that these are very highly sought after jobs and you have to know somebody who knows somebody to get one of these seventh floor positions.*

ROY: I confess that had been my impression before I was selected for the Executive Secretary job. Well, in cases like the executive secretary and the deputies, as you can tell from my own account, those positions are not just routinely filled by the personnel system because you have to work directly with the Secretary and because you have to have the confidence of the people around the Secretary. There's a screening process, much the way an ambassador gets to choose his DCM.

*Q: Well, let's break us off here at this point. We can move on to Beijing at our next session.*

ROY: Good.

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*Q: OK, today is November 18<sup>th</sup> and we're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Mr. Ambassador, you finished up in S/S-S and I think the real question is, how did the assignment as ambassador to Beijing come up? Because I notice that most ambassadors since normalization have been non-career. And you're the first career ambassador, except for Hummel.*

ROY: Art Hummel was the first career Foreign Service Officer to serve as ambassador in Beijing. In my case, the way it worked was that I was up for an assignment abroad. Originally the State Department made me the candidate to be ambassador to Russia. President Bush had indicated that there were three posts that the White House wanted to have the final say on: China, the Soviet Union, and Israel. So I was the State Department candidate for Russia.

Then Jim Lilley suddenly decided he wanted to end his tour in Beijing after two years. So all of a sudden Beijing opened up, at a time when our relations with China were under severe strain. As a result, the State Department Ambassadorial Selection Committee decided to switch me from Russia and make me the candidate for Beijing. Eventually, President Bush decided to send Bob Strauss to Moscow and to send me to Beijing.

There were several considerations that probably worked in my favor: One, I was the department's leading China specialist at the time. Two, President Bush knew me from the time when he had been the Head of the Liaison Office in Beijing and I had been the Deputy Director of the China Desk. Three, I'd been working with Secretary Baker very closely for two years as executive secretary. And four, we were encountering severe difficulties in U.S.-China relations because of the severe negative reaction in the United States to the violent Chinese crackdown on the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

The President may have had reservations about sending a political appointee to Beijing under those circumstances. In any event, I had assigned a low probability to the likelihood that I would get the Beijing job. I don't know what went into the decision process. All I know is that I was sitting in my office in the Executive Secretariat when Secretary Baker stuck his head in the door and said, "Stape, you're going to China."

*Q: (laughs) Let's go through two parts of that process. While you were considered very well informed on China you hadn't dealt with China for some time. Did you go through sort of a re-brief with the desk and whatnot in preparation for going up to the Hill?*

ROY: Absolutely. I needed to be brought up to speed on all of the issues. I went through the normal process of calls around Washington and being briefed on issues by the desk and other components of the government.

*Q: OK. Walk us through the whole process of going up on the Hill and going before the Senate.*

ROY: Well, the main concern, of course, was that Senator Jesse Helms was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that would be conducting my hearing process. After my nomination for Beijing was announced, one of his staffers, Bill Triplett, asked to have lunch with me. We had barely sat down when he bluntly said: "Tell me all the dirt in your background because we're going to ferret it out anyway."

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I responded that I wasn't aware of any dirt, but they were welcome to ferret it out if it existed. In any event, for any career Foreign Service Officer to go up before Senator Helms, even though he was not the chairman of the subcommittee that handled the hearing, was a daunting prospect since he had a well-established pattern of hostile questioning of Foreign Service candidates for ambassadorial posts. He had put the kibosh on some other career people who were qualified for the China position but were considered unlikely to get through his screening process.

A positive factor may have been that when I had become Deputy Assistant Secretary for China in EAP, I had ignored advice in the State Department and had been willing to go up to the Hill and brief people like Bill Triplett on issues in U.S.-China relations. For

example, I had done that in connection with a Sino-Indian border crisis that had occurred in the late 1980s. So there was no particular animus on the part of Senator Helms against me. But he tended to be skeptical of career Foreign Service Officers, so I was anticipating possible difficulties.

*Q: You're being a little polite because Helms would deliberately destroy people's careers or do things antagonistic to the Foreign Service in general. You didn't even have to be a specific individual.*

ROY: Well, for all those reasons I went up with a certain amount of trepidation. At the hearing, Senator Helms made a presentation filled with charts about the iniquities of the Chinese communists. However, I soon realized that rather than going after me; he simply wanted to use the hearing to make a statement on China. So I kept quiet and let him make his presentation. This turned out to be the best strategy. He did not attack me personally, and the hearing was non-eventful.

*Q: The next step once you passed the hearing hurdle would be your swearing in. Did you do that up on the seventh floor and --*

ROY: We did it on the eighth floor. Because I had worked with Secretary Baker so closely for two years, we tried everything we could do to schedule a swearing-in by him. But the Iraq War was going on, and his schedule was filled to overflowing. We set several tentative dates for my swearing in, but then had to scrub them because of conflicting demands on his schedule that had arisen. To lessen the risk that scheduling difficulties would delay my arrival in Beijing, we ended up having Deputy Secretary Eagleburger preside over the ceremony, which he did with his usual skill and humor.

*Q: Now, would you have had representatives of the Chinese embassy there?*

ROY: Certainly. The Chinese ambassador, Zhu Qizhen, was there. When I had gone to Singapore as ambassador, I had been serving as DCM at our Bangkok embassy and was only briefly in Washington for my Senate confirmation hearing. As a result, I decided to have a low key swearing in with only my family and a few guests. Under Secretary Mike Armacost presided over the ceremony in his office.

China was my second ambassadorial post, and it was clearly a major one. I'd just been five years in Washington, had been heading a bureau, S/S being a bureau equivalent, and had been the deputy assistant secretary in the East Asia Bureau. As a result, I had lots of colleagues in the State Department with whom I'd been closely working. So for the China post I decided that a bigger splash would be appropriate.

We secured the Benjamin Franklin room on the Eighth Floor for the ceremony. I invited the entire S/S staff, dozens of friends and colleagues from the EAP Bureau, personal friends and family members. My father came down for the swearing in, together with an aunt who had come to China to visit my parents in the 1930s and had found employment for a few years at the American embassy, where she knew all the old China hands.

Unfortunately, my mother was bedridden and unable to attend.

In his introductory remarks, Deputy Secretary Eagleburger was at his wittiest. This confused my family members, who thought such occasions would be dignified and solemn. The idea that one of their sons would end up as ambassador to China was unimaginable for my parents, who shared the prejudiced view of some missionaries that diplomats were a hard-drinking lot.

Before my departure for Beijing, I took my family over to the White House to have a picture taken with President Bush. We were ushered into the Oval Office for the photography, after which President Bush asked me to stay for a brief discussion of the U.S.-China relationship.

He called in Brent Scowcroft, his National Security Advisor, and we spent thirty minutes discussing China, while my family cooled their heels on an adjacent couch. As we were exiting through the Roosevelt Room, my oldest son, who was greatly awed by these events, asked me: "Dad, where is the Oval Office?" Apparently he had not realized that he had just spent thirty minutes sitting in it.

*Q: (laughs) On the administrative side of things, the ambassador generally picks his DCM. Did you pick your DCM or was Lynn Pascoe there when you arrived?*

ROY: Lynn Pascoe was there, and I was very pleased with him. I would have been happy to have Lynn stay on when his assignment was up in 1992, but he and his family had found Beijing a stressful assignment and preferred to move on. He later served in a series of senior assignments, including ambassador to Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the United Nations. So I didn't get around to picking a DCM until a year after I'd been at post.

*Q: You mentioned earlier that the U.S.-China relationship was pretty strained at this time. Obviously this is the post Tiananmen Square period. How would you describe where things stood when you walked in the door?*

ROY: Well, the U.S. government had terminated its support for all of our cooperative programs with China. For example, in the military sphere during the 1980s we had established cooperative programs with the Chinese army, air force, and navy. The Chinese had some fighter aircraft that were in the United States for the installation of upgraded electronics. Those programs had been put on hold after Tiananmen, and we refused to return the aircraft to China, while charging them rent for the storage costs.

In the sphere of education, Johns Hopkins University, in cooperation with Nanjing University, had established the Hopkins-Nanjing Center in Nanjing in 1986. I'd been very supportive of that move when I was the deputy assistant secretary of EAP. When I called on the President of Johns Hopkins after being confirmed as the American ambassador to China, I found that Johns Hopkins was seriously considering closing the center. The negative U.S. reaction to the Tiananmen events was so strong that the university was

concerned that continuing the cooperative center in Nanjing would adversely affect alumni contributions. I argued strongly against this move and was pleased when the university decided not to close the center.

In another example, in the mid-1980s the United States Department of Commerce had helped launch an American business school in Dalian, China. The school had gotten off to a strong start, and I had accompanied Secretary Shultz to Dalian in 1987 to visit the school. The Department of Commerce withdrew its support after Tiananmen and the school had closed, to be replaced several years later by a German-sponsored business school.

This was typical at the time. All U.S. government agencies that had cooperative programs with China had terminated them because of fear that Congress would cut their agency budgets if they continued such cooperation. In addition, U.S. government officials and members of congress did not consider it wise to travel to China because of fear of a negative backlash in the United States.

I felt strongly that we needed to get high-level discussions with China going again. One of my initial goals was to get Secretary Baker to visit China as a way of nudging open the door so other senior officials could begin to visit China. There was support for that view in the administration, and Secretary Baker did make a visit to Beijing in November of 1991, about four months after I had arrived at post.

*Q: That must have been interesting to organize, because of course the Chinese on their side were still in the midst of their own domestic adjustments to Tiananmen Square. Deng was out of the scene at the moment. Was that trip, the Baker trip, difficult to put together?*

ROY: Yes it was. But let me backtrack a little. I arrived at my post in August 1991, shortly before the abortive Soviet military coup against Gorbachev in Moscow that marked the beginning of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In fact, when I presented my credentials to President Yang Shangkun, the coup was underway in Moscow. I found that we had both been watching it on CNN.

Indeed, it was clear that the Soviet Union was in deep difficulties. So one of my first actions after arriving in Beijing was to send a policy assessment to Washington on the implications of the Soviet collapse for China. With communism rolling back in Eastern Europe and the unraveling of the Soviet Union, there was a widespread assumption that the whole communist system worldwide might be collapsing. My judgment was that despite the Tiananmen turmoil, China's rulers still had a firm grip on the levers of power, and the regime was not in danger of collapse. I urged Washington not to jump on the bandwagon and start dealing with China as though the regime was a short-lived one.

The second challenge I faced on arrival was that Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, who had become one of the principal critics of China's human rights record after the Tiananmen events in June of 1989, had been denied a Chinese visa for a planned trip to Beijing. In my initial call on Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen, I raised her case with him and

urged him to let her visit China. I argued that while her visit might indeed cause problems, not letting her visit would also cause problems, and I thought that on balance it was better to let her come than not to let her come.

For whatever reason, the foreign minister decided to reverse the decision and let Congresswoman Pelosi have a visa. During her visit, she broke loose from her handlers and took a television crew down to Tiananmen Square, where she unfurled a banner denouncing China's human rights practices. The Chinese government was apoplectic.

As it happened, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger arrived in the midst of these developments. I dutifully went to the airport to meet him. On arrival at the airport, I found that Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu was also there to greet Dr. Kissinger. When he spotted me, he broke into a rage, denouncing the Congresswoman and accusing me of having caused extreme embarrassment for China's top leaders. I tried to calm him down, but he would not be modified, again erupting in anger every few minutes.

On his arrival, Dr. Kissinger rode with the Vice Foreign Minister to the Diaoyutai Guest House, while I followed in my limousine. As soon as we arrived at the Guest House, Dr. Kissinger pulled me aside to note his perplexity that the Vice Foreign Minister had repeatedly erupted in fits of anger during their ride from the airport, without providing a coherent explanation. I explained the circumstances, and we heard no more of the matter.

Needless to say, this was not the best way for a newly arrived ambassador to gain the confidence of the government to which he was accredited. Fortunately, we were able to weather these problems, and I was later to establish an excellent working relationship with Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu. I took pride in the fact that two years later, I was again able to secure a Chinese visa for Congresswoman Pelosi, who returned to China with the Congressional Joint Committee on Intelligence.

My immediate focus was on paving the way for a visit by Secretary Baker. The Chinese were eager to have him come. For the U.S. side, the question was whether or not we would be able to make sufficient progress on important issues during his visit to provide political cover for his going to Beijing. Visits to China by senior U.S. officials had become an acutely sensitive issue following two secret visits to Beijing in the fall of 1989 by National Security Advisor Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger, aimed at securing safe passage out of China for the Chinese dissident physicist Fang Lizhi, who had taken refuge in the American embassy.

Fang Lizhi had sought political asylum in the U.S. embassy in June 1989 during the violent events that ended the student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. Chinese security forces had subjected my predecessor, Ambassador Jim Lilley, to constant harassment because of Fang's presence on the U.S. embassy compound. Ambassador Lilley had handled this tense standoff with great skill. The talks by Scowcroft and Eagleburger had been unsuccessful because Deng Xiaoping was not yet ready to make any concessions regarding his nemesis, Fang Lizhi. Unfortunately, during the second visit by the two U.S. emissaries, a video had surfaced of a low-key toast at a private dinner

hosted for Scowcroft and Eagleburger by Chinese Premier Li Peng, who in U.S. minds was considered the villain of the Tiananmen crackdown. The U.S. congressional reaction to the video of the toast was highly critical.

Two years later, these sensitivities were still very much in play. A visit by Secretary Baker to Beijing would be the first high-level visit to China by a U.S. official since 1989. To justify his making the trip, we had to have a reasonable level of confidence that re-engaging with China at a high level would have concrete results.

*Q: And what could those issues be?*

ROY: There were a variety of issues. There was concern that products produced by prison labor in China were being exported to the United States. We were concerned about what we believed to be Chinese support for intermediate range missile programs in Pakistan. We were concerned about Chinese support for an Iranian nuclear research reactor, which was nominally intended for peaceful purposes but which we suspected would facilitate secret Iranian efforts to develop a nuclear weapon capability.

In fact, Secretary Baker's visit did produce significant progress on all of those issues. Nevertheless, there had been some very contentious exchanges on these issues during the visit, especially in the meeting with Premier Li Peng. Nevertheless, we were able to overcome that, and the visit ended on a positive note. Unfortunately, much of that progress was reversed in 1992, when President Bush made the decision to sell F16 fighter aircraft to Taiwan, but the door had been opened to resuming high-level contacts with China.

*Q: Right. And that was again associated with American politics. He was running for the November '92 elections.*

ROY: That's correct. The F-16 sale to Taiwan provided a textbook example of how domestic factors can wreak havoc on foreign policy issues. The August 17, 1982 U.S.-China Joint Communiqué on U.S. arms sales to China had precluded the sale of an advanced fighter aircraft to China. Instead, we made available to Taiwan the technology needed for Taiwan itself to develop and manufacture an advanced indigenous defense fighter (IDF). Official estimates through the end of the Reagan administration were that the IDF would meet Taiwan's air defense needs for the foreseeable future.

Coinciding with the transition to the Bush administration in 1989, the Tiananmen events made any further defense cooperation with Beijing impossible and shifted U.S. domestic sympathies in favor of Taiwan. A new coterie of U.S. defense officials in the Pentagon and State Department took advantage of this opportunity to restore the possibility of robust continuing U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. They began by scrapping the official estimate of 1988 that the IDF could meet Taiwan's defense needs and issuing a new estimate that the IDF could not prevent the emergence of a gap in fighter capabilities between Taiwan and mainland China. The intelligence community cooperated by projecting that the fighter gap would become acute in the early 1990s. These new

estimates were used to support the sale of F-16 fighter aircraft to Taiwan to close the fighter gap.

President George H.W. Bush was running for reelection in 1992. The F-16 fighters were produced in Fort Worth, Texas, and reduced demand for the F-16 fighters held out the possibility that the production lines in Fort Worth might be shut down, creating unemployment. An F-16 sale to Taiwan might enable these production lines to remain open. For election-related reasons, President Bush decided not to sell Taiwan the off-the-shelf F-16 fighters needed to close the projected fighter gap. Rather he approved the sale to Taiwan of newly-produced F-16 fighters whose delivery would be delayed for five or six years. These factors produced the interesting anomaly that the sale was justified by the fighter gap but the delivery date was driven by election considerations that ignored the alleged fighter gap.

The maneuvering on this issue provided further confirmation that U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are driven to a significant degree by the financial interests of the military-industrial complex and not simply by defense factors. Taiwan was delighted at being able to buy F-16 fighters from the United States, but for its own reasons, it also decided to buy some French Mirage fighters. From a narrow defense perspective, we should have welcomed this development, but the Bush administration pulled out all the stops to try to block the French sale. Nevertheless, Taiwan stubbornly refused to cancel the deal with France, given its strong interest in diversifying its sources of military hardware.

While these developments were unfolding, the Bush administration was restructuring itself for the election at the end of 1992. In the summer of 1992, Dick Solomon stepped down as the assistant secretary of EAP and accepted an assignment as ambassador to the Philippines. Bill Clark, who as the principal deputy assistant secretary had been handling Northeast Asia, moved up to become the assistant secretary for EAP.

Overall, the Bush administration remained supportive of a careful step-by-step effort to try to get our relationship with China onto a more normal and sustainable basis. In the wake of the negative fallout over the U.S. F-16 sale to Taiwan, EAP Assistant Secretary Bill Clark came out to Beijing. His talks were very helpful in reassuring the Chinese about U.S. intentions

Later that fall, Secretary of Commerce Barbara Franklin came out for the first meeting of the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade since 1988. That too was a very helpful visit. So by the end of 1992, the Bush administration was moving back toward a more normal relationship with China.

However, the presidential election campaign was introducing new problems into the relationship. In his campaign rhetoric, the Democratic candidate, Bill Clinton, had compared Beijing to Baghdad, a rather bizarre comparison. In addition, the human rights advocates in the United States had established a position of influence with the Clinton campaign and were outspoken in denouncing China's human rights deficiencies.



Unsurprisingly, there was increasing concern in China over the implications of a Democratic victory in the U.S. elections.

In the meantime, U.S. polling showed that support for President Bush had plummeted from its high point at the conclusion of the Gulf War, largely because of concern over economic issues. In a desperate effort to restore the fortunes of the Bush campaign, Secretary Baker had been pulled out of his job as secretary of state and moved over to take charge of the President's re-election effort, at a very late stage in the process. In his place, Deputy Secretary Larry Eagleburger had moved up as the secretary of state.

*Q: Now, obviously it's difficult for American department heads to go to China. How did this impact on the embassy's contact with its counterparts in the Chinese government?*

ROY: We were not frozen out. I did not have problems with access in Beijing. Some members of Congress on the Democratic side were concerned about the possible damage to U.S.-China relations of a change in administrations. Once Governor Clinton had been elected as president, for example, I was able to work with Senator Boren in the Senate to arrange a quiet trip to Washington by Chinese vice foreign minister Liu Huaqiu, who handled U.S.-China relations in the Foreign Ministry. The purpose was for him to meet with some of the leading figures in the incoming administration to explore ways to get the relationship off to a decent start, as opposed to having a big blow up over human rights issues right at the beginning.

*Q: And how did that trip turn out do you think?*

ROY: Well, he was able to make useful contacts in Washington, but the momentum behind the human rights issue was very strong.

For me, of course, the immediate question was whether the new Democratic president would appoint a new ambassador to Beijing. I had been in China for roughly a year and a half at the time of the election. In the normal course of events, when the Democrats came in, they would replace a Republican appointee as the ambassador in Beijing? However, as it turned out, they selected Win Lord to be the new EAP assistant secretary of state, replacing Bill Clark.

Win Lord, of course, had extensive background experience on China. He had been our ambassador in China under Ronald Reagan for four years, during most of which I was the deputy assistant secretary of EAP providing support for him in Washington. He had left Beijing in the spring of 1989, just two months before the Tiananmen events, and had become a strident critic of the Chinese government's crackdown on the demonstrators.

Evidently, he was one of the figures in the new Clinton administration who supported keeping me on as ambassador, which ended up being the decision. From my standpoint, this worked out well since I had a very close working relationship with the EAP Bureau in Washington during a period of acute strain in the bilateral relationship. I personally did not feel that the policy of linking most favored nation treatment to China's human rights

record made sense, but I expressed my views through back channel means. As ambassador, I carried out the administration's policy as diligently as I could.

*Q: Now, one of the things that would have come out of Tiananmen Square was a conservative resurgence, if you will. How was the embassy reporting on -- how would you evaluate embassy reporting on the internal politics of China at this time, '92, '93?*

ROY: Well, when the Clinton administration took office in January 1993, the conservative resurgence in China that followed the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen was already receding, especially following the 14th Party Congress in October 1992. That Congress had rejected the leftist economic line and confirmed that the goal of China's economic restructuring was establishing a socialist market economy.

As for reporting, when I arrived in Beijing as ambassador in August of '91, Don Keyser was the political counselor. He had one of the best analytical minds in the Foreign Service and was one of our leading China specialists. Under his leadership the embassy's reporting on domestic developments in China was very strong, and this continued under his successors.

*Q: Neil Silver came in.*

ROY: Yes, Neil Silver replaced Don Keyser as political counselor in the summer of 1992. Generally, the political section was very much on top of the situation in China. They were active, they were all good Chinese linguists, and in my opinion they kept Washington very accurately informed of what was going on.

The problem was that attitudes in Washington toward Beijing were not being driven by developments in China but by political currents in the United States. Aside from the widespread American hostility toward China resulting from the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen Square, the Democrats had seized on China as their best weapon for attacking the foreign policy of a Republican president with a very strong background in foreign affairs.

As a result, both the Bush administration and their Democratic opponents gave very little attention to the outcome of the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in the fall of 1992, which essentially removed from positions of authority the leftist conservative elements that had gained a stronger foothold after the Tiananmen events in China. The early years of the Clinton administration were heavily influenced by political attitudes in the United States towards China as opposed to an accurate understanding of what was actually taking place in China.

*Q: Now, one of the assets you now had, to assist in analyzing developments in China, was a full panoply of consulates in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, and Chengdu. How would you evaluate their reporting?*

ROY: The consulates were differentiated in their reporting. From a foreign policy

standpoint, Beijing was the most relevant post. Shanghai was a distant second but had some think tanks that worked on foreign policy issues. Guangzhou in the south was our principal immigrant visa office. However, because of the role that the Guangzhou trade fair had played in developing China's foreign trade, Guangzhou was also looked to for some economic reporting. Shenyang in the northeast was important for two reasons: it helped track Sino-Russian relations, and it was the post that was closest to the North Korean border. Our consul general there could go down to the North Korean border and pick up a useful sense of the mood on the Chinese side of the border. Chengdu covered China's southwestern region as well as Tibet. It was not really involved in foreign policy reporting but was very useful in terms of keeping up with what was going on in Tibet.

*Q: There's two feedback mechanisms into the American view of what's going on in China. One of them was the role of journalists. Did you find that the embassy was briefing journalists on a fairly frequent basis and that they understood what was going on?*

ROY: Absolutely. Ambassador Lilley, my predecessor, had been very good at doing that. I met every few weeks with the American journalists in China, and looked on them as a valuable resource because they, like us, were all trying to understand what was going on in China. They had a different perspective from those of us in the embassy because our contacts were weighted toward government officials. They also bore the brunt of Beijing's efforts to suppress any reporting that reflected negatively on developments in China. They also were the victims of the party's reliance on repressive measures to maintain stability.

In my regular meetings with the American press corps in China, I would brief them on our view of what was going on in China and on any shifts in American foreign policy. We would have a very open discussions in which the journalists offered their insights into what was going on. I found these sessions very useful. In 1993 we had this extraordinary perception gap, where American visitors were shocked to find that conditions in China were much better than they had anticipated.

*Q: They were assuming soldiers on every corner and --*

ROY: American visitors expected a more hostile and controlled climate in China.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: The American business community was an exception. They were looking for business opportunities in China and adjusted quickly to the more open environment. U.S. government officials who came to China in 1993 largely operated in a cocoon and learned little from their visits to China about the actual situation. If they came back later, having left the government, they were amazed to find the local situation so different from their earlier assumptions.

I discussed this very frankly with the American journalists and challenged them as to why their reporting was giving Americans such a distorted view of China. They described the

difficulties they labored under. Their editors would put stories about dissidents in China on the front pages of their publications, while stories about other aspects of China would be consigned to the back pages, or not carried at all. So the incentive structures in the journalistic world favored negative coverage of developments in China.

*Q: Another category of people that are watching China are academics.*

ROY: The academic world had been severely impacted by Tiananmen. I found that academics, including good China specialists, were among those who found the situation in China in 1993 very different from what they had anticipated. I think this was partly a reflection of the fact that our academic exchanges with China had been adversely impacted. This contributed to a misreading of events. I think an important part of this was the ideological impact of Tiananmen. Some longtime students of China had adopted extremely hostile attitudes toward Beijing. This predisposed them to adopt a less balanced view of the good things that were happening, along with the bad things that were continuing to be present.

*Q: Now, 1993 would also be about the time that Deng did the southern trip and --*

ROY: Well, that takes us back to 1992, when Deng made his trip to the south. When I arrived in Beijing in the summer of 1991, it was clear that there was an ideological struggle underway within the Communist Party. This was reflected in the differing language used by senior leaders in commenting on recent events and China's prospects for economic development. The party leaders in charge of the media by and large belonged to the leftist group who were hostile to the further introduction of market forces into China's economy, fearing that this was destroying China's socialist characteristics.

That's why the Deng trip to southern China in the spring of 1992 was so important. It was not reported in the central press. We learned about it through reporting from our consulate general in Hong Kong and from our consulate in Guangzhou. His positive comments on the new economic zones in the south helped to swing the struggle within the Communist Party in favor of the reform and openness forces that favored strengthening market forces in China's economy. In May of 1992, following Deng's trip to the south, a commentary in the People's Daily signaled an important shift in the Party's line on economic development.

The question was the degree to which this would be reflected in the outcome of the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress that was scheduled for the fall. In fact, the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress went further than many people had anticipated in installing a new leadership and reaffirming the reform and openness policies. This was occurring in China while the U.S. presidential election campaign was in its final stages, and Governor Clinton was continuing to compare Beijing with Baghdad under Saddam Hussein!

*Q: Yeah.*

ROY: The reality was that the situation in China at that time bore virtually no relationship

to the situation in Iraq. The American embassy's economic and political sections were very good at tracking these developments. They were less good at understanding Jiang Zemin, the former party secretary in Shanghai, who was consolidating his position as the principal leader in China. He had been appointed general secretary of the communist party following the purge of Zhao Ziyang in 1989 because of disagreements over Zhao's handling of the Tiananmen events.

Until the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, Jiang Zemin had not tipped his hand as to the direction in which he was leaning. At and after the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress he swung strongly in favor of the reform and openness policies. However, his personal style was unusual for a senior Chinese leader. As a result, there was a tendency on the part of foreign observers, and some of our analysts, to downplay his significance. I thought that it was wrong to use his personal characteristics as a key factor in assessing his political skills.

*Q: And what were these personal characteristics that were coming to the fore?*

ROY: In meetings with foreign visitors, Jiang Zemin could become exuberant. He prided himself on having been schooled in Western literature in Shanghai as a youth. He liked to make references to *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and quote passages from "The Gettysburg Address." His favorite movie was "The Great Waltz," a biopic about Johann Strauss. In meetings with foreign visitors, he would often hum a few passages from the movie. He drove his interpreters crazy by interspersing his remarks with quotes from Tang Dynasty poetry, which they had difficulty rendering into English. He liked to expound about the merits of *Fengshen Bang*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese novel about gods and demons that, in his telling, contained science fiction elements. At one meeting with the CEO of a large American company, he unexpectedly presented me with an English translation of the novel, following up on an earlier conversation with him about the novel. When he hosted a dinner party, the background music might be Beethoven's "Rage Over a Lost Penny."

This was not normal behavior for a top Chinese leader, whether Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, or Deng Xiaoping. It caused some foreign observers to underestimate him as a bit of a buffoon. I actually rather enjoyed his style. It made meetings with him far more interesting than the usual official conversations.

Jiang Zemin was an electrical engineer by background, and he was fascinated by technology. He loved to meet with the CEOs of high tech companies and would bombard them with questions about technological developments and corporate management. He would pick their brains on how you downsized a workforce? What kind of severance pay did discharged workers get? How much retraining was provided to assist them in finding new jobs. He seemed to have gradually become aware that corporations were a type of collective organization. He had previously thought that corporations were largely family controlled organizations. He was trying to learn from CEOs more about how corporate structures actually worked.

If you put it all together, you could sense that he was supporting a move by China to

strengthen market forces in the economy, but he hadn't fully understood how market forces operated and how the private sector functioned within a market system. He was very interested in learning. There were some very lively discussions dealing with such issues between him and CEOs of large American companies. I found this refreshing.

*Q: During these meetings did some of his aides sort of roll their eyes, or?*

ROY: No. Chinese are very disciplined that way.

*Q: (laughs) Let me ask, given your long association with the Chinese Foreign Service and now you're the ambassador in Beijing, how do you rate the professionalism of the Chinese Foreign Service? I suppose the corollary is, did they understand what the American problem was?*

ROY: The Chinese Foreign Service was improving by leaps and bounds. We mustn't forget that the Chinese Foreign Service was heavily impacted by the Cultural Revolution. They had only had a decade and a half by the time I arrived back in China as ambassador to come out from under the shadow of the Cultural Revolution. Earlier, their English language skills were very limited. For example, China's first two liaison office chiefs were unable to speak English. I think the first ambassador who spoke English was Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Wenjin, who became ambassador in 1983. He did have decent English. From that point on they institutionalized the practice of having ambassadors in Washington who were fluent in English. In the early stages their top representatives in Washington had to operate through interpreters.

They did have some very good English speakers, such as Han Xu, who later became ambassador to the United States. He had fluent English. However, at lower levels of the Foreign Ministry you still had less good English than is now the case. So all of this was in the process of development.

When we first established diplomatic relations, their understanding of the U.S. political system, and of how to work the system, was poor. For example, they had difficulty appreciating the role of congressional staffers as opposed to actual members of Congress. At first, Beijing lacked people who could accurately evaluate reporting from Chinese on the spot in Washington. By the end of the 1980s, however, they were beginning to learn the ropes in Washington and were becoming much more effective in understanding why the American political process behaved the way it did. Now I would rate them among the best embassies in Washington in terms of the sophistication of their understanding of what's going on in Washington.

*Q: Did you get a chance to travel around China much?*

ROY: In my first two years in China, in part because we had a limited number of visitors from Washington, I actually did a good deal of traveling around China. In my last two years, when bilateral exchanges were beginning to pick up, I found that increasingly when I would schedule a trip, I would have to cancel it because of some important

delegation coming from Washington or from elsewhere in the United States.

In 1992 I spent ten days in Xinjiang in the far west, going out to the Russian border, visiting Kashgar and Turfan, and calling on government officials in Urumqi. American oil companies were interested in drilling possibilities in the Taklamakan Desert, which is the second largest high sand dune desert in the world after the Sahara. Because of their interest, I spent several days on the edges of the desert under the auspices of the China petroleum industry. They took me out into the sand dunes and showed me how they were experimenting with a variety of techniques to build highways through the sand dunes, which required stabilization of the sand around the roads to lessen the frequency of drifting sand blocking the passage of vehicles.

In the winter of 1991 I visited Northeast China to attend the annual ice lantern festival in Heilongjiang Province, to call on the governor of Jilin Province, which has China's longest border with North Korea, and to visit our consulate general in Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning Province.

The nearly six-hour train ride from Harbin to Changchun was quite an ordeal. In contrast to the Soviet Union, which had well-heated train carriages in winter, the Chinese rail carriage was completely unheated, with the outside temperature over twenty degrees below zero. I have cross country skied in such temperatures around Moscow without ill effect, but staying warm in a frigid rail car proved far more challenging.

In Harbin my family and I had dinner in the modest home of a former Chinese student at the University of Nanking. He had been one of several Chinese students who had lived in the third story of our house in Nanjing in 1950 while attending the University of Nanking, where my father was a professor. At the time of our visit, he was a retired high school science teacher, who had been "sent down to the countryside" in Heilongjiang during the Cultural Revolution. As a sign of respect, he had acquired a rare local delicacy, consisting of cold jellied cicadas, which he kept urging us to enjoy. I bravely consumed two of them.

In Changchun, I had a fascinating conversation with the provincial governor, who hosted a lunch in my honor. I asked him whether the North Koreans had learned anything from the success of China's economic reforms. Snorting in disgust, he replied that they had learned nothing at all and were still trying to implement socialism. I was surprised by this answer, which illustrated the changes that had taken place in China over the preceding decade.

In the spring of 1992, I made a short trip to the Burmese border in the southwestern province of Yunnan to look into the narcotics situation. I visited an AIDS hospital where the patients were overwhelmingly heroin addicts who had been infected with HIV/AIDS by dirty needles that had been improperly sterilized in between use by drug users.

It was an interesting time because modernization was occurring at different speeds in different parts of China. Much of the interior of China was still in the very early stages of

modernization, while the coastal areas were beginning to pick up steam. However, the most dramatic progress on modernization in China occurred after I left in 1995.

*Q: Now, Deng sort of returned to the scene with his trip to the south in 1992. Did you have any opportunities to meet him?*

ROY: No --

*Q: Because he had no position?*

ROY: No. By the time that I arrived in Beijing as ambassador in August 1991, Deng was 87, had stepped down from his government positions, and had established a strict rule that he would have no further meetings with foreigners. This reflected both his advanced age and his belief that superannuated Chinese leaders should no longer hold governmental positions. The last time I was in a meeting with Deng was in 1988, when as Deputy Assistant Secretary I visited China with Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

During my four years as ambassador in Beijing, no foreign visitor met with Deng. This included people who would as a matter of course have met with him in the past, such as Secretary Baker.

*Q: Hmm.*

ROY: Well, why don't we break here? This is probably a good spot.

*Q: OK, because I want to get into Lee Teng-hui, who was beginning to make himself felt in Taiwan, and some other things that were going on.*

ROY: OK.

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*Q: Let's see. Today is the 19<sup>th</sup> of December and we're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. As we were talking last time, you're ambassador right after Tiananmen Square—*

ROY: It was two years after.

*Q: Right. But still under the shadow of Tiananmen Square.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: And we had covered the first year and a half-year of your tour. But there are a couple of things I want to touch on in the 1993 period, which I think illustrate the importance of diplomacy and the importance of how you handle certain things. The first one I want to touch on is the Yinhe incident in July of 1993. I suppose the first question is, how was the*



*embassy informed that this was going to unfold?*

ROY: We were right in the middle of events. We had acquired information suggesting that precursor chemicals for weapons of mass destruction were being shipped on a Chinese vessel to a Middle Eastern destination. We'd had an earlier case where we had discovered that yellowcake uranium was being shipped on a Chinese ship, invoiced as though it was going to one place whereas in reality it was going someplace else. We had brought this to the attention of the Foreign Ministry, which had looked into the matter, and diverted the ship. In other words, they were cooperative in such matters when we had credible evidence of mis-shipment of dangerous materials.

In the Yinhe (Milky Way) case, we had information suggesting that precursor chemicals were being shipped to Iran through a diversionary pattern that disguised the real destination. The practice was to invoice the dangerous shipment to an intermediate port, where it would be diverted to the real destination.

We were instructed by Washington to bring our suspicions to the attention of the Chinese government and to ask it to halt the shipment. Once again, the Foreign Ministry was cooperative. They looked into the matter and informed me shortly thereafter that they had investigated our claim and found there were no such chemicals on the ship. We were convinced our information was reliable and refused to drop the issue. Various theories were concocted to support our suspicions, such as that the chemicals had been surreptitiously removed from the ship, or hidden in some fashion.

The problem continued to escalate as the ship transited Southeast Asia and headed into the Indian Ocean. We kept pressing our case and even started trailing the Chinese ship with our navy. Eventually, the Chinese agreed to have the ship searched when it arrived at its first port after leaving Southeast Asia. By this time, I was convinced that the chemicals were not on the ship, since it would make no sense for the Chinese to agree to have the ship searched if they believed the chemicals were on the ship.

In the final stage of the crisis, I attended an unrelated meeting with President Jiang Zemin, who turned to me and said that as president of China he could assure me the chemicals were not on board. I reported this, but the overnight brief for U.S. top leaders continued to say that there was a "high probability" the chemicals were on the ship. I blew my stack and sent a very sharp message to Washington pointing out the absurdity of this conclusion.

When the search demonstrated that the suspected chemicals were not on board, the Chinese were understandably furious over our behavior, and heads rolled in our intelligence community over the unprofessional behavior of analysts who utterly failed in their assessment of the totality of the evidence.

The Yinhe incident was an enormous embarrassment for the United States. The Chinese regarded our behavior as arrogant and typical of the disrespect that foreigners displayed in dealing with China. I was told that the incident was even being used in Chinese

primary schools to illustrate the type of behavior that China had been exposed to for the last 150 years from the West.

In any event, the incident did not affect our cooperation with the Chinese Foreign Ministry and other sectors of the Chinese government. In other words, it was not seen by the Chinese as an embassy problem but as a problem reflecting the high levels of animosity towards China in the United States.

*Q: Now, let me ask for researchers' sake. The communications between you and Washington, were those in regular channels or was there a special channel for those communications?*

ROY: My involvement was handled in State Department channels. In contrast to the normalization negotiations, the embassy was dealing directly with the State Department.

*Q: Now, a couple of other things came up in '93 that you would have been following closely. North Korea had a relationship with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), which was beginning to go sour in the spring of '93. I would assume the U.S. embassy and the Chinese government were talking about this at some length and depth.*

ROY: Yes. In the early 1990s, we were increasingly concerned about North Korean efforts to develop a nuclear weapons capability. The crisis came to a head in 1994, but in 1993 we were already focusing on the issue. I was very fortunate that our science attaché in the embassy was a nuclear scientist who had worked in our nuclear sector. As a result, I had expert advice available to me inside the embassy in addition to the material that we received from Washington.

Our problem was with the Chinese assessment of how close the North Koreans were to developing an explosive capability. They were more skeptical than we were about the imminence of the danger. They didn't deny that the North Koreans were trying to develop a nuclear capability, but their sense was that the North Koreans were encountering major problems that were slowing their progress.

In any event, we arranged special intelligence briefings for the Chinese at senior levels so that they would be fully aware of why we took this information so seriously. The Chinese shared our desire not to have North Korea go nuclear, but they had a lower evaluation than we did of North Korean capabilities.

As a further complication, former president Jimmy Carter decided to visit North Korea to pursue the issue with them directly, against the wishes of Washington. He was able to meet with Kim Il-sung, but his visit complicated the picture. Nevertheless, it may have contributed to Washington's success in concluding the framework agreement with North Korea in 1994 that temporarily stabilized the situation.

At the time, we were actually getting close to opening a liaison mission in Pyongyang and were engaged in discussions with Washington on this possibility. Initially, their intent

was to use Beijing rather than Seoul as the supporting mission for a U.S. office in Pyongyang. This was because it would avoid the problem of regularly crossing the border between North and South Korea, which could create political complications in South Korea that wouldn't come into play if Beijing were used. However, soon after the framework agreement was concluded, there began to be reciprocal accusations of bad faith between the two sides that prevented progress toward establishing a closer U.S. relationship with North Korea.

*Q: Now, you would have kept the Chinese informed of those interests, and they would have been supportive?*

ROY: Yes, of course. Obviously we couldn't support an office in Pyongyang if we didn't have Chinese consent for our doing so. We were very open with the Chinese on the issue. There was no hidden agenda. Our common desire was to keep North Korea from developing a nuclear capability. Our differences had more to do with determining the best way to deal with North Korea.

Our experts on North Korea felt that Pyongyang never did the right thing unless it faced inexorable pressure. In contrast, the Chinese experience was that inexorable pressure on North Korea tended to make it even more entrenched in its viewpoints. So we had differences with Beijing over the proper mix of soft and hard measures that should be used in dealing with North Korea. Despite this, the strategic goal that we were pursuing was one that the Chinese supported.

*Q: Let me go back to the nuclear briefings. You would bring a team in from the States. Now, would this be a briefing of just the Ministry of Foreign Affairs types, or a broader, multi-agency Chinese delegation?*

ROY: My memory is that our intention was to brief levels above the Foreign Ministry. It was a multi-agency briefing, but the people who were included in the briefing was largely determined on the Chinese side. It did involve, I believe, representatives of their intelligence community. We had learned in other situations that the Chinese had non-existent or inadequate channels for sharing sensitive information among Chinese agencies, except perhaps at the very top.

*Q: Now, one of the other things that you're watching at the time is the interaction between the authorities in Taiwan and the government in Beijing. And I think the Koo-Wang talks were held in April of '93 in Singapore and that was considered quite a milestone.*

ROY: Well, the so-called "'92 Consensus" -- it wasn't called that until much later -- actually emerged from the Koo-Wang talks the year before in 1992, through semi-governmental meetings in Singapore. After the so-called '92 Consensus had been reached, there were further contacts between Koo Chen-fu and Wang Daohan. Wang was the chairman of the Mainland's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), and Koo was the chairman of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF).

*Q: And the embassy's political section was quite focused on that, among other things?*

ROY: We were not directly involved in any way. Our role was to stay in touch with people like Wang Daohan on the Mainland side. He was resident in Shanghai, so our Consulate General was his principal contact.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: These cross-strait talks were consistent with my thesis that contacts between the mainland and Taiwan are only sincere when they're done behind our back or without our being directly involved in the contacts. When we're involved, the two Chinese sides focus on manipulating us rather than engaging sincerely with the other side.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: What made the Koo-Wang talks important is that they were arranged privately by the two sides in pursuing their own interests. Fortunately, their bilateral initiative happened to be compatible with what we wanted to see happen across the Taiwan Strait. From that standpoint, the talks were fortuitously a good thing. Our job was to stay informed as much as possible about what was going on. In any event, in the Six Assurances we had given Taiwan in July 1982, when we were negotiating the Third U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqué of August 17, 1982, we had pledged that we would not play any mediation role between Taipei and Beijing.

*Q: Who do you recall might have been the reporting officer for that portfolio? I mean Don Keyser was --*

ROY: Don Keyser had left the embassy in the summer of 1992. Neil Silver was the political counselor at the time of these events.

*Q: Right.*

ROY: Wang of course was located in Shanghai, and so our consulate general there also had contacts with him. It would have been Jerry Ogden or Pamela Slutz, his deputy. I flew down to Shanghai at one point to meet with Wang Daohan. But that was after the eight-point proposal of Jiang Zemin on cross-trade relations in January of 1995.

We were generally aware of what was going on. However, the so-called '92 consensus was difficult to understand because it involved assumptions and implications that were not explicitly stated. In fact, it wasn't even referred to as a consensus until five years after I departed Beijing. It depended on statements by one side that weren't contradicted by the other side, thus papering over areas of difference.

For years I carried around in my palm pilot or my smart phones the exact set of exchanges that had resulted in what came to be called the '92 Consensus. The important

thing about the '92 Consensus was that it provided an ill-defined concept of “one China” that both sides were prepared to live with, thus making possible a sustainable cross-strait dialogue. This became crystal clear in 2016, when the refusal of the newly elected President of Taiwan to acknowledge the '92 Consensus resulted in the suspension of cross-strait dialogue.

*Q: Now, going back to the shadow of Tiananmen Square, we have a new administration coming in, the Clinton administration in January of '93. They are putting their people in place. Winston Lord becomes assistant secretary in April. But one of the things I'm assuming the embassy is suggesting or working on is ways to get high-ranking people to meet as illustrative of a productive arrangement. And Jiang Zemin attended the APEC meeting in Seattle in November of '93. President Clinton was there too, correct?*

ROY: Yes. I sat in on the meeting. However, you should bear in mind that when a new administration takes office in Washington, DC, those of us abroad have to be very careful about pushing ideas to Washington until we have a sense of where the new officials want to go. If you get on the wrong side of these officials, your influence in Washington drops to zero.

*Q: How much preparation was going on for that event?*

ROY: Well, the meeting between Presidents Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin at the APEC Summit in Seattle was the culmination of a whole series of interlocking developments. We had had a breakthrough in terms of senior U.S. officials going to China in 1992, after Secretary of State Baker had visited China in November 1991. Then we had the difficulties in 1992 over the sale of F16 aircraft to Taiwan. Bill Clark, who was the new EAP assistant secretary at the time, had come to Beijing in the fall of 1992. Then we were able to reach agreement with the Chinese to resume meetings of the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, which had been in abeyance since the Tiananmen events. Barbara Franklin, the secretary of commerce, came to Beijing for that purpose in December 1992.

So at the end of the Bush administration we were beginning to move toward a more normal pattern of interactions with the Chinese. In the meantime, Beijing in August 1992 had established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea (South Korea). This was a severe blow to the Republic of China on Taiwan since South Korea was the last and one of the most significant East Asian countries to switch recognition from Taipei to Beijing. In addition, it was a setback for North Korea, especially since Beijing had not tried to extract any reciprocal recognitions for Pyongyang from western countries before its recognition of South Korea.

Noone was sure what would happen to U.S-China relations under the new Clinton administration, which assumed office in January 1993. It needed several months to get its new panoply of officials in place. It came in with a strongly negative view of China, and one of its first actions was to establish linkage between human rights in China and renewal of China's most favored nation trade status. In addition, the transition from the

Bush administration to the Clinton administration resulted in a hiatus in visits by senior U.S. officials to China.

As it turned out, however, the establishment of Chinese-South Korean diplomatic relations made it easier to conceive of having an APEC summit. The idea of having an APEC summit was conceived in Washington, and it made sense. At some point in 1993, I received an instruction to propose the idea of an APEC summit to the Chinese side. The initial Chinese reaction to the concept was positive, but the Vice Foreign Minister with whom I was meeting immediately declared that Taiwan could not attend a summit.

I didn't have instructions from Washington on that subject. Nevertheless, I was pretty sure I knew where Washington stood on the question, so I countered by pointing out that since Taiwan was a full-fledged member of APEC, as Chinese Taipei, it had to be present. The issue was not whether it should be present, but rather the level at which it would be represented. Excluding them from the meeting would not be appropriate. Fortunately, the Chinese agreed to go along with that.

With Chinese agreement to the summit, preparations for the meeting were largely carried out in Washington. Since it was going to be a multilateral summit, all of the members of APEC, which included most of the Asia-Pacific countries and economies, were involved.

To my surprise, I was brought to Seattle for the bilateral summit between President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin. It was an hour-long meeting. However, allowing for the fact that both sides had to speak and that interpretation was necessary, there really was extremely limited time for issues to be covered in the meeting. President Clinton had to raise the human rights issue. President Jiang had to raise the Taiwan issue. As a result, much of the meeting was taken up with points that had to be made for the record.

The significance of the meeting lay in the fact that it had occurred. Since February of 1989 we hadn't had any presidential level contacts with China. We still had lots of strains in the bilateral relationship, especially with the change of administration in Washington. The Clinton administration was moving in the right direction by realizing that we had to use senior level meetings as part of the process of addressing the problems in the relationship.

*Q: So you would evaluate that meeting as helpful in moving the relationship forward?*

ROY: That's correct. The fact that the president was willing to meet with Jiang Zemin in a separate bilateral during the APEC summit was an acknowledgement of the importance of the relationship.

*Q: Another aspect of the relationship is on the military side. And I note that when he was assistant secretary of defense, Chas Freeman visited Beijing in December of '93. He was the highest ranking U.S. defense official to have visited in a number of years. And of course the defense relationship was the most prickly.*

ROY: Correct.

*Q: How was the setup for that meeting and the embassy's involvement?*

ROY: Chaz Freeman, of course, had a very strong China background. He had replaced me as the DCM in the embassy in 1981. We had been friends and colleagues for decades. The goal of his visit was to try to make progress on some of the defense issues between the two countries. My recollection is that he carried out his mission very skillfully and professionally.

*Q: Now, he would have known a number of people from that earlier assignment. And of course he is a very good language officer.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: That certainly would have assisted his presentations and the social events associated with them.*

ROY: He had remarkably good Chinese, and he had kept it up over the years. But even he could be thrown off his stride.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: As part of the visit there was a cultural evening where we attended a Chinese performance in a theater. At the end of the performance, Assistant Secretary Freeman and I were invited to go up onto the stage, where some children presented him with flowers *(laughs)*. He was invited to make a few remarks. He hadn't anticipated this part of the evening, nor had I, and his Chinese deserted him.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: He was one of the most articulate people in the Foreign Service, and I had never seen him at a loss for words before, or since, in Chinese or in English. Fortunately, it was in a friendly context.

*Q: Right. Now, who would have been on his delegation? Do you recall? And was his visit handled by the political section or the defense attaché?*

ROY: Both were involved. The Defense Attaché Office had the lead role in the Freeman visit, but the Political-Military officer in the Political section was also involved. He had very close relations with the DAO. They did some joint reporting on pol-mil issues.

*Q: In fact, that's --*

ROY: An embassy political officer would have been present at his meetings as a note taker, as would someone from the Defense Attaché's Office. The Defense Attaché

himself would also have accompanied him on his calls.

*Q: I presume the defense attaché at that time was USAF Brigadier General Garrison?*

ROY: That's correct. The Defense Attaché was Admiral McVadon when I first got to Beijing, but he had been replaced by U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Garrison. Shortly before my departure from Beijing, Army Brigadier General Mike Byrns had been designated to replace General Garrison.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: Mike Byrns had earlier been the army attaché. He got a star and became the defense attaché in 1995. Beijing was one of the very few posts in the world where the defense attaché position rotated through the services and was at the general officer level.

*Q: During Assistant Secretary Freeman's trip, were most of his meetings at the ministries, or did he have the opportunity to get out to some military facilities?*

ROY: He was not a uniformed officer. He was a civilian. He was a Foreign Service Officer. He had meetings with the Chinese military, and he had meetings with the Foreign Ministry. So both sides were represented. Of course, he was speaking for the Defense Department, rather than for the Department of State. But he was not treated the way a uniformed military officer would have been treated in the sense of being exposed to military exercises. At least that's my recollection. I cannot recall whether he was taken to any of the military facilities as opposed to the Defense Ministry.

*Q: Now, along the lines of meeting at the high level, Secretary Christopher in March of '94 visited China and met with Li Peng and Jiang Zemin.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Could we go over how the timing for his visit was chosen, and then some of the issues that were to be handled in this visit?*

ROY: The background is that the Clinton administration came into office in January of 1993. Its first few months were involved in staffing up the administration. Win Lord, who had been designated as the new Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, wasn't confirmed in the job until April 23, 1993. Then, as one of its early initiatives, the Clinton administration announced that as part of its human rights policy, it intended to link China's human rights behavior to our willingness to renew China's most favored nation treatment, now called "permanent normal trade relations."

On May 28, 1993 President Clinton issued Executive Order 12850 directing the Secretary of State by June 3, 1994 to make a recommendation to the President on whether or not to extend MFN to China for a subsequent 12-month period. A positive recommendation was made contingent on seven considerations:



1. whether extension would substantially promote freedom of emigration;
2. Chinese compliance with the 1992 U.S.-China bilateral agreement on prison labor; and whether China had made "significant progress" on:
3. adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
4. releasing and accounting for Chinese citizens imprisoned or detained for non-violent expression of their political and religious beliefs;
5. humane treatment of prisoners, such as by allowing access to prisons by international humanitarian and human rights organizations;
6. protecting Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage; and
7. permitting international radio and television broadcasts into China.

At the same time, I received an instruction to inform the Chinese government of these conditions, as set forth in the Executive Order.

As we discussed last time, my initial concern was whether or not we would be able to get any cooperation from the Chinese at all, since this was a very intrusive approach to the question. We were essentially demanding changes in China's domestic behavior as a condition for giving them normal trade treatment. I was truly concerned that they might simply reject our position out of hand.

In a meeting with the executive vice foreign minister, I set forth our position and gave him a non-paper containing our seven demands (in making an oral demarche, a non-paper is an unofficial document on plain paper that contains the substance of the demarche, thus reducing potential misunderstandings because of translation or note-taking errors). I added that there were two ways of looking at my presentation: first as an outrageous set of demands; or second, as a useful clarification, after months of uncertainty, of the U.S. position, which would greatly assist us in finding the best way to continue our efforts to improve the bilateral relationship. I offered my personal opinion that the second approach was much better than the first. After a lengthy silence, the executive vice foreign minister suggested that I continue to pursue the matter with counterparts in the Foreign Ministry. I concealed my feeling of relief and indicated I would proceed as he suggested.

The question, then, was how to address the problem. The U.S. demands were inherently absurd, since it was wholly unrealistic to expect any country to make "significant progress" on key areas of human rights within a one year time frame. I reviewed the challenge with the embassy's country team, and we decided the best approach was to see if we could achieve some level of progress in each of the seven areas, and then argue with the Department over whether this could be considered "significant progress." We essentially had one year because the renewal of most favored nation treatment for China would again come up in May of 1994.

The Chinese were willing to talk to us on all seven questions. However, the obstacle was that Washington was unable to provide instructions on what we would do if the Chinese met some or all of our demands. This impasse continued until early 1994, despite increasingly strident requests from the embassy for instructions. Time was running out,

and we were unable to get commitments from the Chinese in any of the areas where we thought that progress was possible because of our inability to say what we would do in return.

It was against this backdrop that the issue of a possible stop in Beijing by Secretary Christopher arose. It turned out that he was making a visit to East Asia in March of 1994. The question was whether he should include a China stop.

Mind you, March was only three months away from the May deadline. Washington agreed that it would be desirable for Secretary Christopher to make a stop in Beijing, but his schedule had already been set in terms of visits to other East Asian countries. The only time he could come to Beijing was during the first two weeks of March, which is when the Chinese have their annual meetings of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which brings all of China's top leaders to the capital.

*Q: Mm.*

ROY: The Chinese clearly wanted Secretary Christopher to come, but early March was the most inconvenient time for them. So they firmly rejected our proposed dates for the visit. However, early March was the only time when Secretary Christopher could squeeze a Beijing stop into his packed schedule, so the Chinese eventually relented.

The visit was further complicated by the fact that the Chinese always tighten up security in advance of the "two meetings" each March, such as by rounding up potential demonstrators until the meetings are over. However, members of the secretary's staff interpreted this as a deliberate insult directed at him and urged him to cancel the visit. Fortunately, they did not prevail. Without his visit, I did not see any way that we could develop sufficient leverage on human rights issues to meet our May deadline with its linkage to MFN for China.

The visit was a cliff-hanger, almost up to the last minute. The Chinese gave him appropriate treatment, and his schedule included calls on the Foreign Minister, the Premier, and the President. The Assistant Secretary for Human Rights had come to Beijing a week earlier and told me privately that the Secretary was prepared to offer reciprocal actions if the Chinese agreed to progress on some of the human rights issues.

The Secretary's plane arrived in the early evening, and we immediately went with his traveling party to a secure room in the embassy for an arrival briefing. Contrary to what the Assistant Secretary had told me, during the discussion the Secretary said he had not made up his mind on the question of reciprocal action by the United States. I took a very strong position on this in response and said that we would be wasting the opportunity provided by his meetings with China's top leaders if we didn't convey to them some sense of what we were prepared to do if they took some of the actions that we were demanding.

I got no support from anyone on his delegation. Nevertheless, he agreed to consider rewritten talking points that would incorporate some of what we might do. I hastily prepared a draft, which he said he would look at overnight. To my surprise, in the morning he basically accepted the concept and actually strengthened some of the talking points that I had written for him.

The meeting with Premier Li Peng was contentious. Li Peng's purpose was clearly to lay down China's official position, which was that Americans had no business poking their nose into China's internal affairs. When Premier Li Peng chose to be nasty, he could be very nasty, so the tone of the meeting was not good. However, the key meeting was going to be with President Jiang Zemin the following morning. I was stunned when members of the Secretary's party advised him that the meeting with Li Peng had gone so badly that he should go straight to his aircraft and leave. That would have been a disaster. I explained to the Secretary that Li Peng's remarks had been for the official record, leaving President Jiang in a position to be more accommodating.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: It took me several hours to persuade the Secretary to stay for the meeting with Jiang Zemin, but he finally agreed to do so. When we met with President Jiang Zemin the next morning, Jiang was in a jovial mood. He joked about the meeting with the premier the day before and suggested that the Secretary sit down with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, to see what could be worked out.

In the followup meeting with the foreign minister, we were actually able to make some limited progress on human rights issues. This included the Chinese agreement to release from prison the number one dissident on our list of incarcerated human rights advocates to go to the United States for medical treatment.

Nevertheless, from the standpoint of the U.S. media, the visit was a failure. In part, this was because the attitude of the delegation had been negative, and they had communicated this negative attitude to the press corps. So the visit was not helpful in terms of the secretary himself and the administration's foreign policy. The reality was more positive.

*Q: Now, if I may be so bold, the advisors to the secretary would certainly have to be assistant secretary for Asia Pacific and on one --*

ROY: When the secretary travels, as you well know, the assistant secretary is only one of a coterie of senior officials who accompany him, some of whom are much closer to the Secretary than the EAP assistant secretary.

*Q: Now, was this the period that Pat Derian was the human rights assistant secretary?*

ROY: No, that was in the Carter administration. The human rights assistant secretary was John Shattuck.

*Q: Ah. Now you were talking about access to prisoners by international humanitarian organizations. Were we in a position at this time of passing lists of people to the Chinese?*

ROY: Yes. We did that as a regular practice. I think we did it in President Clinton's meeting with Jiang Zemin in Seattle.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: And I think we did so also in connection with the Secretary's visit in March 1994.

*Q: Now, were these lists well vetted or just anybody who has a relative in the States writes to the State Department and says, "Put my uncle on your list?"*

ROY: No, no. These were usually people involved in some sort of human rights-related activity; prisoners of conscience, if you will, whose circumstances and whereabouts were often not clear. What we were basically trying to do was to get clarification as to the status of these people; what was the nature of their sentence, et cetera.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: The lists were compiled from reports of human rights violations. They were carefully scrutinized. These were not immigration cases; they were human rights cases. The information would often come from family members or people outside of China who would pass information to the State Department. If they reported that they had heard that Lee #4 or Zhang #5 had been arrested or disappeared, we would put their names on a list and ask the Chinese to clarify whether the person in fact had been arrested or detained. That was standard practice.

The Chinese didn't like it, but they had accepted it. We had finally succeeded in setting up regular meetings between the assistant secretary for human rights and his Chinese counterpart in the Foreign Ministry. That channel was used to convey the lists back and forth. The Chinese would look into the cases and report back, usually with incomplete information, rather than 100% of what we needed. Nevertheless, the exchanges were useful in providing some clarification of the status of prisoners of conscience.

*Q: Now, both countries are major international economic players with large economies.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: So there are major economic issues as the two countries trade and interact commercially. And I'm noticing in '94, Secretary Treasury Bentsen goes to Beijing for --*

ROY: That was later First, let me wrap up Secretary Christopher's visit.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: Immediately after Secretary Christopher's departure, we followed up with the

Chinese on getting the dissident who needed medical treatment to the United States. We immediately encountered two problems.

First, this was not an immigration case, and we knew that the human rights community would be upset if we spirited a high profile political dissident out of China permanently, thus making the United States seem to be complicit in an exile procedure. So we got a firm commitment from the Chinese Foreign Ministry that he would be permitted to return to China once his medical treatment was completed. We also had some technical issues involving the order in which he would get his exit visa and the American visa inserted in his passport. We were able to work out a rather complicated procedure whereby the U.S. visa process would be completed at the airport, after the Chinese had completed all of the documentation permitting him to leave.

Second, Washington had agreed to have the dissident come to the United States for medical treatment, but the State Department informed us at the last minute that it had no funds to pay for his travel.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Needless, to say, the Chinese dissident had no funds to buy an airplane ticket on his own. I thought it was bizarre that the Bureau of Human Rights was demanding the release of all these dissidents, but if they were able to leave the country, it couldn't provide any financial assistance for the travel.

We thought we had the problem under control because an American human rights organization had agreed to pay for the travel. However, again at the last minute, the organization withdrew the offer, apparently fearing that facilitating the dissident's departure from China would be bad for fundraising. The State Department gave us no help. I ended up personally telephoning various non-government organizations in the United States seeking assistance. Fortunately, the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations agreed to provide funding for the trip.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: In any event, we eventually were able to get the dissident to the United States for medical treatment. However, the ineptitude of the Department in dealing with the issue left a sour taste in my mouth. I was also shocked that the American human rights organization put its fundraising needs ahead of helping a dissident in need.

Following Secretary Christopher's visit, Under Secretary Mike Armacost was sent out to China for some last minute negotiations with the Chinese, with the May MFN deadline fast approaching. Mike is a superb diplomat, and he was extremely skillful in the way he handled a very sensitive issue. The irony of the situation was that I had already learned, on a very confidential basis, from CEOs who were personal friends of the president, that the president had already made the decision to break the linkage between MFN and human rights, without informing the State Department.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: So we were negotiating to try to get progress on an issue that was increasingly becoming irrelevant because the president was going to break the linkage anyway. When the State Department eventually learned of the decision, the issue then was whether this should be treated as victory or a defeat for our human rights efforts. I thought we should declare victory, because we had actually made some progress, however slight.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: In other words, the progress might not have been as ambitious as we had hoped, but there had been progress on some of the human rights cases that we were concerned about, and we were regularly discussing human rights cases with the Chinese.

However, the State Department had lost the internal struggle within the administration between those who thought the MFN linkage was damaging to U.S. business interests in China, and those who wanted to retain the linkage at all costs to enhance their advocacy of human rights. The State Department was shocked by the president's decision, and decided that as a face-saving gesture, we should sponsor a resolution at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva that was condemnatory of China's human rights practices, even though it knew that we lacked the votes in the Commission to pass the resolution, which is what happened.

China had offered to cooperate with us on human rights questions once the linkage was broken, provided that we did not sponsor such a resolution. The Department's decision scuttled any prospects for further cooperation with China on human rights issues, including the resumption of our regular human rights dialogue between Assistant Secretary Shattuck and the Chinese. So we put posturing on human rights ahead of maintaining a potentially useful link to Beijing on human rights issues.

In any event, breaking the linkage opened the door for other cabinet-level visits to China. Even before Secretary Christopher's visit, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentson had come in January 1994 for the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the U.S.-China Joint Economic Commission, which included a stop in Shanghai as well. The Economic Commission was chaired by Treasury on the U.S. side.

*Q: Well Secretary of Commerce Brown comes in August.*

ROY: Yes, Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown came in August with a large delegation of American business people. I flew down to Shanghai to meet him when he arrived, and then accompanied him on his calls in Beijing. He ended up having a mechanical problem with his special aircraft that delayed his departure until the U.S. military in Japan could scrounge up a replacement aircraft.

*Q: Perry in October. Greenspan later in October.*

ROY: Yes, Defense Secretary Perry and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan came in October. We also squeezed in visits by Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and Secretary of Labor Hazel O'Leary. I particularly remember the Espy visit since I took him on a crack-of-dawn two-hour bicycle tour of the early morning farmers' markets in Beijing.

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor also made a memorable visit. After reaching agreement on a tough issue, the two sides held a convivial dinner at which there were many exchanges of toasts, with Maotai and bourbon flowing freely.

At one point Secretary Kantor leaped to his feet to propose a toast to his Chinese counterpart, accompanied by the official Chinese interpreter. Kantor raised his glass to his Chinese host and said "Here's to this son of a bitch who is drinking me to death." The interpreter stood there mouth agape not knowing what to do. Fortunately, one of Mao Zedong's former interpreters, Harvard University graduate Ji Chaozhu, who was then a senior foreign ministry official, sprang to the rescue and accurately rendered the toast in Chinese as "This son of a turtle is making me drunk." The party continued in high spirits.

The three-day visit by Alan Greenspan in October 1994 was highly unusual in my foreign service experience, in that the top Chinese leaders, including President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng, treated him as though he was teaching them a master class in capitalist economics and finance. They peppered him with questions about the tools used to keep an economy on an even keel, how corporations downsize their work forces, what if any training is given to discharged workers to equip them for new jobs, and what kind of unemployment compensation is provided and for how long. The sessions with Jiang Zemin and Li Peng extended well beyond the allocated times.

At the conclusion of Mr. Greenspan's meeting with Li Peng, Li shook his hand on departure and said that he now accepted the concept of the "invisible hand" in the functioning of market economies, adding "But there is also a 'visible hand' and you, Mr. Greenspan, are the 'visible hand' that is also necessary."

Defense Secretary Perry visited Beijing in October 1994. He held very frank discussions with China's top military leaders and was particularly effective in explaining the importance of the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

There's an interesting anecdote in connection with Treasury Secretary Bentson's visit. He was accompanied by his wife, and I accompanied them when they flew down to Shanghai to see the city. Secretary Bentson had the practice of dining privately with his wife when she accompanied him on official visits abroad, but he invited me to join the two of them for a private dinner in Shanghai in the fancy new high-rise hotel in which they were staying.

During the relaxed conversation over dinner, Secretary Bentson began reminiscing about an earlier trip he had made to China in 1977, when the State Department escort officer

had been a young Chinese speaking foreign service officer who had made a lasting impression on him. I cautioned him to be careful what he said because I had been the escort officer on that occasion. He refused to believe me because he had difficulty associating that young officer with the current U.S. ambassador in Beijing, after a lapse of some seventeen years. I eventually convinced him by citing various episodes from that trip.

So 1994, aside from the difficulties with the human rights linkage, was a pretty good year in terms of getting Cabinet level people coming to China again.

*Q: Now, we've been talking about policy here, but stepping back, you're chief of mission. You have all these people and all these sections working for you, and all these activities going on. How is morale? How are you organizing people's portfolios and keeping them from being too tired (laughs).*

ROY: Well, ambassadors are the worst people to ask about morale.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I have never seen as hardworking and dedicated an embassy in which every unit of the embassy worked cooperatively with all of the other units. This was not just pro forma cooperation. Our rule in the embassy was that all reporting cables were completed before people went home. We never had leftover reporting the following day. This applied even when we had all these Cabinet-level officials making visits that could generate dozens of reporting cables. The staff was absolutely magnificent. You didn't have to crack a whip or raise your voice. These people were professionals, and they would get out fabulous reporting under incredibly tight time deadlines.

If you had a visit by a secretary of commerce, for example, the Economic Section in the embassy would work hand in glove with the Foreign Commercial Service people in the embassy in support of the visit. If a secretary of defense came, the political section would be totally supportive of the Defense Attaché Office in supporting the visit. It made my job unbelievably easy because doing the right thing seemed to come naturally on the part of the staff. And it was exciting to see a U.S. government working as a unified whole to achieve a common purpose, instead of dividing into separate fiefdoms that competed with each other.

*Q: And of course the embassy is just a house for all the federal agencies that may have business in that country.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: And since you're dealing with this large economy and important policy issues, that embassy in Beijing has a lot of other agencies in it. Now, your physical circumstances hadn't improved much. I mean you're still in, what was it called, Sanban.*



ROY: That's correct. The main embassy chancery was still in Sanban, meaning Compound Three, which had been the former Pakistani Embassy. Erban, Compound Two, had been turned into the Administrative and Consular Sections. Yiban, Compound One, which was our original liaison office, still served as the ambassador's residence, with the United States Information Service (USIS) occupying the original chancery building on the same compound. The garages behind the residence had been converted into the embassy's medical unit.

The main chancery in Sanban was badly run down, in part because the State Department's intention was to acquire a new compound where we could construct a new Chancery building that would provide office space for all the agencies housed in the embassy. As a result, it seemed wasteful to expend the funds necessary to fix up the existing chancery building. The congressional delegations that came to Beijing were shocked to see the rundown condition of the existing chancery.

As a footnote on this issue, when I retired from the Foreign Service in 2001, I was invited by the State Department to serve in an advisory capacity on the architectural team that presided over the competition among architectural firms for design and construction of the new and much improved chancery compound in Beijing.

*Q: Now, as this relationship ebbs and flows and flowers, I would assume there were other agencies back in Washington that wanted to have a presence in Beijing. You probably had requests from the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) and other agencies.*

ROY: Not the FAA, but the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) was one of the agencies that was interested in having a place in Beijing. Our basic problem was the absence of space. Agencies that required access to classified communications couldn't be set up outside of the embassy, but there were security concerns about having offices outside of the embassy. So our staff had built up to what we could handle at that time. After we got the new chancery, we've been able to add agencies that had wanted to come in that hadn't been able to. So the staff has grown significantly since I left in 1995.

*Q: So, you would have had to turn down requests from disappointed agencies (laughs).*

ROY: Yes. They had to deal with their needs by making visits rather than by being actually stationed in the embassy.

*Q: Now, one of the issues that comes up in this period is proliferation issues, particularly with regard to Chinese and Pakistani cooperation on missiles. How did those issues come up, and where was the portfolio in the embassy for that?*

ROY: That issue had been frontally addressed during Secretary Baker's visit in 1991. In general, proliferation issues were handled by the political-military officer in our political section in cooperation with the Defense Attaché Office.

*Q: Because I think in '93 we were obligated to put some sanctions on China in relation to*

*those issues, the Pakistani issues.*

ROY: We had sanctions for a variety of reasons. At one point we wouldn't permit American commercial satellites to be launched on Chinese missiles. The net result was to put the U.S. satellite manufacturers out of business. If you can't use the cheapest launching capability, you have difficulty selling your satellites. So having put the sanctions on, we found they were damaging U.S. interests. On one of my visits to Washington, the chief concern of the Under Secretary for Science & Technology was how to get out from under the sanctions in order to keep our satellite manufacturers from going out of business.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Let me ask this. As the ambassador to this major post, did you go back to Washington often to get some face time?*

ROY: I didn't go back often, but I went back one or two times a year.

*Q: And you felt that it was important to do that?*

ROY: Yes. In addition, we had summit meetings between Jiang Zemin and President Clinton three years in a row. And I was brought back to participate in those meetings wherever they took place. The first one was in Seattle, the second was in Jakarta, and the third one, I think, was in Vancouver. That gave me opportunities to hobnob with senior officials in Washington sufficiently to stay in touch with what was going on.

*Q: Again, one of the major interactions these two countries have are on the political-military side. Defense Secretary Perry came to China in mid October 1994. That must have been a fairly major milestone.*

ROY: That was a major milestone. And Secretary Perry was extremely effective in dealing with the Chinese. He's a scientist himself, and he could handle technical issues very thoroughly and professionally.

*Q: Now, he was there I believe for the Joint Defense Conversion Commission meeting, which was something that came out of the fall of the Soviet Union where we had promised them some assistance from pulling out of Eastern Europe. The name got applied to some pol-mil activity between us and China as well as between us and some of the Eastern Europeans. What was that all about?*

ROY: Defense Secretary Perry participated in the first and only meeting of the U.S.-China Joint Defense Conversion Commission on October 17, 1994. The Commission was a short-lived project that I assume emerged from the euphoria engendered by the end of the Cold War. His Chinese counterpart was Ding Henggao, Minister of the PRC Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense.

The Commission's purpose was to facilitate economic cooperation and technical

exchanges and cooperation in the area of defense conversion, which contemplates the reorientation of productive capacities from military use to civilian purposes. An underlying assumption was that there might be opportunities for American business in China's defense conversion projects.

The minutes of the first meeting specified that the Commission would be in operation for five years. However, its establishment aroused concerns in Congress, a second meeting never took place, and the Commission was terminated in 1996.

*Q: I would assume that Assistant Secretary Freeman would be in his delegation?*

ROY: Chas Freeman had been replaced by Joe Nye as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs by the time of the Perry visit to China. EAP Assistant Secretary Win Lord represented the State Department on the delegation, which also included the NSC's Senior Director for Asian Affairs Stanley Roth.

*Q: In any event, this is the first sec-def visit since 1988.*

ROY: Yes, since 1988. Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci came to Beijing in 1988. I remember that because I was still the deputy assistant secretary for China in EAP and accompanied him on that trip.

*Q: This is an important milestone because one of the sanctions that we applied in the wake of Tiananmen Square was cessation of military cooperation with China.*

ROY: That's right. We were still sitting on Chinese military equipment that had been sent to the United States for modifications that we had mutually agreed to do in the 1980s. That had become a big issue between Washington and Beijing because after Tiananmen we would not return the Chinese military equipment to the Chinese. Nevertheless, we insisted that they pay the storage costs in the United States for their equipment that we would not return.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Which I thought was a bad position to be in. It's what I call bad faith. If we weren't prepared to make the modifications we should have returned the equipment. After all, they owned it. If we were responsible for refusing to return the equipment, we ought to bear the cost of that. But that's not the way governments behave.

*Q: (laughs) What were other issues that might have come up during Perry's visit?*

ROY: We had our standard issues. We were concerned about Iranian nuclear developments. We were concerned about missile cooperation with Pakistan. This had seemingly been laid to rest during Secretary Baker's trip, but after the F16 sale to Taiwan in 1992 it reemerged as a problem.

In connection with Secretary Perry's visit, we were obviously concerned about the breakup of the Soviet Union and control over nuclear capabilities. We were concerned about underground testing. We weren't really looking for significant expansion of military-to-military contacts. Our political situations didn't make that feasible. But we wanted to keep open channels of military to military contact and communication. The North Korea issue would have been a topic, because this was in the wake of the framework agreement.

*Q: Mm-hmm. I have in my notes that in mid January 1995 -- going back to some economic issues -- we had talks with the Chinese in Beijing on intellectual property rights. Nothing productive came out of that, and we imposed sanctions in February of 1995.*

ROY: Yes, we had discussions on intellectual property rights?

*Q: Right. And in March, right after that, USTR Kantor came out, and he and Chinese Trade Minister Wu Yi signed an IPR agreement.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: So obviously that sounds as though negotiations finally worked something out at the last minute.*

ROY: Yes. We didn't solve the problem. Intellectual property rights violations continued. However, it represented a step forward in creating a framework for us to manage the question with the Chinese.

As I said earlier, this period was quite busy. We were getting far more Cabinet level people coming out to China. We got a number of visits by congressional delegations. Alan Greenspan's visit was particularly fascinating, as I mentioned before.

*Q: Let's move on to 1995. Lee Teng-hui made the job of the president of the Republic of China an elected position. And he decided to run for that elected position. Part of his campaign was to demonstrate the closeness of his relationship with the United States. Eventually, he was able to get an invitation in June of 1995 to make an informal visit to Cornell University, where he had done graduate work. How are you watching this unfolding series of events?*

ROY: The background is that Taiwan President Chiang Ching-kuo, before he died, had begun the process of opening up cross-strait trade relations, and liberalizing the political system in Taiwan, permitting the emergence of a multi-party system. As an important component of that process, Chiang Ching-kuo had also begun transferring political power from the Mainlander KMT refugees who had ruled Taiwan since 1949 to the native people of Taiwan. With that goal in mind, he had made a Japanese-educated Taiwan native, Lee Teng-hui, his vice president. Lee had succeeded to the presidency in 1988 when Chiang Ching-kuo had died.

The last elections for the National Assembly that selects the president of the Republic of China had taken place on the China mainland in the late 1940s. Since then, elections for the National Assembly had been impossible because the KMT had retreated to Taiwan. As a result, the terms of the representatives in the National Assembly had been extended indefinitely, and the aging members had periodically renewed the mandate of the President.

In the early 1990s this system was changed to permit direct elections in Taiwan for new National Assembly representatives, while the old ones were sent into retirement. The first presidential elections under this new system were to take place in 1996. President Lee Teng-hui had thrown his hat into the ring to become the first elected president of Taiwan.

These changes had far-reaching implications. Previously, the legitimacy of the KMT Mainlander regime on Taiwan had rested on its claim to be the government of all of China. Its commitment to a one-China policy (i.e., that there was only one legitimate government in China and that Taiwan was part of China) was a vital element in its legitimacy. Under the new system, the legitimacy of the government in Taiwan would rest on popular elections, thus weakening the significance of the one-China policy and playing into the hands of those on Taiwan favoring independence.

These developments were of great concern to Beijing. The transfer of political power to native Taiwanese and the holding of presidential elections in Taiwan that would determine the legitimacy of the new Taiwan government increased the danger of a move by Taiwan to separate from China.

Even though Lee Teng-hui was a member of the Kuomintang, which was committed to a one-China policy, mainland Chinese leaders had no confidence in him. Because of his education in Japan, and his fluency in Japanese, Chinese leaders viewed him as more Japanese in his mentality than Chinese. They considered him to be a closet separatist, whose attitudes were not those of a nationalistic Chinese, but of a Japanese oriented person.

A historical factor is relevant here. Modern Chinese nationalism emerged from the May 4<sup>th</sup> movement, which took its name from mass student protests in Beijing on May 4, 1919 when the Versailles Peace Conference transferred former German concessions in Shandong Province to Japan, rather than returning them to China. At the time, Taiwan was under Japanese rule as a Japanese colony, and Chinese on Taiwan did not share in this surge of nationalistic fervor. This made Lee Teng-hui all the more suspect in the eyes of Chinese leaders.

An additional factor was that in January of 1995, Chinese President Jiang Zemin had issued an eight-point proposal on cross-trade relations, which the Chinese considered an important building block in the Chinese position on managing cross-trade relations. In the document there was conciliatory language on Taiwan, at least in the eyes of the Chinese leaders.

We gave a lot of attention to the document. I made a special trip to Shanghai to discuss the document with Wang Daohan, the president of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), a sem-official PRC organization that was the counterpart of the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) in Taiwan. Lee Teng-hui chose to ignore this initiative in favor of finagling a visit to the United States, which was a loss of face for Jiang Zemin and further compromised Lee in the eyes of Beijing.

The Clinton administration was the first Democratic administration since President Jimmy Carter, who had presided over the normalization of U.S.-PRC relations in 1979. Many of its officials were predisposed to the view that Taiwan had gotten a raw deal in normalization. They conducted a China policy review in 1994 with a view to making some compensatory gestures toward Taiwan. The choice boiled down to whether to permit junior cabinet secretaries to visit Taiwan or permit Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to make an informal visit to Cornell.

My own attitude had been that we could permit an informal visit by Lee Teng-hui to the United States if it was properly managed. We would first have to invite PRC President Jiang Zemin for an official visit, perhaps in connection with a United Nations General Assembly session. We could then authorize an informal visit by Lee Teng-hui, with the contrast in treatment underlining the unofficial nature of our relationship with Taiwan.

This would have been difficult to pull off because of pro-Taiwan congressional attitudes, but it would have been consistent with our policy framework. This would have been preferable to permitting junior cabinet-level U.S. officials to visit Taiwan, which was difficult to square with our commitment to having only unofficial relations with Taiwan. I also felt, based on my experience as the EAP deputy assistant secretary for China, that we would have difficulty preventing a private visit by Lee Teng-hui to the United States.

Given negative U.S. attitudes toward the PRC at the time, the administration decided on the cabinet option, which precluded any likelihood of a negative reaction by Congress or the public. At the same time, it provided high-level authoritative assurances to the Chinese government that Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui would not be permitted to make an informal visit to the United States. At the same time, fearing a domestic backlash, the administration also spurned Jiang Zemin's desire to come to the United States for an official visit.

When the administration reversed itself on this pledge, on the flimsy basis of a nearly unanimous but non-binding congressional resolution in favor of a private visit by Lee Teng-hui, top Chinese leaders reacted with fury at the United States for violating its pledge and permitting someone who the Chinese viewed as a closet separatist to visit the United States. To make matters worse, Lee's visit was designed to be unofficial and was under ground rules that he could not make political statements. Lee violated all of the ground rules. Unsurprisingly, the issue blew up into a major crisis.

Not only did the Chinese leaders feel they had been betrayed, but they interpreted the

U.S. step as a dangerous signal that they could not count on the Clinton administration to hold the line on its one-China policy. As a result, the negative consequences of the U.S. reversal were greater than any of us had anticipated, precipitating a fundamental change in Chinese handling of the Taiwan issue, which has complicated matters down to this day.

When we had established diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1979, the Chinese government had issued a major statement on relations with Taiwan in which they declared that peaceful unification with Taiwan was their fundamental policy. Abandoning their earlier practice of constant pressure on Taiwan, underscored by occasional shelling of the offshore islands of Quemoy (Jinmen) and Matsu, they adopted a charm offensive against Taiwan as part of a united front strategy. From 1979 until 1995, Beijing did not make military deployments in a manner threatening to Taiwan, and they abandoned rhetoric threatening to use force against Taiwan.

As a consequence of the Lee Teng-hui visit, the Chinese, for the first time since 1979, resumed the practice of threatening to use force against Taiwan. It underlined this threat by launching ballistic missiles into the Taiwan Strait area as a way of demonstrating that they had the missile capability to threaten Taiwan. The PLA also used the Taiwan issue to launch a crash program to develop a credible capability to fight a war over Taiwan, resulting in double-digit increases in the PLA's defense budget for an extended period.

As you can see, the Lee visit was not a trivial affair, and yet it was handled in a perfunctory way by the American Congress and the administration. The State Department assured me that it had pulled out all the stops to try to prevent the resolution favoring Lee's visit from passing. Less than two weeks after the Lee visit, the deputy Republican whip in the House of Representatives visited Beijing and told me that he was not even aware that such a resolution had passed. He flatly claimed that no resolution of any importance would be passed in the House without his personal knowledge. He was not even aware that the vote had taken place.

*Q: In fact, the Chinese were so concerned that on June the 8<sup>th</sup> during all this, Ambassador Li Daoyu called at the White House to protest the Lee visit.*

ROY: The Foreign Ministry later recalled him to Beijing to express their displeasure.

*Q: But now, you leave shortly thereafter.*

ROY: Well, I was in the final stages of departing Beijing, but I was in the diplomatic doghouse because of the Lee visit. The Foreign Ministry let me make farewell calls on Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, Premier Li Peng, and President Jiang Zemin.. All my other requests for farewell calls were rejected.

*Q: Ah. In the heat of this event.*

ROY: Wu Yi, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, with whom I'd worked closely on a number of issues, compensated for this by hosting a private dinner

for me.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Now, you had known for some time that you were moving on?*

ROY: That's correct. I had expected to leave in the summer of 1994, but they kept me on for another year because they couldn't find a suitable replacement until Senator Sasser lost his reelection bid and became available.

ROY: Originally, I was supposed to go to Thailand. I'd filled out my papers for Thailand in the summer of 1994, and then I'd been delayed for a year. In the summer of 1995, when Senator Sasser was in position to be nominated, they asked me to update my papers for Thailand. A week later they called me and said, "Forget Thailand, you'll be going to Indonesia." I asked whether I had any choice in the matter. They said that I did in theory, but the president had already approved me for Indonesia. So I filled out a new set of papers for Indonesia."

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I'd already been hosted by the Thai ambassador in the expectation that I would be going to Bangkok *(laughs)*. I'd picked a DCM for Bangkok, and everything was reversed at the last minute.

*Q: Oh goodness. Well, why don't we break off at this point and we will come back in the new year?*

ROY: OK, let's do that.

*Q: You left your DCM. Scott Hallford, as chargé?*

ROY: That's correct.

*Q: And Harry Wu gets detained shortly thereafter (laughs).*

ROY: That's correct. We can discuss Harry Wu.

*Q: OK, let me put that down.*

ROY: Bye.

\*\*\*

*Q: OK. Today is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April. We're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Ambassador, when we left our conversation you were departing as ambassador from Beijing.*

ROY: Right.



*Q: And since '94, you'd been offered the ambassadorship to Thailand.*

ROY: The way things transpired was the Clinton administration had made a decision to keep me on as ambassador to China, even though I had been appointed to the position by President George H. W. Bush. That decision remained in place until 1994, which would have been the end of my three years in Beijing, but only a year and a half into the Clinton administration.

Then, on January 1, 1994, The New York Times carried an interview with me that created a firestorm in Washington because it was printed under the headline "Rights in China Improve, Envoy Says," making it appear that I was defending China's human rights record, which in fact was inaccurate, as the content of the interview made clear.

Since this interview had a significant impact on my career, it might be worth carrying the text in full.

**New York Times, January 1, 1994**

## **Rights in China Improve, Envoy Says**

**By PATRICK E. TYLER,**

Despite what he calls continuing abuses of human rights in China, the United States Ambassador here argues that Beijing has made "dramatic" progress in improving the lives of its citizens and that this record should be taken into account when policy toward China is reviewed early in the new year.

In an interview this week, Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy said that the setbacks in human rights represented by the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 and the wave of repression that followed were being steadily reversed, and that the Communist Party had loosened its control over many aspects of Chinese life.

His comments came before a Congressional review in January of China's record on human rights. Before July, President Clinton must decide whether China has made "overall, significant progress" in human rights and thus deserves to have its beneficial trade status renewed.

### **Question of Progress on Rights**

Mr. Roy, 58, a career diplomat who is to complete his tour in Beijing next summer, said he could not predict whether China would satisfy the standard of "overall, significant progress."

"I can't answer those questions, because the Administration is going to have to define what it views as significant progress," he said.

He acknowledged that there had been important human rights "setbacks" in 1993, including arrests and harsh treatment of political and religious dissidents. But he said the economic and technological revolution promoted by Deng Xiaoping since 1978 had stripped away much of the ideological prison in which the Chinese had lived for three decades.

In an executive order in May, President Clinton said there were seven key areas in which China had to make "overall, significant progress" before he could renew its trade privileges in July 1994. Among the areas are "releasing and providing an acceptable accounting for Chinese citizens imprisoned or detained for the nonviolent expression of their political and religious beliefs."

#### Role of Security Forces

Mr. Roy said that human rights abuses were likely to persist for the foreseeable future under the Communist Party and the security apparatus that keeps it in power.

But in nearly two hours of discussion this week, the American Ambassador argued that the overall economic and social transformation under way in China should not be ignored.

China now trades with the United States under what is known as "most favored nation" status, which means that its exports face the lowest trade barriers in force when they enter the United States. China has angrily denounced those in Congress who favor revoking this status to punish Beijing for its human rights record.

The Clinton Administration has had to balance its approach to China between those who call for punitive action over rights violations and those who argue that China must be accommodated because of its importance as a growing market for American goods and investment and as a potential security partner.

In addition, the Administration has tried to engage China in trying to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program, and many argue that a confrontational approach with Beijing does not work.

In his remarks, Mr. Roy took care to reserve for the White House a full range of policy options should China fail to make further progress in human rights.

#### Opposition to Linkage

But he was far more explicit than his superiors have been in showing a preference for abandoning the practice of linking of China's trading status to its human rights record, calling the linkage abnormal.

"At the core of our approach," Mr. Roy said, "is not the idea that we can somehow get beyond the human rights factor in our relationship with China.

"Rather, it is a question of what is the most effective way" to press human rights concerns, he said, while conducting normal diplomacy on crucial Asian security issues.

"If you look at the 150 years of modern China's history since the Opium Wars, then you can't avoid the conclusion that the last 15 years are the best 15 years in China's modern history," Mr. Roy said. "And of those 15 years, the last 2 years are the best in terms of prosperity, individual choice, access to outside sources of information, freedom of movement within the country and stable domestic conditions."

Mr. Roy was referring to social and economic forces that have effectively curtailed monolithic Communist Party control over where people live, work and go to school and whether they can be admitted to universities or get married.

He argued that a new "diversity" had taken root in Chinese society, reflected in a willingness to express individual views, an information revolution wrought by satellite television and fax machines and a new Government "tolerance" for many forms of criticism. He also cited the beginnings of a legal foundation that might help Chinese citizens seek redress and compensation for abuses.

#### Advocates Further Dialogue

Mr. Roy made clear that in his view, the most effective way to resolve disputes with China was through the intensified diplomatic dialogue that began last fall after a review of China policy at the White House and the State Department.

If Secretary of State Warren Christopher "were to recommend next May that we should extend" China's trading privileges "without conditions, that would not remove human rights from our foreign policy agenda with China," Mr. Roy said.

"We would expect to still continue an active human rights dialogue with the Chinese," he said, "and we would continue to expect to see significant progress on human rights issues."

Ambassador Roy said China's top leaders had taken Mr. Clinton seriously when he had warned that China's favorable trade access to the American market would be on the line in 1994.

"We see progress in some areas, and, yes, we do see continuing negative factors in other areas," he said. "And so our purpose is to try to encourage further progress in the areas that will be taken into account next May."

Mr. Roy said China had released the "vast bulk" of political prisoners seized in the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown and, with the release of Wei Jingsheng in September, the major figures from the Democracy Wall period of 1978-79.

#### Dissidents Still in Prison

But a number of democracy campaigners from the Tiananmen Square uprising remain in prison, some of them with severe medical problems, he added. He said Beijing should release them on medical grounds, granting them a form of parole.

With Mr. Clinton having met with President Jiang Zemin in November in Seattle, Mr. Roy said, the two countries are carrying on their most extensive dialogue in five years.

Mr. Roy suggested that with further progress from China in coming months, this dialogue could supplant the contentious annual debate in Congress over whether to extend China's trading privileges, and remove the constant threat of disruption to the increasingly interconnected trade channels between China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States.

The Ambassador, who was born in China to a missionary family in Nanjing and witnessed the Communist takeover in 1949 from Shanghai, said that any new wave of Government repression against Chinese citizens would certainly bring an immediate response from Washington.

"It is impossible for a country like the United States to have normal relations with a country that resorts to overt suppression against its own people," he said. There "will be an impact on the U.S. relationship with China when such repression occurs."

Mr. Roy added that while the widening of individual freedoms represented a "radical transformation" of Chinese society, American policy makers could not forget that China relied fundamentally on "repression as its normal means of maintaining control," mainly through the state security forces.

I had taken the politically incorrect position that overall conditions in China – in terms of standard of living, freedom to travel domestically, access to the outside world and foreign sources of information – was presented as though I was defending China's human rights record, which in fact was inaccurate. But it embarrassed the administration to the point where I think it precipitated a decision to take me out of Beijing. Not to terminate my assignment, but to rotate me out. I can't document that for you, but that's my distinct

impression.

So I was informed in the spring of 1994 that I'd been approved to be nominated for the position of ambassador to Thailand. I filled out the forms and other papers related to Thailand. The Department then discovered that they weren't able to come up with a replacement for me in Beijing.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: This continued for a year until the spring of 1995, in other words, until after the midterm elections in 1994, when Senator Sasser unexpectedly lost his reelection in Tennessee and became available as the potential replacement for me. So I was instructed in the spring of 1995 to update my papers for Thailand, which I did.

A week later I got a call saying the situation had changed, and I should fill out a new set of papers for Indonesia. I had not been consulted on this and asked whether I had any options on the matter. They said of course I did, but the president had already approved me for Indonesia.

Actually, I was just as happy to be shifted to Indonesia, which was a fascinating country. I'd already had two assignments in Thailand, so in a sense I was better prepared for the Thai position since I'd been there for three years as DCM. In that sense, Indonesia was a more exciting challenge. It would fill in a gap in my knowledge of East Asia, and I already had extensive Southeast Asian experience.

*Q: Now, let me ask a little bit about the background of this. Winston Lord was the assistant secretary for EAP at this time I believe.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Under the Clinton administration. And he was quite forward leaning on human rights approaches to foreign policy issues.*

ROY: Right.

*Q: Did that play a role in the circumstances you were in?*

ROY: It played a role, but it might not be the one you imagine. Ambassador Lord had been the ambassador in Beijing when I was the deputy assistant secretary handling China in the East Asia Bureau. At that time, we had worked hand in glove together. So when he became the assistant secretary in the Clinton administration, my guess is that he played a significant role in having the Clinton administration decide to keep me on as ambassador in Beijing, even though I'd been appointed by the Republican president preceding Bill Clinton.

There's no question that Win Lord had a very strong position on human rights. He and his

wife had been devastated by the violent crackdown on the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in June 1989, shortly after he had left his post as ambassador in Beijing. In fact, it was probably his strong public criticism of Beijing over the crackdown that had gotten him his position as EAP Assistant Secretary in the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton.

As EAP Assistant Secretary, he gave me superb support in Beijing during the difficult period in U.S.-China relations following the election of President Clinton. While I had some personal reservations about the wisdom of the Clinton administration's approach to the issue of human rights in China, I never showed any daylight between myself and the administration on human rights questions. When the Clinton administration established the linkage between China's behavior on human rights and our willingness to continue extending MFN (most favored nation status) to China, I faithfully carried out the instructions. As I mentioned to you earlier, I never had any problems with Win Lord personally over the human rights issue.

The problem lay in the State Department's dispute with the high level officials in the Clinton administration who were opposed to the linkage and favored promoting trade with China. This prevented the State Department from sending me the instructions I needed to properly carry out the administration's policy. My task was to see if we could achieve, in one year, Chinese willingness to make progress on the seven areas of human rights specified in the policy. Despite repeated requests for guidance from Washington on what we would be prepared to do if the Chinese were willing to move on these seven areas of human rights, the Department was unable to send me the necessary guidance because of the dispute in Washington.

My interview with The New York Times occurred in this context. When I received a storm of criticism in Washington over the interview, the State Department spokesperson left me dangling in the wind for several days. I finally called Win Lord in exasperation and told him that either the administration had to defend my interview based on the full transcript that I had sent to the State Department, or they would have to withdraw me from Beijing. I was not willing to dangle in the wind in Beijing with no support from the administration. Within three hours Win Lord had the department spokesman make a statement endorsing what I had said. That was the basis on which I stayed in Beijing for another year.

So Win and I, while we differed on the best way of approaching the human rights question, worked cooperatively together in terms of implementing the administration's policy on human rights.

*Q: Now, we're talking here about the post Tiananmen era. And you were the ambassador in the post Tiananmen era. But Win Lord was the ambassador just before Tiananmen Square. Did he --*

ROY: Don't forget that Jim Lilley bore the brunt of the negative impact of Tiananmen on the bilateral relationship, since he was the U.S. ambassador from 1989-91. Win Lord left

Beijing in the spring of 1989, before the Tiananmen events.

*Q: Right.*

ROY: Win and his wife, Bette Bao Lord, had done an absolutely marvelous job in cultivating relations with the performing arts people in China. They were really plugged into the most enlightened group of Chinese performing artists, movie directors, actors, actresses, et cetera. They threw marvelous parties in that period. Win had also engaged in outreach to the universities and had cultivated relationships with the intelligentsia. Win and Bette were devastated by the Tiananmen crackdown, which swept up a lot of their friends because of the hardened attitudes in China.

For the next four years Win had taken a highly emotional, highly critical position on China, which had made him the darling of the human rights crowd, which had seized on China as the poster child for their human rights concerns. When he was nominated as the assistant secretary for EAP, there was a negative reaction to his selection on the part of senior Chinese officials. I knew Win well and told the Chinese that I thought they were misreading Win. I knew him as a highly conscientious and responsible person and was confident that when he was saddled with official responsibilities for implementing U.S.-China relations, he would not be guided by his emotions but by what he thought was best for the United States.

In my view, my assessment of him was accurate. Win found himself in a difficult position because he had been selected for the job of EAP Assistant Secretary in part because of the strong backing of the human rights community based on his stance on human rights in China. But when he was the assistant secretary, he had to balance the human rights considerations against all of the other considerations that affect U.S. interests in dealing with China. When President Clinton made the decision to break the linkage between human rights and most favored nation treatment for China, and the administration was engaged in lobbying Congress and others in support of this decision, Win was so conflicted that he took himself out of the action.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: He did so, as I recall, by making an extended trip to Asia at the height of this period. This is my interpretation. Win and I never explicitly discussed this along these lines. But the fact is that Win was in an awkward position to make calls to people in Congress with strong human rights views explaining why the president had made the decision to break the linkage. I had a policy disagreement with the State Department, not with the administration -- because my judgment was that if the president was going to break the linkage, the best way to get human rights leverage with China was to declare victory and then work with China to get concrete improvement in human rights in areas that were specifically relevant to American interests and American citizens.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: The Chinese were prepared to work along those lines. But the State Department chose to treat the President's decision as a policy failure. As a result, they became committed to sponsoring a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva criticizing China's human rights record, even though they knew that there was insufficient support in the Council to pass such a resolution. The Chinese had informed us that if we took this position, they were not prepared to work with us on human rights issues. So we ended up with a double failure.

The other area where I had a difference in approach with the administration was I thought that in the wake of President Clinton's decision to break the human rights linkage to MFN, we could get additional human rights leverage if we were to agree to have Chinese President Jiang Zemin visit Washington in connection with his trip to the United Nations in New York in the fall of, of 1994. He was eager to make such a visit and might have been more responsive to our concerns about human rights in China if he knew he would be visiting Washington.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: But the administration was unwilling to do that because of concerns over the Congressional and public reaction. This is an additional reason why Chinese anger was so strong when the administration reversed itself on the unofficial visit by Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to the United States in 1995. We had rebuffed a visit by their president and had then reneged on our commitment to China to not let Lee Teng-hui visit the United States on an informal visit. So we got the worst of both worlds.

These were my personal views, which I only expressed in internal discussions on our policy approach to China within the Clinton administration. I never gave the Chinese any reason to believe that I did not support the Clinton administration's approach.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Now, let's go on to the appointment to Indonesia. You were saying it came as a bit of a surprise.*

ROY: It came as a total surprise. I'd worked for two years with Justice Kennedy of the Supreme Court to persuade him to visit China. He'd agreed to do so and came to China in the spring of 1995. His wife came with him, and he and his wife stayed with my wife and me at the residence. We were having breakfast together when the call came in from Washington telling me that I was being switched to Indonesia.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I told the caller that I needed to consult my family and would return the call in a few minutes. I went back to the breakfast table and discussed Indonesia with my wife and Justice Kennedy (*laughs*), and we agreed that Indonesia was a good assignment. So I called Washington back and said that I was happy with the switch. That was just an interesting little vignette.



*Q: Right. Now, actually you had not had much experience with Indonesia before.*

ROY: I had visited Indonesia a number of times, beginning in 1960, but I had no experience or background on the country specifically. As ambassador to Singapore from '84 to '86, I'd visited Indonesia on vacation. So I was not unfamiliar with the country, but I didn't know its history, its politics, and its culture. I was generally familiar with its foreign policy positions. So I had a steep learning curve to go through, despite my strong background on East Asia and Southeast Asia, but not specifically on Indonesia.

*Q: So once you got this nomination and you left Beijing, how did you prepare yourself for Indonesia?*

ROY: Well, the Indonesians moved slowly in terms of granting agrément, because of bureaucratic factors. I had departed Beijing in June and hoped to get to Jakarta by August 17<sup>th</sup>, which is the Indonesian national day. However, the Indonesians took so long in approving agrément that I got caught up in the temporary shutting down of the U.S. government in the fall of 1995.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: I used that time to read extensively on Indonesia and to begin language lessons on a daily basis. I spent nearly two months studying Bahasa Indonesia at FSI during the period when I was waiting to get Senate confirmation. By the time I was able to leave for Jakarta in January of 1996, I had already acquired a superficial knowledge of the country and the language. I was super lucky that the DCM in Jakarta at the time, Barbara Harvey, whom I had asked to stay on, was a real Indonesian specialist. She had a PhD in Indonesian studies, and had served earlier in both Jakarta and Surabaya. So she was the perfect person to advise me on how to function effectively.

*Q: And she was already there.*

ROY: She had already been there as DCM for two years under my predecessor, and I found her advice and guidance invaluable during my breaking-in period in Jakarta.

*Q: I don't have it down here. She was there in '96, so she must have left in '97.*

ROY: Barbara left in the summer of 1997. Her replacement was Mike Owens, who also had a good background on Indonesia. However, by 1997 I had already gotten my feet on the ground and was less dependent on the expertise of the DCM.

*Q: Now, as you come to Indonesia and you've gotten briefed on the desk, maybe by a few private organizations in Washington, what was your image of Indonesia and its problems as you started this assignment?*

ROY: Well, I was already in my fourth decade in the Foreign Service and I'd learned from experience that I was able to gain realistic pictures of conditions in other countries

from the available open source material. So I rarely encountered situations where I had misperceptions that had to be straightened out when I arrived in a country. For example, during my three years on the Soviet Desk in the State Department, when I was a neophyte Soviet specialist, I'd never had an opportunity to visit the Soviet Union. My first direct exposure to the country, before my assignment to Moscow, was during the two-month trip to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that was part of the U.S. Army Advanced Russian Language School's curriculum. Even on that occasion there were very few things in the Soviet Union that differed from my expectations. That applied equally to Indonesia.

Indonesia had an authoritarian political system, but it was much less tightly controlled than was the case in China during the time when I was there. What shocked me was the apparent inability of the foreign human rights community to appreciate the important distinctions among authoritarian countries. For example, shortly after my arrival in Indonesia, Freedom House came out with a report in which they lumped China, Burma, and Indonesia together as highly repressive authoritarian regimes. Having come directly from China to Indonesia, this was a very inaccurate judgment. There was a vast difference between the openness of the two societies in China and Indonesia.

For example, in the middle of the 1990s, Suharto had shut down the most widely read news weekly in Indonesia called Tempo. The power establishment in Indonesia all read this magazine, and there was considerable irritation at having their preferred reading material shut down by the president. In fact, the reaction had been so negative that the regime watchdogs were treading more carefully in censoring the press. For example, they had elections in Indonesia in 1997, and an editorial in one of the Jakarta papers called the elections a farce. You couldn't even get away with that in Singapore, let alone in China. In Indonesia you could.

This set my mind to spinning. Having served as an American diplomat in a variety of countries with authoritarian political systems, I wondered why it is that the English language, and other languages I have known, are so impoverished in their political vocabularies. The Mongols have dozens of words to describe sheep in various stages of development, but we lack vocabulary that differentiates among the many different types of authoritarian systems in the world.

Take the Iranian political system as an example. It includes elements of theocracy, democracy, and authoritarianism. The ayatollahs control the real power, but Iran holds democratic elections for presidents, with the winners not necessarily the preferred choices of the theocratic leaders. We classify Singapore, Indonesia, China, Russia, and Burma, among many others, as having authoritarian systems of government, but in reality the degrees of repression in each country differ greatly.

East Asians can readily distinguish among Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Malays, Filipinos, Indonesians, et cetera. If our political vocabulary classified ethnic groups by skin color, reducing them to red, white, yellow, brown, or black, it would hamper our ability to distinguish Chinese from Japanese or Koreans. In other words, our vocabulary

restricts our ability to distinguish among authoritarian systems, which cover a wide range of differences. This has negative consequences for our foreign policy, because of our inability to make important distinctions.

*Q: So you're arriving in Indonesia and you're being briefed. Was your sense that human rights was one issue, or was the primary issue that the U.S. government was interested in influencing?*

ROY: Human rights wasn't the primary issue, but was a very significant constraint on our relations with Indonesia. In 1991, five years before my assignment to Indonesia, there had been demonstrations in Dili, East Timor, which had been brutally suppressed by Indonesian military forces, resulting in the killing of dozens of unarmed demonstrators. As a result, we had banned the export of small arms to Indonesia, and there was a lobby in Congress that was very hostile to Indonesia.

So human rights certainly was one of the issues that we had to deal with. The Indonesian government had set up a Human Rights Commission, and one of the first things I did on arriving in Jakarta was getting to know the members of the Commission. I was pleasantly surprised to find that it was a serious organization that was genuinely interested in improving human rights in the country. The members of the Commission were independent thinkers. When they issued a human rights report, they didn't simply whitewash the government.

This provided a pleasant contrast to China, which had also set up a human rights commission shortly before my departure from Beijing. I had met with the commission there and got the impression the members were a bunch of party hacks with no particular background in human rights. It was largely a government propaganda organization more intent on defending China's human rights record than in improving it.

The Human Rights Commission in Indonesia was not that way at all. Indonesia also had an active civil society, with a variety of private sector organizations focused on human rights and environmental issues. The American embassy had regularly kept in touch with all of them, and we had provided modest financial support for them over the years. So we actually had something to work with in Indonesia in pursuit of our goal of supporting local efforts to address human rights and environmental issues.

In addition, the East Timor question was very active during my time in Indonesia. It had been a neglected Portuguese colony for over three centuries before the Portuguese withdrew in 1975. At that time, it had hoped to become independent, but the Indonesians had invaded and made it an Indonesian province.

The East Timor population was Catholic and Portuguese speaking, making it a poor fit with Indonesia, which was largely Muslim and had been under Dutch colonial rule until after World War II. The struggle for independence was continuing in East Timor, and the resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao, was imprisoned in Jakarta. Meanwhile the cause was still quietly promoted by Bishop Belo, the Catholic prelate in Dili, the capital of East

Timor, and by Ramos-Horta, who led the international aspects of the struggle. The Nobel Peace Prize had been jointly awarded to Bishop Belo and Ramos-Horta in 1996, shortly after my arrival in Jakarta, so the status of East Timor had become a front burner issue.

We had a variety of environmental issues in Indonesia, many of them associated with the presence of a giant Freeport-McMoRan copper mine high in the mountains of Irian Jaya, Indonesia's easternmost province. The company had invested vast sums of money in constructing an elaborate system of containment walls to limit the environmental impact of the tailings discharged from the mining operations.

At the same time, the U.S. government provided funding to WALHI, Indonesia's largest and most active environmental non-governmental organization, which is often highly critical of the company's mining operations. In my initial calls on the two Indonesian ministers with responsibilities touching on mining, they both urged me to stop funding the environmental organization. I explained that our funding was carefully designed to support environmental activities unrelated to the Freeport mine, but the issue remained an active one.

Congressional concerns over East Timor led to the blocking of the sale of F-16 fighter aircraft to Indonesia and the suspension of our International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs for the Indonesian military. This was a major setback, since senior Indonesian military officers who had been through these programs showed much greater understanding for our concerns when we raised questions about Indonesian military abuses of human rights.

There were three political parties that functioned in Indonesia at that time, so I had to familiarize myself with their characteristics. Indonesia also had a high percentage of Muslims in the population, so it was important to meet the key Islamic leaders and to understand their attitudes and how they were operating.

And then, of course, there was the broader task of gaining support for U.S. foreign policies. Given the fact that most Indonesians were Muslims, they were predisposed to see the United States as hostile to Islam because of our ardent support for Israel. This posed special challenges in gaining their understanding for U.S. behavior in the Middle East. Much of the guidance we received from Washington on Middle Eastern issues was not targeted for Muslim audiences and had to be fine-tuned to fit local circumstances.

Of immediate concern was the fact that Indonesia was gearing up for national elections in 1997. One of the leading politicians was Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of President Sukarno, Indonesia's first leader after gaining independence. She was the head of the PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party), one of the three officially permitted political parties. She was also one of the few Indonesian politicians who had openly taken the position that President Suharto should step down and permit truly free elections. This subjected her to harassment from proponents of Golkar, the party representing the ruling clique.

So there was lots to do. Indonesia is a big country, consisting of over 15,000 islands, spanning an area equivalent to the distance from San Francisco to Boston, and with a population of 200 million and growing. So it was important to get around and visit different parts of the country. We had a substantial American business community in Jakarta, including not simply the oil and mining interests, but also big companies such as General Electric, which was making light bulbs and locomotives there. American financial institutions were also well represented, and we had an active American Chamber of Commerce, whose members were interested in investing in Indonesia and expanding their business interests there.

*Q: In fact, as you approached this embassy, and I assume it was a fairly substantial mission, how did you see the staff and what they'd been doing up until then? Did you suggest new reporting requirements or, you know, were people getting out as you expected?*

ROY: I inherited an excellent staff, which greatly eased my early months as the new ambassador. All sections of the embassy were dedicated, hard working, and sufficiently fluent in the Indonesian language to function effectively in their jobs. Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, is closely related to Malay, the dominant language in Malaysia. The two languages are probably the easiest in East Asia for Americans to learn. They are written in the Latin alphabet, they don't involve significant pronunciation difficulties, and the grammars are not complicated. Moreover, in Jakarta many government officials were fluent in English or at least had a working knowledge of the language.

Nevertheless, I was frustrated that I lacked the fluency in Indonesian that I had in Chinese. This posed a problem for me when I traveled outside of Jakarta, where local officials were much less conversant with English. I found that embassy officers were not up to being good interpreters when they traveled with me. Their language was sufficient for conversational purposes and reading the press and media, but it wasn't at the level necessary to handle interpreting.

A compensating factor was that the staff was not desk bound. The political section was particularly good at getting out and meeting the human rights people, the political activists, and the members of the various political parties. When student demonstrations created instability in connection with the elections in 1997, our political officers were always in the thick of the action. I felt we were the best-informed embassy in Jakarta in terms of having sources and contacts who could keep us informed of what was going on.

*Q: Who would you rate as the other good embassies, well-informed embassies in Jakarta?*

ROY: The Australians and Singapore were very strong, both of them. The Japanese were good. The Brits were pretty good. The Dutch had a special relationship with the Indonesians because they were the former colonial power. I would say the really important ones were the Australians, the Singaporeans, and the Japanese. They were plugged into a wide range of people, so that in dealing with them you were learning

something from them while you were also sharing your own information.

In 1998, when the demonstrations leading up to the resignation of Suharto turned violent, we created a group of four that met frequently to compare notes on what was going on. It consisted of the Australians, the Singaporeans, the Americans, and the Japanese. Later, we expanded the group to bring in the Chinese ambassador because the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia during the period of instability were often the victims of the violence.

*Q: Now, one of the things that happened when you first got there was that Suharto's wife had died in April of '96. Some commentators have said that her removal from the scene changed some of the family dynamics, if not the leadership dynamics.*

ROY: Yes, Her name was Siti Hartinah, but she was generally referred to as Ibu Tien, or Madame Tien. Shortly before her death, my wife took a trip with Ibu Tien and a group of wives of senior Indonesian officials to Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo), the region of central Java where she was from. My wife returned with many fascinating stories about the customs of Indonesian upper class ladies when they are relaxing together.

There was a perception in Indonesia when I got there that Suharto had stayed on too long as the top leader and that there should be some sort of succession process. In my initial calls on cabinet ministers, people that I'd never met before, I even heard these views expressed. I found this surprising because in China you would never have encountered that type of indiscreet comment from Cabinet members. It reflected the much more open and easygoing atmosphere of authoritarian Indonesia.

Thirty years earlier, when Suharto was first consolidating his position as the supreme leader, he knew nothing about economics. As a result he had relied on a group of U.S.-educated Indonesian economists to formulate his economic policies. Initially, he had given them a free hand, and they had put Indonesia on the path of rapid economic development, which helped to explain why Indonesia had developed so rapidly. Back in the '50s and '60s, for example, Indonesia had half the per capita income of Burma. By the 1990s, that is, during the final phase of the Suharto period, Indonesia had 10 times the per capita income of Burma.

However, as Indonesia raised its level of economic development, Suharto had become less reliant on his professional economists and more inclined to let his family tap into the country's growing wealth. Ibu Tien was rumored to be in charge of the Suharto family finances, leading to jokes that she should be called Ibu Ten-percent because she took a cut of ten percent of all major economic deals in the country. Accordingly, she was associated with the growing economic corruption in the country, much to the dismay of the Indonesian economists responsible for the growth, who were listened to less and less by Suharto.

When Ibu Tien died, her death had two political consequences. First, it called attention to the issue of presidential mortality, a taboo subject that had nevertheless been on people's minds as Suharto advanced in years. Senior officials became more willing to consider

what might come after Suharto. Second, Ibu Tien had managed the family finances with a tight hand. Her death was seen as taking away any restraints on the growing involvement of the Suharto children in business deals. The net result was a subtle weakening of Suharto's grip on power.

*Q: Now, as you're getting a feel for the embassy and whatnot, did you do some traveling out of Jakarta early on, or first --*

ROY: As much as possible.

*Q: There's three consulates there. Did you visit all three of them?*

ROY: We only had two there. We had one in Medan and one in Surabaya.

*Q: That's right, I'm counting the consular agent in Bali, sorry about that.*

ROY: The answer is I visited *all of them*. I then got involved in a battle with Washington, which wanted to close the Medan consulate. I thought this was the height of foolishness. The political situation was beginning to heat up in Indonesia, we had an Indonesian political party that was openly challenging the president, and we needed our best eyes and ears on the ground in Indonesia. But Washington was in its bureaucratic mode of closing posts and trying to cut costs. The result was I was overruled. No sooner had they closed the post than they realized they had made a mistake, and they began to plan to reopen it. This was bureaucracy at its worst.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: The Under Secretary of State for Administration who was involved in this was very open and frank that it had been a mistaken decision.

*Q: Now, in the summer of '96 shortly after you arrived, your whole political section turned over. They must have taken some time to get their feed on the ground.*

ROY: I'm trying to remember when the turnover occurred. The political counselor when I was there was Ed McWilliams.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: He was not a sit at your desk type of person. He actually played a very important role in stimulating the political section to be out on the streets and meeting people and doing things. He later ended up having serious differences with me, because he was an ideologue and in my judgment lacked the professional qualities that you'd expect of a Foreign Service Officer. Any story from a human rights source he was ready to believe and treat as the gospel truth. Any story from a military or police source he would discount and consider unworthy of being reported.

This was not a professional approach, and it increased the danger of compromising the objectivity of our reporting. He also couldn't get along with our military component, who were very important because the military played such an important political role behind the scenes in Indonesia. On the other hand, in terms of motivating the political section and keeping them out on the streets and covering developments, he was very good. He ran a political section that had high morale and was very productive.

*Q: How about your DAO (Defense Attaché Office) military guys? Were they well plugged in?*

ROY: I was lucky that the defense attaché when I arrived was Colonel Don McFetridge. A decade earlier, he had attended the Indonesian Army Command and General Staff College in Bandung, and he spoke good Indonesian. His classmates from the College were now senior generals, so he was well plugged in and had good political smarts. He was invaluable during the period of acute instability that surrounded the fall of Suharto in 1998 since he had numerous good sources in the Indonesian military establishment.

The head of the military assistance group, Colonel Bob Humbertson, also had prior Indonesian experience. But as usual, in every post where I have served, the defense attaché people and the military support personnel have different perspectives on the qualities of the military establishment with which they're dealing. Nevertheless, Colonel Humbertson spoke functional Indonesian and had a range of Indonesian contacts that were useful in trying to monitor what was going on. Other members of the Defense Attaché Office were less fluent in Indonesian, which limited their effectiveness.

Throughout my foreign service career, I had learned from personal experience that one can be much more effective if you have a good command of the local language. That's one reason why in Indonesia, I was constantly frustrated by my inability to converse as freely as I would have liked in the local language. In both Moscow and Beijing, the entire embassy was able to function effectively in the local language. This was not the case in Indonesia. Fortunately, in Jakarta more educated Indonesians spoke good English than had been the case when I served in the Soviet Union and Beijing.

*Q: You were mentioning that there was a fairly substantial American business community, so I assume there's an American Chamber of Commerce and that your Commerce Department officers and Econ Section officers were equally as busy.*

ROY: They were. Both the embassy's economic and commercial officers worked closely with each other and with the American business community and the American Chamber of Commerce. In 1997 the Asian Financial Crisis erupted and, against expectations, Indonesia got swept into the maelstrom. From our standpoint, all of the action was with Treasury. The State Department was largely irrelevant. Washington was ill-equipped to deal with the problem. All classified cable traffic had to go through the State Department, but Treasury had no classified electronic channels for transmitting messages to State.

We quickly realized that we needed to have a Treasury officer temporarily assigned to the



economic staff of the embassy. Email was used for direct communications with Treasury, thus bypassing State. This greatly facilitated our ability to deal with Washington during the crisis. Treasury Under Secretary Larry Summers made several visits to Jakarta, as did Treasury Assistant Secretary Tim Geitner. State's Under Secretary for Economic Affairs never visited Indonesia during the entire Asian Financial Crisis.

The State Department was too hidebound to provide us with a classified email capability, even though commercial software for encrypting email was available at the time. In fact, I used such software for communicating with family members in the United States because, as ambassador, I didn't want my personal comments on the situation in Indonesia to be transmitted in open channels, even though I never discussed classified information in the emails. I was simply protecting personal views.

We ran into a similar problem later when we opened an official presence in East Timor. The office there did not have a classified communications facility, and the State Department had no way to encrypt email. So instead of having good protection, we had no protection, because the State Department insisted on *perfect* protection. This was a classic case of the perfect being the enemy of the good.

*Q: Now, political things must have appeared fairly soon after your arrival. I've got in my chronology list that in July '96, Megawati's party headquarters was attacked or there was something going on there.*

ROY: Well, the sequence was this. Megawati Sukarnoputri, a daughter of Indonesia's first president Sukarno, had been elected in 1993 as the Chairperson of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), one of the three authorized political parties in Indonesia. However, the government refused to recognize this result and backed an alternative candidate as chairperson, launching a leadership struggle within the PDI. A further National Congress of the party was held in Medan in June 1996, resulting in clashes between the two factions. This spilled over to Jakarta in July 1996, when the anti-Megawati faction unsuccessfully tried to seize control of the party headquarters, which was controlled by the Megawati faction. This resulted in several days of rioting in the streets. Our embassy was actively involved in monitoring what was going on.

*Q: By then did you or your political counselor have a personal or face-to-face relationship --*

ROY: I had become acquainted with Megawati. The political section, from the political counselor on down, had extensive contacts with the PDI political party, as we did with all the political parties. We knew the people in Golkar, which was the government-associated political party. The third party was the PPP (United Development Party), which had a Muslim orientation, and we also maintained contacts with them. So we were covering the waterfront. The PDI was the one that was testing the limits of the political process. In 1998 it changed its name to the PDIP, the Democratic Party of Struggle.

*Q: Let's talk about pressures facing the country. You mentioned that in July of '97 the*

*Thai baht collapsed and the East Asian Financial Crisis began. Indonesia was one of those, like Korea and Thailand, that were really slammed in the financial crisis. How did the embassy cover it and how worried were people in Indonesia?*

ROY: The answer is people were taken by surprise. There had been earlier financial crises in which Indonesia had been able to straighten things out after a couple of days by taking sensible responses that had prevented them from having a run on their currency of any extended duration. When the financial crisis broke, everybody knew that Thailand was in danger of going down the tubes, but no one expected that Indonesia would be affected the way it was. I can remember that when the Asian Financial Crisis first emerged, the local World Bank representative gave a briefing for the diplomatic community in which he stressed that Indonesia's financial fundamentals were sound. It turned out that he was wrong.

Financial observers had been unaware of the fact that Indonesia had incurred a high level of short-term dollar-denominated debt because the Indonesian exchange rate had been stable. If you borrowed in dollars you could borrow at 7% interest. If you borrowed in rupiah, the Indonesian currency, you would be paying 13% or 14% interest. Therefore, it made sense, as long as the currency was stable, to borrow in dollars.

When the financial crisis hit, however, it turned out that Indonesia had 80 billion dollars of dollar-denominated short-term debt. When the rupiah, against expectations, began dropping through the floor, that meant the dollar-denominated debt suddenly ballooned to the point that Indonesia was functionally bankrupt.

As a result, they had to turn to the IMF (International Monetary Fund), which they'd never had to turn to before, to get financial infusions to shore up their currency. That led to a series of standoffs between the IMF and Indonesia over the terms for such infusions. The IMF wanted to crack down on corruption, particularly the corruption involving members of the president Suharto's family, as conditions for having the money flow into Indonesia.

*Q: Now, how would the IMF have handled the corruption issue? What did they assume?*

ROY: Well, before the IMF would provide the big cash flows necessary for Indonesia, it had to negotiate agreements with the Indonesian banking authorities, with the IMF setting the conditions. For example, the clove monopoly was run by one of Suharto's sons. The IMF tried to ensure that its funds wouldn't go into supporting the clove monopoly, because it was the cash cow for the president's children. This resulted in standoffs with Suharto that delayed the loans. As long as Suharto was president, you had constant battles over the terms of payment for the next tranche of IMF cash for the Indonesian financial system.

Meanwhile, in December 1997, Suharto became seriously ill and dropped out of sight for several weeks, raising questions as to whether he would survive. This forced Indonesians, for the first time, to consider what post-Suharto arrangements would be if the President

did not survive. In a weakened state, Suharto was able to resume public activities in January of 1998. However, he was no longer seen as the indispensable person, because people had been forced to focus on the question of his mortality.

Nevertheless, even though the political landscape had subtly changed, Suharto persisted in wanting to get himself elected to an additional term. There were only two politicians in Indonesia who had the courage publicly to take a contrary view. One was Amin Rais, a leading Muslim intellectual, and the other was Megawati Sukarnoputri. To bolster his hold on power, Suharto selected as his vice presidential candidate the one person in Indonesia who was universally considered the least qualified to be his successor, namely Professor B. J. Habibie, a German educated politician, engineer, and scientist who was currently serving as Minister of Research and Technology.

The duo was duly elected in the spring of 1998, but the political situation did not stabilize. Instead, the impact of the financial crisis, the steep slowdown in the Indonesian economy, and the persistence of student riots because of allegations of corruption in the elections combined to force Suharto to resign from the presidency in June, with Habibie taking over as president. The transition was far from smooth and involved a standoff at the last minute between the commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the son-in-law of Suharto, General Prabowo, who had commanded the Special Forces and was in a powerful position. Many expected a military coup, but this did not transpire.

No one in the establishment expected Habibie to continue in the presidency for more than a few weeks. This was the universal view of the Indonesian political cognoscenti that I consulted, reinforced by the views acquired from their contacts by the political section of the embassy. This assessment did not pan out.

The missing factor was that while Habibie was held in low esteem by the political establishment, he inherited the powerful office of the presidency. For 32 years President Suharto had been the dominant figure in running Indonesia, and officials had long since formed the habit of not challenging the president. So even someone without personal authority, simply by virtue of sitting in that powerful position, was able to exercise authority to a much greater degree than people had expected. The result was that the person universally considered to be the least qualified for president ended up playing an instrumental role in Indonesia's successful transition to a democracy, while at the same time ridding Indonesia of the East Timor albatross around its neck.

It was Habibie who made the decision to have a referendum in East Timor on the question of separation from Indonesia, a decision that eventually led to the independence of Timor Leste. This decision was roundly opposed by everybody in the Indonesian establishment, but nobody was prepared to stand up to the president on the question. Habibie also presided over free and fair elections in 1999, which resulted in his losing the presidency. To everyone's surprise, Indonesia turned the crisis that ended the Suharto era into an enormous opportunity.

*Q: Let's go back over these events in a different light. My note says that in January of '98*

*Secretary of Defense Cohen comes out to Jakarta and calls on Suharto. Now, you're saying Suharto had been off the scene, so this was one of his first public events. You would have attended this meeting.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Did you --*

ROY: Secretary Cohen came two or three three times while I was in Jakarta. I mentioned earlier that Secretary Christopher had come in the summer of 1996 for the ASEAN meeting, and Secretary Albright made a brief visit in 1999. Most of the time, EAP Assistant Secretary Stanley Roth was the only State Department official who made regular visits to Indonesia. The Defense Department and the Treasury Department were the more active departments in Washington with hands-on involvement in Indonesian events.

*Q: In this January '98 meeting, was your perception of Suharto that he had lost his step or he was not in good health?*

ROY: His health was good enough so that he could have continued his presidency. The problem was that his near fatal illness in December had altered political perceptions in the power establishment, and he was now seen as expendable. However, the political establishment was not capable of removing him, because it lacked the political courage to act, and he had not groomed a successor. The only way he could have been involuntarily removed would have been by a military coup. And of course, he had assured that the top ranks of the military were personally loyal to him. So he was able to function.

I thought that his health was not as good as it had been before his illness, but he was able to conduct meetings with foreign visitors and give his usual spiel about the economic improvements that had occurred in Indonesia under his rule. He took great pride in having lowered the poverty rate in Indonesia to 11% from the over 50% figure when he first assumed the presidency.

With the outbreak of the Asian Financial Crisis, senior U.S. Treasury officials were regular visitors. Whenever they came, they would meet with Suharto. Treasury Under Secretary Larry Summers knew many of the Berkeley Mafia whom he had worked with in his academic capacities earlier, and he came on several occasions and met with the president.

The interesting thing is that when Habibie became president, the IMF money was able to flow in regularly because the corruption of Suharto's family was no longer an issue. Soon, Indonesia was able to get about a billion dollars a month from the IMF. Once again, the transition to Habibie was a major factor in bringing Indonesia out of the financial crisis faster than people had anticipated because of the regular flow of the IMF cash inputs necessary to stabilize the economy.

*Q: Which means he wasn't as forward leaning in protecting Suharto's family interest?*

ROY: Habibie was not personally seen as corrupt. Suharto's removal didn't eliminate the business interests of his children, but they had lost their pillar of support. Habibie's role was to protect Suharto from being prosecuted. He protected the family in that sense, but he didn't protect their business interests, and the IMF shifted its focus.

*Q: Now, during all this period the political parties are being more engaged with the perception that Suharto is mortal. Did you attend any rallies of these political parties or, or send your people?*

ROY: An American ambassador has to be careful in dealing with local politics, especially in a Muslim country. As a rule, it was the embassy's political section that was most actively involved in dealing with the political parties and monitoring what was going on. I was more circumspect. In January 1999, however, as the presidential election campaign began to heat up, I decided it wasn't in our interest to be seen as having been in Suharto's pocket. To avoid an overtly political move, I decided to use the Indonesian fasting month of Ramadan, which occurred in January/February 1999, to call on Megawati in connection with one of the events marking the end of Ramadan.

It turned out that the event was being used by her as a political rally. As soon as I showed up, Megawati grabbed me and sat me down next to her in the full glare of the television cameras, while all sorts of political speeches were being made. When I got back to the embassy, I found a cable from Washington saying they were concerned that maybe we were looking too close to Suharto and did we have any ideas on how we could engage in outreach to the opposition (*laughs*).

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: It was the only time in my foreign service career that I found I had carried out an instruction before receiving it.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: Some of the local Indonesian language newspapers carried front-page banner pictures of me sitting next to Megawati. I took copies with me on my next trip to Washington to show to Members of Congress who felt we should do more with the opposition to Suharto.

In any event, we were able to go through the transition from Suharto to post-Suharto governance quite smoothly. We knew everybody in the opposition, and we knew everybody on the Suharto team. We were not identified with any particular party. When the elections took place in 1999, that resulted in Habibie stepping down, Megawati's party won a plurality of the vote. At first, it was assumed that Megawati would become president, but as the result of some back room bargaining at the last minute, Abdurrahman Wahid ended up as the president.

During the election campaign, you had some 50 political parties participating. Two-third of the parties had an Islamic orientation. Nevertheless, we were not a factor in the election, even though we were playing a major role in supporting the electoral process. The reason is we were not tagged as favoring any particular candidate. The International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute, along with Jimmy Carter's group, were all in there providing technical assistance on how to carry out a fair election. I was very impressed with the professionalism of these groups. They were totally nonpartisan. We had no candidates that we were supporting in the election.

*Q: Now, one of the things that you may have noticed in terms of policy direction is that in the second Clinton election Albright became the secretary of state. Winston Lord was replaced by Stan Roth. Did that make any difference for what you were doing and what policies you were supporting?*

ROY: The answer is no. Winston and Stanley were very different people, but there was policy continuity. When I went to Indonesia, Win was nearing the end of his period as assistant secretary, so he never came to Indonesia while I was there, except perhaps with Secretary Christopher in 1996. Stanley Roth came quite frequently.

In fact, Stanley was the only regular visitor from the State Department. During President Clinton's second term, the East Timor issue had emerged as a very important issue. This was partly because the principal East Timor leader, Xanana Gusmao, was in prison in Indonesia, but also because members of congress with substantial Portuguese-American constituencies were beating the drums over the issue (East Timor had been a Portuguese colony until 1965).

Stanley Roth had been a congressional staffer before becoming EAP Assistant Secretary and paid close attention to congressional attitudes (as had Win Lord). Whenever Stanley visited Jakarta, he wanted to meet with Xanana Gusmao, who was of course in prison. To get permission for these visits, I relied on Colonel McFetridge, the embassy's defense attaché, who had known President Suharto's son-in-law, General Prabowo. for a long time. Through General Prabowo, we were able to get Stanley Roth in to see Xanana Gusmao in prison on at least two occasions.

After President Suharto's fall from power, Xanana Gusmao was released from prison and kept under a loose form of house arrest, during which I would call on him at his house.

*Q: Now, in the series of events that came to fruition with Suharto resigning and Habibie assuming the presidency, there were some fairly serious riots and demonstrations and whatnot that must have put extra stress on embassy reporting. I suppose embassy political officers were out there watching the demonstrations?*

ROY: Yes. They followed the demonstrations very closely and provided frequent reports to Washington. By May 1998, the rioting in Jakarta was becoming very serious, and increasingly violent. Our concern mounted when the rioting began to impinge on

residential areas with significant numbers of Americans. We had long since updated our emergency evacuation plans and believed that we were ready for any contingency. Each morning, as the rioting continued, the embassy's country team, consisting of the heads of the various U.S. government agencies in Indonesia and the embassy section heads, would review the situation.

We had red line trigger points built into our evacuation plan. The pattern of rioting was that each day would begin with relative calm in Jakarta, but by the afternoon severe rioting would be occurring in various parts of the city, lasting into the evening hours. The situation would calm down overnight, but the next morning the pattern would repeat itself, only worse than before.

We finally reached the point where the red lines in our emergency evacuation plan were being approached or crossed. The country team was initially skeptical of initiating an evacuation because of the calm mornings (*laughs*), but they were swayed by the worsening pattern of rioting. The demonstrations were approaching the neighborhoods where the American communities lived, and we were unable to get the police or the military to give us the additional resources necessary to ensure their safety. So I made the decision to begin evacuating the American community and all embassy dependents and non-essential personnel.

We were in the middle of the evacuation when President Suharto came back from a visit to Egypt. I was asked by the media whether I wasn't undercutting Suharto's position by evacuating the American community. My response was that we gave top priority to the safety of the American community and would take whatever actions were necessary to ensure their safety, without regard to the political implications. In the back of my mind was my adverse reaction to the chaotic evacuation of American and Vietnamese personnel from Saigon in April 1975, which had been delayed in part for political reasons.

*Q: Now, did this evacuation include the departure of your own staff?*

ROY: We had earlier encouraged most embassy dependents to leave Indonesia as the crisis worsened, before we decided to take out the American community. Before the crisis broke, my wife had gone back to the United States to visit her parents, who were in ill health. At the peak of the crisis, we had drawn down the staff to a skeletal level. For several days there were tanks out on the streets and soldiers with machine guns everywhere. It was a dangerous situation.

*Q: The way the situation looks at it these days there are sort of two levels. There's authorized departure and then ordered departure, if you will.*

ROY: We began with authorized departure for embassy dependents, but later switched to ordered departure. You can't order the unofficial American community to leave, but we shared our assessments of the situation with them at every stage.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: The only glitch in our emergency evacuation plan was that we had pre-arranged for chartered buses to take Americans to the airport if evacuation became necessary. It was part of our emergency planning. But when it became time to take the American community to the airport, the bus companies considered the streets unsafe and would not give us the buses unless we could guarantee military escorts for them. This was ironic since the reason we were evacuating the American community was because we couldn't get the military to provide us with escorts or protection for the American residential communities.

So there was an unexpected glitch in our emergency planning because we hadn't foreseen this possibility. Fortunately, through the good graces of Colonel McFetridge and his colleagues who had close ties to the Indonesian military, we were able to get military escorts, but only in the middle of the night when the city had calmed down. As a result, we had to ferry the American community to the airport around two a.m. for three nights running.

*Q: Were they picking up normal commercial flights or did you charter planes coming in?*

ROY: We had to charter planes, with the assistance of the State Department's Operations Center, which gave us terrific support. My assumption had been that since we were only a couple of hours flight from Singapore, that one plane would make round trips. It turned out that only one plane would come in, make a flight at night, and then wait until the next night to return to Jakarta. This created enormous complications for us because we were dealing with over a thousand Americans who had left their homes, gone to the assembly points, and we couldn't get them out of the country. Most civilian flights had been canceled or severely overbooked at the height of the crisis.

We also found that dealing with hundreds of Americans at the airport required administrative planning that we did not have the experience to handle properly. Fortunately, the Canadians did have that experience, and they gave us guidance on how to handle it. When the Americans got to the airport, each individual would be given a colored slip of paper. When it was time to board the aircraft, instead of having 300 Americans all trying to get on the airplane at once, we would board them by colors, thus establishing a boarding sequence that actually worked.

*Q: That must have been an interesting job for your Consular Section and your admin, Counselor.*

ROY: Yes, indeed. I've never seen an embassy perform more superbly. We literally were without sleep, or at best two or three hours, for three nights running because we had to get the American community out on three separate nights.

*Q: What size are we talking about? In Beijing during Tiananmen Square we evacuated 1,500 people.*



ROY: In our case, it was probably closer to a thousand. The American community was larger than that, but some were able to get out on their own, and some chose to stay.

*Q: And people were taken to Singapore or other locations?*

ROY: They were taken to Bangkok, with a stop in Singapore. Our embassies in both Singapore and Bangkok were absolutely magnificent in providing support. The American ambassador in Singapore made a point of meeting every flight in the middle of the night when it stopped in Singapore. I heard lots of positive comments from members of the U.S. community over the way that the U.S. government had functioned in looking out for their interests. The British ambassador had decided not to evacuate the British community, and he ended up with a political backlash in London over his handling of the crisis.

Why don't we take a break here?

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*Q: OK. Today is the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2014. We're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. Ambassador, good morning.*

ROY: Good morning.

*Q: We wanted to pick up our discussion right after Suharto resigned. I guess the first question is: had the embassy seen how fragile the political situation was becoming?*

ROY: Oh, absolutely (*laughs*). We had been tracking it very, very closely. The uncertainties were how things were going to play out and exactly what the timing would be. But it was clear that the Suharto regime's tenure was under serious challenge. There were two choices: either an attempt at a military crackdown, or Suharto being forced to step down.

*Q: Now, at this point what did the embassy perceive as the major challenges, or challengers, to the Suharto government?*

ROY: As I think we covered in our last session, Suharto had been reelected to a new term in March 1988. But this came in the wake of his very serious illness in December, which had weakened him physically and had forced the government for the first time to focus on the possibility of a transition to a post-Suharto type of governance. That was something people had been unwilling to address mentally until Suharto's illness in December of 1997.

When he got reelected, most of the people who reelected him – this was not a public election, this was an election within the parliament – already thought that he should not have insisted on being reelected. While most of the leaders did not have the political

courage openly to challenge him (Megawati and Amien Rais were the two exceptions), his legitimacy had been eroded both by the Asian financial crisis and by the severe economic impact on Indonesia of the crisis.

When I first arrived in Jakarta in January 1996, noone I met with, including those who thought he had been the top leader for too long, was prepared to contemplate, let alone discuss, a post-Suharto future. His illness in December 1997 changed that. In the months leading up to the presidential election in March of 1998, there was a growing sense that Suharto had served his time and should be paving the way for a successor, which he was not doing. As the student demonstrations increased in intensity, it became clear that there was not a strong consensus in the government that Suharto should be kept in office at all costs. However, there was no obvious off-ramp, and it was also unclear what measures Suharto would be prepared to employ in order to keep himself in office.

*Q: Now, along those lines, were there challengers or groups within the government who were willing to say, "We won't go all the way to Suharto. We'll support him, but if it means at all costs then we will back off?"*

ROY: That situation only emerged at the last moment, around the time of Suharto's visit to Egypt in May 1998.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: Matters came to a head shortly following his return, when the student demonstrations were intensifying. At that point, some within the cabinet had concluded that he needed to step down. But how that could be engineered was unclear, and there was a growing possibility of a military intervention. There were several potential outcomes. One would have been a constitutional succession, with Suharto stepping down and the vice president becoming president in his stead. One was the possibility of the use of force to try to suppress the demonstrations, which would have produced bloodshed. The third possibility was that the military would decide to take power into their hands. All of those possibilities were in play.

*Q: Now, one -- as you --*

ROY: What precipitated Suharto's decision to step down was a revolt within the cabinet that essentially removed his ability to continue governing. One of the background factors was that many Indonesians believed that Suharto could not step down because corruption involving his family had reached such a level that if he gave up the powers of his office, he would not be able to provide protection for himself and his family. This was seen as a factor inhibiting his ability to step down. As part of the coming together of a consensus that he needed to go, there was a feeling that it was better to have him go quietly with reasonable assurances that there would not be a vendetta against him or his family on corruption issues, rather than a desire to have an accounting with him after he had left office.

*Q: Now, as the embassy's watching this unfold you're reporting back. The New York Times carried an article on May 14 that the U.S. had appealed to the Indonesian military to stop the crackdown that was in process. Were you talking to -- I mean was that the embassy's advice for Washington to make that kind of statement? And secondly, what actors were the embassy talking to during all this period in May?*

ROY: We were talking to everybody. Our principal interest was in assuring the safety of the American community. We were in touch with the military. I called on General Yudoyono at one point to express our concerns. Several years later he became the President of Indonesia. We were in touch with the students. We were in touch with all of the political factions. I was in touch with cabinet members, who were keeping me informed of their thinking.

We were not trying to engineer a particular outcome. We were concerned by the violence, and to the extent we could, we weighed in to urge the use of non-violent measures in dealing with the protestors. But this was really a domestic Indonesian crisis. It was not directed against the United States or any outside forces.

From our standpoint, it was not a choice between a government, with all its imperfections, that we'd been able to get along with and the possibility of replacement by an Islamic extremist group or a group that was specifically hostile to U.S. policies and presence in the Pacific. We weren't faced with that sort of a choice.

*Q: Now, as the embassy talked to the various actors, how did you orchestrate that? Who did you talk to? Did you assign your DCM certain groups, political section --*

ROY: Everybody was involved. Our Military Attaché Office was in the lead on dealing with the military, but I, partly on my own and partly in response to instructions from Washington, would also deal at the top level with people like General Wiranto, the military commander. I was in touch with General Prabowo because he was deeply involved in what was going on, and he was very useful to me in terms of understanding the interplay.

There was rivalry in the military, which was one of the things that may have prevented a coup from taking place. Prabowo was the son-in-law of Suharto and married to one of his daughters, but he was relatively junior in the military hierarchy. At the time of the crisis he had become a three-star general, but he had been a one-star general when I arrived in Indonesia. Nevertheless, he was powerful because of his position commanding the special forces in Indonesia. And then you had General Wiranto, who in a sense represented the military establishment. So we were in touch with all elements within the military. Normally, I would be the person who dealt at the ministerial level, called on cabinet members, meeting with advisors to the president, et cetera.

Our Political and Economic Sections, and others within the embassy, were spread out and keeping in touch with the demonstrators and with the other forces at play in the country. It was a fast-breaking situation, but I always had the impression, from sharing

information with other well-connected embassies, that we were as well informed or better informed than any other embassy in town.

*Q: And I think we touched on who you thought were among the more plugged in embassies at an earlier part of the discussion.*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: Let me ask this. As you're reporting back to Washington, is most of the reporting in -- for the future researcher, who is going to file a freedom of information case, most of that reporting in regular channels, or were specialized channels used?*

ROY: No. It was entirely in regular channels and should be available to researchers whenever they are declassified.

*Q: Now, Suharto resigns in May and Habibie takes the position of the presidency, he moves up from vice president to president. What was the embassy's view of Habibie, and how much contact had we had with him before these events unfolded?*

ROY: I had a very good relationship with Habibie and had had extensive contacts with him. Many Americans knew him because he spoke fluent English, had been an advisor to Suharto for a long time, and was very active on science and technology issues. He was the state minister for research and technology in the government when I arrived in Indonesia, and he'd been in that capacity for some time. So there were quite a few people in Washington who were acquainted with him as well. I had had several long discussions with him. Those were usually two-hour sessions in his office, where we had lots of opportunities to exchange views and discuss a wide range of matters. He was not an unknown quantity when he assumed the presidency.

The problem was that he was almost universally considered inappropriate as a successor to Suharto: partly because of his western education, partly because of his personal mannerisms, and partly because he was viewed as an engineer and scientist focused largely on technical issues as opposed to being skilled in governance issues. His influence was seen as derived from his relationship with President Suharto, rather than from having a power base of his own.

When he became president there was a near universal assumption among the Indonesian elite, the establishment, if you will, that he would only remain in office for only a few weeks at best and then give way to some other arrangement for the succession that would be cobbled together. What that would be, nobody knew for certain.

*Q: That perception was in the civilian circles or in the military circles?*

ROY: It was universally shared. I didn't encounter anyone, military or civilian, who predicted that he would be able to consolidate his position as president and serve out his term. The assumption was that he was a transitional figure who would sooner or later --

most thinking sooner --- be replaced as president.

*Q: And he would be the transition to --*

ROY: To whatever came after Suharto. Noone was willing to predict what that would be, although many assumed it would most likely be a military leader. It took the presidential elections in 1999 to sort out the possibilities.

*Q: Certainly there were favorite horses in the race.*

ROY: Not really. Most authoritarian leaders cultivate the assumption that they will hold onto power forever and do not groom successors. You can learn a lot of lessons from the Indonesian experience.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: Suharto's rule had clearly been authoritarian. The elections that took place in Indonesia all had preordained outcomes. There was never a close election for the president, or indeed for the parliament, during the Suharto years.

Nevertheless, Suharto had permitted three political parties to function. They consisted of Golkar, which was essentially a coalition of the forces that formed and supported the government; Megawati's party, which had split into two groups representing the secular nationalists; and the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan -- United Development Party, which had an Islamic orientation. These three parties represented groups that in one way or the other made up the Indonesian establishment. Under the Suharto New Order, there were periodic elections in which these three so-called political parties competed for votes, but within constraints that meant there was never any real danger that they would upset the apple cart in terms of how they functioned.

So when Suharto stepped down, you had a system in place that had provisions for elections. In other words, you had three parties in place that had participated in elections and had organizations of national scope. In other words, Indonesia had mechanisms in place that could have handled various transition scenarios. For example, the president was elected by the People's Consultative Assembly, which had many military representatives who were appointed to it. Nevertheless, in theory it could have voted to remove the president from office. That would have been seen as constitutional.

So there were various scenarios that could have played out, including the possibility -- because of the instability that existed at the time -- of some action by the military to take power into their hands. The fact that this did not happen may have reflected the reality that there were divided views within the military. General Wiranto, who held the top military position, had risen to the top largely through staff positions rather than through commanding troops. So some of the senior generals considered him a political general rather than a fighting general. As a result, if he had decided to try to mount a coup to remove Habibie from office, it was not clear whether he would have been able to count

on the support of other key military troop commanders. Prabowo's command of the special forces represented an additional wild card.

*Q: I have to assume that the civilian politicians were making very similar analyses. The New York Times reports that in early November Megawati and others issued a series of statements, including a demand for the military to end their role in politics within six years.*

ROY: Everybody was assuming a gradual transition to a different form of governance. Indonesia had a tradition called *dwi fungsi* (dual function), which provided that the military could play a major role in the civil aspects of governance in Indonesia. Megawati and many others called for the ending of this tradition.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: I don't have all the timing factors now firmly fixed in my mind, but early on after Habibie became president, he announced that he would call new presidential elections the following year. So he had already set in play a schedule for earlier elections than was required by the election calendar. That factor had already begun to influence political developments.

The second factor was Habibie's decision, reached all by himself, or perhaps in consultation with a few of his closest personal advisors, to permit a referendum in East Timor on whether or not the East Timorese wished to remain part of Indonesia. There was universal opposition to that decision within the government and much of the populace. I didn't encounter a single person, other than a few very close advisors to the president, who thought that was a wise decision. The fact that it was not openly challenged was illustrative of the fact that Habibie had inherited a position occupied for 30 years by an authoritarian ruler. There was no tradition in Indonesia of people standing up to the president and openly taking issue with a decision.

*Q: This decision on East Timor did not go down lightly, because you had the outbreak of very serious violence in East Timor, that I presume occupied the government's attention for some months to come.*

ROY: The worst violence occurred after the results of the referendum were announced.

*Q: Which was in August of '99.*

ROY: Yes, that's right. In other words, the violence was a diehard move by elements in the Indonesian military who did not want to let East Timor separate from Indonesia. Some people thought Prabowo was behind the violence because the special forces seemed tolerant toward the perpetrators, who were essentially hooligans in East Timor. It was only when a decision was made to bring in a peacekeeping force with Australians as the core element that the situation improved. The Australians were absolutely professional and no-nonsense. They curbed the violence within a few weeks after they

moved in.

*Q: Which was in about September.*

ROY: That's right.

*Q: Let me go back to the start of this event. Because the East Timor situation seems to have grown to such a degree that Secretary of State Albright comes to Indonesia in March of '99 and talks to the Indonesian officials and even the East Timor leader. Was that the particular focus of that visit, and how did that visit unfold for you, for the embassy?*

ROY: The leader of the East Timor armed resistance to Indonesian rule was Xanana Gusmão. He had been the leader of the guerilla resistance forces in East Timor, but he had been captured by the Indonesians and put into prison. After the transition to the post-Suharto period, and particularly after President Habibie had made his decision to permit a referendum in East Timor in 1999, the strictures on Xanana Gusmão were eased, so that instead of being in prison he was under house arrest, with access to him much easier.

We were in regular contact with him in the period leading up to the referendum, and we were also of course visiting East Timor regularly. For a time, we established an embassy presence in Dili, the capital of East Timor, to monitor developments there. Throughout, we were in close touch with both the Indonesian officials concerned with East Timor, with East Timorese leadership elements such as Bishop Belo in Dili and Ramos-Horta who was in exile, and with Xanana Gusmão, who was under house arrest in Indonesia. We weren't aligned with any particular faction.

*Q: There were --*

ROY: And I also met with some of the guerilla people when I went to Timor.

*Q: Hm. When, or how often, did you get to Timor?*

ROY: Early during my tenure in Indonesia I made a trip to East Timor to acquaint myself with the region and to meet with Bishop Belo and some of the leaders there. I was there during the referendum, and I was there on an earlier visit in the spring of 1999. So I went to East Timor on at least three occasions, possibly four times, during this period.

*Q: From the embassy, who did you take with you?*

ROY: I would usually take whoever the political officer was that covered developments there.

*Q: And you'd use the DAO aircraft.*

ROY: We used the DAO aircraft, right.

*Q: Now, let's go back to Secretary Albright's visit. This actually coincided with the signing of an East Timor agreement.*

ROY: Her trip was not linked to that. Her visit was linked to the fact that Indonesia was going through a democratic transition.

*Q: OK.*

ROY: The financial crisis had made Treasury the key player in U.S. policy toward Indonesia. The U.S. military was also a key player because their people would visit East Asia regularly. During the four years that I was in Indonesia, I think Defense Secretary Cohen must have come two or three times to Indonesia. I had one visit by Secretary of State Christopher in the summer of 1996, and then the visit by Secretary Albright in the spring of 1999. Aside from those visits, none of the State Department Under Secretaries ever came to Indonesia, although Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbot did make an environment-related visit. I accompanied him on a scuba dive off of Manado in North Sulawesi to inspect the coral reefs. Assistant Secretary Stanley Roth was the only State Department official to make regular trips to Indonesia.

*Q: I would assume that the Pacific Commander would have made regular trips too.*

ROY: Yes. The Seventh Fleet command ship just happened to be on a visit to Indonesia in 1996 when the PRC for the second time fired ballistic missiles into the vicinity of Taiwan in an effort to influence the elections there. The PACOM commander visited Indonesia in 1999 before the visit by Defense Secretary Cohen, at a time when there was considerable violence in East Timor. In general, we were in regular touch with the U.S. military in Honolulu. I made a point of meeting with PACOM officials in Hawaii when I made trips to Washington. I was also in close touch with the PACOM commander in Hawaii in 1998 in connection with the rioting in Jakarta that preceded Suharto's decision to resign from the presidency.

*Q: Was the insecurity in the capital city of that kind of seriousness?*

ROY: Well, in May in the period leading up to Suharto's stepping down, the violence in Jakarta had become so significant that we evacuated the entire American community.

*Q: Uh-huh.*

ROY: They were able to return within a month, but it was a period when there was violence and arson going on in the city, and we were unable to get any additional support from the police or the military, whose hands were full dealing with the rioters. Under those conditions it was not safe for Americans to remain in Indonesia.

*Q: And of course the underlying point here is that the local authorities are responsible*



*for that security and for the security of the embassies.*

ROY: Of course. We had marine guards in the embassy, and they were terrific, but they were insufficient in number to deal with a violent mob. Indonesia's not a country where you can bring U.S. forces in to provide security without creating a major political crisis.

*Q: Which makes it sort of self-defeating.*

ROY: That's correct.

*Q: Now, in the timeline aspect of this, June 7, '99, Indonesia holds its first post-Suharto presidential elections, as Habibi had said he would do. And so a year later in June these elections take place. I assume that the political section and other parts of the embassy are touching bases with everybody possible to try to predict how the election was going to go.*

ROY: That's correct. There were nearly 50 political parties that participated in the election. The vast bulk of them had been newly created, had no nationwide organizations, and had no experience in participating in elections. Ironically, against my advice to Washington, we had been in the process of phasing out our AID mission in Indonesia. Just as the political situation began to heat up in the summer of 1996, we'd also made a decision to close our consulate in Medan. Both of these I thought were unwise steps that reflected an inability in Washington to understand the need for coverage of a major country that was entering a period of potential political transition.

The remarkable thing is that when the possibility of new, democratic elections emerged, the terrific director of our AID mission was able to gain support from Washington for very substantial funding to support electoral training programs for the various Indonesia political parties. Moreover, because of our long-standing support for human rights and environmental activities in Indonesia, which never seemed to have accomplished much, we had been in regular touch with a wide range of non-governmental organizations in Indonesia, particularly those involved with promoting environmental issues, democracy issues, and women's rights.

We were the only embassy in Jakarta that over the years had maintained close working relationships with these NGOs. With the sudden opening up of the political system and the growing role of civil society in Indonesia, we were the best informed embassy in Jakarta in terms of knowing which were the most reliable NGOs, which were the ones most capable of accounting for the uses of cash inputs, and which could produce results. Even the UN representatives drew on our expertise. So we were well positioned to provide a helping hand with the democratic process in Indonesia without in any way trying to steer it in a particular direction.

*Q: That underscores how policies have unintended positive consequences.*

ROY: Well, it's a little noticed fact, but it's one of the features that I am most proud of, that there were democratic elections in the country with the world's largest Muslim

population, with nearly 50 political parties participating, two-thirds of whom represented various strains of Islamic orientation, without anti-Americanism becoming a relevant factor. In large measure, that's because of the professionalism of the foreign NGOs. By not interfering and trying to manipulate the political system, we did not arouse the reactions that were part of the color revolutions in the former Soviet Union.

At one point I received an alarming call from the Foreign Ministry informing me of a potential scandal involving the United States that was about to break. Apparently rumors were circulating that we were holding secret meetings in Jakarta hotels with various political parties in an effort to manipulate the elections. I assured the Ministry this was not the case and would follow up. In consultation with the Embassy's public affairs officer, I immediately invited to a lunch at my residence the editors of the leading Indonesian and foreign language newspapers in Jakarta for a briefing on our role in the elections.

At the lunch, I passed around copies of the briefing books on the technical aspects of holding elections that had been translated into Indonesian. I noted that the meetings were not secret, were being openly advertised, and were available to any political party that wanted the briefing. The lively discussion that followed suggested that the editors saw no problems with what we were doing. The "scandal" never happened.

*Q: Because in those circumstances we were seen as being more participatory?*

ROY: We were seen as playing an advisory role, not a manipulative one, which is an accurate perception of what we were trying to do.

*Q: Let's go to another election. On August 30 there's an election in East Timor. And that's a referendum conducted under UN auspices. How did the UN get involved in covering this, and what was our role?*

ROY: Well, the country that had been most active on East Timor issues was Portugal, because East Timor was a former Portuguese colony and Portuguese was still a language that was in regular use there. Xanana Gusmão, who was the most respected East Timor leader, spoke Portuguese and didn't speak English. So the East Timor issue had been kept before the international community by the actions of Portugal in the United Nations, where every year they would sponsor resolutions criticizing Indonesian rule in East Timor and calling for some sort of self-determination process there.

Nobody had thought that these maneuvers on the part of Portugal were likely to lead anywhere until the political crisis in Indonesia occurred and the President Habibie decided to let them have a referendum on the subject. So the UN had been involved on the East Timor issue for a long time through the actions of Portugal.

It was important for the credibility of the referendum that it be conducted openly with international observers present. I had discussed this with President Habibie, and he fully understood that. He deserves enormous credit for the fact that he not only sponsored truly

democratic elections, free elections, for the government of Indonesia, but that he also ensured that there was a fair referendum in East Timor.

The day before the referendum I had gone down to East Timor so I would be there during the day of the referendum. I met with the Indonesian military leaders there, the governor, and others. It was clear from their observation of local conditions that they knew where the referendum was going to come out. I was a little surprised at how frank they were in acknowledging this. For example, the military commander there simply referred to the fact that the hills had been filled with people walking to reach the polling places for the referendum. Simply by observing this popular support for the referendum, it was clear to him what the outcome was likely to be.

*Q: But in fact, you had immediately after that election, a great deal of violence and insecurity.*

ROY: You had disruptive elements there. And in fact, while I was observing the voting on the day of the referendum, I was at a polling place where guns suddenly appeared and people started shooting.

*Q: Hm.*

ROY: These were the thuggish elements that most observers, myself included, thought had backing from elements within the Indonesian government not supported by the president. This was essentially rogue military elements who were supporting thuggish elements in East Timor whose goal was to disrupt the referendum and to make the transition to independence as difficult as possible.

Those elements became much more active in connection with the referendum and afterwards. It was only when the peacekeeping forces were brought in, with the Australians playing a central role, that those elements were curbed and the situation stabilized. Indonesia deserves credit for the fact that even though there was near universal opposition to having East Timor separate, Indonesian leaders were receptive to establishing good relations with East Timor once the separation was put in train.

*Q: Now, the question rises, were the Indonesian authorities unable to control these thuggish groups?*

ROY: Well, we puzzled over that. I reached the conclusion that the Indonesian military was playing a game of charades with us. The military seemed constantly surprised at the scale of the violence taking place in East Timor, but in reality they were sponsoring it behind the scenes. We found ways to convey these views to top Indonesian generals, that is, that we were on to their game. They were careful in concealing their hand, because they did not wish to incur charges of being war criminals.

*Q: And this comes out in the embassy reporting of the time?*

ROY: Yes.

*Q: That must have made relations with the military rather difficult, or --*

ROY: Well, we were making demarches to the military about the need to prevent the violence. They were receptive to the demarches on the surface, but behind the scenes they were continuing the activities supporting the violence. That was the charade that was taking place. Of course, none of this was based on crystal clear evidence of exactly who was doing what. However, these assumptions were consistent with the pattern of behavior that we observed.

*Q: Your military defense attaches must have been rather frustrated at this in their reporting.*

ROY: They were frustrated, but they were also very active. It's a fiction to think that the United States has the ability to force sovereign countries through the power of our persuasion to take actions that they do not see as in their national interest. This was not a small issue. East Timor was a significant slice of territory that was embedded in the Indonesian archipelago, that had been part of Indonesia since 1975, and that virtually all Indonesians thought belonged as part of Indonesia. It was the eastern half of the island of Timor. The western half of the island was Indonesian.

East Timor had been a Portuguese colony for three centuries, but it ranked at the bottom of Portuguese colonies in terms of its economic value to Portugal. They left it with no educational system, no economic development, and no governing institutions. It was exploitative colonialism at its worst. We can't expect that we can make a demarche to Indonesians on an issue involving separation of a part of their country and that they will simply roll over and play dead. That's not the way the real world works.

*Q: Now, in '99 your tour in Indonesia had been coming to an end. Had you been working on your next assignment, or how did that come up?*

ROY: Secretary Albright during her visit in 1999 raised with me the possibility of coming back as the assistant secretary for intelligence and research, and I had expressed receptivity to that idea. So my next assignment had more or less fallen into place well before my departure. Also, I was getting close to retirement age. If something decent had not come along, I would probably have retired. However, the Intelligence and Research job was a very attractive one from my standpoint, so I was happy that it had been offered.

*Q: Your successor was Ambassador Gelbard, another career Foreign Service Officer, right?*

ROY: Right.

*Q: How early on then was his selection made, do you recall?*

ROY: That was made in the spring, I think. In fact, it became the source of great frustration to me because I'd been in Indonesia for nearly four years and I'd been through a very stressful year and a half of political transition. I wanted Ambassador Gelbard to come as quickly as possible, so I could squeeze in some much needed home leave before my next demanding assignment.

But he lingered in the United States for several months after his confirmation. He wanted to attend his daughter's college graduation, he wanted to do this and that. The result is that I spent two or three additional months in Indonesia that I would have been happy to have spent in the United States. I ended up having to forego any leave before taking up the INR job.

*Q: And actually, when did you leave Indonesia?*

ROY: I remained for the visit by Secretary of Defense Cohen in September 1999. Immediately after seeing him off at the airport, I think a day later, I departed. My recollection is that I left Indonesia on September 30<sup>th</sup> of 1999. Ambassador Gelbard had still not arrived, but he was due to arrive shortly.

*Q: In summarizing this experience with the transition in Indonesia, how would you compare and contrast it with the Arab Spring, which would come years later in the Middle East.*

ROY: I would say it was radically different. Indonesia had had earlier democratic elections in 1955, but Indonesia at that point had a per capita GDP that was half that of Burma. It was an undeveloped country with a very weak educational system. The Dutch had not stressed education during their colonial rule in Indonesia. The democratic period lacked the middle classes necessary to stabilize it, so that the democratic elections of 1955 produced two years of ineffective political governance, and Sukarno reinstituted guided democracy by 1957, meaning he restored authoritarian rule.

Suharto came to power in 1965 and turned the economy over to the so-called "Berkeley Mafia," U.S. educated economists who put Indonesia on the path of rapid economic development. It continued on that path for 30 years under Suharto. The country was transformed, with higher levels of prosperity and a much larger middle class. The university students who were instrumental as the motive force for the transition from Suharto to the post-Suharto period were the children of the new middle class in Indonesia.

As a result, you had two factors that were very different from the Sukarno period, that is, a middle class and economic prosperity. You also had the mechanisms of a democratic process in place in the form of the three political parties that had experience operating within a tightly controlled political system. In acquiring that experience, they had developed nationwide organizations. You also had an Islamic establishment in Indonesia that was known for its tolerant attitudes.

None of these conditions existed in Egypt. With the end of Suharto's New Order authoritarian rule, you had genuinely democratic elections in Indonesia, with dozens of new political parties participating. However, when you looked at the election results, it was the three established parties that did best in the election outcome. The new parties, for all their enthusiasm, lacked national organizations, coherent political programs, and experience in mobilizing political support at the grassroots. As a result, the votes for the new political parties were fragmented.

The only established political party in Egypt was the Muslim Brotherhood, which was illegal. Its leaders had been suppressed and were never able to participate in a democratic election. There were no other political forces that had organizational structures that could compete with the Muslim Brotherhood. In addition, Egypt did not have the broad middle classes that had emerged during the three decades of rapid economic development in Indonesia. Moreover, the Islamic political forces in Egypt were more susceptible to doctrinaire conservative Islamic views than was the case in Indonesia.

Americans have a lot to learn about democracy. We are prone to think that under any and all circumstances, democracy is preferable to alternative forms of rule. History has demonstrated that many democracies fail because they're unable to cope with the challenges of democratic rule.

We can see this process unfolding before our eyes in Thailand. The democratic system there is becoming unstuck because the country had been polarized between a Bangkok-centered establishment, and a political process that consistently elected leaders who drew their votes from other areas of the country, rather than from Bangkok.

If we look elsewhere in the world, after World War I a host of new democracies sprang up in Europe, most of which failed to establish stable systems. In fact, their failures were severe enough to play a role in legitimizing the authoritarian systems that arose to replace them. The United States shows a very poor understanding of democracy when it thinks that sponsoring democracy everywhere, regardless of local circumstances, can produce stable regimes.

*Q: And I would suspect part of those requisite conditions, which many Americans fail to remember, is that local democratic elections had been taking place in the thirteen colonies for an extended period prior to 1776.*

ROY: Our serious thinking about democracy took place in the 1780s, when our founding fathers recognized that the Articles of Confederation were not working. Their thinking was reflected in the Federalist Papers, which dealt with a host of issues associated with democracy.

I've been around a long time and served in a variety of democratic and non-democratic countries. I learned an *enormous* amount about democracy by virtue of being in Indonesia when they were trying to establish a democratic political process. If you simply look at the five English speaking democracies of Great Britain, Canada, United States, Australia,

and New Zealand, each of them has a different electoral process, and different voting arrangements. In some cases you vote for a list of candidates, rather than for individual candidates. That tends to strengthen the roles of parties. In the United States, we have always voted for individual members of Congress. That tends to weaken party organizations in terms of their ability to control the outcome. Both are legitimate forms of democracy. Which system a country chooses to use will affect the outcome of elections and the stability of the system.

Americans are not very good on these types of issues since for most of us, the only political system that we're familiar with is our own. That's why I believe that Americans should be very modest in trying to tell other countries how to handle a democratic process. Nevertheless, I was enormously impressed by our NGOs who provide assistance to other countries in carrying out the technicalities of a democratic process. The IRI (International Republican Institute) and the NDI (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs) really played a superb role in Indonesia, as did former President Carter and his group.

All of these NGOs had the technical expertise to provide training and sound advice on how to manage an electoral process, but they played no role in trying to steer the political process in one direction or another. I was very proud of the American organizations there. We tried to be helpful to Indonesia in carrying out their democratic process, but the motive force behind the democratic transition in Indonesia came entirely from Indonesians, as did the results.

We influence other people most effectively when we open our educational system to them, when we educate them in the United States, when they're able to speak English and therefore can deal easily with the major English speaking democracies around the world, when we expose them to the workings of a free press and an independent judiciary. All of these things affect their thinking about governance issues. But when we try to tell people how to run their countries, when we criticize the way they do things locally – which implicitly carries the sense that we know better than they do how to run their countries – then Americans are at their worst. And yet, that habit is embedded, I'm sorry to say, in our behavior patterns.

*Q: I want now to contrast this very active role that you played as ambassador in Indonesia, and looking and being involved in day-to-day things with the atmospherics of this new job, of being the assistant secretary of a bureau back in Washington. As you came into the INR job, what did you see as the major issues for the bureau?*

ROY: The major issue for the bureau was whether it should continue to exist.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: I'm not joking. Americans were unprepared for the transition away from the Cold War. We staff our government with people at high levels who don't have the backgrounds or experience to think in longer range terms. For example, with the collapse of the Soviet

Union, there was a widespread assumption in the American establishment that somehow we no longer needed an intelligence operation and could make slashing cuts in the intelligence community because the Soviet threat had been removed. Of course, anyone who knows anything about history would recognize that there have frequently been these transition periods in human history, and new threats always emerge.

Moreover, whether you're talking about standard diplomacy or whether you're talking about intelligence operations, you can't gear them up overnight to be effective. You have to keep in place your ability to gain the information that we need as a country that is uniquely positioned to influence developments throughout the world.

Unfortunately, with the end of the Cold War, a mood emerged in Washington that we needed to streamline our intelligence operations and get rid of unnecessary redundancies. These are worthy goals in principle, but too often the measures taken result in degrading our capabilities in ways that damage our interests. When I came back to be the assistant secretary for INR, I discovered that right up to the seventh floor level of the State Department, there was a question in people's minds as to whether INR was necessary.

So one of my initial challenges was to demonstrate that we could contribute something to the intelligence community that was unique and valuable. I had no doubt that we would be able to do so. The State Department has a very unusual type of intelligence operation. First of all, we're not a covert organization. Secondly, we have in INR a mix of civil servants, who have been based in Washington for decades and provide continuity, along with Foreign Service Officers who have spent substantial portions of their careers in other countries, know foreign languages, and are acquainted with foreign leaders.

The staff of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research was a mix of people who had the continuity of long service in Washington and Foreign Service Officers who had personal experience dealing with the countries that we were covering. You don't get that anywhere else in the intelligence community. The average tenure of analysts in INR was something like double that in the Central Intelligence Agency, which was forced by budget cuts to focus on a narrow set of principal threats facing the country. We were focusing on the immediate as opposed to the important.

You can't run an intelligence operation that way because the threats this year may not be the same threats you face two years from now. If you've neglected to retain your ability to gain the information you need to protect American interests and to advance them effectively, you will discover, to your detriment, that you cannot rapidly regain such capabilities.

When I came back to Washington, I was disturbed by the frequency of my encounters with questions as to whether we really needed an intelligence operation in the State Department, as opposed to simply relying on the CIA. The fact was that the State Department was the only agency in the intelligence community that actually had representation in virtually all the countries of the world. This proved invaluable when the East Timor crisis emerged. We didn't have a universal military presence in other



countries. We didn't have full-fledged intelligence operations in every country where we had diplomatic representation. The State Department was everywhere. Depending on where the crisis occurred, the State Department might be the sole agency that could offer informed judgments of what was going on, based on knowledge gained on the ground.

*Q: Now, you talk about the mood in Washington. I presume there was a fair amount of pressure on State from Congress to cut budgets and downsize.*

ROY: Indeed there was. Congress had changed radically from the period when I joined the Foreign Service. At that time, in the mid 1950s, if you were planning for a career in politics on finishing college, you had to have military service on your record. My college classmates who were interested in moving into politics, if they weren't drafted, they chose to volunteer for the draft because they had to have that button pressed. Members of Congress were traveling around the world, visiting countries on every continent, and gaining some sense of the complexity of the external world. Now we have a Congress where many of the members don't even have passports. And yet, these same people get to vote on military and intelligence budgets, regardless of whether they are adequately informed.

*Q: I guess part of the question was whether the move to cut budgets and reduce the size of the State Department was self-generated at the upper levels of the State Department, or was it because senior officials felt under pressure from Congress?*

ROY: Congress was not pressing specifically to eliminate the Intelligence and Research Bureau, but the State Department was under constant budgetary pressures from Congress to make do with less. As a result, there was an internal dynamic in the State Department to try to cut where you could. INR was seen as one of the bureaus that was potentially vulnerable to being eliminated so the cost savings could be used for other aspects of State Department operations. I thought this was crazy.

There are a lot of important issues in the world, including the environment, women's rights, a host of migration issues, et cetera. In the final analysis, however, issues of the security and wellbeing of the United States are at the core of our diplomatic function. If you lose sight of that, if you think the function of our embassies abroad is to write human rights reports, then you have divorced yourself from reality and from the lessons of history.

When you get diverted into issues that are not directly related to the core issues of national survival and national wellbeing, you will lessen your ability to deal effectively with the external world. And yet, we were very much of that mindset during the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War, we elected a series of presidents who lacked experience in diplomatic and national security matters. George H. W. Bush was the last president until Joe Biden who came into office with extensive experience on international relations.

*Q: INR in Washington is only one member of the intelligence community. How did the*

*other agencies, DIA, CIA, etc. interact with State?*

ROY: We had extensive interactions, both directly and through liaison mechanisms. I was impressed with the functioning of our intelligence community. My first job in the State Department after completing basic training, when I was both the most junior and the youngest officer in the Foreign Service, was when I was assigned to what was then called the Office of Intelligence and Research. OIR in those days did not have bureau status. It was headed by a director, usually an ambassador, as opposed to an assistant secretary.

By the time I left Indonesia many decades later, OIR had become a bureau. We participated in producing intelligence products. We were part of the interchanges within the intelligence community on foreign affairs and national security issues. Of course, we were vulnerable to the standard problems of groupthink and not challenging assumptions that seemed self-evident at the time, even though they should have been challenged. Those failings are part of human nature and are constantly present. On balance, I think that we were able to provide useful perspectives for the intelligence community in assessing external developments.

*Q: Did you at your level have to attend a lot of interagency meetings to thrash out issues?*

ROY: Yes and no. We functioned at different levels. If we were preparing a national intelligence estimate, for example, the assistant secretary would go to the meetings that sorted out the final judgments on the estimate. Prior to that, there might have been a lot of meetings at lower levels during the drafting process where either the deputy assistant secretaries, or the office heads, or their staff would have been working with people in other components of the intelligence community to put the estimates together. In confirming the final product, you needed the assistant secretary to be personally involved.

*Q: Now, as part of that mechanism, when you're preparing a National Intelligence Estimate, one of the intelligence agencies can write a dissent to the majority opinion.*

ROY: That's right. Normally, you make every effort to avoid dissents and produce a consensus on your final judgments. But on occasion dissents are vitally necessary. We would on occasion take dissents and make sure that our views were properly reflected in the final product. You were not viewed as being obstreperous if you took dissents.

*Q: I would assume that one of the interactions in that position would also be with foreign intelligence agencies as they came to visit, or -- did you do much traveling when you were in this job?*

ROY: I didn't do a lot of travel. I visited Korea. I visited Australia. I don't recall any visits to Europe while I was the assistant secretary. I would meet with intelligence people from other governments when they visited Washington. Generally I did not have regular contacts with embassies in Washington.

*Q: We haven't had a lot of people who served in the front office of a bureau like INR. Can you describe how it's organized and how the rest of the bureaus might interact with INR?*

ROY: Well, the State Department, like other agencies, is subject to the drawbacks of stove piping, that is, people who know a particular function, or a particular issue, or a particular region very well, but who may not be familiar with other issues or the larger context. Think of General MacArthur pursuing victory in Korea without worrying about whether actions in Asia might trigger a conflict in Europe. The State Department's efforts to deal with such problems gave rise to the GLOP (Global Outlook Program).

*Q: Yes.*

ROY: The goal of that program was to produce people with global perspectives, as opposed to narrow, regional ones. That's not easy to do. When I joined the Foreign Service, the generalist was viewed by the old hands as the model for producing Foreign Service Officers. Specialists were seen as more narrow and more limited in their career prospects than the generalists, who were viewed as more adaptable. They could be sent to countries where they had no particular background and function adequately, since expertise was not necessary for dealing with countries of no particular importance to the United States.

Nevertheless, given the role that we were playing in the post World War II world, the need for specialization was overwhelming. The trend in the Foreign Service after I joined it was to produce area specialists who had a mastery of the language, and, if possible, of the history and background of the countries where they served. That produced the problem of people who knew one country or region, but didn't relate that easily to other regions.

I was very fortunate that for reasons that we've discussed earlier, my background was primarily as an Asian specialist with a particular focus on China and Southeast Asia. However, I also spent nearly a decade working on Soviet affairs. That was a real eye-opener. Nine years in the European Bureau, including three and a half years at the American embassy in Moscow, gave me a different perspective on the world from the one I had acquired in East Asia.

When I became the Executive Secretary of the State Department, essentially all of the papers and memos from all of the bureaus were passing through me to the secretary of state and/or the seventh floor principals. That experience exposed me to a lot of issues that I would not normally have encountered.

I also benefited from the fact that when I had served in Moscow, for example, during the years of the global perspectives program, the external division of the political section had an African specialist, a Latin American specialist, and a Middle Eastern specialist. During my last two years in Moscow, I became the Asian specialist covering East and South Asia. And of course we had European specialists, all working in the political section. The officers covering Soviet activities in different parts of the world were

specialists in those regions. They'd been given a year of Russian language training so they could serve in Moscow. It was expected that they would then return to their original regions to ensure that at least some people in those regions would have first-hand understanding of the Soviet Union. As a result, the embassy in Moscow truly had a global perspective. We had to provide reporting on what the Soviets were doing in all regions of the world.

INR was an extension of that, because INR is essentially a scaled-down State Department. It doesn't have policy responsibilities, but it has units that follow all of the geographic areas of the world and all of the functional issues. In addition, we had expertise that was several layers deep. The Policy Planning Division of the State Department, for example, also has a global perspective, but at best it would have one or two people working on a geographic region or issue, with perhaps a cluster of people working on issues that reflected the political flavor of the moment. You could have six people working on migration, human rights, and women's issues and one person working on East Asia.

INR was not like that. When I worked on the Soviet Union in EUR, I dealt with the people in INR who were Soviet specialists. When I returned 20 years later as assistant secretary for INR some of those same people were in INR providing continuity and perspective.

So for me it was exciting to be in INR because you were in a position to provide information to the senior officials of the State Department that they needed in order to carry out their policy and decision-making responsibilities effectively. That was a real challenge. We had superb staff and could contribute a lot in my judgment.

*Q: Do you recall one particular circumstance that would be a good illustration of that?*

ROY: The head of our Soviet Division had been consul general in St. Petersburg and was personally acquainted with Putin, who had been the deputy mayor of Leningrad when he was there. I had personal experience dealing with top leaders in China, Singapore and Indonesia.

On issues such as political trends in Iran, we were able to provide a longer-range perspective on how political transitions in Iran moved from outward looking leadership to more parochial leadership, and then back toward outward looking leadership. We were able to influence the intelligence community to look beyond the next transition to what might come after that. If you go back and look at the issues in the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s, you will discover that in every case there was a major development in the next decade that had not been anticipated in the previous decade.

To cite a current example, many of us who had worked on the Soviet Union during the Cold War thought continuing NATO expansion right up to the borders of Russia would produce a severe Russian reaction. We would have had better policy if senior officials in the west had focused on the longer-term consequences that were implicit in the approach

to NATO expansion we were taking. We didn't do it, despite the foretaste of the Russian backlash that we saw in Georgia in 2008.

INR had that type of longer-term perspective, a view of world developments that went beyond the immediate issues that most top officials spend their time dealing with. In large measure this reflected the nature of our staffing, which combined experienced foreign policy practitioners with analytical staff who had acquired decades of experience in particular policy areas.

*Q: In addition to your inside duties as an assistant secretary, you're probably called up to the Hill to testify from time-to-time. That would have been a fairly new experience in your career.*

ROY: Well, I'd been through four confirmation processes in the Senate. When I was the deputy assistant secretary in EAP, I had to go up and testify on the Hill in several cases. In INR the analysts did not normally appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or the House Foreign Affairs Committee. They dealt with the intelligence committees in Congress, often on budget related matters. In some cases I would go up to the Hill to brief members or staffers on particular issues that they were interested in.

*Q: Did you find much interest or understanding in the job that INR does?*

ROY: I never encountered skepticism on the Hill about the importance of what INR did. I encountered that more in the State Department than I did on the Hill.

*Q: (laughs) Now --*

ROY: I think the problem in the State Department was the budgetary pressures that caused the management people in the State Department to be constantly looking for ways to save money.

*Q: Sort of like you have a set amount of money so you keep putting it in different pots, hoping to keep the whole thing going?*

ROY: The pressure is to eliminate certain pots so that you can have fuller pots elsewhere.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: But the pots you eliminate may be very important ones.

*Q: Now, as we move into the year 2001, which everybody knows for September 11, you had a bit of a problem in INR with this story about a lost laptop. Can you give us your perspective on what happened?*

Q: I had retired by the time the September 11 attacks occurred in 2001. However, the missing laptop was a very serious problem. Why don't we begin our next session with

that? It's a fairly lengthy story.

*Q: OK. We'll break off here and get back together.*

ROY: Terrific.

*Q: OK, we're returning to our conversation with Ambassador Roy. It is the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. Anyway, I'd like to back up a little bit and go back to the start of your INR period. Because you took over from Phyllis Oakley.*

ROY: That's right.

*Q: At that point, did you have some time with her in which the two of you sat down and discussed what INR was all about. What were your expectations of the bureau when you came to this position? I would note that your very first assignment in the Foreign Service was also in OIR, the predecessor to INR. So this is bookending your career.*

ROY: The answer is yes, I did have an opportunity to spend time with Phyllis, whom I'd known before. I wanted to pick up from her as many tips and advice as I could get. She was extraordinarily helpful in bringing me up to speed regarding the challenges in the position and the dynamics of the intelligence community. I'd been overseas for two consecutive assignments and my familiarity with INR as a bureau was a bit dated.

When I was the EAP deputy assistant secretary for China, or deputy director of the China and Soviet desks, we of course had big contingents in INR who provided analytical coverage of the Soviet Union and China. Therefore, there tended to be close working relations between those country desks and INR. So it wasn't as though I was coming into an unfamiliar bureau.

When Secretary of State Albright first raised with me the possibility of coming back to the INR job, it was one of the few positions that I knew I would enjoy doing. The bureau has a worldwide scope with both geographic and functional expertise on virtually every foreign policy problem that could emerge in the world. Phyllis was a superb briefer.

*Q: In those conversations, what were some of the weaknesses she was passing on, and what were some of the strengths?*

ROY: Well, I've already indicated some of the strengths of the bureau, a view that she shared. She didn't identify any specific "weaknesses" in the bureau, but she did discuss some of the factors in Washington that affected the work of the bureau. High on her list was a factor that I've already mentioned, which was the shocking failure on the part of senior policy officials to understand the importance of the intelligence function and the role that it properly should play.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War had created an attitude, particularly on the part of political appointees, that a robust intelligence capability was no

longer needed. Even before I came back to Washington, I can remember shaking my head in bemusement on reading American press commentary claiming that the CIA no longer had a mission, and maybe it should be used for tracking white slavery, and issues of that sort. Such comments showed a complete lack of understanding of the intelligence function. You need to have intelligence capabilities in place long before crises emerge.

Phyllis was deeply concerned that budget cuts might result in elimination of the bureau. So one of the so-called “weaknesses” of the bureau was the inadequate appreciation by some policy makers of what the bureau could contribute to sound policy formulation and why it was important to have both depth and breadth in coverage of global developments.

One of my first acts when I was designated to be the successor to Phyllis Oakley was to recruit a deputy. The person who was far and away my first choice was Don Keyser, who had been the political counselor in Beijing when I became the ambassador. He was somebody that I had known for years and who was one of the most highly respected drafters and analysts in the Foreign Service. He had a stellar reputation for both his analytical ability and his writing ability.

Fortunately, he turned out to be available, and I was able to recruit him to be my principal deputy. In my judgment, he performed superbly in that job. He had credibility in the intelligence community, he had a background in both Chinese and Soviet affairs, and he was very comfortable dealing with intelligence issues.

At the same time, he had a personality that did not suffer fools gladly. This meant that his working relationships were sometimes troubled. One of the bureaucratic problems I faced was that at times he got crosswise with the Secretary of State’s staff because he would provide unvarnished judgments that weren’t filtered through the lenses of political correctness. At times this resulted in pressure on me to either move him out or not to let him perform certain briefing functions, which he actually was superbly qualified to perform. He was effective because he was held in high regard by the analysts in INR and elsewhere in the government. This enhanced his authority in handling the administrative aspects of the bureau.

As you know, we later got in trouble because of a missing INR laptop filled with highly classified information. And several years after I had retired from the Foreign Service, Don Keyser got involved in a case involving a Taiwanese woman that ended up with him going to prison for a year.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Now, was he the only deputy? How was the bureau organized?*

ROY: We had three deputies. One, Don Keyser, was the principal deputy. He functioned as my alter ego and handled the administration of the bureau. A lot of the personnel actions would go through him. He would step in and replace me at intelligence community meetings if I wasn't available or if I was traveling. He had oversight over the output of the bureau, determining what needed my attention.

Then we had a deputy who handled the reporting function of INR. That was Tom Finger, who later on became the INR assistant secretary. Tom was someone I'd known and worked with for decades. He had a lot of experience, had a PhD in political science, and had come out of the academic community. He was extremely good at handling all the reporting coming out of INR.

We also had a deputy assistant secretary, Chris Kojm, for liaison with other elements of the intelligence community. He had exactly the right sort of background for carrying out that function. We conducted an enormous amount of unclassified activities, where we would bring together analysts in the intelligence community with analysts in the universities and think tanks. We averaged one such conference every three days or so. INR hosted these conferences. Chris Kojm was instrumental in generating and coordinating these types of activities.

In other respects, we were organized pretty much the way the department was. We had geographic areas, some with subunits for particular countries, and we had functional areas, such as science and technology, disarmament, arms control, economics, etc.

*Q: Now, we were talking earlier about financial things and people wanting to cash in on the peace dividend, if you will, and budget cuts and all that. But shortly after you arrived, there was a presidential election in November 2000. The general procedure is that the incoming administration has a transition team that comes into the various federal departments and scopes it out and whatnot. Was that your experience in INR?*

ROY: I had that experience in 1988, when I was deputy assistant secretary in EAP. But in December 2000, not long after the November 2000 election, I had resigned as INR assistant secretary and was preparing for my retirement from the Foreign Service, which was completed in the middle of January. I resigned because of differences over the handling of Don Keyser's responsibility for a missing classified laptop.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: So during much of the post-election transition period I was already out of INR.

*Q: I guess my question is was there a transition team for INR as there were for other bureaus?*

ROY: I assume there was, but I don't know the answer to that.

*Q: OK. What was the background to this missing laptop thing?*

ROY: INR was unusual because of the highly classified nature of the material that we dealt with, much of which had to be stored and handled in highly classified special rooms. Because some of this sensitive information was of interest to other bureaus, people with the proper clearances from those bureaus needed to come to INR to see and use this intelligence. Rather than giving them access to our classified computer systems,



we had classified laptops containing the sensitive information that they could use when working in INR in these special rooms.

We were an exception in the State Department in that we had full responsibility for the security of the classified information that we handled. In other parts of the State Department, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security was responsible for the handling and storage of classified information. The reason for this exception was that the Diplomatic Security Bureau, in general, did not work with the highly classified types of material that we worked with on a daily basis as part of our interaction with the rest of the intelligence community.

For understandable bureaucratic reasons, the Diplomatic Security Bureau was not entirely comfortable with this exception, which was grounded in the fact that our analysts were acutely conscious of the sensitivity of the tightly controlled material they were handling and understood the importance of protecting it. Shortly after I arrived in INR, we had worked out a deal with the Diplomatic Security Bureau where if a security breach occurred in INR, we would immediately turn over responsibility for pursuing the matter to the Diplomatic Security Bureau since we lacked the capability to investigate such breaches.

Shortly before my arrival in INR, it had become necessary to carry out construction work on the special rooms where the most sensitive intelligence was handled and stored. INR was not staffed to provide security over a construction project, but the Diplomatic Security Bureau contended that this was not their responsibility. As a result, INR analysts assumed the task of protecting the areas where the construction work was going on, in addition to their regular jobs. This was an improper use of our resources. In embassies where I have served, when unclassified cleaning crews were admitted to classified spaces, they would be escorted by marine guards, or in some cases, in less sensitive areas, by family members of embassy officers.

A few months after I came on board, I was informed that one of the laptops in the rooms under construction was missing. This was the first time I was aware of the construction project. We launched an immediate high-priority search to try to make sure that it hadn't been misplaced as opposed to gone missing. This consumed a couple of days over a weekend. As soon as we confirmed that the laptop was indeed missing, consistent with our prior understanding with the Diplomatic Security Bureau, I sent a memo to the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security explaining the problem and requesting an immediate investigation to recover the laptop if possible. Mistakenly, I failed to inform Secretary Albright of the loss, assuming that this would be done by the DS Assistant Secretary. This was a bad assumption. My faulty logic was that since we were the guilty party, I should avoid any appearance of seeking to influence the investigation.

Diplomatic Security did not know how to handle the problem, in part because they did not understand the importance of a laptop with this type of highly sensitive intelligence information on it being lost. So they took no immediate actions. The FBI liaison officer in DS also failed to inform FBI headquarters for over two weeks.

From my perspective, the first thing that should have been done was immediately to interrogate the members of the construction crews that had been in these sensitive areas to ascertain whether any of them might have been guilty of removing the laptop. In my mind, there were two possibilities. The first was that we might have been the victim of a sophisticated intelligence operation by a foreign government that had used one or more of the construction crews to penetrate and steal classified information. The more likely possibility was that somebody had seen an unattended laptop and had stolen it for financial gain. Either way, the loss required very quick follow up action.

When Secretary Albright learned of the incident several weeks later when news of the missing laptop leaked to the press, she was understandably furious that she had not been informed. Her reaction was to take away responsibility for the security of the highly classified intelligence information in INR from the Bureau and give it to the Diplomatic Security Bureau.

I was strongly opposed to that action. It didn't make sense to me to put people who did not themselves work on a regular basis with this type of highly classified information in charge of its security. However, we were in a weak position to defend our position since we had been responsible for the security of the missing laptop in the first place.

Eventually, Secretary Albright decided to hold my deputy, Don Keyser, responsible for the loss and remove him from his assignment as INR Deputy Assistant Secretary on the grounds that he had been the acting assistant secretary when the security arrangements had been put in place before I had come back from Indonesia. This put me in an impossible position. If you were going to hold management responsible for the episode, as opposed to the people actually supervising the security of the construction project, then Don Keyser and I were equally guilty, since I had been the assistant secretary at the time of the loss.

I was not prepared to let my deputy take the fall. When I was unable to budge Secretary Albright on the issue, I felt I had no choice but to resign. It was a troubled episode that destroyed my previously cordial relationship with the secretary of state. I completed the process of retiring from the Foreign Service and left the Department under a dark cloud from the seventh floor.

*Q: Prior to this you obviously were working with Secretary Albright, interagency meetings and what not. Prior to this circumstance how did you evaluate her interest in what INR was doing?*

ROY: I liked working with Secretary Albright. I normally would brief her at the opening of business each morning on important global developments. Since the CIA also provided a morning briefing, I tried to avoid duplication in my approach. We provided commentary on fast-breaking overnight intelligence in our daily briefing books. In my oral briefings for her I would focus on broader issues such as: what was the status of Sino-Japanese relations; did the recent failure of several democracies in Africa portend a broader trend

toward the rise of authoritarian regimes elsewhere; what was China's appeal to Southeast Asian countries; what types of surprises might emerge over the next few years for which we should be mentally prepared; etc. Or we might briefly discuss the shifting pattern of leadership in Russia: why was Gorbachev popular in the west and unpopular in Russia; how did Putin differ from Yeltsin; insightful new books on Russia, etc.

Secretary Albright liked these types of briefings. I would draw on inputs from analysts in INR on these topics. She understood the interconnectivity of foreign policy developments in different parts of the world and didn't treat them as individual case studies, as a lawyer might. She was interested in how a development in one part of the world might affect the attitudes and behavior patterns of other parts of the world. From that standpoint, I enjoyed working with her.

*Q: Now, the Clinton administration had just gone through a series of upheavals, such as the crisis precipitated by the Lee Teng-hui visit in 1995, the impeachment of the president, and the toxic politics in Congress. Did you get the impression that the State Department felt it was under any particular cloud from the Congress?*

ROY: Yes and no. The State Department, in my experience, has not been particularly effective in dealing with Congress. We don't have the budget or the personnel to have a big congressional operation. We don't have constituencies in Congress. We don't provide jobs and investments in congressional districts the way the military does. So our effectiveness with Congress is largely a question of personal relationships.

As in most countries, foreign ministries have to walk a careful line, balancing between being an active advocate for American interests abroad, and avoiding being seen as an advocate within the United States of the interests of foreign countries. In other words, it's vitally important for the State Department to be seen as working for the United States and not as an intercessor for other countries.

At the same time, of course, you have to make certain, or as certain as you can, that senior officials understand the motivations of foreign countries, why they are behaving the way that they do, and how, in some cases, their reactions may be in response to actions that we have taken. The people who are in our congressional relations bureau are usually not the people who have the expertise necessary to do that effectively. So the quality of our congressional relations often depends to a significant degree on the interest and willingness of our top officials, seventh floor officials, the secretary of state, the deputy secretary, and under secretaries, to deal personally with congressional leadership on issues of importance. Some of them enjoy doing that and do it well. Some of them don't enjoy it and don't do it at all. Such attitudes make it more difficult to deal with members of congress.

For example, in the case of Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in 1995, which precipitated a major crisis, I was assured by the State Department that it had pulled out all the stops to try to head off the non-binding congressional resolution that expressed the sense of congress that Lee should be allowed to visit the United States.

That resolution was used by the State Department to justify reversing at the last minute the firm assurances that the secretary of state had given Beijing that we would not permit Lee to visit the United States.

As it happened, a week after the Lee visit, the deputy Republican WHIP in the House visited Beijing and told me that he was completely unaware that there had been such a resolution, which he dismissed as inconsequential and the work of congressional staffers. He told me that it was inconceivable that an important resolution would have gone through the House and not been brought to his attention. So he dismissed the resolution as an inconsequential one in which staff members of House members might have approved the members' vote in favor of it. I was left with the impression that nobody on the seventh floor of the State Department had bothered to call key members of Congress to try to head off that resolution.

*Q: On the other hand, the secretary and deputy secretary could have their own feelings about working with Congress and whether the department was being rightfully criticized or wrongfully criticized.*

ROY: We've had under secretaries who were former senators, and our congressional liaison people often come from congressional backgrounds and have a good understanding of how congress works. However, that can also be a problem if the State Department's congressional liaison people, especially in the leadership roles, have previously been congressional staffers. They may be viewed by members of Congress as staff level people without the stature to speak authoritatively. Some of them are able to overcome such attitudes; others less so.

*Q: Well, here we are. We've had this circumstance in Albright's last days. You decide to retire.*

ROY: Well, I was already at the mandatory retirement age, but I was in a presidential appointment position, so I could technically have hung on to see whether the new administration was prepared to keep me in the job or offer me a new presidential appointment.

*Q: With the change in administration you would have normally had to --*

ROY: I would normally have retired after Indonesia.

But I was offered the INR job, and since I was interested in it, I decided not to retire after leaving Indonesia. When I resigned from my position as INR assistant secretary because of the problem involving Don Keyser, I was not interested in a further assignment because I was already at retirement age. I'm generally not in favor of denying upward mobility opportunities to Foreign Service Officers by trying to hang on in official positions too long.

*Q: After your retirement, you are still extremely active, both academically and personally.*

*I think one of the first things you did was to take a position with Kissinger Associates.*

ROY: Yes. My original plan for retirement had been to take a long vacation, since I had not had one for several years. After six months or so of unwinding, I would then decide whether and to what degree I wanted to continue working, and at what level of intensity. So I had not been looking for a job once I'd made the decision to retire.

Unexpectedly, however, I received a call from Jerry Bremer, who had been with Kissinger Associates for quite a few years, asking me whether I'd be interested in replacing him. Apparently he had decided to leave Kissinger Associates and take a job with an international insurance company.

I had gone up to New York for an interview with Dr. Kissinger, and he had made me an offer to join Kissinger Associates. So when I retired from the State Department, the next day I began to work with Kissinger Associates, and my dream of a six-month unwinding period vanished into thin air.

*Q: (laughs) Just have a couple more questions as we're wrapping this up. Where were you on September 11, 2001 when New York City and the Pentagon were attacked?*

ROY: When the attack occurred, I was on a plane to Beijing to join Dr. Kissinger for a visit he had planned to attend a China conference and meet with Chinese leaders. I was then flying on to Tokyo to attend a conference organized by The Asia Foundation. My flight was across the Pacific, while he was proceeding to China via Europe, where he was meeting with various European leaders. Since our respective planes were arriving in Beijing within thirty minutes of each other, my intention was to stay at the airport to meet his plane and accompany him to our hotel.

When I reached Beijing, I was told by the Chinese officials there to meet Dr. Kissinger that he had canceled his trip at the last minute. They said they did not know the reason for the cancellation. I was perplexed by this unexpected development and decided to proceed on to the hotel to attend the China conference. I dropped my bags at the hotel, and while I was standing in front of the hotel waiting for my transportation to the conference, I was approached by an American tourist who had mistaken me for U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, who was also in Beijing at the time, evidently because we both had white hair and wore glasses. She asked me for the latest news regarding the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York. That was the first news I had of it.

En route to the conference in my car, I received a telephone call from the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressing condolences over the terrorist attack. On arrival at the conference site, I was met by a German diplomat, who said that former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl wanted to see me, apparently as a surrogate for Dr. Kissinger. I spent an hour with the former Chancellor while he expressed his consternation over the attack and recounted some of his own experiences with terrorism.

*Q: Hm. OK. It was probably a couple, three days conference? But then you were stuck?*

*Airplanes were closed --*

ROY: I was due to leave Beijing on Saturday, September 15 for The Asia Foundation Conference in Tokyo that was going to take place on Sunday and Monday. If it weren't for that conference, I would normally have headed back to the United States as soon as I found out that Dr. Kissinger was not making the trip. But there were no flights. So I simply remained in Beijing to await developments.

Fortunately, flights from Beijing to Tokyo resumed on Saturday. I ended up as the only participant from the United States in the conference because none of the other participants from the United States were able to get flights to Japan. We had a few Americans who were resident in Tokyo who also participated.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: By the end of the conference, I was able to use my original air reservations for my return to the United States from Japan. By that time, international flights had resumed.

*Q: OK. One more thing I'd like to ask about with regard to the Foreign Service. In 2004, you signed a petition, "Diplomats for Nonpartisan Foreign Service" with Eagleburger, Kissinger, Wisner, Sisco were some of the other signatures. What was that issue that came to your attention?*

ROY: As I recall, that letter was issued in response to a statement by a group calling itself "Diplomats and Military Commanders for Change" which attacked the George W. Bush Administration's foreign policy and established a website and organization to defeat President Bush in November.

Our letter was intended to counter the impression created by this statement that there was consensus among experienced diplomats and military officers about the Bush administration's policies. This was simply wrong. Among the signers of our statement were supporters of the Bush administration's policies and those who were critics. Our letter emphasized that a president must be able to count on the career services to remain above the political fray, provide disinterested advice, and faithfully execute decisions taken. It called this a core principle and deeply held tradition of our foreign and military services.

I strongly favor a nonpartisan Foreign Service and have been a beneficiary of that practice. As you know, I was appointed to Beijing by the first President Bush, a Republican, and was kept on for two and a half more years by President Clinton, a Democrat. So by virtue of being a Foreign Service Officer and nonpartisan, I was able to straddle a Republican and a Democratic administration in ways that political appointees normally cannot do.

When you're a public servant in the United States, you serve whomever is the president. You are loyal and devoted to carrying out each administration's foreign policy and trying

to make it succeed. In my experience, that has been the ethos of all the Foreign Service Officers that I have worked with.

There are at least two issues involved in favoring a nonpartisan Foreign Service. One is the question of political appointees. The second is the question of whether Foreign Service personnel, in exercising their freedoms as American citizens, can appropriately participate in political campaigns in some fashion.

My own feeling is that you can't be nonpartisan and engage in political activity in an advocacy role. You can vote for whomever you please, but you become politicized if you openly in word and deed favor one candidate as opposed to another candidate. In that sense I favor a nonpartisan Foreign Service.

*Q: Given your distinguished Foreign Service career and your involvement in Asian and Russian issues, you've contributed a great deal to articles and whatnot, but you've never written a book.*

ROY: No, I haven't. That's one of the many ways in which I differ from Dr. Kissinger. He has the ability to maintain a very busy schedule and still produce high quality books (*laughs*). I do not have that skill.

*Q: (laughs)*

ROY: When I'm working, I'm usually immersed 100% in my job and cannot develop the sustained concentration necessary to produce a book quality product.

*Q: Well, we certainly appreciated all your speaking engagements and whatnot. One last question on U.S.-China relations. There are so many organizations such as The Asia Foundation and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. Do those still have a useful role to play in educating the public and talking about Asian foreign policy issues?*

ROY: Absolutely. Let me illustrate an aspect of the problem. We've been the sole superpower, so to speak, ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. And yet, this has also been the period when we have been moving away from print media into electronic media. Our print newspapers are struggling for their lives. They're all under financial pressures of varying degrees of severity. They are all cutting back on their foreign correspondents and foreign bureaus, largely for economic reasons. As a result, the breadth and depth of the foreign affairs coverage of our mainstream media is degrading. They're still capable of producing high quality work in limited areas, but they don't have the capacity to maintain foreign correspondents in places where they should be represented.

This is an intolerable situation for a country that has the ability to intervene anywhere in the world. It's a toxic mix when you combine an ability to intervene with ignorance about the place where you're intervening. Unfortunately, that tends to be the situation nowadays. The Iraq War is a classic example. It was the height of pretentiousness to think

we could intervene in the heart of the Islamic world, in a country that we knew very little about, and expect predictable results. We made that mistake in Afghanistan, and again in Iraq.

Our national newspapers are inept in asking the right questions and objectively analysing the potential consequences of interventions in distant places. It is rare when they provide analytical assessments that would be helpful to policymakers, members of congress, and the reading public in avoiding support for egregious policy errors. Too often they let democratic ideology, or maintaining access to administration sources, or catering to the prejudices of their readers affect their judgments. The knee-jerk reaction seems to be: bad things are happening, and we should be doing something about it.

To deal with such biases, we need a host of nonpartisan, professional, foreign policy-related organizations that can help to educate the public, provide experts for possible government employment, and offer jobs for experienced government officials leaving administrations. The National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, The Asia Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy in Georgetown University, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Institute of Peace, to name a few, all play an invaluable role in filling gaps in our understanding of international issues.

*Q: One quick question. We were talking about Iraq a minute again. When you were in the Executive Secretariat, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The ambassador there was April Glaspie. Do you recall her?*

ROY: I didn't know her personally, but I recall her reporting, because it came to me first to determine who got copies of her most sensitive messages. Some of her reporting, such as her conversations with Saddam Hussein would get very limited distribution.

*Q: Right. Well, wasn't there something about some of our cables being given to the press or something? I've forgotten now.*

ROY: Some of her cables leaked. The question was whether she had adequately advised Saddam Hussein about the consequences of moving into Kuwait. My impression was that she behaved competently. To a significant degree she was operating in a vacuum. Our posture on Iraq was complex. We disapproved of Saddam Hussein's regime, but we even more strongly disapproved of Iran. As a result, we had emotionally sided with Iraq when Saddam launched a war on Iran. We saw some utility in Iraq's anti-Iran stance. However, our views became more negative when Saddam began assembling his forces for a possible assault on Kuwait. So our attitudes toward Saddam Hussein were mixed. Ambassador Glaspie had to operate in a shifting environment where our policy had not fully gelled in terms of what our attitude was toward Saddam Hussein.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

ROY: As Monday morning quarterbacks, we can criticize her for not having taken a



stronger position in terms of pulling out all the stops to head off Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. Nevertheless, my recollection is that she always faithfully carried out her instructions, which didn't cover every possible eventuality. In that sense, she would have been winging it if she had made stronger interventions with Saddam Hussein.

*Q: Well, I think you've got a point about the position that she was put in.*

ROY: First of all, my recollection is that everybody thought there was a real possibility that Saddam Hussein would take some action to establish control over the disputed oil fields on the border between Kuwait and Iraq. However, nobody expected him to invade and occupy the entire country, especially since a senior Arab leader had met with Saddam a few days before the invasion and had passed on his assessment that he would not invade Kuwait.

*Q: Interesting stuff. I want to thank you for your time, Ambassador Roy.*

*End of interview*